

ITEM

Application Reference	DC/075939
Location:	Focus School 237 Didsbury Road Heaton Mersey Stockport SK4 2AA
PROPOSAL:	Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the site to provide 34 dwellings, associated landscaping, amended access, car parking and public open space area.
Type Of Application:	Full Application
Registration Date:	04.03.2020
Expiry Date:	Extension of Time agreed until 22 nd October 2020
Case Officer:	Jeni Regan
Applicant:	Mereside Education Trust
Agent:	Eden Planning

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Planning and Highways Regulation Committee – Departure from the Development Plan

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is at 237 Didsbury Road in Heaton Mersey and comprises the former Focus School, which was an independent school with a catchment area across the North West. Due to the age of the existing buildings, the high maintenance costs and the buildings no longer being fit for modern educational spatial standards, the school moved to an alternative site outside the Stockport area and the site has been vacant since July 2019.

There are seven buildings currently on the site, which accommodated the required classrooms, hall, canteen and office accommodation for the former school. The site also includes two vehicular entrances off Didsbury Road, hard surfaces associated with the car park, drop off area and playgrounds, along with grass playing fields and a pitch to the southern area of the site. Overall, there is a 15.5m level difference down the site, sloping down from Didsbury Road on the northern boundary to Tennyson Road to the southern boundary. The slope is more pronounced toward the north of the site.

The application site measures 1.36 hectares and is broadly rectangular in shape, with the addition of the wooded area to the south west of the site below the Briars Mount development. The site lies immediately to the south of the A5145, Didsbury Road, approximately 80m east of its junction with Briars Mount. Tennyson Close runs parallel along the southern boundary of the site, and a row of semi-detached dwellings bound the site to the north across Didsbury Road.

The Northern portion of the site accommodates the previously development land of the school buildings, with the playing fields/grassed areas occupying the Southern

part of the site. An area to the West of the site comprises woodland. The woodland area of the application site is bisected in the western portion by an adopted highway which forms a footpath linking Didsbury Road to Tennyson Close. This is not a public footpath identified on the Definitive Rights of Way plan, and it is understood that it forms an emergency access point to serve existing dwellings to the south of the site.

The northern portion of the site is allocated within the UDP as a Predominantly Residential Area and the southern part of the site to the south is allocated as Local Open Space. None of the buildings within the site edge red or surrounding the site are Listed and the site is not designated as a Conservation Area.

The area around the application site is dominated by residential uses with a mixture of semi-detached, detached and apartments all in the vicinity. There is a mixed vernacular in terms of age, style and materials of the dwellings in the area. The only non-residential use in the immediate area is the day nursery at 175 Didsbury Road.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of all the existing structures on the site and the erection of a residential development comprising 34 residential dwellings, with associated access, parking, private amenity spaces and public open space.

The proposed development would be served by a single vehicular access point off Didsbury Road to the western end of the site. This is the existing main access into the site, which served the former Focus School. Due to the sloping topography of the site, the new access road then winds down and across the site to provide 3 street frontages, terminating at the public open space being provided at the bottom south western corner of the development. There is a further new street/cul-de-sac coming off this new access road towards the bottom of the site to serve 8 no. terraced dwellings. Plots 1 – 10 would front onto the main Didsbury Road frontage, with the remaining 20 Plots fronting the new access roads.

The proposed residential development would comprise of four dwelling types (House Types A to D) that have been designed specifically for this site, to work with the existing sloping topography from the front to the back of the site. The properties have been designed as split level town houses to accommodate to these existing contours. The following mix of dwellinghouses are proposed across the 34 plots and the floor plans and elevations can be seen in the attached plans:

1) House Type A (Plots 1 – 14) – This is a 4 bedroom semi-detached property with accommodation over 3 floors with a floorspace of 1,872 sqft.

- Hall, W.C, open plan living room, dining room and kitchen with access to rear garden terrace at ground floor level;
- Garage, bin store, utility room/laundry, cloakroom, bedroom 4 and bathroom on the lower ground floor; and
- Three bedrooms (two with en-suite), bathroom and landing at first floor level.

Pitched roof design with gable ends and flat roof terrace to rear over part of lower ground floor. Private amenity spaces around properties/gardens to rear as follows:

- Plot 1 – 100.05 sqm
- Plot 2 – 111.67 sqm
- Plot 3 – 110.43 sqm

- Plot 4 – 116.61 sqm
- Plot 5 – 115.56 sqm
- Plot 6 – 121.49 sqm
- Plot 7 – 121.31 sqm
- Plot 8 – 135.40 sqm
- Plot 9 – 126.75 sqm
- Plot 10 – 288.20 sqm
- Plot 11 – 157.86 sqm
- Plot 12 – 102.76 sqm
- Plot 13 – 104.77 sqm
- Plot 14 – 120.11 sqm

2) House Type B (Plots 15 – 20) - This is a 4 bedroom semi-detached property with accommodation over 4 floors with a floorspace of 1,717 sqft.

- Entrance hall, 2 bedrooms and a bathroom and access to a rear terrace on the upper ground floor;
- 2 bedrooms (one ensuite and access to rear terrace) and a bathroom on the ground floor;
- W.C, cloakroom, pantry/store, open plan living room, dining room and kitchen with access to rear garden at lower ground floor level; and
- Loft storage space at first floor level.

Pitched roof design with gable ends and flat roof terraces to rear over parts of ground and lower ground floors. Private amenity spaces around properties/gardens to rear as follows:

- Plot 15 – 118.40 sqm
- Plot 16 – 115.05 sqm
- Plot 17 – 111.94 sqm
- Plot 18 – 108.59 sqm
- Plot 19 – 116.90 sqm
- Plot 20 – 172.03 sqm

3) House Type C (Plots 29 – 34) - This is a 3 bedroom semi-detached property with accommodation over 3 floors with a floorspace of 1,170 sqft.

- Entrance hall, 2 bedrooms (one with a Juliet balcony) and a bathroom at ground floor level;
- Open plan living room, dining room and kitchen on the lower ground floor with access to the rear garden; and
- Master bedroom with dressing room, ensuite bathroom, Juliet balcony to front elevation and access to rear terrace at first floor level.

Pitched roof design with gable ends and flat roof terrace to rear over part of ground floor. Private amenity spaces around properties/gardens to rear as follows:

- Plot 29 – 197.38 sqm
- Plot 30 – 182.45 sqm
- Plot 31 – 184.58 sqm
- Plot 32 – 184.32 sqm
- Plot 33 – 188.05 sqm
- Plot 34 – 294.24 sqm

4) House Type D (Plots 21 – 28) - This is a 2 bedroom terraced property with accommodation over 3 floors with a floorspace of 743 sqft.

- Entrance hall, kitchen, utility room, w.c, open plan lounge and dining room at ground floor level;
- One bedroom and bathroom and landing/lobby area on the first floor; and
- One bedroom at second floor level.

Pitched roof design with gable ends, small dormer window to the rear of the roof and flat roof to rear over part of ground floor. Private amenity spaces around properties/gardens to rear range from 21.5 sqm to 21.8 sqm.

The materials of external construction for the proposed dwellinghouses are specified as varying shades of red brick for the external walls, with header details and recessed brick detailing around openings. A small amount of metal cladding is proposed around the entrances, in canopies and between vertical windows. Grey tiles are proposed for the roof covering and grey window frames and timber doors. Each of the proposed dwellinghouses would be served by two off-road parking spaces, cycle storage and bin storage areas either within the accommodation or to the front curtilages within an enclosed timber bin store. Boundary treatments around the properties will be a mix of brick walls, railings, timber close boarded fencing, and timber hit and miss fencing.

The proposed development would also include an area of public open space within the south western corner of the site, along with the improvement and upgrading of the woodland areas to the west of the site and the provision of a natural play area. More details in relation to this will be provided later in the report.

The application is accompanied by the following supporting information :-

- Design and Access Statement;
- Planning Statement;
- Affordable Housing Statement;
- Transport Statement;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement;
- Phase 1 Ecological Assessment;
- Landscape Strategy Document and Layout;
- Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy;
- Noise Assessment Report;
- Air Quality Assessment
- Sustainability Checklist;
- Crime Impact Statement;

Details of the siting and design of the proposed development are appended to the report.

POLICY BACKGROUND

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

The Development Plan includes-

- Policies set out in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review 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 adopted 17th March 2011.

Part of the application site is allocated within a Predominantly Residential Area, and part is allocated as Local Open Space as defined on the UDP Proposals Map. The following policies are therefore relevant in consideration of the application :-

Saved policies of the SUDP Review

EP1.7 Development and Flood Risk
 UOS1.3 Protection of Local Open Space
 L1.1 Land for Active Recreation
 L1.2 Children's Play
 CTF1.1 Development of Community Services and Facilities
 CTF1.4 Redundant Community Land
 MW1.5 Control of Waste from Development

LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies

CS1 Overarching Principles: Sustainable Development – Addressing Inequalities and Climate Change
 SD-3 Delivering the Energy Opportunities Plans – New Development
 SD-6 Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change
 CS2 Housing Provision
 CS3 Mix of Housing
 CS4 Distribution of Housing
 H-1 Design of Residential Development
 H-2 Housing Phasing
 H-3 Affordable Housing
 CS8 Safeguarding and Improving the Environment
 SIE-1 Quality Places
 SIE-2 Provision of Recreation and Amenity Open Space in New Developments
 SIE-3 Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment
 CS9 Transport and Development
 T-1 Transport and Development
 T-2 Parking in Development
 T-3 Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance does not form part of the Statutory Development Plan; nevertheless it does provide non-statutory Council approved guidance that is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

- Design of Residential Development
- Affordable Housing
- Open Space Provision and Commuted Sum Payments
- Transport & Planning in Residential Area

National Planning Policy Framework

A Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 19th February 2019 replaced the previous NPPF (originally issued 2012 & revised 2018). The NPPF has not altered the fundamental legal requirement under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations (such as the NPPF) indicate otherwise.

The NPPF representing the governments up-to-date planning policy which should be taken into account in dealing with applications focuses on achieving a lasting housing reform, facilitating the delivery of a greater number of homes, ensuring that we get planning for the right homes built in the right places of the right quality at the same time as protecting our environment. If decision takers choose not to follow the NPPF, then clear and convincing reasons for doing so are needed.

N.B. In respect of decision-taking the revised NPPF constitutes a “material consideration”.

Para.1 “The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied”.

Para.2 “Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

Para.7 “The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development”.

Para.8 “Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) an economic objective*
- b) a social objective*
- c) an environmental objective”*

Para.11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

ii. 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”.

Para.12 “.....Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed”.

Para.38 “Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way..... Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”.

Para.47 “Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing”.

Para.59 “To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.”

Para.63 “To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount.”

Para.97 “Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by Equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.”*

Para.108 “In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;*
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and*
- c) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.”*

Para.109 “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”

Para.110 “Within this context, applications for development should:

- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;*
- b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;*
- c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;*
- d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and*
- e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.”*

Para.117 “Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”

Para. 118 “Planning policies and decisions should:

- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;*
- b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;*
- c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;*
- d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure).”*

Para.122 “Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;*
- b) local market conditions and viability;*
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;*
- d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and*
- e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.”*

Para.123 “Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and

decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:

- a) plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible. This will be tested robustly at examination, and should include the use of minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate;
- b) the use of minimum density standards should also be considered for other parts of the plan area. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, rather than one broad density range; and
- c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards)."

Para.124 "The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".

Para.127 "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁶; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."

Para.130 "Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development".

Para.213 "existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, 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)".

Planning Practice Guidance

The Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place (launched in March 2014) and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is an extensive planning history on this site, however only some are relevant to this redevelopment proposal. Most of the history relates to the former school.

Reference: DC/074847

Application Type: Screening Opinion

Address: Focus School, 237 Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, SK4 2AA.

Proposal: Screening Opinion for demolition of existing buildings and replacement with up to 28 dwellings, with associated access, car parking, landscaping and provision of new and improved areas of publicly accessible open space.; Decision

Date: 18-OCT-19; Decision: EAM

Reference: DC/075415

Application Type – Screening Opinion

Address: Focus School, 237 Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, SK4 2AA.

Description – Screening Opinion for demolition of existing buildings and replacement with up to 40 dwellings, with associated access, car parking, landscaping and provision of new and improved areas of publicly accessible open space

Date: 20-DEC-19

Decision: EAM

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Submitted with this application is a Statement of Community Involvement which details the public consultation that was carried out by The Mereside Trust ahead of submitting a full application for residential development on land at the former Focus School site. This exercise is an important element of the planning process and the determination of this application. Early public engagement is not only encouraged by this Planning Authority but also by the Government noting that para 40 of the NPPF advises that LPA's should "encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and where relevant, with statutory and non statutory consultees before submitting their applications."

This report advises that:

"The Applicant also arranged a public information event on site at the former school in December 2019 to provide neighbouring residents with the opportunity to see the draft plans, discuss with the development team and provide feedback.

The Applicant voluntarily arranged a public information event to present and explain the proposals. Local residents were notified via a direct invitation which also included a description of the proposed development together with a draft plan and contact details (email and telephone number) for further information and feedback should they be unable to attend the event. The invitation was distributed to residents as a

hard copy on 30th November 2019. The invitation was sent to 176 properties on roads immediately adjacent to the site and other properties that could be affected including Didsbury Road, Branksome Road, Masefield Drive, Tennyson Close, Briars Mount, Briar Hollow, Bramley Crescent, part of Bankhall Road, Mirfield Avenue and Marcliffe Grove. Invitations were also sent to local Ward Councillors. The public event took place on Monday 16th December 2019 and ran between 3pm and 7pm. It was held at the school site as a local and easily accessible venue.

The applicants and the development team were present to answer questions and help to explain the proposed development. Approximately forty people attended the event and 26 feedback forms were completed, two of which were by one person. Six of these have not made any comment but wanted to be informed when the application was submitted, and three enquired about buying one of the new dwellings. An email was received after the event requesting action on drainage and trees.”

The main issues highlighted on the feedback forms were in relation to;

- Highways/Congestion
- Footpath Through the Site
- Elevations/Design of Dwellings
- Landscaping
- Cycling
- Separation Distances
- Drainage
- Views
- Open Space

In summary, the Applicant has amended the draft proposals in direct response to the feedback received at the pre-application stage as follows:

- Footpath link to the north east removed. Access still possible along shared surface but avoids ‘rat run’.
- Details of landscaping to boundaries submitted, including tall fencing and native planting.
- Lighting and tree management to improve the footpath.
- Ecological improvements including bat and bird boxes in the public open space.
- Knee boards to boundaries of open space to prevent vehicular access.
- Separation distances checked to ensure they meet standards.
- Drainage assessed to ensure existing pooling is addressed.
- Dwellings lowered into slope along Didsbury Road to reduce height.

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

The owners/occupiers of 42 surrounding properties were notified in writing of the application. The neighbour notification period expired on the 30th March 2020. The application was advertised by way of display of notice on site and in the press, the consultation periods for which expired on the 30th March 2020 and the 25th March 2020 respectively.

2 letters of objection have been received to the application. The main causes for concern raised are summarised below :-

- Object because of traffic, air pollution, and oversubscribed schools.

- There would be a significant increase in traffic onto which is already a very busy road. The majority of households have two cars so that could be potentially another sixty eight cars travelling past our house. This would be an increase in car fumes whilst they are waiting to get into or out of their new road. The road is already very congested. We have a massive traffic stand by every day for 2 hours in the morning, and 3 hours in the evening.
- The fact that the new driveways on the houses will be at the back of the houses on Didsbury Road will not stop people parking their cars at the front on Didsbury road. The fact that cars will be travelling in and out of the new road onto Didsbury Road will just mean more car crashes happening. If lights were to be put in then that would mean two sets of lights within yards of each other which would be ridiculous.
- If the planning application was successful then surely it would make more sense for the traffic to go in and out of Briars mount as the road is already in place and traffic lights are already in place.
- We are breathing high levels of polluted air. Didsbury Road is on GM clean air plan map because of illegally high levels of air pollution. I would like to know how you follow guidelines of reducing air pollution here when making access to the site from Didsbury road.
- All schools are already oversubscribed in this area. Where will the new resident's kids be going to school?
- Why can this site not provide a new primary/secondary school instead? Or a hospital or social centre? Something that could benefit all of us not just the higher income people.
- We can predict the prices of houses in such after sought area.
- When we purchased the house nearly 30 years ago we were advised that houses would never be allowed to be built on the land. We were told that the land had been left in a will and that it could only be used for educational purposes. We cannot understand why the council is now allowing for the possibility of houses to be built on the land.
- Houses being built facing our house would significantly reduce the amount of light we currently enjoy. Also the lovely hill views we have from our front living room would also be gone. The fact that there would be a small gap between each house will still not allow us to see the views that we currently enjoy and there would still be a huge blockage of daylight.
- If planning was still granted could the houses on Didsbury road be bungalows as this would reduce the amount of light lost and may still mean we have a view of the hills.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Planning Policy (Housing) and Strategic Housing (combined response)

Original Comments 30th June 2020

With regards to the provision of affordable housing on the site and off-site provision by way of a commuted sum, the key issue for the Council at this stage relates to the off-site element. Rather than the sum identified in the viability note, it is the explanation for off-site provision which we feel requires further examination.

As is highlighted in para 4.1 of the Viability Note: "Paragraph 62 of NPPF states that where an affordable housing requirement arises there is an expectation that this should be met on site unless off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution can be robustly justified. There is some justification for provision of part only of the full affordable housing requirement on-site in the AHS."

However, the AHS does not fully explain why only part of the provision is proposed to be onsite and seems to suggest the other units are 'not suitable for affordable provision', without a clear explanation as to why that is. Consequently, it is not clear what the 'robust justification' is for off-site provision.

In addition, the proposal 'clusters' all affordable dwellings in one part of the site, and the size/design is not reflective of the wider housing mix.

It would therefore be helpful to explore if the required floorspace (which is not in dispute) can be delivered either through:

- A redesign of the site to provide an alternative mix of dwellings, which would incorporate a range of affordable dwellings, spread across and more reflective of the wider site, and of a number/floorspace in line with policy requirements – although there is some reference to this, there is little detail provided as to why such a redesign isn't feasible.
- A change to the proposed affordable dwellings proposed, accepting that it would not be reasonably feasible to redesign the site and overall housing mix. For example, 6no. 2-bed units and 3no. 3-bed units would seem to be more reflective of the site mix, avoid the extent of AH clustering and with the overall floor area being only marginally below the policy requirements, avoid the need for a commuted sum.

As it stands, for the reasons set out above, the scheme is contrary to both local and national affordable housing policies. Consequently, either the scheme needs to make all provision on-site or we will need to have a robust justification to present to members.

The Council operates a Housing Partnership, with a selected number of RPs that are fully conversant with the policy requirements and close links to the Council and affordable housing needs within the Borough. Details of these Partners can be found on the Council's website.

Further Comments 06.08.2020

The applicant has now confirmed that they have now managed to provide all the accommodation on site by changing the Type C houses, by reducing the GIA from 130 sqm down to 109 sqm. They now propose for the 8 no. 2 bed Type D houses (69 sqm) and 5 of the Type C houses (Plots 29-33) to be affordable. This would provide a total of 1,097 sqm of affordable accommodation, which is only a shortfall of 5 sqm from the 1,102 sqm requirement.

This approach is considered to be acceptable in relation to this development and the application is now considered to be policy compliant in floorspace terms, rather than in pure numbers terms. It is confirmed that we can regard the 5 sqm as de minimis in this context.

Sport England

Original Comments 11.03.2020

The site is considered to constitute playing field, or land last used as playing field, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). As such, Sport England is a statutory consultee.

Sport England has sought to consider the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Para. 97) and against its own playing fields policy. Unfortunately, there is insufficient information to enable Sport England to adequately assess the proposal or to make a substantive response. Please therefore could the following information be provided as soon as possible:

Details of the site the school relocated to:

- Did the relocation site contain playing field, whether in use or lapsed?
- Was playing field re-provided as part of the relocation and if so what is the playing field area?

Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document, which includes the type of information required in order for us to evaluate a planning application against our policy, can be viewed via the below link:

https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#playing_fields_policy (see Annex B)

Sport England's interim position on this proposal is to submit a holding objection. However we will happily review our position following the receipt of all the further information requested above. As I am currently unable to make a substantive response, in accordance with the Order referred to above, the 21 days for formally responding to the consultation will not commence until I have received all the information requested above.

Further Comments 04.05.2020

The Planning Statement refers to Sport England Guidance shifting emphasis from sports pitches and formal sports to physical activity. Whilst that is true for Sport England's overarching Strategy 'Towards an Active Nation' it is not true of Sport England's statutory remit to protect natural turf playing field. School playing fields do not have to be used for formal sport but can be used as a teaching resource to develop sport related skills. The aerial imagery clearly shows goal posts which means football is played on the site and delineated by cones which in itself meets the definition of playing field and a pitch within the Order.

It is noted the proposal contains a woodland area that the applicant intends to create a natural play area within the retained woodland. This is welcomed as it meets Sport England's overarching our physical activity objective.

With respect to the school itself the applicant has confirmed the school has relocated to a site outside of the Local Authority area, in Hartford Cheshire (Cheshire West and Chester). The school was constructed on a former Call Centre with no existing sports facilities. The new school sports facilities comprise a small sided Artificial Grass Pitch (34m x 17m) and a one court MUGA for netball and volleyball. The change of use application was approved 9 May 2018.

During early discussions, Sport England advised the replacement school is out of the area and any subsequent sports facilities related to that school do not benefit the local residents where the loss has occurred. It was agreed that mitigation is required within the locality and informed by the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (2019).

An off-site contribution of was agreed at this early stage, but none of the documents submitted with this application specify that contribution forms part of this application. In addition, there is no information on how the contribution will be secured and against what site and set of works.

Sport England is unable to remove the objection until confirmation is received that a contribution of £60k is to be secured with details of a specific site and set of works.

The applicant is advised to work with the Council's Sports Development Team, or other relevant Directorate, to identify a specific site and set of works the contribution is to be used for. It is advised the recently adopted Playing Pitch Strategy is used to help inform that decision.

A more flexible approach could be applied, but the s106 will need to ensure both sites are cited as option (a) and option (b); and a timescale the project needs to be delivered by clearly set out.

For example, the s106 wording could be along the lines of:

Within x months of planning approval being granted the applicant will pay a contribution of £xx for the replacement sports facilities to the Council. The Council will secure the £xx against either:

- a. Match funding towards a 3G Artificial Grass Pitch at Reddish Vale Technology College; or*
- b. Pitch improvements at Fred Whittaker Scott Playing Fields*

Whichever is ready for delivery first. Within x years of the contribution being secured the works will be implemented and in full within the timescales set out in the project (a) or (b) feasibility study. [an agreed deadline for this to come forward would need to be included, for example 2 or 3 years]

If the Local Planning Authority can agree specific wording to be included within a s106 agreement, after consultation with Sport England, then the objection can be removed

Planning Policy (Open Space)

Principle – Loss of Local Open Space

The red edge includes an area of Local Open Space as designated on the UDP Proposals Map, and this related to the sports pitch originally attached to the school. The area to be lost is calculated to be 0.607 hectares. Policy UOS1.3 of the Stockport UDP protects Local Open Space and does not permit its loss unless it meets one of three exceptions.

Whilst Policy UOS1.3 is consistent with national policy, Paragraph 97 of the NPPF is more up-to-date and therefore takes precedence. This advice notes that existing open space including playing fields should not be built on unless it can satisfy one of three exceptions, and it is judged that part b applies in this case. Part b of Paragraph 97 requires replacement of the pitch of equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.

The development is for housing and so part c is irrelevant and the sports pitch, whilst in poor condition is still able to be brought back into use and so is not surplus to requirements under part a.

The Council adopts the Fields in Trust/ NPFA 6 acre minimum standard of 2.4 hectares of open space per 1000 population (0.7 ha. per 1000 population for play, 1.7 ha. per 1000 population for formal recreation). Against that standard, Stockport

has some 1.3ha per 1000 pop, giving a Borough wide shortfall of some 105 hectares.

Sport England have calculated that a compensatory payment for the loss of the playing pitch would be £60,000 and that this would represent suitable mitigation. This will be allocated to priority projects listed in the Formal Sports Priority List within the Heatons and Reddish area. The list is compiled from evidence in the Playing Pitch Strategy and Local Football Facilities Plan, and any such project will be approved by Cabinet Member.

As the timing of implementation of the replacement playing pitch facilities is uncertain, Sport England have lifted their initial objection which required details of where the compensation monies would be spent, and have agreed for the following wording to appear in the Section 106 agreement. This gives sufficient flexibility to allow monies to be directed to the project which is ready for delivery at the time. It has been confirmed by the Council's planning solicitor that this is compliant with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended):

On commencement of the development, the applicant will pay a contribution of £60k for the replacement sports facilities to the Council.

The Council will secure the £60k against either:

- a) Match funding towards a 3G Artificial Grass Pitch at Reddish Vale Technology College; or*
- b) Pitch improvements at Fred Whittaker Scott Playing Fields*

Whichever is ready for delivery first.

Within x years of the contribution being secured the works will be implemented and in full within the timescales set out in the project (a) or (b) feasibility study.

New open space provision

Policy SIE-2 of the Stockport Core Strategy requires development to take a positive role in providing recreation and amenity open space to meet the needs of its users/occupants. The policy states that large new residential developments are required to include provision for recreation and amenity open space on or readily accessible to the site and gives guidelines based on the expected number of occupants. Furthermore, it is then recognised that whilst as much as possible of the open space should be within or adjacent to the new development, the Council will permit some or all of the provision to be off-site or through contributions where there is no practical alternative or where it would be better to do so.

The applicant has offered to provide 0.23 ha of improved public open space to the west of the site, which would include a woodland with wetland habitat and, informal play opportunities. However, it is viewed that this would not represent additional open space as it involves land already provided as public open space within the adjacent Briarsmount development. Furthermore, the Briarsmount development already has 5 Local Areas of Play (LAPs) of poor quality and 4 of these fall within the catchment of the development.

A further 0.06 hectares is to be provided as on-site amenity open space. As this will provide benefits to the prospective residents of the development this will be recognised in the calculation of the open space commuted sum required, as explored further below.

The Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on 'Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments' (adopted September 2019) provides greater clarity on the

off-site requirements and states that open space contributions will be secured in the form of a Planning Obligation under a Section 106 agreement to be completed before planning permission is granted.

The commuted sum is split according to Annex 1 of the SPD and the costs per person calculated. The development will consist of 8 units that are 2 bed, 6 units that are 3 bed and 20 units that are 4 bed. As such, this gives a population capacity of 148. An area of amenity open space of 0.06 hectares is to be provided on-site to the south-west of the proposed properties. It is considered appropriate that the population capacity of the development reflect that this land will serve the occupants to some degree in terms of its function as informal recreation. The SPD outlines that a Local Area of Play (LAP) would normally serve 50 occupants within a development. Therefore, in respect of children's play, the population capacity of 148 is to be reduced by 50 to account for the on-site open space. The revised capacity of 98 gives a total contribution for children's play. The contribution for formal sport would remain unchanged (with a population capacity of 148).

In terms of taking commuted sums for children's play facilities, there are thresholds in place in order to ensure the direct relationship test is passed. It is proposed that the contribution for children's play be directed towards the Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) at Craig Road (within 400 metres threshold) and the Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) at Crescent Park (within 1000 metres threshold), which are both in the catchment area for the development site and are accessible on foot. The LAPs at Briarsmount, whilst closer to prospective residents, are not favoured as they have very small distance thresholds at 100 metres which do not cover the whole development site, they offer limited scope for improvement and have no dynamic play items.

The formal sport element of the commuted sum, is not subject to thresholds and will be allocated to the Council's Formal Sport Priority List. This will be allocated to priority projects listed in the Formal Sports Priority List within the Heaton and Reddish area. The list is compiled from evidence in the Playing Pitch Strategy and Local Football Facilities Plan, and any such project will be approved by Cabinet Members.

Highways

Original Comments 01.05.2020

I write with some initial thoughts on the Focus School site redevelopment proposal.

At this stage, I reserve the need to consider and comment on traffic generation, highway impact and site accessibility associated with the proposal but I take the opportunity to provide some comment on the detail of the internal layout.

I have concern that the number of dwellings proposed, 34 in total, which is a considerable increase from the scale of the development proposal that was considered at pre-application stage (25 and 28 dwellings in number). When considering the pre-app we agreed the principles of a shared surface would be appropriate and should be utilised to serve this form of development and I wouldn't be unduly concerned under the circumstances with a scheme of 28 dwellings. This view was informed by the Council's standards for shared surface roads which are designed to serve up to 25 dwellings and restrained to this level to reduce the risk of conflict between all users of the space and consequent volume of vehicular traffic that would use the space.

The current planning application shows an increase in numbers to 34 dwellings. I have concern that this scale of development is a significant departure from the Council's standards and such a scale of development should it be served by a shared surface road would be too intensive and would increase the risk of conflict to an unacceptable level. That being the case it would ordinarily warrant a change to the road infrastructure design to provide for a traditional design with dedicated carriageway and footway space.

I am nevertheless open to considering how the scheme can be developed to better and safely manage increased usage and conflict risk whilst still retaining essentially a shared surface environment and I would prefer to look at a hybrid arrangement where the layout is revised to introduce a footway facility adjacent to part of the shared surface road space. This would give vulnerable persons a safer environment should they wish to utilise the footway with reduced risk of conflict.

To progress this, a 2m wide walkway is required alongside one side of the shared surface road, retaining the 6.5m width to the road throughout the development but with the addition of a 2m walkway. There may be opportunity to try to keep the kerbline upstand as shallow as possible, perhaps 50mm, which should assist with levels. The footway surfacing would be a contrasting colour modular construction which aesthetically would be better than a flexible surface.

I have concern with the implications of retaining the highway noting the considerable level changes across the site and there is a clear need for a retaining structure to the south side of the initial road link (to the north of properties 11-20 indicated). I wonder whether detailed consideration has been given to the design for the retaining structure, requisite parapet etc? My initial thought is that to retain a highway to a level about 1m higher than adjoining private space a structure significantly more substantive than is drafted on the current drawings will be required and this could impact on plot dimensions/space. This retaining structure will require full structural approval, would form part of the road adoption agreement process and it may need to be adopted by the highway authority as it will be retaining highway land. I need further advice from Highway and Structure colleagues in this respect.

This leads me to consider that footway provision would be better alongside the south side of this link as it may be easier to incorporate the necessary retaining structure and parapet plus it would be more suitable for siting lighting columns, an issue that is not currently addressed with road space shown immediately adjacent to whatever retaining structure and parapet is proposed.

The necessity for the steps to the north side of plots 11-20 are is also questioned.

The bend in the road where it circulates around plot 11 would need amendment to incorporate the footway. This I feel would be achievable but I would need further tracking checks. The footway could terminate after plot 11 where pedestrians would merge/diverge to and from the shared space environment for the remainder of the development infrastructure.

A layout that may prove suitable was provided to the applicant. Amendment to this effect or such other suitable design is necessary to enable me to support a proposal for 34 dwellings. Sent without prejudice, I have also incorporated into this revision a localised narrowing feature on the initial link and a rumble strip within the bend central to the access road, both appropriate having regard to a concern raised in the road safety audit for the scheme that has recently been received.

Noting the adjustment to the road alignment, driveway depths need review to ensure avoiding driveway depths of between 7m and 10m. Depths of 10m or marginally greater is probably the answer.

The short length of roadway that serves plots 21-28 needs to be to shared surface design standards, 6.5m width not 6m as indicated. There is however a question over street lighting and where such would be located as there is no scope on either side of the road space given the proposals for parking bays.

I am not accepting of parallel parking bays as shown for plot 29. Whilst I would not expect a turning space at the head of this link, I cannot accept drivers regularly having to reverse from these bays and through a junction in order to turn, which would be the case unless you look to incorporate a turning area.

Finally, the link through the POS should be designed for shared use by cyclists. A width of 3.5m, perhaps a ramp alongside the steps and the link should be widened to 3.5m up to the points where the link meets Masefield Drive and Tennyson Close. Widening work is achievable as this hard surfaced link and adjacent verges is adopted highway.

Further comments 1st September 2020

The application is for redevelopment of a former independent school site as residential comprising 34 dwellings served from a new access road. The submission is accompanied by a package of drawings which have recently been revised following discussion, a transport statement and stage 1 road safety audit with designer's response.

The matters for consideration are site accessibility, traffic generation and highway impact and the detail of the site layout.

The site is located within an area that is relatively well served by public transport, with bus services along Didsbury Road that connect Stockport Town Centre, Manchester, Burnage, Didsbury, Chorlton and Stretford. Although the nearest rail station is nearly 2km away this does offer potential for longer journeys, linked travel and connectivity further afield. Pedestrian and cycle facilities within the locality give potential for walking and cycling to be a chosen travel mode and the site is within close proximity to a range of services and amenities that residents could reasonably expect to enjoy.

In summary, I am satisfied that the site is within a relatively accessible location where residents would not be likely to be so dependent on car travel and public transport, walking and cycling have potential to be realistic modes of travel.

In terms of traffic generation the proposed development is forecast generate around 19 and 16 two-way trips in the AM and PM peak hours respectively, which equates to around one trip every 3 minutes on average. Furthermore the total volume of daily traffic associated with the site is not excessive. Considering the predicted traffic relative to the lawful use of the site as a school shows that the development would generate significantly less traffic during both the peak periods and throughout the day and I conclude that the proposal will not generate a volume of traffic that will materially or unacceptably impact on the operation of the highway. I am also satisfied that the priority junction arrangement proposed for the site entrance is design standard compliant and its operation for residential purposes will not give rise to operational or safety concerns.

The internal site layout has been the subject of discussion and amendment and I am now satisfied that it is design standard compliant and suitable to serve a development of this scale. Issues raised in the road safety audit review have been considered and responded to within the revised layout and will be addressed further as part of the future detailed design process.

The initial part of the spine road would be traditional carriageway and footways with transition once within the site to a shared space arrangement. Given the quantum of development it is appropriate to provide a footway facility alongside the shared space element for a proportion of the site as this would give an alternative facility for pedestrians to walk on and minimise the risk of conflict with vehicular traffic. Towards the end of the cul-de-sac the layout reverts to traditional shared space which is acceptable as the risk of any conflict is significantly less due to the lesser volume of traffic at the end of the development.

The road would be designed and constructed to a standard considered suitable for adoption and I note the need for structural approval for a necessary highway retaining structure alongside part of the road space. The detailed design and approval of a highway retaining structure will need resolution prior to any works commencing on site and integrating into the detailed design of the road space. These are matters capable of conditional control.

Swept path drawings show that refuse and recycling sized vehicles are able to safely enter the site, negotiate a passage through and safely manoeuvre within the site and thereafter exit in a proper and safe manner. This size of vehicle is ordinarily the largest that would visit a residential community and I am satisfied that no operational or safety concerns should arise.

Car parking is proposed for individual dwellings with the majority having two spaces. The smaller terraced properties, 8 in total, would have one parking space each and I see no reason of justification to express concern about parking levels having regard to the Council's standards, the accessibility of the site and the potential for a small amount of kerbside parking that could occur without materially inhibiting the operation of the site. Each dwelling will need an electric vehicle charging facility and a covered and secure cycle parking facility, these are both matters that are capable of conditional control.

I visited site and reviewed the potential for improved cycle infrastructure. The link from the end of the development road runs across the POS/Play space to the adjacent footpath network and I was considering the potential for a widened route for cycle usage.

This area of land experiences significant level changes and it is proposed to introduce steps within a footpath link to overcome the level changes. Whilst ideally the link would be of sufficient width and gradient for cycle usage I am accepting that this would not be practical or an effective and efficient use of space as it would involve an extensive ramp network across the land and likely detrimental impact on trees. As such, provision as a footpath link incorporating steps is supported and indeed essential for site connectivity. I am accepting that cycle connectivity is available through the main site entrance and cyclists can connect to this footpath network from the adjacent residential estate should the need arise.

In conclusion, I am satisfied that the proposal will not give rise to highway safety and operational concerns and I am supportive of the submission.

Conditions:

1) No demolition or construction works shall commence on any part of the site until a method statement or separate statements dealing with how the works will take place have submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The demolition and construction works shall be completed in accordance with the approved details which shall include but not be limited to, the following information:

- details of the routing of earth and material carrying vehicles to and from the site and access and egress arrangements within the site including details of signage, monitoring and enforcement;
- delivery and collection times for vehicles associated with demolition and construction works;
- details of the site preparation, demolition, groundwork and construction stages of the works and the likely number and type of vehicle movements involved;
- details of provisions for any recycling of materials;
- the provision on site of a delivery area for all vehicles;
- the provision on site of all plant, huts and welfare facilities;
- details showing how all vehicles associated with the demolition and construction works are to be properly washed and cleaned to prevent the passage to mud and dirt onto the highway;
- a suitable and efficient means of suppressing dust, including the adequate containment of stored or accumulated material so as to prevent it becoming airborne at any time and giving rise to nuisance;
- details of contractors compound and car parking arrangements;
- screening and hoarding details;
- details of a community liaison contact for the duration of all works including a complaints procedures and complaint response procedures;
- prior notice and agreement procedures for works outside agreed limits and hours;
- details of contractors membership of the Considerate Contractors Scheme and
- the provision of an emergency contact number.

Reason: To ensure that the demolition and construction works are managed in a safe manner and do not adversely affect highway operation and safety or prejudice the amenities of the occupiers of the adjoining residential properties, in accordance with Policies Development Management T-3 Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network, SIE-1 Quality Places and SIE-3 Protecting, Safeguarding and enhancing the Environment. The condition is pre-commencement as the methodology for undertaking demolition and construction works needs to be approved in advance of any works taking place.

2) No development shall take place until a pre-condition survey of the Didsbury Road footway fronting the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No dwelling within the development hereby approved shall be occupied until repairs, reconstruction or resurfacing of the areas of the footway and carriageway which have been affected by the development of the site have been undertaken in accordance with a scheme which has previously been identified and agreed with the local planning authority by means of a second survey to be carried out following the completion of construction work within the development.

Reason: In order to ensure that there are safe and high quality pedestrian facilities adjacent to the site and ensure that development can be accessed in a safe manner in accordance with Policies SIE-1 'Quality Places', CS9 'Transport and Development'

and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

NOTE: * This condition is pre-commencement as the first condition survey must be undertaken prior to the commencement of any demolition or construction activities. *

3) No development shall take place until detail drawings of all parts of the carriageway, footways and retaining structures within the approved development, which shall include the following details, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:-

- (i) A general arrangement / layout, based on a topographical survey and to a scale not less than 1:500, showing all carriageways, footways, retaining structures and visibility splays;
- (ii) A general site layout, showing the proposed buildings and boundaries, together with existing and proposed levels;
- (iii) Longitudinal sections along the centre line and channel lines of each proposed carriageway and footway showing the existing ground level and proposed carriageway/footway level;
- (iv) Typical highway cross-sections, showing a specification for each type of carriageway and footway;
- (v) Full details of the surface water drainage proposals (including details of the main drainage system and any sustainable urban drainage or attenuation systems);
- (vi) Details of all proposed street lighting, signage, markings, structures and street furniture.
- (vii) Full design including plans, sections and specifications of the highway retaining structure.

No part of the development shall be occupied (unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority) until the carriageway, footways and retaining structure have been constructed in accordance with the approved drawings and are available for use. Any visibility splays formed shall thereafter be kept clear of any structure, object, plant or tree exceeding the height specified on the approved drawings.

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an appropriately designed highway layout so that it can be safely accessed by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles in accordance with Policies SIE-1 'Quality Places', CS9 'Transport and Development', T-1 'Transport and Development' and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

NOTE: *The details relating to the design of the access road and highway retaining structure which include the exact layout, levels, sections, specifications, construction and drainage need to be agreed prior to commencement of development. Should works commence before such details had been agreed this could result in conflicts between levels of buildings, the highway and other features, abortive work or amendments to the scheme that were not technically possible and may impact on the general planning layout. *

4) No dwelling within the development shall be occupied until the redundant access point on Didsbury Road has been closed in accordance with details that have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme to permanently close the redundant access shall include details of boundary treatment, the removal of the footway crossing and the full reinstatement of the footway.

Reason: In order to remove the redundant and ensure that the development can be accessed in a safe manner and ensure the safety of highway users in accordance with Policies SIE-1 'Quality Places', CS9 'Transport and Development' and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

5) No work shall take place in respect to the construction of any vehicular access point within the approved development until a detailed drawing of the access arrangements for each plot which shall include the provision of 1m by 1m pedestrian visibility splays and vehicular visibility splays on either side of the accesses has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling shall be occupied until its access has been constructed in accordance with the approved drawing and is available for use. No structure, object, plant or tree exceeding 600mm in height shall subsequently be erected or allowed to grow within the pedestrian visibility splays and no structure, object, plant or tree exceeding 1000mm in height shall subsequently be erected or allowed to grow within the vehicular visibility splays. The means of access and visibility splays shall be retained for the planning life of the development.

Reason: In order that the site will benefit from safe and practical access arrangements in accordance with Policies SIE-1 'Quality Places', CS9 'Transport and Development' and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

6) No work shall take place in respect to the construction of the approved driveways for each plot until details of the construction, drainage and surfacing of the driveways have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No dwelling shall be occupied until its driveway has been constructed in accordance with the approved drawings and the driveways shall then be retained and remain available for use for parking at all times thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that adequate and useable parking facilities are provided in accordance with Policies SD-6 'Adapting to the impacts of climate change', SIE-1 'Quality Places', T-1 Transport and Development', and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

7) No work shall take place in respect to the construction of the car parking facilities to be provided for plots 21-28 until a detailed drawing of the car parking facilities has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include how the car parking facilities will be surfaced, drained, marked out, signed and illuminated (either permanent or motion controlled). This part of the development shall not be occupied until the car parking facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved drawing and are available for use. The car parking facilities shall thereafter be retained and shall remain available for use.

Reason: To ensure that adequate parking facilities are provided and that they are appropriately located and are of a safe and practical design, in accordance with Policies SD-6 'Adapting to the impacts of climate change', SIE-1 'Quality Places', T-1 Transport and Development', T-2 'Parking in Developments' and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

8) No dwelling shall be occupied until it has an electric vehicle charging point that has been provided in accordance with details that have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and is available for use. The charging points or subsequently upgraded charging points shall thereafter be retained and available for use.

Reason: To ensure that adequate parking with facilities for the charging of electric vehicles are provided in accordance with Policies SD-6 'Adapting to the impacts of climate change', T-1 Transport and Development', T-2 'Parking in Developments' and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD and Paragraph 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

9) No dwelling shall be occupied until it has a covered and secure cycle parking facility that has been provided in accordance with details that have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The facilities shall then be retained and remain available for use at all times thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that safe and practical cycle parking facilities are provided so as to ensure that the site is fully accessible by all modes of transport in accordance with Policies CS9 'Transport and Development', T-1 'Transport and Development', T-2 'Parking in Developments' and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

Informatives:

1) The applicant's attention is drawn to the procedure for entering into a Section 38 Road Agreement under the Highways Act 1980 regarding the construction and future adoption of the proposed Access road. For further advice please contact Highway Design and Construction, tel: 0161 474 2077.

2) The applicant's attention is drawn to the need to enter into an agreement under the Highways Act 1980 regarding the tie in of the site entrance and the reconstruction of the footway. For further advice please contact Highway Design and Construction, tel: 0161 474 2077.

3) The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that the proposed highway retaining structure will be subjected to a formal Technical Approval process, for which there will be a charge. For further advice the applicant should contact the Highways Section of Planning Services, tel: 0161 474 4905/06.

Environmental Health (Noise)

The submitted Noise Assessment Report has been considered. The report conclusion is as follows:

" 6.2 Mitigation measures necessary to provide suitable internal noise levels for the preservation of residential amenity comprise:

- Up-rated glazing, providing 35 dB RW + Ctr of sound attenuation when closed, for living rooms with windows closest to and directly or obliquely facing Didsbury Road, allied to acoustically-attenuating through-window trickle ventilation units, providing a minimum of 35 dB Dn,e,w of sound attenuation when open.*
- Up-rated glazing, providing 36 dB RW + Ctr of sound attenuation when closed, for bedrooms with windows closest to and directly or obliquely facing Didsbury Road, allied to acoustically-attenuating through-window trickle ventilation units, providing a minimum of 38 dB Dn,e,w + Ctr of sound attenuation when open, for bedrooms with windows directly or obliquely facing Didsbury Road.*

6.3 For all properties from Unit 11 onwards, standard glazing and ventilation strategies will suffice.

6.4 It is suggested that greater levels of protection against noise, alongside benefits in indoor air quality, energy-saving and improved heating/cooling may be achieved using wholehouse mechanical ventilation and heat recovery (MVHR) units, or similar, with a boost functi for additional heating or cooling as necessary. However, this is a recommendation only and is not a specific mitigation measure necessary to protect the future residents from noise.

6.5 With these measures in place, the assessment concludes that the property is suitable for residential use, that good residential amenity for future occupants of the development can be assured, and that noise need not be a reason for refusal of planning permission".

Environmental Health are satisfied with the recommendations of the report subject to the inclusion of an appropriately worded condition approving the details within the report and stating the development should be built in accordance with the recommendations made

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land)

No reports in relation to the potential contamination of the land that have been submitted with the application. Given the scale of the development, the developer will need to undertake an investigation for soil and gas.

As such, the following conditions are recommended;

1) No development shall take place until an investigation and risk assessment into contamination at the site, in accordance with a scheme to be approved in writing by the local planning authority, has been carried out. The investigation and risk assessment shall include recommendations for remedial action and the development shall not be occupied until these recommendations have been implemented.

Reason - The report submitted with the application has identified potentially unacceptable risks from contamination and further investigation is required to ensure that these risks to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other off-site receptors in accordance with Policy SIE-3 "Protecting Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment", of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

2) No development shall take place until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the specified use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme to be submitted shall specify but not be limited to :-the proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria (ii) all remedial works to be undertaken including the quantities of materials to be removed from and imported to the development site. (iii) the proposals for sourcing and testing all materials imported to the site including testing schedules, sampling frequencies and actual and allowable contaminant concentrations (as determined by appropriate risk

assessment in accordance with the document "Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination" (CLR11)).

Reason - To ensure that any unacceptable risks from contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other off-site receptors in accordance with Policy SIE-3 "Protecting Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment", of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

3) The development shall not be occupied until the approved remediation scheme required to be submitted by Condition 14; has been carried out. Within 12 months of completion of remediation measures, a validation report assessing the effectiveness of the remediation carried shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The report shall specify any further remediation measures necessary and indicate how and when these measures will be undertaken.

Reason - To ensure that any unacceptable risks from contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy SIE-3 "Protecting Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment", of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

4) No development shall take place until (i) a method statement for the carrying out of an investigation and assessment of the potential for landfill gas being present on the land has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and (ii) the investigation and assessment has been carried out in accordance with the approved method statement and (iii) a written report of the investigation and a copy of the assessment has been submitted to the local planning authority. All precautionary and remedial measures (whether relating to excavation and other site works, building development and construction, gas control measures or otherwise) recommended or suggested by the report and assessment shall be taken or carried out in the course of the development unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason - The land may contain landfill gas and it may be necessary to undertake remedial measures in order to comply with Policy SIE-3 "Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment" of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD

5) No part of the development shall be occupied until all works necessary to prevent landfill gas migration into the development have been approved in writing by the local planning authority and carried out in full.

Reason - The adjoining land may contain landfill gas and it may be necessary to undertake remedial measures in order to comply with Policy SIE-3 "Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment" of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

Environmental Health (Air Quality)

The submitted Air Quality Assessment has been assessed and Environmental Health are happy with its findings and conclusions. It is recommended that the dust mitigation measures in appendix D of the report for demolition, earthworks, construction and track out phases of the development are followed. To this end, the following condition is recommended:

Prior to the demolition or development commencing a detailed Demolition and construction management plan shall be submitted for approval to the Local Authority to demonstrate how the developer will mitigate the effects of dust on existing residents in the area. This shall have regard to the mitigation measures proposed within Appendix D of the air quality report submitted as part of the application.

Drainage

While the site is possibly viable for infiltration, the proposal is to connect to a sewer. We accept this at this stage, but at the Discharge of condition stage we would require BRE 365 compliant infiltration tests.

It may be prudent to note at this stage that it is SMBCs policy that all areas of hardstanding should be of a permeable construction.

Should infiltration not be proven to be viable then the applicant should look to use the available wetland habitat as storage for the surface water rather than oversized pipes.

We therefore, recommend the below condition.

Condition

Notwithstanding the approved plans and prior to the commencement of any development, a detailed surface water drainage scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The scheme shall:

- (a) incorporate SuDS and be based on the hierarchy of drainage options in the National Planning Practice Guidance with evidence of an assessment of the site conditions;*
- (b) include an assessment and calculation for 1in 1yr, 30yr and 100yr + 40% climate change figure critical storm events;*
- (c) be in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) or any subsequent replacement national standards; and*
- (d) shall include details of ongoing maintenance and management. The development shall be completed and maintained in full accordance with the approved details.*

United Utilities

Drainage

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the site should be drained on a separate system with foul water draining to the public sewer and surface water draining in the most sustainable way.

We request the following drainage conditions are attached to any subsequent approval to reflect the above approach:

Condition 1 – Surface water

Prior to the commencement of any development, a surface water drainage scheme, based on the hierarchy of drainage options in the National Planning Practice Guidance with evidence of an assessment of the site conditions shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The surface water drainage scheme must be in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) or any subsequent replacement national standards. In the event of surface water draining to the public surface water sewer, the pass forward flow rate to the public sewer must be restricted to 30 l/s.

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved drainage scheme.

Reason: To promote sustainable development, secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution. This condition is imposed in light of policies within the NPPF and NPPG.

Condition 2 – Foul water

Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems.

Reason: To secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution.

Management and Maintenance of Sustainable Drainage Systems

Without effective management and maintenance, sustainable drainage systems can fail or become ineffective. As a provider of wastewater services, we believe we have a duty to advise the Local Planning Authority of this potential risk to ensure the longevity of the surface water drainage system and the service it provides to people. We also wish to minimise the risk of a sustainable drainage system having a detrimental impact on the public sewer network should the two systems interact. We therefore recommend the Local Planning Authority include a condition in their Decision Notice regarding a management and maintenance regime for any sustainable drainage system that is included as part of the proposed development.

For schemes of 10 or more units and other major development, we recommend the Local Planning Authority consults with the Lead Local Flood Authority regarding the exact wording of any condition. You may find the below a useful example:

Prior to occupation of the development a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development shall be submitted to the local planning authority and agreed in writing. The sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan shall include as a minimum: a. Arrangements for adoption by an appropriate public body or statutory undertaker, or, management and maintenance by a resident's management company; and b. Arrangements for inspection and ongoing maintenance of all elements of the sustainable drainage system to secure the operation of the surface water drainage scheme throughout its lifetime. The development shall subsequently be completed, maintained and managed in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: To ensure that management arrangements are in place for the sustainable drainage system in order to manage the risk of flooding and pollution during the lifetime of the development. Please note United Utilities cannot provide comment on the management and maintenance of an asset that is owned by a third party

management and maintenance company. We would not be involved in the discharge of the management and maintenance condition in these circumstances.

Arboriculture

Original Comments 31.03.2020

The proposed development site is located within the existing grounds of the education facility site predominantly on the old hard standing and formal playing fields. The plot is comprised largely of former hard standing and formal playing fields. Conservation Area Designations The proposed development is not within or affected by a conservation Area. Legally Protected Trees There are legally protected trees within this site or affected by this development (Briarsmount, Heaton Mersey 2005). Recommendations: The construction site footprint predominantly sits within the hard standing and formal grounds of the site and the proposed new construction works will potentially impact on the trees on and off site.

A full tree survey has been supplied as part of the planning application to show the condition and amenity levels of the existing trees and where applicable which trees could be retained to increase the amenity levels of the site with retained mature trees, which is clearly required as the site layout plan shows the loss of several trees and further risk of encroachment.

The following comments are based on the shown impact gathered from the site layout plan and site inspections over time, with several areas throughout the site in close proximity to the protected and non-protected trees off site.

A tree constraints plan is required for all retained trees on site or neighbouring properties in influencing distance in accordance with British Standards. In regards to the retained trees on site the root protection plan is required and will need to be adhered to with all relevant fencing be erected prior to any works commencing on site, this will need to be conditioned to allay those concerns.

In principle the design will potentially have the opportunity to have a negative impact on trees on site and within neighbouring properties, therefore it could only be accepted in its current format without further information and an adjustment of the submitted application form, root protection plan, alternative construction methods if requiring construction within the root zones of protected trees and as detailed below an improved landscaping scheme to enhance the developments site.

An improved landscaping design would also enhance the site to increase the number of trees and diversify the species of the trees to offer some improved species and improved biodiversity the trees offer increasing wildlife benefits to an ever increasing urban area. There is a real opportunity to green up the frontage to Didsbury road and tree line all routes through the site with appropriate tree planting in appropriate locations similar to the site layout plan but improved as well as delivering the woodland management plan to enhance the woodland area.

The following conditions would be relevant to any planning application relating to the site;

Condition Tree 1

No existing tree within the site shall be cut down, topped, lopped, uprooted, wilfully damaged or wilfully destroyed without the prior written approval of the local planning authority, with the exception of those indicated otherwise on the approved plan. Any

hedgerows, woody plants or shrubbery removed without such consent or dying or being severely damaged or being seriously diseased, within 5 years of the development commencing, shall be replaced within the next planting season with trees of such size and species as may be approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Condition Tree 2

No development shall take place until all existing trees on the site except those shown to be removed on the approved plans, have been fenced off in accordance with BS 5837:2012 "Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations". The fencing shall be retained during the period of construction and no work, excavation, tipping or stacking of materials shall take place within any such fence during the construction period.

Condition Tree 3

No development shall take place until details of all proposed tree planting, including the intended dates of planting, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All tree planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the development being brought into use.

Further comments 29.04.2020

My only concern following a review of the documents is the limited tree scene planting along Didsbury Road, as the proposed small ornamental trees won't have the necessary impact. Also, it is proposed for the planting in pairs, so being closer together will have a detrimental effect on each other. Therefore, it is recommended to rationalise the spacing or quantity here with appropriate species and stock size.

In addition, it has always been requested that the applicant consider Highway tree planting along their boundary with Didsbury Road, to further enhance the approach to the site. This will require approval of the Council's Highways team, so I would ask this is still considered.

Subsequent Comments from Highways 29.04.2020

Highways would be satisfied with the trees as proposed within the site frontage to Didsbury Road, however we would object to any trees being planted within the footway/forward of the site boundary, as this would impact on visibility splays to and for drivers emerging from the new junction.

Nature Development

The application involves demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the site to provide 34 dwellings, associated landscaping, amended access, car parking and public open space area.

Legislative and Policy Framework

Nature Conservation Designations

The site has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise.

Legally Protected Species

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey and daytime bat roost assessment survey has been carried out and submitted with the application. The survey was carried out by a suitably experience ecologist and followed best practice survey guidelines (Rachel

Hacking Ecology Ltd, May 2019). Habitats on site were mapped and the potential for protected species to be present was assessed. Habitats on site are dominated by amenity grassland and hard standing/bare ground with areas of tall ruderal vegetation and shrubs. An area of broadleaved woodland (which is a Local BAP Priority Habitat) is located in the west of the application area.

Many buildings and trees have the potential to support roosting bats. In addition, the application site supports and is located near to suitable bat foraging habitat, which increases the likelihood of bats being impacted by any proposed works. All species of bats, and their roosts, are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The latter implements the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. Bats are included in Schedule 2 of the Regulations as 'European Protected Species of animals' (EPS).

Under the Regulations it is an offence to:

- 1) Deliberately capture or kill a wild EPS
- 2) Deliberately disturb a wild EPS in such a way that significantly affects:
 - a) the ability of a significant group to survive, breed, rear or nurture young.
 - b) the local distribution of that species.
- 3) Damage or destroy a breeding place or resting site of such an animal.

The buildings were subject to an internal and external inspection survey for bats (Buildings 1a, 1b, 2-7). No internal access was possible for Building 7 however this is a prefabricated building with no roost access opportunities for bats noted and so this is not considered to significantly affect the assessment. In general the buildings were found to be well sealed and any gaps were found to be shallow and/or densely cobwebbed (indicating no recent use by bats). The buildings on site were assessed as offering negligible potential to support roosting bats. No potential bat roosting features were observed within the trees on site.

Buildings, trees and vegetation also have the potential to support nesting birds. The nests of all wild birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended).

Records for badger exist in the vicinity and the site offers suitable foraging habitat for badgers. Badgers and their setts are legally protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. The extended phase 1 survey report states that two mammal holes were found within the area of broadleaved woodland. The location of these holes does not appear to have been marked up on the Phase 1 map and so I would ask that this detail is provided to the LPA. The mammal holes were assessed as being currently inactive due to presence of leaf litter and overgrown vegetation. A single badger hair was recorded within one of the holes which would indicate that this hole may be a disused badger sett. No other evidence of badger activity was recorded within the site.

Recommendations

The buildings and trees on site were assessed as offering negligible bat roosting potential and so the proposed works are considered to be of low risk to roosting bats. Bats can roost in seemingly unlikely places however and so it is recommended that an informative is attached to any planning consent granted so that the applicant is aware of the potential for roosting bats to be present. It should also state that the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the legislation in place to protect biodiversity. If at anytime during works, evidence of roosting bats (or any other protected species) is discovered on site, works must cease and a suitably experienced ecologist contacted for advice.

Developments are expected to achieve net gains for biodiversity (see for example Biodiversity Net Gain good practice principles for development:

<https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-good-practice-principles-for-development-a-practical-guide/>).

Biodiversity enhancements should therefore be incorporated into the scheme design in accordance with national (NPPF) and local planning policy para 3.345 of policy SIE-3 in the LDF). The landscape strategy shows provision of 8 bat/bird boxes on trees within the application area. From the submitted information it appears as though wooden boxes are proposed. It is recommended that these are substituted for woodcrete boxes as these have much greater longevity. I would also expect a greater number of bat and bird boxes to be provided on site for a development of this scale and nature – a bat or bird box to be provided at a minimum rate of one per residential dwelling would be appropriate. This can be easily achieved by providing integrated bat and bird roosting/nesting facilities into the new buildings (every dwelling does not necessarily need to have a bat/bird box, it may be more appropriate to have some dwellings without and some dwellings with more than one roost/nest feature for example). The proposed number, locations and specifications of bat and bird boxes should be submitted to the LPA for review and this can be secured via condition.

Ecological conditions can change overtime. If works have not commenced within 2 years of the bat inspection survey (i.e. by May 2021), an update survey will be required prior to commencement of works. This is to ensure that the impact assessment is based on sufficiently up-to-date survey data. This update survey can be secured via a suitably worded condition.

In relation to nesting birds, the following condition can be used: [BS42020: D.3.2.1] No vegetation clearance/demolition works should take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation/buildings for active birds' nests immediately before vegetation clearance/demolition works commence and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the LPA.

Two mammal holes were recorded within the broadleaved woodland area. These holes were assessed as being inactive. The locations of the holes does not appear to have been provided on the Phase 1 map and this detail should be submitted to the LPA for completeness. A badger hair was recorded within one of the holes. No other evidence of badgers was recorded during the survey however there are records of badgers within the local area. Badgers are a highly mobile species and can move into new areas relatively rapidly. The presence of a badger hair indicates that badgers have used the application site in the past. It is therefore recommended that an update survey for badgers is carried out prior to commencement of development. This should be done no more than three months in advance of works commencing. The results of the update survey along with any mitigation/sensitive working measures which may be required should be submitted to the LPA for review. This can be secured by condition.

Montbretia and wall Cotoneaster were recorded within the application site. A condition should be attached to any planning consent granted to state that these

invasive species will be removed and disposed of following best practice guidance and their spread will be prevented.

It is recommended that occasional gaps (13cm x 13cm) are provided at the base of proposed close boarded fencing/walls (minimum of one gap per elevation) to maintain habitat connectivity through the site for species such as hedgehog.

The landscape strategy indicates native tree/hedgerow and shrub planting. This is welcomed and details of the proposed species should be submitted for review. A mix of locally native species and wildlife-friendly species which will produce nectar and berries should be used to increase benefits to wildlife. Native species such as holly or yew should be used for the proposed evergreen hedge around gardens.

Enhancement of the woodland area is also indicated (which is welcomed since this is a LBAP habitat), along with creation of habitat areas such as wildflower areas/wetland areas. It is also recommended that any dead wood removed during woodland management works are left on site to create habitat piles for invertebrates and fungi. Details regarding the future management and monitoring of these habitat areas should be provided in a management plan. It may be more straightforward to provide this information, along with detailed landscape planting proposals and details of proposed bat and bird boxes (see above) and 'hedgehog gaps' within a Scheme for Biodiversity Enhancement, which can be conditioned.

Any proposed lighting should be sensitively designed so as to minimise impacts on wildlife associated with light disturbance (following the principles outlined in Bat Conservation Trust guidance: http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats_and_lighting.html).

As part of the final scheme it is advised the following condition is used [BS42020: D3.2]: Prior to occupation, a "lighting design strategy for biodiversity" for areas to be lit shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and badgers and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and
- b) show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Greater Manchester Police

Original comments 18.03.2020

Having looked at the proposals Greater Manchester Police can confirm that due to the size and nature of this proposal we would recommend that a full Crime Impact Statement (CIS) report should be submitted when full permission is sought, in order to show how crime has been considered for the proposal and the surrounding area.

The report should be completed by a suitably qualified security assessor, and identify, predict, evaluate and mitigate the site-specific crime and disorder effects of a development and should be produced by a professional individual/organisation independent of the design process. The CIS can then be submitted as part of the planning application, indicating that the proposed development has been designed to

avoid/reduce the adverse effects of crime and disorder and enabling the planning process to run more smoothly

Further Comments 05.08.2020

Having looked at the documents submitted, GMP would recommend that a condition to reflect the physical security specifications set out in the Crime Impact Statement should be added, if the application for full permission is to be approved.

ANALYSIS

In considering this application it is acknowledged that the applicant has sought to engage with the Planning Authority, statutory consultees and the local community prior to the submission of this application. This engagement is a welcomed and important element of the planning process and one which is encouraged not only by this Authority but by the Government also. In this context, pre application discussions with the applicant have been continuing since early 2019 with the proposals evolving and changing over that time period in response to the feedback given. The submission of this application is therefore the culmination of that process however during the consideration of this application, further amendments have also been discussed and agreed to ensure that the proposals comply with the Development Plan.

Members are advised that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para10). Para 11 of the NPPF reconfirms this position and advises that for decision making this means:-

- approving developments that accord with an up to date development plan or
- where the policies which are most important for the determination of the application are out of date (this includes for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the LPA cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing), granting planning permission unless:
 - the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of importance (that is those specifically relating to designated heritage assets (conservation areas and listed buildings)) provides a clear reason for refusing planning permission or
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.

In this respect, given that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year deliverable supply of housing, the relevant elements of Core Strategy policies CS4 and H2 which seek to deliver housing supply that are considered to be out of date. That being the case, the tilted balance as referred to in para 11 of the NPPF directs that permission should be approved unless:

- there are compelling reasons in relation to the impact of the development upon the Conservation Area and the setting of adjacent listed buildings to refuse planning permission or
- the adverse impacts of approving planning permission (such as the loss of the community facility, local open space or sports pitch or impact on residential amenity, highway safety etc) would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The main issues for consideration are as follows:-

- Loss of a community facility (school)

- Loss of the Local Open Space and sports pitch
- Principle of residential accommodation including affordable housing and density
- Impact on the character of the locality
- Impact on residential amenity
- Highway impacts
- Other matters such as ecology, trees, energy efficient design, contamination and drainage.

Having regard to this presumption in favour of residential development, Members are advised accordingly:

Loss of the School

The lawful use of the site is as a school and therefore policy CTF1.1 of the UDP Review is material to the consideration of this application. CTF1.1 confirms that development which would result in the loss of existing community facilities (which includes public and private sector facilities) will only be permitted where adequate replacement is provided or special justification can be shown.

The application confirms that the site was formerly occupied by the Focus School, which was an independent school for boys and girls aged from 7 to 18. The school was opened in August 2003 and most recently accommodated around 140 pupils from across the North West. The information provided with the application outlines that;

“The existing buildings are nearing obsolescence and consequently have high maintenance costs. They no longer meet modern education spatial standards. The school has therefore moved to an alternative leaving the Didsbury Road site vacant since July 2019.”

Members are advised that the proposed redevelopment of this site clearly results in the loss of a community facility contrary to policy CTF1.1. This policy does however allow for an exception to be made where special justification can be shown. In this respect, the information provided by the Mereside Trust in the application submission sets out the issues that the school had with the condition of the buildings on the site, the ability of them to continue to maintain the school in that location and the viability of refurbishing or replacing the existing buildings in order to remain on the site. Members should also note that this was an independent school that did not have direct links to the local community and as such, the weight given to the loss of this facility is somewhat reduced.

On the basis of the above, whilst the loss of this community facility is regrettable, it is considered that special justification has been demonstrated and the benefits that will accrue from the proposed residential development outweigh the loss of this independent school. As such, the proposal in terms of the loss of the community facility is compliant with policy CTF1.1 of the UDP Review.

Loss of Local Open Space and Sports Pitch

As outlined above, part of the application site encompasses land designated on the UDP Proposals Map as Local Open Space (LOS) upon which there was a sports pitch. As such policies CTF1.4, UOS1.3 and L1.1 are relevant to the consideration of this application along with para 97 of the NPPF.

Policy CTF1.4 confirms that where proposals for the redevelopment of redundant community facilities are made on sites which include open land, and where there is a local deficiency of recreational open space, the proposal should make a contribution to reducing that deficiency.

Policy UOS1.3 confirms that within areas of LOS, development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is an adequate provision of open space in the local area and that the loss would not be detrimental to the well being of the local community or the amenities of the area; or the open space that would be lost would be replaced by open space of an equivalent or better quantity, quality, usefulness and attractiveness in a location at least as accessible to current and potential users.

The supporting text to policy UOS1.3 confirms that private recreation facilities and school playing fields both can both perform as LOS. This text also sets out the factors of importance in determining the value of areas of LOS. These can be summarised as follows:-

- Standards of open space provision in the local area
- The visual or amenity value of the land
- The ecological value of the land
- Formal recreation use
- Informal public access and
- Contribution to urban form or general well being of the community.

Policy L1.1 confirms that proposals which involve the loss of public and private sports grounds or other land currently or last used for recreation will not be permitted except where the proposed development would provide facilities of sufficient benefit to sport and recreation to outweigh the loss. Development of land currently or last used as playing fields will not be permitted unless:-

- The proposed development is ancillary to the use of the site as a playing field
- The proposed development only affects land that is not capable of forming a playing pitch and results in the retention and enhancement of pitches
- The playing fields that would be lost would be replaced by playing fields of an equivalent or better quantity, quality, usefulness and attractiveness in a location at least as accessible to current and potential users
- The proposed development is for a sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the loss of the playing field.

Para 97 confirms that existing open space, sports and recreational land including playing fields should not be built upon unless:-

- Assessment has been undertaken which shows that the land is surplus to requirement
- The loss would be replaced with equivalent or better facilities or
- The development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the benefits of which outweigh the loss of the former or current use.

On the basis of the above mentioned policies, there are two issues that require consideration those being the loss of the land designated as LOS and the loss of the sports pitch.

In response to this policy position, the applicant has made the following case:-

In respect of the loss of LOS, the Planning Statement explains that:

“The school site includes an area allocated as Local Open Space to the south of the school. This is private land and is not publicly accessible. It is not of a high visual or amenity standard, nor does the allocation provide any notable ecological habitat. The land does not provide any formal recreation use, nor does not contribute to the overall wellbeing of the community.

The proposed improvements are described in detail within the Landscape Strategy Document prepared by DEP and the Landscape Layout Plan. The underlying open space strategy is driven by the applicant’s desire to leave a positive legacy and create an attractive place for families (both existing and new). This is clearly evidenced in the approach taken to the Landscape Plan with key elements including:

- Mixed native planting throughout the site and to boundaries.*
- Enhancement of existing open space with timber play equipment.*
- A wetland habitat to work with the natural features of the site, with timber board walk to access.*
- Proposed pollen and nectar rich grassland areas to encourage wildlife.*
- Informal kick about area within the open and surveyed part of the site.*
- Timber benches along the footpath.*

The concept seeks to deliver an improved quality of open space, as well as enriching ecology, public access, natural woodland play and a place where residents can spend time outdoors. It is envisaged that information boards will form part of this ecological hub, with planting including native blue bells, to encourage wildlife. This has also been complemented with planting along boundaries and throughout the site, to link to existing tree lined areas and provide connected wildlife corridors.

Maintenance of the trees is outlined in the Woodland Management Plan prepared by Mulberry Tree Consultants, which is within the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment. The plans for the open space area have evolved with direct advice and input from landscape architects, arborists and ecologists.

We consider the creation of the publicly accessible open space will directly and positively address the third criterion of Policy UOS1.3, Protection of Local Open Space. The open space proposed is of a significantly better quality than the existing low quality and inaccessible allocation. It is close to the existing Local Open Space and, crucially, it will be publicly accessible. There are no current users of the existing open space.”

In respect of the loss of the sports pitch, the Planning Statement explains that:

“The grassed area to the south of the site was used by the former school at playtime but was not used as a formal playing field. It is not allocated as a playing pitch in the Development Plan.

The physical characteristics of the grassed area means that it has a steep gradient dropping 3m that precludes the playing of ball games, and has manhole covers within it rendering it substandard for formal matches.

Pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority addressed this issue, and as mentioned in the consultation section of this statement, the Applicant also sought advice directly from Sport England.

Whilst the deficiencies in the quality of the pitch have been recognised, it was considered that this part of the site meets the strict definition within the Sport England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance (2018) and formally defined in the General Management Procedure Order (2015). It states that a playing pitch is: “a delineated area which, together with any run-off area, is of 0.2 hectares or more, and which is used for association football, American football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo., polo or cycle polo.’

Therefore, any proposal affecting the site needs to address policy requirements for replacement provision.

Further to pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority and Sport England, the proposed development has addressed this issue in various ways.

As noted above, the quality of the grassed area is sloped with manhole covers within it. When the school was operational, physical education lessons had been held off-site due to the poor quality of the site as the slope precluded a fair sports match.

The only users of this area, the pupils of the school, have moved to a different geographical area. However, the replacement school has created improved sports provision. Sport England policy requires improvements to benefit the users of the pitch. However, because the replacement was within a different Local Authority Area, pre-application feedback states that this was not considered to be a ‘suitable geographical area’ for the purposes of Exception 4 of the Sport England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance.

In addition to the provision of enhanced sporting facilities at the replacement school, the development team has worked together to ensure the existing site can also make a positive contribution towards Sports England broader objectives. A review of the Sport England guidance indicates the focus has moved from sports pitches and formal sports to encouraging active lives, and the many benefits that stem from physical activity.

The Green Infrastructure strategy for the site, translated into the landscape plans, is submitted with the application which details the plans to open areas up to the wider community, providing green links through the site, and the opportunity for natural play equipment and an informal kick about area.

This provides a wholly new publicly accessible amenity area for the existing community and new residents to enable the active use of the site.

The Applicant recognises that, following feedback from Sport England, even with these improvements both on and off site, a financial contribution may be necessary to improve existing local sports facilities in the area to offset the loss of the grassed area on the application site.

This will contribute to wider local improvements identified within the Stockport Sports Playing Pitch Strategy. It is considered that with this mitigation in place, the proposed development meets Sport England Exception E4 and local Policy L1.1, Land for Active Recreation, as the area lost to development will be replaced prior to the commencement of development by a new area of playing field of

equivalent or better quality, of equivalent or greater quantity in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.”

Members are advised as follows:

The planning application red edge includes an area of Local Open Space as designated on the UDP Proposals Map, and this also relates to the sports pitch originally attached to the school. The area to be lost is calculated to be 0.607 hectares on a wider 1.36ha site contrary to policies UOS1.3, CTF1.4 and L1.1 of the UDP Review and para 97 of the NPPF.

Firstly in relation to the loss of the sports pitch on the site, whilst Policy UOS1.3 is consistent with national policy, Paragraph 97 of the NPPF is more up-to-date and therefore takes precedence. This advice notes that existing open space including playing fields should not be built on unless it can satisfy one of three exceptions, and it is judged that part b applies in this case. Part b of Paragraph 97 requires replacement of the pitch of equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.

The development is for housing and so part c is irrelevant and the sports pitch, whilst in poor condition is still able to be brought back into use and so is not surplus to requirements under part a.

The Council adopts the Fields in Trust/ NPFA 6 acre minimum standard of 2.4 hectares of open space per 1000 population (0.7 ha. per 1000 population for play, 1.7 ha. per 1000 population for formal recreation). Against that standard, Stockport has some 1.3ha per 1000 pop, giving a Borough wide shortfall of some 105 hectares.

Sport England is a statutory consultee on this application given that the proposed development will result in the loss of a sports pitch. Sport England have assessed the proposed development having regard not only to para 97 of the NPPF but also to their playing fields policy contained within 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document'. This document is material to the consideration of this application and is drafted along similar lines to the UDP policies referred to above as well as para 97 of the NPPF.

As Sport England confirm, it is their policy to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all/part of a playing field, unless one or more of the five exceptions stated in its policy apply. They have noted that all existing sports facilities/playing field land at the site would be lost and that there is an undersupply of playing field provision in the area. As such, they conclude that the proposal is contrary to exception 1 of their policy document as well as the corresponding bullet point within NPPF paragraph 97.

On this basis, Sport England have calculated that a compensatory payment for the loss of the playing pitch would be required and that this would represent suitable mitigation. This will be allocated to priority projects listed in the Formal Sports Priority List within the Heaton and Reddish area. The list is compiled from evidence in the Playing Pitch Strategy and Local Football Facilities Plan, and any such project will be approved by Cabinet Member.

As the timing of implementation of the replacement playing pitch facilities is uncertain, Sport England have lifted their initial objection which required details of

where the compensation monies would be spent, and have agreed to the use of a more flexible approach. This includes the provision of certain wording that would allow monies to be directed to a project, which is ready for delivery at the right time. The 2 priority projects in the Heatons and Reddish Area that have been identified in this case are:

- Match funding towards a 3G Artificial Grass Pitch at Reddish Vale Technology College; or
- Pitch improvements at Fred Whittaker Scott Playing Fields

Therefore, on this basis, it is considered that the loss of the existing sports pitch on the site is being appropriately mitigated through the provision of the above compensation monies to be spent within the Heatons and Reddish area.

Therefore, the development is considered to be compliant with Policy UOS1.3 of the development plan and Paragraph 97 of the NPPF.

Secondly in relation to the loss of the LOS on the site, it is acknowledged that being positioned to the rear of the school, the LOS is not publically accessible or visible being enclosed by the tall brick boundary wall and gates to the front of the site and bounded by the rear or side garden boundaries of properties on Didsbury Road, Masefield Drive, Briars Mount and Tennyson Close. Due to the steep gradient of the site sloping down from Didsbury Road, there are currently no views of the entire site from this main road frontage. The ecological report submitted with the application confirms that the LOS has little ecological value and is not inhabited or utilised by any protected species. On this basis, it is accepted that the visual and amenity value of the land is limited other than to those properties sharing a boundary with the site. Notwithstanding this, whilst there is no public access, the LOS has been used for formal and informal recreation and as such, it has made a contribution to the general well being of the community, albeit limited to the pupils of the school. Taking into account these factors, it is however considered that the value of the LOS is somewhat limited.

Policy SIE-2 of the Stockport Core Strategy requires development to take a positive role in providing recreation and amenity open space to meet the needs of its users/occupants. The policy states that large new residential developments are required to include provision for recreation and amenity open space on or readily accessible to the site and gives guidelines based on the expected number of occupants. Furthermore, it is then recognised that whilst as much as possible of the open space should be within or adjacent to the new development, the Council will permit some or all of the provision to be off-site or through contributions where there is no practical alternative or where it would be better to do so.

The applicant has offered to provide 0.23 ha of improved public open space to the west of the site which would include a woodland with wetland habitat and, informal play opportunities. However, although this is a very much welcomed improvement due the current poor state of these areas, it is considered that this cannot represent additional open space to be counted in this development, as it involves land already provided as public open space within the adjacent Briars Mount development. Furthermore, the Briars Mount development already has 5 Local Areas of Play (LAPs) of poor quality and 4 of these fall within the catchment of the development.

In an area in the south western corner of the site within the existing LOS allocation, a further 0.06 hectares is to be provided as on-site amenity open space. As this will provide benefits to the prospective residents of the development and other existing residents within the local area, this will be recognised as on-site provision. Therefore, to mitigate the loss of the existing LOS on the site, the proposals include a mixture of the on-site provision outlined above and a commuted sum to contribute towards off site provision.

The Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on 'Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments' (adopted September 2019) provides greater clarity on the off-site requirements and states that open space contributions will be secured in the form of a Planning Obligation under a Section 106 agreement to be completed before planning permission is granted.

As outlined in the Policy comments in the consultations section above, the commuted sum is split according to Annex 1 of the SPD and the costs per person are calculated. The development will consist of 8 units that are 2 bed, 6 units that are 3 bed and 20 units that are 4 bed. As such, this gives a population capacity of 148 and a total contribution of has been calculated and secured for children's play and for formal sport.

An area of amenity open space of 0.06 hectares is to be provided on-site to the south-west of the proposed properties. It is considered appropriate that the population capacity of the development reflect that this land will serve the occupants to some degree in terms of its function as informal recreation. The SPD outlines that a Local Area of Play (LAP) would normally serve 50 occupants within a development. Therefore, in respect of children's play, the population capacity of 148 is to be reduced by 50 to account for the on-site open space. The revised capacity of 98 gives a total contribution for children's play, however the contribution for formal sport would remain unchanged (with a population capacity of 148).

In terms of taking commuted sums for children's play facilities, there are thresholds in place in order to ensure the direct relationship test is passed. It is proposed that the commuted sum for children's play be directed towards the Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) at Craig Road (within 400 metres threshold) and the Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) at Crescent Park (within 1000 metres threshold), which are both in the catchment area for the development site and are accessible on foot.

The LAPs at Briars Mount, whilst closer to prospective residents, are not favoured as they have very small distance thresholds at 100 metres which do not cover the whole development site, they offer limited scope for improvement and have no dynamic play items. The formal sport element of the commuted sum, is not subject to thresholds and will be allocated to the Council's Formal Sport Priority List. This will be allocated to priority projects listed in the Formal Sports Priority List within the Heaton and Reddish area. The list is compiled from evidence in the Playing Pitch Strategy and Local Football Facilities Plan, and any such project will be approved by Cabinet Member.

On the basis of all the matters raised above, the loss of the LOS and sports pitch clearly weigh against the merits of the proposed development and their loss will cause harm in terms of the amenities of the properties surrounding this part of the site and the well being of the population. The weight of this loss is reduced by the LOS currently not having any access to the public or being visible from the

site frontage onto Didsbury Road. Furthermore, this loss is considered to be mitigated through the following measures; the agreed contributions to be made towards replacement sports facilities within the Heatons and Reddish area; the provision of public open space within the development; and the commuted sum towards children's play and formal sport for the new residents of the development again within the local area.

The development also has to be balanced against the merits of the proposed development in terms of the regeneration of this previously developed site, the enhancement of the visual amenities of the locality and the tilted balance in favour of residential development engaged by para 11 of the NPPF. These issues are explored in detail below in this report, however, having regard to the conclusions reached in relation to these issues, it is considered that on balance, the benefits that will accrue from the proposed development outweigh the loss of LOS and sports pitch. On this basis, it is considered that the development is compliant with policies CTF1.4, L1.1 and UOS1.3 of the UDP Review, Policy SIE-2 of the Core Strategy and para 97 of the NPPF.

Principle of Residential Accommodation

Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy directs new residential development towards the more accessible parts of the Borough identifying 3 spatial priority areas (Central Housing Area; Neighbourhood Priority Areas and the catchment areas of District/Large Local Centres; and other accessible locations). Policy H-2 confirms that when there is less than a 5 year deliverable supply of housing (as is currently the case) the required accessibility scores will be lowered to allow the deliverable supply to be topped up by other sites in accessible locations. This position has been regularly assessed to ensure that the score reflects the ability to 'top up' supply to a 5 year position. However, the scale of shortfall is such that in order to genuinely reflect the current position in that regard the accessibility score has been reduced to zero.

As referred to at the start of this analysis, the fact that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing means that elements of Core Strategy policies CS4 and H2 are considered to be out of date. As such the tilted balance in favour of the residential redevelopment of the site as set out in para 11 of the NPPF is engaged.

The application site predominantly comprises a brownfield site in an accessible area on the main radial route of Didsbury Road served by public transport and located close to the M60 motorway. The site is within the catchment area of the Moor Top Large Local Shopping Centre and is accessible to Stockport Town Centre and so the proposal is therefore in compliance with policies CS4 and H2 of the Core Strategy. The application site is located within a Predominantly Residential Area as allocated in the saved UDP review and the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes is also in accordance with para 118 of the NPPF which places substantial weight upon the use of brownfield land within settlements for homes and supporting opportunities to remediate derelict land.

With regard to the density of the proposed development, policy CS3 of the Core Strategy confirms that for sites close to or within Town Centres/District Centres, housing densities of 70 dwellings per hectare (dph) and above are commonplace. Moving away from these central locations, densities should gradually decrease, first to around 50 dph then to around 40 dph, as the proportion of houses increases. Developments in accessible suburban locations

may be expected to provide the full range of house types, from low-cost 2 bed terraces to larger detached properties. However, they should still achieve a density of 30 dph.

Para 123 of the NPPF confirms that when there is a shortage of housing, decisions should avoid homes being built at low densities and LPA's should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in the Framework. The drive to secure the efficient use of urban land set out at para 122 of the NPPF however acknowledges that account must also be taken of the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character

The proposed development will achieve 25 dph which is below what the site is expected to deliver having regard to Core Strategy policy CS3. The NPPF through references in para's 122 and 123 acknowledges that regard must also be paid to other policies and the character of the area. In this respect, the site area includes 0.24 hectares of existing woodland open space and 0.06 hectares of new amenity open space that will contribute to the compliance of the development with other development plan policies. The site also comprises a significant slope across the site, which has created certain restrictions to construction and increasing the number of houses has not been possible due to the necessary retaining structures and required highway specifications.

The density of the surrounding areas and more recent developments must be taken into account and the resulting requirement that development must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that Area (Core Strategy policy SIE-3 and para 192 of the NPPF). As required by Policy CS3, the development proposes a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties within an accessible suburban location, all of which comply with the standards outlined within the Design of Residential Development SPD for the provision of private outdoor amenity spaces and in-curtilage parking requirements. It should also be noted that an increase in density would most likely result in a larger number of smaller dwellings including more apartments which in turn would result in smaller gardens and more car parking. There is concern that such a development would not reflect the character of this area where medium to large sized houses are set within generous plots with the impacts of car parking softened by well landscaped gardens. As such a balance has to be taken between these requirements.

Noting that there will be other opportunities on more suitable sites in the Borough to secure quality high density developments on urban brownfield land to claw back some of the dwellings not achieved on this site (which will be required to avoid further intrusion upon the Green Belt), it is considered that the density proposed on this particular site, having regard to the site and area constraints, is not unacceptable. On this basis, notwithstanding the conflict with Core Strategy policy CS3, the proposed development complies with Government advice contained within para's 63, 118, 122 and 123 of the NPPF.

Affordable Housing Provision

Paragraph 62 of NPPF requires that where a need for affordable housing has been identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required with an expectation that this should be provided on-site unless:

(a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and

(b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

Paragraph 63 of NPPF states that in order to support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount. A footnote advises that this should be equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of the existing buildings and does not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned.

Policy H-3 is concerned with provision of affordable housing. Paragraph 3.125 sets 50% affordable housing provision as an overall strategic target (i.e. to be met from contributions from both market housing sites and publicly funded development programmes).

A 40% affordable housing target is set for Council owned sites, or 'as high a level as is viable'. In earlier iterations of the Core Strategy 50% affordable housing was proposed for Council owned sites but was reduced to 40% during the examination process as this was not considered to be viable as acknowledged in paragraph 33 of the Inspector's Report.

Paragraph 3.126 seeks provision of affordable housing in connection with all development proposals involving 15 or more market dwellings or on sites of 0.5 hectares or greater.

Variable targets for affordable housing provision are specified dependent upon the prevailing level of house prices within the identified sub-areas. Paragraph 3.127 states that 30% affordable housing provision will be sought in areas with 'above average' property prices, for example, those listed in paragraph 3.126 (which makes reference to 'The Heatons' (excluding Heaton Norris)) and those areas shown as 'hot' on the map which comprises figure 9. The application site is therefore located in an area where the default policy requirement is for 30% affordable housing.

As identified previously paragraph 63 of NPPF states that in order to support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount equivalent to the gross existing floorspace of the existing buildings (commonly referred to as the 'Vacant Building Credit' ('VBC')). The Gross Internal Area ('GIA') of the proposed development is 4,598m², whilst the GIA of the existing buildings is 1,709m² which equates to 37.16% of the proposed GIA.

In this case, the calculation of the gross affordable housing yield also needs to have regard to the application of two different affordable housing targets to accommodation located within different parts of the site. The affordable housing requirement (in sq.m) is calculated at 30% of the GIA of those plots on the part of the site which comprises Previously Developed Land (the former school buildings) and 50% of the GIA of those plots on those parts of the site which comprises Urban Open Space

On the basis of the above requirements and calculations, the gross affordable housing yield is based on the differential policy targets in policy H-3. This suggests a gross requirement for 1,754sq.m of affordable housing. Net of the VBC this reduces to 1,102sq.m. It is proposed that all the 8 no. Type D dwellings

(plots 21 to 28) and 5 no. Type C dwellings (plots 29 to 33) will comprise affordable housing for this development. It is acknowledged that this would leave a nominal shortfall of affordable accommodation of 5sq.m, however this is not considered to be material in this case.

Therefore, based on the above affordable housing provision proposals that will be secured through the inclusion within a S106 agreement, the development is considered to comply with Policy H3 of the Core Strategy and Paragraphs 62 and 63 of the NPPF.

Design, Siting and Impact on Visual Amenity

Policy SIE-1 'Quality Places' states that development that is designed and landscaped to the highest contemporary standard, paying high regard to the built and/or natural environment within which it is sited, will be given positive consideration. Specific account should be had to the materials, site's characteristics, safety and security of users, provision and maintenance of access, privacy and amenity and landscaping.

As outlined within the Design and Access Statement submitted to accompany the application, the application site is bounded by residential properties of various styles and ages. From the grand Victorian homes to the East of the site, to the 25 year old red brick properties to the South, the area has an established mix of homes. There is little by the way of a predominant architectural style in the immediate area, with red brick being the only material repeated on numerous occasions. The mass and scale of the surroundings is also largely consistent. Residential buildings generally have pitched roofs and many of the surrounding properties are two - three storey, detached & semi-detached buildings.

The proposals include a variety of house types, eaves and roof heights, materials and design, to give visual interest and variation across the site. The properties have a contemporary design with numerous design features to elevate the architectural interest of the new properties, whilst the traditional materials suitable to the Heaton Mersey area have been selected. It is agreed that utilising similar materiality found locally, will help integrate this new development into the fabric of the area, while proudly having it's own identity.

The materials of external construction for the proposed dwellinghouses are specified as varying shades of red brick for the external walls, with header details and recessed brick detailing around openings. A small amount of metal cladding is proposed around the entrances, in canopies and between vertical windows. Grey tiles are proposed for the roof covering and grey window frames and timber doors. The boundary treatments proposed are a mix of brick walls, metal railings and timber fencing, again to compliment and match the existing boundary treatment in this area.

Therefore, due to the location of the site on a main radial route, no concerns are raised to the general contemporary design and proposed use of traditional materials for the proposed development. Suitably worded planning conditions would be imposed to secure appropriate materials of external construction and boundary treatments.

All new developments should ensure that they respond to the surrounding context of the site and maximise frontages with the street scene and other important features of sites. The application site is fairly uniform in shape and

size and has one main road frontage to the front on Didsbury Road, along with new street frontages being provided from the new highway running through the site. The proposed development responds positively to all of these road frontages by providing built form along the perimeter of the application site and strengthening the urban grain.

All of the family houses proposed have a street frontage, with a decent set back from the highway to provide privacy within the property, yet still providing activity and surveillance over the street. All of the Type A, B and C properties have in curtilage car parking spaces to either the rear or side along with front boundary treatments and planting to soften the appearance on the street scene. The terraced Type D houses have a space immediately to the front of the properties which again is softened by landscaping. Therefore, the new buildings and their key architectural features along with the significant proposed landscaping dominate the street scene, with car parking located to the side or rear of the new dwellings or screened by good quality boundary treatments and planting.

The proposed terraced properties at the bottom of the site overlook both the street to the front and the habitable rooms on the rear elevation would provide natural surveillance over the public open space to the rear. The public open space is also overlooked by the habitable room windows on the rear of the properties on Plots 19 and 20, further improving the perceived security of this open space.

There are then well sized private gardens for the rear, which is adequate for these 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings. As outlined in the description of the development above, the garden sizes for the 4 bedroom A and B types range from 100.5 sqm up to 288.20 sqm and the 3 bedroom C type range from 182.45 sqm up to 294.24 sqm. Therefore, all of these properties provide significantly more private outdoor amenity space for the future occupants of these properties over the 75 sqm and 100 sqm standards required within the Design for Residential Development SPD.

The usual standards for 2 bedroom terraced properties is 50 sqm and it is acknowledged that at around 21.5 sqm for the D type properties, the rear garden spaces are below the standard required size. However, these properties immediately back onto the public open space, informal woodland play area and improved wetland habitat area being provided as part of the development and the future residents of these properties would have very easy access to these spaces. Furthermore, such amenity space shortfalls are considered to be outweighed by the requirement for additional dwellings within the Borough and the current focus within Paragraphs 122 and 123 of the NPPF, which seek to maximise densities within residential developments where there is an identified housing need. As such, the NPPF desire to maximise densities within residential developments effectively supersedes private amenity space requirement guidance as recommended within the SPD, which Members will be aware has been reflected in recent appeal decisions.

Notwithstanding this however, it is considered that the levels of amenity spaces being delivered across the development as a whole is significantly above the guidance contained within the SPD and as such, the development is considered to be acceptable in this regard.

Therefore, overall, the siting and layout of the development maximises the relationship with the existing and new surrounding road network. The siting and

layout provides a logical arrangement and is therefore considered to be in accordance with the development plan.

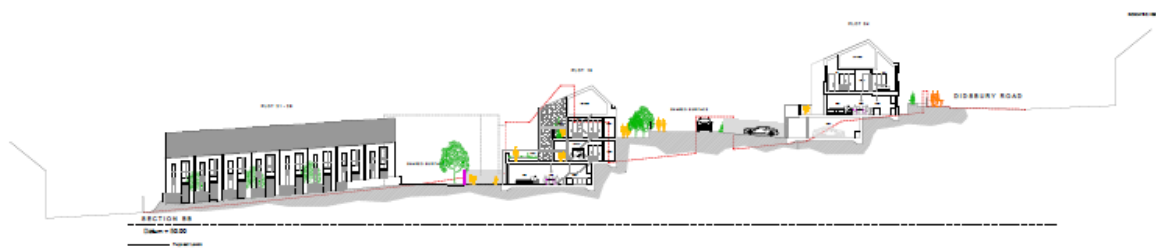
The application site is located in a position where limited public vantage points are available, due to the steep gradient of the site away from main street frontage on Didsbury Road and residential properties to all other sides on Masefield Close, Briars Mount, Tennyson Close and Didsbury Road. It is acknowledged that the proposed properties fronting Didsbury Road (House Type A's) have accommodation over three floors. However, as can be seen from the street scene image of Didsbury Road below, due to the gradient of the site sloping down from the level of Didsbury Road itself and the split level design of the properties to accommodate this change in levels, it will only be the upper floor of the properties that will be visible from the street scene. The height of the properties visible onto Didsbury Road was also reduced during the design process in response to the comments made during the pre-application public consultation event.

The existing tall boundary wall currently in place along this boundary will be reduced significantly in size to provide a more domestic scale, and new trees and landscaping will be planted to the front of the properties to further improve the visual appearance of the development on Didsbury Road. The scale of the development on Didsbury Road is considerably below the existing large semi-detached properties adjacent to the application site at 177 and 179 Didsbury Road.



Proposed Street Scene, Didsbury Road

The rest of the development remains at 2 ½ to 3 storeys in height, which remains in keeping with the properties surrounding the site. The elevations of the houses will have a residential proportion to room sizes and windows. The mass and scale of the buildings are broken through the use of changes in materials, plane changes, deep window reveals and door canopies. All the housing has been bespoke designed to respond to the existing site levels to reduce the amount of earth works required. The results are contemporary family homes, with multiple levels, terraces and sunken courtyards. Some properties only appear to be single storey and a roof from street level, with lower levels responding to the site. Due to the level changes across the site and as can be seen from the sections below, the scale and height of the 3 storey properties is reduced from the properties being built into the slope side.



Proposed site section drawing

As such, no concerns are raised to the proposed scale and height of the proposed development in this particular location.

In view of the above, it is considered that the size, scale, height and design of the proposed development could be successfully accommodated on the site without causing undue harm to the character of the street scene or the visual amenity of the area. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Core Strategy DPD policies H-1 and SIE-1 and the Design of Residential Development SPD.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Policies H1, CS8, SIE1 and SIE3 of the Core Strategy together with para 127 of the NPPF seek to ensure that developments provide for a good standard of amenity not only for existing but also future occupiers. The Core Strategy policies are supported by the Council's SPD 'Design of Residential Development' which provides detailed guidance regarding the layout of development and its relationship with existing properties. Members are reminded that the SPD is not policy but is simply guidance to influence but not dictate development. There is acknowledgement within that document that rigid adherence with the guidance can stifle creativity and result in uniformity of development.

The closest relationship of the development to existing residential properties is between Plot 10 and No. 179 Didsbury Road, Plot 20 and No. 9 Masefield Drive and Plot 21 and No. 15 and 17 Tennyson Close. These relationships can be seen on the site layout plan below:



Proposed Site Layout Plan

However, as can be seen on the site layout plan, all of these relationships are where the side elevation of a new property is facing the adjacent existing properties and therefore the potential impact from overlooking from habitable room windows is significantly reduced. The side elevations of Plot 10, 20 and 21

do not contain any clear glazed windows, with only small opaque glazed bathroom or w.c windows present in these elevations. Any potential impact is further reduced by the presence of either existing mature trees or the significant number of newly planted proposed trees around the site boundary to increase the level of screening around the site and between existing and new properties.

In these closer areas, the distance between the side elevation of Plot 10 and the side elevation of No.179 Didsbury Road is 10.9 metres. The distance between the side elevation of Plot 20 and the rear elevation of No.9 Masefield Drive is 13.520 metres. Finally, the distances between the side elevation of Plot 21 and the rear elevations of Nos. 15 and 17 Tennyson Close is 14.426 metres and 12.727 metres respectively. Therefore, these all meet the minimum space standards of 12 metres for this relationship, as outlined in the Council's SPD in relation to the protection of amenity.

At the bottom of the site, there are back to back relationships at Plots 29 to 31, where the rear elevations of the new properties back onto the rear elevations of the existing properties along Tennyson Close. The distance between the rear elevations of Plots 29 to 31 and the rear elevations of Nos. 21 and 23 Tennyson Close is 25.796 metres. The rear elevation of Plot 32 faces the front garden and driveway of No. 25 Tennyson Close. Therefore, these also meet the minimum space standards of 25 metres for this relationship, as outlined in the Council's SPD in relation to the protection of amenity.

The relationship between Plots 33 and 34 comprises the rear elevation of the new properties to side elevation of No. 25 Tennyson Close. Again, there are no habitable room windows in the side elevation of this existing property and therefore, at a distance of 20.582 metres, this meets the minimum space standards of 12 metres for this relationship, as outlined in the Council's SPD in relation to the protection of amenity.

Finally, for completeness, the final distances between Plots 1 and 11 and adjacent properties are as follows. The relationship between Plot 1 and No. 12 Masefield Drive comprises the side elevation of the new property to the rear elevation of the existing property. There are clear glazed windows in the side elevation of Plot 1 to improve natural surveillance over the street scene in this location, however, these do not serve habitable rooms and the distance between the properties is 31.824 metres, which is considered to be appropriate in this context.

The relationship between Plot 11 and No. 179 Didsbury Road comprises the side elevation of the new property to the rear garden of the existing property. Again as with Plot 1, there are clear glazed windows in the side elevation of Plot 11 to improve natural surveillance over the street scene in this location. However, again these do not serve habitable rooms and the distance between the new property and the garden boundary is 17.2 metres, together with significant planting of new trees along this site boundary with the garden of No. 179 Didsbury Road. Therefore, this relationship and distance is considered to be appropriate in this context.

In relation to the distances between the new properties to the front of the site facing Didsbury Road (Plots 1-10), the distance between the front elevations of the existing properties at Nos. 184 to 207 Didsbury Road and the front site boundary is 23 metres. The new properties are set back and down from the front site boundary by a further 3.2 metres and therefore, the total distance between

the front elevations of the existing and new properties is approximately 26.2 metres. Therefore, this also meets the minimum space standards of 21 metres for this relationship, as outlined in the Council's SPD in relation to the protection of amenity.

In relation to the assessment of an overshadowing impact on the existing residential properties around the site, the orientation of the site and its relationship to the surrounding properties is really important in this case. The existing properties to the north of the site are located approximately 26 metres away across Didsbury Road. As the new properties fronting Didsbury Road are also stepped down with only the upper floor visible from the street scene, there would be no overbearing or overshadowing impact on the existing properties on Didsbury Road.

The existing properties on Tennyson Close are located to the south of the application site and the new properties at Plots 21 to 34, and therefore due to this orientation, there would be no overshadowing created by the new buildings over the rear elevations or gardens of these existing dwellings. It is acknowledged that the 2 storey terraced dwelling on Plot 21 is only located 2.25 metres from the rear garden boundaries of Nos. 15 and 17 Tennyson Close. However, any potential overbearing impact will be softened and screened by the existing trees and planting along this boundary coupled with the new landscaped buffer of tree planting proposed along this boundary. Plot 21 is also a two storey terraced D type property, and therefore again any potential impact is reduced from the use of this smaller house type with a shorter depth and lower height of 9 metres to the ridge and 5.8m to the eaves.

The new properties closest to the eastern boundary (Plots 10, 11 and 34) are alongside No.179 Didsbury Road. Plot 10 which has the closest relationship, is located adjacent to and is the same depth as the existing dwelling and therefore, there would be no overshadowing or overbearing impact from the new property on this Plot. The new dwellings on Plots 11 and 34 are located a much greater distance away and would have a limited impact on the rear garden of No. 179 Didsbury Road from an overbearing and overshadowing impact. Again, due to the substantial landscaping scheme that is proposed and the existing tall mature trees along this boundary in parts, any potential impact would be significantly reduced by the planting buffer.

On the basis of the above, it is noted that on the whole, the proposed development complies with and in most instances exceeds the space standards set out in the SPD. As such, it is concluded that the proposed development as a whole, will provide for a good standard of amenity and will not cause harm to either existing or future occupiers by reason of overshadowing, over-dominance, visual intrusion, loss of outlook, overlooking or loss of privacy. Noting that there is a presumption in favour of residential development as engaged by para 11 of the NPPF it is not considered that the limited instances of failure to comply with this guidance as set out above significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development. That being the case the development accords with policies H1, CS8, SIE1 and SIE3 of the Core Strategy together with para 127 of the NPPF.

Traffic Generation, Access, Highway Safety and Parking

A Transport Statement has been submitted in support of the application. The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Highway Engineer are contained within the Consultee Responses section above.

The matters for consideration are site accessibility, traffic generation and highway impact and the detail of the site layout.

The site is located within an area that is relatively well served by public transport, with bus services along Didsbury Road that connect Stockport Town Centre, Manchester, Burnage, Didsbury, Chorlton and Stretford. Although it is acknowledged that the nearest rail station is nearly 2km away, this does offer potential for longer journeys, linked travel and connectivity further afield. Pedestrian and cycle facilities within the locality give potential for walking and cycling to be a chosen travel mode and the site is within close proximity to a range of services and amenities that residents could reasonably expect to enjoy.

On this basis, the site is considered to be within a relatively accessible location where residents would not be likely to be so dependent on car travel and public transport, walking and cycling have potential to be realistic modes of travel.

In terms of traffic generation, the proposed development is forecast within the Transport Statement to generate around 19 and 16 two-way trips in the AM and PM peak hours respectively, which equates to around one trip every 3 minutes on average. On this basis, the total volume of daily traffic associated with the site is not excessive. It is also important in this case to give full consideration to the former use of the site as a school. The predicted traffic relative to the lawful use of the site as a school, shows that the development would generate significantly less traffic during both the peak periods and throughout the day than this former use. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the proposal will not generate a volume of traffic that will materially or unacceptably impact on the operation of the highway.

The design of the vehicular access into the site and the proximity of the existing junction adjacent to the site has also been assessed. Highways have confirmed that they are satisfied that the priority junction arrangement proposed for the site entrance is design standard compliant and its operation for residential purposes will not give rise to operational or safety concerns.

The internal site layout is now design standard compliant and suitable to serve a development of this scale. Issues raised in the submitted road safety audit review have been considered and responded to within the revised layout and will be addressed further as part of the future detailed design process with Highway Services following the grant of any planning permission.

The initial part of the spine road would be traditional carriageway and footways with transition once within the site to a shared space arrangement. Given the quantum of development it is appropriate to provide a footway facility alongside the shared space element for a proportion of the site as this would give an alternative facility for pedestrians to walk on and minimise the risk of conflict with vehicular traffic. Towards the end of the cul-de-sac, the layout reverts to traditional shared space which is acceptable as the risk of any conflict is significantly less due to the lesser volume of traffic at the end of the development.

The road would be designed and constructed to a standard considered suitable for adoption and I note the need for structural approval for a necessary highway retaining structure alongside part of the road space. The detailed design and approval of a highway retaining structure will need resolution prior to any works commencing on site and integrating into the detailed design of the road space. However, Highways have confirmed that they are satisfied for these are matters to be addressed through conditional control.

Swept path drawings show that refuse and recycling sized vehicles are able to safely enter the site, negotiate a passage through and safely manoeuvre within the site and thereafter exit in a proper and safe manner. This size of vehicle is ordinarily the largest that would visit a residential community and no operational or safety concerns should arise.

Car parking is proposed for individual dwellings with the majority having two spaces. The smaller terraced properties, 8 in total, would have one parking space each. However, there are no concerns about these reduced parking levels having regard to the Council's standards, the accessibility of the site and the potential for a small amount of kerbside parking that could occur without materially inhibiting the operation of the site.

Each dwelling also has space within the curtilage for secure and enclosed cycle parking, however further details will be required in relation to how this will be delivered. A condition is also requested in relation to the provision of an electric vehicle charging facility for every new dwelling.

In conclusion, in the absence of objections from the Highway Engineer and subject to the imposition of the conditions recommended by the Highway Engineer, it is considered that the proposed development could be accessed and serviced in a safe and practical manner, adequate car parking would be provided and the proposal should not have a material impact on the local highway network. As such, the proposal complies with Core Strategy DPD policies SD-6, SIE-1, CS9, T-1, T-2 and T-3 and the Sustainable Transport SPD.

Landscaping and Impact on Trees

The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Arboricultural Officer are contained within the Consultee Responses section above.

The proposed development does require the removal of some trees, and ongoing management of others. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement prepared by Mulberry Tree Management Consultants, outlines the findings of the Tree Survey, and advises on the implications of any proposed tree removal. The development requires the removal of T1, a small conifer of low value adjacent to Didsbury Road, and T2, which is a chestnut tree adjacent to a neighbouring property which is in decline. One of the trees within G1 is proposed to be felled, which is categorised as an A2 tree, and a hawthorn tree is proposed for removal within the open space area to provide a footpath through the site, and open up the area to enable natural surveillance.

The open space area is subject to Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 365W (2005). Within this area, limited management is proposed to ensure the character and protected trees are retained.

A detailed Landscaping Masterplan prepared by DEP and a Woodland Management Plan prepared by Mulberry has been submitted to accompany this planning application. This report states that:

“The proposed development has sought from its inception to create a very high quality and publicly accessible open space area within the wooded part of the site. This area is currently undeveloped and heavily wooded. This character will be retained, whilst the opportunity provided to share this with future and existing residents. This is supported by Development Management Policy SIE -1, Quality Places. The Landscaping Masterplan identifies the detailed proposals. These include hard and soft boundary treatments to the site, appropriate planting within the site, green verges throughout the site to achieve ‘green links’ through the development as a whole.

The public open space area has been designed to improve quality and accessibility. Where currently the application site is inaccessible to the public and the wooded area unmanaged, the proposed development directly addresses this to promote ongoing and well planned management as well as vastly improved public access.”

The Landscape Strategy document and attached Landscape Masterplan show comprehensive landscaping proposals for across the site with significant new tree planting particularly around the boundaries of the site, along with proposed native screen planting, ornamental planting, evergreen and native hedge mixes, grassed areas and the protection and maintenance of existing trees, shrubs and understorey vegetation.

The Arboricultural Officer notes the submitted reports and landscape proposals and subject to the inclusion of appropriately worded conditions raises no concerns about the development. A request was made for further trees to be planted within the footway on Didsbury Road to further enhance the appearance of the site. However, it was confirmed by Highways that this would not be supported by them due to the impact these would have on visibility splays to and for drivers emerging from the new junction.

In view of the above, in the absence of objections from the Arboricultural Officer and subject to conditional control, the proposal is considered acceptable with regard to its impact on trees and to the provision of good quality landscaping across the site, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policies SIE-1 and SIE-3.

Impact on Protected Species and Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been submitted in support of the application. The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Nature Development Officer are contained within the Consultee Responses section above.

It is noted that the site has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey and daytime bat roost assessment survey has been carried out and habitats on site were mapped and the potential for protected species to be present was assessed. Habitats on site are dominated by amenity grassland and hard standing/bare ground with areas of tall ruderal vegetation and shrubs. An area of broadleaved woodland (which is a Local BAP Priority Habitat) is located in the west of the application area.

The Habitat survey submitted in support of the application confirms that the buildings were subject to an internal and external inspection survey for bats (Buildings 1a, 1b, 2-7). No internal access was possible for Building 7, however this is a prefabricated building with no roost access opportunities for bats noted and so this is not considered to significantly affect the assessment. In general the buildings were found to be well sealed and any gaps were found to be shallow and/or densely cobwebbed (indicating no recent use by bats). The buildings on site were assessed as offering negligible potential to support roosting bats. No potential bat roosting features were observed within the trees on site.

Nevertheless, the applicant will be advised of the potential for bats to be present on the site, the legislation in place to protect biodiversity and procedures to follow should bats or other protected species be discovered on site by way of informative. In relation to birds, a condition is recommended to prevent any demolition or vegetation clearance during the bird breeding season, unless it can be demonstrated that no birds would be harmed and/or appropriate mitigation measures are in place to protect nesting birds.

Records for badger exist in the vicinity and the site offers suitable foraging habitat for badgers. Badgers and their setts are legally protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. The extended phase 1 survey report states that two mammal holes were found within the area of broadleaved woodland. The mammal holes were assessed as being currently inactive due to presence of leaf litter and overgrown vegetation. A single badger hair was recorded within one of the holes which would indicate that this hole may be a disused badger sett. No other evidence of badger activity was recorded within the site.

Ecological conditions can change overtime. If works have not commenced within 2 years of the bat inspection survey (i.e. by May 2021), an update survey will be required prior to commencement of works. This is to ensure that the impact assessment is based on sufficiently up-to-date survey data. This update survey can be secured via a suitably worded condition.

Invasive species, in the form of Montbretia and wall Cotoneaster, were recorded within the application site. As such, a condition is recommended to require the submission and approval of an invasive non-native species protocol, to detail the containment, control and removal of these invasive species on the site.

Further conditions are recommended by the Nature Development Officer to require the provision of biodiversity enhancements and locally native species within the proposed landscaping scheme; to require the provision of gaps within any proposed boundary treatment to maintain habitat connectivity; and to ensure that any proposed external lighting is sensitively designed to minimise adverse impacts on wildlife.

In view of the above, in the absence of objections from the Council Nature Development Officer and subject to the imposition of suitably worded planning conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable with regard to its impact on protected species, biodiversity and the ecological interest of the site, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policy SIE-3.

Land Contamination

The information submitted with the planning application outlines that the site history indicates the ground is low risk in terms of contamination. However, the

applicant is aware through correspondence received through the earlier EIA screening applications and the pre-application stage, that soil and gas surveys will be required to be undertaken and submitted prior to any development commencing on the site. The applicant has agreed to such appropriately worded conditions.

The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Environment Team are contained within the consultee responses section above. As expected, the Environment Team recommends the undertaking of the necessary reports for soil and gas. As such, it is recommended that conditions are imposed, which should be applied as a phased approach, to require the submission, approval and implementation of an investigation, risk assessment, remediation scheme and remedial action into potential land contamination and landfill gas at the site.

Subject to compliance with such conditions, it is considered that the proposed development would not be at risk from land contamination or landfill gas migration, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policies CS8 and SIE-3.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Drainage Engineer/Lead Local Flood Authority and United Utilities are contained within the Consultee Responses section above.

Saved Policy EP1.7, Development and Flood Risk, controls development to require that any proposal is not at risk of flooding, does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, does not hinder access to watercourses, does not result in the loss of the flood plain or result in extensive culverting, affect existing flood defences, or significantly increase surface water runoff. This accords with Paragraph 163 of the NPPF, which relates to ensuring any planning application ensure vulnerable uses are located within the lowest areas of risk, and that proposals are flood resilient.

A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy prepared by WSP has been submitted to accompany this planning application. Whilst the application site is within Flood Zone 1, which is at a low risk of flooding, the application site is over 1ha and therefore requires the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment. Whilst the risk of flooding is low, the report recommends mitigation measures to account for climate change and a medium risk associated with the south of the site, and reports of waterlogging to the south west of the site. This approach accords with the requirements of Development Management Policy SD-6, Adapting to the Impacts of C climate Change. A number of mitigation measures are proposed within the report.

The sloping nature of the site is relevant to this issue, and the Report notes that the site slopes down 15m from north to south. This limits the potential use of SUDs. The report states that engineering of site levels should ensure surface water flow is directed away from buildings, and the detailed design will require a drainage system with adequate capacity and storage to managed site runoff together with increases expected as a result of climate change. The layout of the proposed development has been designed with the sequential approach in mind, with the lowest part of the site to the south designated for water compatible usage as open space. In addition, the design and levels mean that water will drain away from entrances to the proposed buildings.

In raising no objections to the proposal, both the Drainage Engineer/Lead Local Flood Authority and United Utilities acknowledge that appropriate drainage of the development could be secured by conditional control. This would require foul and surface water to be drained on separate systems; the submission, approval and implementation of an appropriate surface water drainage system; and management and maintenance of such a drainage system at all times thereafter.

Subject to compliance with such conditions, it is considered that the proposed development could be drained in a sustainable and appropriate manner without the risk of flooding elsewhere, in accordance with saved UDP policy EP1.7 and Core Strategy DPD policies SD-6 and SIE-3.

Noise and Air Quality

A Noise Assessment completed by Echo Acoustics has been submitted to accompany the application. The report assesses the impact of existing noise levels on the occupiers of the proposed development and due to the location of the site on a main road (Didsbury Road) Plots 1 to 10 will require mitigation measures to ensure the relevant internal noise levels are met. These measures include uprated glazing for both living room and bedroom windows for those closest to and directly or obliquely facing Didsbury Road. For all properties from Unit 11 onwards, standard glazing and ventilation strategies will suffice.

The Council's EHO has considered this report and advises that there will be no adverse impact arising in relation to noise in relation to the existing or future occupiers. Environmental Health are satisfied with the recommendations of the report subject to the inclusion of an appropriately worded condition approving the details within the report and stating the development should be built in accordance with the recommendations made.

In relation to Air Quality, and Air Quality Assessment completed by Miller Goodhall has been submitted to accompany the application. This report concludes that the assessment considers whether the proposed development could significantly change air quality during the construction phase and occupation phases. With the implementation of mitigation measures, the dust impacts from the construction are considered to be not significant, in accordance with IAQM guidance.

The suitability of the site for residential receptors with regards to air quality was considered. Concentrations of NO₂ and PM₁₀ are likely to be below their respective long and short-term objectives at the proposed development site, which is therefore considered suitable for residential use with regards to air quality. The traffic associated with this development is not expected to have a significant impact on local air quality when considered in accordance with IAQM Guidance.

The submitted assessment was considered by the EHO and it has been confirmed that they are happy with its findings and conclusions. However, it is recommended that the dust mitigation measures in Appendix D of the report for demolition, earthworks, construction and track out phases of the development are followed. Therefore, a suitably worded condition is recommended to ensure that a detailed Demolition and construction management plan is submitted for approval to the Local Authority to demonstrate how the developer will mitigate the effects of dust on existing residents in the area prior to the commencement of any development, including demolition, at the site.

Designing out Crime

Policies H1 and SIE1 of the Core Strategy together with para's 117 and 127 of the NPPF seek to ensure that developments create safe living conditions. The applicant is required to include a Crime Impact Statement (CIS) with the application. This report is compiled by GMP Design for Security who then offer their comments on the proposals in this respect once the application is submitted. The CIS advises that:-

“ The site is located in a neighbourhood with a moderate volume of recorded crime, although the burglary rate and targeting of houses around the edges of the site does raise some concerns. However, given the constraints of the site, the development is well-laid out from a crime prevention perspective and the mix of housing appropriate.

Consequently, there are only a few recommendations to improve the scheme. Those that are included relate to:

- security quality of the doors, windows frames and glazing;*
- inclusion of windows in gable elevations of plots 01 and 28;*
- front door positions of type C houses;*
- boundary fencing & gates securing the rear gardens, with particular reference to plot 20 & 21- 28;*
- measures to prevent parking on roadside verges; and,*
- boundaries to, and the management and maintenance of the public open space.*

Overall, we are happy to support the proposals. At the planning application stage, Greater Manchester Police Design for Security will make representations to Stockport Council to require the inclusion of a condition requiring the completed development to achieve Secured by Design, SBD, accreditation. Should the recommendations included in this report be adopted, I have every confidence that the scheme will achieve the award and the condition met.”

In responding to the application, GMP advise that they have no objection to the application subject to compliance with the CIS. It should also be noted that further changes have been made to the proposed site layout to address the comments made in the CIS, including the insertion of windows into the side elevations of Plots 1 and 28, the redesign of the C Type houses and changes to boundary treatments as requested.

On this basis, the proposed development by reason of its design and layout will minimise the opportunity for criminal behaviour and as such accords with policies H1 and SIE1 of the Core Strategy together with para's 117 and 127 of the NPPF.

Energy Efficiency

As the proposed development is for more than 10 residential units, it triggers the Council's carbon reduction targets, as defined by Core Strategy DPD policy SD-3. Therefore, an Energy Statement has been submitted in support of the application.

The Sustainability Checklist submitted with the application addresses the requirements of Core Strategy policy SD3 together with para 153 of the NPPF. The options explored in the checklist are dependent upon further investigations

and discussions with specialist sub-contractors, and the proposals will be developed during detailed design and consultation with the Building Inspector to meet the Building Regulations Part L1A and Policy CS1.

The Energy Statement confirms that there is the potential for energy efficiency measures to be incorporated within the fabric of the buildings, in order to comply with current Building Regulations. With regard to low and zero carbon technologies, the use of solar photovoltaics and solar thermal hot water could also be considered within the development.

On this basis, and subject to the compliance with a condition to submit further information in relation to energy efficient, the development is considered to be compliant with the requirements of Core Strategy DPD policy SD-3.

Developer Contributions

As outlined in full detail in the report above, a S106 agreement will be attached to any approval relating to the delivery of affordable housing on the site in compliance with Core Strategy DPD policy H-3, the Provision of Affordable Housing SPG, and the NPPF. The legal agreement will also secure a monetary contribution towards the provision of replacement or improved sports facilities to mitigate the loss of the existing sports pitch on the site, and the provision and maintenance of formal recreation and children's play space and facilities within the Borough to meet the need of residents of the proposed development

CONCLUSION

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF establishes three dimensions to sustainable development – economic, social and environmental and Paragraph 8 of the NPPF indicates that these should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

The proposed redevelopment of this site will result in the loss of a community facility, Local Open Space (LOS) and a sports pitch. The loss of the community has been justified through the demonstrating of exceptional circumstances and as such this aspect of the development is compliant with UDP Review policy CTF1.1. The applicant has sought to justify the loss of the LOS and sports pitch through the limited value of the existing LOS, the provision of public open space on site and the enhancement of sporting provision within the Heaton and Reddish area through a monetary contribution. The proposal is therefore considered to be compliant to policies UOS1.3, CTF1.4 and L1.1 of the UDP Review and para 97 of the NPPF.

The location of the site is within a Predominantly Residential Area and as referred to at the start of this analysis, the fact that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing means that elements of Core Strategy policies CS4 and H2 are considered to be out of date. As such the tilted balance in favour of the residential redevelopment of the site as set out in para 11 of the NPPF is engaged. The application site predominantly comprises a brownfield site in an accessible area and the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes is also in accordance with para 118 of the NPPF which places substantial weight upon the use of brownfield land within settlements for homes and supporting opportunities to remediate derelict land.

It is considered that the siting, scale and design of the proposed development could be successfully accommodated on the site without causing undue harm to the visual amenity of the area or the residential amenity of surrounding properties. In the absence of objections from relevant consultees and subject to conditional control, the proposal is considered acceptable with regard to the issues of traffic generation, parking and highway safety; impact on trees; impact on protected species and ecology; flood risk and drainage; land contamination; and energy efficiency.

In view of the above, notwithstanding the site allocation of part of the application site as Local Open Space and the fact that approval of the development would constitute a departure from the development plan, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development. On this basis, notwithstanding the objection raised to the proposal, in accordance with the requirements of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS AND S106 AGREEMENT

HEATONS AND REDDISH AREA COMMITTEE (30/09/20)

The Planning Officer introduced the application and highlighted the pertinent issues of the proposal.

The Planning Officer provided a verbal update on the one additional representation received since the publication of the report to the Committee. This was summarised as follows:

It is believed that the proposed development would damage the local area for a variety of reasons including;

- traffic issues,
- detrimental changes to the character of the area,
- overlooking of the Briars Mount estate,
- the misrepresentation of the nature areas delivered as part of the Briars Mount development,
- the impact of carrying out the development in terms of dust, movements of earth, noise and vibrations,
- drainage issues,
- the loss of a local community amenity, and
- wildlife impacts.

The objection concludes that this proposal brings nothing advantageous to the area, it will do a lot of harm, it should be rejected, and the building should be put to good use for the benefit of the local community. It is not felt that there are “exceptional” circumstances, and it is not felt that a modest financial contribution to sports facilities elsewhere in Stockport is any compensation for the loss of local facilities in this area. Finally, it is not considered that the proposal meets the objectives of sustainable development as defined on NPPF Paragraph 8.

Members sought clarification from the Planning Officer on the following points:

- Requesting a list of projects on the Formal Sports Priority List within the Heaton and Reddish Area based on concerns that the £60,000 contribution was going outside the immediate area;

The Officer responded to say that it was not possible for the list of projects on the formal sports priority list to be provided at the meeting, however it could be provided for Councillors following the meeting if required.

- Reassurances about the safety of the proposed vehicular access onto Didsbury Road due to concerns over highway safety;

The Officer responded to say that the application had been submitted with a Transport Assessment, which had been fully assessed by the Highways Engineer. The use of this existing access by the former school was also a key consideration. The applicants had responded to all the issues raised throughout the application process by Highways and the proposed access onto Didsbury Road was considered to be acceptable and not a detriment to highway safety.

- Query about the possible removal of existing trees along the site boundary with properties on Tennyson Close due to their impact on existing residents;

The Officer responded to say that that there would be an appropriately worded condition about the upgrade/management of the woodland areas and the possibility of removing some trees if appropriate, could be reviewed at the discharge of condition stage.

- Query why the woodland areas in the south western area of the site have been included within the open space provision for this development, when these actually form part of the open space provision on the Briars Mount estate;

The officer responded to say that although these areas are shown on the submitted plans, they have not been included in the calculations for the provision of on and off site open space, children's play and formal sports facilities in this case.

- Clarification was requested in relation to who would be responsible for the maintenance of the woodland areas (wetland & informal play area);

The officer responded to state that the applicant has confirmed these will not be adopted by the Council for future maintenance and would be maintained by a management company.

- Further clarification was then sought in relation to if it was possible for a condition to be included that could enforce the proper maintenance of these areas in the future, based on the history of poor maintenance of the public open spaces on the adjacent Briars Mount estate;

The officer responded to say this was possible and it was requested that the wording of such a condition was circulated to Committee Members for their consideration prior to the application being presented to the Planning & Highways Regulation Committee.

- Clarification was required in relation to drainage issues relating to the wetland area and is this is flood risk;

The officer responded to say that the application had been submitted with a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy and this had been assessed by the Council's drainage officer. Relevant drainage conditions could be applied to ensure that appropriate works are completed as part of the development to alleviate future flooding risks.

There were no members of the public present speaking against the application.

The agent for the application then addressed Committee in support of the application. They advised Members that the applicant is a charity and not a developer, and their aim was to leave a positive legacy on the site that was fully policy compliant. The site is currently very closed off from the surrounding community by the tall boundary wall on Didsbury Road and the development replaces this by opening up the site with well designed homes and open spaces. The agent added further information in response to the questions raised by Members in the officers questions, particularly in relation to the open space. The inclusion of the adjacent woodland areas was to improve connectivity from the site and within the wider area and open up what is currently an enclosed site.

The agent confirmed that the wetland habitat area does not form part of the drainage strategy for the site, this is in fact proposed within the area of open space being provided to the rear of Plots 21-28. The wetland area is proposed to be an ecology hub with a boardwalk and information signs to provide the local community with a valuable space they can enjoy. This is in addition to the monetary contributions being made by the applicant towards replacement sports facilities, children's play and formal sport off site.

The agent concluded to say that the applicant has worked very hard to resolve any issues raised through the application process and that from 40 attendees at the community engagement event, only 3 letters of objection have been received, which shows how proactive the applicants have been to work with stakeholders and local residents.

Members sought further clarification from the agent on the following matters:

- The amount of the commuted sum being delivered through the S106 agreement;

The agent confirmed this was approx. £191,000 for children's play and formal sport with the addition of the £60,000 required by Sport England to mitigate the loss of the sports pitch at the site.

- What consideration was taken to the views over the Cheshire plains when putting the development together;

The agent confirmed that this formed a significant part of the design process for the site and resulted in a number of features being proposed to protect and improve these views, even though there is no right to a view in planning terms. This was raised by residents at the community engagement events and now include lowering the front boundary wall, creating larger gaps between the new properties and setting the properties back and down from the site frontage to retain and improve these views. The landscaping of the site was also key to the design process and softening the necessary retaining structures needed within the site due to the steep gradients.

- Request for contact to be made with residents on Tennyson Close about the issue of the existing trees and the impacts these are having on residents;

The agent confirmed that this was possible.

Members then debated the application further. The comments made were in relation to the following matters:

- Housing is an appropriate use;
- Would have preferred a lower density;
- Welcomed that the eaves heights have been lowered to improve views;
- Classification of the site in planning terms as a community facility is a misnomer due to actual use by people far and wide and not within the local community;
- Classification of the open space and a sports pitch is also a misnomer due to the closed site and gradient;
- Formal request for either a condition or legal agreement to be included in relation to the ongoing maintenance of the woodland areas;
- Lot of merit in this development as the Borough does need housing;
- Support the principle of the commuted sum being spent locally to the site and disappointed that the replacement sports facilities will not be more local;
- Concerns about the safety of the main entrance into the site and cars travelling from Heaton Moor, turning left onto Didsbury Road and then doing a quick U-turn into the site;
- Happy about the views over the Cheshire plains;
- Welcome the proposals for the delivery of affordable housing on the site;
- Concerns over the watercourse and site drainage; and
- Happy to support the application subject to the conditions that have been discussed.

Therefore, it was unanimously resolved to refer the application to the Planning and Highways Regulation Committee with a recommendation to grant subject to the requested conditions.