

## **ITEM**

<b>Application Reference</b>	<b>DC/071417</b>
<b>Location:</b>	Stockport Interchange Chestergate Stockport SK1 1NP
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Hybrid Application seeking:-  1) Full planning permission for construction of a replacement bus interchange with associated retail and cafe units, creation of public park with ancillary works and creation of an elevated 15 storey residential/commercial building comprising of 196 flats (1 and 2 bed) and creation of units totalling circa 779sq.m of commercial floorspace , along with the temporary re-development of Heaton Lane car park as a bus station/depot, and;  2) Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved for subsequent approval, for the creation of interconnecting bridge between the new public park and Station Road.
<b>Type Of Application:</b>	Full Application
<b>Registration Date:</b>	14.11.2018
<b>Expiry Date:</b>	13.02.2019
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Mark Jordan
<b>Applicant:</b>	Transport for Greater Manchester & Stockport MBC
<b>Agent:</b>	WSP

## **DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS**

Planning & Highways Regulations Committee decision– Strategic application comprising over 100 residential units & site area of 5 hectares

The views of both the Heaton & Reddish and Stockport Central Area Committees are requested, in order that these can be reported to the Planning & Highways Regulations Committee.

## **DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT**

This proposal is a hybrid application which seeks both outline and full planning permission for the re-development the existing bus interchange, together with land off Daw Bank / Exchange Street and an existing surface level car park at Heaton Lane.

Members will also be advised that a standalone application (ref. DC/071509) has also been lodged with the Council seeking Listed Building Consent for the creation of multiple access points between the Grade II listed structure of Wellington Bridge and the proposed rooftop park.

A separate report assessing the Listed Building Consent application is to be considered on the same agenda as the hybrid application (full and outline permission).

With regard to the current hybrid application, the element seeking full planning permission comprises, the following:-

- 1) Covered Interchange Facility - The demolition of the existing bus interchange and the construction of a new covered interchange facility, circa 5808 sq.m, to include northern and southern concourse buildings, providing public facilities including food and beverage opportunities, as well as staff services, operator accommodation and retail (Use Class A1) floorspace . The replacement interchange will include 14 bus stands and up to 9 layover/coach bays, together with facilities for secure bicycle storage. The proposed replacement interchange would accommodate both existing local bus services and well as regional / national coach services;
- 2) Public Park - The interchange facility would predominantly have an overall roof height of approx. 9m above ground level (excluding the pedestrian stairwell / link to the public park situated at roof top level). This equates to 52m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) and will form a public park of approximately 7822 sq.m. The proposed layout of the park includes an oculus at its centre, measuring approx. 40m wide and 90m in length, designed to provide natural light and ventilation to the bus interchange at lower levels. The park will comprise areas of both hard and soft landscaping including the planting of 185 trees, lawned areas, children's play areas together with associated street furniture, artwork installations and lighting. Means of enclosure include an internal wall around the oculus and an outer perimeter wall, both of which would be 1.3m in height. The park will provide pedestrian access to the lower level Interchange, as well as to Wellington Bridge, the Mersey Riverside area and Stockport Railway Station.
- 3) A new mixed use residential and commercial development - is proposed adjacent to the replacement interchange building, with access provided from Daw Bank. The building would comprise 17 storeys, with an overall height of circa 59m above ground level (equivalent to 108m AOD). The building would include 23 car parking spaces, of which 20 would be marked disabled bays split across 2 basement levels, as well as secure bicycle storage. Commercial accommodation, of 5 units totalling circa 779sq.m of floorspace, would be provided at ground floor level, with 196 residential apartments (70 x 1 bed and 126 x 2 bed) split across the remaining 14 storeys;
- 4) A new area of public realm covering adjacent to the River Mersey approximately 1963 sq.m, is proposed. This public open space will provide seating areas and linked facilities, such as an event space and a nature walk, as well as providing improved access, with National Cycle Network Route 62 being accommodated along the Interchange edge and connectivity to the riverside area and existing footpaths.
- 5) A temporary bus station facility is proposed on the site of the existing Heaton Lane surface level car park, so as to ensure on-going bus passenger services

during the construction phase of the replacement interchange. The temporary facility will incorporate 6 bus bays and a double length layover bay.

A comprehensive scheme of access arrangements and public realm works is included as part of the full application element, as detailed earlier in this report and as illustrated on the attached drawings.

The proposal would form a key driver in delivering various aspects of the Council's Town Centre Masterplan, in terms of encouraging mixed use development within the Town Centre, providing strong gateway entry points, improved access / connectivity to and use of high quality public open spaces, including riverside areas and the wider public realm.

The proposed interchange, public open space and mixed use (commercial / residential tower) elements of the application are considered to represent an innovative design which seeks to deliver a high quality development which sensitively addresses the location of the site adjacent to a number of key heritage assets and seeks to minimise harm in this regard.

The proposal seeks to create a high quality residential offer at the heart of the town centre in an urban location, by seeking to make the most efficient use of a site which is located in a highly sustainable location.

The drawings attached to this planning report represent the best way for Members to appreciate and consider the physical impact of the proposal seeking full planning permission, in terms of its layout, scale, appearance, means of access and landscaping.

The outline element of the hybrid application seeks permission for the principle of the provision of a pedestrian bridge over Daw Bank, linking with the proposed Interchange. Whilst indicative drawings setting out the parameters of the proposed bridge accompany the application, all matters are reserved for future approval via detailed reserved matters applications.

Since the hybrid application was originally submitted and consulted on, one of the outline elements which related to the provision of B1(a) office space and associated parking, has subsequently been removed from the proposal. Therefore the outline element that now remains to be considered is limited to the provision of the pedestrian bridge.

As part of the submission, details of the extent of public engagement carried out as part of the evolution of the proposal have been provided. In summary an extensive public engagement exercise was carried out over a 4 week period. This included public exhibitions, together with a development survey distributed to over 8000 local residents and made available online.

A total of 330 individuals and organisations completed the online survey. In total, the findings of the public engagement exercise was that 72% of respondents supported the proposal, with 18% opposing the development.

In addition to the extensive number of detailed drawings and indicative / parameter plans provided with the hybrid application, the proposal has also been accompanied by a large number of supporting reports which are listed below:-

- Air Quality Assessment;
- Airport Safeguarding Information;
- Bank Survey Assessment;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal;
- Contaminated Land;
- Crime Impact Statement;
- Daylight & Sunlight Assessment;
- Design & Access Statement;
- Energy Statement(s) for both the Interchange and residential elements;
- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Heritage Assessment (Built Environment);
- Heritage Assessment (Archaeology);
- Home Quality Mark Assessment;
- Geotechnical Reports;
- Lighting Impact Assessment;
- Noise Impact Assessment;
- Planning Statement;
- Project Public Engagement Report;
- Sustainability Strategy;
- Travel Plan;
- Transport Statement;
- Tunnel Assessment;
- Tree Survey;
- Ventilation / Extraction details;
- Viability Appraisal;
- Wind Assessment

## **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

In total the hybrid application covers approximately 5 hectares, split into two distinct sites.

The first site comprises the bus interchange and Daw Bank / Exchange Street, which covers approximately 4.5 hectares, with the second site comprising Heaton Lane surface car park covering 0.5 hectares.

The first and larger site is irregular in shape, with the River Mersey forming the northern boundary, Swaine Street, the Railway Viaduct and Stockport Railway Station form the western edge of the site, with Station Road denoting the southern-most site boundary. The eastern edge of the site runs from the junction with Mersey Square and Chestergate, along Daw Bank adjacent to the Hatworks Museum before heading south and intersecting Exchange Street, adjacent to the Telecom Exchange building.

The site is varied in character, but is predominantly defined by the existing bus station and surrounding commercial / industrial buildings, with some residential accommodation also evident.

Ground levels predominantly rise across the site when travelling in a southerly direction from the River Mersey, whilst the A6 is set at an elevated level to the east.

Numerous heritage assets exist both within and directly adjacent to the site. Specifically the Grade II listed Wellington Bridge (A6) crosses the north-eastern corner of the larger site, as does the St Peter's Conservation Area which also extends to include parts of the site along Daw Bank. In addition the following buildings / areas exist adjacent to or in close proximity to the site boundaries:

- 1) Grade II\* listed Railway Viaduct
- 2) Grade II\* listed Former Plaza Cinema
- 3) Grade II listed steps adjacent to Former Plaza Cinema
- 4) Grade II listed Weir Mill
- 5) Grade II listed Wellington Mill
- 6) Locally listed Stockport Railway Station
- 7) Locally Listed Mersey Square Bear Pit
- 8) Locally Listed Upstairs & Downstairs PH
- 9) St Peter's Conservation Area

The second and smaller site is roughly rectangular in shape, flat and comprises the existing Heaton Lane surface car park. A multi-storey car park falls beyond the northern site boundary, whilst the A6 lays to the east. Heaton Lane falls to the south and the western site boundary is defined by Gas Street and the adjacent Grade II\* listed Railway Viaduct. The locally listed George PH and the Crown Inn PH exist in close proximity to the east and west of the site respectively.

The Site Location Plan appended to this report gives an overview of the development site(s) and their wider context within the Town Centre setting.

## **POLICY BACKGROUND**

The site lies within the Town Centre and M60 Gateway as defined on the Proposals Map of the adopted Local Development Framework (UDP Proposals Map DPD).

The majority of the Heaton Lane and Interchange site(s) fall within TCG3.1 'Riverside', with the exception of a small part of the scheme which relates to land to the east of the A6 at the junction with Mersey Square. This falls within TCG2.1 'Central Shopping Area'. The outline element of the proposal around Exchange Street and up to Station Road falls within TCG3.2 'Cultural Leisure and Heritage Quarter'.

A significant proportion of the Interchange site falls within Flood Zone 2, whilst the Exchange Street and Heaton Lane car park elements are situated in Flood Zone 1.

The buildings, structures and areas which form heritage assets are fully set out in the 'Site and Surroundings' section of this planning report.

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 31<sup>st</sup> 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

## **Saved policies of the SUDP Review**

TCG1 - TOWN CENTRE/M60 GATEWAY  
TCG1.1 COMMUNITY AND CIVIC SPACE  
TCG1.2 - TOWN CENTRE/M60 GATEWAY TRANSPORT HUB  
TCG1.3 - PARKING IN THE TOWN CENTRE  
TCG1.4 - SUSTAINABLE ACCESS IN THE TOWN CENTRE  
TCG1.5 - IMPACT ON THE M60 MOTORWAY  
TCG2.1 – CENTRAL SHOPPING AREA  
TCG3.1 - RIVERSIDE  
TCG3.2 - CULTURAL, LEISURE AND HERITAGE QUARTER  
HC1.1 – DEMOLITION AND TREE FELLING IN CONSERVATION AREAS  
HC1.3 - SPECIAL CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS  
EP1.7 - DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK  
EP1.9 – SAFEGUARDING OF AERODROMES AND AIR NAVIGATION FACILITIES  
EP1.10 – AIRCRAFT NOISE  
E1.2 - LOCATION OF NEW BUSINESS PREMISES AND OFFICES  
L1.1 – LAND FOR ACTIVE RECREATION  
L1.2 – CHILDREN’S PLAY  
L1.7 – RECREATION ROUTES: Maintenance and expansion of network  
L1.8 – STRATEGIC RECREATION ROUTES  
L1.9 – RECREATION ROUTES AND NEW DEVELOPMENT  
L1.11 – DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO RECREATION ROUTES  
MW1.5 – CONTROL OF WASTE FROM DEVELOPMENT

## **LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies**

CS1 - OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
SD1- CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES  
SD3 - DELIVERING THE ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES PLANS - NEW DEVELOPMENT  
SD6 - 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  
CS5 - ACCESS TO SERVICES  
CS6 - SAFEGUARDING AND STRENGTHENING THE SERVICE CENTRE HIERARCHY  
AS-1 - THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF STOCKPORTS SERVICE CENTRES  
AS-3 - MAIN TOWN CENTRE USES, HOT FOOD TAKEAWAYS AND PRISON DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE EXISTING CENTRES  
CS7 - ACCOMMODATING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AED1 - EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN CENTRE AND M60 GATEWAY  
AED-5 - EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING PROVISION  
AED-6 - EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE PROTECTED EMPLOYMENT AREAS  
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  
CS10 AN EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT NETWORK  
T-1 TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT  
T-2 PARKING AND DEVELOPMENT  
T-3 SAFETY AND CAPACITY ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK  
CS11 - STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE  
TC1 - STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE

### **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. The following are of relevance to the current application:-

Local Employment and Training Benefits SPD  
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD  
Sustainable Transport SPD  
Design of Residential Development SPD  
Recreational Open Space Provision and Commuted Sums LAP DPD  
Town Centre Housing SPD  
Town Centre Masterplan SPD  
Recreational Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments SPG  
Affordable Housing SPG

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) initially published on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012, subsequently revised and published on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The revised National Planning Policy Framework will be a vital tool in 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.

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 57 *“Where up-to-date policies have set out the contributions expected from development, planning applications that comply with them should be assumed to be viable. It is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the application stage. The weight to be given to a viability assessment is a matter for the decision maker, having regard to all the circumstances in the case, including whether the plan and the viability evidence underpinning it is up to date, and any change in site circumstances since the plan was brought into force. All viability assessments, including any undertaken at the plan-making stage, should reflect the recommended approach in national planning guidance, including standardised inputs, and should be made publicly available”.*



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 64 *“Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. Exemptions to this 10% requirement should also be made where the site or proposed development:*

- a) provides solely for Build to Rent homes;*
- b) provides specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose-built accommodation for the elderly or students);*
- c) is proposed to be developed by people who wish to build or commission their own homes; or*
- d) is exclusively for affordable housing, an entry-level exception site or a rural exception site.*

Para 80 *“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.”*

Para 85 *“Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should:*

- a) define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters;*
- b) define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre;*
- c) retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones;*
- d) allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed, looking at least ten years ahead. Meeting anticipated needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses over this period should not be compromised by limited site availability, so town centre boundaries should be kept under review where necessary;*
- e) where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available for main town centre uses, allocate appropriate edge of centre sites that are well connected to the town centre. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, policies should explain how identified needs can be met in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre; and*
- f) recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites”.*

Para 91 *“Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:*

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and*
- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling”.*

Para 92 *“To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services”.*

Para 96 *“Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities ...”*

Para 98 *“Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails”.*

Para 102 *“Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*

- a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
- b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
- e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places”.*

Para 103 *"The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making".*

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 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 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.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.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.153 states *“In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:*

*a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and*

*b) take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption”.*

Para 163 *“When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere ... “.*

Para 165 *“Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. The systems used should:*

*a) take account of advice from the lead local flood authority;*

*b) have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards;*

*c) have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development; and*

*d) where possible, provide multifunctional benefits”.*

Para 175 *“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*

*a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*

*b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*

*c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*

*d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity*

*Para 189 “In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.*

*Para 190 “Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal”.*

*Para 192 “In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness”.*

*Para 193 “When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance”.*

*Para 194 “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional”.*

*Para 195 “Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss*

*is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use”.*

*Para 196 “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”.*

*Para 197 “The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset”.*

*Para 198 “Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.*

*Para 199 “Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible<sup>64</sup>. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted”.*

*Para 202 “Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.*

*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**

Given the extensive size of the application site, a significant number of planning applications exist which relate to various parts of the development site. The most relevant decisions issued post 2000 can be summarised as:-

DC/061476; Address: The Arches, 1 Wellington Road South, Stockport, Stockport, SK4 1AA ; Proposal: Change of use from vacant nightclub and retail unit (Sui Generis) to a 20 en-suite bedroom licensed HMO (Sui Generis), alterations to elevations and erection of a single storey extension. Granted 29/07/16

DC/058692; Address: The Arches, 1 Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK4 1AA; Proposal: Change of use from vacant nightclub and retail unit (Sui Generis) to 11 residential units (C3) with associated external alterations. Granted 12/05/16.

DC/046122; Address: Met Cafe, 2 Stockport Bus Station, Stockport, SK1 1NU; Proposal: Change from A3 to A5 for dual purpose food outlet with sit-in and take away cafe. Additional door on side elevation. Granted 25/01/11

DC/053352; Address: McColls Kiosk No 1 At Bus Station, Mersey Square, Stockport, SK1 1NU; Proposal: Installation of anti-ram raid bollards. Granted 20/09/13

DC/062030; Address: Land Off Swaine Street, Chestergate, Astley Street And Heaton Lane, Stockport, Proposal: Proposed new Astley Street, River Mersey Road bridge including associated highway works. Granted 29/09/16

DC/015484; Type: FUL; Address: Wellington Road North, Stockport; Proposal: Pavement widening plus construction of associated supporting wall. Granted 15/07/14.

DC/005587; Address: Heaton Lane Multi-Storey Car Park, Heaton Lane, Stockport, Cheshire; Proposal: Re-roofing of 2 no. existing stairwells. Granted 10/01/02.

DC/013277; Address: Heaton Lane Car Park, Heaton Lane, Stockport, Cheshire; Proposal: Provision of additional public car park. Granted 11/12/03.

DC/004256; Type: FUL; Address: Wellington Mill, Wellington Road South, Stockport, Cheshire; Proposal: Retention of two additional flats on 2nd & 7th floors. Granted 08/08/01.

DC/029010; Address: Wellington Mill, Wellington Road South, Stockport; Proposal: Erection of fall arrest system to the chimney stack and alteration to one window. (Retrospective) (Listed Building Application). Granted 19/11/08.

DC/001468; Wellington Mill, Wellington Road South, Stockport. Proposal: Listed Building Consent sought for the painting of additional signs on to the existing chimney. Refused 21/08/00

DC/069834; Address: Stockport Interchange, Chestergate, Stockport, SK1 1NP, ; Proposal: Screening Opinion for the following development:-, , 1) A new covered bus interchange to include a northern and southern concourse building and operator accommodation, 2) A multi storey residential block of approximately 196 residential units, 3) External green areas and a hard landscaped public park, 4) Commercial units and offices on Exchange Street comprising three office blocks, 5) Construction of a pedestrian link bridge from the Interchange to the rail station, 6) Consolidated corridor arrangement along Swaine Street, 7) The external area of Heaton Lane car park is proposed to be used as a temporary bus station while the existing bus station is cleared and constructed, 8) Pedestrian and cycle routes via the proposed primary and secondary roads which will connect with the wider network. Environmental Impact Assessment Not required. 22/-6/18

DC/071509; Address: Stockport Interchange, Chestergate, Stockport, SK1 1NP, Proposal: Creation of new public staircase access from Wellington Bridge to a proposed bus interchange, together with ancillary works (Listed Building Consent). Currently un-determined.

DC/068530; Address: 1 Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK4 1AA; Proposal: Redevelopment of existing building, including partial demolition, to create a mixed-

use commercial (A1 or A2) and residential scheme comprising 14 apartments. Granted 10/09/18.

DC/059155; Address: Stockport Transport Interchange, Stockport; Proposal: Screening Opinion for the development of a Transport Interchange. Environmental Impact Assessment Not Required 05/08/15.

DC/003932; Address: Stockport Railway Station; Proposal: Erection of new station concourse building, new station platform and internal works to existing underbridge. Granted 13/09/01.

DC/005090; Address: T N Robinson Ltd, Daw Bank, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 0EH; Proposal: First floor office & wc extensions on existing flat roof. Granted 16/10/01.

DC/054978; Address: Grand Central / Stockport Exchange, Bounded By Railway Road, Station Road, Stockport Railway Station And Wellington Road South (A6), Stockport; Proposal: Hybrid application seeking:-, (1) full planning permission for the construction of an office building (Use Class B1) with ground floor commercial units (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 or B1), a hotel (Use Class C1), landscaping, areas of public realm and associated engineering and infrastructure works;; , (2) outline planning permission, with all matters reserved, for the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of office development (Use Class B1) with ground floor commercial units (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 or B1), a decked car park, landscaping, areas of public realm and associated engineering and infrastructure works. Granted 16/07/14.

DC/063213; Address: Stockport Exchange, Bounded By Railway Road,, Station Road, Stockport Railway Station And Wellington Road South (A6), Stockport. Proposal: Variation of condition 2 of DC058003 to allow for amendments to the approved hotel, office building and public realm works (Minor Material Amendment).; Granted 13/12/16.

DC/053364; Address: Grand Central Leisure Park, Railway Road, Stockport; Proposal: Screening opinion. Environmental Impact Assessment Not Required. 21/08/13.

DC/005543; Address: Stockport Grand Central Leisure Complex, Wellington Road South and Stopford House Car Park.; Proposal: Modification of existing legal agreement to cease the use of Stopford House car park by customers of Grand Central Leisure complex. Granted 28/11/02.

DC/042866; Address: 18, Gas Street, Stockport, SK4 1AQ; Proposal: Change of use of highway to forecourt & parking area and erection of gates (Retrospective). Granted 27/04/10.

DC/057154; Type: REG3; Address: A6 Wellington Road North, Stockport; Proposal: Planning application for the proposed widening to the A6. Including the creation of a dedicated bus layby and associated works at Wellington Road North / Heaton Lane, Stockport. Granted 03/02/15.

DC/057245; Address: Great Egerton Street and Heaton Lane, Stockport. Proposal: Creation of a new vehicle access into and out of Heaton Lane car park off Great Egerton Street and closure of the existing access on Heaton Lane. Granted 09/02/15

## **NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS**

The application has been the subject of extensive consultation with a total of 267 nearby properties being notified directly by letter. In addition the application has been advertised via multiple site notices and a press notice.



The expiry date of the notification period was 13/12/18. At the time of report preparation a total of 4 responses have been received.

Two representations make comments on the proposal as summarised below:-

- 1) Query what is proposed for the parking facility on Daw Bank;
- 2) Will additional parking be provided for the new apartment block?;
- 3) Query the impact of the apartment block on Wellington Mill in terms of over-shadowing and loss of view;
- 4) Clarification needed as to the duration of any construction works and any disruption that will affect residents of Wellington Mill;
- 5) Will any enhancements be made to the Wellington Mill building as a form of compensation;
- 6) Will residents of the proposed flats be allowed to apply for a town centre parking permit? If so will additional parking be provided to meet the additional demand?;
- 7) Parking near Wellington Mill is already difficult, with the proposal set to result in an increased demand for parking?

Two representations, one of which is on behalf of Stockport Heritage Trust, object to the proposal on the following summarised grounds:-

- 1) The Council's own application has been submitted to coincide with the Christmas holidays, when public scrutiny of planning applications would be at its lowest and when breakdowns in the planning portal are not corrected
- 2) The application combines two distinct and separate elements, that are not financially connected, with the unpopular residential tower embedded with the more popular bus interchange;
- 3) The 14 storey residential tower materially and detrimentally impacts the architectural and urban setting, and short and long range iconic views of the Grade II\* listed viaduct and nearby Grade II Hat Works Museum, which is one of the taller buildings of its era;
- 4) A public Inquiry should be called for the application;
- 5) If two separate full planning applications has been made (1 for the residential tower and 1 for the Interchange), the latter would have been supported as a much needed facility and anchor for the town centre;
- 6) The location, height, massing and other architectural aspects of the residential tower, impact on the local historic environment;
- 7) The residential tower raises impacts upon wind vectors and shading on the roof park and planting;
- 8) The designers of the scheme were architects of the Red Rock facility;

- 9) The submitted artistic impressions are un-realistic;
- 10) Concerns are expressed that the rooftop park will be seen as a wasteland, with the Council unable to maintain existing parks and greenspaces;
- 11) Concerns as to whether the bus station could be adequately ventilated;
- 12) The number of bus loading bays is reduced in the current scheme, raising how this would represent an improvement;
- 13) Alternative suggestions exist for revised schemes with either no residential tower or a block reduced in height to 7 storeys, with residential density to be provided in other housing developments planned in the local area;
- 14) The new apartment building will dwarf Wellington Mill, which will suffer significant loss of light and views of the iconic viaduct;
- 15) The apartment block is disproportionate in its size and location, which will harm the character of the local area, which is currently dominated Stockport Viaduct and Wellington Mill;
- 16) Clarity is needed regarding the current parking on Daw Bank

## **CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

### **Highway Engineer:**

It should be noted that the application follows on from application DC/062030, which proposed the construction of a new road and associated bridge between Chestergate and Heaton Lane and was approved in October 2016. This application, which is in the process of being implemented, was intended as the first stage of the redevelopment of the bus station as it will provide a new road connection between the site and the local highway network.

It should also be noted that the scheme has been designed to enable the extension of Metrolink into Stockport Town Centre, with a Metrolink stop provided on or near Swaine Street.

### **Bus Station Redevelopment**

The existing bus station is located within Stockport Town Centre, adjacent to Merseyway Shopping Centre and within reasonable walking distance of much of the town centre. The layout and design of the station, however, is dated, with the station made up of long narrow bus shelters located between the running lanes of the bus station. This results in safety and security issues, overcrowding, long walks between stops and passenger facilities, not all the station being covered and provides an environment that does not make bus use attractive. In addition, although Stockport Railway Station is less than 300m from the Bus Station (as the crow flies), there is a significant level change between the two facilities, the route is indirect and requires public transport users to cross two roads which do not benefit from controlled crossing facilities.

The proposed new interchange will provide bus users with a modern enclosed facility, with improve security, passenger and driver facilities (travel shop, WCs, café, driver accommodation etc.) and connections with the adjacent parts of the Town Centre. Bus users will also be separated from buses within the facility, improving safety and reducing the risk of conflict between pedestrians and buses. Once constructed, the proposed link bridge and associated pedestrian / cycle route, will significantly improve connectivity between the Bus Interchange and Railway Station, bringing benefits to public transport users. As such, I would support the redevelopment of the bus interchange and, in order to ensure that the benefits of the scheme are maximised, I would recommend that the scheme for the link bridge is progressed as soon as possible.

#### Impact on the highway network

A Transport Assessment (TA) has been submitted in support of the planning application which includes an assessment of the impact that the development will have on the local highway network. In summary, this reviews:

- 1) The impact that re-routing of existing bus services will have on the local highway network (although no new bus services will be introduced as part of the Interchange proposals, existing services will be re-routed as a result of the different access arrangements (all services would enter via Swaine Street, with services removed from Mersey Square)
- 2) The impact on the local highway network of the vehicle movements that would be generated by the proposed residential, commercial and office uses.

This assessment outlines that the proposed residential use would be expected to generate 31 vehicle movements during the AM peak and 43 during the PM peak, the proposed commercial uses in the residential building 35 vehicle movements during the AM peak and 43 during the PM peak and the proposed office use would be expected to generate 52 vehicle movements during the AM peak and 46 during the PM peak. This equates to 118 vehicle movements during the AM peak and 132 during the PM peak in total. These rates are based on the assumption that the commercial units would be used for a mixture of uses, such as a convenience store, gym and nursery. Such uses differ from those applied for (A1 retail and A3 food and drink) and I would not support the provision of a nursery due to the lack of drop-off / pick-up facilities. If the uses were to be A1 and A3, as proposed, and the A1 use was restricted to “convenience store” size, as I understand will be required, I would consider the trip rates for the commercial uses reasonably representative.

The impact of these vehicle movements on the local highway network and amended bus routing has then been assessed. The assessments, which review the impact once the development is fully constructed, are based on the year 2032 and assume all TCAP schemes are implemented and are complete. In summary, the modelling outlines the following:

Junction	Predicted impact
A6/Heaton Lane A6/Leyland Street	In 2032 the junction is predicted to operate over capacity without the development. The development would result in a slight worsening of the situation, although not significant, with queues increasing by up to 2 cars on the worse affected arms during the AM peak.

Heaton Lane/Astley Street	The junction is predicted to operate within capacity in 2032 and the development will have minimal impact
Swaine Street/Daw Bank/Exchange Street	The proposed junction is predicted to operate within capacity.
Interchange Access:	The proposed signals at the access should not cause queues back to the Daw Bank junction.
Mersey Square/Chestergate	In 2032 the junction is predicted to operate within capacity without the development during the AM peak but slightly over capacity during the PM peak, with queues of around 12 vehicles on Mersey Square and 11 vehicles on Daw Bank. With development, the junction is still predicted to operate within capacity during the AM peak. During the PM peak, the development would result in a slight worsening of the situation, although queues would only likely extend back by a further vehicle.
A6/Exchange St/ St Petersgate	The junction is predicted to continue to operate within capacity in 2032 with development.
Daw Bank/King St West/ Wood St	In 2032 the junction is predicted to operate over capacity without the development. The development would result in a slight worsening of the situation, with queues increasing by 2-3 cars on the worse affected arms
Daw Bank car park access	The access is predicted to operate within capacity

The TA therefore concludes that the development will have a minimal impact on the local highway network.

TfGM have outlined that the updated LINSIG modelling that has been provided is acceptable at this stage / to allow the application to be assessed, although there would be a need for further modelling work to be carried out to ensure that proposed new and amended signal controlled junctions and crossings function in the most efficient manner possible, which minimises queues and delays. This could be done as part of the detailed design of the junctions and crossings and therefore dealt with by condition.

They have also confirmed the need for the SCOOT (the system which controls the timings of traffic signals) to be revalidated for the junctions in the area, outlining that the revalidation of SCOOT will help to mitigate the increased delay as a result of the increased traffic flows and changes in traffic patterns resulting from the development. This, they outline, will ensure that the network operates as efficiently as possible to ensure that congestion is minimised. This could also be dealt with by condition.

As such, I can confirm that the additional assessment work carried out demonstrates that the impact that the development will have on the network would not be significant, nor will it be of a level that would justify a recommendation of refusal. This, however, is subject to detailed design of the signal controlled junctions and crossings and revalidation of SCOOT in the area.

In addition, the proposals will require buses travelling from the west to be rerouted from Port Street, Prince's Street and Mersey Square. At present buses use a nearside bus lane on Great Egerton Street as part of this route. As they will be

rerouted along Great Egerton Street and Heaton Lane, the bus lane on Great Egerton Street will need to be reviewed. Details of how this will be done are not included in the TA and therefore this will need to be agreed at detailed design stage and therefore a condition will need to be imposed on any permission granted relating to this.

Finally, with respect to accidents, the TA notes that there have been a number of recorded accidents on the local highway network. This is not unusual for a town centre location. TCAP schemes that have, or are in the process of being implemented should hopefully address some of the design features which may have attributed to accidents and works to be carried as part of the development, including signalling the Daw Bank / Exchange Street / Swaine Street junction and providing a cycle link through the site should help to further reduce conflicts and accidents.

### Parking

As is presently the case for the bus station, no parking is proposed to be provided for the Bus Interchange itself, although a drop-off / pick-up facility is proposed to be provided on Daw Bank (which will also be available for use by occupiers of the apartments) and a new taxi rank / pickup area is proposed to be provided on Mersey Square. Cycle parking (monitored by CCTV), however, is proposed to be provided in various locations, including on Mersey Square, although the exact location of this, together with details of stands and shelters, will need to be subsequently agreed.

A total of 22 parking spaces are proposed to be provided within a two-deck car park below the residential building for use by occupiers of the apartments, with 20 spaces for disabled badge holders. This accords with the adopted parking standards. Although the TA also includes a plan showing an alternative option showing a smaller number of disabled spaces, as this would not comply with the adopted parking standards, such an option would not be supported. I would recommend that electric charging points are provided for at least 6 of the spaces (2 standard spaces and 4 disabled spaces), cabling / ducting is provided to allow electric vehicle charging equipment to be provided for all spaces in the future (as electric vehicle numbers increase) and would also recommend that at least one of the disabled spaces is made available for car club users. These issues, however, can all be dealt with by condition.

The overall number of car parking spaces equates to 9% of the maximum number of spaces that would be permitted based on the adopted parking standards (a maximum of 245 spaces could be provided for the apartments). The site, however, is highly accessible, car ownership in the area is lower than average (the car ownership level in the vicinity of the site is around 0.44 cars per dwelling), car parking availability within a development will affect whether occupiers will own a car and there are public car parks within the vicinity of the site if parking was required and, for occasions when public transport was not suitable for a particular journey, car clubs provide an alternative to owning a car. As such, providing adequate parking for cycles, disabled badge holders and powered two wheelers is provided and a robust Travel Plan is implemented, which should include providing residents with access to a car club (there is presently a car club within Stockport which the developer could buy in to), I would not object to the proposed level of parking.

A number of issues were identified with the layout of the proposed car park as indicated on the drawings that were originally submitted. Revised drawings have been submitted to address these issues and vehicle swept-path tracking diagrams

have been submitted to demonstrate that vehicles will be able to manoeuvre within the car park.

Cycle parking is proposed to be provided for a total of 201 cycles for occupiers of the apartments. This also accords with the adopted parking standards. Parking for 174 cycles would be provided within a large store on level 3 (accessed from Swaine Street and parking for 27 cycles would be provided within level 2 of the car park (accessed via the main car park entrance on Daw Bank). 6 parking spaces for powered two wheelers (motorcycles) is also proposed to be provided, which should meet demand (on average, 2.3% of households have a motorcycle).

At present there are 21 Pay and Display parking spaces on the north side of Daw Bank. These are available for general use public car parking although it is understood that some occupiers of apartments in Wellington Mill use these spaces. These will be replaced with a servicing bay (for the apartments) and 3 short-stay drop-off / pick-up spaces for users of the interchange (the existing bus station does not presently have such a facility). In addition, 5 pay and display parking bays are proposed to be provided on the southern side of Daw Bank (adjacent to Wellington Mill). Whilst these won't provide a like-for-like replacement for the spaces lost on the north side, their provision should be beneficial for the occupiers of apartments in Wellington Mill. Other displaced parking will be able to be accommodated within other car parks within the town centre.

To ensure that the drop-off / pick up facility functions in a safe and practical manner, there will be a need to restrict the duration of stay for these spaces (e.g. to 5-10 minutes). This will require a Traffic Regulation Order. Details of this will need to be determined at detailed design stage as part of the Section 278 Agreement relating to the design and construction of the highway works.

### Servicing

The apartments are proposed to be serviced as follows:

- 1) Refuse vehicles (collecting from the main refuse store) and large delivery vehicles will park within one of the bus layover bays within the Interchange building (at a pre-booked timeslot to avoid conflict with buses)
- 2) Smaller vehicles, short-timed deliveries and refuse vehicles collecting from the smaller refuse store will use the proposed service layby on Daw Bank

Vehicle swept-path tracking diagrams have been submitted to demonstrate that vehicles would be able to use such facilities and the TA notes that use of the service layby on Daw Bank could be controlled by a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). I would consider such arrangements generally acceptable although I would recommend that a separate pedestrian access is provided to the apartments from Daw Bank (or a corridor is provided through the bin store), so that deliveries to the apartments do not have to be made through the smaller bin store. This, however, could be reviewed at detailed design stage. The detail design of the servicing layby on Daw Bank will also need to be agreed, although both of these issues could be dealt with by condition. The applicant will need to fund the provision of the Traffic Regulation Order to control the servicing layby. Full details of the servicing arrangements will need to be agreed and therefore I would recommend that any approval granted is subject to a condition requiring the submission, approval and implementation of a Servicing Method Statement.

The commercial and retail units within both the apartment building and Interchange are also proposed to be serviced from within the Interchange Building, with delivery vehicles making use of one of the bus bays (DIRO bay 1) or bus layover bays. As with servicing of the apartments, servicing will need to be scheduled to avoid conflict with buses, although this can also be managed by means of a Servicing Method Statement.

Finally, the submitted drawings indicate that the two refuse stores that are proposed would be able to accommodate approx. 46 Eurobins, which is approx. half the number required for 196 apartments if waste and recycling is collected at a standard frequency. Refuse storage will therefore need to be reviewed at detailed design stage and there may be a need to agree a higher-frequency waste collection. This, however, can be dealt with by condition requiring the submission, approval and implementation of a Servicing Method Statement.

### Accessibility

The existing bus station is located within Stockport Town Centre and is within reasonable walking distance of much of the town centre, including shopping areas, offices and other employment, leisure facilities, public buildings and a various apartment buildings and other dwellings. In addition, the site is within reasonable cycling distance of many other parts of the town including the Heaton, Cheadle, Hazel Grove, Reddish and Bredbury. Pedestrian facilities in the area are, in general, good quality, part of the National Cycle Network (route 62) passes the site and there are various other cycle route and facilities within the vicinity of the site. The site is obviously highly accessible by bus, with the majority of bus services in the area either stopping at the bus station (49 in total) or close by (e.g. on the A6, Wellington Road), and is within reasonable walking distance of Stockport Railway Station (which is served by a range of commuter and long distance trains). Pedestrian routes within and in the vicinity of the bus station, however, are not all high quality with safe crossing facilities, the route between the bus and railway stations is of poor quality and not accessible to those with disabilities, direct access from Wellington Road South is via steps and the cycle route past the site is on carriageway, requiring cyclists to share road space with buses and other vehicles. As such, although the bus station is well suited to serve Stockport Town Centre and a residential development at the site would be highly accessible, connectivity between the bus and railway stations is presently poor and not suitable for those with disabilities or people with prams / buggies / wheeled suitcases and some of the pedestrian and cycle facilities within the area are sub-standard. The same can be said for the site of the proposed office development, with good quality routes to the north of the site (recently improved as part of the Stockport Exchange scheme) but with some deficiencies elsewhere.

The proposed interchange will provide a much improved, safer and attractive facility for bus users and the facility will also have improved access arrangements, with entrances from Mersey Square, Daw Bank, Swain Street and a new area of public realm to the north of the site. Once constructed, the proposed link bridge and associated pedestrian / cycle route, will significantly improve connectivity between the Bus Interchange and Railway Station, bringing benefits to public transport users. The scheme also includes various other measures to improve access to the site and in the vicinity of the site, including:

- 1) New areas of public realm
- 2) Rerouting NCN route 62 through the site and Mersey Square
- 3) The provision of a TOUCAN crossing on Astley Street / Chestergate

- 4) Improved pedestrian facilities on Swaine Street
- 5) Controlled pedestrian crossing facilities at the Daw Bank / Swaine Street junction
- 6) Provision of cycle parking in various locations

All these measures should ensure that pedestrians and cyclists can safely access the site, existing deficiencies are addressed and will provide improved facilities for public transport users, as well as pedestrians and cyclists in the area. Full details of the pedestrian, cycle and public transport infrastructure, as well as other matters of detail design, will need to be agreed as part of the detail design of the scheme, although this can be dealt with by condition. Full details of how the proposed office development will connect in with the wider network will also need to be agreed. This can be agreed at reserved matters stage / by condition in the event that the application is approved.

I do, however, consider that it is important for the link bridge and associated pedestrian / cycle route between the Bus Interchange and Railway Station to be provided as soon as possible, so as to ensure that the benefits of the scheme are maximised and a suitable route is provided for all public transport users (notably those with disabilities) between the two transport facilities. I would therefore recommend that the applicants endeavour to bring forward and implement the outline scheme for the office development and bridge as soon as possible. If there is to be a delay between the Interchange being occupied and the bridge and associated route being provided, I consider that an interim solution to improve access between the Bus Interchange and Railway Station (e.g. improved surfacing, handrails, signage, lighting and crossing facilities) is required. As such, I would recommend that, in the event that permission is granted, it is subject to a condition requiring improvements to this route.

### Travel Plan

A Framework Travel Plan has been produced for the development (covering the residential and office elements of the scheme) and submitted in support of the application. It outlines that Full Travel Plans will be developed for the two elements of the scheme from the Framework Plan and that these could include a range of measures, such as production of Travel Information Packs, personalised travel planning, travel information on a website, employee travel benefits, car sharing and use of a car club.

Consideration of the plan concludes that whilst the proposal to produce Full Travel Plans is considered acceptable, in principle, these will need to be produced prior to occupation (to allow details of all measures to be implemented upon occupation to be agreed) and I consider that the plan for the Interchange Building should also include the commercial elements of the building and that additional measures could also be considered. In addition, although initial modal split targets are provided, I would question these as they don't take into account the low level of parking. I would also point out that the full plans need to include more information on the development, such as how they will be managed and funded, parking provision and management and, noting the low level of parking in the residential scheme, I consider it is important for residents to have easy access to a car club (with car club vehicles being available within or close by the development). I also consider that, as well as modal share being monitored, parking demand should be, and staff and resident surveys are conducted to allow any issues relating to travel to be identified. These issues, however, can all be dealt with as part of the production of a full Travel



Plans prior to the occupation of the buildings and therefore I would conclude that this matter can be dealt with by condition.

### Access

The two-deck car park to be provided within the lower floors of the apartment building will be accessed via an access on Daw Bank. The applicant has confirmed (by means of a speed survey) that the access will benefit from a level of vehicular visibility that accords with current design standards and vehicle swept-path tracking diagrams have been submitted which outline that cars will be able to turn into and out of the access. The submitted plans, however, do not show the provision of pedestrian visibility splays at the access and I consider that the gates / doors at the car park entrance should just be set back from the carriageway an adequate distance to allow a car to pull off the road before reaching the gates / doors. These issues, however, could be dealt with at detailed design stage and can therefore be dealt with by condition.

The main access for the Interchange will be on Swaine Street and will be in the form of segregated entrance and exit lanes. For safety reasons, this access will be signalised and will incorporate controlled crossings to allow pedestrians and cyclists to safely cross the entrance and exit lanes. The provision of this signal controlled junction will require the existing private access that serves the car park of TN Robinson to be made entrance only. It is understood that such arrangements have been agreed with the company and vehicles would, instead, exit the site via Viaduct Street. I consider such arrangements generally acceptable, although they will need to be subject to detailed design. I will defer to TfGM to comment on the detail design of the proposed signals.

### Detail design

With regard to key detailed issues (notably those that will require designs to be developed and agreed and conditions to be attached to any decision granted to any decision granted):

- 1) The Interchange is proposed to be attached to Wellington Bridge on both sides of the bridge. On the eastern side of the bridge, the "Mersey Square Pavilion" will be attached to the bridge at one of the arches, just above arch level but below the level of the adjacent road. This will take the form of a fairly lightweight, mainly glazed, section of the building (the main part of the building is more solid with a green roof), measuring approx. 2.3 in width. It appears from the submitted plans that this glazed structure would be attached, but not supported by the bridge structure, although full details of this (as with all structural work) would need to be agreed with the Council's Structures Team at detailed design stage. Separate approval for works affecting the bridge will also be required from the Highway Authority. On the western side of the bridge, the main interchange building will be attached to the bridge for a length of approx. 54m. This will also take the form of a fairly lightweight, mainly glazed section of the building, measuring approx. 3-4m in width. There will be two bridge links across this area (2.5m and 4m wide), linking the footway on the bridge with the public park on the roof. These would be available for use by pedestrians and cyclists and retractable bollards would be provided to prevent vehicular access onto the roof (other than for maintenance / emergencies). It is not clear from the submitted plans whether the glazed link and bridges would be cantilevered from the main structure to Wellington Bridge or whether Wellington Bridge would be subject to any

additional loading from the structure. Details of this will need to be agreed, as well as other details relating to the tie in of the roof and side walls to the bridge structure and removal of part of the parapet wall to allow for the bridge links to be constructed. There would also be a need for hostile vehicle containment measures. The scheme will also require the construction of a retaining wall abutting Arches 3 and 4 to accommodate the removal of the ramp from Daw Bank by the bridge and new levels within the building. Details of how this will be done will also need to be agreed. Details of a retaining wall by one of the arches would also need to be agreed. In addition, as the link bridges are to be used by pedestrians and cyclists, I would recommend that the width of lower bridge is reviewed at detailed design stage as, at 2.5m in width, it will prove quite narrow (3m is recommended). There will also be a need to agree operational and maintenance responsibilities for the structures linked to or within the vicinity of Wellington Bridge / highways. Any approval granted will therefore need to be subject to detailed conditions relating to the submission and approval of further details relating to structures. It should be noted that as detailed structural design has not yet been carried out, it may be possible that detailed design will result in some amendments being required to the design of the Interchange. If this is the case, depending on the scale of amendments, there may be the need for the applicant to submit a non-material or minor-material amendment application.

- 2) The Interchange and residential building (and possibly the office development) will require the construction of retaining structures close to the public highway (e.g. along Daw Bank). Details of these will need to be agreed and formal approval of these will need to be obtained from the Highway Authority through the formal Technical Approval process.
- 3) Vehicle swept-path tracking diagrams have been submitted which demonstrate that buses would be able to enter, manoeuvre within and exit the Interchange.
- 4) The scheme involves various amendments to Mersey Square, including construction of a building to replace the existing retail units (which will form the main entrance to the Interchange), the formation of a taxi rank (which will act as the new head of the existing rank on Chestergate), amendments to the exit route from the Interchange (including the provision of 1 double bus stop), provision of a cycle route and various public realm improvements. Swept-path diagrams have been submitted which demonstrate that the amended layout will be suitable for buses, taxis and service vehicles. The scheme also takes into account the servicing requirements of 1 Wellington Road South (service vehicles would be able to stop on a service road to the east of the building). As the scheme closes the southern end of the vehicular access route through Mersey Square, the whole of the access route (from both Wellington Road North and the junction of Port Street and Prince's Street) will need to be closed to traffic. The current proposals do not show outline exactly how this will be done. Details of this, as well as the other highway and public realm works, however, can be agreed at detailed design stage / by condition. In addition, there will be a need for new traffic regulation orders to be introduced to control the use of the taxi rank and to take into account the amended layout and some sections of existing highway to be stopped up.
- 5) Various amendments are proposed to Swaine Street as part of the proposed development. The street will remain as a one-way access road (in the northbound direction) but will be narrowed slightly so as to allow a

southbound bus lane to be provided between Chestergate and the entrance to the Interchange (this would also be available for use by service vehicles accessing the Interchange). 3 bus stops are proposed to be provided on this lane. A combined footway / cycleway (with controlled crossing points at the Interchange access) is intended to be provided along the eastern side of Swaine Street (along the western elevation of the building). The applicant has outlined that they wish to stop up part of Swaine Street to enable the southbound bus lane and bus stops on it to form part of the Interchange and not be adopted highway. Legal advice provided by the Council's Legal Department, however, has outlined that public highway can only be stopped up / extinguished if it is no longer necessary for public use. Bus stops, however, are a normal public use on the highway and, as such, the legal advice is that grounds for stopping up would not be met. As such, this needs to be reconsidered. If the footway / cycleway on the eastern side of Swaine Street is not to be adopted public access will need to be secured by means of a Walkway Agreement, or similar. Finally, although the general design of the amended Swaine Street is considered acceptable, acceptability of the design is subject to matters of detail (e.g. the provision of barriers on the island and the location of bus shelters). Such details, however, can be agreed at detailed design stage.

- 6) The applicant has also outlined that they wish to stop up part of Mersey Square to enable the two bus stops to be provided to the south of the "Mersey Square Pavilion" to not be adopted highway. As with the bus stops on Swaine Street, Legal advice indicates that this would not be possible and therefore this needs to be reconsidered.
- 7) Parts of the building (the "Mersey Square Pavilion" and the south-western corner of the main building) will be constructed on areas of existing highway which would need to be stopped up as public highway. Unlike in the case of the bus stops, this could be justified. The applicant will need to make an application under Section 247 of the T&CP Act in respect to this in the event that the application was approved.
- 8) New sections of highway will be formed as part of the development, including much of the new area of public realm between the Interchange and the river and on Swaine Street and Daw Bank. A plan included in the TA shows the approx. extent of highway proposed to be stopped up or created although this will need to be reviewed having regard to the above comments regarding the on-street bus stops. Notwithstanding this, the new sections of highway will need to be dedicated as highway under an appropriate agreement with the Highway Authority.
- 9) The scheme involves the formation of an area of public realm between the Interchange and the River Mersey, including seating areas, landscaping and a cycle route, together with amendments and the creation of improved public realm areas on Mersey Square between the bear pit and the former "Ups and Downs". Although the landscape masterplan shows details of how this area will be surfaced and landscaped, further design work will be required (e.g. to agree materials and determine how the cycle route through the area will be delineated and the areas suitable for seating / outside café areas - although the submitted plans show a range of paving colours which potentially could be used to delineate the cycle route, contrasting paving does not run up to the TOUCAN crossing or along Swaine Street). This, however, can be dealt with at detailed design stage / by condition.

- 10) The proposed rooftop park will be accessed via two links from Wellington Road Bridge, for use by pedestrians and cycles. The TA outlines that these may also need to be used by maintenance vehicles and fire appliances. Full details of these links, however, have not been provided (including how the links will be tied to the bridge structure and how vehicles / cycles will pull on / off the carriageway) and therefore the detailed design of these will need to be agreed.
- 11) There are a series of Traffic Regulation Orders presently in force within the vicinity of the site to manage parking, loading and access on the highway network in the vicinity of the site and, as outlined above, Orders will need to be amended and new Orders will be required to manage the amended highway network, both during construction and permanently. This includes Orders to manage parking and loading on Daw Bank, the operation of Swaine Street, the taxi rank on Mersey Square, the management of cycle routes and the provision of temporary bus stops. Details of these will need to be developed and consulted on as part of the detailed design of the scheme and the applicant will need to pay the Highway Authority's costs in respect to implementation of the Orders.
- 12) Glazed canopies are proposed to be installed on the southern elevation of the building abutting the layby on Daw Bank and around the Mersey Square Pavilion. The exact details of these will need to be agreed (to ensure they are set back a sufficient distance from kerb lines) and a highway licence will be required for these as this will overhang the highway. Part of the Interchange Building will overhang the footway on Swaine Street. Full details of this structure will also need to be submitted to the Council for approval and will need a highways licence.
- 13) The scheme includes proposals to provide outside seating / café areas both within the rooftop park and in the public realm area between the interchange and the river. These will need to be laid out (and have suitable barriers installed) to ensure that they do not obstruct pedestrian and cycle routes. This, however, can be agreed by condition.
- 14) Short stay cycle parking is proposed to be provided at various locations around the development, including within the rooftop park. The submitted plans, however, do not outline where all this will be provided and therefore the location of this (and the form / design of the cycle parking) will need to be agreed at detailed design stage / by condition. The plans do, however, show cycle parking being provided in the arch near which is closest to the river. This, however, may not prove a secure location for open racks and therefore I consider this location needs to be reviewed.
- 15) Cycle parking for the residential development is within a large cycle store and on one deck of the car park. Such large or open stores are not normally advised unless the facilities have robust security features, such as CCTV and secure entry systems. As such, I consider that there is a need to agree full details of the cycle stores at detailed design stage so as to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
- 16) Cyclists will be permitted to use various routes within the rooftop park. Appropriate signage (and, possibly tactile paving) will need to be provided to

sign such routes. This will need to be worked up and agreed at detailed design stage / by condition.

- 17) The submitted drawings show many of the external doors opening outwards, rather than into the building. This could be a hazard to pedestrians and therefore, doors should be amended so that they open into the building. This can be dealt with by condition.
- 18) Although the submitted drawings show the provision of tactile paving at the signal controlled junctions, such paving will be required elsewhere and other features to assist people with disabilities negotiate the development, including wheelchair users and the blind / partially sighted, will be required. This will need to be worked up and agreed at detailed design stage / by condition.
- 19) The areas of public realm areas could be prone to anti-social behaviour issues so measures to minimise such issues, including lighting, CCTV and anti-skateboarding features will need to be incorporated into the detailed design. This may result in the need for amendments to the street furniture shown on the current plans.
- 20) The submitted plans show the public realm areas and footways abutting the development being surfaced in various materials. All materials (and street furniture) to be used within the public highway will need to accord with the Council's agreed palette unless otherwise agreed with the Council's Public Realm Department. The materials (and street furniture) shown on the submitted plans do not accord and will therefore will need to be reviewed at detailed design stage.
- 21) The former street to the south of the access road out of the Interchange into Mersey Square will be severed as a result of the scheme. Details of how this street will be dealt with (including the section under the arch) will need to be agreed and therefore this issue also need to be taken into consideration at detailed design stage.
- 22) The parapet wall around the rooftop park is shown to be 1.3m in height. This, however, needs to be raised to 1.4m in height as the paths within the park will be available for use by cyclists. This minor amendment can be dealt with by condition.
- 23) The submitted drawings do not show the proposed bridge over Daw Bank being the required clearance over the highway. The applicant, however, has outlined that the bridge will be designed in accordance with national technical design standards, with the correct clearance provided (5.7m plus sag radius compensation). As the permission for the bridge is only being applied for in outline form, full details of the bridge design can be agreed as part of any subsequent reserved matters application. It should be noted that in order to achieve the required clearance, the connecting path in the rooftop park to the south-western corner of the Interchange building may need to be graded up towards the bridge, starting a few metres from the end of the building, which may require the parapet wall in this area to be raised slightly.
- 24) The level of inter-visibility that will be provided at the proposed Daw Bank signal-controlled junction has been identified as being sub-standard. This issue therefore needs to be reviewed / addressed. TfGM have indicated that this could be done at detailed design stage, possibly by relocating the

crossing point on the Swaine Street arm to the north. This issue can therefore be dealt with at detailed design stage.

### Temporary Bus Station / Construction

During construction of the Interchange (estimated to take 2 years), there will be a need to temporarily relocate existing bus facilities. As such, a temporary bus station is proposed to be constructed on part of Heaton Lane car park, which will comprise of 7 bus bays and a layover bay, together with shelters and portacabins to be used for staff accommodation and a travel shop. A traffic light system will be put in place to avoid conflicts between manoeuvring buses. The bus station will be accessed via two accesses on Heaton Lane (an ingress and egress) and will result in the temporary loss of 87 parking spaces within the car park. The rest of the car park, however, will remain in use, accessed from Great Egerton Street. As the area proposed to be used for the temporary bus station contains disabled parking, this will need to be relocated so as to ensure that there is no loss of disabled parking as a result of the proposals. Vehicle swept-path tracking diagrams have been submitted which demonstrate that buses would be able to enter, manoeuvre within and exit the temporary bus station.

In addition, 2 bus stops are proposed to be provided on Mersey Square (in front of Merseyway) and an additional 2 stops are proposed to be provided on the hill between Mersey Square and St. Peter's Square (opposite the Rock Buildings). Vehicle swept-path tracking diagrams have been submitted which demonstrate that buses would be able to use the stops on Mersey Square. It should be noted that, additional stands are now not proposed to be provided on Heaton Lane, as was indicated in the TA.

To enable the temporary bus station to operate in a safe and practical manner, Heaton Lane will need to be closed to through-traffic. This will be possible following completion of the Travis Brow Link Road which is presently under construction and due to traffic open later this year. Details of how access to Heaton Lane will be controlled will need to be worked up and agreed, as will full details of the temporary bus station and stops (e.g. lighting, surfacing kerbing etc.). Such details, however, can be agreed at detailed design stage / by condition. In addition, there will be a need for new traffic regulation orders to manage access.

Construction of the development will also have other implications in respect to the operation of the local highway network, with access and parking affected during the period of construction. Businesses and residents in the area may also be impacted on. The TA therefore outlines that construction method statements will be produced / implemented to manage construction activities and these will cover issues such as phasing of works, temporary road closures, vehicle routing and access to properties. Providing suitable arrangements are put in place, I would conclude that construction of the development should not have a significant adverse impact on the local highway network.

As such, subject to detail, I would consider that construction of the proposed development will be able to be carried out in a manner that will not significantly impact on the local highway network.

### Conclusion

The proposed interchange will provide bus users with a modern enclosed facility, with improve security, passenger and driver facilities and connections with the

adjacent parts of the Town Centre. Bus users will also be separated from buses within the facility, improving safety and reducing the risk of conflict between pedestrians and buses. As such, I would support the redevelopment of the bus interchange. I would also consider the sites suitable for both residential and office accommodation, noting the sites' accessibility. Whilst there are some aspects of the local pedestrian and cycle network that presently impair accessibility, these are proposed to be addressed as part of the proposal. A key to ensuring that the site's accessibility is maximised is the provision of the link bridge and associated pedestrian / cycle route between the Bus Interchange and Railway Station. As such, it is recommended that this is implemented as soon as possible.

Parking is proposed to be provided in accordance with the adopted standards and although a low level of car parking is proposed to be provided, noting the site's accessibility, I would not object to this, subject to implementation of a Travel Plan which should include providing occupiers of the apartments with access to a car club. I would also consider the proposed servicing arrangements acceptable, although details of site servicing will need to be agreed by means of a servicing method statement.

With respect to detailed design, whilst I consider the design of the scheme generally acceptable, there are various matters of detail (notably in respect to the design of the highway works and areas of public realm, structural design and location and form of the cycle parking) that need further development and / or some amendment. These issues, however, can be dealt with at detailed design stage / by condition. The applicant will need to enter into a Section 278 (or similar) highways agreement (with both Stockport Council and TfGM) with respect to the highway works and will also require approval for works that will affect existing highway structures and for the construction or amendment of structures in the vicinity of public highways. Various Traffic Regulation Orders (both temporary and permanent) will be required to manage parking, servicing and access on roads and paths within the vicinity of the site. The applicant will also need to make an application under Section 247 of the T&CP Act to shop up a number of section of public highway.

## **Conservation Officer:**

### **Introduction**

This proposal is sited in close proximity to a cluster of heritage assets of special architectural and historic interest. The collective group value of the heritage assets in this location combine to help define Stockport's unique identity, townscape and sense of local distinctiveness. They include the Stockport Railway Viaduct (listed grade II\*), Wellington Mill and chimney (Grade II), Wellington Bridge (Grade II), former Wellington Bridge Inn (locally listed), the Plaza Cinema (listed Grade II\*), Weir Mill (Grade II) and the St Peters Square Conservation Area. These buildings and structures frame the existing bus station on its west, south and east sides and the steep sided banks of the River Mersey contain its northern boundary. A locally listed signal box forming part of Stockport Station is located adjacent to the site off Exchange Street that forms part of the outline application.

The full application consists of two principal components, a transport interchange building that incorporates a rooftop public park and a residential tower. The impact upon the significance of the heritage assets listed above varies in nature and scale – from physical alterations to new development within their setting - and are considered separately.

## **Heritage impact of alterations to Wellington Road Bridge (listed grade II)**

Two new openings (one pedestrian, one vehicular) are proposed through the bridge's stone parapet in order to connect the proposed rooftop park to Wellington Road South. The stone parapet is not an original feature and therefore its partial removal at a pair of isolated locations will not unduly impact upon its significance in terms of loss of fabric or the overall sense of enclosure the parapet provides to the carriageway. Full details of the treatment of the breaks will need to be finalised via a planning/LBC condition to ensure an appropriate finish is achieved; it is recommended that consideration is given to the potential of installing stone piers at the transitions.

The new Interchange buildings to the east and west of the bridge are linked to the original fabric by way of a glazed roof, glazed screen walls and two high level bridges. Great care will be required at these junctions to minimise any harm to the physical fabric of the bridge whilst providing for adequate access for internal and external maintenance: this will require full details to be submitted and agreed via a planning/LBC condition.

A key architectural feature of Wellington Road Bridge is the series of eleven segmental arches of varying spans that carry the bridge from the River Mersey to Daw Bank. The proposals indicate the enclosure of a number of arches and this will create an unnecessary additional physical barrier to pedestrian circulation, limiting public access to and enjoyment of the heritage asset. Arch 5 is proposed to be dedicated to storage/plant when this could provide for enhanced pedestrian links between the Interchange and Mersey Square; Arch 4, immediately south of the main vehicular route and currently open, is partially blocked by a retaining wall and has potential to provide an additional and attractive pedestrian route to/from the south side of the Interchange.

If approved, Planning/LBC conditions will be required relating to detailed aspects of the proposed alterations to the bridge arches (external infilling, partitions, internal finishes, installation of lighting and other services etc) in order to minimise any harm.

## **Impact of new development in Mersey Square upon the setting of heritage assets including St Peters Conservation Area**

The design of the new building within Mersey Square represents a continuation of the architectural language applied to the main Interchange building. This represents an improvement upon the existing bus station/shopping facilities in this location, enhancing the character and appearance of the St Peters Conservation Area and the immediate setting of heritage assets (Wellington Bridge, Plaza Cinema and former Wellington Bridge Inn). The design of hard/soft landscaping within Mersey Square has the potential to positively reinforce pedestrian links with the shopping centre and other nearby attractions, such as the Plaza Cinema, and it is recommended that landscaping proposals are integrated with a wider scheme of streetworks to reinforce pedestrian routes and enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment in this important transitional area.

## **Heritage impact of new development to west of Wellington Bridge (site of existing bus station) upon the setting of heritage assets**

The impact of development on the existing bus station site can be split into 3 elements: the Interchange building and associated rooftop park, the riverfront and the residential tower.



#### (i) Interchange building and associated rooftop park

The Railway Viaduct of 1840 and Wellington Bridge of 1824 are key heritage assets that visibly tell the story of the historic development of Stockport town centre. Both represent impressive engineering feats that facilitated the town's westward C19th expansion by providing new transport links across the Mersey Valley and easing the congestion caused by the town's topography and medieval street pattern. Wellington Mill and Wellington Bridge Inn are attached to and are contemporary with the Bridge and their presence adds richness to the character of the historic environment, signalling the first step in the ensuing expansion of the town. Views of all of these heritage assets will be affected by the new Interchange building.

The Interchange building will result in a visual foreshortening of the Railway Viaduct on its south east side, particularly in views from Wellington Bridge, producing an apparent truncation of its tall monumental arches (up to 13 arches of a total of 22 will be affected from some viewpoints). The reduction of the overall scale and presence of the structure within its dramatic urban and topographical setting will harm the significance of this designated heritage asset (at Grade II\* it is recognised as one of the top 8% of all listed buildings in England). It is however acknowledged that some mitigation will result from the creation of new public views available from the new vantage points upon the rooftop park, and these elevated short distance views will allow the special visual qualities of the structure to be enjoyed.

Similarly the Interchange building will obscure 6 of 11 the western segmental arches of the Wellington Bridge. Whilst these will remain exposed or legible within the interior of the building, the scale and sense of containment the bridge provides to the existing bus station site will effectively be lost, particularly in views from the Railway Viaduct.

Notwithstanding the impact on long established views, it is acknowledged that the overall architectural approach of the Interchange building, is well considered and its striking contemporary design will enhance the area occupied by the existing bus station and suitably complement the industrial architectural character of the surrounding heritage assets.

#### (ii) Riverfront

The opening up of the riverfront and creation of an attractive ground level public space represents a positive intervention, with enhanced access providing potential for greater public appreciation and contemplation of the environmental qualities of, and relationship between, the town and the river. This area has the potential to provide opportunities for the interpretation of the history and development of Stockport and in particular the key contribution played by water from the River Mersey and its tributaries to provide power for the early textile industries.

#### (iii) Residential block

The proposed residential block would, at 59m, become the tallest building in the town centre and would therefore have a substantial and permanent alteration of the town centre skyline. The proposed tower comprises a total of 17 storeys (15 storeys above the rooftop park with a further 2 storeys given over to services and car parking). The proposed total height is 9m above the Wellington Mill (Hatworks) chimney, rising 30m above the eaves of the existing 7 storey Mill and 33m above the parapet of the Railway Viaduct; the proposed north/south elevations of the block at

73m are approximately 23m wider than the Mill and it is sited 20m from its west gable. The block would therefore be dominant in views from west/east/north/south approaches to the town centre.

The proposed block would challenge the sense of scale and dominance of heritage assets in key views, from short, medium and long distances. The height, scale and mass of the residential tower will impact most harmfully upon the setting of Wellington Mill and Chimney (listed Grade II), both of which will be partially concealed or become subservient features in key views, weakening the relationship between heritage assets and their landscape setting and their significance diminished by the overbearing scale and height of the proposed tower.

The supporting information includes a Heritage Assessment and Design & Access Statement and these are not considered sufficient to provide a clear and convincing justification for the size and scale of the tower as required by para 194 of the NPPF. The former focusses on a views analysis to measure the visual impact of the submitted proposals upon views of heritage assets but does not explore the relative impact of alternative design options; for example there is no consideration of the height, scale and massing options in relation to the residential block. The views selected in the Heritage Assessment are closed and exclude a number of key views. Further assessment is therefore recommended to consider the south facing view of Wellington Mill from Wellington Bridge (View 2) and it would be helpful if further assessment of views from the western side of the viaduct is undertaken. The analysis of heritage asset impact substantially underestimates the magnitude of impact, particularly in respect of Wellington Mill (eg moderate adverse impact in View 1, no impact in view 2, minor adverse impact in View 9). Some additional commentary has been provided to indicate how the massing and siting of residential and retail elements were developed in response to initial consideration of the potential impact of new development upon the setting of heritage assets but no further consideration was given to the overall scale of the proposals. The submitted Design and Access Statement indicates that the scale of residential development has been set by a predetermined client brief rather than an analysis of site or planning policy constraints. In addition the Statement provides no consideration of how the amalgamation of two wholly different building types/uses/lifespans could impact upon the future planning of the area, making it difficult to balance the immediate benefits of a public park/open space/bus facilities (short lifespan) with the long term harm of the residential tower (long lifespan).

Apart from a substantial reduction in its height, amendments to the detailed design of the residential tower would offer no mitigation for the scale of impact in my opinion. In order to avoid any harm to the setting of Wellington Mill, it is recommended that the height of the tower should be of equivalent height to the Mill.

### **Heritage impact of an interconnecting bridge between Park and Exchange Street site upon the setting of heritage assets (outline application)**

These proposals include a pedestrian bridge over to an adjacent site located off Exchange Street that is close to the Grade II\* Railway Viaduct and a locally listed signal box forming part of Stockport Station. The scale of the proposal is such that there will be no harmful impact upon the setting of these heritage assets.

### **Conclusion**

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to give special consideration to the desirability of preserving the

setting of a listed building and recent case law has confirmed that decision makers should give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. Para 194 of the NPPF states that 'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification'.

Para 196 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Substantial harm is not defined, but is commonly applied where the whole or key parts of a heritage asset are likely to be lost through alteration or demolition. When considering any proposal that has an adverse impact on a designated heritage asset through development within its setting, NPPF para 193 states that 'great weight should be given to the asset's conservation', irrespective of whether the harm amounts to less than substantial harm. In assessing a proposed development, local planning authorities must pay particular regard to seek economic, social and environmental gains jointly and simultaneously in order to deliver positive improvements to the quality of the built, natural and historic environment. This may involve examination of alternative designs or schemes that may be more sustainable because they can deliver public benefits alongside positive improvement in the local environment. If a tall building is harmful to the historic environment, then a careful examination of the worth of any public benefits that the proposed tall building is to deliver and of the alternative means of delivering them is required in order to make a clear and convincing justification for cumulative harm.

Notwithstanding its function, the physical mass, form, height and siting of the overall development would have a significant long term impact upon Stockport's identity, affecting the setting of key heritage assets and becoming a dominant element in short, medium and long distance views of Stockport's historic core and wider town centre.

The wider public benefits of improved transport facilities offered by the Interchange building and the environmental benefits of the proposed rooftop park and riverfront public open space are recognised. The physical harm that may result from alterations to Wellington Bridge can be minimised through minor amendments and/or planning conditions. However the harmful impact of the residential block upon the setting and significance of heritage assets is not underpinned by a clear and convincing justification within the application to justify the scale of the proposal, measure the level of harm involved and explain why other options have been discounted.

**Environmental Health (Air):** I have looked at the air quality assessment associated with this application and have no objections. I would recommend that a dust management plan should be submitted for the construction phase and any demolition phase.

**Environmental Health (Contaminated Land):** There has been an investigation undertaken in the past however this was not at all sufficient and there was lots of data gaps. The consultant has recommended that an extensive site investigation is undertaken for soil, gas and controlled waters. As such I request the following conditions:-

CTM1, CTM2, CTM3, LFG1 & LFG3

**Environmental Health (Noise):** I do not object to the planning application and I do not object to the developments in principle.

#### Demolition/Construction

There have been some details supplied in relation to construction but not the demolition. The hours that the document stipulated for construction are 07.00-18.00 Monday-Friday, given that there are residential properties approx. 20meters from the boundary of the site, I feel that 07.30-18.00 would be more reasonable. Construction / Demolition Environmental Management Plan will need to be submitted for approval.

Condition

Hours of operation

08.00-13.00 Saturdays

No noise working audible beyond the boundary outside of the above times.

Condition

Construction and Environmental Management Plan;

- may need to look at projected noise levels given the distance from nearby residential BS5288:2009
- Should include demolition information
- If Pile Driving is being undertaken details of this will need to be included, would be beneficial for the Local Planning Authority to be notified before commencement
- Vibration and noise monitoring if there is specific need
- Dust
- Lighting

#### Existing plant and proposed plant

The report advises that there will be no impact upon the development from existing plant already in situ. There are maximum noise levels proposed for new external fixed plant 49dB during the day and 40dB during the night. If the levels are met then the external plant should not cause any noise to future residents.

Condition

Noise from any fixed plant 49dB during the day and 40dB during the night

#### Internal noise for residential

I have assessed the report in relation to internal noise levels for the proposed apartments. The report assesses the external environment from a number of points around the development. The report assesses internal noise levels in line with BS8233:2014. The report advises that the development will meet Good internal noise standards with windows closed therefore, there will be a need for a ventilation scheme to be submitted. Different rooms within the development will need different specification of windows dependent upon the activity taking place within the room i.e. bedroom and sleeping. The report advises there will be a need for further detailed noise break-in calculations to be undertaken as part of the detailed design process.

Condition

Details of ventilation scheme to be fitted within the development.

## Condition

Further Acoustic report will be needed to specify the façade specification and should be based on detailed noise break-in calculation method described within BS8233:2014

## Fixed Plant

Noise from fixed plant have been assessed however, there are no specific details at this stage, the below condition will ensure that the noise levels produced from any fixed plant will not cause any amenity issues to prospective residents.

## Condition

Noise from fixed plant should be 10dB below background noise levels however, we will accept 5dB below background with justification. Meeting the above noise levels will prevent a creeping background noise level. Measurements should be undertaken in line with BS4142:2014 Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound.

No development shall take place until the approved noise mitigation measures in the report (where required) have been incorporated into the development.

## External noise-Park

The documentation advises that noise levels within the Park will not meet those stipulated with BS8233:2014 and will be elevated. BS8233:2014 does allow for elevated noise levels for gardens and parks that are situated within an area that have high external noise levels.

## Light

I have assessed the lighting report, the report looks at the lighting and the levels of light that is already situated within in the area. The report discusses the lighting needs for the construction and when the development is operational.

The report advises that there will be a need for some mitigation to meet lux levels at light sensitive properties. Once the development gets to the detailed design stage, there will need to be further details submitted.

The report will need to show the Lux levels for the surrounding area pre and post curfew and show any proposed mitigation.

2) Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved for subsequent approval, for change of use to B1(a) office used and creation of interconnecting bridge between the park and office site to Station Road.

I do not object to the above outline planning permission. There will be a need to submit further details in relation to noise, vibration and light given the location of the proposed office development.

## **Nature Development Officer:**

## Site Context

The site is located on Chestergate in the town centre. The application is a hybrid application seeking:- 1) Full planning permission for construction of a

replacement bus interchange with associated retail and cafe units, creation of public park with ancillary works and creation of 14 storey residential building comprising of 196 flats (1 and 2 bed), along with the temporary re-development of Heaton Lane car park as a bus station/depot, and; 2) Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved for subsequent approval, for change of use to B1(a) office used and creation of interconnecting bridge between the park and office site to Station Road.

### Legislative and Policy Framework

#### Nature Conservation Designations

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

#### Legally Protected Species

A preliminary ecological appraisal has been carried out at the site (WSP, 2018). The survey was carried out in June 2017 by a suitably experienced ecologist and followed best practice. Habitats on site were mapped and evidence of and potential for protected species was recorded. The Phase 1 Habitat Map has not however been included within the report. This needs to be submitted to the LPA for review.

The majority of the habitats identified during the Phase 1 habitat survey are of limited ecological value and low nature conservation interest. The site is dominated by hardstanding with areas of scrub and trees.

Many buildings/structures and trees offer potential to support roosting bats. All species of bat are protected under Section 9 of 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, or to hibernate or migrate.
  - b) the local distribution of that species.
- 3) Damage or destroy a breeding place or resting site of such an animal.

Records for roosting bats exist under the Mersey way shopping centre. The buildings and trees within the application site have been assessed as offering negligible potential to support roosting bats. The report states that four subterranean tunnels within the retaining wall of the existing bus station may provide roosting opportunities (including hibernation). No further details are provided and it is not clear how or if these potential roosting features will be impacted by the proposals. It is therefore not possible to fully determine the impact that the proposed works will have on protected species and further information will need to be provided.

Most of the site offers limited potential for use by foraging and commuting bats as it comprises mainly hardstanding and buildings. The adjacent River Mersey and habitats along the river corridor have a much higher value.

All breeding birds and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Some species, such as kingfisher receive further protection through inclusion on Schedule 1. Scattered trees and scrub and hedgerows within the site provide foraging and nesting potential for birds. Nesting opportunities are also offered by some of the buildings, however many of the buildings within the site offer negligible potential for use by nesting birds however and some were noted to have bird deterrents installed. The River Mersey adjacent to the site provides suitable habitat for birds, such as kingfisher.

The River Mersey provides suitable commuting habitat for otter. Otters receive the same level of legal protection as bats (outlined above). No evidence of otters was observed during the survey.

### Invasive Species

Cotoneaster sp. and Rhododendron have been recorded within the application boundary. Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are also present along the banks of the River Mersey beyond the site boundaries. These species are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to plant or otherwise cause to grow these invasive species in the wild.

### LDF Core Strategy

Core Policy CS8 Safeguarding and Improving the Environment

Green Infrastructure

Refer to 3.286

### Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

Refer to 3.296

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY SIE-3

### A) Protecting the Natural Environment

Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment

Refer to 3.345, 3.346, 3.347, 3.361, 3.362, 3.363, 3.364, 3.365, 3.366, 3.367, 3.368 and

3.369

### Recommendations:

The Phase 1 map and further information relating to bats needs to be submitted prior to the determination of this application. The ecology report submitted with the application refers to potential impacts to roosting bats within the retaining wall along the River Mersey and states that “further survey will be required if these are to be impacted by the Proposed Development”. As protected species are a material consideration in the planning process, whether or not there is likely to be an impact needs to be made clear as part of the ecological assessment and to

inform the determination process. This will enable impacts on any roosting sites to be fully assessed and appropriately mitigated for. It is important that this assessment is done ASAP if it hasn't already been done so that if needs be, hibernation surveys can be done this winter to avoid project delays. All survey work should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist, at an appropriate time of year and following best practice guidance.

Once this information is available, I will be able to comment on the application further. The requirement for the survey information prior to determination of the application is in line with national and local planning policy and is reinforced by legal cases which emphasise the duty the local planning authority has to fully consider protected species when determining planning applications.

Other comments relevant to the current application are:

The report proposes additional activity transect surveys for foraging and commuting bats (in spring, summer and autumn). Whilst it is acknowledged that this proposed suite of surveys is in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines, given the vast majority of the site comprises hard standing, it can be assumed that the local bat population (including the maternity colony under the Mersey way shopping centre) are only really likely to utilise the riparian zone as a key foraging/commuting resource. In this particular instance I do not consider that these activity transect are required to inform the impact assessment as the additional information the surveys are likely to reveal about how foraging and commuting bats are using the site is considered to be limited. Adverse impacts on foraging/commuting bats can be prevented through mitigation and careful design of the scheme— i.e. protecting the river corridor from light spill/retention of an unlit zone.

In relation to breeding birds, the following condition would be relevant to any planning application relating to the site: [BS42020: D.3.2.1] No demolition/vegetation clearance works should take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of buildings/structures and vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before demolition/vegetation clearance 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.

No evidence of otter was recorded during the survey. Suitable precautionary measures to prevent potential impacts on otters which may be passing through the site during the construction phase should be followed. Such measures are outlined in section 4.7 of the ecology report. This should be incorporated into the CEMP (see below).

I would also recommend that an informative is attached to any future planning permission granted so that the applicant is aware of the potential for protected species to be present on site. It should also include information stating that the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the laws which are in place to protect biodiversity. Should at any time otters, bats or any other protected species be discovered on site, work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist/Natural England should be contacted.

The following condition should be attached to any planning permission granted: [BS42020: D.3.10] Prior to the commencement of development, an invasive non-



native species protocol shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA, detailing the containment, control and removal of *Cotoneaster* spp. *Rhododendron*, and (Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam where affected) on site. The measures shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme. This information can be incorporated into the CEMP (see below)

It is important that the river is adequately protected during the construction phase. The following condition should therefore be used: [BS42020: D.4.1] No development shall take place until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The CEMP shall include:

- a) risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities
- b) identification of 'biodiversity protection zones'
- c) measures and sensitive working practices to avoid or reduce impacts during construction
- d) location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity
- e) times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works
- f) responsible persons and lines of communication
- g) roles and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk or works (EcOW) where one is required
- h) use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs

and shall include details of measures to:

- Avoid the impact on nesting birds
- Avoid the spread and details of treatment of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the WCA
- Avoid pollution of or negative impact on the river and other sensitive ecological features during construction
- Prevent potential impacts to otters during construction
- Protect all retained features of biodiversity interest such as trees.

The ecology survey was carried out in June 2017. Ecological conditions can change over time and species can move in/out of an area. If works have therefore not commenced before June 2019, I would recommend that update ecological surveys are carried out prior to commencement of works to ensure that the biodiversity assessment remains current and appropriate mitigation is implemented. This can be secured by condition.

The proposed lighting strategy includes measures to minimise light spill and information submitted as part of the application states that careful landscape planting can also be used to ensure light is directed away from ecologically sensitive habitats (following the principles outlined in Bat Conservation Trust guidance. It is vital that lighting is sensitively designed so as to minimise impacts on wildlife associated with light disturbance and ensuring the river corridor is protected from light spill is of particular importance.

The proposed landscaping scheme includes many biodiversity enhancements to the site and this is a welcome inclusion in the proposals. No details regarding proposed species has been provided at this stage. It is recommended that the principles in section 4.8 of the ecology report should be followed (i.e. locally native species and insect –attracting species) so as to ensure biodiversity benefits are maximised. I would also request details future management of habitat areas and of the proposed bat and bird boxes. In particular I would also ask that biodiversity enhancements along the river corridor are perused where possible as this is an important wildlife corridor.

Lead Local Flood Authority: Further information is required.

**Arboricultural Officer:** The proposed development footprint is shown or indicated at this time within the informal grounds of the existing site and it is assumed the proposed new developments will potentially impact on the trees and hedges within the site or neighbouring site as the development site is located in proximity of several trees on site and within the existing hard standing.

A full tree survey has been submitted as part of the planning application to show the condition and amenity levels of the existing neighbouring trees and where applicable which trees will have a potential impact on the proposed development, so any comments are based on this as it's a true representation of the trees on site and our professional judgements and information gathered.

In addition any layout plan need to fully consider the need to be given to tree planting throughout the site to increase the amenity levels of the site with replanting of semi-mature trees.

Specific consideration needs to be given to the potential benefit urban tree planting throughout the site to enhance the biodiversity, the amenity, connectivity through the site and the SUDs capacity through hard landscaped tree pits.

A detailed landscaping scheme has been supplied to indicate the locations but not species so will need to be further considered/drawn up as part of the planning application conditions which clearly shows enhancements of the site and surrounding environment to improve the local biodiversity and amenity of the area.

In principle the main works and design will have a negative impact on the trees on site, in neighbouring properties on all the boundaries, however it is acknowledged that the impact has been lessened to a minimal to allow a development and with appropriate landscaping it can be accepted.

In its current format it could be considered favourably as long as the proposal shows consideration has been given to the tree loss, which would need to be off-set the loss proposed, but it is not clear how this is going to be proposed, however it can be conditioned and plans drawn up in agreement with the Council Tree officer.

It would require some consideration for the loss of the trees throughout the three sites and how they intend to replace and enhance the local environment from the tree loss proposed and so would require the submission of full details as requested above justifying any impact on trees within proximity of the site and some consideration given to the existing trees in or around the site when designing the new improved landscaping design to include a detailed landscaping scheme that includes a greater number of new trees to improve the amenity and aesthetics of the

site for users and making sure a percentage of these are native large species and fruit trees at every opportunity

**Landscape Officer:** The concept of a roof garden in the location and the principal of a roof garden on a public transport interchange has previously been agreed. Further, much of the scheme's detailed design has already been agreed with the council. Although the site is council owned, it is not clear if the roof garden will be adopted by the council as a public open space or if the council will be responsible for maintenance of the landscape. If the council will be responsible for the grounds maintenance, this will fundamentally influence any comments.

For example, adopted areas will need to be designed and constructed in accordance with the council's standard details. Please confirm if the roof garden will be managed privately by a management company and please send me a plan showing areas to be adopted and maintained by the council.

I have not had any prior involvement or knowledge of the scheme and, at this stage, I will only be considering the scheme from a detailed landscape perspective (planting). In landscape terms, my comments will relate to the visual amenity of the planting scheme only.

My comments will not relate to any technical approvals. Other related technical issues to be considered by others:

- Access / circulation
- Building regulations / load bearing capacity / technical detail design and construction of the roof structure beneath the roof garden
- Weight of the roof garden / load (including hard landscape materials, growing media, water etc)
- Wind heave / load
- Irrigation
- Permeability (e.g. of hard landscape materials / paving)
- Drainage
- Waterproofing and lifespan of the waterproofing
- Accessibility to the roof and waterproofing beneath the garden for future maintenance and repairs
- Depths and extents of topsoil / growing media
- Levels, gradients and falls
- Hard landscape materials / paving
- Lighting
- Accessibility, barriers and health & safety

**Waste Management Team:** It should be ensured that the site plan meets with waste storage and access requirements.

Sufficient storage room should be allocated to allow for the safe and direct access/removal of the bins.

There needs to be sufficient access, width of entrance, turning circle enough for a heavy good sized vehicle, in order that residents have the use of their Council's waste collection services.

Given the size of the development and subsequent bin capacity it would be recommended that the site have compactor skips for all waste types, this will allow

for great storage/space efficiency and reduce the time/effort spend on/by the waste collection service.

**Street Lighting:** No response received, therefore no objection.

**Director of Public Health:** Sustainable Transport / Active Travel: the proposal will considerably contribute to opportunities for residents of all ages to improve their access around and beyond the Borough using active travel options as part of longer journeys. In Stockport 18.3% of adults and 86.4% of 15 year olds are not physically active enough to maintain their health in the medium to long term (as measured against the Chief Medical Officer for England guidance) and appropriate infrastructure is critical to enabling cycling and particularly walking as part of longer journeys by bus or rail. Promoting active travel contributes to management of good public health in the Borough, especially healthy weight. In addition appropriately designed transport infrastructure can contribute to reducing social exclusion, whilst encouraging uptake of non-car modes of travel. It is therefore important that it is clearly understood by the development team which routes are for cyclists or pedestrians and which ones may accommodate both - the Council can provide information on this. The importance of the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) needs to be fully recognised not only as a recreational route but for commuting where there have been daily flows of over 900 users (peak volumes of 100 users per hour) at times during this autumn. It is critical that the current diversion of the TPT along Heaton Lane will need to be considered carefully when the temporary bus facility is in operation as the intended route will also be closed off at this time.

Green Infrastructure: the proposed public park is extremely welcome in public health terms since it will provide much needed amenity space in the town centre, address air quality issues around the A6 and enable improvements to biodiversity including for species such as pollinators which are critical to supporting affordable healthy food choices. It is key that transport infrastructure contributes to enabling access to recreational spaces and supports good quality amenity for public health benefits. Child obesity levels in the Borough remain higher than the previous decade. Achieving healthy weight reduces risks of other lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, coronary heart disease and stroke. Reducing risks of such diseases also reduces pressures on current and future public sector health budgets (Stockport's JSNA). Retention and provision of new native trees and habitats are key to enabling public health benefits from green infrastructure enhancement for example not just around addressing flood risk but also in terms of tackling associated stress and its exacerbating effect on health. Health benefits are achieved where the site provides access to new open space. Enabling people to get next to nature is important in terms of lifting the human spirit which also assists with reducing the health impacts of stress, including on people with long term physical and/or mental health conditions.

Ageing Well: Stockport Council is in the process of preparing an Ageing Well Strategy which takes account of the World Health Organisation guidance on appropriate place making for older people. The Guidance contains design considerations which are critical to ensuring that the needs of the growing ageing population of Stockport are addressed where practicable through development and any proposed changes to the design could take account of guidance.

**Transport for Greater Manchester:** TfGM UTC have reviewed the updated LINSIG modelling provided by WSP and consider that it is acceptable at this stage. However, it is expected that as the junction design progresses post-application stage, then the

modelling would need to be updated accordingly (as discussed at the meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> January). TfGM are unsure as to whether this will need to be conditioned.

As requested previously, UTC would recommend that the following mitigation is provided as part of the development and conditioned accordingly:

- The costs of SCOOT revalidation in the area. This cost is estimated at £19,350.

This estimation is based on the below:

Heaton Lane / Mersey Square and A6 / Leyland Street: £3,300

Heaton Lane / Astley Street: £2,850

Mersey Square / Chestergate: £3,300

A6 / Exchange Street / St Petersgate: £3,300

Daw Bank / King Street West / Wood Street: £6,600

The revalidation of SCOOT will help to mitigate the increased delay as a result of the increased traffic flows and changes in traffic patterns resulting from the development. This will ensure that the network operates as efficiently as possible to ensure that congestion is minimised.

**Historic England:** Stockport Viaduct opened in 1840 a mere ten years after the first commercial passenger route was established and is an indication of the speed of expansion that the railways underwent from the 1830's onwards.

The massive scale of the vivid red structure as it marches across the landscape, is a defining landmark of the town and highlights topography of Stockport and its origins focused around the valley of the River Mersey. It also demonstrates the extensive influence industry had shaping the form and development of the settlement, further evidenced by the former Wellington Cotton Mill (grade II) on Daw Bank. Now Wellington Museum, the brick built mill of seven stories, it is a prominent building in Stockport, read alongside the striding viaduct and highly visible from the train when crossing the structure.

The 27 arch viaduct is a feat of early Victorian engineering and represents one of a number of substantial undertakings in the infancy of the railway, demonstrating both the economic confidence of the period and the development of construction technics which the railway era triggered. The historic and architectural significance of the structure is recognised in its designation as a grade II\* listed building, placing it in the top listed buildings in the country.

The viaduct runs adjacent to the main core of Stockport and Mersey Square. The square is enclosed on the western side by the Wellington Bridge (grade II) and is defined by the magnificent Plaza Cinema (GII\*), an art deco masterpiece described as one of the country's finest super cinema. This historic interest of the area is a whole is recognised in its designation as the Stockport Conservation Area.

The current application seeks to redevelopment of Stockport Bus interchange, which is located at the base of the viaduct, between it and the Wellington Bridge. The proposals would see the bus station developed as a roofed structure, with a public park created on top. In addition, a 14 storey residential tower is proposed to be constructed on Daw Bank, adjacent to the Wellington Museum.

The application meets our statutory remit for comment due to falling within the setting of the grade II\* listed viaduct. We will also provide a brief comment on the impact of the scheme on the II\* Plaza Cinema, but would refer you to your own specialist advisors for comments regarding the potential impact on the setting of the grade II listed buildings, particularly Wellington Bridge and Wellington Mill, as well as the wider conservation area.

Historic England recognises the potential wider benefits of improved transport interchange in this location, as well as the improvements to the general aesthetic of the area.

We do, however, have some concerns that the introduction of a single storey interchange building would have an impact on the dominance of the viaduct, when viewed from the city centre.

This is because the solid nature of the interchange would prevent views of the feet of the viaduct when viewed from Wellington Bridge, which has the result of visually foreshortening the height of the viaduct in a key view.

The proposed residential tower would also be taller than the viaduct, which would have a further impact on the structure's sense of scale and dominance in the town. We therefore consider that the proposal for both the tower and the interchange building would result in a level of harm to the significance of the designated asset.

In parallel to the viaduct, the dominance of the Plaza Cinema is a fundamental part of its significance, particularly when viewed from Mersey Square. However, we consider that the redevelopment of the interchange, including the new element which lies in front of the Plaza would not have an impact on its significance, as the scale of the new build is low.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out in section 16 that the local planning authority in considering whether or not to grant listed building consent shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 66 of the Act repeats the requirement for having "special regard" when considering whether to grant planning permission. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out in paragraph 193 that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Paragraph 196 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The current application is considered to cause a level of harm to the viaduct's significance. However, we acknowledge that the provision of a new public park on the roof top of the interchange would create new views of the viaduct, including some that would allow the whole height of the structure to be appreciated. This would mitigate some of the harm caused by the single storey interchange.

We have no objection to the proposals and would advise that the application should be considered against the relevant statute and policies of the revised NPPF, with particular reference to paragraph 196 and weighing the identified harm against the stated public benefits of the new public transport facility.

Recommendation: Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds. In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

**Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service:** The application is accompanied by an 'Archaeology Strategy' report prepared by WSP in October 2018. There is also a Heritage Report: Significance and Impact' produced by BDP in June 2018 which includes an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment by AECOM (2015) as Appendix B. These are in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (2018) paragraph 189. The studies have identified below-ground archaeology potential relating to various historic industrial sites and those of early worker's housing. Under section 4.2 Archaeology in the BDP Heritage Report, page 21, it is noted that: ...'the archaeological study undertaken by AECOM related to previous proposals for the Stockport bus station area with different site extents and level of development. As such this will require updating to reflect the new proposals with close liaison with the County Archaeologist'. GMAAS would be happy to discuss with the applicant in further detail the precise form of archaeological mitigation required for the scheme. As identified in the WSP Archaeology Strategy report, this will initially take the form of evaluation trenching to determine the level of survival and relative significance of buried remains, followed by more detailed and targeted excavation where the archaeology will be destroyed or damaged by development ground works. The archaeology should provide opportunities for community engagement, such as guided tours or an open day, and the results should be disseminated more permanently through information panels and publication. The latter might include a popular booklet in the Greater Manchester Past Revealed series. This would give visitors and local residents a sense of history and place for this important historical area of Stockport. GMAAS recommend that these works are secured through planning conditions which should be worded as follows:

No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works. The works are to be undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) submitted to and approved in writing by Stockport Planning Authority. The WSI shall cover the following:

A phased programme and methodology of investigation and recording to include: - evaluation trenching - informed by the above, targeted excavation (subject to a new WSI)

A programme for post investigation assessment to include: - analysis of the site investigation records and finds - production of a final report on the significance of the below-ground archaeological interest.

Provision for publication and dissemination of the analysis and report on the site investigations commensurate with their significance.

Provision for archive deposition of the report, finds and records of the site investigation.

Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved WSI.

Reason: To record and advance the understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible in accordance with NPPF policy 16, paragraph 199 and SIE-3 "Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment" of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

And

Prior to the completion of the development the applicant will submit details for the approval in writing by Local Planning Authority for the erection of information boards commemorating the history and archaeology of the site; the board shall subsequently be erected in complete accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To commemorate and present the archaeology and history of the site in accordance with Policy SIE-3 'Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment' of the Stockport Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

**Environment Agency:** We have not undertaken a detailed review of the risk posed to controlled waters from land contamination and would therefore advise that you refer to our published Guiding Principles for Land Contamination, which outlines the approach we would wish to see adopted to managing risks to the water environment from this site.

**Network Rail: *Network rail is placing a holding objection on the proposal***

The developer is proposing an access route described within the Design and Access Statement as follows, "Land bridge and raised podium to provide an access route from the Interchange to the railway station."

The land on which the Eastern most side of the development is set out is on land owned by Network Rail. There is access to trackside assets and also the Signal Box in this area. Network Rail requires 24/7/365 trackside access and also access to the Signal Box. Therefore, the land should be excluded from the proposal area.

In addition to the above:

1. Network Rail requests that the developer ensures there is a minimum 6m gap between the proposed building and the Network Rail viaduct. Notwithstanding this Long term maintenance plans shall be agreed with network rail and shall not infringe on the minimum electrical clearance rules. The minimum gap is to allow for all construction works on site and any future maintenance to be carried out wholly within the applicant's own land ownership. Also for the following reasons:-
  - To ensure that the applicant does not construct their proposal so that any foundations that impacts on Network Rail structures. Under Building Regulations the depth and width of foundations will be dependent upon the size of the structure, therefore foundations may impact upon Network Rail land by undermining or de-stabilising soil or boundary treatments.
  - To ensure that the proposal will not be impacted by overhead electrified lines. Induced voltage can affect structures or individuals up to 20m from the overhead line. AC 25kv lines have overhead cables.
  - Given the fatal nature of contact with 25kv live overhead line equipment there is a 3 metre prohibited zone to the electrification equipment. Construction and



Maintenance activities as required for the proposed building will only be permitted outside this zone.

- To provide maintenance access to the viaduct structure
  - There are no Party Wall issues for which the applicant would be liable for all costs.
  - Due to potential effects of increased windage and gusting caused by the erection of such a tall building shall be calculated against all elements of Network Rail infrastructure i.e. OLE gantries, parapets/refuges and ancillary structures.
2. Soakaways as a means of storm/surface water disposal must not be constructed near/within 20 metres of Network Rail's boundary or at any point which could adversely affect the stability of Network Rail's property. Storm/surface water must not be discharged onto Network Rail's property or into Network Rail's culverts or drains. Water discharged into the soil from the applicant's drainage system and land could seep onto Network Rail land and cause flooding, water and soil run off onto lineside safety critical equipment or de-stabilisation of land through water saturation. Suitable drainage or other works must be provided and maintained by the Developer to prevent surface water flows or run-off onto Network Rail's property. Suitable foul drainage must be provided separate from Network Rail's existing drainage. Once water enters a pipe it becomes a controlled source and as such no water should be discharged in the direction of the railway.
  3. Details of Vibro-compaction machinery / piling machinery or piling and ground treatment works to be undertaken as part of the development to be submitted to the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer. Network Rail will need to review such works in order to determine the type of soil (e.g. sand, rock) that the works are being carried out upon and also to determine the level of vibration that will occur as a result of the piling. The impact upon the railway is dependent upon the distance from the railway boundary of the piling equipment, the type of soil the development is being constructed upon and the level of vibration. Each proposal is therefore different and thence the need for Network Rail to review the piling details / method statement. Maximum allowable levels of vibration - CFA piling is preferred as this tends to give rise to less vibration. Excessive vibration caused by piling can damage railway structures and cause movement to the railway track as a result of the consolidation of track ballast. The developer must demonstrate that the vibration does not exceed a peak particle velocity of 5mm/s at any structure or with respect to the rail track.
  4. The lighting associated with the development must not interfere with the sighting of signalling apparatus and/or train drivers vision on approaching trains. The location and colour of lights must not give rise to the potential for confusion with the signalling arrangements on the railway. The developer should obtain the approval of the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer for their detailed proposals regarding lighting. Following occupation of the development, if within three months Network Rail or a Train Operating Company has identified that lighting from the development is interfering with driver's vision, signal sighting, alteration/mitigation will be required to remove the conflict at the applicant's expense e.g. a sodium light on third party land can 'wash-out' a driver's ability to perceive a signal set at red: to the train

driver the signal would be perceived as yellow and the driver would proceed even though a red signal indicates danger and to stop.

5. Foundation type and installation method to be agreed with NR. Any adverse effects on the existing foundations of the adjacent viaduct shall not be accepted. An appropriate monitoring regime is to be adopted throughout all execution stages. All excavations / earthworks carried out in the vicinity of Network Rail property/ structures must be designed and executed such that no interference with the integrity of that viaduct structure can occur. If temporary works compounds are to be located adjacent to the operational railway, these should be included in a method statement for approval by Network Rail. Prior to commencement of works, full details of excavations and earthworks to be carried out near the railway undertaker's boundary fence should be submitted for the approval of the Asset Protection Engineer and the works shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
6. Prior to commencement Network Rail will need to be in receipt of a signed Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA) in place. This is to cover costs of reviews of Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) and any associated on-site supervision by Network Rail. RAMS to be accepted by Network Rail prior to commencement of works on site. Construction phase clearances and working practices are to be agreed with Network Rail.
7. Network Rail requests that the LPA and the developer (along with their chosen acoustic contractor) engage in discussions to determine the most appropriate measures to mitigate noise and vibration from the existing railway to ensure that there will be no future issues for residents once they take up occupation of the dwellings. Network Rail is aware that residents of dwellings adjacent to the railway have in the past discovered issues upon occupation of dwellings with noise and vibration from the existing operational railway, as a consequence of inadequate mitigation measures for the site, and therefore it is a matter for the developer and the LPA via mitigation measures and conditions to ensure that these issues are mitigated appropriately prior to construction.
  - The current level of railway usage may be subject to change at any time without prior notification including increased frequency of trains, night time train running and heavy freight trains.
  - Network Rail also often carry out works at night on the operational railway when normal rail traffic is suspended and often these works can be noisy and cause vibration.
  - Network Rail may need to conduct emergency works on the railway line and equipment and these would not be notified to residents in advance due to their safety critical nature.
  - The proposal should not prevent Network Rail from its statutory undertaking
8. Demolition works on site must be carried out so that they do not endanger the safe operation of the railway, or the stability of the adjoining Network Rail structures and land. Demolition of any existing buildings, due to its close proximity to the Network Rail boundary, must be carried out in accordance with an agreed method statement. Review of the method statement will be

undertaken by the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer before the development and any demolition works on site can commence. Network Rail would like to add that the applicant is strongly recommended to employ companies to demolish buildings / structures belonging to the National Federation of Demolition Contractors. This will ensure that all demolition works are carried out to professional standards and the company itself will also include liability insurance as part of its service and that demolition works on site do not impact the safety and performance of the railway. Demolition works to control risk of dust and debris on Network Rail land (and asbestos if applicable).

9. The requirements of CPA Tower Crane guidance will apply due to the railway being within the collapse radius of the tower crane. As part of the process a Network Rail Project Engineer will review the temporary works certificate and associated calculations. Please refer to CPA requirements attached including section 2.3.2, which outlines the requirement to downrate cranes alongside Network Rail infrastructure. If there is a requirement for a tower crane to oversail Network Rail land discussions will be required to assess the feasibility of an oversailing agreement.
10. Network Rail requirements for landscaping are highlighted below. Network Rail would request that no trees are planted immediately adjacent to the boundary with our land and the operational railway, also see attached information guidance note on suitable trees adjacent to the boundary.
  - Trees can be blown over in high winds resulting in damage to Network Rail's boundary treatments / fencing as well as any lineside equipment (e.g. telecoms cabinets, signals) which has both safety and performance issues.
  - Trees toppling over can also destabilise soil on Network Rail land and the applicant's land which could result in landslides or slippage of soil onto the operational railway.
  - Deciduous trees shed their leaves which fall onto the rail track, any passing train therefore loses its grip on the rails due to leaf fall adhering to the rails, and there are issues with trains being unable to break correctly for signals set at danger.

Network Rail would request that only evergreen shrubs are planted and we would request that they should be planted a minimum distance from the Network Rail boundary that is equal to their expected mature growth height.

Lists of trees that are permitted and those that are not are provided below and these should be added to any tree planting conditions:

Permitted:

Birch (Betula), Crab Apple (Malus Sylvestris), Field Maple (Acer Campestre), Bird Cherry (Prunus Padus), Wild Pear (Pyrus Communis), Fir Trees - Pines (Pinus), Hawthorne (Cretaeagus), Mountain Ash - Whitebeams (Sorbus), False Acacia (Robinia), Willow Shrubs(Shrubby Salix), Thuja Plicatata "Zebra"

Not Permitted:

Alder (Alnus Glutinosa), Aspen - Poplar (Populus), Beech (Fagus Sylvatica), Wild Cherry (Prunus Avium), Hornbeam (CarpinusBetulus), Small-leaved Lime (Tilia

Cordata), Oak (Quercus), Willows (Salix Willow), Sycamore - Norway Maple (Acer), Horse Chestnut (Aesculus Hippocastanum), Sweet Chestnut (Castanea Sativa), London Plane (Platanus Hispanica).

Network Rail is required to recover all costs associated with facilitating these works. A Basic Asset Protection Agreement will be required to facilitate works on site.

**Coal Authority:** No observations. The application site does not fall within the defined coalfield; there is no requirement therefore to consider coal mining issues as part of this planning application or to consult the Coal Authority. The Coal Authority has no comments to make on this planning application.

**Design for Security:** Having now reviewed the plans and submitted Crime Impact Statement, we would recommend that the Crime Impact Statement issued by WSP is conditioned to reflect the recommendation within the report.

We would recommend that the scheme strives to achieve a security rated accreditation for example; Secured by Design, SABRE or Secured Environments.

**Natural England:** No comment.

**Manchester Airport Group:** The Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport has assessed this proposal and its potential to conflict aerodrome safeguarding criteria. Accordingly, Manchester Airport has no safeguarding objections to the proposal provided that the height stated is not exceeded. During construction, as the site is directly beneath the approach path, we request that any excessive dust/smoke caused by construction be suppressed.

Please note that any cranes or other tall equipment required during construction may present a hazard to aircraft and will need to be assessed separately to ensure that aircraft safety is protected. We therefore request that the following informative is attached to any approval granted:

Cranes, whilst they are temporary, can be a hazard to air safety. The developer or crane operator must therefore contact Manchester Airport's Control of Works Office using the details provided below, at least 21 days in advance of intending to erect a crane or other tall construction equipment on site. This is to obtain a Tall Equipment Permit and to ascertain if any operating restrictions that are subsequently imposed by Manchester Airport must be fully complied with.

A separate guidance document is attached to this response providing further details of the requirements and procedures relating to the operation of cranes, which should be provided to the applicant for their information.

**United Utilities:** With regard to the above development proposal, United Utilities Water Limited ('United Utilities') wishes to provide the following comments.

#### Drainage Conditions

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 this approach:

## Foul Water

### Condition 1

Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems.

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

## Surface Water

### Condition 2

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 and unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, no surface water shall discharge to the public combined sewerage system either directly or indirectly.

The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

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.

A public sewer crosses this site and we may not permit building over it. We will require an access strip width of six metres, three metres either side of the centre line of the sewer which is in accordance with the minimum distances specified in the current issue of "Sewers for Adoption", for maintenance or replacement. Therefore a modification of the site layout, or a diversion of the affected public sewer at the applicant's expense, may be necessary. To establish if a sewer diversion is feasible, the applicant must discuss this at an early stage with our Developer Engineer as a lengthy lead in period may be required if a sewer diversion proves to be acceptable.

Deep rooted shrubs and trees should not be planted in the vicinity of the public sewer and overflow systems.

Please note, United Utilities are not responsible for advising on rates of discharge to the local watercourse system. This is a matter for discussion with the Lead Local Flood Authority and / or the Environment Agency (if the watercourse is classified as main river).

## 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.

#### Example condition

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 design, management and maintenance of an asset that is not in our ownership and therefore should the suggested condition be included in the Decision Notice, we will not be involved in discharging this condition.

#### Water Comments

A water main crosses the site. As we need unrestricted access for operating and maintaining it, we will not permit development over or in close proximity to the main. We require an access strip as detailed in our 'Standard Conditions for Works Adjacent to Pipelines', a copy of which is enclosed.

The applicant must comply with our 'Standard Conditions' document. This should be taken into account in the final site layout, or a diversion may be necessary. Unless there is specific provision within the title of the property or an associated easement, any necessary disconnection or diversion required as a result of any development will be at the applicant's expense. If considering a water mains diversion, the applicant should contact United Utilities at their earliest opportunity as they may find that the cost of mains diversion is prohibitive in the context of their development scheme.

The Water Industry Act 1991 affords United Utilities specific rights in relation to the maintenance, repair, access and protection of our water infrastructure. Sections 158 & 159, outlines the right to inspect, maintain, adjust, repair or alter our mains. This includes carrying out any works incidental to any of those purposes. Service pipes are not our property and we have no record of them. Under Section 174 of the Act it is an offence to intentionally or negligently interfere with any resource main or water main that causes damage to or has an effect on its use or operation.

It is in accordance with this statutory provision that we provide standard conditions to assist developers when working in close proximity to our water mains.

Both during and post construction, there should be no additional load bearing capacity on the main without prior agreement from United Utilities. This would include earth movement and the transport and position of construction equipment and vehicles.

Our water mains may need extending to serve any development on this site and the applicant may be required to pay a contribution.

The applicant must undertake a complete soil survey, as and when land proposals have progressed to a scheme design i.e. development, and results submitted along with an application for water. This will aid in our design of future pipework and materials to eliminate the risk of contamination to the local water supply.

If the applicant intends to obtain a water supply from United Utilities for the proposed development, we strongly recommend they engage with us at the earliest opportunity. If reinforcement of the water network is required to meet the demand, this could be a significant project and the design and construction period should be accounted for.

Please note, all internal pipework must comply with current Water Supply (water fittings) Regulations 1999.

#### General comments

Where United Utilities' assets exist, the level of cover to the water mains and public sewers must not be compromised either during or after construction.

It is the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate the exact relationship between any United Utilities' assets and the proposed development

Due to the public sewer transfer in 2011, not all sewers are currently shown on the statutory sewer records and we do not always show private pipes on our plans. If a sewer is discovered during construction; please contact a Building Control Body to discuss the matter further.

#### Supporting information - Drainage

If the applicant intends to offer wastewater assets forward for adoption by United Utilities, the proposed detailed design will be subject to a technical appraisal by an Adoptions Engineer as we need to be sure that the proposal meets the requirements of Sewers for Adoption and United Utilities' Asset Standards. The detailed layout should be prepared with consideration of what is necessary to secure a development to an adoptable standard. This is important as drainage design can be a key determining factor of site levels and layout. The proposed design should give consideration to long term operability and give United Utilities a cost effective proposal for the life of the assets. Therefore, should this application be approved and the applicant wishes to progress a Section 104 agreement, we strongly recommend that no construction commences until the detailed drainage design, submitted as part of the Section 104 agreement, has been assessed and accepted in writing by United Utilities. Any works carried out prior to the technical assessment being approved is done entirely at the developers own risk and could be subject to change.

Should this planning application be approved the applicant should contact United Utilities regarding a potential water supply or connection to public sewers. Additional information is available on our website.

**Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service:** The proposal should meet the requirements for Fire Service Access.

The Fire Service requires vehicular access for a fire appliance to within 45m of all points within the dwellings.

The access road should be a minimum width of 4.5 metres and capable of carrying 12.5 tonnes. Additionally if the access road is more than 20m long a turning circle, hammerhead, or other turning point for fire appliances will be required. The maximum length of any cul-de-sac network should be 250m.

There should be a suitable fire hydrant within 165m of the furthest dwelling.

The Fire Service strongly supports the installation of domestic sprinkler systems as a positive measure to protect persons. At a small cost occupants' can be given the reassurance of a high level of protection. All developers should positively consider the viability of installing domestic sprinkler systems. The access requirements for a dwelling fitted with an approved sprinkler system can deviate from the required standard detailed above, further consultation will be required.

Assuming the proposals meet the functional requirement of B5 (2) (fire appliance access) this Authority has no objection regarding access under any local enactment.

**Civil Aviation Authority:** No response received, therefore no objection.

**British Pipeline Agency:** No response received, therefore no objection.

**Cadent Gas:** Should you be minded to approve this application please can the following notes be included as an informative note for the Applicant

Considerations in relation to gas pipeline/s identified on site:

Cadent have identified operational gas apparatus within the application site boundary. This may include a legal interest (easements or wayleaves) in the land which restricts activity in proximity to Cadent assets in private land. The Applicant must ensure that proposed works do not infringe on Cadent's legal rights and any details of such restrictions should be obtained from the landowner in the first instance.

If buildings or structures are proposed directly above the gas apparatus then development should only take place following a diversion of this apparatus. The Applicant should contact Cadent's Plant Protection Team at the earliest opportunity to discuss proposed diversions of apparatus to avoid any unnecessary delays.

If any construction traffic is likely to cross a Cadent pipeline then the Applicant must contact Cadent's Plant Protection Team to see if any protection measures are required.

All developers are required to contact Cadent's Plant Protection Team for approval before carrying out any works on site and ensuring requirements are adhered to.

Cadent Gas has a major accident hazard pipeline in the vicinity, Partington – Stockport.



The BPD (Building Proximity Distance) for this Pipeline is 8.0 metres.

The BPD is taken from The Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers publication IGEM/TD/1 Edition 5 which is the standard applicable to steel pipelines and associated installations for high pressure gas transmission. This is the standard adopted by Cadent Gas and endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

There are other restraints imposed on high pressure gas pipelines, these are land use planning distances. These are distances defined by the HSE to allow them to advise on the acceptability of new developments next to the pipeline and are controlled through the HSE's Planning Advice for Developments near Hazardous Installations (PADHI) process. Further guidance on how these are applied can be found on the HSE's website.

Under Land Use Planning the HSE may wish to apply more stringent criteria for Building Proximity. I recommend that you ensure that they are formally consulted.

When working in the vicinity of any Cadent Gas pipelines, the standards set out in the National Grid specification SSW22 must be strictly adhered to.

From the information provided, it does not appear the proposed works will directly affect the above pipeline.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact Cadent Gas prior to any works commencing on site. As you will appreciate we are unable to provide specific guidance based on the information provided. It is therefore essential that the applicant should contact Cadent Gas at the earliest convenience providing detailed site plans, method statements and risk assessments.

Searches based on the enquiry have identified that there is apparatus in the vicinity, which may be affected by the activities as specified. Please inform Plant Protection, as soon as possible, the decision your authority is likely to make regarding this application.

**Disability Stockport:** Disability Stockport supports this application as it will greatly improve access to transport for disabled people.

**Health & Safety Executive:** HSE is a statutory consultee for certain developments within the consultation distance (CD) of major hazard sites and major accident hazard pipelines, and has provided planning authorities with access to HSEs Planning Advice Web App.

HSEs Planning Advice WebApp should be used to consult advice on this application, which lies very close to the CD of Pipeline 6732 - Cadent Gas Ltd (Partington / Stockport).

## **ANALYSIS**

This application seeks the comprehensive regeneration of the site of the existing bus station and proposes the delivery of a high quality contemporary residential tower, the provision of a new bus interchange together with the provision of a new public park in the heart of the town centre. It also proposes the creation of a new pedestrian footbridge linking the bus interchange to the rail station and Stockport Exchange.

As detailed in the description of development the application comprises a hybrid application containing a number of component parts.

In the consideration of this application a number of matters should be considered in assessing the merits of the proposal, addressing the impacts of the proposed development, as well as looking at the overall planning balance of the proposal with regards to harm and public benefits.

### Principle of Development

The existing bus interchange site occupies a key strategic position in terms of being a prominent gateway site to the wider town centre. The importance of the site in respect of prominence and development potential has been long acknowledged by the Council, with the potential for significant development opportunity having been referred to within studies, including 'Future Stockport: Town Centre Masterplan' (2005).

The site also occupies a key position in providing a transitional area between the principle commercial retail core, and the wider town centre. This site is located within the boundary of Greater Manchester's first proposed Mayoral Development Corporation which is part of the next stage in the Council's ambitious regeneration plans for the town which will see the creation of in the region of 3000 new homes over a 15 year period in the heart of the town.

As proposed the scheme would enable the regeneration of a highly accessible and prominent site, which does not currently fulfil its potential as a place of arrival and destination, in delivering both a high quality transport hub future proofed for the delivery of metrolink into the town centre. From a general overview this joint Local Authority / Transport for Greater Manchester proposal aligns with the long term regenerative aspirations of the Council and is considered to reflect the general economic, social and environmental thrusts of the NPPF as well as aligning with national policy / ministerial statements which direct the delivery of new residential development at increased densities close to accessible transport hubs. This advises that planning authorities should amongst other things be supportive of development which leads to economic growth in the interests of stimulating employment and the economy, as part of delivering sustainable development.

In considering the land uses proposed consideration should be made to the relevant development plan policy for this area of the town centre. The majority of the site falls within Town Centre Guidance (TCG)3.1 'Riverside', with the exception of a small part of the scheme which relates to land to the east of the A6 at the junction with Mersey Square and which falls within TCG2.1 'Central Shopping Area'. The outline element of the proposal around Exchange Street and up to Station Road falls within TCG3.2 'Cultural Leisure and Heritage Quarter'.

The thrust of these adopted policies which remain in compliance with National Planning Policy advocates the provision of high quality, mixed residential, leisure and commercial / office uses. It should also be further noted that a particular aim is to enhance the public enjoyment of the river environment by generating active uses and by the creation of new areas of public realm in the vicinity. A further aim also seeks to ensure that development opportunities deliver improvements to the provision of linkages to the Town centre and improvements to enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment.

The application identifies as a key issue that the scheme wishes to address, its connectivity and the pedestrian environment. Particular care has been taken to design and improve the interrelationship and function of the interchange, the A6 and linkages across to Mersey Square and the rail station. It is considered that the scheme would if approved deliver significant improvements in this regard.

In turn, by improving connectivity and accessibility, the scheme should assist in ensuring security, surveillance and visibility in the area are enhanced.. In addition, it will provide for significantly improved passenger and driver facilities and will improve connections with the adjacent parts of the Town Centre, including the station. Enhancing the overall environment and providing for safer and more accessible environment will assist in increasing overall activity and footfall in and around the area increasing the overall vitality of the town centre and providing for a facility which would support and assist with enhancing the daytime and evening economy of the town centre as a whole.

The Stockport Town Centre Development Prospectus identifies Stockport as a major transport hub for all modes and an interchange for local, regional and national movements. However, there are a number of access issues that could constrain the growth of the Town centre if not addressed. One of the identified constraint includes:

- deficiencies in physical infrastructure that make interchange between different modes more difficult than it should be, with a particular problem being the separation of the bus and rail stations from each other and their separation from the rest of the Town Centre by the A6.

The proposed development would significantly reduce the current barriers and assist in achieving reduction in the existing issues experienced. It is therefore considered that the proposed uses are entirely appropriate under current local planning policy and national planning guidance and could deliver significant regenerative benefits for the town as a whole

### Vitality & Viability of the Town Centre

In assessing the commercial aspect of the current proposal, it should be noted that retail uses are listed as a main town centre use within the NPPF, which sets out the requirement for a sequential test to be applied to planning applications for 'main town centre uses' that are not in an existing centre. According to the NPPF, main town centre uses should be located in town centres then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered. In order to be compliant with the NPPF, other suitable sites should be assessed within the catchment area of the proposal. The NPPF further expands in para 85 that planning decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, with Para 85 (f) recognising that residential development plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres, and that residential development on appropriate sites should be encouraged.

The councils own policies support the vitality and viability of the town centre with Core Policy CS6 ' Safeguarding and Strengthening the Service Centre Hierarchy' indicating that the Core Retail Area of the Town Centre (TCG2.1) is sequentially preferable for the purpose of A1 uses.

Core Policy CS5: 'Access to Services' from the Core Strategy also sets out that main town centre uses should be directed to relevant centres in the service centre hierarchy thereby adopting the principles of the sequential approach.

The town centre first approach as a requirement of the NPPF, together with the need to achieve sustainable development, delivering a sufficient supply of homes, building a strong and competitive economy and promoting healthy and safe communities are all principles of the application and a requirement of the NPPF and supported by planning guidance "Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres".

Whilst the proposal seeks maximum flexibility in the breakdown of the commercial uses, it must be acknowledged that this compliance with adopted planning policy and the NPPF. Suitable conditions can be applied limiting the type and maximum size of any individual A1 (retail) unit, in order to safeguard the vitality and viability of the core retail area of the Town Centre and to comply with the sequential test.

There are no matters or considerations relating to this application which would detrimentally impact on the vitality or viability of the town centre, and as such, the scheme is compliant with local and national planning policy in this regard.

#### Housing Supply

The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to identify and maintain at least a 5 year housing land supply against its defined housing requirements. Stockport is currently in a position of significant under-supply with only 2.8 years of housing supply when considered against the most up-to-date housing need position. In these circumstances paragraph 67 of the Framework notes that local planning authorities should boost significantly the supply of housing. As such the principle of the delivery of 196 new homes is to be welcomed.

Given the highly sustainable location of the site, immediately adjacent to a public transport hub it is precisely the type of location where the delivery of a higher density form of development should be encouraged, subject of course to other considerations such as visual impact and level of amenity afforded to existing and future residents.

#### Affordable Housing

Core Strategy policy H-3 indicates that the proportion of affordable housing sought in new housing developments varies across the borough to take account of property prices and economic viability. The percentage requirement across the borough ranges from an upper end of 40 % to a lower end of between 5-15% affordable provision. In this case, as the site is located within the town centre the policy advises that provision should be made within a range of 5-15%. This reflects limited viability that currently exists for residential development within the town centre. However, as the site is Council owned, the policy requires that "40% of dwellings.....should be affordable, or as high a level is viable, having regard to the creation of mixed balanced communities".

The application has been supported by an economic viability appraisal, which seeks to demonstrate that the development would not be viable if there was a policy requirement to provide any affordable housing, simply put it indicates that it would not be possible to deliver the regenerative benefits of the scheme and provide any affordable housing.

In the assessment of the submitted appraisal the Council has appointed a specialist consultant to undertake an independent assessment of the information. This assessment concludes that the project is commercially unviable with the cost of delivering the scheme being significant higher than the value of the property created. It would therefore not be possible to deliver affordable housing as part of the scheme. The submitted appraisal identifies that the scheme works on the basis that the applicants are pursuing a long term strategy of revenue generation through residential rents and are not driven by short term financial goals. The inclusion of affordable housing in the scheme would however undermine the rental cash flow and the expected rental growth which would jeopardise the funding available to the project.

Based on the assessment of the information submitted, it is concluded that the applicant has demonstrated that it would not be viable for the scheme to include any affordable housing and still deliver wider public regenerative benefits of the proposal.

### Heritage considerations

The site is located within the town centre and in close proximity to a number of key statutorily listed heritage assets, most notably the majestic defining viaduct a Grade II\* Listed Building. This iconic structure is located within the top 8% of listed buildings in the country and is described in its statutory listing as:

*Viaduct of 27 arches by G W Buck. Opened 27 December 1840, having taken 21 months to build, at a cost of £70,000. Said to contain 11 million bricks. Viaduct in brick with stone capping and dentil cornice. Stone moulded impost bands and rusticated faces to piers.*

There can be no doubt that the development proposed would present significant change to the townscape of Stockport. The residential tower would comprise one of Stockport's tallest building and would present a prominent structure which would be readily visible from a number of long term views. The information submitted to accompany the application advises that the scheme seeks to maximise development opportunity whilst minimising the obvious scale of the project to humanise and complement pedestrian and user experience, balancing this with existing town centre scale whilst celebrating the ambition and drama of this bold intervention with an appropriate response to heritage context. The development does present a a defining structure which announces the evolving function of the town centre, and continues those scheme which have already been granted consent at the Sorting Office and the site of the former Greenhale House proposing striking modern contemporary architecture.

The provision of a new roof top public park to the interchange building would deliver a significant level change and would enable the western part of the town to more effectively tie in to the elevated A6 and offer a considerable benefit in providing much needed accessible and useable greenspace in the heart of the town.

Dealing firstly with matters relating to archaeological interest, the Council has consulted with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service who have in turn considered the supporting documents and raise no objections, subject to the use of appropriate planning conditions which would amongst other matters seek to ensure that works are carried out in accordance with a programme of archaeological works including the investigation, recording, publication and dissemination of information and the provision for the deposition of finds. A condition requiring the

applicant to erect information boards commemorating the history and archaeology of the site would also be included on any permission.

Turning to principle heritage considerations, Members will be advised that numerous heritage assets exist both within and directly adjacent to the site. Specifically the Grade II listed Wellington Bridge (A6) crosses the north-eastern corner of the larger site, as does the St Peter's Conservation Area which also extends to include parts of the site along Daw Bank. In addition the following buildings / areas exist adjacent to or in close proximity to the site boundaries and identified on plan appended to this report:

- 1) Grade II\* listed Railway Viaduct
- 2) Grade II\* listed Former Plaza Cinema
- 3) Grade II listed steps adjacent to Former Plaza Cinema
- 4) Grade II listed Weir Mill
- 5) Grade II listed Wellington Mill
- 6) Locally listed Stockport Railway Station
- 7) Locally Listed Mersey Square Bear Pit
- 8) Locally Listed Upstairs & Downstairs PH
- 9) St Peter's Conservation Area

In considering the hybrid application the extensive comments of the Council's Conservation Officer are included earlier in this planning report and should be referred to in the context of assessing the proposal as a whole. Detailed discussion regarding the Wellington Mill, the viaduct and their impacts follow, however based on the conservation officer comments there is limited impact to the other heritage assets listed above.

When considering proposals which could result in harm to a heritage assets, para 194 of the NPPF advises that a clear and convincing justification is required to justify any harm to, loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting). Therefore, in considering these proposals regard should be had to the extent of harm from development both to the significance of the assets in regard to the impact on Wellington Bridge by virtue of the proposed alterations to the bridge required to facilitate the development as well as the impact of the proposal on the setting of both the Grade II Listed Wellington Mill and the Grade II\* Viaduct specifically. In this respect Members will be advised that the location and design of the proposal, particularly the residential element of the application, has been subject to extensive discussions regarding the feasibility of alternative solutions over the last 2 years. In particular, the design of the current scheme has seen the position, size, form and orientation of the scheme's components parts evolve, particularly in respect of seeking to minimise harmful impacts on key views of nearby heritage assets and in seeking to address concerns /comments made by consultees, including the Councils conservation officer. Whilst the views of the conservation officer are noted, it is considered that the application includes sufficient supporting information which has

been further supplemented to address concerns expressed and is considered to present sufficient information to allow a conclusion to be reached that clear and convincing justification has been presented to demonstrate that the scheme could not be delivered in a less harmful way. The proposal now before Members is considered to demonstrate that para 194 of the NPPF has been satisfied.

In assessing development which could result in harm to heritage assets, consideration is then required as to whether the scheme would result in substantial or less than substantial harm. In considering this matter, both Historic England and the Council's Conservation Officer conclude that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm, therefore paragraph 195 of the NPPF is satisfied.

Members will note from the proposals that there is no demolition proposed by the application resulting in permanent loss of a heritage asset, and it is acknowledged that given the physical constraints of the site and its surroundings, that the proposed development will invariably (and not unexpectedly due to its settling) have an impact on heritage assets, including the grade II\* listed viaduct, the grade II listed Wellington Mill, grade II listed Wellington Bridge and the wider St Peters Conservation Area.

In assessing the impact on the grade II\* listed viaduct and other heritage assets, it is considered by both Historic England and the conservation officer that the proposed development, specifically the interchange building and the residential tower, would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the viaduct. Historic England state *'The current application is considered to cause a level of harm to the viaducts significance. However, we acknowledge that the provision of a new public park on the roof top of the interchange would create new views of the viaduct, including some that would allow the whole height of the structure to be appreciated. This would mitigate some of the harm caused by the single storey interchange'*.

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

In respect of the grade II\* listed viaduct the harm arises by virtue of the development impacting on its scale and dominance when viewed from the Town Centre, and in part through the shortening of key views. It is acknowledged that the current proposal through the provision of a public park on the roof top of the interchange building would create entirely new views of the viaduct not currently achieved, including some that would allow the whole height of the structure to be appreciated, a matter highlighted and supported by Historic England. The proposal would further result in opening up of the riverfront and creation of an attractive ground level public space representing a positive intervention, with enhanced access providing potential for greater public appreciation and contemplation of the environmental qualities of, and relationship between, the town and the river. This area has the potential to provide opportunities for the interpretation of the history and development of Stockport and in particular the key contribution played by water from the River Mersey and its tributaries to provide power for the early textile industries.

The proposal seeks to strike a balance which will propose an optimum number of residential units, to make the scheme deliverable whilst having regard to the need to minimise harm to defined assets. Prior to the submission of the application a number of options were considered by the applicant which informed the approach.

The applicants sought extensive expert advice to inform the scheme development which identified an optimum number of units with a range siting between 175 -200 units. The lower end of the units were discounted as this would not result in the same level of yield due to disproportionate build costs and would render the scheme undeliverable .

Following the identification of the minimum number of units, the scheme was developed to provide a building that seeks to position the building in the most sensitive position which also had to have an efficient and cost effective structural interface with the interchange beneath . The building could not be positioned to sit on top of the manoeuvring areas within the interchange as this would require expensive transfer structures, making the viability even more challenging.

The only two locations therefore the building could be positioned was above the northern and southern concourses. The northern concourse was not deemed acceptable in terms of the urban design, potential technical issues of the tunnels and sewer but also the heritage impacts particularly in regard to a greater impact on the setting and views of the viaduct.

Within the southern concourse, the minimum width of building (north south) was informed by the operational space for the bus layover areas, then the length of the building was kept to a minimum to maximise the views to the Hat Works

The benefits and enhancements to the overall environment together with the views from the park and residential block are considered to offer a degree of mitigation towards any overall harm to the viaduct caused by the proposed development. In considering this matter one must weigh any harm against the wider public benefits of the proposal as advised in paragraph 196 of the NPPF. This matter will be considered in more detail later in the report.

In respect of the grade II listed Wellington Mill, the proposed residential tower would, given its scale, mass and siting have an impact on this heritage asset. At approximately 59m in height (from ground level on Daw Bank) the residential tower would become one of the tallest building in the town centre skyline, with an overall height 9m above the Wellington Mill (Hatworks) chimney and standing double the height of the 7 storey Grade II listed mill. A recently permitted Greenhale House however stands at 112.1m AOD. policy The councils conservation officer has raised concern about the impact of the residential block on the adjacent Wellington Mill due to scale, identifying that they believe that this is the most harmful part of the overall proposal. In order to assist in considering the application, the conservation officer advises that in his opinion only a residential block of an identical height to the existing mill would result in no harm to Wellington Mill, but, recognising that a block in this location is acceptable. The comments of the conservation officer further considers that the harm is less than substantial. Whilst the conservations officers view is appreciated, it is for members to balance the overall harm of the scheme against the public benefits. In support of the application a Heritage Statement has been provided which identifies harm and significance, and includes an assessment of all of the following views:



View 1: Stockport Railway Viaduct

View 2: Wellington Bridge

View 3: Bridge connecting St. Petersgate and Merseyway Roof

View 4: Rock Buildings, Mersey Square towards the Viaduct

View 5: Wellington Bridge overlooking The Bear Pit

View 6: Swaine Street looking north

View 7: Swaine Street looking south

View 8: Bus Station towards Wellington Bridge

View 9: Daw Bank looking west

The conservation officer considers that from certain vantage points the existing mill would be partially concealed by the new proposed residential block, thereby reducing the relationship between the asset and its landscape setting. It is appreciated that the setting in which the mill sits would change as a result of the redevelopment, however, taking account of the significant benefits to the scheme and the information provided in the Heritage Assessment submitted by the applicant it is considered to be acceptable.

As identified earlier, Paragraph 196 requires the decision maker to weigh any harm against the public benefits of the proposal. In this respect, Officers recognise the potential for significant and sustained public benefits being delivered by the development. These include benefits are discussed in detail throughout this planning report, but can be defined as including, inter alia, the provision of a new and upgraded transport hub promoting the use of sustainable transport; a high quality public park (circa 7822 sq.m) and areas of enhanced public realm (circa 1963sq.m) along the riverside boundary of the site; improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity both into / out of and within the Town Centre; an enhanced modern and attractive commercial offer in a Town Centre location and the ability to deliver a significant number of residential units (196) on a brownfield site in a highly sustainable urban location. In a wider context the proposal will offer further scope for attracting inward investment and job creation into this part of Stockport, in accordance with paragraphs 80 – 90 of the NPPF

In respect of the outline element of the hybrid application (seeking creation of an interconnecting bridge between the park and Station Road), it must be noted that this element solely seeks permission for the principle of the creation of the bridge link, with all matters of detail reserved for future determination. Notwithstanding this, the parameters of the bridge have been provided to allow an initial assessment of the overall scheme. Scope therefore remains for the local planning authority to consider detailed design solutions as part of any subsequent reserved matters applications. Members therefore retain the ability to make a determination on full matters of details relating to the outline element.

Whilst members will appreciate that there is harm associated with the proposed development, full consideration has been given to paras 194, 195 and 196 of the NPPF, the comments of Historic England, the Council's conservation officer and Greater Manchester Archaeological unit in forming an overall assessment of the application. The potential impact of the development on heritage assets, including landmark buildings has been assessed against the substantial regeneration benefits

of the scheme, the potential positive impact on the vitality and viability of the area as a whole, the improved environment and transport links that the proposal would create, increased exposure to the viaduct, creation of a public park and 196 residential units. In accordance with the comments of Historic England which are shared by the Council's Conservation Officer harm caused to the viaduct is 'less than substantial' and should therefore be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal as set out above.

The statutory duty to have 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their setting as set out in Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that **considerable weight and importance** is be afforded to the harm to the heritage assets and given the proposals setting it is considered that significant weight should be given to the cumulative harm in the overall planning balance.

Whilst there is no denying harm, this needs to be carefully balanced against the benefits of the scheme, however, for the reasons set out above and in accordance with the Council's statutory duties, it is considered that significant weight should be given to the harm the development would have on the heritage assets when assessing the wider proposal.

#### Highway considerations

The Council's Highways Engineers detailed response is included with the Consultees section of this report and should be cross-referenced as part of the analysis of this hybrid application. The Highway Engineers is supportive of the comprehensive regeneration of the site, which is in a highly accessible location, with the proposed end uses considered to be acceptable in a Town Centre location.

A variety of technical documents and drawings have been submitted in support of the hybrid application, these include both a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan. Following initial discussions with the Council's Highway Engineer additional technical details have subsequently been received.

From a highway / transport perspective the proposed interchange building will incorporate 15 bus boarding / alighting bays, together with 5 layover bays. There will also be a double stop on Mersey Square and 3 stops on Swaine Street. These will serve all existing bus services that use the existing bus station and some capacity is also provided for additional services in the future (there are presently 107 bus movements an hour at the current bus station and the Interchange will allow for up to 186 bus movements per hour, thus providing 42% spare capacity).

It should be noted that the application follows on from application DC/062030, which proposed the construction of a new road and associated bridge between Chestergate and Heaton Lane and was approved in October 2016. This application, which is in the process of being implemented, was intended as the first stage of the redevelopment of the bus station as it will provide a new road connection between the site and the local highway network.

Members will be advised that the scheme has been designed to enable the extension of Metrolink into Stockport Town Centre, with a Metrolink stop provided on or near Swaine Street.

The existing bus station is located within Stockport Town Centre, adjacent to Merseyway Shopping Centre and within reasonable walking distance of much of the town centre. The layout and design of the station, however, is dated, with the station

made up of long narrow bus shelters located between the running lanes of the bus station. This results in safety and security issues, overcrowding, long walks between stops and passenger facilities, not all the station being covered and provides an environment that does not make bus use attractive. In addition, although Stockport Railway Station is less than 300m from the Bus Station (as the crow flies), there is a significant level change between the two facilities, the route is indirect and requires public transport users to cross two roads which do not benefit from controlled crossing facilities.

The proposed interchange will provide bus users with a modern enclosed facility, with improve security, passenger and driver facilities and connections with the adjacent parts of the Town Centre. Bus users will also be separated from buses within the facility, improving safety and reducing the risk of conflict between pedestrians and buses. The redevelopment of the bus interchange is therefore supported.

The application sites are considered suitable for both residential and office accommodation, noting the sites' accessibility. Whilst there are some aspects of the local pedestrian and cycle network that presently impair accessibility, these are proposed to be addressed as part of the development. A key to ensuring that the site's accessibility is maximised is the provision of the link bridge and associated pedestrian / cycle route between the Bus Interchange and Railway Station.

Parking is proposed to be provided in accordance with adopted standards. Although a low level of car parking is being put forward, no objections are raised by the Council's Highway Engineer having regard to the site's accessibility, subject to implementation of an appropriate Travel Plan. The proposals also fully accord with the policy with regard to parking provision.

The servicing arrangements proposed as part of the development are considered to be acceptable, with specific details of site servicing needing to be agreed by means of a servicing method statement.

In terms of detailed layout design, this is generally considered to be acceptable, however it is acknowledged that some elements of technical design work require further amendment. These matters remain capable of being addressed outside of the planning system via a S278 highway agreement.

Various Traffic Regulation Orders (both temporary and permanent) will be required to manage parking, servicing and access on roads and paths within the vicinity of the site. The applicant will also need to make an application outside of the planning system to stop up a number of sections of public highway.

Traffic modelling work carried out as part of the Transport Assessment produced for the development concludes that the development will have a minimal impact on the local highway network.

Having regard to the comprehensive comments of the highways engineer it is considered that the scheme is acceptable in highways terms and where matters remain outstanding, these can either be dealt with by planning condition or under highways approvals processes under section 278 of the Highways Act. The scheme would result in improved vehicular, cycle and pedestrian links together with improved accessibility to the site and surrounding area. The scheme is considered to comply with all relevant Council policy which considers highway matters and accords with the NPPF which at para 109 clearly advises that planning permission should not be

refused for development on highway grounds unless *“there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”* In the case of this application, the scheme would have neither affect having regard to this and the local planning policy position it is concluded that the proposals are wholly acceptable in highways terms.

### Scale & Design

An assessment of the scale and design of the proposed development has been set out earlier in this planning report under various headings, including heritage section given that these material considerations are intrinsically linked.

Whilst it is evident that concerns have been expressed to the proposal, particularly in the form of the consultee response from the Council’s Conservation Officer as well as representations received from Stockport Heritage Trust, and these have been carefully balanced against the wider, significant regenerative benefits associated with the development. These benefits are extensively discussed throughout this planning report. Notably, whilst concerns are raised in respect of the scale of the proposal no such concerns are presented in respect of the design of the building by consultees.

#### 1. Outline element (footbridge)

In terms of the outline element of the proposal no details of exact layout, appearance and scale are submitted for approval. However as outlined previously, parameters have been submitted for approval giving parameters of the structure, with the aim of demonstrating how a development can successfully be accommodated on site. Whilst the exact detail and size of the pedestrian footbridge is therefore not for consideration, the submitted information allows an initial assessment of the acceptability of this outline element from an urban design and townscape perspective.

#### 2. Residential element

The scheme as proposed seeks to provide a bold architectural statement which seeks to breathe new life into this part of the town, as proposed this would be one of Stockport’s tallest building and presents a defining change for the townscape in this part of the town. Standing at 59 metres in height it will be readily visible from both short and longer range views into the town centre, the submission makes no attempt to hide or shy away from this matter and indicates that the provision of residential accommodation on this site together with the benefits associated with the delivery of a new public park, would not be possible without the quantum of residential development proposed. The fact that building is taller than other buildings in the locality does not render it unacceptable. In assessing the proposal consideration must be given to the architectural quality of the proposal and should also be considered in the context whether it is appropriate for the location. In this regard the proposal is located adjacent to several buildings which in a Stockport context can be considered as tall including Beckwith House and Regent House.

Consideration should also be given to how the proposal could contribute to the enhancement of the area and wider location as the report states, the scheme would deliver considerable regenerative benefits. The scheme also could be considered to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness by its striking architectural design and prominent position.

In assessing the current application, it is important to note both the comments made by interested 3<sup>rd</sup> parties and that the design approach of the development has sought to minimise the potential impact on both occupants of the development and local residents.

Matters of air quality, noise and lighting, which may impact on amenity are considered separately in this planning report.

In relation to potential impacts arising from the development on the amenity of existing residential properties, the nearest dwellings that could be affected by the proposal are principally located in Wellington Mill / the Hat Works.

The overall purpose of the Council's Design of Residential Development SPD, which as adopted supplementary guidance is a material consideration, is to achieve high quality design in residential development; The document has three broad aims: 1. promote high quality inclusive design; 2. ensure efficient use of resources; 3. endorse developments that make a positive contribution to the townscape and landscape character of the local area.

It is noted that a separation distance of approx. 21m would be provided between the residential block and the nearest, existing residential dwelling located within Wellington Mill. The residential building has been designed to provide a set back recessed area in order to provide sufficient separation between the two buildings. Clearly, from different vantage points the building will appear to overlap the northern elevation of the mill. A full assessment of the impact on Wellington Mill has been considered and residents of the building have been directly consulted as part of this process. It is considered that the separation provided, combined with the orientation of the proposed residential tower, ensures that there would be no undue adverse loss of privacy to existing residential properties and future occupants of the development.

In considering the impact of the proposal on existing residential properties, a detailed daylight and shading assessment has been submitted in support of the application. The submitted report identifies what are considered to be the key residential properties that would be affected by the proposal. These include residential and commercial properties within Wellington Mill, Beckwith House and along Wellington Rd, Exchange St and Chestergate. The report assesses the potential impact on a total of 534 windows.

In summary the findings of the daylighting report, indicate that approx. 64% of the windows assessed experience a negligible impact, approx. 14% are identified as experiencing a medium impact, with approx. 0.2% affected by a high magnitude of change.

In terms of sunlight impacts, the report concludes that not all windows are susceptible to being affected. However 240 windows were assessed, with the results indicating that approx. 92% experience a negligible impact and the remaining 8% having a low magnitude of change.

In terms of the provision of private amenity space, this would be provided via a combination of a communal garden area to the rear of the residential building, together with a limited number of 2 bed apartments being served by a small terrace / balcony.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the above would represent technical shortfalls in the amount of private amenity space when assessed against the Council's 'The Design

of Residential Development' SPD, the level of provision is considered to be appropriate for a constrained site, set within a Town Centre location.

This scheme would afford future residents of the development with considerable amenity in the immediate vicinity of the proposed homes. In addition, an area of enhanced public realm (circa 1963sq.m) along the riverside boundary of the site also forms an integral part of the proposal offer a further benefit. These elements of the proposal will ensure that future occupants of the residential tower will benefit from access to significant areas of high quality, usable open space.

The development as a whole represents a considered response to its context and seeks to limit any undue impact on the amenity of nearby properties and for future occupiers by reason of visual intrusion, overshadowing, loss of daylight, overlooking or loss of privacy.

The NPPF is clear that housing proposals should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this instance the significant benefits; in particular the efficient re-use of an accessible brownfield site; the contribution to boosting general housing supply, provision of wider community benefits in terms of the public park and riverside public realm works, supporting economic growth, assisting the vitality and viability of the Town Centre, should be afforded significant material weight.

To conclude and notwithstanding the comments of the Council's Conservation Officer, both the proposed full and outline elements of the current proposal are, on balance, considered to be acceptable in respect of Policy SIE-1 and SIE-3, as well as the overarching aims of the Core Strategy DPD, which seek to ensure that the design of new development is high quality and appropriate for the context of a particular location.

### Landscaping

With regard to the park and public realm works, the layout has been derived from a design approach seeking to provide a highly functional, safe, attractive and enjoyable areas of open space.

The landscape masterplan submitted in support of the application demonstrates how the concept design seeks to use landforms within the landscape to create visual interest through the use of a series of spaces or 'character areas', whilst also highlighting key pedestrian and cycle routes/movements. These include the use of both hard and soft landscaping, as well as seating and terraced areas to emphasis views of important historic landmarks.

In support of the application an Arboricultural Assessment has been submitted detailing the extent and condition of trees indicated for removal as part of the development. In addition a landscaping strategy accompanies the submission, detailing the planting of circa 185 trees as part of the proposed scheme, thereby ensuring no net loss of trees within the overall site.

The comments of both the Council's Arboricultural and Landscape Officers are set earlier in this planning report. In summary these do not raise any fundamental objections to the loss of trees as part of the proposed development, having regard to the extensive re-plants being proposed or the proposed landscaping scheme, subject to appropriate conditions.

### Flood Risk & Drainage

In respect of drainage and flood risk, the comments of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and the absence of any objections from the Environment Agency and United Utilities are noted.

The application site is identified on the Environment Agency's Flood Map as falling within both Flood Zones 1 and 2, which means there is a medium to low probability of flooding. The NPPF, Core Strategy Policies SIE-3 and Saved UDP Review Policy EP1.7 deal with flood risk and seek to ensure that developments are not at risk of flooding and will not increase the risk of flooding.

A detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy have been submitted in support of the application.

In the event the drainage solution remains unresolved when the application is determined, conditions will be applied to the development to secure compliance (where achievable) with the aims of Policy SD-6. Such conditions will also encompass the recommendations of United Utilities.

On this basis there are currently no reasons to resist the proposal from a flood risk and drainage perspective.

#### Contaminated Land

In respect of ground contamination, Policy SIE-3 seeks to protect development from matters relating to contaminated land. A Phase 1 Contaminated Land Report supports the application to assess the risk of potential contamination at the site and impact on the proposed development.

After due consideration the Council's Environmental Health (Contaminated Land) officer has raised no objections to the proposal subject to appropriate conditions. Similarly the Environment Agency has separately assessed the submitted reports and raise no objections, subject to a conditional approach. On this basis the proposal is considered to comply with Policy SIE-3.

#### Recreational Open Space

Core Strategy Policy SIE 2 relates to the provision of both formal and informal recreational play space as part of a development.

The application seeks to provide an area of public open space, as well as private amenity space to the rear of the residential block. Policy SIE-2 seeks to provide open space and states that *"development will be expected to take a positive role in providing recreation and amenity open space to meet the needs of its users/occupants"*. In this instance, whilst providing an overprovision of open space in connection with the residential block, it is not proposed to provide a commuted sum in order to satisfy the requirements of Core Strategy Policy SIE 2 'Provision of Recreational and Amenity Open Space in New Development', and the Recreational Open Space Provision SPG and the Town Centre Housing SPD. The lack of commuted sum must however be balanced against the wider public benefits of the overall scheme, and must take account of the wider viability matters as discussed elsewhere in this report. The requirement for an off-site open space contribution in this instance would be £336,855.40 however, as identified above the scheme seeks to provide a significant area of public open space for the wider benefit of Stockport which is considered to outweigh any benefits derived through seeking a commuted

sum for the provision of formal open space in accordance with policy. As such, it is considered that the scheme strikes an appropriate balance in this regard.

### Air, Noise & Light Pollution

In respect of air quality, the comments of the Council's Environmental Health Officer are noted as is the setting of parts of the site within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). In this respect the applicant has submitted a detailed air quality assessment, which identifies potential impacts and mitigation measures as part of both the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. In light of the above and in the absence of any objections from the Council's Environmental Health Officer, the proposal is considered to be policy compliant, subject to appropriate conditions.

In terms of noise impacts, the main considerations are in providing an acceptable level of attenuation particularly for noise sensitive users from the commercial elements, the transport interchange and surrounding road network. Having regard to the noise and vibration assessment submitted in support of the application and in the absence of any objections from the Council's Environmental Health Officer (Noise), the current application is considered to be acceptable, subject to appropriate conditions.

With regard to light pollution, para 180 of the NPPF seeks to "limit the impact of light pollution from artificial lighting on local amenity ...". A Lighting Impact Assessment has been submitted as part of the hybrid application, which identifies both potential impacts and mitigation measures. Having regard to submitted assessment and in the absence of any objections from the Council's Environmental Health Officer, the current application is considered to be acceptable, subject to appropriate conditions.

### Sustainability & Energy

Delivering sustainable development is the primary aim of NPPF. Sustainability and energy efficiency is also key theme of the adopted Core Strategy which seeks to ensure that new development is designed in way to reduce Co2 emissions and minimise climate change.

It should be noted that as the proposal is a hybrid application, seeking part full and part outline planning permission, the outline element of the development has not been designed up to a level where the majority of measures that would deliver these requirements can be established in detail. The application has however been supported by Energy Statements which consider the opportunities for the development to deliver the desired energy savings and Co2 reduction for both the interchange and residential block.

The comments of the Council's Director of Public Health are contained within the Consultees section of this report. The response is acknowledged and it is noted that they welcome the general approach towards the sustainable principles of the development.

In this respect both the interchange and residential block have been designed to meet and exceed Part L of the Building Regulations. As part of the sustainability



measures associated with the development, solar pv is proposed for both the interchange facility and residential block.

The interchange facility will meet the Council's minimum requirements for energy efficiency, however the residential block is limited to achieving 5% above and beyond Part L of the Building Regulations,

Whilst it is acknowledged that all development should seek to aspire to achieve maximum ratings in terms of sustainability, the constraints of a site and its re-development mean that this may not always be feasible and needs to be carefully balanced against other material considerations, including wider regenerative and community benefits.

On balance and in light of the above the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of relevant energy and climate change Core Strategy Policies.

### Ecological Interests

The application has been accompanied by an Ecological Assessment. The report identifies that some structures, i.e. existing tunnels, have the potential to support roosting bats. In this respect the Council's Nature Development Officer has considered the proposal and has requested that further bat surveys are carried out prior to the determination of the application, as suggested by the recommendations contained within the Ecological Assessment.

The agent for the application has been advised and further information has been provided and is in the process of being assessed by the Council's Nature Development Officer. Members will be presented with a verbal update in this regard.

Subject to no objections being raised, which aren't outweighed by other material considerations, the proposal is considered to comply with relevant plan policies and the NPPF.

### Other Matters

Members will note from the Consultee section earlier in this planning report, that a holding objection has been lodged against the hybrid application by Network Rail. In this respect Members will be advised that appropriate advice has been sought by Officers and that the comments from Network Rail do not constitute an impediment to the Council issuing a formal decision on this application.

### **SUMMARY**

In conclusion, the scheme as proposed would deliver substantial regenerative benefits to a prominent gateway site within the town centre. The re-development of the site has been a key regeneration objective of the Council for many years and this proposal would be the next step in delivering a high quality mixed use development in the town centre.

Whilst areas of concern have been identified within this planning report, particularly in respect of the impact of the development on heritage assets within the vicinity of the site, including Wellington Mill and Stockport Viaduct, this needs to be carefully balanced against the wide ranging and significant benefits associated with the proposal. The setting of Grade II and II\* listed buildings would be affected, even after any proposed mitigation, arising from the location, scale, bulk and mass of the

development. Although harm would be less than substantial harm, significant weight should be afforded to the harm caused to these heritage assets in accordance with the Council's statutory duty. The scheme now before Members has been subject to extensive discussions, which ultimately has resulted in a development which demonstrates a clear and convincing justification for the development in accordance with para 194 of the NPPF. The scheme is considered to present significant regeneration benefits which have been discussed at length within this report of the scheme. They can be summarised as :-

- the provision of a new and upgraded transport hub,
- an extensive public park and areas of public realm designed to a high quality
- improved pedestrian connectivity,
- an enhanced commercial offer in a Town Centre location
- the delivery of a high quality residential apartment block which would deliver a significant number of residential units during a period of housing under supply,

The proposal will offer further scope for attracting inward investment and job creation into this part of Stockport. The site is also in a highly accessible location with good transport links and the proposal has potential to deliver an energy efficient development. After careful consideration, and having regard to all material consideration and comments it is the opinion of Officers that any harm caused by the proposal, is on balance outweighed by the clear and substantial regenerative benefits of the re-development of this site. Furthermore, the proposed development pre-dominantly reflects the key principles of the NPPF in helping to deliver sustainable development, together with the need to deliver a sufficient supply of homes, building a strong and competitive economy and promoting healthy and safe communities.

Officers therefore recommend that both full and outline planning permission be granted for the proposed development.

In light of the above, the views of the both the Heaton & Reddish and Stockport Central Area Committees, on the proposed development, are requested in order that these can be reported to the relevant meeting of the Council's Planning & Highways Regulations Committee.

Given the scale of the proposal and potential impacts it is recommended that Members undertake a detailed site visit in advance of making a decision in connection with this and the accompanying application for Listed Building Consent. This visit should include, but should be limited to, an assessment of the potential impact of the development from a number key vantage points both within and outwith the town centre.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant subject to conditions.

## **HEATONS & REDDISH AREA COMMITTEE COMMENTS (04/03/19)**

The Planning Officer confirmed that two separate applications were on the agenda to be considered for the same site, but that these were inter-related. As such the relevant planning reports were introduced as one, however two separate resolutions would be needed.

The Planning Officer introduced the reports and Members were advised that there were no updates.

A representative of Stockport Heritage Trust spoke against the hybrid planning application. Reference was made to a photomontage of affected views that had been circulated separately to Members in advance of the meeting. It was commented that the 3<sup>rd</sup> party responses summarised within the planning report had been censored. It was suggested that these did not make it clear that the Red Rock development, which was designed by the architects involved in the current scheme, was an example of bad design. As highlighted by its receipt of awards for its poor design quality.

It was acknowledged that a new bus station was required, however this should have been a separate application excluding the residential tower. The proposed residential block by virtue of its location, scale and design would obscure various short and long range iconic views of Wellington Mill, its chimney, the Stockport Viaduct and the wider Town Centre. It was suggested that the residential block would result in over-shadowing of the public park.

It was queried whether possible alternative solutions for the residential block had been explored. The timing of the submission of the applications over the Xmas period was also queried.

A representative of the applicants' spoke in support of the proposal. It was highlighted that this was a key strategic town centre scheme, on a brownfield site. The benefits of the scheme were outlined, including reference to the modern interchange facility, opening up of the riverside with a route to Mersey Way, together with an accessible at grade route from the railway station to Mersey Square, the provision of 196 new homes and a new park.

It was acknowledged that the site was surrounded by heritage assets and that the proposal would have an impact on these, but that the proposal had sought to minimise such harm where possible. The comments of Historic England were referred to, in respect of providing new views of the Stockport Viaduct from the proposed park.

The viability issues affecting the scheme was highlighted, as were the wider regenerative benefits that would be delivered by the proposed development.

Members debated the applications acknowledging the views of Stockport Heritage Trust. At the same time it was suggested that impact of some of the heritage assets had already been compromised.

Concerns were expressed by Cllr Guariento about the incongruous setting and design of the residential block that would be out of keeping with the character of the area. A re-design of this building was suggested so as to incorporate a pitched roof design. Clarification was sought as to the provision of sprinklers and means of access / escape to / from the residential building.

The wider impact of the scheme on the Town Centre was highlighted by Members. Reference was made to the provision of a high quality residential offer within the Town Centre, setting a new level for future developments to follow.

The viability issues affecting the scheme were noted, particularly in respect of how this affected the number of residential units being sought and the scale / mass of the residential block

It was clarified that the provision of a Metrolink route / stop would be safeguarded as part of the proposal, whilst disabled access would be provided directly to the park from the A6.

Committee supported the proposal, with Members noting that the riverside area would be opened up, transport facilities improved and a link between the rail and bus station welcomed. Reference was made to the shortage of public open space within the Town Centre and the positive impact that would result from the new park.

Committee acknowledged that the proposal would harm heritage assets, but that this needed to be carefully balanced against the benefits provided by the development for both the existing and future population of the borough, on what is a brownfield site.

It was resolved to recommend that the Planning & Highways Regulations Committee be advised to grant both full and outline permission, as well listed building consent.

#### **CENTRAL STOCKPORT AREA COMMITTEE COMMENTS (07/03/19)**

The Planning Officer confirmed that two separate applications, which were inter-related, were on the agenda to be considered for the same site, As such the relevant planning reports were introduced as one. It was however highlighted to Committee that two separate resolutions would be needed.

The Planning Officer introduced the reports and Members were advised that there were no updates, other than confirming the recommendations made by the Heaton & Reddish Area Committee.

A representative of the applicants' spoke in support of the proposals. It was highlighted that the proposal was a key strategic town centre scheme on a brownfield site. The benefits of the scheme were outlined, including reference to the modern interchange facility, opening up of the riverside with a route to Mersey Way, together with an accessible at grade route from the railway station to Mersey Square, the provision of 196 new homes and a new park.

It was acknowledged that the site was surrounded by heritage assets and that the proposal would have an impact on these, but that the proposal had sought to minimise such harm where possible. The provision of new views of the Stockport Viaduct from the proposed park was highlighted.

The viability issues affecting the scheme were outlined, as were the wider regenerative benefits that would be delivered by the proposed development.

Members sought and were provided with clarification from the applicant on a number of matters. These included why no affordable housing was being provided; why the different elements of the scheme could not be separated out; why the height of the

residential block could not be reduced and what the impact of delivering the scheme, or not, would be.

Cllrs queried matters linked to the viability issues affecting the development, including the size of any viability deficit, why the application was in a hybrid format and who would be responsible for maintaining the public park.

Committee debated the applications. Support was offered for the principle of the overall proposal, which would provide an innovative and modern development and which would act as a kickstart for development in the town centre. The significant benefits being offered in terms of the public park, town centre housing, improved links between the rail and bus stations and the use of riverside areas were acknowledged, as was the harm to heritage assets that would result from the development.

Whilst individual concerns were raised as to the height of the residential block and the absence of any affordable housing, it was acknowledged that these needed to be carefully balanced against the wider benefits provided by the development.

Committee resolved (with one abstention) to recommend that the Planning & Highways Regulations Committee be advised to grant both full and outline permission, as well as listed building consent.