

## **MARPLE AREA COMMITTEE (03/02/2021)**

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

Members sought clarification with regard to the issue of flood risk. The Planning Officer confirmed that the scheme had been the subject of extensive discussions between the applicant and the Environment Agency and the submitted amended and additional information had addressed previous concerns raised by the Environment Agency. Subject to conditions recommended by the Environment Agency, the proposal was considered acceptable from a flood risk perspective.

Members sought clarification with regard to traffic concerns, in terms of volume of traffic, access and egress. Clarification was requested as to whether or not the traffic surveys were up to date and had been undertaken recently, noting that Andrew Street was a very busy and fast road. Clarification was requested regarding pedestrian safety. Clarification was requested regarding pedestrian accessibility, including lack of pedestrian crossing points. The Planning Officer advised that traffic generation, access and accessibility issues had been considered and summarised within the report. The Planning Officer advised that an almost identical scheme had been resolved to be granted by Members in 2014. The Planning Officer advised no objections were raised to the scheme by the Highway Engineer, in terms of traffic generation, impact on the highway network, junction design and visibility. Whilst it was acknowledged that no pedestrian crossing facilities were proposed on Andrew Street, the Planning Officer confirmed that such facilities were not considered necessary.

Members noted that the site is within the catchment of Ludworth School and sought clarification as to whether the additional impact on the School from a traffic generation and pupil number perspective could be considered. The Planning Officer confirmed that this was not a material consideration in assessment of the application.

Members sought clarification as to whether the scheme was to be delivered by Viaduct Housing. The Planning Officer confirmed that the development would be delivered and managed by Stockport Homes on an affordable basis.

Members sought clarification as to how typical was it for Section 106 contribution to be waived. The Planning Officer confirmed that planning policies allowed for a viability argument to be made and that the submitted and independently assessed Viability Appraisal demonstrated that the development would not be viable or deliverable unless the usual policy required contributions were waived in this particular case, bearing in mind the 100% affordable nature of the scheme.

Members sought clarification as to whether or not electric vehicle charging facilities would be provided. The Planning Officer confirmed that appropriate electric vehicle charging facilities would be secured by condition.

Members sought further clarification with regard to viability. The Planning Officer advised of the usual open space policy requirement, however confirmed that there were provisions to allow a viability argument to be made. It was noted that the

submitted Viability Appraisal has been assessed by an independent Surveyor, who concluded that it had been demonstrated that the required contribution would affect viability and deliverability of the scheme and therefore should be waived.

Members sought clarification regarding pedestrian safety, due to the fact that there is only one footpath across the adjacent bridge and the bridge is narrow. The Planning Officer confirmed that all matters of highway safety, including pedestrian safety, have been assessed and considered acceptable by the Highway Engineer.

Members sought clarification regarding the site allocation within Green Belt. The Planning Officer confirmed the UDP designation as a Major Existing Developed Site (MEDS) within the Green Belt, however the site was considered to comprise previously developed land. The Planning Officer explained relevant local planning policies for Green Belt (MEDS) sites, highlighted the policy conflict of the proposal, however considered that the submitted case for 'Very Special Circumstances' justified any potential harm.

Members sought clarification regarding highway assessments and relationship to the previous 2014 scheme. The Planning Officer confirmed that the current proposal has been assessed on the basis of up to date traffic and highway information.

The agent spoke in support of the application. The history of the agent's involvement with the site was explained and it was noted that the scheme was resolved to be granted in 2014, however the applicant failed to enter into a Section 106 Agreement, due to financial contribution viability issues which is the reason for the current position. It was noted that the site remains undeveloped, unmanaged, a problem site and a blight on Compstall. The current scheme is affectively the same as the scheme granted in 2014, in terms of overall quality and retention of heritage assets. Issues relating to flood risk and highways had been satisfactorily addressed. The scheme offered a unique opportunity for Stockport Homes to provide 100% affordable accommodation for shared ownership and social rent which was much needed in the area and a real bonus for the Borough.

Members debated the proposal. Redevelopment of the site was welcomed and the scheme was considered to comprise a sympathetic design, retaining existing heritage features and protecting the adjacent right of way. The creation of much needed affordable housing was welcomed and it was reassuring that Stockport Homes was involved. The number of conditions recommended was also reassuring, in order to control matters of detail. The scheme demonstrated that the development of brownfield land within a Green Belt site could be successfully achieved.

Concerns were raised to the fact that there was only one footpath on the adjacent listed bridge which is very narrow and pedestrians would have difficulty passing without crossing the busy road. Without wanting to or being in a position to challenge the Highway Engineer, this remained a concern. Concerns were raised regarding the impact of additional traffic on Compstall. A properly integrated traffic management plan was required for Compstall, however it was acknowledged that this would need to be developed outside the remit of the planning application.

Following the debate, Members resolved to refer the application to the Planning and Highways Regulation Committee with a recommendation to grant.