

## ITEM

<b>Application Reference</b>	<b>DC/078016</b>
<b>Location:</b>	Former Offerton High School The Fairway Offerton
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Demolition of the former Offerton High School buildings with a replacement part single and part two storey primary school and associated external works to facilitate the proposed use.
<b>Type Of Application:</b>	Full Application
<b>Registration Date:</b>	15.09.2020
<b>Expiry Date:</b>	15.12.2020
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Chris Smyton
<b>Applicant:</b>	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
<b>Agent:</b>	Mr A McMullan, Broadgrove Planning and Development Limited

## **COMMITTEE STATUS**

The proposed development is a departure from the development plan and exceeds 3 hectares in size, as such the determination of this application rests with Planning and Highways Regulation Committee following consideration by the Area Committee.

In the event that Members of Planning & Highways Regulation Committee are minded to grant the application, due to the amount of floorspace proposed it will be necessary to refer the application to the Secretary of State who will consider whether to exercise call-in powers. It will need to be referred to the National Planning Casework Unit (NPCU). This is to give the Secretary of State the opportunity to consider whether to exercise call-in powers.

## **DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT**

The application relates to the demolition of all of the existing buildings on the site (the former Offerton High School) and the development of a new primary school. The footprint of the existing buildings on the site is 2,342m<sup>2</sup> and the total floorspace to be demolished is 3,027m<sup>2</sup>.

More specifically the proposal will be for a new 208 place Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Primary School for children from reception to year 6 (age 11). There will be on average 30 pupils per year group, in average class sizes of 10. It will cater for children with a range of needs and abilities.

The school currently operates at three sites; the main Lisburne Primary School site on Half Moon Lane, Stockport, from the Overdale Centre on Powicke Drive and from Hollywood Park on Hardman Street. The schools currently have 144 pupils on roll

over all three sites. The proposal will bring the sites together to form one school, and will create an additional 64 SEND places.

The school floor area will measure 4,935 sqm (excluding a minibus garage), split across three interlinked buildings, located predominantly on the site of the existing High School buildings (ground – 2,960 sqm and first – 1,975 sqm). The overall built footprint, including the minibus garage, will measure 3,055 sqm. With regard to the maximum height of Blocks A, B and C, this will be 10.5m to the ridge of the two storey part and 7.6m to the eaves.

The building to the south west of the built form area (Block A) is mainly single storey, with a two storey element at the northern end. The ground floor of this building will predominantly accommodate the kitchen, kitchen storage and preparation, and dining hall. The remaining space will accommodate meeting rooms, the reception area, office and plant. The first floor of this building will accommodate a library, computer suite, offices, therapy offices and back of house.

The building to the east of this area is a part single and part two storey building (Block C). At ground floor, it will comprise therapy rooms, staff rooms and classrooms. The western half of the first floor will comprise an open play Terrace, and the eastern half will be used for years 5 and 6 classrooms.

The northern building (Block B) of the three buildings proposed will be linked by a first floor bridge from the external play terrace. At ground floor, the western part of Block B will include classrooms for early years and the eastern part will comprise classrooms for years 1 and 2. At first floor, the accommodation will comprise classrooms for years 3 and 4 at the western part of the building, and classrooms for years 4 and 5 at the western part of the building.

The external appearance of Blocks A, B and C will be red brick at ground floor and slatted natural timber cladding at first floor, with a standing seam roof.

A minibus garage is also proposed to the north west of the site. This will measure 11,448mm long by 7,500mm wide by 3,410mm to eaves and 4,150mm to ridge height. It will be constructed of mainly metal cladding to match the school roof, and elements of lower level red brickwork to match Blocks A, B and C.

The following on site vehicle/ cycle/ scooter parking will be provided:

- 1) 91 car parking spaces for staff and 14 car parking spaces for parents/visitors (including 8 with EV charging equipment)
- 2) 5 disabled parking spaces (including 2 with EV charging equipment)
- 3) 3 parking spaces for powered two-wheelers
- 4) A garage for the parking of 3 no. 17-seater minibuses
- 5) A layby for use by mini-buses and taxis for the dropping off and picking up of pupils (with a capacity of 12-13 vehicles)
- 6) Cycle parking for 20 cycles (16 long stay and 4 short stay)
- 7) Scooter parking for 11 children's scooters.

Although the internal access road largely exists, it will be altered and widened in places to provide improved pedestrian and vehicular access.

The Arboriculture Report shows that the proposed works will require the removal of 13 no. Category B trees, 22no Category C trees and 548m<sup>2</sup> of grouped Category C trees; and 2 no. Category U trees (Category B are trees of moderate quality, Category C trees are of low quality and category U trees are in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years). Their removal is required because they are located directly in the footprint of the works, or so closely adjacent to the scheme that the works would require significant RPA severance. The applicant has stated that the design has been adapted where possible to retain trees, whilst also responding to the requirements for the proposed school facility including wide paths and the infrastructure to meet the needs of its future occupants. Replacement planting is proposed as part of the scheme, to serve a variety of functions and the needs of the children.

Within the centre of all of the buildings (creating a courtyard arrangement) is a rectangular shaped space that will accommodate the following:

- Wobble bridge over 'river'
- Wet play rills
- Rubber spheres
- Gutter run on wall
- Inclined balance beam over 'river'
- Sensory planting
- Covered sand play
- Raised planting bed with informal seating edge
- Post mounted play/learning resource
- Storage under stairs
- Corner seating
- 'Transport' play table and storage
- Wigwam withdrawal space
- Timber tunnel withdrawal crawl space through 'river'
- View through to retained trees
- Wet play area, tuff top tables and storage.

The area to the north of Block B proposes the following:

- Wigwam withdrawal space
- Shade sail with group seating
- Play tower: climb, slide, elevated viewing
- Inclusive basket swing
- Floorscape learning / game
- Post mounted play/learning resource
- Cycle / trike track (incl. undulations)
- Cycle / Trike store with capacity for approx. 24no. units. Scope for green roof
- Raised planting with informal seating edges
- Individual seating opportunities.

The play area to the east of Block B proposes the following:

- Broad belt 'balance', multi-function, multi-user feature
- Floorscape games area
- Climbing wall - new timber unit or relocate existing - TBC
- Multi-user seesaw
- Ball shoot
- Seating opportunities
- Inclusive multi-user spinner
- Willow dome withdrawal / den space
- Tunnel feature

The area which surrounds Block C proposes the following:

- Tepee withdrawal space and picnic bench
- Nest / basket swing
- Picnic desk
- Wet play area (external tap)
- Inclusive webnet climber.
- Tarmac with thermographic games/learning
- Shade sail with group seating area
- Covered sand
- Maintenance access
- Playful seating
- Balance feature
- Play boat
- Wheelchair roundabout
- Soft boundary
- Raised planting bed with informal seating edge
- Post mounted play/learning resource.

The proposed development includes a Forest School area to the south of Block C, and it proposes the following:

- External dining
- Storage
- Covered area in forest school (roof with posts)
- Parent access for drop off / collection
- Stabilized rolled gravel surface
- Maintenance / emergency gates
- Covered external dining
- Removable fabric hammock
- Stump seating - reuse of felled timber
- Mud kitchen
- Reuse of felled timber for art
- Wildflowers
- Den posts with stump seating

- Habitat / coppice planting
- Reuse of felled timber for informal seating.

To the east of the Forest School area is the Multi Use Gaming Area/Sensory/Memorial Garden and Growing Area. This will include the following:

- Ball retrieval access
- KEY
- 300mm wide mowing margin
- Soft sports surface with floor markings for 5-a-side football, basketball and short tennis
- Recessed goals to avoid any loose items
- Poly tunnel
- Stabilised rolled gravel surface
- Fruiting hedge
- PE store
- Shed
- Sustainable water butt
- Picnic/ seating desks
- 6 no. raised beds
- Orchard trees
- Sprinkler Tank
- Pump house
- Recreate memorial garden feature for Ryan
- Musical archway
- Water feature
- Seat with space for adjacent wheelchair
- Mirror / reflection
- Gateway feature
- Sensory planting.

To the east of the proposed MUGA are the existing fields, which are currently used sporadically by Castle Hill High School. This space will be formalised through the laying out of a football pitch, a running track and a loop walk around these spaces. There will be a total of 3,253m<sup>2</sup> of sports pitches within the application site. For the avoidance of doubt, these facilities will not be available for community use.

A variety of fencing will be erected within and surrounding the site, as indicated on the Fencing Strategy Drawings. This will include, for example, 1.8m high green welded mesh perimeter fencing, 2.4m high green welded mesh playground enclosure fencing and 3.0m high welded mesh ballstop fencing around the MUGA.

### **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The application site measures 3.26ha and comprises the buildings and associated land of the former Offerton High School, The Fairway. The buildings have been vacant for approximately 7 years.

The existing built form on the application site is split across two blocks, a larger square shaped arrangement and a smaller rectangular single storey. The square

shaped building is part two storey and part single storey, with a flat roof throughout and a tower at one corner. The arrangements of the buildings creates a courtyard in the centre which is landscaped. To the north of this building is the single storey rectangular building with a flat roof. The existing built form totals 3,027 sqm.

The site has a significant amount of hard standing around the building, which was used as playgrounds and general circulation.

Mature vegetation exists within the site, primarily to the east of the existing built form.

The application site includes an internal private access road (Castle Hill Service Road). This extends from the adopted highway of The Fairway and extends in a northerly direction past the built form, creating a loop for vehicular turning purposes.

The eastern part of the application site comprises the former playing fields of Offerton High School. Since the site was vacated these fields have been used by Castle Hill High School.

Save for the existing playing fields on the eastern part of the site, it comprises previously developed brownfield site located in the Greater Manchester Green Belt. The western portion (within which the proposed buildings are located) is designated as a Major Existing Developed Site (MEDS) in the development plan. The land on the eastern part of the application site, outside the MEDS designation and predominantly including the existing playing fields to the east of the existing internal access road, is Green Belt. The site also lies within Landscape Character Area G: Goyt Valley, and is adjacent to Landscape Character Area H: Offerton – Poise Brook.

The site is set on the edge of the residential area of Offerton. To the south east of the site is Castle Hill High School and then immediately beyond this is Fairway Primary School. To the east and north of the application site is a heavily wooded area and within this, set at a lower level, are both the Poise Brook and the River Goyt. The application site itself has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise. However, Poise Brook Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Poise Brook and Goyt Valley Site of Biological Importance (SBI) is located immediately to the north and east of the application site.

Beyond the wooded area are the agricultural fields associated with Goyt Hall Farm. To the west of the application site are the playing fields associated with the former Offerton High School, which are now primarily used as a walking area for members of the public. Beyond this is Life Leisure Dialstone (leisure centre) and residential apartments located on Woodlands Drive.

To the south of the application site is The Fairway, an adopted highway that connects the application site with Marple Road (A626). Along The Fairway and adjoining roads are residential properties.

## **POLICY BACKGROUND**

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

**The Statutory Development Plan includes:**

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

N.B. Due weight should be given to relevant SUDP and CS policies according to their degree of consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') issued in February 2019 (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given); and how the policies are expected to be applied is outlined within the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') last updated on 01<sup>st</sup> October 2019..

**Saved policies of the SUDP Review**

LCR1.1 Landscape Character Areas (Goyt Valley)  
LCR1.1a The Urban Fringe including the River Valleys  
EP1.7 Development and Flood Risk  
GBA1.1 Extent of Green Belt  
GBA1.2 Control of Development in Green Belt  
GBA1.5 Residential Development in Green Belt  
GBA1.7 Major Existing Developed Sites in the Green Belt  
L1.1 Land for Active Recreation  
CTF1.1 Development of Community Services and Facilities  
NE1.1 Sites of Special Nature Conservation Importance  
NE1.2 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance

**LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies**

CS1: OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
SD-1: Creating Sustainable Communities  
SD-3: Delivering the Energy Opportunities Plans - New Development  
SD-6: Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change  
CS5: ACCESS TO SERVICES  
AS-2: Improving Indoor Sports, Community and Education Facilities and their Accessibility  
CS8: SAFEGUARDING AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT  
SIE-1: Quality Places  
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 in Developments  
T-3: Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network

## Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance (Saved SPG's & SPD's) 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 considered relevant to this application:

- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
- Sustainable Transport SPD
- Transport and Highways in Residential Areas SPD

## National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 1 states: *"The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied"*.

Paragraph 2 states *"Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise<sup>3</sup>. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements"*.

Paragraph 7 states *"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*.

Paragraph 8 states *"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** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

*b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*

*c) **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy"*.



Paragraph 9 states “*These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area*”

Paragraph 10 states “*So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11)*”.

Paragraph 11 states “*Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.*

*For **plan-making** this means that:*

*a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;*  
*b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:*

*i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; 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.*

*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”.*

Paragraph 12 states “*The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making*”.

Paragraph 38 states “*Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range*

*of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”.*

Paragraph 47 states *“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”.*

Paragraph 48 states *“Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:*

- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);*
- b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and*
- c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)”.*

**Paragraph 94 states *“It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:***

- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and***
- b) work with schools promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted”.***

Paragraph 96 states *“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. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate”.*

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

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*

- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use”.*

Paragraph 102 states “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”.*

Paragraph 103 states “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”.

Paragraph 108 states that “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”.*

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

Paragraph 124 states “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”.*

*Paragraph 130 states “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. Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used)”.*

*Paragraph 133 states “The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”.*

*Paragraph 134 states “Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land”.*

*Paragraph 143 states “Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”.*

*Paragraph 144 states “When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”.*

*Paragraph 145 states “A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*

*d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*

*e) limited infilling in villages;*

*f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*

*g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*

*– not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*

*– not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority”.*

Paragraph 146 states “Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

*a) mineral extraction;*

*b) engineering operations;*

*c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*

*d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*

*e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*

*f) development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order”.*

Paragraph 149 states “Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures”.

Paragraph 15-0 states “New development should be planned for in ways that:

*a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and*

*b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government’s policy for national technical standards”.*

Paragraph 163 states *“When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment”*.

Paragraph 165 states *“Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate”*.

Paragraph 170 states *“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate”*.

Paragraph 175 states *“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<sup>58</sup> 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”.*

Paragraph 178 states “*Planning policies and decisions should ensure that:*

- a) a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation (as well as potential impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation);*
- b) after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and*
- c) adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is available to inform these assessments”.*

Paragraph 179 states “*Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner”.*

Paragraph 180 states “*Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:*

- a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;*
- b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and*
- c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation”.*

Paragraph 212 states “*The policies in this Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication”.*

Paragraph 213 states “*However, 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 (PPG)**

This is national planning policy guidance that can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

None relevant.

### **NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS**

To date, no representations have been received in response to the public consultation period. The consultation period for four properties (consulted later in the process) expires on 03<sup>rd</sup> March 2021. Should any representations be received these will be reported verbally at the Area Committee meeting.

### **CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

**Coal Authority** – No objection, subject to informative. The application site does not fall within the defined Development High Risk Area and is located instead within the defined Development Low Risk Area. This means that there is no requirement under the risk-based approach that has been agreed with the LPA for a Coal Mining Risk Assessment to be submitted.

In accordance with the agreed approach to assessing coal mining risks as part of the development management process, if this proposal is granted planning permission, it will be necessary to include The Coal Authority's Standing Advice within the Decision Notice as an informative note to the applicant in the interests of public health and safety.

**Environmental Health (Contaminated Land)** – No objection, subject to conditions. The proposed school site has not been identified as potentially contaminated, however it is within close proximity to two small areas that we have identified as potentially contaminated, these are areas of unknown filled ground to the west of the proposed new site. Areas of unknown filled ground can be a source of ground gas and this will need to be considered.

In addition to this, there is a large former landfill 100m away to the east known as Offerton Sand and Gravel – Quarrying. Any landfilling activity within 250m has the potential to be a source of ground gas and will need to be considered. The developer will need to undertake a site investigation for soil and gas at the proposed site.

**Environmental Health (Public Protection)** – No objection, subject to conditions. In support of the application, the applicant has submitted an acoustic report: NIA, Atkins, Ref: 5198497, Rev 1.0, 17/09/2020.

The impact of the noise from external noise emissions from fixed plant and building services associated with the development on existing noise sensitive receptors



(NSR's) have been assessed in accordance with: BS4142:2014 Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound.

An agreed methodology for the assessment of the proposed noise sources.

This is a preliminary report, setting out maximum plant noise limits and stipulates that a full NIA shall be completed once the design has progressed.

The typical operating hours of the new building are expected to be Monday to Friday 08:00 to 17:00. Items of plant are not expected to operate outside of these hours.

Closest noise sensitive receptors (NSR's) have been identified and are accepted.

The type, quantity and location of fixed mechanical and electrical (M&E) plant associated with the scheme has not been defined at this stage.

The daytime plant noise limits (07:00 – 23:00) at Table 4, page 9 are accepted.

This department shall accept an addendum to this report that demonstrates, that the (as yet unknown plant sound power levels) external plant (when operating simultaneously) shall not exceed the daytime plant noise limits detailed at Table 4.

**Greater Manchester Police** – No objection, subject to condition. We would recommend that a condition to reflect the physical security specifications set out in sections 3.3 and 4 of the Crime Impact Statement should be added, if the application is to be approved.

**Highway Engineer** - No objection, subject to conditions. I write with reference to the revised/ additional information that has been submitted in response to Consultation Response of the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020, which include:

- 1) A revised / updated Transport Assessment, including a Framework Travel Plan (v4, dated 29//1/21)
- 2) Aecom Response to Highways DC Comments Report
- 3) Drawing LISSEN\_ATK-Z2-XX-DR-LA-411050 Rev P03

After examining this information, I would make the following comments:

#### Impact on the highway network

The TA includes a revised and more detailed assessment of the traffic generation of the proposed school, breaking the data down into 15 minute intervals. This outlines that the proposal would be expected to generate 209 vehicle movements during the AM peak (08:00-09:00) and 223 during the PM peak (14:45-15:45). This is over double the movements estimated in the original TA for the AM peak and 27% more than previously estimated for the PM peak. The impact that these vehicle movements will have on the local highway network has then been assessed (in the same way as was carried out as part of the original TA using PICADY and LINSIG junction modelling software). The results of this modelling / review are as follows:

<b>Junction</b>	<b>Impact</b>
The site access / The Fairway	The junction will continue to operate within capacity, with minimal queuing predicted.
The Fairway / Marple Road / Sundial Road	The modelling indicates that the junction currently operates within capacity, with minimal queuing. The development will result in The Fairway arm of the junction reaching capacity during the PM peak by 2027, with queuing predicted to occur and an increase in the time required to exit The Fairway (from 29 seconds to nearly 2 minutes for right-turning vehicles). Vehicles turning right into The Fairway may also face delays during the AM peak.
Marple Road / Lisburne Lane signal controlled junction	The junction currently operates over capacity, with queuing occurring on all 3 arms during the AM and PM peak periods. The modelling outlines that the development would result in an increase in queues and delays on 3 of the 4 arms, with the greatest impact being on vehicles turning right into Lisburne Lane during the PM peak.

In addition, the impact of the development has also been reviewed by examining the increase in vehicle movements on a number of roads within the area. The results of this review are outlined below.

<b>Junction</b>	<b>Impact (% increase in traffic AM/PM)</b>
Lisburne Lane / Crosswaite Road	2% / 4%
The Fairway / Marple Road / Sundial Road	9% / 10%
Marple Road / Lisburne Lane	3% / 3%
Marple Road / Hempshaw Lane	7% / 7%

Based on this modelling and review, the TA concludes that the development will not have a significant impact on the local highway network and, whilst a 10% increase in flows is predicted at The Fairway / Marple Road / Sundial Road junction, it notes that this is from a low base. It also outlines that the results of the modelling should be regarded as worse-case, as the modelling is robust and may over-estimate the impact. Notwithstanding this, it does recommend that a range of soft mitigation measures are implemented (measures to allow and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, including the operation of a Travel Plan) to reduce the impact of the development.

Based on the revised modelling and analysis, I would conclude that, providing soft measures are implemented to minimise the number of vehicle trips and to spread the demand, the development should not have a material impact on the wider highway network. It will, however, have some impact on The Fairway / Marple Road / Sundial Road junction, which may be greater than that modelled (noting observed queue lengths are greater than those modelled). Whilst the impact at this junction would not be able to be fully mitigated without a major intervention (e.g. signalling the junction), which would be hard to justify in the context of this development, providing a right-turn ghost lane (by amending the carriageway markings on Marple Road)

would help to mitigate the impact (alongside soft measures). As such, I would recommend that any approval granted is subject to a condition requiring the provision of a right-turn ghost lane at this junction.

The modelling also shows that the development will impact on the operation of Marple Road / Lisburne Lane signal controlled junction. This currently operates over capacity, resulting in queuing and some delay, and the development will result in a worsening of the situation. The junction, however, already operates on MOVA (a system used to improve the operation of signal-controlled junctions) and there is no scope for improving its capacity so as to fully mitigate the impact of the development without carrying out a significant and costly junction improvement scheme (this would likely require the use of third-party land and major service diversions). Such a scheme would not be viable in the context of this development.

I understand from Transport for Greater Manchester (who are responsible for the operation of signal controlled junctions), however, that signal timings at the junction could be reviewed so as to maximise the efficiency and operation of the junction, which, together with travel plan measures, would go part-way in mitigating the impact of the development. The requirement to do this could be dealt with by condition. I will, however, leave it for TfGM to provide comprehensive comments on this junction and confirm this. Whilst this would not fully mitigate the impact of the development on this junction, subject to a level of mitigation being provided to ensure that the impact of the development would not be severe (as defined by the NPPF), a recommendation of refusal on such grounds would be hard to justify.

Finally, I previously noted that the scheme will result in a significant increase in vehicle movements on The Fairway (the revised TA outlines that vehicle movements will approx. double). Whilst this will not result in the theoretical capacity of the road being exceeded, I outlined that this could have implications in respect to highway safety as it will increase the risk of conflicts. In addition, whilst I outlined that various measures have been implemented in recent years to improve road safety on the road, I was aware that there is some concern in the area in respect to the speed of vehicles on the road. As such, this issue has been reviewed and the revised TA includes the results of a speed survey that was carried out in January 2021. The survey, which was carried out over the period of a week, recorded average (mean) speeds of 17.7mph southbound and 18mph northbound and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds of 21.5mph northbound and 21.8mph southbound. During school start and finish times, recorded speeds were found to be slightly lower, with both average and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds at or below 20mph (although HGV northbound speeds were found to be slightly higher at 21.6mph). Based on this information, I would conclude that vehicle speeds on The Fairway are not at a level which it is considered would raise road safety concerns or justify the provision of additional traffic calming as part of the proposed development.

### Access

As outlined in my previous comments, the school is proposed to be accessed via two accesses (an ingress and egress) that will take access from the existing private access drive which serves the wider site. I did not, however, consider the original

proposals acceptable and, as such, the scheme has been amended with the aim of addressing the issues raised. The revised scheme shows:

- 1) Proposals to provide a 3.5m path along the west side of the main access road from The Fairway
- 2) A 3m wide path within the site
- 3) Amendments to the loop road within the site
- 4) Provision of a 2.5m footway between the main path into the site and the rear playground
- 5) Gated accesses on the northern and western boundary (to connect to the future cycle Beeline route)
- 6) A number of zebra style crossings at pedestrian crossing points within the site
- 7) Tactile paving to be provided at pedestrian crossings
- 8) Some of the parking bays adjacent to the access drive being changed to a layby
- 9) The main gates at the end of The Fairway being the main gated access into the site (but open during school start and finish times)
- 10) The gates at the entrance to the Lisburne site being locked open during the school day so as to allow unhindered access to the school (once someone has gained access into the wider site) and the ability for all vehicles to use the loop road

Vehicle swept-path tracking diagrams are included in the revised TA which are aimed at demonstrating that a range of vehicles, including refuse vehicles, fire appliances and box vans would be able to negotiate the site's accesses and access drives. Whilst a tracking diagram has also been submitted designed to show a refuse vehicle would be able to turn at the end of the main access road, such a manoeuvre would be very tight and would only be possible if gates were open. As the loop road in the Lisburne site would be open during the day (which would allow service vehicles to use as a turning area), this would negate the need for vehicles to turn within this area and therefore this would not be an issue.

Consideration of the amended scheme concludes that the revised scheme addresses the majority of the issues I previously raised. Whilst the revised scheme is not fully in line with my recommendations, noting the site's constraints and the fact that the layout, as now proposed, is not considered to such that would result in collisions, I would conclude that an objection to the layout would be hard to justify. I do not, however, consider the main pedestrian access into the site acceptable (due to the width of the gate and acute angle at which the paths meet), consider the northern gate access to the Beeline route should be wider (as it would be used by cyclists) and I note that the vehicle tracking shows that the access drive (in the vicinity of the drop-off spaces) will be very tight (although I note that the TA suggests that this should not be an issue, noting that large refuse vehicles are used in Stockport, and the time of refuse collection cannot necessarily be controlled, I consider that does need to be addressed). In addition, the drawing does not show proposals to provide a raised table at the site access (with improved pedestrian crossings) as I previously outlined, was required. These issues, as well as other matters of detail could be dealt with at detailed design stage / by condition (requiring minor amendments to the site layout).

Finally, as previously outlined, to enable vehicles to turn out of the site, the east side of the private access drive would need to be kept clear of parked cars. As such, parking restrictions (e.g. double yellow lines) will need to be provided towards the end of the site access road. This matter can also be dealt with by condition.

### Parking

The scheme has been revised and the following parking facilities are now proposed to be provided for the proposed school:

- 8) 91 car parking spaces for staff and 14 car parking spaces for parents/visitors (including 8 with EV charging equipment)
- 9) 5 disabled parking spaces (including 2 with EV charging equipment)
- 10) 3 parking spaces for powered two-wheelers
- 11) A garage for the parking of 3 no. 17-seater minibuses
- 12) A layby for use by mini-buses and taxis for the dropping off and picking up of pupils (with a capacity of 12-13 vehicles)
- 13) Cycle parking for 20 cycles (16 long stay and 4 short stay)
- 14) Scooter parking for 11 children's scooters.

As previously outlined, the proposed overall level of car parking exceeds that permitted under the adopted parking standards and the number of spaces for cycles is less than the minimum requirement (although the number of spaces for disabled badge holders is also less than the required number it could be argued that the mini-bus laybys affectively function as disabled parking spaces). It needs to be acknowledged, however, that the parking requirements of a SEND school differ from those of a mainstream school and, as such, it is appropriate for parking to be considered on a site / school specific basis, based on a first-principles approach. With respect to this, the revised TA provides further information to justify the number of spaces proposed to be provided. This outlines that, at present, 86% of staff travel by car and therefore staff parking demand would be expected to be 108 spaces. Parking, however, is proposed to be provided for 75% of staff, which would mean that the level of parking will not exceed current demand, will be less than demand based on current levels of commuting in the area but at a level which should meet demand if measures are put in place to allow and encourage some staff to car share or travel by sustainable modes of transport. As such, I consider the level of parking is justified and is not excessive, noting the high staffing levels of a SEND school.

With respect to mini-buses and taxis, the TA outlines that around 30 mini-buses and taxis would transport pupils to the enlarged school and that, based on expected arrival and departure times, as well as dwell times, the proposed layby facility should accommodate the majority of these vehicles. During the afternoon pick-up, however, this may not always be the case and there could potentially be a short period where sufficient capacity was not available. These, however, could wait in the car park aisle (now an exit to the main car park has been created) and wait for a space to come free before joining the end of the mini-bus queue in the layby. As such, this should not have any highway implications or adversely affect site safety. To ensure that pupil drop-off and pick up operates in a safe and practical manner and a methodology is developed for managing vehicles within the site, I would recommend

that any approval granted is subject to a method statement for the management of the mini-bus and taxi operation.

With respect to parent drop-off, as previously outlined, 31 pupils would be expected to be transported to / from school by car and 14 parking spaces are proposed to be provided for parents / carers to use. Based on expected arrival and departure times, as well as dwell times, the revised TA outlines that the 14 spaces should be able to meet demand during the morning drop-off but, based on current travel patterns, will not quite meet the demand during the afternoon pick-up period, with demand exceeding supply by 4 cars. As such, a small number of parents may need to park elsewhere, which is likely to be on The Fairway (and its side roads). This number of cars should be able to be accommodated without adversely affecting highway safety and is likely to be less than the demand that would arise if the existing school building was to be bought back into use. As such, I would conclude that an objection on such grounds would be hard to justify. I do, however, consider that this should be minimised by the introduction of travel plan measures.

In my previous comments I outlined that the scheme will result in the loss of some existing parking spaces on the access drive that serves the wider site which is used by parents / carers with children at The Fairway Primary School and Castle Hill High School to park when dropping off / picking up their children. The revised TA estimates approx. 3 spaces will be lost as a result of this. This, however, does not take into account the sections of the drive where parents / carers park where there are no marked out parking spaces. If these areas are also included, this could equate to around 20 spaces. These would also be displaced onto The Fairway (and its side roads). Notwithstanding the difference in these figures, the TA notes that parking demand could be managed (and reduced) by measures included in a campus-wide Travel Plan and by reviewing school start / finish times for the 3 schools at the site (which could ensure that parking demand for the 3 schools did not all occur at the same time). Providing such measures are implemented, I would conclude that it should be possible to reduce demand to a level that does not result in a material increase in on-street parking on The Fairway and surrounding roads.

Finally, parking for 20 cycles is now proposed to be provided (16 long-stay and 4 short-stay), which equates to a level of parking of 56% of the minimum required under the adoptable parking standards. In addition, the scheme also now includes proposals to provide parking for 11 children's scooters. Due to the nature of the school and pupil's disabilities, fewer children would be expected to cycle than to a mainstream school and the applicant outlines that just 1 pupil presently cycles to Lisburne School. Even if measures were put in place to allow and encourage more pupils to cycle, I would not envisage that this would reach double figures (it is noted that the TA outlines that 5% of pupils currently travel to the site by foot, cycle, scooter or bus). I do, however, consider that the number of staff travelling to the site could reach 16, noting that parking would be available for 75% of staff. As such, and noting that it is not desirable to combine staff and pupil cycle parking, I would recommend that the 16-space store is provided for staff and a separate 8-space store is provided for pupils. This could be provided in the vicinity of where the scooter parking is proposed. Usage of these facilities could then be monitored as part of the Travel Plan and additional facilities provided if demand was found to exceed supply.

## Servicing

As outlined above, the site layout has been revised slightly and vehicle swept-path tracking diagrams are included in the revised TA which are aimed at demonstrating that a range of vehicles would be able to negotiate the revised site layout. As also outlined, whilst the revised layout is considered generally acceptable, it is considered that a slight amendment is required to the layout and parking restrictions will be required to ensure that vehicles would be able to negotiate the access roads in a practical manner. These issues, however, can be dealt with by condition. As referred to in my previous consultation response, I would recommend that any approval granted is subject to a condition which requires the production and approval of a servicing method statement, which would control when servicing takes place.

## Accessibility

As outlined above, the scheme has been amended so as to include a 3.5m path among the west side of the main access road that will serve the site (which would be wide enough for use by cycles and scooters, as well as pedestrians, a gated access on the northern boundary (to connect with the future Beeline cycle route), relocated cycle parking (closer to the entrance of the building) and scooter parking for scooters. Subject to minor amendments, these amendments are considered acceptable and address the majority of the issues I previously raised. As outlined above, it is considered that a cycle store for pupils should also be provided. This, as well as other measures to improve the site's accessibility (referred to in my previous consultation response), however, can be secured by condition.

## Travel Plan

I previously outlined that an integrated 'campus wide' Travel Plan was proposed to be produced for the site, which would include measures to manage travel for all three schools at the site (Fairway Primary School, Castle Hill High School and the proposed new school), so as to ensure a coordinated approach is adopted in respect to managing parking and minimising the impact of the development on the local highway network. Although a draft plan was included in the TA, I outlined that I did not consider that it was fit for purpose.

A revised Framework Travel Plan (FTP) has therefore been submitted. This includes:

- 1) An assessment of how many staff could travel by sustainable modes (based on where they live).
- 2) A review of what the FTP needs to achieve (based on the findings of the TA)
- 3) Details of additional measures to be implemented (these include offering cycle training, promoting the Cycle to Work cycle purchase scheme, reviewing school start / finish times, signage / poster campaigns, encouraging car sharing, having traffic marshals and having a parking permit scheme)

The plan outlines that the TA has identified that, based on the current modal share, the proposed car park and drop-off / pick-up facilities would not fully cater for demand and therefore the key target of the travel plan will be to reduce the demand

so as to ensure the proposed facilities will be able to meet demand. With respect to whether this could be achieved, the assessment of staff travel outlines that 30% of current staff live within 2km of the site (reasonable walking distance to the site) and 28% of staff live between 2km and 5km of the site (reasonable cycling distance to the site). As such, with 58% of existing staff living within reasonable walking or cycling distance of the site, the data shows that there is a great potential for significantly more than 14% of staff (the existing figure) to travel to the site by sustainable modes. The FTP therefore outlines that the final travel plan would aim to double the amount of staff travelling by sustainable modes of transport so as to reduce those travelling by single occupancy car to 70% (over a 5 year period). This, it outlines would ensure parking supply would fully meet demand.

Although the revised FTP still focuses on Lisburne School and staff travel, it is considered that the information contained in the plan demonstrates that there is considerable scope to significantly change modal share so as to reduce vehicle movements to / from the site, as well as parking demand. The additional measures proposed should ensure that the plan will be effective and the development of a campus wide travel plan, together with reviewing school start / finish times, having traffic marshals and a parking permit scheme should ensure that vehicle movements and parking demand are reduced and spread out, so as to avoid large peaks and the site functions in a safe and practical manner. It is, however, considered that it is critical that the final plan is a campus-wide travel plan and that, to ensure the plan is effective, the draft plan will need to be developed in conjunction with all three schools and all three schools will need to “buy in” to the plan and agree to work with each other on travel plan measures and the management of parking and vehicle movements within the site. In addition, whilst it is acknowledged that, due to the nature of Lisburne and Castle Hill schools, there is less scope to encourage pupils to travel by foot, cycle or scooter, there will be some scope and there would be in the case of The Fairway Primary School. As such, it is considered that the final campus wide travel plan should include measures and targets in respect to this.

## Conclusion

A revised / updated Transport Assessment (including a Framework Travel Plan) and site layout drawing have been submitted with the aim of addressing the issues raised in my consultation response of the 8th December 2020.

Based on the modelling, I would conclude that, providing travel plan measures are implemented to minimise the number of vehicle trips and spread the demand, the development should not have a material impact on the wider highway network. It will, however, have some impact on The Fairway / Marple Road / Sundial Road junction. Provision of a right-turn ghost lane at this junction would help to mitigate the impact (alongside soft measures) and, as such, I would recommend that any approval granted is subject to a condition requiring the provision of a right-turn ghost lane at this junction. The modelling also shows that the development will impact on the operation of Marple Road / Lisburne Lane signal controlled junction. Whilst I will leave it for Transport for Greater Manchester to provide comprehensive comments on this, it would not be possible to fully mitigate this impact in a cost-effective way. Travel Plan measures and reviewing signal timings at the junction would, however, provide some mitigation and should ensure that the impact of the development would



not be severe (as defined by the NPPF). As such, providing such measures were implemented (which could also be secured by condition), a recommendation of refusal on such grounds would be hard to justify.

Finally, various amendments have been made to the site layout and proposed parking facilities, including providing improved pedestrian / cycle access routes within the site and relocating the cycle parking. The TA includes additional information to justify the proposed level of parking. Subject to a few minor amendments (which can be dealt with by condition / at detailed design stage), I consider the revised layout acceptable. I also consider the proposed level of car parking acceptable, as well as the facilities for the dropping-off and picking-up of pupils, subject to suitable management arrangements being in place and measures being implemented to manage demand. In order to minimise the impact of the development on the local highway network and ensure that the site will function in a safe and practical manner, the production of a robust campus-wide travel plan will be essential and therefore it is considered that any approval should be subject to a condition requiring the production of such a travel plan.

**LLFA** – No objection, subject to planning condition(s). The application incorporates a comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment (Rev 1.0 26.08.2020) and Drainage Strategy (LISSEN-ATK-ZE-00-RP-CE-710000 27.08.2020). There are a number of minor issues that need to be addressed, however any revisions resulting from this should not alter the fundamental approach and it is acknowledged that the drainage principles have been developed appropriately.

**Manchester Airport** - The Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport has assessed this proposal and its potential to conflict aerodrome Safeguarding criteria. There are no aerodrome safeguarding objections to the proposal, subject to the following Conditions:

- During demolition & construction robust measures must be taken to control dust and smoke clouds.

Reason: Flight safety – dust and smoke are hazardous to aircraft engines; dust and smoke clouds can present a visual hazard to pilots and air traffic controllers.

- During construction, robust measures to be taken to prevent birds being attracted to the site. No pools of water should occur and prevent scavenging of any detritus.

Reason: Flight safety – Birdstrike risk avoidance; to prevent any increase in the number of hazardous birds in the vicinity of Manchester Airport (MAN) that would increase the risk of a Birdstrike to aircraft using MAN.

- All exterior lighting to be capped at the horizontal with no upward light spill.

Reason: Flight safety - to prevent distraction or confusion to pilots using MAN.

- No solar photovoltaics to be used on site without first consulting with the aerodrome safeguarding authority for MAN.

Reason: Flight safety - to prevent ocular hazard and distraction to pilots using MAN.

Advisory:

The applicant's attention is drawn to the new procedures for crane and tall equipment notifications that will be effective from October 2020, please see: <https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP1096%20Crane%20user%20guidance%20Edition%202.pdf>

It is important that any conditions or advice in this response are applied to a planning approval. Where a Planning Authority proposes to grant permission against the advice of Manchester Airport, or not attach conditions which Manchester Airport has advised, it shall notify Manchester Airport, and the Civil Aviation Authority as specified in the Town & Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosive Storage Areas) Direction 2002.

**Nature Development Officer** – No objection, subject to conditions and informatives.  
**Site Context**

The site is located off The Fairway in Offerton. The application involves demolition of the former Offerton High School buildings with a replacement with a part single and part two storey primary school and associated external works to facilitate the proposed use.

### **Legislative and Policy Framework** **Nature Conservation Designations**

The application site itself has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise. Poise Brook Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Poise Brook and Goyt Valley Site of Biological Importance (SBI) is located immediately to the north and east of the application site. This woodland is also listed on the Natural England Ancient Woodland Inventory. It is important that this designated area and the habitats it supports are protected from potential impacts associated with the proposals.

### **Legally Protected Species**

Ecological survey work has been carried out and submitted with the application. The survey included an extended Phase 1 Habitat survey (undertaken in June 2020) to map the habitats present and identify their potential to support protected species. Survey work has been undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist and in accordance with best practice survey guidelines.

Habitats on site mainly comprise species poor semi-improved grassland, amenity grassland, buildings and scattered trees. A biological impact assessment has been submitted with the application along with the DEFRA Metric 2.0 to demonstrate habitat losses and gains. It is summarised that the site would

achieve an increase of 2.11 biodiversity units, representing a 19% Biodiversity Net Gain. This is welcome within the proposals.

Many buildings and trees have the potential to support roosting bats and the woodland adjacent to the site also offers good bat foraging habitat which increases the likelihood of bats being present. All species of bats, and their roosts, 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.
  - b) the local distribution of that species.
- 3) Damage or destroy a breeding place or resting site of such an animal

An interior and exterior inspection of the buildings on site was undertaken to search for signs of bats and assess the potential for roosting bats to be present. No evidence indicative of bat presence was observed during the inspection survey. In general both buildings appeared to be well-sealed with limited potential roosting features for bats. The larger main school building offered some potential access points for bats into the building through broken windows and gaps in the masonry. The main school building was assessed as offering low bat roosting potential and the smaller building on site was assessed as having negligible potential to support a bat roost.

In accordance with best practice survey guidance, a bat emergence survey was carried out at the main school building. The survey was undertaken in August 2020 under suitable weather conditions. No bats were observed to emerge from the building during the survey. Common and soprano pipistrelle bat activity was recorded across the site and a noctule bat was also detected.

The trees on site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. No potential roosting features were identified.

The site (and habitats immediately adjacent to it) offers suitable habitat for badger. Badgers and their setts are legally protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. There are records for badger in the surrounding area. The ecology report submitted with the application states that no evidence of badgers was recorded within the application area but that evidence of badgers was observed 37m from the site boundary. From previous telephone discussions, the ecological consultant has confirmed that a sett is present here and inferred that adverse impacts on this badger sett can be prevented due to the topography of the site, direction of the badger tunnels and distance from the proposed works. A Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement in relation to badgers has been submitted with the application which details sensitive working measures

and how impacts will be avoided and adequately mitigated for.

Ponds and their surrounding habitat have the potential to support amphibians such as great crested newt (GCN). GCN receive the same level of legal protection as bats (outlined above). The site offers suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN (grassland and scrub). No ponds are present on site but three ponds have been identified within 500m of the application area. The closest pond is located approx. 260m to the south and a further two ponds are present to the southwest >330m away. There are historical records of great crested newts (GCN) within the pond to the south (GCN eggs were found in 2009). Surveys in 2013 did not find evidence of GCN but there were significant constraints associated with the survey and so it was concluded that GCN could still be present. Toad (a UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Priority Species under Section 41 of the NERC Act) was recorded in 2013, along with frog, palmate newt and smooth newt.

As part of the current application a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) survey has been carried out at the pond to the south. This assesses the suitability of a pond to support GCN. The pond scored as having poor suitability. An eDNA GCN survey was also carried out at the pond in June 2020 and the results were negative which indicates that GCN are absent. No access for survey was possible to two the ponds located to the southwest, however, given their limited habitat connectivity with, and distance from, the site it is considered unlikely that GCN are present within the application area.

### **Invasive Species**

Wall Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*) and false acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) have been recorded on site. 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.

### **Recommendations:**

It is considered that sufficient ecological information has been provided to allow determination of the application. A Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement in relation to badgers has been submitted with the application (Rachel Hacking Ecology, Ltd). This document details how potential adverse impacts will be avoided and appropriately mitigated for and this should be conditioned and implemented in full as part of any planning permission granted. It is also recommended that occasional gaps are provided at the base of the proposed boundary fencing to maintain access for badger to the grassland, which is likely to be a key foraging resource.

An Ecological Statement (22 October 2020, Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd) has been submitted as part of the application. This confirms the buffers to be adopted to protect the designated LNR and SBI and ancient woodland habitats. Following Natural England advice there should be a minimum 15m buffer between the woodland and proposed development (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient->

[woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences](#)). It is demonstrated how an adequate buffer will be maintained during construction and operation of the scheme to protect these habitats. The Ecological Statement states that lighting will be kept below 5 lux on the woodland habitats. It is requested however that this is reduced to 3 lux to minimise ecological impacts (see below). This will help to ensure that proposals accord with policy NE1.1 and NE1.2 of the retained UDP.

The ecological assessment states that a sensitive lighting design will help to protect the woodland habitats and reduce light disturbance impacts on protected species such as bats and badgers. The current lighting plan submitted with the application however, appears to show significant light spill into the woodland habitats where the proposed car park area borders the woodland. It is requested that the lighting scheme is amended to avoid light spill onto the woodland edge and/or screening (e.g. additional planting) is provided to adequately protect the woodland and associated protected species from impacts associated with light disturbance. It has since been confirmed via email that the lighting will be amended so as to minimise ecological impacts, including:

- Selection of directional luminaires / lamps, i.e. limit back lighting.
- Relocation of luminaires away from the site boundary.
- Changing mounting height of luminaires.
- Selection of reflective covers to reduce back lighting.
- Installation of lighting controls, including time clock and PIR

sensors

These measures can be secured via condition, but it is important that the applicant is aware that appropriate mitigation is required. Proposed lighting should be sensitively designed following principles outlined in Bat Conservation Trust guidance: <https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2018/09/new-guidance-on-bats-and-lighting>. Research indicates light levels need to be less than 3 lux at ground level to avoid significant adverse impacts on bat activity.

A suitable condition in relation to the lighting would be: Prior to occupation, a "lighting design strategy for biodiversity" for areas to be lit shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

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

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

Biodiversity enhancements are expected as part the development in line with local (paragraph 3.345 of the LDF) and national planning policy (NPPF). A Biological Impact Assessment has been submitted with the application and uses the DEFRA metric 2.0 for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). It is summarised that there will be a gain of 2.11 biodiversity units (19% BNG). This is welcome within the proposals.

The proposed landscape strategy includes tree planting, creation of wildflower areas, shrub planting and also provision of a double staggered hedgerow along the north site boundary. The hedgerow should comprise a mix of locally native species given its role as a buffer with the adjacent Poise Brook designated LNR and SBI site. This is also important given that the biodiversity metric calculations (see above) assume that the hedgerow comprises mixed native species. Landscape planting across the site should comprise a mix of species to provide a year-round nectar/berry resource for invertebrates and birds. Details regarding the future long-term management of habitat areas (including the hedgerow and meadow area) will also need to be provided and this can be detailed in a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) and secured by condition.

The ecology report refers to the provision of bird boxes on site. It is also recommended that bat boxes are provided. These can be integrated within the new school buildings as well as on retained mature trees. Details regarding the number, location and type of bat and bird boxes proposed should be submitted to the LPA for review. This can be secured via condition.

No evidence of roosting bats or great crested newts was identified during the surveys. Bats can regularly switch roost sites however and protected species can sometimes be found in seemingly unlikely places. An informative should therefore be used to as part of any planning consent to state that the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the legislation in place to protect biodiversity. In the event that roosting bats, great crested newts, or any other protected species is discovered on site during works, works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist contacted for advice.

If the proposed works have not commenced by June 2022 (i.e. within two years of the 2020 surveys) it is recommended that an update ecology survey is carried out in advance of works to ensure the baseline and assessment of impacts in respect of ecological receptors remains current. This can be secured by condition as part of any planning consent granted.

In relation to breeding birds it is recommended that works are timed to avoid the bird nesting season where possible. If building demolition and vegetation clearance works need to take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive a competent ecologist must undertake a careful, detailed check of

buildings/vegetation/trees for active birds' nests immediately before works commence and ensure there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. This can be secured by condition.

A condition should be attached to any planning permission granted, stating that the spread of wall Cotoneaster and false acacia will be avoided. A method statement for the control and treatment of these invasive species will need to be submitted to and agreed by the council prior to any works commencing. This can form part of the CEMP (see below).

It is important that retained habitats (including the adjacent SBI and LNR) are 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 (where appropriate) of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the WCA
- Avoid negative impact on sensitive ecological features during construction (such as the LNR/SBI, retained trees etc) and protect all retained features of biodiversity interest.
- mitigation measures and RAMS to be adopted during works to minimise potential impacts to badgers and other wildlife.

**Planning Policy Officer (Energy)** - No objection. The energy statement for this application is compliant with Core Strategy Policy requirements on energy statements. The statement states a commitment to an Air Source Heat Pump and Solar PV which will contribute to a carbon saving of around 45% over 2006 Part L.

The policy carbon reduction targets for non-residential development have been superseded by 2013 part L of the Building Regulations. However, as stated, the proposed energy options for this development will considerably reduce carbon emissions from the site. This is welcome in terms of contributing to the GM Zero Carbon by 2038 target laid out in the GM 5 Year Environment Plan and the aim in Stockport's Climate Action Now Strategy to reduce carbon emissions from new buildings. This will also contribute to reduced costs for future retrofit of buildings to a zero carbon target which will be necessary to address the climate emergency.

The Sustainability Checklist submitted within the energy statement shows the proposed design delivers a Silver level of building against the checklist, scoring 37 on the Checklist.'

**Planning Policy Officer (Open Space)** – No objection. The proposal for a special educational needs school is wholly on land designated as Green Belt and includes existing unused school buildings and hardstanding to the west. The previously-developed element of the site is designated as a 'Major Developed Site in the Green Belt' under UDP Policy GBA1.7. This policy is now judged to be superseded by national policies on Green Belt in the NPPF.

The NPPF notes at Paragraph 143 that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 145 states that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate unless they meet one of the listed exceptions. As the proposal would involve previously-developed land to a large extent, particularly the area occupied by the Woodbank Building, I would advise that the most relevant exception for consideration is (g) on the 'complete redevelopment of previously developed land...which would...not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development'.

Advice in the Planning Practice Guidance states that openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects. I would add that any consideration of the impact on the openness between existing and proposed development should include a comparison of the size, volume, height and massing of the existing and proposed buildings, alongside a consideration of the surface area taken up by hardstanding.

The applicant has provided information to demonstrate that, whilst the height would be broadly the same, when comparing the increase in size from existing to proposed, the footprint would be by 31%, the floorspace by 63%, the hardstanding by 45% and volume by 83%. Furthermore, not all the land is previously developed and, when taken together with the balance to be made in judging compliance with Paragraph 145g above, it is considered the proposal would be inappropriate development in principle in this regard. As such there is in-principle harm caused to the Green Belt by not being in accordance with the exceptions in Paragraph 145 and 146 of the NPPF and there is also other harm caused in relation to the combined impact on



openness from the increase in volume and floorspace. A case for very special circumstances is therefore required in line with Paragraph 143.

There is considerable case law that suggests a case for very special circumstances should be arrived at using the following approach:

1. Identify (with evidence) an essential objective that the proposal is intended to meet;
2. Demonstrate that that essential objective could not reasonably be met in a less harmful way (i.e. consideration of other sites outside of the Green Belt or alternative sites within the Green Belt but where less harm would be caused or which would amount to a form of development excepted by NPPF paragraph 89); and
3. Demonstrate that the proposed development would meet the essential objective and that doing so clearly outweighs the degree of harm caused by the proposal.

The submitted case for very special circumstances is extensive and has outlined that there is a substantial need for SEND provision in the Borough, that existing provision is inadequate and could not be feasibly extended, and that other non-Green Belt alternative sites are unsuitable. In addition the proposal would provide a high quality offer and would regenerate a vacant and dilapidated brownfield site, enabling the local authority to provide the best possible education opportunities whilst minimising travel costs and lowering running costs.

I would advise that the VSC case is sufficient to outweigh the in-principle harm and any other harm caused to the Green Belt.

**Senior Arboriculture & Habitats Officer**- No objection, subject to conditions.  
**Site Context**

The proposed development site is located within the existing open space/gardens of the site predominantly on the existing informal grounds and hard standing areas. The plot is comprised largely of hardstanding, informal grounds and associated infrastructure.

### **Recommendations:**

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 arboriculture impact assessment and tree survey has been supplied 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. The comments are based on site inspection and professional judgement.

In addition it was requested that the plan needed to fully consider tree planting throughout the site to increase the amenity levels of the site with replanting of semi-

mature trees or fruit trees, which appears on the proposed site layout plan but no landscaping plan with details has been supplied. This will need to be conditioned and agreed when the developer comes to discharge the condition.

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

As stated above a detailed landscaping scheme will need to be drawn up as part of this planning application to discharge the condition, 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 small negative impact on the trees. In its current format it could be considered favourably subject to resolving the issues set out above as well as the need to off-set the loss proposed. A detailed landscaping scheme should include 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.

**Sport England** – No objection, subject to compensation for the loss of an area of natural turf playing field which equates to 7,315m<sup>2</sup>.

This existing natural turf playing field area is 16,894m<sup>2</sup>. The proposed playing field will only be 9,579m<sup>2</sup> which represents a loss of 7,315m<sup>2</sup>. This is a significant loss, being larger than a full sized football pitch. It should be noted Sport England's remit is to protect natural turf playing field in the first instance. Any alternative non-natural turf sports provision on the playing field needs to be justified against paragraph 97(c) of the NPPF and Exception E5 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. As the MUGA and Daily Mile Track are artificial surface non pitch sport facilities they need to meet this exception.

#### **EXCEPTION 5**

*The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.*

The sporting benefits are clearly set out in the supporting letter from the school so from that perspective I consider the MUGA and Daily Mile Track meet Exception E5.

With respect to the use of the pitches by Castle Hill High School I understand the proposals do not affect the schools use. Given pitches can still be marked out that point is also satisfied.

#### **Conclusion**

The outstanding issue is around the loss of natural turf playing field which equates to 7,315m<sup>2</sup> and represents a significant loss. The Stockport Playing Pitch Strategy shows there are significant deficiencies across most pitch types and sizes. Given there is no excess of provision the loss cannot be deemed surplus to requirement. It should be noted that surplus to requirement does not mean surplus to the current

owner/user but surplus to meeting pitch sport needs across the local authority area. For that reason the loss needs to be replaced. As it is unlikely it can be replaced within the school site then mitigation should come forward in accordance with the Playing Pitch Strategy recommendations.

I understand £45,798 is to be secured to mitigate the loss of playing field. Subject to the contribution being secured via a s.111 agreement and being allocated towards and appropriate project, Sport England raises no objection. However, Sport England would wish to be consulted on the wording of the s.111 agreement.

**TfGM (Note, these are initial comments. TfGM has been consulted on revised details and comments are awaited) -**

#### Background

This application is to build a SEND primary school for 208 students and 125 staff. The Lisburne SEND School is to replace the existing school that is located within 1.3km. The new school will increase the student numbers by 66 and the staff numbers by 99.

#### Highways Overview

HFAS (Highways Forecasting Analytical Services) and UTC (Urban Traffic Control) have reviewed the highway section of the Transport Assessment (TA) issued in support of the proposed development and have provided feedback which is listed in the following sections.

##### **I. Parking**

Parking surveys have been undertaken and show little parking associated with the existing schools on the public highway (The Fairway)

##### **II. Junction Assessment**

The full junction 9 results for all scenarios and time periods should be included within the appendices. The only results included for the Fairway/Site Access are 2020 Base AM and A626 Marple Rd/The Fairway/Sundial Rd are 2027 Base plus Committed plus Development.

TfGM undertook a spot check on A626 Marple Rd/The Fairway/Sundial Rd and the OD data was incorrect. Drawing 8c was checked against the Junctions9 OD data and the following movements were incorrect.

C-D 26 should be 76

D-A 114 should be 115

D-C 123 should be 126

TfGM suggest that AECOM spot check the results for the other scenarios.

The signal junction modelling appears to be satisfactory.

The site appears to be over capacity and the development flows make it slightly worse, it already operates on MOVA.

### Site Accessibility

In order to encourage walking and cycling, it should be ensured that the pedestrian and cycling environment, around the site, is designed to be as safe, attractive and convenient as possible. Given there is the potential for local employment opportunities from the surrounding residential areas, with accessible connections to the public transport networks, it is vital to ensure that the pedestrian and cycling environment is suitable for use.

To promote active travel and link in with the surrounding environment, the applicant should ensure provision of the following:

- The condition of the footways and lighting along surrounding routes should be reviewed and improved where appropriate.
- It is recommended that dropped crossings and tactile paving are installed at junctions in the vicinity of the site (where not already in place). This is to help encourage walking to the site.
- Any redundant vehicle access points which served the former site should be reinstated as continuous footway to adoptable standards.
- Tactile paving and dropped crossings should be installed across either side of the site access points.
- Footway resurfacing and renewal undertaken on the surrounding network (as appropriate).
- Provision of continuous 2 metre wide footways throughout and surrounding the development.
- Implementation of additional cycle infrastructure and cycle route signing from the site.

In terms of pedestrian access, the TA states that this will be via The Fairway and Castle Hill Service Road whereby a footpath is provided along the western boundary of the service road. This runs up to the proposed development site access junction. The TA also states that upgrade / resurfacing will be provided. TfGM would suggest that the LA ensure this aspect of the development is carried out.

### III. Cycle Parking Provision

It is also important to ensure that there is adequate infrastructure and facilities to encourage development end users / visitors to travel by sustainable modes. The TA does not provide any details of the provision of secure cycle parking. It states that the development proposals include the provision of secure cycle parking spaces for students and staff but does not give an indication of the proposed number of spaces.

### IV. Travel Plan

It is important to influence travel patterns at the beginning of occupation. The TA states that the application will be accompanied by a Framework Travel Plan. If the Travel Plan is to be successful, it will be dependent on establishing a culture of sustainable travel behaviour at the outset, rather than on changing already established travel practices. The success of the Travel Plan measures will depend on their effective delivery and commitment from the occupiers and therefore robust arrangements for the implementation and running of the Travel Plan need to be included in the Framework Travel Plan. These include:

- a travel plan budget and resources for the implementation and day to day management of travel plan measures;
- appropriate management structures;
- detailed time frames for the delivery;
- a marketing and communication strategy;
- handover arrangements for the travel plan or its components when the developer's responsibility ceases; and
- initial targets before first surveys are conducted

Ideally a full Travel Plan should include tailored measures to overcome specific barriers, or take advantage of opportunities, presented by the site in order to encourage future employees and visitors to use sustainable modes of travel for appropriate journeys i.e. incentives to employees for travelling by public transport or by cycle; improvements to bus stop infrastructure etc.

The offer of personalised journey planning for staff is a further measure that could be included in a full Travel Plan for the site. The marketing and communication strategy should communicate the Travel Plan objectives and benefits to potential future business or commercial occupiers of the development, prior to them occupying the development. This should ensure potential business and commercial organisations are able to make informed choices and are more likely to commit to and adopt the Travel Plan.

In order to encourage sustainable journeys to mitigate the traffic impact of the development, through the Travel Plan, incentives should be offered to the development occupiers such as concessionary bus fares, discounted cycles, journey planning etc.

Should Stockport Council be minded to approve this application it is suggested that the further development, implementation and monitoring of full Travel Plans be attached as conditions of any planning consent.

**United Utilities** – No objection, subject to conditions.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Impact on Green Belt**

The application site in its entirety lies within the Greater Manchester Green Belt. It is also allocated as a Major Existing Developed Site (MEDS) in part, comprising previously developed land.

The application details provide the following comparison of the existing and proposed built form:

<b>Matter</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Maximum Heights (metres)</b>	10.4 (Chimney) 10.245 (water tank)	10.5 (two storey part to ridge, note 7.6 to eaves)
<b>Volume (cubic metres)</b>	12,750	23,295 (including mini bus garage)
<b>Hard Standing (sq m)</b>	7,320	10,605
<b>Footprint (sq m)</b>	2,342	3,055
<b>Building footprint as a % of red line area</b>	6.53	9.89
<b>Floorspace (sq m)</b>	3,027	4,935

The development therefore represents a departure from the Council's adopted Development Plan (saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Review Policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.7). This is because, inter alia, the development (including the buildings, car parking areas, hardstandings and other outside paraphernalia shown on the Proposed Site Plan) will occupy a larger area of the site and exceed the heights of existing buildings; it is not *essential* that the MUGA is provided in an open air/ countryside location; and the proposed fencing in and surrounding the site (including around the MUGA) will not preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The explanation to Policy GBA1.7 also confirms that the effect of proposals on the visual amenities of the Green Belt will be a material consideration in all cases. In this case, the above factors combined will lead to the proposed scheme having a greater visual impact on the Green Belt than the existing development, although it is acknowledged that the current building is unsightly, dilapidated and subject to anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

There is a degree of inconsistency between Policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.7 and the Green Belt Guidance in the NPPF. The NPPF post-dates these Development Plan Policies. Therefore, although the application represents a departure to the Council's adopted Development Plan, the Green Belt guidance in the NPPF should be afforded more weight in decision making. It is necessary to determine whether the Policies in the NPPF that protect the Green Belt provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. The NPPF outlines that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions (relevant to this application) are:

- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it; and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously

developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would: – not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or – not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These include:

- b) engineering operations;
- c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location.

“Openness” is not defined in the NPPF, however the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance states that assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt requires a judgment based on the circumstances of the case. By way of example, the courts have identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include, but are not limited to:

- i. openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;
- ii. the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and
- iii. the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.

In terms of the NPPF exceptions, it is determined that the proposal does not comply. This is because, inter alia:

- It is proposed that the MUGA will be surrounded by 3.0m high ballstop fencing. This is located in a presently undeveloped portion of the site, and it will not preserve the openness of the Green Belt.
- A comparative assessment (of the impact of existing and proposed development on openness) shows that the proposal - including the proposed buildings, car parking areas, hardstandings and other outside paraphernalia shown on the Proposed Site Plan - will be more spread out and will occupy a larger site area. The built form will also exceed the heights, footprint and volume of existing buildings.
- The proposed fencing in and surrounding the site will lead to a sense of enclosure.
- The submitted Landscape Visual Appraisal Statement outlines that scheme footprint will maximise use of the area of the Woodbank School building as much as possible, which will *minimise* the impact on the sites openness. It

therefore acknowledges that the scheme will have an impact on the openness of the site.

- Taking the above factors into account, the proposed scheme will have a greater visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

The NPPF confirms that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. In accordance with the NPPF, and in order for the development to be supported by the local planning authority, 'Very special circumstances' will need to be demonstrated to show that the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Neither local nor national policy specify what demonstrating a case for 'very special circumstances' should entail but there is considerable case law which suggests that adhering to the following approach is likely to be suitable:

1. Identify (with evidence) an essential objective that the proposal is intended to meet;
2. Demonstrate that that essential objective could not reasonably be met in a less harmful way (i.e. consideration of other sites outside of the Green Belt or alternative sites within the Green Belt but where less harm would be caused or which would amount to a form of development excepted by NPPF paragraph 89); and
3. Demonstrate that the proposed development would meet the essential objective and that doing so clearly outweighs the degree of harm caused by the proposal.

An addendum to the applicant's Planning Statement is attached to this report, focusing on what are considered to be very special circumstances to support this development. In summary, the applicant has stated:

1. There is currently a need for further SEND provision within the Borough of Stockport. Based on the projections for the next 8 years, this demand is going to increase, putting more pressure upon existing SEND provision.
2. The implication of not delivering the school would be a major setback in providing an integrated provision for primary age SEND pupils within Stockport. There would still be a need for a new school, and the process of locating a suitable site would recommence, delaying the ability of Stockport to meet its duty by several years.
3. The status quo is not sustainable, with suitability issues at Lisburne, the use of temporary buildings and the school population spread across 3 sites. Any major development at the existing Lisburne school would be highly disruptive, requiring alternative accommodation to be found for the pupils and would not



significantly increase capacity. Adaptations at the satellite sites are adequate to cope with essential needs of the children but inevitably there will be limited capability to share facilities with the main school. Transferring pupils between sites, either temporarily or in mid-school career, is a disturbance that is difficult to manage for this population and negatively affects the wellbeing of the children. The benefit of an integrated primary education is significant.

4. In terms of capacity, there are a total of 165 pupils cared for under the umbrella of Lisburne school. Of these only 91 pupils can be accommodated at Lisburne school itself. The remaining 74 are at Bredbury Green (48) and at Hollywood (26) satellite sites.
5. Over the last 5 years, Stockport have placed an average of 15 primary age pupils each year into independent providers at an annual cost of fees of £0.5m.
6. The current Lisburne school has a shortage of 90 places against the current need.
7. The new school will provide 208 SEND places on one site. This represents an increase in integrated places of 117 on the current Lisburne school, thereby bringing the 74 pupils currently in satellite sites into the same school. There is capacity for the forecast increase in need and to absorb future pupils that may otherwise be sent to independent provision.
8. The Local Authority currently spends significant amounts of money placing and transporting pupils with complex needs to settings which are not maintained by the local authority. These placements are much more expensive than local authority provision as well as being further afield for the children who live in Stockport but may have to travel significant distances to available placements outside the Borough.
9. In carrying out the proposed improvement works, significant savings can be made against external placements and the associated travel costs. These savings can be used to pay for the new building.
10. The option of the Lisburne School remaining at its existing location is unviable for a number of reasons. The School does not have the space to accommodate the number of places currently required, or additional places in the future. This has been demonstrated by the satellite provision established at Hollywood Park Nursery School and Bredbury Green. In addition, the current building is not fully adapted for pupils with mobility difficulties. Work to re-develop the building as fit for purpose could not be undertaken with the School in occupation. As well as being costly, alternative accommodation would have to be provided for pupils whilst the work was underway and this would be very disruptive to the School. The site is not large enough to re-build the whole school, as a larger building would be needed whilst retaining the existing School during the construction period.

11. The Council currently has no other suitable alternative sites that could accommodate the school with all necessary facilities. The Bredbury Green site is currently fully occupied and there is no space available to develop. In addition, this is an Academy and so SMBC does not have control over the future activities on the site in terms of new educational provision. Hollywood Park is set within a mixed use area that comprises residential, however mainly commercial uses. The surrounding commercial uses are in close proximity to this site and there is no room at all for expansion, making it an unsuitable option. The existing buildings on the former Offerton School site were considered. However, Castle Hill High School now occupies the Vernon block and the other buildings have deteriorated significantly. Furthermore, the available space at the former Orrishmere Primary School site in Cheadle Hulme is too small for the size of development.
12. The existing buildings on the site are unsightly, dilapidated, subject to considerable anti-social behaviour and are a blot on the landscape. By approving the proposed development, it would allow the existing buildings to be demolished and replaced with buildings of high quality design, using high quality materials on the building and the significant landscaping surrounding the building.
13. The School would be designed specifically to accommodate children with SEND rather than the existing building which has been adapted over time and is now stretched beyond its capacity with separate units across the site as well as additional units in other locations. The proposed new building facilities would also be fully accessible for people with disabilities with spaces which are designed to allow mobility for pupils with physical difficulties. Under the proposals, Lisburne pupils would attend an enhanced provision. Pupils and staff will benefit from significantly improved buildings and better facilities that are fit for purpose to deliver the best education possible.
14. The School would have a modernised building with lower running costs, meaning funding can be more appropriately directed towards teaching and learning.
15. The planning application is supported by an Energy and Sustainability Report. The new Lisburne SEN School is to be an environmentally friendly building. This includes all aspects of the engineering and construction.
16. There is a parking/highway management problem within the locality currently because of the current operations of the existing schools within the area. The proposal involves the concept of an education estate wide travel plan so that the new Lisburne School, the existing Castle Hill School and the existing Fairway Primary School have a unified highway management strategy. The intention is that this would lead to betterment of the existing situation.
17. The proposed development incorporates a number of measures to improve connectivity within and adjoining the site.

18. Whilst the application proposes a net loss of natural turf sports provision on the site, there will be a significant qualitative net gain in the sports offer at the site.
19. Biodiversity enhancements are proposed as part of the development. This will include soft landscaping and the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates; bird boxes; and native tree and shrub planting where possible.
20. During the design, development and construction process, it is anticipated that the proposed development will create a significant number of jobs. The application proposes a net gain in Special Needs places within the Borough of Stockport. This necessitates the need for additional educational and medical support to facilitate the increase in provision. There are currently 65 FTE Staff Serving Lisburne SEND and satellite locations. The projected FTE for the new development will be 125 staff. This represents a net increase of 60 FTE jobs.
21. The duration of development will be 52 weeks, which is considered a short timescale for a proposal of this nature.
22. Based on the findings of the Phase 1 contamination report, the proposed development presents an opportunity to understand the underlying site constraints better and prepare an appropriate remediation strategy depending upon the Phase 2 findings.
23. When fully operational, Offerton High School accommodated 1176 pupils. The proposed development will accommodate 208 pupils, which is approximately a fifth of the former capacity.
24. It is purported that the very special circumstances and other material benefits of the proposal, outlined above, outweigh the slight/moderate harm that this development would cause to the Green Belt.

All the above factors, together with the remaining analysis in this report, mean that very special circumstances have been demonstrated and exist to show that the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Members are asked to note, in particular, the urgent need for additional SEND provision in Stockport and that it is unviable for Lisburne School to remain at its existing location. The local planning authority is not aware of any suitable alternative locations to site the new school. It is considered that the educational need for the development as an essential objective with clear public and educational benefits has been successfully made and that alternative, less harmful ways of delivering it have been fairly and reasonably discounted. Paragraph 94 of the NPPF stresses *"It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through decisions on applications".*

It is noted that the Planning Policy Officer (Open Space) – see ‘Consultee Responses’ section) does not object to the development.

Due to the amount of floor space to be created by this development in the Green Belt, if the Planning & Highways Regulation Committee is minded to grant the application it will need to be referred to the NPCU. This is to give the Secretary of State the opportunity to consider whether to exercise call-in powers.

### **Impact on Landscape Character Area**

The site lies within designated Landscape Character Area G: Goyt Valley and is adjacent to LCA H: Offerton – Poise Brook. The requirements for developments within and adjacent to these zones is set out in the Policies and the Council’s Landscape Character Assessment 2018. With respect to Landscape Character Area G, the Development Plan comments as follows:

*One of the largest LCAs, this follows the course of the River Goyt from the border with Derbyshire/Cheshire at Strines to the edge of the Town Centre/M60 Gateway. Like the Tame Valley the Goyt Valley forms a very important environmental and recreational resource in close proximity to a number of the urban settlements of the Borough, and has been protected and enhanced for these purposes over a number of years.*

*The valley contains a mixture of agricultural land, Sites of Biological Importance (including a number of the Borough’s ancient woodlands), developed sites including schools and factories, and the Borough’s only remaining significant mineral working at Offerton.*

*As with the Tame, there will continue to be an emphasis on maintaining the countryside character of the valley. The LCA contains a number of sites where proposals may come forward on “Major Existing Developed Site” in the Green Belt under Policy GBA1.7 of the UDP. The landscape impact of proposals on these sites will be a major factor in their consideration. In addition, the mitigation of the environmental impact of the proposed Stockport north-south bypass will be an important issue in this LCA*

The applicant has submitted a comprehensive Landscape Visual Appraisal Statement, to record the primary landscape and visual amenity issues that have been identified as a result of the proposed development. It is acknowledged that although the scheme sits within the boundary of Landscape Character Area G this is not wholly reflective of the area. At site level the character is predominantly open, interspersed with buildings and trees. The site is enclosed on all sides. To the north and east there is a definitive visual boundary, Offerton Wood. To the south and west the area is enclosed by residential housing and urban features. The sensitivity of the site to the type of change/works proposed is judged to be low. Long distance views of the site are generally limited by woodland cover, intermittent trees and tree avenues, residential boundaries and topography. Subsequently, the majority of views of the site are experienced from directly within or adjacent to it.

Due to the nature of the proposed scheme and the characteristics of the site, there will undoubtedly be some landscape impacts on the character and visual amenity of

Castle Hill High School as well as to visual receptors adjacent to it. However, the overall adverse effects from the proposed scheme on the adjoining landscape would predominately only be apparent in the establishment period following construction. Specifically, the adverse effects would primarily arise from the loss of trees.

However, the intention is to partially mitigate for this loss in the short to medium term through the planting of replacement trees within the locality of the tree loss, and where this is not directly possible replacement tree planting in other locations within the proposed scheme. In the medium to long term it is anticipated that the tree loss would be fully mitigated as the replacement and additional tree planting matures.

After the new planting has established the scheme would not be out of character with its existing landscape, taking into account also the existing school buildings in this location, and at that time it is envisaged that the residual landscape effects are likely to be neutral/slight adverse at the most.

Care has been taken to assist the integration of the proposed scheme by considering site boundaries carefully, and through using visually penetrable mesh fencing and soft planting where appropriate.

It is arguable that the landscape character of the site will be enhanced by this development as it will remove existing, unsightly buildings that are falling into disrepair and have been subject to vandalism. If it does not proceed, it is probable that the condition of these buildings will continue to deteriorate. The proposed buildings are located in broadly the same location as the existing built footprint, and there will be an uplift in the design quality. The new school buildings propose materials sympathetic to the woodland context and Forest School ethos, including the extensive use of timber cladding.

### **Impact on Residential Amenity**

The proposed development is set a sufficient distance away from any residential accommodation and therefore would cause no harm in this regard. The Environmental Health Officer (Noise) has raised no objections to the development, subject to a Planning condition to control noise from any external plant. This will be conditioned if the application is granted.

### **Impact on Ecology**

The application site itself has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise. Poise Brook Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Poise Brook and Goyt Valley Site of Biological Importance (SBI) is located immediately to the north and east of the application site. This woodland is also listed on the Natural England Ancient Woodland Inventory. It is important that this designated area and the habitats it supports are protected from potential impacts associated with the proposals.

The Council's Nature Development Officer (see 'Consultee Responses' section) considers that sufficient ecological information has been provided to allow the positive determination of the application. The recommended conditions and informatives will be included on the decision notice if the application is granted.

### **Impact on Trees**

There are no legally protected trees within this site or affected by this development. The Council's Senior Arboriculture & Habitats Officer (see 'Consultee Responses' section) raises no objection on arboriculture grounds, provided a suitable landscape scheme is secured. A Planting Strategy has been submitted by the applicant, however it has been agreed that the detailed landscape scheme can be controlled by condition if the application is granted.

### **Impact on Playing Fields**

The development represents a departure from the Council's adopted Development Plan (saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Review Policies L1.1. This is because, inter alia, the development will result in the loss of natural turf playing field totalling 7,315m<sup>2</sup>; the proposed development is not ancillary to the use of the site as a playing field (e.g. new changing rooms) and it will adversely affect the quantity or quality of pitches and their use; the proposed development does not only affect land which is incapable of forming a playing pitch (or part of one); the playing fields that would be lost as a result of the proposed development would not be replaced by a playing field or fields of equivalent or better quantity, quality, usefulness and attractiveness in a location at least as accessible to current and potential users; and the proposed development is not for an outdoor or indoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the loss of the playing field.

There is a degree of inconsistency between Policy L1.1 and the NPPF. Therefore, although the application represents a departure to the Council's adopted Development Plan, the 'open space' guidance in the NPPF should be afforded more weight in decision making. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF is clear that playing fields should be protected unless certain criteria are met. Of relevance to this application is whether the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.

Sport England (see 'Consultee Responses' section) has a specific role in the planning system as a statutory consultee on planning applications for development affecting or prejudicing the use of playing fields. It has raised no objection to this development, provided the applicant makes a financial payment of £45,798.00 (based on Sport England facility costs) to go specifically towards other (off site) qualitative improvements informed by the latest Playing Pitch Strategy. The payment is required to compensate for the loss of the playing field. Sport England has confirmed it can be allocated to an artificial pitch or ancillary facilities that support pitch use. Therefore, provided the requirement of Sport England is satisfied an objection to the loss of the area of playing field could not be sustained.

The applicant has accepted the need to make the payment, and it is proposed that the money will go either towards projects due to take place at Marple High School (this is subject to planning permission being obtained and is to convert the condemned sand-dressed pitch into a full size 3G Artificial Grass Pitch) or Priestnall School (changing room investment). The contribution will need to be secured via a legal agreement. Members should note that Sport England is very specific about the types of project to which compensatory payments can go. Following discussion with

Sport England these are the only schemes identified that will meet its' strict requirements. There are no suitable sites within the Stepping Hill Ward.

### **Impact on Highway Safety**

The Council's Highway Engineer (see 'Consultee Responses' section) raises no objection, subject to conditions.

Based on the modelling the Engineer has concluded that, providing travel plan measures are implemented to minimise the number of vehicle trips and spread the demand, the development should not have a material impact on the wider highway network. It will, however, have some impact on The Fairway / Marple Road / Sundial Road junction. Provision of a right-turn ghost lane at this junction would help to mitigate the impact (alongside soft measures) and any approval granted should be subject to a condition requiring the provision of a right-turn ghost lane at this junction. The modelling also shows that the development will impact on the operation of Marple Road / Lisburne Lane signal controlled junction. Although the updated comments of TfGM are awaited on this aspect, and it is hoped that these will be available to report verbally to the Area Committee, it is acknowledged that it would not be possible to fully mitigate this impact in a cost-effective way. Travel Plan measures and reviewing signal timings at the junction would, however, provide some mitigation and should ensure that the impact of the development would not be severe. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF is clear that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. As such, providing such measures were implemented (which could also be secured by condition), a recommendation of refusal on such grounds would be hard to defend..

Finally, various amendments have been made to the site layout and proposed parking facilities, including providing improved pedestrian / cycle access routes within the site and relocating the cycle parking. The TA includes additional information to justify the proposed level of parking. Subject to a few minor amendments (which can be dealt with by condition/ at detailed design stage), the Engineer considers that the layout is acceptable. It is also considered that the proposed level of car parking is acceptable, as well as the facilities for the dropping-off and picking-up of pupils, subject to suitable management arrangements being put in place and measures being implemented to manage demand. In order to minimise the impact of the development on the local highway network and ensure that the site will function in a safe and practical manner, the production of a robust campus-wide travel plan will be essential and therefore any approval should be subject to a condition requiring the production of such a travel plan.

The conditions recommended by the Engineer will be included on the decision notice if the application is granted.

### **Design**

A Design and Access Statement has been submitted with the application. This successfully articulates the rationale behind the design and layout of the proposed school. It was developed through engagement with the school to compliment their pupil arrival strategy, as well as ensuring that it takes advantage of the natural

surroundings of the site and will meet the requirements of its' intended occupants. The statement emphasises that a simple and natural palette of materials has been chosen to create a soft and welcoming building to pupils, staff and visitors, as well as being appropriate to the landscape setting. The proposed material palette is:

- Timber/Composite cladding above 2600mm
- Brickwork up to 2600mm
- Curtain glazing to the main entrance
- Full height glazing at ground level
- 'Punch-out' glazing at first floor to create visual variety between the two material treatments.

Furthermore, care has been taken to assist the integration of the proposed scheme into its surroundings by considering site boundaries carefully, and through using visually penetrable mesh fencing and soft planting where appropriate.

Lisburne SEND School conducts a sensory based curriculum with a focus on communication. The school aims to develop social interaction and integration skills, and independence, to aid pupils to achieve their personal goals. Life-skills plays a large part in the curriculum that builds opportunities for the children to develop their independence. The school is designed to enable children to move around both within the school building and school grounds with independence. A Forest School (an outdoor education delivery model in which students visit natural spaces to learn personal, social and technical skills) plays a central role in the Lisburne curriculum. This provides children with an opportunity to develop social skills and team work, child led learning opportunities and gross motor development. The external landscape is an inclusive one, accessible to all Lisburne pupils, and encourages independent exploration.

It is accepted that the school is best placed to determine what works for its' pupils, and there are no planning objections to the design rationale proposed or the choice of materials or enclosures. The precise materials will be controlled by condition if the application is granted.

The application has also been accompanied by a Crime Impact Statement. This has been reviewed by Greater Manchester Police, and provided a condition is imposed to reflect the physical security specifications set out in the statement no objection is raised. This condition will be included on the decision notice if the application is granted.

### **Other Issues**

An Energy Checklist has been submitted in compliance with Policy SD-3.

The conditions requested by the Environmental Health Officers (Contaminated Land and Noise), and Manchester Airport, will be imposed if the application is granted.

In terms of drainage and Policy SD-6, the applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy. The proposed development is within Flood Zone 1, indicating a very low risk of fluvial flooding. However, it is understood that



the surface water flood risk map shows there are small pockets of the site that are at medium to high risk of surface water flooding currently due to the topography. The LLFA has raised no objection, subject to planning condition(s). There remain a number of minor issues that need to be addressed, however any revisions resulting from this should not alter the fundamental approach and it is acknowledged that the drainage principles have been developed appropriately. United Utilities has also raised no objection to the development, subject to conditions that (i) the drainage for the development is carried out in accordance with principles set out in the submitted Drainage Strategy Report. No surface water will be permitted to drain directly or indirectly into the public sewer; and (ii) foul and surface water is drained on separate systems. Conditions will be included on the decision notice to ensure suitable drainage, if the application is granted.

### **Summary - 'Sustainable Development/ Planning Balance'**

The determination of a planning application is to be made pursuant to section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which is to be read in conjunction with section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Section 38(6) requires the Local Planning Authority to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless there are material circumstances which 'indicate otherwise'. Section 70(2) provides that in determining applications the local planning authority "shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations."

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies that there are three overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways, these include:

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of the present and future generations; and by fostering a well designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making the effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the NPPF apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:

- 1) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- 2) 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 (including the Green Belt) 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.

Assessed against the Council's adopted Development Plan and the NPPF, it is recommended that the application is granted as it amounts to sustainable development. No policies in the NPPF provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, and any adverse impacts of granting the development do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Very special circumstances exist to show that the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Not only is the proposed development a departure to the Council's adopted Development Plan, but as the site area exceeds 3ha the decision on this application will rest with the Planning & Highway Regulation Committee following comment by the Area Committee. Due to the amount of floor space to be created by this development in the Green Belt, if the Planning & Highways Regulation Committee is minded to grant the application it will need to be referred to the NPCU. This is to give the Secretary of State the opportunity to consider whether to exercise call-in powers.

Prior to issuing a decision to approve this application, a legal agreement will need to be secured to address the issue raised by Sport England.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant, subject to referral to the Secretary of State and securing a legal agreement to address the issue raised by Sport England.