

ITEM

Application Reference	DC/078365
Location:	Dutch House Wilmslow Road Woodford Stockport SK7 1RH
PROPOSAL:	Demolition of the existing house and detached garage. Replacement with 1 no. new dwelling
Type Of Application:	Full Application
Registration Date:	23.10.2020
Expiry Date:	20201218
Case Officer:	Jane Chase
Applicant:	Mrs H MacDonald
Agent:	LHGProjects

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Departure – Planning & Highways Committee. Called up by Cllr Bagnall

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks the demolition of a detached 4 bedroom dwelling comprising accommodation at ground and first floor level. To the front elevation the first floor accommodation is within the roofspace and served by dormers however to the rear the first floor accommodation has a full hipped roof over. To the rear elevation is a single storey pitched roof extension across the entire house. A detached garage is positioned in the rear garden adjacent to the boundary with Atwood House to the east.

In place of the existing dwelling and garage, it is proposed to erect a 2 storey detached house with a hipped roof over, 3 projecting gables to the front elevation and 1 to the rear elevation. Reception rooms are proposed at ground floor level together with 5 bedrooms and bathrooms at first floor level. The attic would be used for storage and lit by way of rooflights in the front, rear and side elevations. The proposed house would be of a traditional design and built in buff facing brick, buff stone plinths and window surrounds, grey UPVC windows and a slate roof.

As originally submitted the proposed house would be slightly wider and deeper than that existing and whilst it would be sited in a similar position to the front and west side elevation, to the rear and east side elevation it would extend further by approximately 1.9m and 1.7m respectively. To the centre of the rear elevation a 2 storey projection is proposed with a pitched roof and gable end.

Since the submission of the application, amended plans have been received which show the reduced depth of the proposed house such that it will project no further to the rear than the existing single storey extension. The centrally positioned 2 storey projection has also been amended such that this will now comprise a single storey projection with a flat roof over.

Submitted with the application is an existing and proposed streetscene. This along with the existing and proposed plans and elevations is appended to the report. The proposed dwelling would measure 11.5m wide being sited 1.4m off the boundary with Bramwood House to the west (5m to the facing side elevation and no closer than existing) and 1.4m off the boundary with Atwood House to the east (2.4m to the facing side elevation). As amended the main bulk of the house would be 14.6m deep with the bays to the front projecting up to 1.2m and the single storey projection to the rear 2m deep. The house would measure 5.5m to eaves and 8.5m to the ridge rising to the same ridge height as both neighbouring houses.

Externally the garden to the front and rear would remain as existing however the detached garage to the rear of the dwelling is to be demolished.

The application is supported by the following documents:

Planning, design and Access Statement

Green Belt Statement

Bat Survey

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is located on the north side of Wilmslow Road within a ribbon of development that extends in a westerly direction towards the boundary with Cheshire East. The existing dwelling comprises a detached 4 bedroom dwelling with accommodation at ground and first floor level. To the front elevation the first floor accommodation is within the roofspace and served by dormers however to the rear the first floor accommodation has a full hipped roof over. A single storey pitched roof extension spans the rear elevation of the house.

Houses, including the application property, are set back from the road by landscaped front gardens approximately 26m deep. There are a mix of architectural styles however houses are all detached with mainly hipped roofs and constructed from a variety of red or brown brick, white render (with black timber detailing in some instances) and grey or red roof tiles. Houses are generally 2 storeys high with a roof over and there is evidence of accommodation at second floor level in the roofspace served by dormers and rooflights front and rear. Some houses (like the application site) have accommodation at first floor level within the roofspace in full or in part.

Opposite the site and to the rear is open farmland. The application site is identified on the UDP Proposals Map as being located within a Landscape Character Area and the Green Belt.

POLICY BACKGROUND

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

The Development Plan includes-

Policies set out in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review adopted 31st May 2006 which have been saved by direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;

Policies set out in the Stockport Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted 17th March 2011; &

Policies set out in the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

Saved policies of the SUDP Review

LCR1.1 Landscape Character Areas
GBA1.1 Extent of Green Belt
GBA1.2 Control of Development in Green Belt
GBA1.5 Residential Development in Green Belt
L1.1 Land for Active Recreation
L1.2 Children's Play

LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies

SD-1 Creating Sustainable Communities
SD-3 Delivering the Energies Opportunities Plan
CS2 Housing Provision
CS4 Distribution of Housing
H-1 Design of Residential Development
H-2 Housing Phasing
CS8 Safeguarding & Improving the Environment
SIE-1 Quality Places
SIE-2 Provision of Recreation and Amenity Open Space in New Developments
SIE-3 Protecting, Safeguarding & Enhancing the Environment
CS9 Transport & Development
T-1 Transport & Development
T-2 Parking in Developments
T-3 Safety & Capacity on the Highway Network

Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

DEV2 Replacement of Existing Dwellings
DEV4 Design of New Development
ENV3 Protecting Woodford's Natural Features
ENV4 Supporting Biodiversity

Supplementary Planning Guidance

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

Design of Residential Development
Open Space Provision and Commuted Sum Payments

National Planning Policy Framework

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For decision-taking this means:

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

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

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

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole”.

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

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

Para.47 *“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible,*

and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing”.

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

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

Para.133 *“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”.*

Para.134 *“Green Belt serves five purposes:*

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

Para.141 *“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land”.*

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

Para.144 *“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, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”.*

Para.145 *“A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this include amongst others:*

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

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

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

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

Para.213 “existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)”.

Planning Practice Guidance

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DC/014726; Type: FUL; Address: Dutch House, Wilmslow Road, Woodford, Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 1RH; Proposal: Alterations and extensions including two storey front and rear extensions and rear dormer; Decision Date: 10-MAY-04; Decision: GTD and expired unimplemented

DC/024161; Type: FUL; Address: The Dutch House, Wilmslow Road, Woodford, Stockport, Cheshire; Proposal: Part two storey and part single storey extension to rear of house and detached garage; Decision Date: 02-NOV-06; Decision: WDN

DC/025206; Type: FUL; Address: Dutch House, Wilmslow Road, Woodford, Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 1RH; Proposal: Part two storey and part single storey rear extension and detached garage to rear of property (resubmission of DC024161); Decision Date: 15-MAR-07; Decision: GTD and implemented.

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

The occupiers of 2 neighbouring properties have been notified in writing of the receipt of this application. The proposal has also been advertised by way of a site and press notice.

2 letters have been received objecting on the following grounds:-

- Overdevelopment of the site which would have a significant negative impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers as well as on the character of the area.

- The proposed dwelling would result in an increase in floor area of almost 50% and will project beyond the front and rear walls of both Bramwood House and Attwood house. The proposed building would appear as an overbearing and visually intrusive structure, which will overshadow our dwelling and affect our privacy in the back garden.

- The subject property as currently existing, comprises a modest two-storey detached house in an area, which is characterised by buildings of a similar size. However, the larger existing dwellings on Wilmslow Road all benefit from

significantly larger plots and therefore appear in proportion unlike the proposed Dutch House, which is squeezed into the modest plot and will appear like a Cuckoo on a nest! The bulk, height and overall massing of the building particularly its length along my common boundary is unacceptable.

- The Bat Survey which was carried out by Gritstone Ecology in late October 2020 was I believe undertaken outside of the May to September survey season? The survey also suggests that the roof is in good condition but in fact the original old roof is actually in a poor condition. Having a large wood within 60m of our houses, bats are a common sight around our properties which I believe questions the validity of the Bat report particularly in its timing and observations of the roof condition?

- I would note that in principle I do not object to the redevelopment of the Dutch House but will only support such a project which is in proportion to the plot and is sympathetic to the two adjacent properties.

- The garage roof currently shields the view from The Dutch House' upstairs windows from overlooking my back garden. I am concerned that the removal of the garage will now provide an unfettered view of both my patio areas and the leisure area of my back garden (including sun terrace, etc.)

- The boundary fence between my property and The Dutch House is currently in a state of disrepair and leaning up against my house wall thereby blocking access down the path of my house and to my side door. With no-one resident in The Dutch House and building work planned I am concerned that this boundary fence (which is the responsibility of The Dutch House) is going to remain in this state until the rebuild has been complete. This will be unacceptable to me - I would like the boundary fence made good as a condition of the construction commencing.

- Both my partner and I are having to work from home due to current Covid restrictions and our places of work being inaccessible. We are concerned that the construction work will potentially create noise and disturbance that will hamper our ability to work effectively. Anything that can be done to mitigate noise-related issues during the re-build would be very much appreciated

- I would like assurances that access to my driveway will not be an issue during the construction. The unfenced land I own between my fence at the front and the public footpath will not be used as over-flow parking for construction related vehicles.

The objectors have been notified of the receipt of the amended plans. To date 1 letter has been received objecting on the following grounds:-

- The slight reduction in mass is acknowledged however we strongly believe the revised plans still reflect an overbearing solution which will have a significant impact on the light at the rear of our property.

- To demonstrate the significance of the revised extension it would be helpful if the existing Dutch house side elevation is added onto the proposed side elevation. By doing this it will clearly identify the excessive and unacceptable massing which we will be faced with and is why we strongly object to the revised plans and support their rejection or a sympathetic redesign that reflects our major concerns.

- I note from the revised documents there is no reference to the suitability of the original bat survey which was an issue raised by me previously?

Any further comments received will be reported orally to Members.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Nature Development Officer - The site has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise. Many buildings have the potential to support roosting bats and the site is located near to 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

Buildings can also offer suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds. All breeding birds and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Nesting opportunities within the building are considered to be limited.

A preliminary bat roost assessment has been carried out and submitted as part of the application. The survey was carried out in October 2020 by a suitably experienced ecologist and followed best practice survey guidelines (Gritstone Ecology, 2020). An internal and external inspection was undertaken to search for signs of bats and assess the potential for bats to be present. No signs indicative of bat presence were observed during the survey and the main building and garage were assessed as offering negligible potential to support roosting bats. Tiles, lead flashing and fascias were found to be tight-fitting with mortar at the roof verges intact. No suitable external potential roosting features were recorded. No internal access into the roof void for bats was observed and any gaps between timbers/brickwork were inspected with an endoscope and found to be cobwebbed (which indicates no recent use by bats).

Ponds and their surrounding terrestrial habitats have the potential to support amphibians such as great crested newts (GCN). GCN receive the same level of legal protection as bats (outlined above). The closest pond to the application site is located approx. 110m to the northwest. The proposed works will be confined to an area of existing hard standing (which is suboptimal habitat for GCN). Furthermore, although GCN can travel up to 500m from ponds, in a review of licence trapping data Creswell and Whitworth (2004) found that most GCN occur within 50m of ponds with few captures recorded at distances over 100m from ponds.

Paragraph 016 of the Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance states that the local authority should only request a survey if they consider there is a reasonable likelihood of a protected species being present and affected by development. In light of the above there is considered to be a low risk of GCN being impacted by the proposals, especially if precautionary Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) are followed during works. I would therefore not consider it reasonable to request a GCN survey as part of the current application.

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

The risk of great crested newts being impacted by the proposed works is considered to be low. It is recommended that reasonable avoidance measures (RAMS) are implemented during works to further minimise the risk of impacting amphibians and also to prevent terrestrial habitats on site from becoming more suitable for amphibians during construction works (such as through the creation of rubble/spoil piles).

- Works shall be confined to existing areas of hard standing.
- All materials should be stored on raised palettes or in skips
- Any excavations left open overnight should be covered, or an escape route provided (e.g. a scaffold board used as a ramp) to prevent GCN becoming trapped.
- If at any time during works GCN are discovered on site, works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist be contacted for advice.

This should be secured by condition as part of any planning consent granted.

Ecological conditions can change over time. In the event that works have not commenced within two years of the 2020 survey then update survey work will be required. This can be secured via condition.

Biodiversity enhancements are expected as part of developments in line with local (paragraph 3.345 of the LDF) and national planning policy (NPPF). A suitable measure would be the inclusion of a bat and/or bird box on the new property. Woodcrete/woodstone boxes are preferred as these have greater longevity than timber boxes. Integrated boxes are available which can be faced to match the building exterior (see for example Habibat and Schwegler boxes). This can be secured by condition.

Any proposed lighting should be sensitively designed so as to minimise impacts on wildlife associated with light disturbance (following principles outlined in Bat Conservation Trust guidance).

Highway Engineer - The proposal for a replacement dwelling raises no concerns in principle. I do however have some concern with the standard of the existing access that would be utilised which suffers from poor pedestrian visibility on its westerly side by virtue of a high wall and hedgerow along the boundary. The hedgerow also overhangs the footway and inhibits the free passage of pedestrians.

As part of this redevelopment proposal pedestrian visibility splays should be protected on either side of the access, requiring a revision to the existing wall design and thinning or removal of the hedgerow on the westerly side. This should ideally be incorporated on a revision to the drawings although could be covered by conditional control.

Other conditions will be required to cover driveway drainage, construction and surfacing, cycle parking and a charge facility for an electric vehicle.

Woodford Neighbourhood Forum - The application does not refer to the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan 2019, or acknowledge that it is the most recent and local part of the development plan for the Woodford area and has substantial weight in terms of the balance of relevant planning factors in the determination of this application. We have assessed the proposal against policies in the WNP.

DEV 2: Replacement of Existing Dwellings - "Development comprising the replacement of a dwelling should not be materially larger than the dwelling that it replaces and must have regard to local character and residential amenity."

The Green Belt Statement states "The proposal represents an increase in volume of approx. 33%. The increase takes into account the volume of the existing detached garage to be demolished." If the total final volume is materially larger than the existing volume, then the proposal does not comply with this policy.

ENV3: Protecting Woodford's Natural Features - "The protection and/or enhancement of Woodford's natural features, including those identified in the Table below, will be supported."

An area of mature native woodland (10W2) at the rear of the curtilage, which supports wildlife, should be protected from any ingress or damage during the demolition and construction process.

Flood risk - Given the problems with drainage generally in Woodford, any new development proposal should consider flood risk and drainage, as outlined in the information provided by the Environment Agency provided for the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan.

In terms of compliance with the NPPF 2019 we noted that relevant national policies include the following:

Paragraph 145 "A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:
d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces"

The Green Belt Statement states "The proposal represents an increase in volume of approx 33%. The increase takes into account the volume of the existing detached garage to be demolished." If the total final volume is materially larger than the existing volume, then the proposal does not comply with this policy.

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

The proposal should be assessed for any harm on the openness that would be caused by the increased volume of the dwelling and decreased space between it and the neighbouring dwelling to the north east.

In terms of compliance with saved policies of the Stockport UDP 2006

GBA1.5. "Proposals relating to existing residential uses in the Green Belt may be permitted in the following cases: rebuilding or replacement of an existing habitable

dwelling where the new dwelling is of similar size and would not be more intrusive in the landscape than the one demolished;”

The proposal is larger than the one it replaces and closer to the dwelling to the north east Therefore, an assessment should be made as to whether it is more intrusive in the landscape than the one to be demolished.

Having regard to the Design of Residential Development SPD paras 8.8 to 8.10, the potential for a cramming or terracing effect needs to be assessed.

In summary, we believe that the proposal does not comply with policies in WNP, Stockport UDP and the NPPF as outlined above. Whether the harm outweighs the benefits needs to be assessed.

ANALYSIS

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

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

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

- the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance (including the Green Belt) provides a clear reason for refusing the proposed development or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

This assessment is set out below.

Housing Delivery

Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that a wide range of homes are provided to meet the needs of existing and future Stockport households. The focus will be on providing housing through the effective and efficient use of land within accessible urban areas.

Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy directs new residential development towards the more accessible parts of the Borough identifying 3 spatial priority areas (Central Housing Area; Neighbourhood Priority Areas and the catchment areas of

District/Large Local Centres; and other accessible locations). Policy H-2 confirms that when there is less than a 5 year deliverable supply of housing (as is currently the case) the required accessibility scores will be lowered to allow the deliverable supply to be topped up by other sites in accessible locations. This position has been regularly assessed to ensure that the score reflects the ability to 'top up' supply to a 5 year position. However, the scale of shortfall is such that in order to genuinely reflect the current position in that regard the score has been reduced to zero. The reduction of this score to zero means that for the purposes of housing delivery, all sites within the Borough will be considered as being accessible.

Having regard to this policy position, the application site is within an accessible location for the purpose of housing delivery and the proposal accords with policies CS2, CS4 and H-2 of the Core Strategy.

Green Belt

Saved UDP Review policy GBA1.2 confirms that within the Green Belt there is a presumption against the construction of new buildings unless it is for one of several purposes including agriculture and forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings and limited infilling or redevelopment of Major Existing Developed Sites.

Saved UDP Review policy GBA1.5 confirms that within the Green Belt proposals relating to existing residential development will be restricted to the rebuilding or replacement of an existing habitable dwelling where the new building is of a similar size and would not be more intrusive in the landscape than the one demolished.

The supporting text to GBA1.5 advises that the rebuilding of an existing habitable dwelling as an alternative to refurbishment may be acceptable where the existing structure is not of architectural or historic interest and where the resulting dwelling is not significantly larger or more intrusive than that previously existing. As a general guideline the volume of the proposed dwelling should not exceed the volume of the original dwelling by more than one third and the form of the dwelling should not be significantly altered. The cumulative effect of any extensions to the original dwelling will be taken into account in assessing the acceptability of a proposal.

The NPPF and WNP offer the most up to date policy position in relation to development in the Green Belt and as such, greater weight is afforded to the relevant policies in these Plans.

Para 145 of the NPPF confirms that *"a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this include amongst others, the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces"*

Policy DEV2 of the WNP confirms that *"development comprising the replacement of a dwelling should not be materially larger than the dwelling it replaces and must have regard to the local character and residential amenity."*

There is no definition or advice in the NPPF or WNP as to what *"materially larger"* comprises. In the absence of such a definition, the position set out in the UDP Review is considered to form the basis of the determination of this application in respect to the impact on the Green Belt. This is an approach that has been

adopted in many planning applications and appeals relating to similar development.

It is important to note the difference between the position as set out in the UDP Review and that in the NPPF/WNP. For a replacement dwelling to be appropriate in the Green Belt and UDP Review compliant, the new dwelling must not be materially larger than the original dwelling. The NPPF/WNP however confirm that for a replacement building to be appropriate in the Green Belt and policy compliant, the new building must not be materially larger than that it replaces.

As such, if the original building has been extended (as has the application property) then unlike the UDP Review, the NPPF/WNP allow a replacement building to be larger than the extended building (provided it is not materially larger). In determining the size of a building, regard is paid to the volume.

In applying that policy position Members are advised accordingly:

GBA1.5 – the existing dwelling is not of architectural or historic interest. That existing on site has been extended beyond its original form through planning permission DC025206. The volume of the extensions (including the detached garage) approved by DC025206 equate to 33% that of the original dwelling. The replacement dwelling proposed by this application would increase the volume of the existing dwelling by circa 27% taking the increase beyond that of the original dwelling to circa 48%. Noting that the supporting text to GBA1.5 confirms that the volume of the proposed dwelling should not exceed the volume of the original dwelling by more than one third, it must be concluded that having regard to GBA1.2, the replacement dwelling would be materially larger than the original dwelling.

As is explored in the report below, it is not considered that the proposed dwelling will be intrusive in the landscape than that existing and whilst the form (as viewed from the front elevation) will be changed beyond that existing, it is not considered harmful to the character or amenities of the locality. Notwithstanding that, as the proposed dwelling is materially larger than the original dwelling, the proposal fails to comply with saved policy GBA1.5.

DEV2/Para 145 NPPF – the volume of the existing dwelling (including that of the detached garage which is to be demolished along with the main house) is circa 942m³ and that proposed is circa 1295m³. The proposed dwelling therefore represents around a 27% increase beyond that existing and as such is not considered materially larger than that which it replaces. On the basis that the proposed building will be in the same residential use as that it replaces and will respect local character and amenity (as set out in the report below), the proposal is considered compliant with policy DEV2 of the WNP Plan and para 145 of the NPPF and therefore is appropriate in the Green Belt.

Members are advised that the NPPF and WNP form the most up to date policy position and as such carry greater weight in the consideration of Green Belt matters than the UDP Review. It is against the NPPF and WNP that the proposal should therefore be considered. Given the conflict with saved policy GBA1.5, however, if Members are minded to agree the recommendation then the application must be referred to the Planning & Highways Committee for determination.

Landscape Character Area/General Character of the Area

Saved UDP Review policy LCR1.1 confirms that development in the countryside will be strictly controlled, and will not be permitted unless it protects or enhances the quality and character of the rural areas. Development should improve the appearance of the countryside, notably by removing unsightly existing development. Where it is acceptable in principle, development should be sensitively sited, designed and constructed of materials appropriate to the landscape character area in which it is located; and be accommodated without adverse effect on the landscape quality of the particular character area.

Core Strategy policy H1 confirms that development should be of a high quality, respond to the character of the area within which they are located and provide for good standards of amenity. This position is reflected in policy CS8 of the CS DPD which confirms that the landscape and character of the borough's countryside will be preserved and enhanced, taking into account the distinctive attributes of local areas based on a landscape character assessment.

Policy SIE1 of the CS DPD confirms that development that is designed and landscaped to the highest contemporary standard, paying high regard to the built and/or natural environment within which it is sited, will be given positive consideration. Specific account should be had to the site's characteristics including landform and landscape as well as the site's context in relation to surrounding buildings and spaces.

Policy DEV4 of the WNP confirms that new development in the area should achieve a high standard of design, respect and respond to the rural character of the area.

The application site falls within the Woodford Landscape Character Area as defined by the UDP Proposals Map. The character appraisal in the UDP confirms that the roads through the area are characterised by varying degrees of ribbon development making up the settlement of Woodford. Infill development has occurred over the years and it is likely that only a few opportunities for such development remain. The northern part of the area has been affected by the construction of the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road and will be further affected by the construction of the Poynton Bypass.

The character of Chester Road in the vicinity of the application site is that of detached houses set behind deep front gardens which are generally maturely landscaped. Houses are typically fairly closely sited, 2 storeys high, of varying age and design; there is however a bungalow to the east of the site. Roofs are typically hipped however there are a few examples of pitched roofs with gable ends to either side elevation. Projecting gables to the front elevation are common place. Materials are a mix of red brick and/or white render, timber detailing and red, brown or grey roof tiles.

The application property as existing is unusual in its design, compared to other houses in the locality, in that to the front elevation the entire first floor accommodation is positioned within the hipped roofspace and is served by 2 small dormer windows. To the rear however the property comprises 2 full floors of accommodation with a hipped roof over. It is noted that the houses immediately to the west and east, Bramwood House and Atwood House, have part of the first floor accommodation to the front elevation within the roofspace as do the next two houses beyond to the east. These 4 houses however also have full 2 storey accommodation to their front elevations with a roof over as do most others in this ribbon of development.

Submitted with the application is an existing and proposed streetscene. This shows that the proposed dwelling would be no closer to Bramwood House to the west than that existing, however, to the east, the proposed house would be positioned 1.6m closer to Atwood House (being 2m from the side elevation of this neighbouring house). The siting of the proposed dwelling relative to Atwood House is not considered to be out of keeping with the pattern of development in the locality noting that the 5 dwellings to the east of Atwood House are sited in a similar close proximity to each other as are others to the west of the site.

The proposed ridge height would be the same as that existing albeit with a longer ridgeline. This ridge would also be the same as those to either side. Whilst the first floor eaves line would be slightly raised above those to either side, this is marginal and it is not considered that it would be overly apparent in the streetscene noting the set back of the houses and the screening afforded by the mature landscaping in adjacent front gardens.

The main front elevation of the proposed dwelling either side of the central projecting bay will be positioned 0.8m behind the existing front elevation. The central projecting bay will however be positioned further forward 0.4m beyond that existing. Taken from the main front elevation (rather than from the small flat roofed bay windows at ground floor level) the proposed house will be positioned 2.6m forward of Bramwood House to the west and 1.4m forward of Atwood House to the east. Unlike the existing dwelling however that proposed will comprise 2 full floors of accommodation with projecting gables to the roof and therefore will be more prominent than that existing. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the small projection forward which in any event is a distance of 27m from the front site boundary, will not result a form of development that is visually obtrusive in the streetscene.

In terms of the design approach, that proposed with a hipped roof and projecting gables to the front elevation together with the choice of materials, is not considered out of keeping with the varied pattern of development in the locality. Subject therefore to a condition to secure the submission and approval of specific materials, it is considered that the proposed development will be in compliance with saved policy LCR1.1, Core Strategy policies H1, CS8 and SIE1 and policy DEV4 of the WNP.

In response to objections about a terracing effect being created, Members are advised that the Council's SPD suggests that to avoid such an impact, development should be sited 1m off the boundary with a neighbouring property so as to maintain a gap between dwellings. That proposed will be 1.4m off the boundary with Bramwood House to the west (5m to the facing side elevation and no closer than existing) and 1.4m off the boundary with Atwood House to the east (2.4m to the facing side elevation). The proposal therefore complies with this guidance and will not result in a terracing effect.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Policy SIE1 of the CS DPD confirms that specific account should be had to the provision, maintenance and enhancement (where suitable) of satisfactory levels of access, privacy and amenity for future, existing and neighbouring users and residents. Core Strategy policy H1 confirms that development should provide for good standards of amenity.

Guidance contained within the Council's SPD Design of Residential Development is also relevant to the consideration of this application.

To the west of the site is Bramwood House. The driveway of this house lies between the house and boundary with the application site such that the house is positioned 3.7m off the boundary with the application site. A small 1.2m deep single storey extension is positioned on the rear elevation adjacent to the application site. To the rear of this neighbouring house is a small detached garage at the end of the drive and positioned on the boundary with the application site. The side elevation of Bramwood House contains a small secondary kitchen window at ground (served also by larger patio doors and windows to the rear elevation with rooflights over) and at toilet window at first floor level.

The proposed house would be positioned no closer to the boundary with Bramwood House than that existing (1.4m to the boundary and 5m to the side elevation of Bramwood House). The eaves to the side elevation would also be a similar height to that existing however to the rear the ridge of the hipped roof would be 1m higher than existing and would extend further to the rear than existing at first floor level.

Adjacent to Bramwood House the proposed house would extend no further than that existing at ground floor level but would be 3.4m deeper at first floor level. The main body of the proposed house would be positioned 0.5m behind the ground floor rear elevation of Bramwood House and would project 0.8m beyond the adjacent first floor rear elevation. The centrally positioned flat roofed projection would extend 1.4m beyond the ground floor rear elevation of Bramwood House however this would be positioned 5m from the boundary. Being no closer to the boundary than that existing and 5m from the rear corner of Bramwood House, it is not considered that an unacceptable impact on the amenities of this neighbouring occupier will arise when viewed from the adjacent drive or garden (which is further away). Whilst there will be 1 new rear facing first floor window adjacent to the boundary with Bramwood House, this will not give rise to an unacceptable level of overlooking noting the mutual overlooking of rear garden areas in this locality.

The presence of side facing windows to Bramwood House is noted however these are small, secondary (in the case of the ground floor kitchen window) and to a non habitable room (the first floor toilet window). Whilst the proposed house will be higher to the ridgeline at the rear and will project further than that existing, the new dwelling will be no closer to these side facing windows than that existing. Having regard to these factors it is not considered that there will be an unacceptable impact on the rooms with an outlook to the side of Bramwood House.

To the east of the site is Atwood House which is positioned 1m off the boundary with the application site. The side elevation of Atwood House contains a door and small window at ground floor level to the utility room and WC together with a small window above at first floor level to an ensuite bathroom. Whilst the proposed house would be closer to these windows than that existing (by 1.6m) and will be higher to the ridgeline at the rear, it is not considered that its siting 2.4m from this side elevation would have an unacceptable impact on the non habitable rooms of this neighbouring house.

Adjacent to Atwood House the main body of the proposed house would extend 1.2m beyond the main rear elevation of Atwood House at ground and first floor level. The centrally positioned flat roofed projection would extend 3.2m beyond the rear elevation of Bramwood House however this would be positioned 5m

from the boundary. The resulting house would also be 1.6m closer to the side elevation of Atwood House than that existing (2.4m distant). In the rear elevation of Atwood House at ground and first floor levels are habitable room windows. The projection of the proposed dwelling would not intersect a 45 degree angle taken from these windows thus indicating that in conjunction with the demolition of the garage (which is on the boundary with Atwood House and is positioned beyond the rear elevation of this house) an unacceptable impact on the visual amenities afforded from these rooms would not arise.

In conclusion, the proposed house at ground floor level will project no further to the rear than that existing. Whilst it will project 3m to 3.4m deep than existing at first floor level, will be higher to ridge at the rear and will be closer to Atwood House, it is not considered that the small projection beyond the first floor rear elevations of the neighbouring houses will result in an unacceptable impact on the occupiers of these properties. The dwelling will be of a similar eaves and ridge height as both neighbouring properties and the use of a hipped roof to the side and rear will reduce the impact of the small rearward projection beyond the first floor rear elevation of Bramwood House and ground and first floor rear elevation of Atwood House.

On this basis the proposal is considered compliant with policies H1 and SIE1 of the CS DPD.

Parking and Highways

Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy DPD requires development to be sited in locations accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. The Council will support development that reduces the need to travel by car. This position is followed through in policy T1. Policy T2 requires parking in accordance with the maximum standards and policy T3 confirms that development which will have an adverse impact on highway safety and/or the capacity of the highway network will only be permitted if mitigation measures are proposed to address such impacts. Developments shall be of a safe and practical design.

In response to this policy position Members are advised that as with the existing dwelling, that proposed is considered to be in an accessible location. The application proposes no change to the existing access and parking arrangements. As such the driveway and forecourt, providing parking for 2 cars in accordance with the Council's maximum standards will remain as existing.

The comments of the Highway Engineer in relation to the standard of the existing access (in terms of poor pedestrian visibility) are noted however given that the proposed development (replacing a 4 bed house with a 5 bed house) will not result in a material increase in the use of the access, there is no basis on which such amendments can be requested. Furthermore as the application does not propose to alter the driveway or forecourt in any way, conditions cannot be imposed to secure details of its drainage, construction and surfacing as this will remain as existing. Given the demolition of the garage (which could currently provide for cycle parking and the charging of electric vehicles) a condition can be imposed to secure replacement cycle parking and a charge facility for an electric vehicle.

On this basis the proposal accords with policies CS9, T1, T2 and T3 of the CS DPD.

Other Matters

Policies L1.1, L1.2 and SIE2 seek to ensure that applications for residential development contribute towards children's play and formal recreation noting that there is a shortfall of such facilities within the Borough. Given however that the application proposes the replacement of a 4 bed house with a 5 bed house, in accordance with the guidance set out in the accompanying SPD, there is no requirement for any contribution to be made towards children's play or formal recreation.

Policy SD3 requires development to demonstrate how it will assist in reducing carbon emissions through its construction and occupation through the submission and approval of an energy statement. Given the small scale of the proposed development, the application is not required to include an energy statement at this stage. In this respect a condition can be imposed in the event that planning permission is approved.

The application site is not identified on the UDP Proposals Map as being in an area liable to flood and the Environment Agency identify the site as being within Flood Zone 1. Having regard to the size of the site and scale of the proposed development there is no requirement for the application to be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment. Notwithstanding this, policy SD6 requires all development to be designed in such a way as to avoid, mitigate or reduce the impacts of climate change. In this respect development is required to incorporate sustainable drainage systems so as to manage run off water from the site. Given the small scale of the proposed development, compliance with this policy is not required to be demonstrated at this stage, however, in the event that planning permission is approved a condition would require the submission and approval of a SUDS compliant drainage scheme for the site. On this basis the proposed development is considered compliant with policy SD6 of the Core Strategy.

Policies NE1.2 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance of the UDP Review and SIE-3 Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment of the Core Strategy along with policy ENV4 of the WNP and para's 170 and 175 of the NPPF seek to ensure that proposed development does not adversely affect protected species and secures enhancements for biodiversity.

Submitted with the application is a protected species survey which has been considered by the Council's ecologist. This report concludes that the buildings to be demolished offer negligible bat roosting potential. Notwithstanding that an informative can be imposed in the event that permission is approved making the applicant aware of the (low) potential for roosting bats to be present. The grant of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the legislation in place to protect biodiversity. If at any time during works, evidence of roosting bats (or any other protected species such as nesting birds or GCN) is discovered on site, works must cease and a suitably experienced ecologist contacted for advice.

The risk of great crested newts being impacted by the proposed works is considered to be low. A condition can however be imposed such that reasonable avoidance measures (RAMS) are implemented during works to further minimise the risk of impacting amphibians and also to prevent terrestrial habitats on site from becoming more suitable for amphibians during construction works (such as through the creation of rubble/spoil piles). If at any time during works GCN are discovered on site, works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist be contacted for advice.

A condition can also be imposed to ensure a repeat survey in the event that works have not commenced within two years of the 2020 survey. Biodiversity enhancements such as the inclusion of a bat and/or bird box on the new property can be secured by condition.

The comments of the neighbour in relation to the bat survey are noted however the Council's ecologist is satisfied that the survey is of sufficient quality and integrity. Preliminary surveys can be carried out at any time of the year; it is only emergence surveys or hibernation surveys that are restricted to certain months.

On this basis and as advised by the Council's ecologist, the proposal is compliant with policy NE1.2 of the UDP Review, SIE-3 of the Core Strategy, ENV4 of the WNP and para's 170 and 175 of the NPPF.

In response to objections made and not addressed above:

- The application proposes no changes to the means of enclosure around the site. Objections regarding the dilapidated condition of that existing to one boundary is noted however the replacement of the existing dwelling with a new dwelling would not justify seeking control of the means by which the site is enclosed. This is essentially a private matter between neighbours and one over which the Council cannot intervene. That aside, it should be noted that planning permission would not be required to replace a means of enclosure between 2 gardens provided that it does not exceed 2m in height.

- It is accepted that building works can cause noise and disruption however they are an essential element of modern life. Noting the small scale of the development such works are unlikely to be lengthy nor cause unacceptable levels of disruption. Access from Wilmslow Road is unfettered and parking/deliveries could take place within the site. If parking occurs on land within the ownership of the neighbours or restricts access to their property then this is a private matter and one in which the Council cannot intervene. Members are advised that hours of operation in relation to construction works are controlled in any event under Environmental Health legislation.

Conclusion

The delivery of residential development on this site accords with policies CS2, CS4 and H-2 of the Core Strategy.

Notwithstanding the conflict with saved policy GBA1.5 of the UDP Review, the proposed development accords with WNP policy DEV2 and para 145 of the NPPF. The WNP and NPPF form the most up to date policy position on development in the Green Belt and it is against these that the application should be assessed. Given the compliance with DEV2 and para 145, the proposed development is considered appropriate in the Green Belt and therefore will cause no harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Given the conflict with GBA1.5 the application must however be referred to the Planning & Highways Committee in the event that Members agree the recommendation to grant planning permission.

The proposed development will cause no harm to the Landscape Character Area or general character of the area and thus complies with saved policy LCR1.1 of the UDP Review together with policies CS8 and SIE1 of the CS DPD and DEV4 of the WNP.

The development is considered to be of a size, siting and design that will be in keeping with the character of the locality and will not harm the amenities of the existing neighbouring occupiers. The proposal is therefore compliant with policies

H1, CS8, SIE1 and SIE3 of the Core Strategy DPD together with advice contained within Chapter 12 of the NPPF.

Subject to the imposition of conditions the proposed development will cause no harm to ecology. In this respect the proposal is compliant with saved UDP Review policy NE1.2 together with policy SIE3 of the CS DPD and advice contained in the NPPF.

Matters relating to drainage and sustainable design can be secured by condition thus ensuring compliance with CS policies SD3 and SD6.

Having regard to the tilted balance in favour of the residential development of this site as set out at para 11 of the NPPF, Members are advised that there would be no adverse impacts arising from the grant of planning permission that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole. As such in accordance with para 11 of the NPPF it is recommended that the application should be approved subject to the conditions referenced in this report together with others considered reasonable and necessary.

RECOMMENDATION GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS