

## ITEM

<b>Application Reference</b>	<b>DC/081772</b>
<b>Location:</b>	CP1A, Stockport Exchange Car Park Railway Road Stockport SK1 3SW
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Reserved matters approval (access, layout, scale, appearance, and landscaping) for the erection of a multi storey car park pursuant to hybrid application reference DC/063213.
<b>Type Of Application:</b>	Reserved Matters
<b>Registration Date:</b>	08.07.2021
<b>Expiry Date:</b>	07.10.2021
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Jeni Regan
<b>Applicant:</b>	Muse Developments Ltd
<b>Agent:</b>	Savills

## DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Under the Council's adopted Scheme of Delegation, this application is required to be determined by the Council's Planning & Highways Regulations Committee by virtue of the floorspace associated with the proposal.

This application is presented to seek the views of the Central Area Committee in order that these can be brought to the attention of the Planning & Highways Regulations Committee.

## DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

This reserved matters application relates to Phase 4 of the Stockport Exchange Master Plan site, for the erection of a 399 space multi storey car park, together with associated landscaping works. The proposed multi storey car park will include 357 Regular Vehicle spaces; 18 Accessible spaces; 22 EV charging spaces; 2 Accessible EV charging spaces and 60 Bicycle spaces.

The application seeks approval for the appearance, landscaping, layout, scale and access relating to the development, full details of which are set out in the plans accompanying this report.

This reserved matters application is submitted pursuant to the latest hybrid (part full, part outline) permission (DC063213), which approved the re-development of the former Grand Central complex.

The development of the entire Master Plan site is intended to be delivered on a phased basis with phases 1, 2 and 3 already having been delivered through the construction of a multi storey car park and the completed hotel and office buildings.

The proposal remains a key component of the Council's Town Centre regeneration strategy linking Stockport Rail Station with the remainder of the Town Centre and is anticipated to secure significant direct investment to the local economy

The outline permission granted first under DC/054978 and subsequently amended under DC/063213 established the principle of a mixed use re-development of the remainder of the Master Plan site, including the current Phase 4.

Planning permission has already been granted for the quantum of parking for existing and future phases by virtue to the earlier permissions on this site. In terms of parking for future phases (4-8) of the Master Plan site, including this part of Phase 4 that forms the current application, this has already been accepted in the form of a decked car park of up to 400 spaces to be provided on the application site.

In total the overall Master Plan site (phases 2-8) when re-developed will be served by up to 1400 spaces, with circa 1000 spaces already provided by the initial larger multi storey car park already completed on site under Phase 1 works..

The parameters plans submitted as part of previous approvals sets out the maximum height that was proposed and considered acceptable for various phases. The height of the multi storey car park within Phase 4 is controlled by condition. The current proposal provides four/five levels of parking (plus plant) and measures 85m AOD, which falls with the previously approved parameters.

Proposed façade materials include aluminium finishes in a range of textures and profiles which will be natural anodised or polyester powder coated and glazed screens. The principle lift and stair core stands out from all other proposed finishes, in that it is to be clad with a living green wall.

Phase 4 of Stockport Exchange which includes both the current multi storey car park proposal and the mixed use office development forming part of planning application DC/081773 (which is also on this agenda before Members), will be funded through a variety of sources, including the recently announced £4.2m Getting Building Fund grant. The development therefore provides a unique opportunity to build on the success of Stockport Exchange development already carried out and further bolster the local economy.

The current application is accompanied by a number of supporting documents which are listed below:-

- Landscape Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Transport Statement and Travel Plan
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Ground Conditions Report
- Air Quality Assessment
- Energy Statement
- Climate Change Assessment
- Sustainability Checklist
- Utilities Statement
- Ecological Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Statement
- Lighting Statement
- Crime Impact Statement

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) SCREENING**

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations specify that for multi-stage consents, EIA screening is only required where the development is likely to have significant environmental effects which were not anticipated when the initial planning permission was granted.

Planning Practice Guidance ([PPG]) also states that the likely significant effects of a project on the environment should be identified and assessed at the time of the procedure relating to the principal decision.

The environmental impacts associated with the development were assessed as part of the previous hybrid planning application(s). A series of Parameter Plans formed the basis of the assessment that was undertaken. Appropriate conditions were attached to the hybrid consent(s) controlling the implementation of the development in accordance with the approved plans and subject to floorspace and building height limits.

Having reviewed each of the environmental aspects that was previously assessed in respect of the original hybrid planning application, it is considered that there has been no material change in circumstances since the grant of planning permission which would necessitate a fresh assessment being undertaken or a reappraisal of one or more of the environmental impacts. On this basis, it is concluded that the current proposal would not warrant the undertaking of an EIA.

## **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The application site sits in the middle zone of the Stockport Exchange Master Plan development, which in its entirety covers approximately 4.5 hectares. The site is currently in use as a surface car park known as CP1A. The car park is accessed off Railway Road and provides circa 122 spaces.

The site is bounded to the north by Railway Road and to the east by Millennium House car park, to the west by NCP Stockport Exchange Station Car Park. To the rear of the site is an established planted embankment which provides a buffer along the majority of the southern site boundary, with residential properties positioned beyond at a higher level along Thomson Street

## **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.

The site lies within the Stockport Town Centre Mixed Use Area as defined on the Proposals Map of the adopted Local Development Framework (UDP Proposals Map DPD). The wider Master Plan site falls within both TCG3.2 'Cultural Leisure and Heritage Quarter' and TCG3.3 'Stockport Station'.

Listed buildings including the Grade II\* Town Hall and Grade II Millennium House exist further afield to the east, either side of Wellington Road, within the adjacent Town Hall Conservation Area.

The following policies of the adopted Local Development Framework are relevant to the consideration of this proposal:-

### **Saved Policies of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review**

TCG1 - TOWN CENTRE/M60 GATEWAY

TCG1.2 - TOWN CENTRE/M60 GATEWAY TRANSPORT HUB

TCG1.3 - PARKING IN THE TOWN CENTRE

TCG1.4 - SUSTAINABLE ACCESS IN THE TOWN CENTRE

TCG1.5 - IMPACT ON THE M60 MOTORWAY

TCG3.2 - CULTURAL, LEISURE AND HERITAGE QUARTER

TCG3.3 - STOCKPORT STATION

HC1.3 - SPECIAL CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

EP1.7 - DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK

E1.2 - LOCATION OF NEW BUSINESS PREMISES AND OFFICES

### **Stockport Core Strategy DPD**

CS1 - OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

SD1- CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

SD3 - DELIVERING THE ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES PLANS - NEW DEVELOPMENT

SD6 - ADAPTING TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

CS5 - ACCESS TO SERVICES

CS6 - SAFEGUARDING AND STRENGTHENING THE SERVICE CENTRE HIERARCHY

AS-1 - THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF STOCKPORTS SERVICE CENTRES

AS-3 - MAIN TOWN CENTRE USES, HOT FOOD TAKEAWAYS AND PRISON DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE EXISTING CENTRES

AS-4 - VISITOR ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

CS7 - ACCOMMODATING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AED1 - EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN CENTRE AND M60 GATEWAY

AED-5 - EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING PROVISION

AED-6 - EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE PROTECTED EMPLOYMENT AREAS

CS8 SAFEGUARDING AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

SIE-1 QUALITY PLACES

SIE-3 PROTECTING, SAFEGUARDING AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT  
CS9 TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT  
CS10 AN EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT NETWORK  
T-1 TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT  
T-2 PARKING AND DEVELOPMENT  
T-3 SAFETY AND CAPACITY ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK  
CS11 - STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE  
TC1 - STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

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

Local Employment and Training Benefits SPD

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD

Sustainable Transport SPD

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The revised NPPF, issued by DCLG on the 19th February 2019 has been subsequently revised on 20th July 2021 and sets out the Government's planning policies and how they are expected to be applied.

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.126 The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable 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. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

Para.134 Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to: a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

Para 194. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Para 195. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Para 197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Para 199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Para 200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should

require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of: a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Para 201. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Para 202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Para 203. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets. Applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Para 204. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

Para 205. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

Para 206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

## **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.

### **Stockport Climate Action Now (Stockport CAN)**

The Council declared a climate emergency in March 2019 and agreed the ambition to become carbon neutral by 2038.

As well as large-scale improvements in health and wellbeing around the world, bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities.

Subsequently, in December 2020 the Council adopted the Stockport CAN Climate Change Strategy, it sets out the initial actions that Stockport Council will take to make a difference on climate change over the next five years as it begins the journey to net-zero 2038. This document is read alongside current planning policies and is being used to inform work in developing a new local plan

## **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

The site and its immediate surroundings have an extensive planning history, the following are particularly pertinent to the current proposal:-

J44233 - Outline planning permission granted in 1989 for leisure development (restaurant, shops, cinema, bowling alley, nightclub and amusement arcade)

J46841 - Approval of reserved matters granted December 1989 for construction of road infrastructure (access) drainage, construction of car park and station parking area.

J74168 - Approval of reserved matters (Phase 1) to include cinema, bowling alley, nightclub, health club, theme bar public house/restaurant 11 shops, parking and ancillary works. Granted December 1989.

J47508 - Modification to outline permission J44233 for leisure complex to cover 1st and 2nd floor offices, restaurant, shop and revised car park.

DC003932 - Erection of station concourse building, new platform and internal works to existing underbridge. Prior Approval granted September 2001.

DC018144 - Outline planning permission granted in April 2005 for car park improvements, a security fence & pay station shelter.

DC020081 - Planning permission granted August 2005 for security fence to the perimeter including access gates plus security hut and pay station shelter.

DC024698 - Screening opinion submitted for redevelopment of existing leisure and retail development. Decision- not EIA development November 2006.

DC026012 - Temporary 3 year planning permission granted in July 2007 for formation of displaced car parking on land off King Street West.

DC027049 - Variation of condition 7 of consent DC020081 to allow for retention of security hut for further two years. Granted August 2007.

DC028156 – Re-modelling of existing tenpin bowling alley, provision of replacement food & drink premises (use classes A3-A5) and additional offices above (use classes B1 and/or D1) including partial demolition and rebuilding of premises. Granted 17/01/08.

DC025432 - Full planning permission granted for demolition of existing buildings and erection of three storey cafe/shops at ground floor with office space above and associated car parking at 80 - 82 Wellington Road South to east of site. Granted 15/03/07.

DC027303 Outline planning permission for mixed use redevelopment of Grand Central Complex for Hotel, Residential, Food and Drink, Ancillary Retail, Offices, Non Residential Institutions & Multi Storey Car Park and associated highway works together with re-modelling of the Bowling Alley, Cinema and Swimming Pool. This application was considered by Planning and Highways Committee in February 2008 where it was resolved that planning permission should be granted subject to a Section 106 agreement. The agreement was not completed and the application was deemed not proceeded with.

DC048549 Construction of a multi storey car park. Granted 14/12/11

DC048552 Consent for the Demolition of former Heaven and Hell Nightclub, Tenpin Bowling Alley and Brannigans to form temporary Car Park. Granted 14/12/11.

DC049892 Minor material amendment to DC048552 to allow revised parking layout. Granted 22/08/12.

DC050228 Minor material amendment to DC048549 to allow a reduced footprint and increased height of the multi storey car park, together with revised surface car park and access arrangements. Granted 16/10/12.

DC/054978 - Hybrid application seeking:

(1) full planning permission for the construction of an office building (Use Class B1) with ground floor commercial units (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 or B1), a hotel (Use Class C1), landscaping, areas of public realm and associated engineering and infrastructure works;

(2) outline planning permission, with all matters reserved, for the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of office development (Use Class B1) with ground floor commercial units (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 or B1), a decked car park, landscaping, areas of public realm and associated engineering and infrastructure works. Application Granted 17/07/14

DC/058003 - Variation of conditions 1 & 12 of planning permission DC054978 to allow for revised location of office building, reconfiguration of southern loop, amendments to parking layout, public realm and service roads and associated highway works (Minor Material Amendment). Granted 22/05/15.

DC/063213 - Variation of condition 2 of DC058003 to allow for amendments to the approved hotel, office building and public realm works (Minor Material Amendment). Granted 13/12/16.

DC/067841 - Demolition of existing cinema (Prior Notification). Prior Approval Approved 09/03/18.

DC/068127 - Reserved matters application seeking approval for access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping, for the erection of a six storey office building (Use Class B1) including ground floor commercial uses (Use Class B1, A1, A2, A3,

A4 and A5) and associated landscaping and works, following the grant of outline permission under DC/063213. Approved 09/03/18.

DC/069604 - Development of a temporary surface car park with access off Railway Road. Approved 08/08/18.

DC/070421 - Variation of Conditions 1 and 17 of the Reserved Matters Permission DC/068127, to allow a, change in the materiality of the roof mounted plant screen from photovoltaic panels to anthracite grey louvres and to vary the landscaping around the building. Approved 17/10/19

DC/080334 – Non Material Amendment to DC/063213 to allow for the approved parameter plan to refer to a 5 storey car park + plant, whilst maintaining an overall approved height of 86m AOD. Approved 28/05/21.

DC/081773 - Reserved matters approval (access, layout, scale, appearance, and landscaping) for the erection of a 6 storey office building (Class E), including retail and commercial uses at ground level (Class E and Sui Generis Drinking Establishments and Hot Food Takeaways), associated landscaping and works, pursuant to hybrid application reference DC/063213. Currently un-determined.

### **NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS**

A total of 38 surrounding properties have been directly notified of the application by letter. In addition the application has been advertised via site notices (6) and a press notice as a Major Development, affecting the setting of a Listed Building and a Conservation Area. The consultation period expired on 25/08/21. At the time of report preparation a single response has been received objecting to the proposal on the following summarised grounds:-

- 1) Families live on Thomson Street & this car park will be directly back onto rear gardens;
- 2) The proposal would be quite intrusive as the higher levels will overlook back gardens & back bedrooms;
- 3) The proposal could be fairly noisy, mainly because the alarm in the car park next to where this is proposed to be, goes off at least once a week for a few hours;
- 4) The car park would block out light coming through to rear facing windows and back gardens;
- 5) The work necessary to carry out the construction would be very noisy and not ideal for children;
- 6) The car park would devalue house prices.

### **CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

Highway Engineer – The application seeks reserved matters approval for the construction of a multi storey car park pursuant to hybrid application reference DC/063213. This is being considered alongside the reserved matters application for commercial development within Stockport Exchange and forms part of Phase 4 of the wider Stockport Exchange development.

The original permission and the approved parameter plan includes a cap of 400 parking bays within the car park and I understand that parking would be exclusively for Stockport Exchange tenants. The site is currently an undeveloped area of the wider Masterplan and serves as a surface car park.

The car park will have a total of 399 vehicles comprising 357 regular vehicle spaces, 18 accessible spaces: 18 spaces with electric vehicle charge points and 2 accessible spaces with electric vehicle charge points. In addition parking for up to 38 cycles will be provided at ground level accessible alongside the eastern elevation of the structure.

Vehicular access to the car park will be from Railway Road, designed to facilitate two way traffic movements and with no barrier control arrangement to be installed. The absence of barriers is critical to ensure uninhibited vehicular movement through the access and to avoid queuing occurring on Railway Road. To control access, an ANPR system will be installed so that only those vehicles with recognised number plates would be able to park within the site. Unauthorised drivers, which is those not entitled to park within the car park would not find access prohibited but they would then need to circulate through the car park and exit to avoid charges or penalty. To enhance car park security there would be a roller shutter arrangement which would secure the car park out of hours. The shutters would be fixed in an open position at peak times of car park usage which is anticipated to be 07:00 – 19:00, Monday – Friday. The shutter would be closed at all other times, although the shutter system would enable the doors to be opened to allow a registered vehicle into or from the car park out of hours. It is essential that the shutter system is subjected to conditional control and that no barrier controls or other inhibition to vehicle movement through the entrance is in place between the hours of 0700-1900. A suitably worded condition can be imposed on any approval granted.

The point of vehicular access is to be located relatively central to the building frontage and this informs the spacing achievable to the site entrances to either side. The minimum spacing of junctions should exceed the stopping sight distance for the 85th percentile speed of traffic on the corridor on which access is proposed so in order to review, give comfort and justify the design a review of vehicle speeds was undertaken. The survey of vehicle speeds travelling along the Railway Road corridor shows the 85th percentile speed to be 26mph. This informs that that the minimum acceptable spacing between entrances relative to the actual stopping sight distance is 35m and the submission affords in excess of this spacing. I therefore see no reason to express concern about the relationship of the proposed site entrance in relation to those on either side. The car park entrance would have adequate visibility to and for emerging drivers with sightlines measuring 2.4m by 43m clearly achievable across highway land on the building frontage.

The Council has proposals as part of the Mayor's Challenge Fund Walking and Cycling improvements for an improved pedestrian and cycle route between Edgeley and the Town Centre. This scheme includes a shared use pedestrian cycle route across the frontage to this car park alongside improved facilities for pedestrians and junction capacity. The proposed multi storey car park access has been designed in consideration of this scheme and would not prejudice the delivery of the scheme at a later date. It will however be expected that the car park entrance design is the form of a dropped crossing that would retain a priority of movement for pedestrians and cyclists across the access. This is a matter for detailed design and can be determined under conditional control.

A separate pedestrian entrance is proposed on the northerly elevation to the car park with lifts and stairs to each deck of parking. A cycle store is proposed at the rear of the MSCP to be accessible with level access on the eastern building elevation. I have no concerns in either respect.

Within the car park building the layout ensure suitably sized parking bays and aisle widths and swept path drawings have shown that a large car can take a safe and commodious circulatory route through the car park and utilise the parking bays.

The provision of 18 accessible parking spaces, a further 2 accessible spaces with electric vehicle charge points and 22 general spaces with electric vehicle charge points. This is an acceptable level of provision for a car park of this scale.

In conclusion I have no concerns with this proposal and I am satisfied that the necessary highway mitigation works will be covered by either future phases within Stockport Exchange or potentially as part of a Council MCF project.

Environment Team (Air) – Environmental Health have looked at the air quality assessments submitted with the application and are happy with the methodology and conclusions. Therefore, there are no objections.

Arboriculture Officer - The only concern I have is the same as highlighted during the original application. This is the lack of frontage landscaping, which can easily accommodate highway tree pits along the road frontage within the red edge. If this can be considered and included, I would have no further arboriculture concerns.

Environment Team (Contaminated Land) – Environmental Health have reviewed the Curtins Phase 1 Report dated 29-6-21. The report states that a Phase 2 site investigation should be undertaken for soil and gas. As such, there are no objections to the proposed development. However, it is recommended that the following conditions be applied:- CTM1, CTM2, CTM3, LFG1 & LFG3.

Conservation Officer – The application seeks reserved matters approval for access, layout, scale, appearance, and landscaping, for the construction of a multi storey car park (MSCP).

The application site is located within the setting of a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets, most particularly the Town Hall Conservation Area, the GII listed Millenium House (former Stockport Infirmary) the locally listed former nurses home at Arden House, the locally listed Stockport Rail Station, and the Grade II\* listed Stockport Town Hall.

In respect of the principle of development, I am aware that the impact of the re-development of the Stockport Exchange Master Plan site on heritage assets was previously considered as part of earlier hybrid application approvals was deemed accepted in principle – subject to details to be resolved through the reserved matters application process.

With specific regard to the proposed decked car park, Hybrid Application DC054978 granted outline permission for the MSCP, with all matters reserved. The Committee Report accompanying this application states in reference to the MSCP that ‘the indicative scale and siting largely seek to reflect that previously resolved for approval under DC027303’. Application DC027303 allowed for a MSCP of 4/5 storeys measuring 12 -15m tall. Under DC054978 and subsequent S73 and NMA applications, the maximum height perimeters for the MSCP was increased to allow

for a maximum height of 18m, and this maximum height has remained as such throughout the subsequent S73 and NMA applications.

The Committee Report accompanying DC054978 made clear that whilst the maximum parameters of the built envelope of the development was considered as part of the outline element of this application, scope remains to consider detailed design solutions as part of any subsequent reserved matters applications and that 'further detailed assessment will be required as to the potential impact on the character of the surrounding area and adjacent listed buildings as part of any reserved matters application'. The report also indicated that, as with the 2008 application, the MSCP would vary in height across the site in order to address setting and residential amenity issues. In this respect it is notable that the plans associated with DC027303 illustrated the MSCP as being of lower height on its north-east side (close to Millenium House and on the boundary of the Town Hall Conservation Area), and at the rear of the building towards Thomson Street, rising to its maximum height in a south westerly direction, towards the existing multi-storey NCP carpark. It is therefore disappointed that whilst the rear of the MSCP is shown at a lower height at the rear of the site towards Thomson Street, it does not appear that consideration has been given to the relative impacts of the height, scale and mass of the building on the setting of Millenium House and the Town Hall Conservation Area. Rather, the current application shows the carpark of a consistent height across the full 65m Railway Road frontage at its maximum approved number of 5 storeys, with justification for this height relying on compliance with the maximum allowable heights under the outline permission. The MSCP would be sited immediately next to the 2 storey carpark to GII listed Millenium House and the boundary of the Town Hall Conservation Area. It is my view that the proposed height of the building across the whole frontage of the site and its resultant dominating scale and mass in such close proximity to heritage assets, would have a harmful impact on their setting. Regrettably, the submitted plans do not show the streetscene relationship between Millenium House and the proposed MSCP, although it is clear it would be significantly taller than the 2-storey carpark and it would appear that it would also exceed the height of Millenium House. It is my view that the proposed height scale and mass of the MSCP should be reconsidered, with a lower height at the north-east end of the site, as per the previous approval which showed a maximum 3 level height at this end of the building.

Turning to the proposed materiality of the MSCP, in analysis of the prevailing palette of materials in the locality and the existing built environment / heritage assets on the north-east, south and south-west of the site, it is evident that red brick is the predominant material of external construction, particularly to heritage assets. The rear of the GII listed Millenium House and its carpark, the locally listed Arden House (which is visible on elevated ground at Thomson Street), and the locally listed Stockport Railway Station are all constructed of red brick. The existing NCP multi-storey carpark is also notably clad in mesh, of a colour and finish specifically chosen to harmonise with the prevailing red brick materials of the locality. As such, I consider that the proposed cladding, which is silver coloured, would be at odds with and would not complement the existing palette of materials in the locality, nor would it provide a sensitive or appropriate setting or backdrop for the numerous heritage assets in the area. The currently proposed materials of external construction are therefore not supported and should be reconsidered. The proposed use of living wall elevations is consistent with the 2008 and 2016 applications and is supported, however it is disappointing that the currently proposed scheme proposes the use of a significantly reduced area of living wall, confining its use to very limited areas of the external envelope. As such, it is my view that the materials of external construction should be reconsidered in the context of the above comments. Materials that

complement and harmonise with the red brick elevations of nearby heritage assets should be identified, and opportunities to increase the amount of living wall should be considered.

Lead Local Flood Authority (Drainage) – We note that the submitted strategy currently only has attenuation to a public sewer and does not incorporate any source control SuDS. While the strategy states that we have been consulted previously and it was proposed that the site discharges under a brownfield run off calculation with a 50% betterment. Only 2 infiltration tests have been provided, with conflicting results. There is therefore an argument for more testing to be carried out so that feasibility can be properly assessed (with the locations of the tests to be submitted also). Even if infiltration is ruled out, options as far up the drainage hierarchy as possible should be assessed for feasibility and only ruled out with good reason.

Updated consultee response awaited to additional details provided.

Nature Development Officer –

*Nature Conservation Designations*

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

*Legally Protected Species*

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey has been carried out and submitted with the application (TEP, Ecological Assessment, 2021). The survey was carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist in April 2021. Habitats on site were mapped and the potential for protected species to be present and impacted by the proposals was assessed. The site is dominated by hard standing, with areas of grassland (modified neutral grassland and amenity), scattered trees and a species poor hedge. Many buildings and trees have the potential to support roosting bats. All species of bats and their roosts are protected under UK (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)) and European legislation (The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019). No potential bat roosting features were identified within the trees or single structure (referred to as B1) on site and they were assessed as offering negligible roosting potential. The site is considered to offer limited opportunities for foraging and commuting bats owing to its urban location and likely light-disturbance. The hedgerow and scattered trees offer suitable habitat for nesting birds. All breeding birds and their nests are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Some species receive additional protection through inclusion of Schedule 1 of the Act.

Suitable habitat for badger is offered by the area of grassland and scattered trees to the south. No evidence of badger activity was however recorded during the survey. Badgers and their setts are legally protected by the Badger Protection Act 1992. The site may support hedgehog (a UKBAP Priority Species and listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as a Species of Principle Importance). No evidence of, or significant potential for, any other protected species was recorded during the survey. Invasive Species No non-native invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended) were observed during the survey.

Recommendations: No evidence of roosting bats was observed and there is considered to be a low risk to roosting bats as a result of the proposals. Bats can sometimes roost in seemingly unlikely places however and so as a precautionary measure it is advised that an informative is attached to any planning consent granted 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 unlikely event that roosting bats (or any other protected species) are discovered on site during works, works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist be contacted for advice. The site has potential to support nesting birds. The following condition should therefore be attached to any planning consent: No tree/vegetation clearance works should take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of trees/vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before (no more than 48 hours before) vegetation clearance works commence and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. No evidence of badgers was recorded during the survey but badgers are a highly mobile species and can move into new areas relatively quickly. The recommendation in section 5.5 of the ecology assessment report (TEP, 2021), relating to an update badger survey prior to commencement of works should therefore be followed. The update badger survey should be carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist no more than three months in advance of works commencing. The results of the survey, along with details of any appropriate mitigation (should evidence of badger be recorded) should be submitted to the LPA for review. Sensitive working measures should be adopted during site clearance works in relation to hedgehog. These are outlined in section 5.8 of the ecology assessment report and include staged stinging and hand-searching. These measures should be secured by condition.

Biodiversity enhancements are expected as part of developments in line with local (paragraph 3.345 of the LDF) and national planning policy (NPPF). The landscape masterplan submitted with the application shows tree and hedgerow planting together with creation of wildflower areas – these measures are welcome. Details of the future long-term management of habitat areas to ensure maximum benefits for biodiversity would also be required. The application also refers to provision of a living green wall to the façade and entrance of the proposed multi-storey car park. This is very much encouraged and can be secured via condition. The ecology report also recommends that bat and bird boxes will be provided on retained trees as well as bug hotels. The proposed number, type and location of bat and bird boxes and bug hotels should be submitted to the LPA for review. The DEFRA Biodiversity Metric can be used to demonstrate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to be delivered as part of the proposed scheme. Although current local and national planning policy does not set a figure for BNG, the forthcoming Environment Bill will set this at a minimum of 10% and so this target would be encouraged. Where it is not possible to secure adequate BNG on site (this should be maximised where possible), off-site BNG will need to be explored. Ecological conditions can change over time. In the event that works have not commenced within two years of the 2021 survey (i.e. by April 2023) then update survey work will be required to ensure the ecological impact assessment remains valid. This can be secured via condition.

Planning Policy (Energy) - This type of development does not usually require the Stockport Sustainability Checklist to be submitted as that is more relevant for typical buildings that people will occupy for long periods of time. The submitted Checklist does showcase the sustainability of the proposed design and construction processes.

The score is Gold overall if all of the aspects committed to are delivered. For the record the CEEQUAL design standard [appropriate for developments of this type] is not proposed but this is NOT required by current policy. The submitted energy statement highlights that the roof level area is approximately 2000m<sup>2</sup> which could incorporate a Solar PV array. Each proposed PV array would be supported via secondary steel work. Total proposed PV area is approximately 600m<sup>2</sup>. The carbon

savings estimated from the use of a PV array could equate to approximately 25,000 kgCO<sub>2</sub> per annum. The estimate cost is £90,00 - £120,000 should SMBC decide to install a PV array at a later date as PV system will not be included in base build.

Passive infrastructure will be provided which will enable a PV array to be installed in the future. My only query would be if there is any difference in costs for retrofitting versus inclusion in the build of the car park?

The car park proposes 24 electric car parking spaces and the Climate Change Statement states the intent: 'To future proof the development and ensure the MSCP is fit for the current and future demands relating to car travel 24 (6%) EV charging points are being provided. This includes two to serve disabled spaces. The MSCP design will permit a future increase in the quantity of EV charging points.' Electric vehicles are critical in terms of offering opportunities for essential car users to choose and operate vehicles that reduce carbon and traffic emissions and the proposal addresses that the UK is moving to an electrified vehicle approach by 2030.

In addition there is the potential for income generation from vehicle charging that could offset the cost of renewable energy and future battery storage installation. There is evidence of the impact of traffic emissions on human health and electric vehicle charging is welcomed in air quality terms, but is one level in a hierarchy of sustainable transport choices where prioritising sustainable transport options of walking, cycling and public transport are vital to increasing activity and considerably reducing carbon emissions. 38 covered and secure cycle spaces are proposed to the rear of the proposed car park with secure access direct from Railway Road. These spaces supplement the further 38 spaces that are contained within the proposed Stockport Exchange Phase 4 new office building. There is also capacity for further cycle storage as the Stockport Exchange masterplan is developed further.

Regarding climate change adaptation the proposed enhancements to the existing site's ecology include tree and wildflower planting to the rear of car park as well as a living green wall system to the façade and entrance of the MSCP. The living green wall system will not only improve local biodiversity but also reduce the local urban heat island effect and slow the flow of extreme rainfall events through the built environment. It should be noted for information that the 1000 space adjacent NCP car park hosts 50 disabled spaces, 50 cycle parking spaces and 6 EV charging points. It should also be noted that the Planning Statement makes the case for economic growth needed to revive Stockport's employment sector post Pandemic.

Planning Policy – No objection..

Director of Public Health – Stockport Sustainability Checklist – this type of development does not usually require the Stockport Sustainability Checklist to be submitted as that is more relevant for typical buildings that people will occupy for long periods of time. The submitted Checklist does showcase the sustainability of the proposed design and construction processes. The score is Gold overall if all of the aspects committed to are delivered. Active Travel: the promotion of active travel and public transport is key to maintaining physical and mental health through fostering activity, social interaction and engagement, managing healthy weight, reducing emissions from vehicles and enabling social interaction. The Planning Statement for this car park application makes the case for the need for economic growth to revive Stockport's employment sector post Pandemic. The site's proximity to the rail station and other public transport choices could facilitate multi modal travel choices and potentially reduce the amount of longer car journeys, ensuring a reduction of

emissions and wider road congestion. The site also supports links to the wider pedestrian and cycling (Bee Network) networks. The planned cycle parking of 38 spaces is in addition to the 38 proposed as part of the office development and there is capacity for further expansion as required. This is welcome and could be useful in supporting the shift to active, low carbon travel options and enabling active travel choices that increase physical activity. Achieving healthy weight reduces risks of other lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, coronary heart disease and stroke. Reducing risks of such diseases also reduces pressures on current and future public sector health budgets (Stockport's JSNA). The proposed 24 electric vehicle parking spaces are important in light of the GM Zero Carbon target for 2038 and as the UK moves to an electrified vehicle approach by 2030. Indeed some of the 20 proposed disabled car parking could be electric vehicle. There is evidence of the impact of traffic emissions on human health and electric vehicle charging is welcomed in air quality terms, but is one level in a hierarchy of sustainable transport choices where prioritising sustainable transport options of walking, cycling and public transport are vital to increasing activity and considerably reducing carbon emissions. It is noted that the 1000 space adjacent NCP car park hosts 50 disabled spaces, 50 cycle parking spaces and 6 EV charging points.

Ageing Well: Stockport Council has adopted an Ageing Well Strategy which takes account of the World Health Organisation guidance on appropriate place making for older people. The WHO design considerations are critical to ensuring that the needs of the growing ageing population of Stockport are addressed where practicable through new development. In particular any seating being provided as a result of the development should be considered for some units being provided with back and arm rests in order to enable older and less mobile visitors to sit, rest and rise more easily thereby enabling them to make use of seating to help them navigate the site and the wider neighbourhood. Green Infrastructure (GI): the scheme is in an urbanised location and it should be noted that the proposed enhancements to the existing site's ecology include tree and wildflower planting to the rear of car park as well as a living green wall system to the façade and entrance of the MSCP. The living green wall system will not only improve local biodiversity but also reduce the local urban heat island effect and slow the flow of extreme rainfall events through the built environment. Appropriate delivery of green infrastructure is welcome in public health terms and will help to manage urban temperatures and extreme rainfall events in the area, reducing stress and thereby maintaining immunity. The consideration of native planting around the site will not only contribute to managing air quality but also enable biodiversity net gain in an area of the Borough that has a deficit of natural capital, further enhancing access for and to nature on the development. Enabling people to get next to nature is important in terms of lifting the human spirit, which also assists with reducing the health impacts of stress, including on people with long term physical and/or mental health conditions. The summertime comfort and well-being of the urban population has become increasingly compromised. The urban environment stores and traps heat. The majority of heat-related fatalities during the summer of 2003 were in urban areas and were predominantly more vulnerable members of society (Designing urban spaces and buildings to improve sustainability and quality of life in a warmer world). GI is a critical tool on new development for adapting to the climate crisis where extreme summer temperature events are likely to occur more frequently. Development Management Policy SD-6 Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change (Page 54).

Mental Health: developments of certain types (such as higher buildings or structures) trigger the need to assess the design for suicide prevention purposes. Stockport Council's Public Health Team can discuss appropriate assessment and government guidance is available that outlines potential options for minimising any risk of self

harm. Alongside the ethical imperatives to prevent suicide, it is of note that for each life lost to suicide, the estimated total cost to society is around £1.67 million. In terms of this specific application, the proposed car park could provide opportunities for self harm, although the proposed layout ensures the site is reasonably well overlooked which can deter such actions during busy periods and the design appears to take account of safety. It is critical that areas of concern must be accessible to emergency services attempting to access a vulnerable individual, including recovering them safely where required.

United Utilities - No comments received..

Manchester Airport – We have no objection to this development subject to the following Condition:

External lighting - Notwithstanding the provision of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking or reenacting that Order), all exterior lighting shall be capped at the horizontal with no upward light spill. Reason In the interests of flight safety and to prevent distraction and confusion to pilots using Manchester Airport in accordance with Policy SIE-5 "Aviation Facilities, Telecommunications and other Broadcast Infrastructure" of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD, EP 1.9 "Safeguarding of Aerodromes and Air Navigation Facilities" of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review and the Town & Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosive Storage Areas) Direction 2002.

Informative: The applicant's attention is drawn to the new procedures for crane and tall equipment notifications, please see: <https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Airspace/Eventand-obstacle-notification/Crane-notification/> 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.

Historic England – On the basis of the information available to date, we do not wish to offer any comments. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, as relevant. It is not necessary for us to be consulted on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals.

Environment Agency – We have no objection in principle to the proposed development, but we would wish to make the following comments. Environment Agency position - We do not have any comments to make at this time on the reserved matters application relating to (access, layout, scale, appearance, and landscaping) for the erection of a multi-storey car park pursuant to hybrid application reference DC/063213

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service – Having checked our records, GMAAS are satisfied that the proposed development does not threaten any known or suspected archaeological heritage. On this basis there is no reason to seek to impose any archaeological requirements upon the applicant

Network Rail – No comments received.

Transport for Greater Manchester – The following comments are offered as advice on transport issues for you to balance against other factors in determining the application and are made in the context of TfGM's role in the planning process, as set out in the footnote below. Background The application seeks Reserved Matters Approval relating to access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping for the erection of a multi-storey car park, located on Railway Road in Stockport, approved under Application DC/063213. Highways Overview This application relates to the Reserved Matters Approval for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. As such it is considered that the traffic and highway matters would have been agreed as part of the Outline Approval. Therefore, no comments are provided in this regard.

In terms of other comments, Officers within TfGM have reviewed the accompanying Transport Statement (TS) and have responded as follows: I. Proposed Internal Access Arrangements The site will be served by an access point onto Railway Road as shown in Drawing 075939-75001 with visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m in accordance with Manual for Streets (MfS) guidance for 30mph speeds. Section 278 General Arrangement Plan (Drawing Number 75000 Rev P02) denotes the provision of tactile paving and dropped kerbs at the proposed site access. Any redundant vehicle access points should be reinstated as continuous footway to adoptable standards. This should be ensured by way of planning condition. A series of Swept Path drawings have been provided to demonstrate a large car is able to circulate the different levels of the car park. The internal layout of the development should be designed to ensure a safe walkway for pedestrians on each level of the car park. TfGM would refer to the Local Highway Authority (LHA) to determine whether the proposed internal access arrangements are acceptable. II. Traffic Regulation Orders TfGM would suggest that a review is undertaken of the Traffic Regulation Orders in the vicinity of the development, with a view to introducing additional parking restrictions if necessary, as well as ensuring adequate parking restrictions remain in place, and are refreshed accordingly. In particular, to ensure double yellow lines cover the proposed site access point (if not already in place). III. Active Travel The TS states that (subject to grant funding) there are proposals being separately progressed for a segregated cycle lane on the southern side of Railway Road. The proposed MSCP access has been designed in consideration of this scheme, in order to not prejudice the delivery at a later date. IV. Cycle Parking The proposals include the provision of 38 cycle parking spaces within a cycle store, accessible from a cycleway/footpath adjacent to the eastern building façade. The cycle facilities should be made secure through the use of measures such as CCTV and appropriate lighting. V. Travel Plan It is noted that a Travel Plan has been submitted alongside the application. TfGM would refer to the Local Authority to determine whether the submitted Travel Plan is acceptable. VI. Other A robust Construction Traffic Management Plan should be employed as part of the development.

GMP Design for Security - Having looked at the plans, GMP would support the application subject to the layout issues within Section 3.3 being addressed and recommend that the physical security measures within Section 4 of the Crime Impact Statement are conditioned.

## **ANALYSIS**

In 2012 the Council and the developer (Muse) completed a development agreement paving the way for a partnership regeneration of this key town centre site, which is hoped will attract up to £145 million of inward investment into the local economy and potentially secure approximately 4465 jobs (full time equivalent).

A hybrid application which sought both outline and full planning permission for the re-development of the former Grand Central complex was granted in 2014 under DC/054978. Subsequently revised proposals were granted in 2015 and 2016, the most recent being under DC/063213.

The outline element of these hybrid permissions established that the land use of the current application site, for mixed use office and commercial premises was acceptable. Furthermore as part of the approval(s) a maximum quantum of development of 44,900 sq.m of office space and 2,600 sq.m of flexible commercial floorspace for the wider Master Plan site, was accepted and is controlled by appropriate conditions.

A parameters plan submitted as part of the previous approvals sets out the maximum height proposed for various phases within the Master Plan site. This matter is controlled by condition. In this particular location the previous approvals allows for a multi storey car park of 5 storeys, plus roof top plant, with a maximum AOD (Above Ordinance Datum) of 86m.

The proposal provides four/five levels of parking (plus plant) and measures 85m AOD, which falls with the previously approved parameters.

In considering the current reserved matters application it is acknowledged that the principle of the proposal has already been established via the previous hybrid permission(s). Furthermore it is accepted that the floorspace and maximum overall height associated with the current application would be in compliance with relevant conditions contained within previous permission(s).

The following matters require consideration as part of the assessment of this application:-

#### Appearance, Layout & Scale

As referenced earlier in this report the scale of the proposed development falls within the parameters set by previous permissions which limit the height of the Phase 4 multi storey car park.

In considering the proposal the potential impact of the scale of the development on views into/out of the Town Centre and on landmark buildings has been carefully balanced against the on-going substantial regenerative benefits of the proposals.

The design of the proposed building seeks inspiration from that of the existing Stockport Exchange NCP multi storey car park immediately to the south of the site, however it is intended to have an identity of its own, forming a positive addition to the streetscene.

Proposed façade materials include aluminium finishes in a range of textures and profiles which will be natural anodised or polyester powder coated and glazed screens. The materials palette chosen seeks to ensure that a degree of unity continues to flow throughout the overall Master Plan scheme. Members will note that as part of the wider design approach to sustainability the principle lift and stair core stands out from all other proposed finishes, in that it is to be clad with a living green wall.

Overall, Officers consider that the proposed building will deliver a development that has due regard to the high quality design ethos of the wider Stockport Exchange

Master Plan site. The appearance of the current proposal is not designed to be a pure copy of the adjacent NCP multi storey car park already completed. It will be a distinctive and clearly recognisable form of development, which will however continue to be complementary to its surroundings.

Policy SIE-1 states 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. In addition policy SIE-1 sets out that the provision, maintenance and enhancement (where suitable) of satisfactory levels of access, privacy and amenity for future, existing and neighbouring users and residents should be taken into account.

A scheme of public realm works is included as part of current application. This continues to build on the themes / materials already accepted and established as part of the Phase 2 and 3 developments already completed.

Works include a series of pedestrian walkways around the perimeter of the proposed multi storey car park. To the south east corner a larger space is created to provide a secure cycle storage area. These will comprise surface materials reflecting those used across the wider Stockport Exchange development. The public realm proposals are designed to ensure a fully accessible scheme.

Planting beds are proposed along the west elevation of the multi storey car park to provide a soft landscape buffer.

The embankment which forms the southern site boundary, beyond which lies residential properties on Thomson Street, already benefits from well-established tree planting. It is however proposed to add to this area with extra heavy standard trees predominantly being planted in the south eastern part of the embankment. This will assist in providing denser screen planting at a higher level.

In general the public realm works and landscaping are supported by the Council's Arboricultural Officer, subject to appropriate conditions.

A Crime Impact Statement has been submitted as part of the application and GMP Design for Security raise no objections, as such the proposal will seek to provide a safe and secure environment where crime and the fear of crime are minimised.

Overall the details provide for a form of development which accords with the provisions of policies SIE-1 and SIE-3.

In assessing the potential impact of the proposed development on the amenity of surrounding properties, particularly the nearest residential properties along Thomson Street, the Council's Environmental Health Officers have been consulted on the application in respect of matters relating to noise, air quality and lighting. In the absence of any objections these proposed impacts are considered to be acceptable, subject to appropriate conditions.

With regard to the potential impact on amenity resulting from the scale and layout of the proposal, it must be acknowledged that the parameters plans approved as part of the previous applications, set out the mass of buildings that was considered to be acceptable in terms of amongst other things safeguarding wider residential amenity. The current proposal complies with the height restrictions placed on the previous permissions.

The nearest residential dwellings to the site are located along Thomson Street to the south / south east. A steep planted embankment separates the proposed development from these properties, with Thomson Street set approximately 7m higher than the application site.

The proposed multi storey car park has been designed to have reduced / staggered massing when facing towards Thomson Street, stepping down to two storeys closest to the residential properties to the rear, with the taller element located further away (to the west of the site closest to the Stockport Exchange NCP). This results in the upper level of the MSCP being approximately 38m away from the closest properties, with the lower level approximately 22m away. This separation, helps to minimise any detrimental impacts on residential amenity from the proposed MSCP.

Given the above, allied to the changes in ground levels between the application site and properties along Thomson Street (approx. 7m higher) and when combined with the existing and additional tree planting proposed along the separating embankment, the current proposal is not considered to be detrimental to the amenity of nearby residential properties in terms of overshadowing, loss of privacy or over-dominance.

To conclude this application is considered to be acceptable in respect of Policy SIE-1 as well as the overarching aims of the Core Strategy DPD, which seek to ensure the design quality of new development which is appropriate for the context of a particular location, having particular regard to the safeguarding of amenity.

### Sustainability & Energy

Delivering sustainable development is the primary aim of NPPF. Sustainability and energy efficiency is also key theme of the adopted Core Strategy which seeks to ensure that new development is designed in way to reduce Co2 emissions and minimise climate change including incorporating Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). Core strategy policies SD-1, SD-3 and SD-6 all therefore apply and the development must be assessed against their requirements.

The application has been supported by a Sustainability Checklist and Energy Statement which considers the opportunities for the development to deliver the desired energy savings and Co2 reduction for the proposed scheme. In this respect the proposed development has been designed to target a gold sustainability rating.

In addition the application is accompanied by a specific Climate Change Assessment, which considers the proposal in respect of the Councils CAN strategy. Officers acknowledge that the proposal replaces an existing surface level car park and is designed to meet the needs of the wider Stockport Exchange Master Plan site, for which the quantum of development and associated parking provision have already been approved. Notwithstanding this, climate change adaptation measures are proposed in terms of tree and wildflower planting to the rear of car park, as well as a living green wall system to the façade and entrance of the MSCP. The living green wall system will not only improve local biodiversity but also reduce the local urban heat island effect and slow the flow of extreme rainfall events through the built environment.

The comments of the Council's Policy Officer (Energy) and Director of Health are contained within the Consultees section of this report. The responses are acknowledged and it is noted that they are supportive the approach taken towards the sustainable principles of the development and specific measures proposed.

Overall the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of relevant energy and climate change Core Strategy Policies and the Councils wider CAN strategy.

### Highways & Access

The Council's Highways Engineer has provided a detailed response on the application, which has been included within the Consultee section of this report and to which Councillors are directed.

The comments are supportive of the on-going regeneration of the wider Master Plan site, which has already been accepted as being in a highly accessible location, with the proposed end uses considered to be acceptable in a Town Centre location.

It is not proposed to reiterate these comments in full within this analysis, noting that overall levels of traffic generation, parking provision and any associated highway / transport improvements have already been accepted by the Council for the wider Master Plan site, as part of the previous permissions granted for the wider site and are therefore not required to be re-assessed. Furthermore level access is provided to all parts of the site and all areas of the MSCP in accordance with Part M of the building regulations.

Members will be aware that the site is in a highly accessible location, being at the focal point of a major transport hub with Stockport Rail station and a large number of high frequency bus routes existing in close proximity to the site. In this respect the site is acknowledged as offering excellent opportunity for travel to the site by various modes of travel.

Committee will be mindful of the significant, on-going, regenerative benefits of the proposal, together with the support offered by the Council's Highway Engineer in terms of highway and pedestrian layout and parking / servicing arrangements.

### Flood Risk & Drainage

The application site is identified on the Environment Agency's Flood Map as being within Flood Zone 1 which means there is a low probability of flooding. The NPPF, Core Strategy Policies SIE-3 and Saved UDP Review Policy EP1.7 deal with flood risk and seek to ensure that developments are not at risk of flooding and will not increase the risk of flooding. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Assessment were submitted with the previous hybrid approvals and have also been updated accordingly and included with the current application. No objections have been received in principle to the proposal from the Environment Agency. Whilst an updated response is awaited from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), they have similarly raised no initial objection to the principle of the latest proposal. On this basis there are no reasons to resist the proposal from a flood risk / drainage perspective and the proposal is considered to comply with all relevant planning policy.

### Heritage

The principle of the impact of the re-development of the wider Master Plan site on wider heritage assets, was previously considered and accepted as part of the earlier hybrid approvals.

In respect of archaeological interest Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) continue to support the current application.

Turning to other specific heritage matters affecting the current proposal, the site is most readily seen in the context of the adjacent Town Hall Conservation Area, together with surrounding listed buildings including the Grade II\* Town Hall and Grade II Millennium House. In this respect and having regard to the previous hybrid approvals, no objections have been received from Historic England.

Members will be aware of the comments made by the Council's Conservation Officer which are set out in detail earlier in the consultees section of this report. In this respect it is important to acknowledge the context of the current proposal, in that parameters relating to the built envelope of the multi storey car park in terms of its setting, footprint and overall height have already been established by previous hybrid approvals.

Notwithstanding the above, it is considered that the site's existing relationship with the Town Hall and Millennium House is relatively poor. Millennium House has been significantly altered to provide a modern extension accommodating a multi-storey car park to its rear. This modern extension to Millennium House also hides the majority of the Town Hall from the application site. Given the separation to and juxtaposition with the proposed multi storey car park, a balance needs to be struck when assessing the impact of the development on the special character of the Conservation Area and the listed buildings within the vicinity of the site.

In considering the application Officers are aware that the height and massing across the masterplan area were adjusted during the design development and visual impact assessment process associated with previous hybrid permissions.

In assessing the proposal the potential impact of the development on heritage assets, including landmark buildings, this needs to be carefully be balanced against the on-going substantial regenerative benefits of the proposal previously set out in this report and the potential to continue to significantly enhance a key gateway site. Subsequently the proposed development is considered to comply with Policies SIE - 1, SIE-3 and HC1.3, and the NPPF.

### Contaminated Land

Policy SIE-3 also seeks to protect development from matters relating to contaminated land. The submitted Contaminated Land Report supports the application to assess the risk of potential contamination at the site and impact on the proposed development. The Council's Environmental Health (Contaminated Land) officers have been consulted on this application and raised no objection subject to appropriate conditions. On this basis the proposal is considered to comply with Policy SIE-3.

### Ecological Interests

As per the previous approvals, the current application has been accompanied by an Ecological Assessment. In this respect the Council's Nature Development Officer has considered the application and supports the principles of the proposal.

Having regard to the above and in the absence of any objections from the Council's Nature Development Officer, it is recommended that the proposal be approved, subject to appropriate conditions.

## Noise & Air Quality

A Noise Impact Assessment and Ventilation / Utilities Statements have been submitted in support of the current application.

In terms of noise the main considerations are in providing an acceptable level of attenuation within the building, as well as assessing associated impacts from plant equipment and end users.

With regard to air quality, this was previously considered and found to be acceptable as part of the previous consents for the wider Master Plan site.

In respect of both noise and air quality, the Council's Environmental Health officers has been consulted on the application. No objections have been received to the proposal in this respect.

On this basis the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of Core Strategy policy SIE-3 which seeks to protect, safeguard and enhance the environment in respect of range of matters including air quality and noise.

### **SUMMARY**

In conclusion, the scheme as proposed would continue to build on the significant regenerative benefits that have recently taken place at this prominent gateway site. The re-development of the wider Master Plan site has been a key regeneration objective of the Councils for many years and this latest proposal would be the next step in enabling the further delivery of a high quality mixed use development.

The proposal will continue to assist in offering significant potential for attracting inward investment and job creation into this part of Stockport, helping it to capitalise on its potential within the sub-regional economy.

Whilst issues have been identified within this planning report, it is felt that these are after careful consideration, on balance, outweighed by the substantial regenerative benefits of the re-development of this site and that the proposal reflects the key principles of the NPPF in helping to deliver sustainable development that will assist in the delivery of economic recovery.

Members are therefore advised to recommend that the Planning & Highways Regulations Committee grant planning permission for the development proposed.

Grant.

### **CENTRAL STOCKPORT AREA COMMITTEE COMMENTS (16/09/21)**

The Planning Officer introduced the report.

Mr McBride (applicant) spoke in support of the proposal highlighting that it formed an essential part of the wider Stockport Exchange development and noted that outline planning permission had already been granted. It was clarified that the proposed car park would not be for wider public use and is intended to serve existing and future tenants of Stockport Exchange.

The proposed car park comprises a variety of sustainable measures including the provision of 24 EV charging points and future proofing for the installation of solar pv

and further EV charging, together with cycle provision and biodiversity improvements.

The applicant referenced the second Stockport Exchange application on the committee agenda for the Phase 4 office development. The specifics of the proposed development and associated public realm works were summarised. It was noted that the proposal would provide further local employment / training opportunities for both Stockport Exchange and the Town Centre. It was highlighted that the building has been designed to accord with the outline permission and would have a BREEAM rating of excellent.

Cllr Wynne spoke in connection with the application, noting that a proposal for a cycle link adjacent to and within part of the site may come forward in the future and that the security of this should be considered.

Cllr Sorton noted that outline permission has already been granted prior to any potential cycle link being considered.

Cllr Crawford referenced the spacing between the existing NCP car park and the proposal, but noted that any future cycle link would need to be considered in its own right at a later date.

Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to PHR that the application be granted.