

Application Reference	DC/080271
Location:	White House Farm Torkington Road Hazel Grove Stockport SK7 6NP
PROPOSAL:	Conversion of an existing barn to form 1 no. dwellinghouse, with associated demolition, extension, external alterations, access, parking and curtilage.
Type Of Application:	Full Application
Registration Date:	19/03/2021
Expiry Date:	15/05/2021
Case Officer:	Mark Burgess
Applicant:	Mr J Williamson
Agent:	

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Marple Area Committee. Application referred to Committee due to receipt of 4 letters in support of the application, contrary to the Officer recommendation to refuse.

Should Marple Area Committee resolve to recommend the application for grant, the application shall be referred to the Planning and Highway Regulation Committee for determination as a Departure from the Development Plan.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the conversion of an existing barn at White House Farm, Torkington Road, Hazel Grove to form 1 no. residential dwellinghouse, with associated demolition, extension, alterations, access, parking and curtilage.

The proposed conversion would comprise the Western part of the Northernmost barn at the site, to the West of White House Farm. An existing extension to the Northern elevation of the barn would be demolished and replaced with a new single storey extension to the Northern elevation. Internally, the proposed conversion would accommodate a lounge, office/play room, foyer, W.C, utility and kitchen/dining/day room at ground floor level and four bedrooms (one with en-suite) and a bathroom at first floor level. External alterations to the existing building are proposed to accommodate the proposed residential use. The Eastern portion of the building would be retained as storage.

Vehicular access to the proposed development would be provided by way of a relocated access, approximately 13.0 metres to the East of the existing access to the site, with a new section of driveway formed. Hardstanding for parking, turning and servicing would be provided to the South of the building. An area of garden/curtilage would be provided to the North of the building.

The application is accompanied by the following supporting documents :-

- Planning Statement.
- Heritage Statement.
- Structural Condition Survey.
- Transport Technical Note.
- Building Protected Species Survey Statement Report.
- Phase 2 Bat Survey Statement Report.

The scheme has been amended since its original submission in order to address comments raised by the Council Conservation Officer.

Details of the design and siting of the proposed development are appended to the report.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The 0.13 hectare application site is located on the Northern side of Torkington Road in Hazel Grove and accommodates two detached barns with associated hardstanding and landscaping. Access to the site is taken from Torkington Road to the South.

Directly to the East of the site is 'White House Farm' a two storey residential dwelling which has the benefit of planning permission for the conversion of 2 no. apartments (Reference : DC071700) and shares the same access drive with the application site. To the North and West of the site and on the opposite side of Torkington Road to the South is characterised by open fields, countryside and woodland.

POLICY BACKGROUND

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

The Statutory Development Plan for Stockport comprises :-

- Policies set out in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review (saved UDP) adopted on the 31st May 2006 which have been saved by direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; and
- Policies set out in the Stockport Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Core Strategy DPD) adopted on the 1^{7th} March 2011.

The site is allocated within the Green Belt and a Landscape Character Area (Hazel Grove-High Lane), as defined on the UDP Proposals Map. The site is also located within the boundaries of the High Lane Village Neighbourhood Development Plan Area. The following policies are therefore relevant in consideration of the proposal :-

Saved UDP policies

- LCR1.1 : LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS
- LCR1.1A : THE URBAN FRINGE INCLUDING THE RIVER VALLEYS
- NE1.2 : SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE
- EP1.7 : DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK
- GBA1.1 : EXTENT OF GREEN BELT

- GBA1.2 : CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT
- GBA1.5 : RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN GREEN BELT
- L1.1 : LAND FOR ACTIVE RECREATION
- L1.2 : CHILDRENS PLAY
- TD2.2 : QUIET LANES
- MW1.5 : CONTROL OF WASTE FROM DEVELOPMENT

Core Strategy DPD policies

- CS1 : OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES : SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGES
- SD-1 : CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
- SD-3 : DELIVERING THE ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES PLAN : NEW DEVELOPMENT
- SD-6 : ADAPTING TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE
- CS2 : HOUSING PROVISION
- CS3 : MIX OF HOUSING
- CS4 : DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING
- H-1 : DESIGN OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- H-2 : HOUSING PHASING
- H-3 : AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- CS8 : SAFEGUARDING AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT
- SIE-1 : QUALITY PLACES
- SIE-2 : PROVISION OF RECREATION AND AMENITY OPEN SPACE IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS
- SIE-3 : PROTECTING, SAFEGUARDING AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT
- CS9 : TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT
- CS10 : AN EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT NETWORK
- T-1 : TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT
- T-2 : PARKING IN DEVELOPMENTS
- T-3 : SAFETY AND CAPACITY ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK

High Lane Village Neighbourhood Development Plan (HLVNDP)

In anticipation of the administrative adoption statement, following an Independent Examiners Report in May 2021 and a referendum vote in favour in September 2021, Members are advised that full weight to the relevant policies of the HLVNDP should be afforded in the determination of planning applications. Relevant policies of the HLVNDP include :-

- T1 : MITIGATING LOCAL TRAFFIC IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVING AIR QUALITY
- T2 : LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL
- H1 : HOUSING SCALE AND MIX
- R1 : PROTECTING AND ENHANCING PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS
- NH1 : PROTECTING LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IN THE HIGH LANE AREA
- NH3 : PROTECTING AND ENHANCING LOCAL WILDLIFE
- HD1 : PROTECTING BUILT HERITAGE ASSETS AND THEIR SETTINGS
- HD2 : HIGH QUALITY DESIGN AND DESIGN CODES

Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents

Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents (SPG's and SPD's) do not form part of the Statutory Development Plan. Nevertheless, they do provide non-statutory Council approved guidance that is a material consideration when determining planning applications. Relevant SPG's and SPD's include :-

- DESIGN OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SPD
- OPEN SPACE PROVISION AND COMMUTED PAYMENTS SPD
- PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPG
- SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SPD
- SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SPD

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF, initially published in March 2012 and subsequently revised and published in July 2021 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

In respect of decision-taking, the revised NPPF constitutes a 'material consideration'.

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

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

Paragraph 7 states *'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'*.

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

- a) An economic objective*
- b) A social objective*
- c) An environmental objective'*

Paragraph 11 states *'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'.

Paragraph 12 states '*.....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'.*

Paragraph 38 states '*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'.*

Paragraph 47 states '*Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing'.*

Paragraph 219 states '*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)'.*

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

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

- DC076623 : Demolition of existing barn and erection of 1 no. dwellinghouse with associated works and landscaping : Withdrawn – 02/03/2021.
- DC075288 : Erection of four dwellings and other associated works : Refused – 15/02/2020 : Appeal Dismissed – 26/08/2020.
- DC073719 : The erection of 4 detached dwellings with associated landscaping, access and other associated works : Withdrawn – 19/09/2019.
- DC071700 : The erection of a two storey rear extension, plus the subdivision of the building known as White House Farm, from a single dwelling to 2no. units of residential accommodation and other associated works : Granted – 07/02/2019.
- J17182 : Residential development : Refused – 09/10/1979.

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

The owners/occupiers of surrounding properties were notified in writing of the application and the application was advertised by way of display of notices on site and in the press.

Letter of support have been received to the proposal from 4 properties, which assert the following :-

- The proposed scheme presents a whole host of benefits and approval is a no-brainer.
- The adaptation of the older building for a new house should be a priority for the Council to consider as it would only be of benefit for the surrounding area and local residents.
- It is the perfect opportunity to save a historic building with the owners getting older and the current use of the building now inadequate. The use for storage is not viable anymore so to convert the building and retain it is welcomed.
- The change of use would be the best thing for this historic building and, with its current unviable use, it would be sad to see the building go when there is a simple, improved way to keep it, save it and improve the current layout and safety.
- The existing barn was once an attractive and historic building and it would be lovely to see it get the TLC it deserves and make it into a beautiful home.
- It would save an historic building and turn it into a beautiful home for families for years to come.
- The newly designed house will incorporate a wonderful blending of old and new and will visually be a lot more appealing than the run down barn that sits on the site now.
- The building already needs a lot of attention and, if not done soon, we will lose the historic building which will be a huge shame.
- The proposal looks great and within the multiple changes to the current unsafe access, this would be a benefit to the residents currently there and also the many walkers, cyclists and horse riders who use the road on a daily basis with a clear, visible, new access and improvements.
- The proposal would be of massive benefit to the people who currently use Torkington Road to walk down, as the new access point will be clearly visible to walkers whilst the current one is not at all.
- The new access complies with current design standards and, as such, will be hugely beneficial to all who currently use the roads to walk down.
- The current dangerous access would be improved and meet national safety standards which it currently fails.
- The proposed changes to the access will make a positive difference to road safety.

- The new design will hugely improve safety for walkers and dogs. Whilst walkers with children and dogs have used the road for years with no issues, the new access point will make this corner safer to use.
- The new access would enable vehicles to drive in and out in a forward motion instead of delivery drivers and bin drivers reversing onto Torkington Road.
- The road is recognised as a quiet zone and walkers have always felt safe using the road to go on rural walks and enjoy the surroundings.
- Following the failed new mega development on Green Belt land nearby, it is understood that the Council were to focus on brownfield sites to meet future housing need. Surely the re-use of an existing building is in harmony with this ideal. Considering the entrained energy in the building already, we should be duty bound to reuse all buildings and structures in this way as a priority where we can.
- Support is offered to the scheme on the proviso that the opportunity will be taken to update the nineteenth century drainage for the whole site to a modern solution within the curtilage of the farm.
- The application should be approved on the basis of the above matters and that it fundamentally accords with the NPPF and the relevant planning policies of the Council.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Conservation Officer

This site is identified within the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record and should therefore be dealt with as a non-designated heritage asset for local and national planning policy purposes. The HER record is as follows :-

MGM8697 Whitehouse Farm, Farmhouse & Outbuilding

The farmhouse, late C18/early C19, is 2 storeys with a slate roof and gable chimney. Front elevation: modern French windows. 2 storey gabled extension with lean-to at rear. House flanked by brick built barn with stone slate roof running full length of rear. 2nd building: 2 storeys, brick built, slate roof. East elevation: 2 stable doors, 2 ground floor windows, taking-in door on 1st floor. South gable: 1 1st floor window. West elevation: 2 1st floor windows. North gable: 1st floor door with wooden stairway to it. 1840 tithe award[c] owner: Thomas Bradshaw- Isherwood, occupant: John Jackson. 2nd building is referred to as a cottage, which present building is not. Other buildings referred to as Tan Yard(1). There are buildings in this approximate location on the Burdett's Cheshire map(a) of c1770 and Swire & Hutchings 1830 map(b)(2).

The principle of conversion of the western half of the barn to residential use, including proposed amendments to the vehicular access and site layout, is supported because it will assist the long term preservation of the heritage asset. There is no objection to the proposed removal of the rear extension – this is of later construction and does not form an important element of the historic fabric of the barn or its significance. A structural report has been prepared by a conservation accredited structural engineer and this concludes that the building is in a stable and

adequate condition for conversion, whilst acknowledging that fabric repairs are required.

Through the course of the application the architectural drawings have been updated and amended in light of the structural engineer's recommendations as well as conservation advice and it has been confirmed that the natural slate roof and timber roof trusses will be retained. The submitted scheme now ensures that the key elements of the barn's historic character and interest will be safeguarded with the historic fabric repaired using matching traditional materials. On this basis the proposed conversion to residential use is supported on conservation grounds.

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

The application is supported by a brief Heritage Statement (Unknown author, March 2021), the majority of which is a re-submission of a document submitted in support of a previous application for this site (DC/075288). The evolution of the farmstead outbuildings (including the barn) is based on historic mapping, information from relevant directories and the description of the site as represented on the GM Historic Environment Record. Whilst the report alludes to considerable modern changes and alterations to the outbuildings over time, it does not describe the historic building fabric, architectural detailing or evidence for changes/phasing. It is clear from the many photos submitted in the report that there are many elements surviving from the original late 18th/early 19th century form. Some of these elements are further described within the Heritage Structural Survey (Morton Partnership, February 2021) submitted in support of the application, but again the detail is lacking to provide a clear phasing of the structure to enable understanding of its construction origins and development.

As mentioned in consultation comments provided by GMAAS for a previous application (DC/075288) at this site (Norman Redhead, 18/12/2019), the barn can be considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

Should Stockport LPA be minded to grant consent for the present application then GMAAS recommend that a historic building survey is undertaken to record the structure before any demolition or further alteration works.

The historic building survey should be at Historic England Level 2/3 and include measured floor plans and phased plans, detailed photographs of elevations, rooms, and features of architectural/archaeological interest, a detailed written description of the historic fabric, history, and comparative analysis, and an assessment of significance of the building and its components. A report on the results will be produced and the work will be undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist in historic building surveys. GMAAS, The University of Salford. Peel Building 0161 295 6917 www.salford.ac.uk email: b.j.dyson@salford.ac.uk

The building recording will provide a point-in-time record of the structural layout of the building and will inform the necessity for a watching brief during any soft-strip or demolition works that may expose concealed historic fabric within or on the exterior of the building.

GMAAS recommend that the archaeological works are secured by a condition, worded as follows :

No demolition or development works shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of

archaeological works. The works are to be undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The WSI shall cover the following:

1. Informed by the updated North West Regional Research Framework, a phased programme and methodology of investigation and recording to include:

i – historic building survey to Historic England Level 2/3, informed by more detailed historic research

ii – informed by the above, an archaeological watching brief during any soft-strip or demolition works which have potential to reveal concealed historic fabric that can further enhance the record.

2. A programme for post investigation assessment to include:

- analysis of the site investigation records and finds
- production of a final report on the significance of the heritage interest represented.

3. Deposition of the final report with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.

4. Dissemination of the results commensurate with their significance.

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

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

Reason: In accordance with NPPF Section 16, Paragraph 199 - 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.

The work should be undertaken by a suitably experienced and qualified archaeological contractor, funded by the applicant, and in accordance with guidance provided by GMAAS who would also monitor the implementation of the works on behalf of Stockport MBC.

Highway Engineer

This application, seeking permission for the conversion of an existing barn adjacent to White House Farm, Torkington Road, Hazel Grove, to a 4-bed dwelling, is similar to a scheme submitted last year (application DC/076623), which proposed the demolition of the barn and the erection of a 4-bed detached dwelling in its place. That application, however, was withdrawn as the applicant was not able to address the issues previously raised in respect to accessibility and pedestrian access to the site. That application followed on from an application for a larger development (the erection of 4 detached dwellings) which was refused. That decision was appealed against but the appeal was dismissed.

When application DC/076623 was originally reviewed, it was concluded that the applicant had failed to demonstrate that the development would be able to be accessed and serviced in a safe and practical manner and that the development would be suitably and safely accessible by foot or other sustainable modes of transport. As

such, it was concluded that, based on the original submission, the application should be refused.

The scheme was subsequently revised, with the site access relocated approx. 13m to the east of its current location (closer to the bend) in order to address the issue raised in respect to visibility, a new section of drive formed (linked to the existing drive) and part of the existing access drive retained as a turning head. In addition, the revised scheme included the provision of two parking spaces for both the existing dwelling and proposed dwelling and a cycle store was proposed to be provided for the proposed dwelling. A review of the revised scheme concluded that the revised access would benefit from an acceptable level of visibility, service vehicles (notably refuse vehicles) would be able to turn into, within and out of the site, a sufficient amount of car parking would be provided within the site and cycle parking will be provided for the proposed dwelling in accordance with the Council's policies and parking standards. As such, it was concluded that the revised scheme addressed the issues in respect to visibility, servicing and parking.

With respect to accessibility, although the applicant's agent submitted further information with the aim of demonstrating that the site was accessible and that it was safe for pedestrians to walk in the carriageway along Torkington Road and subsequently tabled proposals to provide a pedestrian connection path into the site from public footpath 82HG, it was concluded that the path would only go part way to addressing the issues previously raised in respect to accessibility, additional improvements would be required to ensure that there was a safe and practical route between the site and the wider pedestrian network and the connecting path would need to be fit for purpose, could be used by all pedestrians (including those with prams / buggies or wheelchairs) and would be suitable for use at all times. Although detailed advice was provided to the applicant on the design of the pedestrian link and additional improvements, a scheme was not tabled and the application was subsequently withdrawn.

A review of the scheme which is the subject of this application concludes that the site access, parking facilities and turning facility are as per the revised scheme that was submitted as part of the application DC/076623. As outlined above, these were considered acceptable and, as such, subject to detail, I consider the scheme is acceptable in respect to vehicular access, servicing and parking.

With respect to pedestrian access, the Transport Technical Note submitted in support of the planning application again attempts to argue that pedestrians could safely walk in the carriageway on Torkington Road on the basis that is designated a Quiet Lane and that pedestrians walking in the carriageway is expected in rural area. It also outlines that a survey carried out on Sunday 7th March 2021 recorded 10 people walking along the road during a 35 minute period and that the existing public right of way through the adjacent field is well used by local residents. Whilst a plan is included in the Technical Note which shows a connecting path between the site and the public footpath, no details of this path have been provided and the Note describes it as an informal pedestrian route. The applicant, however, has submitted a personal statement in support of the application which outlines that although they have access rights across the field and have tried to obtain the landowner's permission to construct a path through the field, they have been unable to obtain permission. As such, even if the applicant has the ability to cross the field (although it should be noted that the applicant has not submitted any evidence to confirm this), this would have to involve walking across a vegetated field.

With respect to the comments in the Note, whilst the lane has been designated a Quiet Lane, this is simply a designation and no physical works have been carried out to inform drivers this is the case, to traffic calm the road or to ensure that pedestrians could safely use the road (the designation on site, with signage, ends approx. 750m to the east of the site). In addition, whilst it could be argued that some roads in rural areas are suitable for pedestrians and drivers would be expected to see pedestrians, this is not the case for all rural roads, notably those that are well trafficked and link nearby settlements, such as Torkington Road. With respect to existing pedestrian use, notwithstanding the fact that a copy of the pedestrian survey has not been submitted to verify it, I note that it was carried out on a Sunday during a period of COVID-19 lockdown when traffic levels would have been significantly lower than usual, which would have affected the route choices of pedestrians (I note that the traffic survey carried out by the applicant in 2019 indicates Sunday traffic flows are 43% of the weekday average and during lockdown, flows would likely to have been even less). In addition, there is a difference between whether a route is suitable for adult hikers during the day to whether it is suitable for children or vulnerable persons at night or in wet weather. As such, I do not consider the information contained in the Technical Note address the issues I previously raised in respect to pedestrian access and accessibility.

As previously outlined, even if the existing footway to the west of the site is well-maintained to ensure vegetation does not encroach onto it, it is only approx. 0.8-1.1m in width and therefore of insufficient width to enable two pedestrians to pass or a parent to walk with a child. It would also prove very tight for wheelchair users and would mean that pedestrians would be walking very close to the kerb line. In addition, unless a suitable pedestrian path was provided between the end of the footway and the site, pedestrians would have to walk in the carriageway for a distance of approx. 75m (crucially where there are bends in the road, poor forward visibility and poor street lighting). As also previously outlined, with vehicle movements reaching 9 vehicles per minute and over 10% of vehicles being goods vehicles, the road could not be regarded as being lightly trafficked or of a nature that pedestrians could safely walk in the carriageway. A review of the route through the field concludes that the route is across an open grass field, which is not level, poorly drained, unlit and requires pedestrians to walk through a narrow gap in a field boundary. Indeed, when I have walked the route on one site visit, I got wet feet wearing stout shoes even though it hadn't rained. As such, it is not considered that the existing pedestrian route along Torkington Road, together with an "informal pedestrian route" across the field (assuming the applicant has legal rights to use it) will allow pedestrians to access the site in a safe and practical manner and therefore ensure that the site has, at least, a minimal level of pedestrian accessibility (required for journeys that are either fully or partly on foot).

In conclusion, as the applicant has failed to submit detailed proposals to provide a pedestrian route through the field (and is unable to do so) and improve the pedestrian route along Torkington Road so as to ensure that the site can be safely accessed by foot, this current scheme does not address the issue relating to the development not being suitably and safely accessible by foot or other sustainable modes of transport. As such, and taking into account two recent appeal decisions for similar development proposals at two different sites in the Borough (planning applications DC/068758 and DC/072911, both of which proposed the construction of a single dwelling and were dismissed at appeal), I feel that I have no option other than to recommend that the application be refused.

For information, in respect to application DC/072911, which sought permission for the construction of a dwelling that would be accessed via a road without a footway, Inspector noted that whilst *"the proposal includes a stretch of footway along the width*

of the appeal site” (as would be the case with the scheme that is the subject of this application) “that stretch would be limited in length and disconnected from any other footways [and] as such, there would remain a stretch of highway where pedestrians would be vulnerable”. With respect to DC/068758, which also sought permission for the construction of a dwelling that would be accessed via a road without a footway, the Inspector noted that “whilst there are services and facilities nearby to the appeal site, including bus stops which could be reasonably walked to by the intended future occupiers of the new dwelling, in order to do so a large part of the journey would be walking in the carriageway” and that he was “not persuaded on the evidence before me that the site would provide safe pedestrian access”.

- Recommendation : Refuse, for the following reason :-

The proposed dwelling will be sited in a location that is not suitably and safely accessible by foot or other sustainable modes of transport by reason of the lack of a safe and practical pedestrian access route to the site and having regard to the site's proximity to public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes, shops and services, leisure uses and places of employment. As such the proposal will be contrary to Policies CS9 'Transport and Development', T-1 'Transport and Development', T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' and SIE-1 'Quality Places' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD 2011.

Arboricultural Officer

- *Conservation Area Designations*

The proposed development is not within or affected by a Conservation Area.

- *Legally Protected Trees*

There is no legally protected tree within this site or affected by this development.

- *Recommendations*

The proposed development will potentially not have a negative impact on trees located on site with the application form stating no trees to be removed or impacted, the proposed new building has the potential for impact from encroachment/potential damage from machinery working in close proximity of the trees within the site. The sites boundary has a fair level of vegetation and trees and as such, there cannot be any loss of trees on site as this will have a negative impact on amenity and biodiversity.

The proposed development would potentially not have a negative impact on the existing trees, therefore the only concern will be the construction traffic, delivery vehicles and site compound being located away from the existing trees on site.

The construction materials or vehicles may also impact on the trees and as such an advisory should be required to be given to make contractors aware of the protective trees and the installation of protective fencing to limit access to these areas to prevent compaction, accidental damage or spillage of chemicals on the root zones of all trees in the whole of the property and neighbouring property, if this is conditioned and complied with then the lack of landscaping/tree planting would be the only issue for negative impact on the site and surrounding environment.

The trees offer a high level of biodiversity/habitat benefit and as such they need retaining as the loss would be unacceptable as this would be further increasing urban sprawl of Hazel Grove area.

In principle the scheme will not have a negative impact on the trees in the area and if an enhanced landscaping scheme can be considered there are no arboriculture concerns. If the scheme is to be approved in its current format an improved landscaping scheme will need to be considered to show greater enhancement of the site, protective fencing plan and an advisory restricting all access to the protected trees in the property and adjoining the property area. Some of these should have been submitted as part of the planning application and therefore can be conditioned and submitted later then this will resolve any tree related issues.

The following conditions are required if the scheme is approved;

Condition Tree 1

- No existing tree within the site shall be cut down, topped, lopped, uprooted, wilfully damaged or wilfully destroyed without the prior written approval of the local planning authority, with the exception of those indicated otherwise on the approved plan. Any hedgerows, woody plants or shrubbery removed without such consent or dying or being severely damaged or being seriously diseased, within 5 years of the development commencing, shall be replaced within the next planting season with trees of such size and species as may be approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Condition Tree 2

- No development shall take place until all existing trees on the site except those shown to be removed on the approved plans, have been fenced off in accordance with BS 5837:2012 "Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations". The fencing shall be retained during the period of construction and no work, excavation, tipping or stacking of materials shall take place within any such fence during the construction period.

Nature Development Officer

Site Context

The site is located on Torkington Road in Hazel Grove. The application is for conversion of an existing barn to form 1 no. dwellinghouse, with associated demolition, extension, external alterations, access, parking and curtilage.

Nature Conservation Designations

The site has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise. Torkington Road Meadow Site of Biological Importance (SBI) is located approximately 60m to the southeast. I do not however envisage any significant adverse impacts on the designated site as a result of the proposed development owing to its distance from the application site and the nature of the proposals.

Legally Protected Species

Many buildings and trees offer the potential to support roosting bats. All species of bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species (EU Exit) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. The latter implements the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. Bats are included in Schedule 2 of the Regulations as 'European protected species of animals' (EPS). Under the Regulations it is an offence to :-

- 1) Deliberately capture or kill a wild EPS
- 2) Deliberately disturb a wild EPS in such a way that significantly affects:
 - a) the ability of a significant group to survive, breed, rear or nurture young, or to hibernate or migrate.
 - b) the local distribution of that species.
- 3) Damage or destroy a breeding place or resting site of such an animal.

The site has subject to a bat assessment in March 2019. The initial survey report was submitted as part of a previous planning application for the site and has been reviewed as part of the current application (DC075288 – report reference SESS 2019a White House Farm Torkington Road, Hazel Grove. Buildings Protected Species Survey Statement Report). No evidence indicative of bat presence was recorded and the barn proposed for conversion (referenced as Building 2 in the bat report) was considered to offer low potential to support roosting bats. In accordance with best practice survey guidance, a single activity survey was carried out at the building in May 2019 (the results of which have been submitted with the current application: SESS 2019 White House Farm Torkington Road Phase 2 bat survey). All survey work was carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist. No bats were recorded emerging from the building but low levels of common pipistrelle foraging activity was recorded within the site.

In relation to age of survey data, Bat Conservation Trust survey guidelines advise that bat surveys should be from the current or preceding survey season. As such, the survey information submitted is currently sufficiently up-to-date to inform determination of the application, however it is advised that update survey work is carried out should works have not commenced by May 2021.

Suitable bat foraging habitat is provided within the site by trees, hedgerow and shrubs. It is not clear from the submitted information whether any tree loss is proposed to accommodate the scheme. If tree loss is anticipated, it should be confirmed whether any of the trees to be impacted offer bat roosting potential. From review of aerial imagery it appears as though trees along the frontage with Torkington Road have been felled in the interim period since the previous planning applications. As such, I would like to see replacement planting incorporated within the current scheme.

Nesting opportunities for breeding birds are provided by the tree and hedge/shrub habitats. Disused swallow nest cups and nesting robins were also recorded within the barn. All breeding birds and their nests are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

A pond is located approximately 70m from the application site (a second pond shown on mapping systems approximately 90m away from the site is no longer thought to be present). Ponds and their surrounding terrestrial habitat have the potential to support amphibians such as great crested newts (GCN). GCN receive

the same level of legal protection as bats (outlined above). An assessment of the pond and the terrestrial habitats on site to support GCN was carried out, the findings of which were confirmed via email (dated 10 July 2019, David Bell of SESS). The pond is stocked with fish which reduces the likelihood of GCN being present. Terrestrial habitats within the application area are considered to be sub-optimal for GCN, dominated by short-mown grassland and hard standing. This reduces the risk that GCN will be present and impacted by the proposals and the overall risk to GCN has been assessed as negligible. Paragraph 016 of the Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#biodiversity-and-ecosystems>) 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 this instance I do not consider it reasonable to request further GCN surveys as the risk to GCN is considered to be low, and can be further minimised if sensitive working measures are adopted during demolition/construction works.

No evidence of or significant potential for any other protected species was recorded during the survey.

Relevant Local Planning Policies

- Core Strategy DPD Policy CS8 ‘Safeguarding and Improving the Environment’ (Biodiversity and Nature Conservation : 3.296).
- Core Strategy DPD policy SIE-3 ‘Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment’ (Protecting the Natural Environment : 3.345, 3.347, 3.361, 3.362, 3.364, 3.366, 3.367 and 3.369).
- Saved UDP policy NE1.2 ‘SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE’ - *The habitats and biodiversity of sites of biological importance, geological conservation sites and local wildlife sites will be protected and enhanced where possible. Proposals for development on sites so designated must demonstrate that there is a justification which overrides any harm to the nature conservation value of the site.*

Recommendations

From review of aerial imagery, it appears as though trees along Torkington Road have been felled during the interim period since the previous planning application submission for the site. As such, I would like to see replacement planting incorporated within the current proposals.

It should be confirmed whether any further tree loss is anticipated and if so, whether any trees to be impacted offer potential to support roosting bats. This information is required to ensure that all potential impacts and material considerations have been fully assessed as part of the application.

In relation to the works on the barn, the proposals are considered to be of low risk to roosting bats and great crested newts. Protected species can sometimes be found in unexpected places and so as a precautionary measure, I would recommend that an informative is attached to any planning permission granted so that the applicant is aware of the potential for bats and great crested newts to be present on site. It should also state that the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the laws which are in place to protect biodiversity. Should at any time bats, great crested newts or any other protected species be

discovered on site, work should cease immediately and Natural England/a suitably experienced ecologist should be contacted.

Ecological conditions can change over time. If the proposed works have not commenced by May 2021 (i.e. within two years of the most recent 2019 surveys) it is recommended that an update survey is carried out in advance of works to ensure the baseline and assessment of impacts in respect of bats, great crested newts and other potential ecological receptors remains current.

Precautionary measures should be implemented during construction and demolition works (storage of materials on raised pallets so as not to create potential GCN refuge areas and provision of ramps in any steep-sided excavations left uncovered overnight to allow amphibians and mammals (such as hedgehogs) a means of escape). This can be secured by condition if necessary.

Biodiversity enhancements are expected as part of developments in line with local (paragraph 3.345 of the LDF) and national planning policy (NPPF). It is therefore recommended that the measures detailed in the ecology report (Sensible Ecological Survey Solutions, 2019a) relating to the provision of bat roosting facilities and bird nesting facilities are implemented within the proposals. Details of the proposed number, type and location of bat and bird boxes to be integrated within/provided on the converted building should be submitted to the LPA for review. This can be secured by condition. Additionally, any proposed landscaping should comprise locally native species to maximise benefits to biodiversity and details should be submitted to the LPA for review. A suitable measure would be plant native mixed species hedgerows along proposed fence lines. This is in addition to tree replanting to mitigate for the loss of the trees along Torkington Road.

In relation to breeding birds, the following condition should be used: No vegetation clearance/demolition or roof works should take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist (or other suitably qualified person) has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation/buildings for active birds' nests immediately before (no more than 48 hours before) vegetation clearance/demolition/roof works commence and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site.

Any 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: <https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2018/09/new-guidance-on-bats-and-lighting>).

Environment Team (Land Contamination)

There have been no known historic former potentially contaminative sources at the development site however given the scale of the development and the neglected nature of the proposed development area the developer will need to undertake a desktop study and walkover to see if a site investigation is required, as such could I please request the CTM1-3 conditions :-

Condition CTM 1

No development shall take place until an investigation and risk assessment into contamination at the site, in accordance with a scheme to be approved in writing by

the local planning authority, has been carried out. The investigation and risk assessment shall include recommendations for remedial action and the development shall not be occupied until these recommendations have been implemented.

Reason CTM1

The report submitted with the application has identified potentially unacceptable risks from contamination and further investigation is required to ensure that these risks to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other off-site receptors in accordance with Policy SIE-3 "Protecting Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment", of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

Condition CTM 2

No development shall take place until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the specified use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme to be submitted shall specify but not be limited to :-the proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria (ii) all remedial works to be undertaken including the quantities of materials to be removed from and imported to the development site. (iii) the proposals for sourcing and testing all materials imported to the site including testing schedules, sampling frequencies and actual and allowable contaminant concentrations (as determined by appropriate risk assessment in accordance with the document "Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination" (CLR11)).

Reason CTM 2

To ensure that any unacceptable risks from contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other off-site receptors in accordance with Policy SIE-3 "Protecting Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment", of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

Condition CTM 3

The development shall not be occupied until the approved remediation scheme required to be submitted by Condition CTM2; has been carried out. Within 12 months of completion of remediation measures, a validation report assessing the effectiveness of the remediation carried shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The report shall specify any further remediation measures necessary and indicate how and when these measures will be undertaken.

Reason CTM 3

To ensure that any unacceptable risks from contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy SIE-3 "Protecting Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment", of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

Drainage Engineer

The application does not appear to have any documents relating to drainage strategy for the above scheme.

However, I have reviewed our records which show:

- The site is located in flood zone 1
- The site has no surface water risk
- The closest watercourse is located circa 225m away from the site
- The site to be probably compatible with infiltration SuDS, but it is also to have bespoke opportunities for infiltration SuDS
- A water table level of < 3m below ground surface, and also between 3-5m below ground surface
- We have recorded the following historical flood event circa 474m from the site related to exceptional weather coupled with hydraulic inadequacy, which led to internal property flooding

The application should be supported by a drainage strategy/plan showing the applicants intentions.

The applicant should strictly follow and demonstrate the drainage hierarchy (Source Control, Site Control, Local Control, Regional Control, Watercourse, SW Sewers, and then Combined Sewers) with every stage looking to manage the surface water on site as much as possible.

An assessment of SuDS for the site would also be required.

United Utilities

No comments made.

High Lane Village Neighbourhood Forum

It has been noted that the applicant has been engaged with the planning department concerning proposals for this development. In consequence our conclusion is that the proposals appear to be sympathetic with the original barn, therefore we have nothing further to add.

ANALYSIS

Background

Members are advised of a previous planning application (Reference : DC075288) for the erection of four dwellings at the site, which has refused under delegated powers in the 15th February 2020 for the following reasons :-

1. *The partial demolition of the non-designated heritage asset 'White House Farm' would fail to preserve or enhance the special architectural, artistic, historic or archaeological significance of the heritage asset and would harm its setting and significance contrary to the provisions of Policies CS8 "Safeguarding and Improving the Environment", SIE-3 "Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment" and SIE-1 "Quality Places" of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD 2011; and Chapters 2, 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*
2. *The design of the proposed development fails to satisfactorily respond to the site's context in terms of its locally distinct landscape features and rural character and fails to preserve or enhance the setting of the adjacent non-designated heritage asset. As such the application is considered to represent poor design, that fails to accord with Policies CS8 "Safeguarding and Improving the Environment", SIE-1 "Quality Places" of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD 2011; saved Policies L1.8 "Strategic Recreation Routes" and L1.9 "Recreation Routes and New Development" of the Stockport UDP Review; and Chapters 2, 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*
3. *The proposal would be contrary to the interests of highway safety since it will result in an intensification of use of the private access drive that serves the site, which is sub-standard in terms of visibility and geometry and having regard to local and national design standards. As such, the development will be contrary to policies SIE-1 "Quality Places", CS9 "Transport and Development" and T-3 "Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network" of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD 2011.*
4. *Insufficient information has been submitted in support of the application to demonstrate that the access and access drive that will serve the development will be of a form that will enable a range of vehicles to turn into, within and out of the site so as to enable the site to be safely accessed and serviced and negate the need for vehicles to park, reverse or manoeuvre on Torkington Road. Without the ability for service vehicles to access the site, the proposal would be contrary to the interests of highway safety and affect the free flow of traffic on Torkington Road and therefore the development would be contrary to policies SIE-1 'Quality Places', CS9 'Transport and Development' and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD 2011.*
5. *The proposed dwellings will be sited in a location that is not suitably and safely accessible by foot or other sustainable modes of transport by reason of the lack of a safe and practical pedestrian access route to the site and having regard to the site's proximity to public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes, shops and services, leisure uses and places of employment. As such the proposal will be contrary to Policies CS9 'Transport and Development', T-1 'Transport and Development', T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' and SIE-1 'Quality Places' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD 2011.*

6. *The applicant has failed to make provision and maintenance of recreation and amenity open space for the proposed development in accordance with the requirements of Policy SIE-2 "Provision of Recreation and Amenity Open Space in New Developments" of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD 2011 or the advice found in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document "Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments" (adopted 30th September 2019).*

A subsequent appeal against the refusal of the above planning application was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate on the 26th August 2020. In summary, the Inspector agreed with reasons for refusal numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and disagreed with reason for refusal number 6.

Policy Principle – Green Belt

The site is allocated within the Green Belt, as defined on the UDP Proposals Map. The NPPF addresses the national approach to Green Belt policy under the heading entitled 'Protecting Green Belt Land' and takes as its fundamental starting point the importance of maintaining 'openness' on a 'permanent basis'. Paragraph 137 of the NPPF confirms that *'The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence'*.

Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that a Local Planning Authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt, except in a number of limited circumstances, including within Paragraph 149 (c) :-

The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Paragraph 150 of the NPPF states that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Such forms of development include, within Paragraph 150 (d) :-

The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.

Saved UDP policy GBA1.2 states that forms of development other than new buildings, including changes in the use of land, will not be permitted unless they maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt and that proposals for the re-use of buildings will be assessed against the provisions of saved UDP policy GBA1.6. Additionally, saved UDP policy GBA1.5 specifies, amongst other categories, that within the Green Belt new residential development will be restricted to the re-use of buildings, as provided for by saved UDP policy GBA1.6.

Saved UDP policy GBA1.6 confirms that the change of use or conversion of buildings of permanent and substantial construction will be permitted, provided that a number of criteria are satisfied, as outlined below :-

(i) Would be used for economic or other purposes other than wholly residential ones;

Whilst saved UDP policy is broadly consistent with the NPPF, criteria (i) of saved UDP policy GBA1.6, which precludes conversion of buildings to wholly residential uses, is in direct conflict with Paragraph 150 (d) of the NPPF, which makes no distinction between types of uses.

In this context, Paragraph 219 of the NPPF requires weight to be afforded to Local Plan policy, according to its degree of consistency with the NPPF. On this basis, the discrepancy relating to criteria (i) of the saved UDP policy GBA1.6 is outdated following the introduction of the NPPF and accordingly should not be apportioned any weight.

In view of the above, in Green Belt policy terms, it is therefore left to be considered whether or not the conversion satisfies the remaining criteria (ii), (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi) of saved UDP policy GBA1.6. Each of these will be assessed in turn :-

(ii) Would maintain openness and would not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt;

From Officer calculations, when compared to the volume of the original building to which the proposal relates and the existing outrigger to be demolished, the proposed conversion and extension would result in a 23 cubic metre reduction on the volume of the original building. As such, the proposal would clearly not represent a disproportionate addition over and above the volume of the original building, in accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 149 (c) of the NPPF and would effectively result in an increase in openness. On this basis, the proposal is considered to maintain openness and would not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. Should planning permission be granted for the proposed development, a condition would be imposed to withdraw domestic permitted development rights, in order to maintain openness.

(iii) Would safeguard or improve the appearance of the rural environment;

The proposal, which is supported by the Conservation Officer, would secure a viable, long-term future for the building. As such, it is considered that the sympathetic conversion of the building would safeguard and improve the appearance of the rural environment, in particular the Hazel Grove-High Lane Landscape Character Area within which the site is located.

All buildings should be structurally sound, well related to their surroundings and capable of :-

(iv) Accommodating the new use without the need for major rebuilding or extension;

The Structural Condition Survey submitted in support of the application confirms that, although repairs are required to the existing building to accommodate the proposed residential use, the existing building appears to be in a stable and adequate condition. As stated above, the proposed extension is not considered to be major. As such, the proposal satisfies the requirements of saved UDP policy GBA1.6 (iv), along with the requirements of Paragraph 150 (d) of the NPPF.

(v) Being provided with an adequate curtilage without adverse impact on the Green Belt; and

It is noted that the proposed dwellinghouses would be served by an appropriately sized curtilage to the North of the building, on an existing area of curtilage which would not extend outside the existing curtilage of the wider site.

(vi) Being satisfactorily accessed and serviced without adverse impact on the Green Belt.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposal would include the a relocated access, approximately 13.0 metres to the East of the existing access to the site and associated new section of driveway and hardstanding for parking, turning and servicing, it is considered that such proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the Green Belt.

In the case of buildings, which may be used by bats, barn owls or other protected species, satisfactory investigation must be carried out into the possible presence of such species and, where appropriate, measures must be implemented to ensure that legal obligations are met and that any damage to habitats is minimised.

On the basis of the suite of ecological information submitted in support of the application, in the absence of objections from the Nature Development Officer and subject to appropriate mitigation measures which would be secured by condition, any harm to protected species would be minimised.

In view of the above and in summary of Green Belt considerations, it is clear that the proposal complies with the requirements of criteria (ii), (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi) of saved UDP policy GBA1.6. It is recognised that the proposal does not comply with the requirement of criteria (i) of saved UDP policy GBA1.6, being for a wholly residential use. However, due to the fact that this criteria is in direct conflict and inconsistent with Paragraph 150 (d) NPPF which was introduced after adoption of the UDP, it is considered to be outdated and should not be apportioned any weight, in accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 219 of the NPPF. On this basis, the proposal represents a Green Belt exception for the purposes of Paragraph 150 (d) of the NPPF, does not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and is considered to be fully justified as a departure from the development plan.

Policy Principle – Residential

Core Strategy DPD policy CS4 directs new housing towards three spatial priority areas (The Town Centre, District and Large Local Centres and, finally, other accessible locations), with Green Belt sites being last sequentially in terms of acceptable Urban Greenfield and Green Belt sites. Core Strategy DPD policy H-2 states that the delivery and supply of new housing will be monitored and managed to ensure that provision is in line with the local trajectory, the local previously developed land target is being applied and a continuous 5 year deliverable supply of housing is maintained and notes that the local previously developed land target is 90%.

The NPPF puts additional emphasis upon the government's objective to significantly boost the supply of housing, rather than simply having land allocated for housing development. Stockport is currently in a position of housing under-supply, with 2.6 years of supply against the minimum requirement of 5 years + 20%, as set out in Paragraph 74 of the NPPF. In situations of housing under-supply, Core Strategy DPD policy CS4 allows Core Strategy DPD policy H-2 to come into effect, bringing housing developments on sites which meet the Councils reduced accessibility

criteria. Having regard to the continued position of housing under-supply within the Borough, the current minimum accessibility score is set at 'zero'.

In view of the above factors, the principle of conversion of the building to residential use is considered acceptable at the current time of housing under-supply within the Borough. On this basis, the proposal is considered to comply with Core Strategy DPD policies CS2, CS4 and H-2.

Design, Siting and Impact on Heritage Assets

A Heritage Statement has been submitted in support of the application. The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Conservation Officer are contained within the Consultee Responses section above.

The Conservation Officer notes that the site is identified within the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record and therefore comprises a non-designated heritage asset.

The principle of the conversion of the Western half of the building to residential use, including the proposed amendments to the vehicular access and site layout, is supported by the Conservation Officer, who considers that it would assist the long-term preservation of the heritage asset. No objections are raised from the Conservation Officer to the proposed removal of the existing rear extension, which is of later construction and does not form an important element of the historic fabric of the building or its significance. The submitted Structural Report concludes that the building is in a stable and adequate condition for conversion, whilst acknowledging that fabric repairs are required.

The proposal has been amended at the request of the Conservation Officer and confirmation has been provided that the natural slate roof and timber roof trusses would be retained. The amended scheme would ensure that the key elements of the buildings historic character and interest would be safeguarded, with the historic fabric repaired using matching traditional materials. On this basis, the proposed conversion is supported by the Conservation Officer on heritage grounds.

In addition to the support offered to the proposal from the Conservation Officer, Members are advised of the comments of the Planning Inspector in dismissing an appeal against the refusal of planning application DC075288 in 2020 for the erection of four dwellings at the site, a scheme which included the demolition of the barn to which the current proposal relates. The following Inspectors comments are of relevance :-

"The appeal site is located within the countryside and forms part of a small group of buildings that comprise White House Farm".

"The group of buildings are identified within the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HERS). Both parties consider the buildings to be a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). Therefore, I have considered the effects of the proposal on the NDHA's significance in accordance with paragraph 197 of The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)".

"The NDHA consists of three detached buildings on a historic farmstead, that dates back to the late 18th Century. This comprises a farmhouse and a barn, as well as a building referred to in the HERS record as a cottage".

“The main part of the barn is brick-built with thick stone roof tiles, the single storey element to the rear appears to be a later addition and has a lean-to slate roof. The cottage is constructed in brickwork, has a slate roof and a staircase to the side leading to the first floor. Whilst I note the buildings have been altered, and the barn extended, externally both buildings appear to be intact, and the overall form and period design features such as the window and door openings, and external brickwork reflect their period of construction. These architectural features and traditional building materials contribute to the significance of the NDHA, as well as the prevailing character of the area”.

“I now turn to the historic significance of the NDHA. The HERS record states that the barn and cottage were constructed late 18th to early 19th century. Evidence provided by the appellants also indicate that the current site layout and its setting within the countryside reflects that shown on an early 19th century Tithe map. Albeit the barn may have been replaced or expanded around this time to reflect the historical trends in farming. Therefore, the significance of the barn and outbuilding also lies in their historic as well as architectural interest as a farmstead”.

“The proposal would result in the complete demolition of the barn and the cottage. These encompass the substantial portion of the historic and architectural value the farmstead. Their loss would result in substantial harm to the integrity of the NDHA as a group of buildings and the positive contribution that they make as a historic farmstead to the character and appearance of the area”.

“I acknowledge that the buildings are not within a Conservation Area and are not statutorily listed. However, the Framework attaches importance to heritage assets, both those designated and non-designated”.

“Consequently, the proposal would harm the heritage asset. It does not accord with Policies CS8, SIE-1 and SIE-3 of the Local Plan which seek to ensure development respects local character, and preserves or enhances the special architectural, historic and archaeological significance of heritage assets. The proposal would be inconsistent with paragraphs 127 and 197 of the Framework in this regard”.

In terms of other matters, the proposed conversion with extension and limited alterations to the external appearance of the building would ensure that the proposed development could be accommodated on the site without causing harm to the character of the Hazel Grove-High Lane Landscape Character Area within which the site is located. No objections are raised from Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, subject to appropriate archaeological works being secured by condition.

In summary, the proposed conversion is supported by the Conservation Officer, who considers that the proposed conversion would assist in the long-term preservation of the non-designated heritage asset and the scheme would ensure that the key elements of the buildings historic character and interest would be safeguarded. In addition, the Planning Inspector has previously acknowledged the historic and architectural significance of the barn and that its loss would result in substantial harm to the integrity of the non-designated heritage asset. Members should apportion significant weight to the retention of the non-designated heritage in consideration of the application.

In view of the above, the proposed conversion and associated external alterations is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on the non-designated heritage asset, the Hazel Grove-High Lane Landscape Character Area and the visual amenity of the

area. As such, the proposal complies with saved UDP policies LCR1.1 and LCR1.1A, Core Strategy DPD policies H-1, CS8, SIE-1 and SIE-3, HLVNDP policies NH1, HD1 and HD2 and the advice contained within the NPPF.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposed dwelling would be served by a 255 square metre curtilage to the North, comfortably in accordance with the requirements of the Design of Residential Development SPD and would therefore provide future occupiers of the proposed dwelling with appropriate levels of private amenity space.

The site is adjoined to the North and West by open/agricultural land, with further open/agricultural land on the opposite side of Torkington Road to the South. Directly to the East of the site is 'White House Farm' a two storey residential dwelling which has the benefit of planning permission for the conversion of 2 no. apartments. However, due to the fact that the proposed residential conversion and associated extension would be confined to the Western section of the existing building and would be sited away from the boundary with 'White House Farm', it is considered that the proposed conversion and associated extension would not unduly impact on the residential amenity of this property, by reason of overshadowing, over-dominance, visual intrusion, loss of outlook, overlooking or loss of privacy. On this basis, the proposal complied with the requirements of Core Strategy DPD policies H-1 and SIE-1 and the Design of Residential Development SPD.

Highways Considerations

A Transport Technical Note has been submitted in support of the application. The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Highway Engineer are contained within the Consultee Responses section above.

The Highway Engineer notes the planning history of the site, including application DC076623 for the demolition of the existing barn and erection of 1 no. dwellinghouse which was withdrawn in March 2021 and application DC075288 for the erection of 4 no. dwellings, which was refused on a number of grounds, including highway safety and the inaccessible/inappropriate location of the site for housing, and for a which a subsequent appeal was dismissed on such grounds.

Vehicular Access, Servicing and Parking

In terms of the current scheme before Members, the proposal includes the relocation of the site access approximately 13.0 metres to the East of its current location in order to address previous concerns raised by the Highway Engineer in respect to visibility. A new section of drive would be formed, linked to the existing drive, and part of the existing drive would be retained as a turning head. Two parking spaces would be provided for both the existing dwelling and the proposed dwelling and a cycle store would be provided for the proposed dwelling. The Highway Engineer considers that the proposed access would benefit from an acceptable level of visibility, service vehicles would be able to turn into, within and out of the site, a sufficient amount of car parking would be provided and cycle parking to serve the proposed dwelling would be provided, in accordance with Council policies and parking standards. As such, subject to matters of detail, the Highway Engineer considers that the current proposal is acceptable in respect of vehicle access, visibility, servicing and parking, addressing reasons for refusal numbers 3 and 4 of planning application DC075288 which was subsequently dismissed at appeal.

Pedestrian Access and Site Accessibility

In terms of the issues of site accessibility, Members are advised of the comments of the Planning Inspector in dismissing an appeal against the refusal of planning application DC075288 in 2020 for the erection of four dwellings at the site. The following Inspectors comments are of relevance :-

“The appeal site is located within the countryside, outside of the settlement boundary identified in the Proposals Map that accompanies the Local Plan. The nearest day to day services and facilities would be found within the settlement of Hazel Grove, whose centre provides a variety of shops and services”.

“To access the centre pedestrians and cyclists traveling from the site would need to use Torkington Road, which for large parts in the vicinity of the site only has a narrow grass verges either side and does not benefit from footpaths or street lighting for substantial lengths of its route from the site. As such, it is undesirable for walking and cycling, particularly in the dark or during inclement weather”.

“Taking this into account future occupants would be deterred from walking or cycling and would therefore be reliant upon private motorised transport. This would not assist in mitigating the effects of climate change and encouraging the health benefits of walking and cycling”.

“I have had regard to the travel distances provided to local services and public transport, outlined in the submitted Transport Note. However, for the reasons given above walking would not be an attractive option due to the lack of footway and street lighting, which would not make walking or cycling a reasonably likely option in this case”.

“Consequently, the appeal site would not be a suitable location for housing, and its development for that purpose would be contrary to Policies T-1, T-3 and SIE-1 of the Local Plan, which seek to ensure that development is located so that it has access to services and facilities by sustainable modes of transport, and reduces the reliance on the use of the car”.

The Highway Engineer notes that, as part of the subsequently withdrawn application (DC076623) for the erection of 1 no. dwelling at the site, information was submitted by the applicant with the aim of demonstrating that the site was accessible and that it was safe for pedestrians to walk in the carriageway along Torkington Road. Proposals were tabled to provide a pedestrian connection path into the site from public footpath 82HG to the West. However, the Highway Engineer considered that the path would only go part way to addressing issues previously raised in respect to accessibility. The Highway Engineer considered that additional improvements would be required to ensure that the path was a safe and practical route between the site and the wider pedestrian network, the connecting path would need to be fit for purpose, could be used by all pedestrians, including those with prams/buggies or wheelchairs and would be suitable for use at all times. Detailed advice was provided by the Highway Engineer to the applicant regarding the design of the pedestrian link and the required additional improvements.

With respect to pedestrian access, the Transport Technical Note submitted in support of the current application attempts to argue that pedestrians could safely walk in the carriageway on Torkington Road, on the basis that it is a designated ‘Quiet Lane’ and that pedestrians walking in the carriageway is expected in rural areas. The Transport Technical Note also outlines that a survey carried out recorded

10 people walking along the road during a 35 minute period and that the existing public right of way through the adjacent field is well used by local residents. Whilst a plan included within the Transport Technical Note shows a connecting path between the site and the public footpath, the Highway Engineer notes that no details of the path have been provided and the Transport Technical Note describes it as an 'informal pedestrian route'. The applicant has submitted a Personal Statement in support of the application which outlines that, although they have access rights across the field and have attempted to obtain the landowners permission to construct a path through the field, they have been unable to obtain permission. As such, even if the applicant has the ability to cross the field, this would involve walking across a vegetated field.

Whilst the Highway Engineer acknowledges that the lane has been designated a 'Quiet Lane', it is noted that this is simply a designation and no physical works have been carried out to inform drivers that this is the case, to traffic calm the road or to ensure that pedestrians could safely use the road. Whilst it could be argued that some roads in rural areas are suitable for pedestrians and drivers would be expected to see pedestrians, this is not the case for all rural roads, particularly those that are well trafficked and link nearby settlements, as is the case with Torkington Road.

With respect to existing pedestrian use, the Highway Engineer notes that the submitted survey was carried out on a Sunday during a period of COVID-19 lockdown, when traffic levels would have been significant lower than usual and would therefore have affected the route choice of pedestrians. In addition, there is a difference between whether a route is suitable for adult hikers during the day to whether it is suitable for children or vulnerable persons at night or during wet weather. As such, the Highway Engineer does not consider that the information contained within the Transport Technical Note addresses previously raised issues in respect of pedestrian access and accessibility.

In terms of the existing footway to the West of the site, even if it is well maintained to ensure that vegetation does not encroach onto it, the Highway Engineer notes that it is only 0.8 metres to 1.1 metres in width and therefore is of insufficient width to enable two pedestrians to pass or a parent to walk with a child. It would also prove very tight for wheelchair users and would mean that pedestrians would be walking very close to the kerb line. In addition, unless a suitable pedestrian path was provided between the end of the footway and the site, pedestrians would have to walk in the carriageway for a distance of approximately 75.0 metres, in an area where there are bends in the road, poor forward visibility and poor street lighting. With vehicle movements reaching 9 vehicles per minute and over 10% of vehicles being goods vehicles, the Highway Engineer considers that the road could not be regarded as being lightly trafficked or of a nature that pedestrians could safely walk in the carriageway. The Highway Engineer has reviewed the route through the field and concludes that the route is across an open grass field, which is not level, poorly drained, unlit and requires pedestrians to walk through a narrow gap in a field boundary. As such, the Highway Engineer does not consider that the existing pedestrian route along Torkington Road, together with the 'informal pedestrian route' across the field, would allow pedestrians to access the site in a safe and practical manner and ensure that the site has, at least, a minimal level of pedestrian accessibility.

The Highway Engineer cites two recent appeal decisions for similar proposals at two different sites within the Borough (DC068758 : 65 Longhurst Lane, Marple Bridge and DC072911 : 65 Townscliffe Lane, Mellor), where the Planning Inspector noted the following :-

“The proposal includes a stretch of footway along the width of the appeal site” (as would be the case with the proposal before Members) “that stretch would be limited in length and disconnected from any other footways [and] as such, there would remain a stretch of highway where pedestrians would be vulnerable” (DC072911)

“Whilst there are services and facilities nearby to the appeal site, including bus stops which could be reasonably walked to by the intended future occupiers of the new dwelling, in order to do so a large part of the journey would be walking in the carriageway” and that he was “not persuaded on the evidence before me that the site would provide safe pedestrian access” (DC068758).

In conclusion, as the applicant has failed to submit detailed proposals to provide a pedestrian route through the field and is unable to do so, and improve the pedestrian route along Torkington Road so as to ensure that the site can be safely accessed on foot, the current proposal does not address the issues raised by the Highway Engineer, along with the concerns raised by the Planning Inspector as part of planning application DC075288, relating to the development site not being suitably and safely accessible by foot or other sustainable modes of transport. On this basis, the Highway Engineer recommends that the application is refused for the following reason :-

- *The proposed dwelling will be sited in a location that is not suitably and safely accessible by foot or other sustainable modes of transport by reason of the lack of a safe and practical pedestrian access route to the site and having regard to the site’s proximity to public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes, shops and services, leisure uses and places of employment. As such the proposal will be contrary to policies CS9 : TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT, T-1 : TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT, T-3 : SAFETY AND CAPACITY ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK and SIE-1 : QUALITY PLACES of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.*

Impact on Trees

The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Arboricultural Officer are contained within the Consultee Responses section above.

The Arboricultural Officer notes that existing trees on the site are not afforded protection by way of Tree Preservation Order or Conservation Area Status. On this basis, existing trees could effectively be worked to or removed without the requirement for consent.

The Arboricultural Officer considers that the proposed development would not have a negative impact on trees within the site, with the submitted application forms confirming that no trees are proposed to be removed or worked to. In order to prevent any impacts on trees during construction, a condition is recommended that appropriate tree protection measures are implemented, in addition to the imposition of a condition to ensure that no existing retained tree is worked to or removed.

In view of the above, in the absence of objections from the Arboricultural Officer and subject to conditional control, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on trees, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policies SIE-1 and SIE-3 AND HLVNDP policy NH3.

Impact on Protected Species and Ecology

A Building Protected Species Survey Statement Report and a Phase 2 Bat Survey Statement Report have been submitted in support of the application. The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Nature Development Officer are contained within the Consultation Responses section above.

The Nature Development Officer notes that Torkington Meadow Site of Biological Importance (SBI) is located approximately 60.0 metres to the South East of the site. However, no significant adverse impacts on the designated site as a result on the proposal are envisaged, in view of the nature of the proposal and the distance of the site from the SBI.

Buildings and trees on the site offer the potential to support roosting bats, a protected species. The Bat Survey submitted in support of the applicant confirms that no evidence indicative of bat presence was recorded and the barn proposed for conversion was considered to offer low potential to support roosting bats. No bats were recorded emerging from the building, however low levels of common pipistrelle foraging activity was recorded within the site. Suitable bats foraging habitat is provided within the site by trees, hedgerows and shrubs. The Nature Development Officer notes that trees along the Torkington Road frontage have been felled recently, therefore replacement planting is required within the development to mitigate this loss and would be secured by condition. Whilst the submitted survey information is sufficient to inform determination of the application, the submission of update survey work is required prior to implementation of the development and would be secured by condition. The applicant will also be advised of the potential for bats to be present on site, legislation in place to protect biodiversity and procedures to follow should protected species be discovered during development by way of informative.

Nesting opportunities for breeding birds, a protected species, are provided by the tree and hedge/shrub habitat on site and disused swallow nest cups and nesting robins were also recorded within the barn proposed for conversion. As such, a condition is recommended to ensure that no vegetation clearance, demolition or roof works are undertaken within the bird breeding season, unless an Ecologist has undertaken a check for active birds nests immediately prior to works and has confirmed that no birds would be harmed or appropriate measures put in place to protect nesting bird interest.

Ponds in proximity to the site and their surrounding terrestrial habit have the potential to support Great Crested Newts, a protected species. Assessments submitted in support of the application confirm that the nature of the ponds and terrestrial habitats are such that the risk of Great Crested Newts being present is low and impacted by the proposal is negligible. On this basis, it is not considered reasonable to require the submission of further Great Crested Newt Surveys. A condition is recommended to ensure that sensitive working measures are adopted during development works, to further minimise risks to Great Crested Newts. The applicant will also be advised of the potential for Great Crested Newts to be present on site, legislation in place to protect biodiversity and procedures to follow should protected species be discovered during development by way of informative.

No evidence of or significant potential for any other protected species was recorded during the Surveys.

In addition to the recommended conditions to require additional planting to mitigate for the tree loss along the Torkington Road frontage, the submission of update ecology surveys prior to commencement of development and implementation of

precautionary measures during development, further conditions are recommended by the Nature Development Officer. These include the requirement for biodiversity enhancements within the development; provision of locally native species within the proposed planting/landscaping scheme; and to require any proposed external lighting to be sensitively designed to minimise impacts on wildlife.

In view of the above, on the basis of the submitted information, in the absence of objections from the Nature Development Officer and subject to conditional control, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on protected species, biodiversity and the ecological interest of the site. As such, the proposal complies with saved UDP policy NE1.2, Core Strategy DPD policies CS8 and SIE-3 and HLVNDP policy NH3.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1, which is deemed to have the lowest risk of flooding. Core Strategy DPD policy SIE-3 states that all development will be expected to comply with the approach set out in national policy, with areas of hard-standing or other surfaces, should be of a permeable construction or drain to an alternative form of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Core Strategy DPD policy SD-6 requires a 50% reduction in existing surface water runoff and incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage the run-off water from the site through the incorporation of permeable surfaces and SuDS.

The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Drainage Engineer are contained within the Consultee Responses section above. The Drainage Engineer notes that no proposed drainage scheme/strategy has been submitted in support of the application. Nevertheless, it is considered that appropriate drainage for the proposed development could be secured by the imposition of a suitably worded planning condition. Such a condition would require the submission, approval and subsequent implementation of a sustainable surface water drainage system, including management and maintenance of such at all times thereafter, which should incorporate a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS), based on the hierarchy of drainage options identified by National Planning Practice Guidance and taking into account ground conditions. Subject to compliance with such a condition, it is considered that the proposed development could be drained in an appropriate and sustainable manner without the risk of flooding elsewhere, in accordance with saved UDP policy EP1.7 and Core Strategy DPD policies SD-6 and SIE-3.

Land Contamination

The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Environment Team are contained within the Consultee Responses section above.

The Environment Team notes that there have been no known historic former potentially contaminated sources at the site. However, given the scale of the proposed development and the neglected nature of the proposed development area, the undertaking of a desktop study and walkover to ascertain whether or not a site investigation is required. This would be secured by suitably worded conditions, which should be applied as a phased approach, to require the submission, approval and implementation of an investigation, risk assessment, remediation scheme and remedial action, where necessary, into contamination at the site. Subject to compliance with such conditions, it is considered that the proposed development

would not be at risk from land contamination, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policies CS8 and SIE-3.

Energy Efficiency

As the proposed development would not exceed 10 residential units, the proposed development does not trigger the Council's carbon reduction targets, as defined by Core Strategy DPD policy SD-3. The submission of an Energy Statement, to confirm that energy efficient measures would be incorporated within the fabric of the development and to assess the potential use of low and zero carbon technologies within the development would be secured by way of suitably worded planning condition.

Developer Contributions

With regard to affordable housing, notwithstanding the requirements of Core Strategy DPD policy H-3, HLVNDP policy H1 and the Provision of Affordable Housing SPG, the NPPF states that the provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments (10 residential units or more). As such, on the basis of the proposal for 1 no. dwellinghouse, there is no requirement for affordable housing provision within the development.

In accordance with saved UDP policy L1.2, Core Strategy DPD policy SIE-2, HLVNDP policy R1, the Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments SPD and the NPPG, there is a usual requirement to ensure the provision and maintenance of formal recreation and children's play space and facilities within the Borough to meet the needs of the residents of the development. On the basis of the population capacity of the proposed development (1 no. 4 bedrooomed/5 person dwelling = 5), this would usually require a commuted sum payment of £7,480, to be secured by way of a Section 106 Agreement.

Notwithstanding the above policy requirement, consideration must be taken of the following comments of the Planning Inspector as part of the appeal against the refusal of planning application DC075288 for four dwellings at the site in 2020 :-

"I have not been provided with any detailed evidence to define the extent of any local deficiencies in open space, or the effect that the appeal proposal might have on them. Accordingly, I cannot be certain that the contributions sought would be necessary to make the development acceptable or that they would be directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. Consequently, and notwithstanding the aims of Policy SIE-2 of the Local Plan and the SPD, I am unable to conclude that a planning obligation seeking to provide these contributions would comply with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010".

In view of the Planning Inspectors comments, it is not considered reasonable to seek a commuted sum for the provision and maintenance of formal recreation and children's play space and facilities within the Borough in this particular case.

SUMMARY AND THE PLANNING BALANCE

It is acknowledged that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year housing supply (the current figure being 2.6 years) with the appropriate buffer, as required by Paragraph 74 of the NPPF. Given the position of housing under-supply which the

Borough is currently experiencing, Paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF is engaged, which requires that planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole.

It is noted that the proposal for 1 no. dwellinghouse would make a small contribution to housing supply and would bring minor economic benefits through additional spending and short-lived construction phase of the development. However, given the number of dwellings proposed, these benefits are considered to be limited and modest.

The proposal is considered to comprise appropriate development within the Green Belt, albeit as a Departure to the Development Plan, and it is considered that the proposed residential use and proposed extension could be accommodated on the site without causing harm to the residential amenity of the adjacent property. Subject to suitably worded planning conditions, no objections are raised from relevant consultees with regard to the issues of impact on trees; impact on protected species and ecology; land contamination; and energy efficiency. However, in the absence of harm with regard to these considerations, these matters are neutral factors.

Members are advised that the proposal is supported by the Conservation Officer, who considers that the proposed conversion would assist in the long-term preservation of the non-designated heritage asset and the scheme would ensure that the key elements of the buildings historic character and interest would be safeguarded. In addition, the Planning Inspector has previously acknowledged the historic and architectural significance of the barn and that its loss would result in substantial harm to the integrity of the non-designated heritage asset. Members should apportion significant weight to the retention of the non-designated heritage in consideration of the application.

Notwithstanding the above, objections are raised to the proposal from the Council Highway Engineer, who considers that the proposed dwelling would be sited in a location that is not suitably and safely accessible by foot or other sustainable modes of transport, by reason of the lack of a safe and practical pedestrian access route to the site and having regard to the sites proximity to public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes, shops and leisure uses and places of employment. The applicant has failed to submit detailed proposals to provide a pedestrian route through the adjacent field and is unable to do so and improve the pedestrian route along Torkington Road so as to ensure that the site can be safely accessed on foot and address the objections of the Highway Engineer. This is consistent with the previous Planning Inspectors comments that the site would not be a suitable location for housing for these reasons.

On this basis, when the range of considerations are weighed in the overall planning balance, the adverse impacts relating to pedestrian safety and the location of the site being unsuitable for residential development are considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal when assessed against the policies in the NPPF and the Development Plan taken as a whole. Accordingly, the proposal does not amount to sustainable development in the widest sense of the definition provided by the NPPF and, as such, the application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reason :-

- The proposed dwelling will be sited in a location that is not suitably and safely accessible by foot or other sustainable modes of transport by reason of the lack of a safe and practical pedestrian access route to the site and having regard to the site's proximity to public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes, shops and services, leisure uses and places of employment. As such the proposal will be contrary to policies CS9 : TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT, T-1 : TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT, T-3 : SAFETY AND CAPACITY ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK and SIE-1 : QUALITY PLACES of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

Should Marple Area Committee resolve to recommend the application for grant, contrary to the Officer recommendation to refuse, the application should be referred to the Planning and Highway Regulation Committee for determination as a Departure from the Development Plan.

MARPLE AREA COMMITTEE (1st DECEMBER 2021)

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

Members sought clarification from the Planning Officer on a number of matters, including whether or not the application could be determined by Marple Area Committee; the age of the building; current housing under-supply issues within the Borough; application of the 'tilted balance' in considering planning applications; how the proposal relates to similar schemes that have been considered elsewhere in the Borough where there were issues relating to access; whether or not conditions could be imposed or measures provided to mitigate any access concerns; the planning history of the adjacent farmhouse for an additional dwelling; the timeframes for the submission of any updated Ecological Surveys; whether or not a contribution would be required for open space provision; issues relating to the designation of the 'Quiet Lane' in terms of highway safety; the support offered to the proposal from the Conservation Officer in terms of the 'tilted balance'; inconsistencies with regard to the Highway Engineers comments in relation to similar applications where there are no pavements in proximity to sites; the mitigation measures required, albeit undeliverable, to make the scheme acceptable; accident history on Torkington Road; and as to whether or not there was a specified distance from local facilities that new dwellings needed to be located in order to be considered accessible. These matters were clarified by the Planning Officer.

The applicants Agent spoke in support of the application. It was noted that the one issues with the application related to pedestrian accessibility and the scheme was supported by all other Consultees. The intention for the proposal was to provide a family dwelling for the applicant adjacent to their elderly parents, to provide care and support. Support had been offered to the proposal from people in the local area. The acceptability of the scheme was considered to rest on a single issue articulated by the Council Highway Engineer. It was noted that the proposed vehicular access was considered acceptable and would result in an improvement to the current situation and would provide improved access for service vehicles. Car and cycle parking would accord with adopted standards. The application was supported by a Transport Technical Note and confirmation was provided that no accidents had been reported in the area. Whilst it was acknowledged that a small section of the road does not benefit from a footpath, no pedestrian safety concerns were raised. Based on the information contained within the Transport Technical Note, coupled with the significant benefits of the proposal, it was considered there should be no highway

concerns. The retention of the existing building on the site was considered to be a significant planning gain and supported by the Conservation Officer and previous Planning Inspector.

Members sought clarification from the Agent on a number of matters, including information contained within the Transport Survey; whether or not the Transport Survey concluded that the development would be safe; the reasons why the mitigation measures recommended by the Highway Engineer could not be delivered; and whether or not the proposed new vehicular access would result in an improvement to the existing access to the site.

There were no requests to speak in objection to the application.

Members debated the application. It was noted that there was a grassed access path in the vicinity of the site and it was considered that people living in rural areas would expect different access arrangements to those living in an urban area in relation to sustainable travel modes. There were a number of rural properties and rural roads in the area with no footways and applications had recently been granted for new properties on 'Quiet Lanes'. Whilst access, safety and sustainable transport would be fine in an ideal world, it was considered that the applicant would understand the area and what it would mean to live on a rural road with no footway. Such infill schemes were going to be commonplace going forward and Members needed to take a sensible and consistent approach. Members noted that each case should be taken on its own merits. The case in favour provided by the applicant was considered to be good, however Members could not control who occupied the dwelling. Officers had clearly laid out a judgement on pedestrian safety grounds, however there was a strong argument for retention of the existing building as supported by the Conservation Area, coupled with the 'Quiet Lane' designation. It was noted that the NPPF was in favour of sustainable development and the safety concerns needed to be weighed against the heritage benefits and the need for new housing. It was noted that the Conservation Officer was supportive of the scheme, the proposal would make a contribution towards housing and no other Consultee objections were raised. The main issue was the objection from the Highway Engineer. The existing housing under-supply situation was highlighted and it was noted that the scheme was for one house as opposed to the previously refused four house scheme. The proposal was considered to comprise appropriate development within the Green Belt and would deliver economic benefits. There were existing farm houses in the area, along with flats close by and housing estates, which were located a similar distance from services and sustainable modes of transport. Members acknowledged that the access improvements recommended by the Highway Engineer could not be provided as the applicant did not own the land. Members raised concerns as to inconsistencies with the Highway Engineers objection in relation to recently considered schemes. It was noted that vehicular access to the site would be imposed as part of the scheme and would make the road safer than the existing situation. On balance, it was considered that there would be highway safety and traffic management improvements, along with the heritage benefits. Whilst there were no pedestrian safety improvements within the scheme, it was noted that there was a pedestrian access that could be used. No history of accidents in the road had been reported and it was noted that other areas of the Borough had no pavements in proximity to residential properties.

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