

ITEM 2

Application Reference	DC/085887
Location:	Land South Of Chester Road (Part Of The Former Woodford Aerodrome) Chester Road Woodford Stockport
PROPOSAL:	Erection of a two-storey mixed-use local centre development comprising a convenience store and flexible commercial floorspace (Use Class E) at ground floor level and 6 no. two-bedroom apartments (Use Class C3) at first floor level, together with access, car parking, hard and soft landscaping, drainage infrastructure and other associated works
Type Of Application:	Full Application
Registration Date:	06.07.2022
Expiry Date:	20221005
Case Officer:	Jane Chase
Applicant:	Redrow Homes Ltd (Harrow Estates Division)
Agent:	Lichfields

UPDATE POST 1st DECEMBER 2022 AREA COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme Area Committee on 1st December 2022, Members agreed to defer consideration of this application so as to seek amended plans and additional information. This resolution is set out in more detail at the end of this report.

The application is therefore referred back to Members with the following:-

- Amended plans that show additional articulation to the elevation of the development to Chester Road. The applicant advises that the amended scheme seeks to take its cue from the Aviator Pub, using it as an architectural precedent considering the fenestrations, elevational treatment and materiality. In this respect this elevation has been reviewed to introduce more glazing at the ground floor to provide a more active frontage onto Chester Road, this has been achieved through the use of a mix clear/transparent glazing and also opaque (back painted or laminated interlayer).
- In addition to this, additional mullions have been added to the windows at first floor level reflecting the approach taken for the windows proposed within the first floor residential dwellings. It is also proposed to introduce render at first floor level reflecting the application of render to the adjacent commercial units and the Aviator Pub.
- To support the revised drawing pack, an addendum to the Planning Statement has also been submitted which seeks to address comments raised regarding the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan regarding lack of reference to the Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed wording of conditions relating to hours of operation and servicing, and a CEMP. The proposed condition wording

seeks to reflect the conditions imposed on the hybrid consent and are as follows:-

- The trading hours of the Class E floorspace hereby permitted shall be restricted to 07:00 - 23:00 daily.
 - Deliveries and servicing to the Class E floorspace hereby permitted shall be restricted to 07:00 – 19:00 daily.
 - No development shall commence until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details. The Construction Traffic Management Plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:
 - i. Details of the routing of demolition and construction vehicles to the site and access and egress arrangements within the site including details of signage, monitoring and enforcement;
 - ii. Site preparation, demolition and construction stages of development;
 - iii. Details of provisions for recycling of materials, the provision on site of a storage/delivery area for all plant, site huts, site facilities and materials;
 - iv. Details showing how all vehicles associated with the demolition and construction works are properly washed and cleaned to prevent the passage to mud and dirt onto the highway;
 - v. The methods to be used and the measures to be undertaken to control the emission of dust, noise and vibration arising from demolition and construction works;
 - vi. Measures to monitor vibration from demolition and construction activities on the site;
 - vii. A suitable and efficient means of suppressing dust, including the adequate containment of stored or accumulated material so as to prevent it becoming airborne at any time and giving rise to nuisance;
 - viii. Noise mitigation measures for all plant and processors;
 - ix. Details of contractors compound and car parking arrangements;
 - x. Screening and hoarding details;
 - xi. Delivery and collection times for construction purposes;
 - xii. Details of interim car parking management arrangements for the duration of demolition and construction stages;
 - xiii. Temporary access arrangements for pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists;
 - xiv. Details of a community liaison contact for the duration of all works associated with the development including complaints procedures and complaint response procedures;
 - xv. Prior notice and agreement procedures for works outside agreed limits and hours; and,
 - xvi. Membership of the Considerate Contractors Scheme
- With regards to affordable housing, the applicant notes that there is no policy requirement for the provision of affordable units, due to the number of dwellings proposed. They therefore maintain their position on this matter and will not be looking to provide any affordable dwellings on site.

Whilst not required by the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (as the amendments secured were not significant nor changed the nature of the application)

Officers notified neighbours and the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum of the receipt of amended plans on 15th December 2022 (noting that there was ample time to do so before the running of the agenda).

At the time of writing this report 6 further letters have been received objecting on the following grounds:-

- The visual representation is very poor. Woodford is a lovely village and this just looks a far cry from the initial Woodford district centre Harrow Estates drew up in its plans. The shopping centre should look more in keeping with the local area, with slanted roofs rather than designers arguing that it's based on an 'aircraft wing'. We were shown a lovely village centre, much similar to the aviator pub which has been built. I would urge the planners to go and look back again at the full, square block design of this and make it more of a centre in keeping with the local area.
- The original plans were pretty dire and looked nothing like the original concept drawings that Redrow shared over a period of several years with prospective residents. Whereas the revised plans offer a small improvement in terms of aesthetics, the improvements are really rather limited and in no way reflect the 'heritage' feel of the estate that Redrow so proudly champion as part of their sales pitch. I don't have all the original concept drawings, but the plan was for lower, pitched roof buildings situated further away from Verdon Roe Avenue, that look more in-keeping with what we now know the Aviator public house looks like, as well as the residential plots surrounding it.
- The revised plans for more industrial looking premises, something that would look at ease in a retail park, still bear no resemblance to the original concept plans for a 'village feel' shopping arcade that fits in with historic Woodford and the 'historic' look strived for in the much newer WGV. What they have done with the pub is very simple and in-keeping and is extremely effective. The plans for this development make use of cheaper building resources than the original plans suggested, are lazy and bare no consideration for the look of the properties or village around it. Rather than a pitched, tile roof, the property now has an arched metal roof – like a supermarket or hanger. Similarly, rather than arching the premises around a central car park, which would have been much more aesthetically pleasing, the development is now bunched up next to the junction of Verdon Roe Avenue and Chester Road. As part of the main application pack, the main photographic street scene from Chester Road quite succinctly sums it up, they have had to disguise the building aspect with 6 very large and conveniently placed trees which as we know, won't look like that for 20-30 years after they've been planted.
- The other commercial properties in the area are all housed in properties that resemble the local architecture. The hair salon, barbers shop, kitchen store and Budgen's convenience store on Chester Road (SK7 1QP/QS) all tie in with the village feel offered in Woodford.
- I do not wish for the proposals to be rejected outright, the area and expanding population is in need of commercial as well as residential use, but I urge you to consider pressing Redrow to take their obligation to the residents of the whole of Woodford, not just WGV, more seriously by revising the plans once more to tie-in sympathetically with the surrounding buildings and area. To submit plans at this stage of a far inferior quality build, both aesthetically and structurally, is a typically lazy and contemptable move by Redrow. Having

been a resident for 2+ years, it is abundantly clear they have repeatedly cut corners in the quality of construction of our house (and others no doubt) and also in public spaces throughout the development. They should not be given the opportunity to cut corners with this particular major communal planning development.

- We are already well served by shops and other facilities and need no more. If more are deemed to be required then they should be positioned within the Garden Village development where it would be truly accessible to those residents.
- Insufficient changes have been made since the previous application. Woodford already has a convenience store that adequately serves the local community and is not needed. The visual impact is not in keeping with the area at all. There will be noise pollution from reversing delivery trucks. The sum number of properties given planning permission has already been agreed, when is enough houses enough, it seems there is no limit?
- The developers state in paragraph 2.26 of their December 2022 Planning Statement Addendum that *"The design of the roof reduces the overall massing of the proposed development and an 'aeronautical' inspired roof profile in metal adds a characteristic form that hints to the historic use of the site"*. It is likely that few, if any, Woodford residents would want this inspiration, nor would they want the development to look like any of the following:
 - an aircraft factory
 - an aircraft hangar
 - an oversized aeroplane wing.What is needed is a roof genuinely reflecting the architectural precedent of the Aviator Pub and the existing adjacent commercial properties.
- The claim by the developers in paragraph 2.22 of their December 2022 Planning Statement Addendum that *"The Aviator Pub and adjacent commercial properties have been used as an architectural precedent"* is inaccurate and misleading, because those buildings all have tiled pitched roofs. The two wings of the proposed development should therefore both have tiled pitched roofs.
- The colossal energy price rises of the last few months, added to more general consideration of the existential threat of the global climate crisis, have highlighted the importance of the use of sustainable, renewable energy wherever possible. Happily, many homes in Woodford Garden Village already have solar panels on their tiled pitched roofs. In keeping with this, the use of pitched roofs on the proposed development would allow the installation of solar panels on those roof sections which face West, South or East.

Woodford Neighbourhood Forum – make the following comments:-

We support the comments made on this application by local councillors at the Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme South Area Committee on 1st December 2022. We are pleased to see that the relevant Woodford Neighbourhood Plan policies have been considered in the Planning Statement Addendum prepared by Lichfield's on behalf of Redrow Homes Ltd.

On behalf of residents, the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum management committee raised particular concerns about the first draft of the design for the

commercial centre, which was considered to be not in keeping with the style of either the original Woodford village or the Woodford Garden Village. These concerns were echoed in comments made by councillors at the Area Committee meeting. We welcome the proposals outlined in the addendum to take architectural cues from The Aviator Pub on the Woodford Garden Village and adjacent commercial properties in the original Woodford village.

We are disappointed that our suggestions presented in our response dated 18 August 2022, have not been acknowledged. Our previous suggestions are repeated below:

“We suggest that the site would be better arranged with the small units (with apartments above) arranged parallel to Chester Road (and wrapping around the corner into Verdon Roe Avenue if necessary) while the convenience store is positioned at the right angles to these units. This arrangement could provide greater continuity with the existing line of shops and the Chester Road street scene. The convenience store would be positioned deeper into the garden village and have less impact on the Chester Road street scene and the openness of the Green Belt. The apartments and small shops need parking spaces. This should ideally be behind the shops, so pulling the shops forward would allow for space for parking for the shops to be able to transfer goods into the store and the apartments to have parking spaces. We note that a fire escape may be needed from the upper floor.”

The provision of 6 no. two-bedroom apartments is welcomed because smaller dwellings are needed in Woodford. We support the councillor’s suggestions for inclusion of affordable dwellings.

As stated previously, opportunities for employment and social interaction are welcomed.

1 further letter has also been received supporting the application but offers no comment on why they support it.

Any further comments received after the publication of this agenda will be reported orally to Members.

In response to the above Members are advised as follows:-

- The amended plans showing revisions to the Chester Road frontage are considered acceptable (see appended plans and updated visuals). The introduction of 9 windows to the ground floor with louvred panels above and render to the first floor in contrast to the wider use of brick will add visual interest to this elevation. It is noted that of the ground floor windows proposed only 1 is transparent however it is acknowledged that the operational requirements of the building in terms of the layout of racking and chiller compartments for the storage and display of goods has an impact on the external articulation of the elevations. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the revisions now presented are an improvement upon that originally submitted and upon that previously considered by Members. For these reasons it is considered that although the proposed development is not of the same architectural approach as that prevailing, it will nonetheless respond not only to development within the Garden Village but within the wider Woodford area as well through a more contemporary interpretation of the wider vernacular.

- The streetscenes have been updated to reflect the revised plans. In response to comments made by Members at Area Committee, the applicant advises that the 2 drawings of the streetscenes are to scale however the photographic streetscene is not due to each photograph having a perspective left and right and into the distance beyond which cannot be portrayed to an accurate scale. Members are advised that applicants are not expected to provide photographic streetscenes although clearly they do assist in portraying how a development may appear in the context of existing development. The drawn streetscenes that they have included are, more importantly, to scale and in this respect the applicant has provided all that is required to assess the application.
- On the subject of affordable housing Members are advised that para 64 of the NPPF confirms that such should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments (which in respect of the residential development proposed, this application is not). Whilst it could be argued that such provision may assist in justifying otherwise inappropriate development in the Green Belt, for the reasons set out in this report, it is considered that there is sufficient justification already without having to explore such provision. The fact that affordable housing has been secured as part of the wider Garden Village development is irrelevant; this application proposing 6 apartments as part of the local centre must be considered on its own merits and against the relevant policies in the Development Plan and NPPF. The application of such does not give rise to the need for affordable housing provision.
- With regard to conditions, those relating to the opening and servicing of the Class E units are acceptable and will ensure that there is no adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residential occupiers (including those within the proposed development which will be closest to the commercial uses proposed). It should also be noted that the opening hours condition reflects that imposed on the hybrid consent (noting that there is no condition on this consent relating to the hours at which the commercial units can be serviced). As with all other applications, the applicant is not expected at this stage to evidence how the construction of the development will be managed so as to protect the amenities of the locality and conditions of highway safety. Rather such details will be secured through the imposition of a condition such as that suggested by the applicant.
- The need for means of escape in the event of fire is governed by the Building Regulations and not planning policy. It is expected that the applicant will have investigated such requirements before submitting this planning application however should it be established at a later date that such provision is required then this may necessitate the need for a new planning application. This however does not preclude the determination of this submission.
- On a general note, Members are reminded that it is the role of the Planning Authority to determine the application as presented to them. Objections from residents that the scheme does not reflect that presented to them in previous public engagement exercises are noted, however, a decision must be taken on the basis of the application as currently submitted as to whether the proposals are acceptable or not.
- In relation to sustainable design, compliance with Part L of the Building Regulations will secure a development, which in terms of energy efficiency, is superior to that required by the current Core Strategy Policy SD-3. The

development will achieve carbon reductions beyond those expressed in policy SD3 through the inclusion of air source heat pump technology, a high-performance thermal envelope and an appropriate building services specification. In response to the specific objection above, Members are advised that photovoltaic panels are proposed by this application being fitted to the south roof plane of the building fronting Chester Road. The applicant also advises that whilst such panels are not proposed to the roof above the residential dwellings, this element has been designed to accommodate additional PV panels such that they can be fitted at a later date. Noting the compliance with and exceedance beyond the requirements of policy SD-3, there is no planning justification for further amendment of the application in this respect.

The application remains recommended for approval subject to the imposition of conditions and the completion of a S106 as set out within the report below.

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Called up to Area Committee by Cllr Bagnall
PHR – Departure to the Development Plan

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a two-storey mixed-use local centre development comprising 1468m² of Class E (commercial, business and service use) floorspace and 6no. 2 bed apartments. The Class E floorspace will include a 431m² convenience store with 496m² of commercial floorspace at first floor level (including the lobby and bathrooms) together with 541m² of commercial floorspace at ground floor level in the form of 6 individual units below the apartments. Access, car parking, hard and soft landscaping, drainage infrastructure and other associated works are also proposed. In detail the development will comprise the following:

The erection of a 2 storey detached building, L shaped in its footprint, fronting Chester Road and Verdon Roe Avenue. The proposed building would be positioned 12m to 10m from the eastern side boundary of the site, forward of the adjacent commercial parade by 8.6m. The front elevation to Chester Road would be positioned 6.4m to 8m behind a landscaped strip. Here the building would measure 29.4m wide and 16m deep. Rising 7.4m to eaves with a gently curved roof structure, this element of the building would be a maximum of 9.5m high.

A Class E convenience store is proposed at ground floor level comprising a total of circa 431m² of floorspace of which 279m² will be sales floorspace and 152m² will be back of house. The public entrance to this store will be to the rear elevation off Verdon Roe Avenue with service and back of house access from the eastern side elevation via the service yard that will be positioned between the development and adjacent commercial parade. Above this at first floor level an additional circa 496m² of flexible Class E commercial floorspace is proposed with separate access from a 2 storey access and service core that connects this element of the development fronting Chester Road with that to the rear fronting Verdon Roe Avenue. This service core would also accommodate at roof level, plant necessary to service the development.

To Verdon Roe Avenue, the building would be set back from the side elevation of that fronting Chester Road by some 8m. The proposed building would be positioned

14.4m to 15.4m from the boundary to Verdon Roe Avenue behind a hard and soft landscaped area. Measuring 38m wide and 14m to 16.8m deep, this building would rise 7m to eaves with a gently curved roof structure rising to a maximum height of 8.7m high.

6 Class E commercial units are proposed at ground floor level comprising a total of circa 541m² of floorspace. Public access to each of these units would be from the front western elevation to Verdon Roe Avenue with back of house and service access from the rear eastern elevation via the service yard to the rear.

Above these units at first floor level 6 no. 2 bed apartments are proposed each with a small external balcony incorporated within the envelope of the building to the front elevation. Access to these apartments would be from either end of this element of the development via an external staircase and landing.

Access to the service yard is from Verdon Roe Avenue to the south of the building. In this service yard is manoeuvring space for delivery and service vehicles together with storage for commercial and residential refuse and a bike store for the apartments. To the south of the building and service yard a total of 70 parking spaces are proposed including 8 disabled spaces closest to the building of which 2 would have access to an electric vehicle charging point. 6 other spaces within the wider parking provision would also provide for the charging of electric vehicles. The access into the car park would connect with that serving the Aviator PH to the east of the site thus connecting Verdon Roe Avenue with Lancastrian Way. Minor revisions to the layout of the car park have been secured during the consideration of the application.

The proposed development is of a simple contemporary design, constructed from facing brickwork with powder coated aluminium panels, windows and doors. As originally proposed the elevation to Chester Road would be solid at ground floor level with no openings or windows whilst that above at first floor level would contain more features in the form of windows and panelling. Amended plans have however since been submitted showing increased detailing to this elevation to Chester Road. The front elevation to Verdon Roe Avenue presents a more animated form with the entrance to the convenience store and floor to ceiling shopfronts to the commercial units at ground floor level. Above floor to ceiling windows to the apartments are proposed together with the recessed balconies. The southern end elevation and eastern elevation to the service yard largely comprise solid elevations punctuated with smaller doors and windows. The main entrance to the convenience store is evident in the southern elevation of the development comprising floor to ceiling doors and windows at ground floor level; windows are proposed to the flexible commercial floorspace above at first floor level. The side, eastern elevation of the convenience store is also evident in this elevation and other than a pair of doors to the back of house area will again be solid at ground floor. Above at first floor level, windows to the flexible commercial floorspace are proposed.

The roof over the development comprises 3 elements. That parallel to Chester Road over the convenience store and flexible commercial floorspace would comprise a simple curved form constructed from a standing seam system. To each side elevation (western and eastern) the space between the eaves and highest roof point would be glazed. The roof to the 2 storey access and service core would be flat and finished in a single ply membrane. Beyond this to the south and parallel to Verdon Roe Avenue, the roof over the 6 commercial units and apartments would again comprise a simple curved form constructed from a standing seam system. Again, to

the southern side elevation the space between the eaves and highest roof point would be glazed.

The application is accompanied by the following documents:-

- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Employment and Skills Plan
- Transport Statement and Delivery Strategy
- Noise Assessment
- Hard and Soft Landscaping Details
- Landscape Design Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Drainage Strategy
- Lighting Scheme
- Ecological Survey
- Contaminated Land Survey
- Crime Impact Statement
- Energy Statement
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Plans showing the development as described above are appended to this report.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is located on the south side of Chester Road immediately to the east of the junction with Verdon Rose Avenue. The site which is irregular in shape but largely rectangular with an arm extending to Lancastrian Way, extends to some 0.65ha of land and occupies the site of the former Bodycote Heat Treatment works (circa 0.3ha) and part of the former Woodford Aerodrome now often referred to as Woodford Garden Village (WGV). The site is vacant, clear of any buildings however has been soft landscaped to provide an attractive setting to the entrance into WGV.

Adjacent to the site on Chester Road to the east is a small parade of 4 commercial premises positioned behind forecourt parking. Beyond this to the east is Lancastrian Way, one of the two entrances into WGV which also gives access to the Aviator PH and car park which adjoins part of the eastern boundary of the application site. To the west on the opposite side of Verdon Roe Avenue is a ribbon of 2 storey detached dwellings, all positioned behind generous landscaped front gardens. Behind these houses and accessed from Verdon Roe Avenue will be a recently approved extra care development comprising bungalows and a 3 storey apartment building with extensive car parking and landscaped gardens. A similar form of ribbon development is evident to the north side of Chester Road opposite the site but here residential development is punctuated by a small convenience store and the extensive site accommodating Woodford Garden Centre. To the rear of the site are 2 storey detached houses forming part of the wider and extensive WGV development stretching southwards to meet the Borough boundary with Cheshire East.

The UDP Proposal Map identifies the application site as being within the Woodford Landscape Character Area and the Greater Manchester Green Belt within Stockport Borough. The application site does not relate to any heritage assets.

POLICY BACKGROUND

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

The Development Plan includes-

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

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

Policies set out in the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan adopted 2019

Saved policies of the SUDP Review

LCR1.1 Landscape Character Areas

LCR1.1a The Urban Fringe Including the River Valleys

NE1.2 Sites of Nature Importance

EP1.7 Development and Flood Risk

GBA1.1 Extent of Green Belt

GBA1.2 Control of Development in Green Belt

GBA1.5 Residential Development in Green Belt

GBA1.7 Major Existing Developed Sites in the Green Belt

GBA 2.1 Protection of Agricultural Land

L1.1 Land for Active Recreation

L1.2 Children`s Play

HP1.5 Living Over the Shop

PSD2.6 Local Shops

SE1.2 Shopfronts

MW1.5 Control of Waste from Development

LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies

CS1 Overarching Principles: Sustainable Development – Addressing Inequalities and Climate Change

SD-1 Creating Sustainable Communities

SD-3 Delivering the Energies Opportunities Plan

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

H2 Housing Phasing

CS5 Access to Services

CS6 Safeguarding and Strengthening the Service Centre Hierarchy

AS1 The Vitality and Viability of Stockport`s Service Centres

AS3 Main Town Centre Uses, Hot Food Takeaways and Prison Development Outside Existing Centres

CS7 Accommodating Economic Development

AED4 Employment Development in Rural Areas

AED6 Employment Sites Outside Protected Employment Areas

CS8 Safeguarding & Improving the Environment

SIE-1 Quality Places

SIE-2 Provision of Recreation and Amenity Open Space in New Developments

SIE-3 Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment

CS9 Transport & Development
H-1 Design of Residential Development
T-1 Transport and Development
T-2 Parking in Developments
T-3 Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network

Woodford Neighbourhood Plan (Former Bodycote Site Only)

ENV3 Protecting Woodford's Natural Features
ENV4 Supporting Biodiversity
EMP1 New Businesses Within the Area
EMP2 Loss of Employment
DEV4 Design of New Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance

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

Open Space Provision and Commuted Sum Payments
Sustainable Transport' SPD
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
Woodford Aerodrome Opportunity Site SPD

National Planning Policy Framework

A Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 20th July 2021 replaced the previous NPPF (originally issued 2012 & revised 2018 and 2019). The NPPF has not altered the fundamental legal requirement under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations (such as the NPPF) indicate otherwise.

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

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

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

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

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

Para.8 *"Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in*

mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

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

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

Para.11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole”.**

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

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

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

Para. 55 “Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.”

Para. 60 “To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.”

Para. 62 “Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families

with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).”

Para. 64 *“Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments.”*

Para.69 *“Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should: c) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes.”*

Para. 81 *“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.”*

Para.82 *“Planning policies should:*

- a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;*
- b) set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;*
- c) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and*
- d) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.”*

Para.84 *“Planning policies and decisions should enable:*

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;”*

Para.85 *“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.”*

Para. 86 *“Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.”*

Para. 87 *“Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in*

accordance with an up-to-date plan. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.”

Para. 88 “When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored.”

Para. 90 “When assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500m² of gross floorspace). This should include assessment of:

- a) the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and*
- b) the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme).”*

Para. 91 “Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the considerations in paragraph 90, it should be refused.”

Para. 92 “Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and*
- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”*

Para. 93 “To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*

- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.”

Para. 98 “Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.”

Para. 104 “Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:

- a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;
- b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;
- c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;
- d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and
- e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.”

Para. 105. The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”

Para. 110 “In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;
- c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and
- d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.”

Para. 111 “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”

Para 112. “Within this context, applications for development should:

- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
- b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
- d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
- e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.”

Para. 113 “All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.”

Para. 119 “Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”

Para.120 “Planning policies and decisions should:

- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;
- b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;
- c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;
- d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure).”

Para.122 “Planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability. Where the local planning authority considers there to be no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan:

- a) it should, as part of plan updates, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use that can help to address identified needs (or, if appropriate, deallocate a site which is undeveloped); and

b) in the interim, prior to updating the plan, applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area.”

Para. 123 “Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. In particular, they should support proposals to:

a) use retail and employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres, and would be compatible with other policies in this Framework; and

b) make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools and hospitals, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.”

Para. 124 “Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;

b) local market conditions and viability;

c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;

d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and

e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.”

Para. 126 “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”

Para.130 “Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁹; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

Para.131 *“Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”*

Para. 134 *“Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:*

- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or*
- b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.”*

Para. 137 *“The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.”*

Para.138 *“Green Belt serves five purposes:*

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

Para.147 *“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”*

Para.148 *“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”*

Para.149 *“A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

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

- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.”

Para.150 “Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

- a) mineral extraction;
- b) engineering operations;
- c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
- f) development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.”

Para. 152 “The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.”

Para.157 “In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:

- a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and
- b) take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.”

Para. 159 “Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.”

Para.167 “When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment.”

Para.169 *“Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. The systems used should:*

- a) take account of advice from the lead local flood authority;*
- b) have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards;*
- c) have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development; and*
- d) where possible, provide multifunctional benefits.”*

Para.174 *“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

Para. 180 *“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;”*

Para. 183 *“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that:*

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

Para.184 *“Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.”*

Para.185 *“Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:*

- a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;*
- b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and*

c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.”

Para. 218 “The policies in this Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication. Plans may also need to be revised to reflect policy changes which this Framework has made.”

Para. 219 “However, existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).”

Planning Practice Guidance

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is a considerable planning history to this site, the most relevant of which is set out below:-

DC053832 Former Woodford Aerodrome, Chester Road, Woodford.

Hybrid planning application for:

Part A - Outline planning permission (excluding phase 1) for the erection of:

Up to 775 dwellings;

C2 Extra Care Unit;

Commercial floorspace (comprising up to 8,361m² of Class B1c);

A public house (comprising some 650m² of Class A4 floorspace);

Retail floorspace (comprising up to 5 shop units and some 1000m² of Class A1, A3 & A5 floorspace);

A one form entry primary school;

Use Class D1 floorspace (300m²); and

The provision of associated infrastructure (including roads, footpaths, cycleways and open space)

Part B - Full planning permission for Phase 1 for the erection of 145 dwellings and the provision of associated infrastructure (including roads, footpaths, cycleways and open space).

Approved Subject to Conditions and S106 21st January 2015

NB: Reserved Matters applications have been submitted and approved in respect of all the development granted outline planning permission except for the retail and Use Class B1c and D1 floorspace. In all other respects the development is nearing completion.

DC053833 Former Woodford Aerodrome, Chester Road, Woodford.

Full planning application for:

The demolition of the existing buildings, remediation of land (including mitigation/removal of runways, hardstanding and taxiways) and the regrading of the land to create development platforms for a residential led mixed-use development.

Approved Subject to Conditions 7th October 2014

DC054212 Former Woodford Aerodrome, Chester Road, Woodford.

Full planning application for:

The formation and construction of two accesses from Chester Road to serve a development of up to 920 dwellings, C2 Extra Care Unit; commercial floor space (Comprising up to 8,361 sq.m (90,000 sq.ft) of class B1C); a public house (comprising up to 650 sq.m of class A4 floorspace); retail floorspace (comprising up to 5 shop units and some 1,000 sq.m of class A1, A3 & A5 floorspace); A one form entry primary school; and use class D1 floorspace (up to 300 sq.m).
Approved Subject to Conditions 5th November 2014

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

The receipt of this application has been advertised by way of a site and press notice. The occupiers of 71 neighbouring properties have also been notified in writing. At the time of writing this report:-

14 letters have been received objecting to the application as originally submitted on the grounds set out below. As the amended plans proposing revisions to the elevation to Chester Road and to the layout of the car park did not propose significant revisions, no further engagement with neighbouring occupiers has been undertaken (in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement):-

The site designated for the convenience store and approximately half of the area designated for the commercial floor space and apartments, is the former Bodycote site and as such was never part of the aerodrome site or its MEDS area. It falls within the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan Area (WNA), but I can find no reference to the WNA in the documentation and there is no effort to show that the proposed plans are in compliance with WNA policies.

The convenience store building is a large block in the landscape. The Chester Road facing side of the building appears to be almost 10 metres in front of the building line of the existing shops and the houses to the west on Chester Road. It is shown as being slightly taller than the existing shops. The artists' impression gives the impression that the existing Chester Road houses are massive structures close to the roadway. They are not.

The size and mass of these proposed buildings will have a much greater effect than the buildings that were demolished several years ago, serving to significantly diminish the openness of the greenbelt in this locale, dominating and greatly transforming (not in a good way) the character and ambiance of the area. In its present form, the proposed development is completely inappropriate and contrary to the NPPF.

It is my view that the application does not comply with the following Woodford Neighbourhood Plan policies:

EMP1: Reason - The development does not respect local character

DEV2: Reason - The development does not respect local character

DEV4: Reason - The development does not respect local character

The same absence of respect for local character in the application, also largely applies to its relationship to the garden village estate itself.

The proposed plans are far too industrial and not at all in keeping with the broader development and surrounding area. They do not resemble the plans originally proposed by Harrow Estates for this part of the site and which were much more in keeping with the character of the area. They have tried to design buildings that look

like the old aircraft hangers and a broken wing roof, they are in fact just putting up cheap buildings that are an eyesore.

The convenience store must interface with and interact with both Chester Road and the existing retail units to the left of the proposed new facility. The elevation facing Chester Road needs to contain an entrance for foot traffic from Chester Road. The elevation itself needs to be made less imposing and blend with the surrounding properties and engage with Chester Road and the community. There should be a footpath connecting the existing retail spaces with the new (a new foot path not the public pavement).

The proposed development is to be sited too close to Chester Road and therefore it will have a negative visual impact not in keeping with the surrounding and immediate semi-rural area.

The siting the development on the main road appears aimed at outside visitors with the probability of increased traffic and inadequate parking facilities.

We have no need of a new "landmark" building as we already have Notcutt's Garden Centre and The Aviator pub as points of reference.

Does the community really need another convenience store virtually opposite another one which has served the existing local community well for so many years. I am sure that if the intention is to service the newly created WGV then it would be better placed more centrally within the new village itself and encourage pedestrian shoppers.

The area intended to be developed has only just been landscaped clearly to enhance the appearance of the Redrow development for the potential new home owners and to keep to their declaration for the development, The existing landscape is both sympathetic and quite lovely, why dig it all up again to be replaced with what looks like a very ugly building and looks somewhat like silver space ship.

The Aviator public house development sited near to the alternate entrance has been constructed in a traditional manor and like the original Budgen's shop resembles as closely as possible the housing and other developments on Chester Road.

The proposed development should already be able to accommodate flats/apartments within the garden village so there is no requirement for them on the main road.

The development will affect my long standing business within Woodford community. We have already got evidence of the car park that it is in front of my business being blocked and have destroyed the car park by contractors working on the estate that have been working on behalf of Redrow. My premises is a quiet working environment and the noise level will affect this massively. The dirt and dust this also creates is also a huge concern for my business and the local community and something we do not want to live through again.

They are building a bike store, bin store and six 2 bed apartments which will not only be an utter nightmare during the building process, but will also be an ongoing concern if the planning goes ahead.

The emptying of the bins on a regular basis will cause noise.

There has been far too much building work in Woodford granted by the Council already in my opinion. Woodford was a lovely quiet area once upon a time, and now it is very busy and the roads are bordering on dangerous. Further development will cause noise from the construction works as well as total disruption of the car park in front of the adjacent commercial premises with contractors parking wherever they feel like such that you can't get your own vehicle out of the parking area. It is obvious that the proposed location will add to existing traffic in the immediate vicinity of the junction onto Chester Road and will encourage even more added traffic from the inevitable passing trade.

The Travel Plan suggests that parking is contained; this can only truly be achieved if access from the pub side is restricted. If the access is as proposed is approved the route would turn in to a thoroughfare and the risk of vehicular collision is increased.

There will be additional traffic increases observed from pub patrons exiting via Verdon Roe Avenue. The site is already restricted to two entry and exit points, Lancastrian Way and Verdon Roe Avenue. Facilitating vehicle exit points from Verdon Roe Avenue serves to create bottle necks within the design.

The Travel Plan grants the operators the right to review delivery and servicing scheduling. These in my view are not substantial, sufficient, or considerate. Each commercial unit will have multiple deliveries through the week. Each unit may offset deliveries to alternate with other units meaning as a neighbour I could see and hear goods vehicles accessing the site daily. With the operator in charge of reviews, they may deem more frequent, earlier, or even seven-day delivery schedules to be appropriate.

The current convenience store already has goods vehicles in attendance every day. These can arrive from 6am onwards and creates a noise nuisance every day. Adding 6 new commercial units will only serve to increase the noise levels faced by residents. Should planning proceed I would like to see stronger measures in place such as no goods deliveries before 9am and no later than 7.30pm Residents are already fed up with the noise and this development seeks to add to it.

The existing convenience store attracts significant passing trade, this leads to parked vehicles blocking mine and neighbouring drive ways, blocking our access to enter or exit our property and also blocking our vision to the oncoming traffic to get out of our properties. As heavy goods vehicles, cars etc. park in bus stops on both sides, along Chester Road and the pavement erosion can be observed from the presence of goods vehicles. All this congestion will inevitably lead to a serious crash and possibly fatalities without some measures around these "stores". The existing convenience store has a car park on front of the store and vehicles still don't park in the car park, where the new buildings car park is at the back of the units therefore this will cause even more congestion on Chester Road.

Once this does happen it is also inevitable the council will impose traffic calming measures. All of this is retrospective measures to correct poor judgement during the initial application. I would reiterate, placing the development further inside the Redrow estate would serve the Redrow community better and reduce levels of risk from traffic and pedestrian movements.

Few people will walk to the store or cycle. The information upon which the transport impact of the development is based is therefore flawed.

The proposed development will attract and give rise to more crime and anti social behaviour.

The impact of noise has not been fully assessed in the Noise Impact Assessment in terms of mechanical plant, concurrent deliveries and delivery vehicles moving into position.

Other than a convenience store there is no hard plans for whether there's going to be any much needed family facilities for the community such as a GP (we have to travel off site in a car to Poynton or Bramhall), gym (again we have to travel in a car to one) or family meeting place like a soft play/café.

1 letter has been received supporting the development on the following grounds:-

As a residential owner directly affected, I want to applaud the thoughtful design of this application. It considers commercial and jobs aspect of front facing to the main road, as well as respect to residential homeowners behind with the position of the car park, extension of the already planted tree buffer zone, and providing a quieter zone to residential units, with public realm of open space thoughtfully considered.

2 letters have been received neither objecting nor supporting the development but making the following comments:-

There does not appear to be any detail as to how traffic will be managed. There is increased footfall into the estate and the commercial units will also increase this. It would seem beneficial that some form of safe crossing is added to Chester Road as currently there is no provision for this and the traffic is increasing or traffic calming measures in the form of speed cameras as there is an issue with speeding vehicles. This would not seem to be an issue for Harrow Estates but one for Stockport Council.

The opening hours of the retail units should be restricted in order to respect local residence regarding traffic and noise levels. Opening hours should be restricted to no longer than 8am-8pm.

Waste disposal should be controlled for both the retail units and bins provided within the car park area to control waste. It should also be the responsibility of the units to control their own waste and that of the bins on the car park.

There should be mechanical means to control access to the car park when the retail units are closed. There can be access via a barrier of some description for residents above the shops. This is to stop unwanted vehicles congregating on the car park at night causing noise and litter as well as posing security issues.

The whole area should be covered by CCTV to control and monitor crime.

There should be sufficient external lighting to help deter crime, especially if there is going to be a proposed pedestrian route through the car park to the Aviator public house.

Any deliveries should be restricted to within the opening hours of the retail units. No deliveries should be able to deliver at night due to noise pollution.

Signage for individual units should be controlled and should be suitable for a development of this location and prominence within a small local village. Large totem

signs should not be allowed which will make the development look like a retail park which needs to be avoided.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & PRE APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which details the public consultation that was carried out by the applicant ahead of submitting a full application for the development proposed is included in Planning Statement submitted with this application. This is an important element of the planning process and the determination of this application. Early public engagement as well as that with statutory and non statutory consultees is not only encouraged by this Planning Authority but also by the Government through the NPPF (para's 39 to 42).

The SCI advises that the applicant and their consultant team have undertaken engagement with Council Officers, key stakeholders and the public to discuss and inform the emerging proposals for the application site. Consultation with the local community took place whilst Covid-19 restrictions were in place and included a virtual meeting with Woodford Community Council on 13th May 2021 and a leaflet drop to around 950 properties within the Woodford Neighbourhood Area and WGV.

The leaflet was distributed on two separate occasions: the first leaflet drop took place on 21st May 2021, and the second on 14th June 2021. Responses were invited by 5th July 2021.

A total of 185 completed forms were received, which is a response rate of around 1 in 5. An analysis of the responses is set out below:

The responses indicate that the local centre would be used regularly by residents of WGV and the wider community. 84% of participants state they would use the facilities at least once per week, with 31% suggesting they would visit on a daily basis.

In response to the question as to how users would access the development, 92% of participants including walking within their response, with 66% recording walking as their only likely means of visiting the local centre. Only 6% of participants responded that they would access the local centre by car alone.

Users were asked which potential uses they would be keen to see in addition to a convenience store and café. There was a mixed response to the range of potential uses identified (those being a deli, flexible working space, gym, nursery and pharmacy) albeit a deli and a pharmacy were overwhelmingly the most popular suggestions by a significant margin, with 73% and 78% of respondents claiming they would 'like to see this use' respectively.

Respondents were also encouraged to offer any additional comments that they had regarding the proposed local centre. A diverse range of opinions and suggestions relating to the local centre were received, but recurring issues included:

- Principle of development;
- Need for local services/community hub; and
- Impact on WGV and the wider community.

In terms of the detailed comments received, there was a preference for convenient service uses that reduce the need to travel further afield, or to replace those which

have been lost (i.e., post office). Some respondents referred to the role of the local centre in creating a community. The integration of the development within the wider Woodford community, particularly in terms of the impact of existing local businesses, was also a key issue for some respondents.

In addition to this public engagement the applicant sought pre application advice from the Planning Authority in respect of proposals comprising 1009m² of retail floorspace with the convenience store being 441m², 428m² of office floorspace at first floor level and 6 commercial units totalling 568.5m².

This engagement is welcome and accord with para's 39 to 42 of the NPPF as well as the Council's drive for applicants to engage with them, stakeholders and residents at an early stage.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Planning Policy (Employment) – No objections.

The proposal is located on a site formerly occupied by Bodycote, a metal thermal processing company that operated a B2 industrial use. The premises have since been demolished and, whilst not part of the original hybrid consent for WGV, now forms part of the wider site and is proposed under this application to be the preferred location of the new local centre.

The site is not designated as an employment area, lying in the Green Belt. Loss of employment uses in locations outside of designated employment areas is covered under Core Strategy DM Policy AED-6. As such, the applicant is required to meet the four criteria in the policy, specifically the case for the site to be no longer viable for its previous use.

We disagree with the agent's position that there is no loss of employment land, although we note that justification has been provided against the criteria of policy AED-6 and judge that the policy has been complied with. It is acknowledged that in practical terms the reuse of the land for B2 purposes is unlikely and that the site is no longer viable for employment use.

Planning Policy (Retail) – No objections subject to conditions.

The agent puts forward the case in the application through an updated retail impact study that despite the increase in floorspace the proposed scheme continues to comply with Core Strategy DM Policy AS-3 as the proposed additional floorspace and its new location on the site would have no greater impact on surrounding district centres of Bramhall and Poynton than that previously assessed under the hybrid consent. This has been reviewed by Officers and we have no objections to its content as it has been prepared in line with the NPPF and PPG, reflects the latest evidence in the Council's 2019 Retail and Leisure Study and emerging 2022 Retail and Leisure Study update and its conclusions appear to be reasonable.

It is judged that there is no requirement for a sequential test given that it has been established through the grant of the hybrid consent that a local centre is intrinsically linked with the Woodford Garden Village development and is required to serve its growing population.

Whilst it is found that the convenience store floorspace and its quoted sales area is in line with the hybrid consent conditions, there is no indication of the proportion

which will be set aside for comparison goods. I would therefore advise that we should include a condition on any permission that a maximum of 56m² only be used for the sale of comparison goods. This is to ensure that the primary function of the store is the sale of convenience goods and consequently to safeguard the vitality and viability of centres having regard to Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy and Paragraph 90 of the NPPF.

It is recognised that the original hybrid consent through a condition restricted the conversion of the A3 and A5 floorspace to A2 uses (financial and professional services). As A2 is now covered under Class E and would be suitable in the proposed local centre the subject of this application, I am satisfied that there is no need for a similar condition.

Finally, I request that a condition is added to limit the individual unit size of the 6 ground floor commercial units to a maximum floorspace of no more than 250 sqm gross. This will ensure compliance with Saved UDP Policy PSD2.6 on Local Shops and will enable control over future plans to remodel the units that could cause harm to the vitality and viability of nearby centres.

Planning Policy (Housing) – No Objections.

In terms of the housing element of the proposal, the six apartments proposed do not form part of the original permission for housing across wider site at the Former Woodford Aerodrome. Consequently those six units are in addition to the 920 dwellings approved under the original approval DC/053832.

Housing Supply Position: The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to identify and maintain at least a 5-year housing land supply against its defined housing requirements. Stockport is currently in a position of prolonged, significant under-supply with only 3.2 years of housing supply when considered against the most up-to-date housing need position. In these circumstances, the Framework notes that local planning authorities should boost significantly the supply of housing. As such, whilst it is not a major development, the principle of the delivery of 6 new apartments is to be welcomed.

Accessibility and location of the housing development: Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy directs new residential development towards the more accessible parts of the Borough. Policy H-2 confirms that when there is less than a 5 year deliverable supply of housing (as is currently the case) the required accessibility scores will be lowered to allow the deliverable supply to be topped up by other sites in accessible locations. However, at present, the scale of the shortfall is such that in order to genuinely reflect the current position in that regard the score has been reduced to zero.

The apartments are located above the proposed commercial (Class E) units which form part of a new development for a local centre intended to serve the immediate area of Woodford. The provision of residential development about those units represents a positive use of land and space, reflecting NPPF para 120, and is in conformity Saved UDP Policy HP1.5 'Living Over the Shop'.

Housing Mix: The proposal includes 6 two-bedroomed apartments. The latest Housing Needs Assessment indicates that there is a shortfall in this type of property in the Woodford area and therefore the delivery of these units would be welcomed.

Affordable Housing: Given the scale of the housing element at six units there is no requirement for any affordable housing provision.

Planning Policy (Green Belt) – No objections subject to provisos.

The site is washed over by a Green Belt designation and falls within a 'major existing development site in the Green Belt '(MEDS) according to the UDP proposals map. The proposal is therefore subject to paragraphs 137,138, 147,148,149 and 150 of the NPPF and is addressed at a local level by the UDP Review Policies GBA 1.5 and GBA 1.7.

The area of land located within the former Woodford Aerodrome Major Existing Developed Site [MEDS] (southern portion of the site) benefits from outline planning permission for retail floorspace (comprising up to 5 shop units and some 1000 sq. m. of Class A1, A3 & A5 floorspace), as part of extant hybrid planning consent DC/053832. It was envisaged by the indicative masterplan that the proposed local centre would be located to the north of the site, close to Chester Road. The principle of development on this part of the site has therefore been established through the granting of the hybrid planning permission.

Whilst the provision of commercial uses on part of the site is accepted through the extant hybrid planning consent it is acknowledged that approximately 0.2ha of the northern extent of the site (i.e., that formerly occupied by Bodycote) is located within the Green Belt, as identified by the UDP Proposals Map.

Paragraphs 149 and 150 set out that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless one of the listed exceptions can be met. The proposed development does not meet any of the relevant exceptions and is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Para 147 from the NPPF sets out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Openness and Green Belt purposes: Paragraph 137 of the NPPF sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Openness can be considered as meaning an absence of built or otherwise urbanising development. The Courts have also identified other matters in terms of assessing the impact on openness and have confirmed that the concept of "openness of the Green Belt" is not narrowly limited to the volumetric approach. The word "openness" is open-textured and a number of factors are capable of being relevant when it comes to applying it to the particular facts of a specific case, such as visual impact. In volume terms the proposed developed would have an impact on openness. In order to make a more comprehensive assessment of openness, a visual impact assessment and detailed breakdown of volume changes should be provided.

A detailed assessment has been made of the Green Belt purposes. It is agreed that the development will have a limited impact on the five purposes of the Green Belt. This mainly relates to the site being contained on all sites by built development and its release from the Green Belt having limited impact on unrestricted sprawl. It is also considered that the degree to which the site assists in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment is relatively limited due to the site having a strong

sense of containment. The proposals would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development, as the Bodycote site has been cleared.

At this stage it is concluded that despite the site being previously developed land, the erection of a two-storey mixed-use local centre development and 6 no. two-bedroom apartments will no doubt have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development, the proposal is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and Very Special Circumstances would need to be met.

Very Special Circumstances: Para 147 from the NPPF sets out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Para 148 of the NPPF sets out that local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt and that 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The starting point therefore is that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm arising from the proposal. VSC will not exist unless the potential harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would cause some harm to the Green Belt although at the lower end of the spectrum owing to the site's minimal role in meeting the key Green Belt objectives.

The VSC presented with this scheme primarily relate to housing need and the local centre contributing to a sustainable community. Delivering housing need and community facilities do go some way to meeting the VSC but it is advised that the case could be strengthened further, in order overcome the harm to the Green Belt particular with regards to the delivery of affordable housing. It is strongly suggested that this be delivered in a way that is policy compliant with the Stockport Development Plan. In addition, the scheme should:

- Commit a much higher portion of affordable dwellings (housing policy officer to comment further)
- Be design led and incorporate high quality and sustainable buildings, which contribute to exemplar place making and be accompanied with design codes
- Be complementary to the Woodford Landscape Character Area by taking on board the guidance and opportunities from Stockport's Landscape Character Area Assessment Study
- Make firm commitments to ensuring the site is easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport
- Contribute to archiving a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in line with the emerging Environment Bill
- Ensure resilience to the Climate Emergency
- Contribute to the good health and wellbeing of our communities, including maximising opportunities for play and incorporating active design principles
- The Green Infrastructure for the site should contribute to hedgerow network.

In conclusion as outlined above further information is required to make an assessment of openness and impact on the purpose of Green Belt in this location. These factors, when considered collectively could demonstrate VSC and outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, thereby being compliant with the NPPF in terms of the

Green Belt. However owing to more information being required to make an assessment of openness and limited details of how the scheme would meet Stockport's housing need, it is difficult to conclude at this whether VSC are present.

Policy GBA 1.5 'Residential Development in the Green Belt' lists a number of exceptions to development allowed in the Green Belt, none of which apply to this scheme. Policy GBA 1.5 does not allow for exceptional circumstances, therefore the proposal is not compliant with this policy, however the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) offers a more up-to-date position and is a material consideration of significant weight.

Director of Public Health – No objections.

Sustainable Transport / Active Travel: any comments made and conditions proposed by the Council's Highway Engineer are critical to enabling the use of sustainable (including active) travel modes in and around this development and have been discussed with representatives of the Public Health and Transport Policy teams. An accurate assessment of transport options should inform this application.

The proposed provision of cycle parking is welcomed by Public Health since promoting active travel (which includes sufficient infrastructure for active travel modes) contributes to management of good public health in the Borough, especially healthy weight. Consideration should be given to a wayfinding strategy that ensures that cyclists can find the cycle parking when unfamiliar with this development. In Stockport 42.3% of adults and 86.4% of 15 year olds are not physically active enough to maintain their health in the medium to long term (as measured against the Chief Medical Officer for England guidance). In addition, an appropriately designed built environment can contribute to reducing social exclusion, as well as offering cycle and pedestrian routes for commuters, shoppers and recreational users.

Green Infrastructure: any comments made by the Council's Planning Officer responsible for open space / children's play should be carefully considered. Given the relatively low levels of sport and active recreation for adults in the Borough, it is critical that the built environment contributes to benefiting provision or maintenance of recreational spaces. Child obesity levels in the Borough remain higher than the previous decade, and have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Achieving healthy weight reduces risks of other lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, coronary heart disease and stroke. Reducing risks of such diseases also reduces pressures on current and future public sector health budgets (Stockport's JSNA).

Consideration of trees and biodiversity are key to enabling public health benefits from green infrastructure enhancement not just around addressing flood risk but also in terms of tackling stress and its exacerbating effect on health, through provision of pleasant relaxing environments and views. Any comments of the Council's Senior Tree & Arboricultural Officer should be taken into careful consideration regarding opportunities to improve biodiversity since this can have public health benefits. Planting offers opportunities for the site to contribute beneficially to the nearby Green Chain asset. The summertime comfort and well-being of the urban population has become increasingly compromised. In contrast to rural areas, where night-time relief from high daytime temperatures occurs as heat is lost to the sky, the urban environment stores and traps heat. This urban heat island effect is responsible for temperature differences of up to 7 degrees (Centigrade) between urban and rural locations. The majority of heat-related fatalities during the summer of 2003 were in

urban areas (designing urban spaces and buildings to improve sustainability and quality of life in a warmer world).

Affordable Housing: The application documents appear not to make reference to affordable housing provision, despite noting that Paragraph 149 of the NPPF specifically identifies the meeting of affordable housing need as a possible exception that permits development (without substantial harm to openness) within the Green Belt. The modification of the proposals to enable the flats to become affordable housing would very welcome. It is important to note that a lack of affordable housing can be argued to contribute to widening health inequalities, with additional pressure on the Council's public health and related budgets. Evidence is available to show that affordable housing benefits health in a variety of ways including reducing the stress of unaffordable homes, enabling better food budgets for more nutritious food, access to better quality homes that do not impact negatively on health (including management of chronic illnesses), support for domestic violence survivors to establish a safe home, mental health benefits of a less stressful expensive home and benefit to the environment as well as the residents through low carbon housing that doesn't cost the earth to run (The Impacts of Affordable Housing on Health).

Ground gas and asbestos risk: We have noted from the geotechnical reports that the site suffers from elevated ground gas carbon dioxide levels, polycyclical aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) contamination and asbestos contamination. Given the mixed commercial and residential proposed use for the development, it is vital that any remediation and protection measures made by the Council's Environmental Health Officers regarding these contaminants are implemented in full and appropriately verified.

Planning Policy (Energy) – No objections.

In March 2019, Stockport Council declared a climate emergency, and agreed that Stockport should become carbon neutral by 2038, in advance of the UK 2050 target. The Stockport Climate Action Now (CAN) strategy was developed to underpin this agreement and was approved by the Council in October 2020. The strategy sets out to ensure that Stockport achieves carbon neutrality by 2038, in order to support global efforts to prevent global warming going above 1.5°C.

The Energy Statement sets out that solar PV will form part of the CO2 emissions savings for the commercial element of the scheme, and the plans for the roof indicate areas for their installation, this approach is supported.

The overall proposed energy strategy meets the targets set out in the Core Strategy. However to meet our 2038 carbon neutrality target will require new development to achieve net zero carbon in advance of then, and we should not be building homes which will require retrofitting in the near future.

I would therefore encourage the applicant to include the provision of solar PV for the benefit of the residents of each of the apartments. If this is not financially viable at this stage, I would encourage the roof to be designed to be able to accept the installation of solar PV panels within the next 5 years.

Highway Engineer – No objections subject to conditions.

The principle access to the site for vehicular, cycle and pedestrian purposes will be from Verdon Roe Avenue, including pedestrian connectivity to building frontages to the Avenue and from within the site. A second access for vehicular and

pedestrian/cycle purposes will be created via the pub car park to the immediate northeast, utilising the existing vehicular route into the car park and seeing a new shared footpath connection constructed.

Within the site car parking for 70 vehicles is proposed, including 8 disabled spaces and 8 spaces with electric vehicle charge facilities. Service vehicles will access the site from Verdon Roe Avenue and then manoeuvre and reverse to loading bays to the rear of the commercial units. A public realm area around the buildings will offer seating, cycle and electric scooter parking.

My review of the application is focused on a number of issues, these being site accessibility, traffic generation and highway impact, parking demand and site layout and operational issues.

In terms of site accessibility, the principle of this particular development has been agreed as part of the outline permission and some interventions have been introduced and continue to be delivered to improve the accessibility of the overall Garden Village development. The provision of community focused retail and commercial opportunities will clearly benefit the overall site and provide opportunity for residents within the overall site and the area in general to access in a convenient manner some day to day needs. The location of the facilities within the overall development makes it accessible on foot or cycle and this should contribute towards reducing the reliance of residents within the overall development and the surrounding area on the use of car travel.

With respect to trip generation and the attraction of the commercial uses it is predicted that a significant volume of trips and visits will be from those already living or future residents within the overall development. The principle of the development is focused on local community needs and the scale and appeal of the end uses is unlikely to draw significant volumes of trade from beyond the general area. The applicant also submits that from community feedback the site will appeal to the community and the majority of persons would probably walk to the shops and other units.

That being said it is necessary to consider the potential vehicular trip attraction of the site and ensure that this can safely be accommodated both on the highway network and within the complex. Using TRICS data for Local Centres with a mix of uses, the proposed development could generate during its weekday peak hours, up to 136 two-way movements. On a weekend the potential is up to 100 two-way movements. These predictions are clearly a worst case scenario so a robust assessment, however in reality the number of vehicle trips associated with the site will be considerably lower due to linked trips and the likelihood that a significant majority of the trip attraction will be from existing residents who would reasonably choose to walk and cycle to the site.

Even should the development generate traffic levels anywhere close to the figures identified I am aware from the original hybrid permission that the two main access points from Chester Road, the roundabout and the western access, have sufficient spare capacity to accommodate such movements. The junctions when built were designed to accommodate the overall residential development, traffic generated by this commercial element, employment land and school traffic in the 2028 future year scenario and I see no reason or justification to present a case that the proposal would give rise to an unacceptable highway impact. This is both in terms of capacity and safety, with both junctions being capable of continuing to operate in a safe and efficient manner.

The proposed commercial units and residential element will clearly have a demand for parking spaces and the level of such has been considered having regard to the worst case in terms of vehicular trips to and from the site and an accumulation study provided.

The parking demand assessment also has regard to the parking requirement for the existing pub, noting that the pub's secondary parking area to the rear with 37 bays is effectively removed and would be incorporated into what would be a new approved layout with a shared car park to serve the commercial development and overspill from the pub. The parking demand for the pub was determined and agreed when granting permission for that development and these figures have been combined with the predicted demand for this commercial proposal.

This development proposes a total of 70 parking bays and 42 spaces would remain available to the immediate rear of the pub, giving an overall total of 112 spaces and I acknowledge that the parking can be shared use with pub visitors having the ability to park within the new commercial parking area should the need arise.

The combined parking demand would peak at weekend when the pub usage is greater. The accumulation study shows a combined demand across the course of a weekend day with the maximum accumulation being 98 spaces during the lunchtime period. This is below the collective parking provision of 112 spaces and is therefore considered sufficient to meet demand. Whilst I feel these predictions are robust I have undertaken some validation with observations of use of the pub car park during the weekend peak trading period, that being the period that coincides with the peak for the commercial use. My observations show that there the main pub car park that holds 42 spaces appears to be adequate to cover weekend peak demand, this the collective parking of 112 spaces would be acceptable for weekend shared use. During evening periods when pub demand is higher, the demand for commercial parking is reduced thus I do not consider there should be any concern with insufficient provision or risk of overspill parking.

The parking layout provides eight disabled parking bays and electric vehicle parking facilities to eight spaces, including facilities to two disabled spaces. This level of provision satisfies Council standards and national and local planning policies, the details being a matter for conditional control. I add that at least two of the bays for electric vehicle parking should be provided with rapid charge facilities, the remainder can be provided with a fast charge.

In summary I am satisfied that adequate parking will be available to serve both the needs of the new development and the existing pub and subject to delivery of appropriate electric vehicle charge facilities the proposal would be compliant with national and local planning policies.

I have no particular concerns with the main site entrance on Verdon Roe Avenue, the location of the junction being of appropriate design for the likely usage and having adequate separation and spacing to other junctions off the Avenue. Pedestrian access arrangements are acceptable from the Avenue. With respect to the second vehicular access through the pub car park, this is established and raises no concerns with the suggested tie in with the new car park being to an acceptable standard.

Connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists from the eastern side of the overall Garden Village will be provided with a 3m wide shared footpath/cycle path to be provided

alongside the vehicular route to the pub car park. This will tie in with infrastructure on Lancastrian Way and connect into the new parking area, with a landing/standing area provided that aligns with crossing infrastructure to be provided within the car park. The detailed design, construction, regulation, signage etc. for this link can be resolved under conditional control.

The general layout of the car parking area is acceptable, provision will be made for a zebra type crossing for movement between the car park and the buildings and extensive public realm space will surround the buildings. The submission includes swept paths for delivery vehicles and show such are able to access the site, manoeuvre within the car park, reverse to servicing areas and thereafter exit the site. I am comfortable with the approach of shared use of the car parking area for manoeuvring purposes, in the knowledge that servicing can be carefully managed under the terms of a service management plan. A management plan can and must display some control over vehicle arrival times, frequencies, how to avoid conflicting arrivals and also the presence of an operative or banks person whilst vehicles are manoeuvring within and from the car parking area. A service management plan is a matter that is capable of conditional control.

Covered and secure cycle parking is required for residents in the apartments and staff within the commercial buildings. Some short stay Sheffield type stands are required within the realm space for the benefit of customers. This is a matter capable of conditional control.

In conclusion I am supportive of the application and see no reason to have concern with traffic generation, highway impact, parking provision and the general site layout.

Tree Officer – No objections subject to conditions.

A full tree survey has been supplied as part of the planning application to show the condition and amenity levels of the existing trees and where applicable which trees could be retained to increase the amenity levels of the site with retained mature trees.

The main concern with the scheme is the proposed tree loss to the development which has already suffered. The replacement planting needs to be greater in number, quality and species to enhance the site, existing trees within the site and along the boundary of the site need to be protected as these trees are the only mature trees on site and as such offer high amenity and biodiversity value for the site. All remaining trees will need to have full protection status during the all stages of the development including the demolition and remediation stages as these trees cannot be lost or accidentally damaged.

The proposed works will only have a small negative impact on low value trees on site and within neighbouring properties and therefore can be accepted in its current format (subject to *fagus sylvatica* being removed from the proposed hedgerow planting as this is not locally native to the area). If this amendment is secured then the landscaping plan can be approved.

The following conditions would be relevant to any planning application relating to the site:

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.

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.

Ecology – No objections subject to conditions.

The site has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise. It has however been identified as an opportunity area within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) pilot study for Greater Manchester. This is not necessarily a barrier to development and does not confer protection or prevention of land uses but shows that such areas have been prioritised for restoring and linking up habitats.

An ecological assessment has been carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist and submitted with the application (Paul Chester and Associates Ltd, 2022). Site visits were carried out in August 2021 and April 2022 to identify the habitats present on site and assess the potential for protected species to be present and impacted by the proposals. The site comprises bare ground with ephemeral vegetation and ornamental planting, amenity grassland, poor semi-improved grassland and scattered trees.

Many trees have the potential to support roosting bats. All species of bats and their roosts are protected under UK (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)) and European legislation (The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations, 2019). The trees on site are not suitable to support roosting bats however on account of their young age. A bat activity survey was carried out in August 2021. Low levels of common pipistrelle bat activity were recorded within the site.

The vegetation on site offers some potential to support nesting birds. All breeding birds and their nests are legally protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

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

Recommendations:

The proposed works are considered to be of low risk to protected species (such as roosting bats, badgers and great crested newt). As a precautionary measure, an informative should be attached to any planning consent granted so that the applicant is aware that protected species can sometimes be found in unexpected places. It should also state that the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the legislation in place to protect biodiversity. If at any time during works, evidence of any protected species is discovered on site and are likely to be impacted, works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist be contacted for advice.

In relation to nesting birds, the following condition should be used: No tree/hedgerow/vegetation clearance works should take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist (or otherwise suitably qualified person) has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before (no more than 48 hours before) such works commence and confirmed that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site (e.g. implementation of appropriate buffer zones to prevent disturbance).

Ecological conditions can change over time. In the event that works have not commenced within two years of the 2022 survey (i.e. by April 2024) it is advised that update survey work is undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist to ensure that the ecological impact assessment and protection measures are based on sufficiently up to date survey data and so that any required amendments to proposed mitigation can be identified and incorporated into the scheme. This can be secured by condition.

Any proposed lighting should be sensitively designed so as to minimise impacts on wildlife associated with light disturbance (following the principles outlined in Bat Conservation Trust guidance: http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats_and_lighting.html).

All retained trees should be adequately protected from potential adverse impacts in accordance with British Standards and following advice from the Council's Arboriculture Officer. Mitigation for proposed tree loss will be required via new tree planting on site. Proposals submitted with the application indicate that new native trees are proposed on site – it is advised that the proposed tree cover is further increased and the Council's Arboriculture Officer will be able to provide further guidance on this.

Enhancements and measurable gains for biodiversity are expected as part of developments in line with local (paragraph 3.345 of the LDF) and national planning policy (NPPF). Tree planting should be maximised within the site and landscape planting should comprise wildlife-friendly (preferably locally native species) and be selected to provide a nectar/berry resource across the seasons. Plans submitted with the application show provision of wildflower areas and mixed native hedgerows, which are welcomed. Enhancement measures should be detailed on a Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancements Plan and would be expected to include:

- Native tree and/or fruit tree planting to be maximised
- Provision of mixed species native hedgerows at site boundaries where possible [NB: plans currently show spindle and hornbeam within the proposed native hedgerow – these species are not locally native to Stockport and should be replaced with locally native species]
- Details of long-term management of habitat areas (including appropriate management of the wildflower areas – i.e. sensitive cutting regime)
- Provision of bat and/or bird boxes to be provided within/mounted on the new building – details of the proposed number, location and type to be submitted to the LPA / detailed on the landscape plan. Boxes should be integrated or be made from woodstone/woodcrete for greater longevity. As a minimum, four nesting/roosting boxes should be provided.
- Any close board boundary fencing to incorporate gaps (130m x 130mm) to maintain habitat connectivity for wildlife (e.g. hedgehogs)

These measures would be particularly welcomed given the designation of the site as an opportunity area within the LNRS for Greater Manchester.

LLFA – No objections to a condition requiring compliance with the drainage proposals submitted as part of this application.

United Utilities – No objection subject to a condition.

Following our review of the submitted Drainage Strategy, we can confirm the proposals are acceptable in principle to United Utilities and therefore should planning permission be granted we request the following condition is attached to any subsequent Decision Notice:

The drainage for the development hereby approved, shall be carried out in accordance with principles set out in the submitted Foul & Surface Water Drainage Design Drawing WCC-BWB-ZZ-XX-DR-CD-0001, Rev P03- Dated 26/06/2022 which was prepared by BWB. No surface water will be permitted to drain directly or indirectly into the public sewer. Prior to occupation of the proposed development, the drainage schemes shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development and to prevent an undue increase in surface water run-off and to reduce the risk of flooding.

EHO (Air) – No objections

EHO (Noise) – No objections subject to a condition.

Having considered the Noise Impact Assessment and subsequent information provided by the applicant, it is concluded that subject to the imposition of a condition requiring compliance with the mitigation set out in the Assessment the proposed development will not give rise to unacceptable conditions of noise pollution in terms of the operation of the development or living conditions for existing adjacent and future occupiers of the development.

EHO (Contamination) – No objections subject to conditions.

I have reviewed the Betts Geo Desk Study and Ground Investigation Report (Woodford Local Centre) dated May 2021. The report recommends remedial works within the vicinity of TP7 with either removal proposed or a cover system with geotextile membrane. In addition to this CS2 gas measures are also required.

As such I would recommend the imposition of conditions to ensure the carrying out of the proposed remediation scheme and the submission of a validation report assessing the effectiveness of the remediation carried within a specified period of time. No part of the development shall be occupied until all works necessary to prevent landfill gas migration into the development have been approved in writing by the local planning authority and carried out in full; evidence of the installation of the proposed CS2 gas measures will be required. Any works to be carried out must be undertaken in line with CIRIA 665.

Woodford Neighbourhood Forum – Object.

On a general note:-

Part of the site is in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area and therefore policies in the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan apply, as well as other policies in the Stockport Development Plan and the NPPF.

We note that the Planning Statement submitted with the application does not reference the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan under section 5 Planning Policy Context, which is an omission.

As noted in the Planning Statement with the application, part of the site adjacent to Chester Road is in Green Belt. The former Bodycote building was demolished and the site has been landscaped. It is, therefore, relevant to consider the impact of the proposals on the openness of the Green Belt.

We are disappointed with the style of the design of the convenience store. It is in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area and does not fit in with the character of Chester Road, from where it will be very visible. While the style might be well suited to a modern out-of-town commercial centre, it will not fit in with the more traditional style of the dwellings on Chester Road, or the short parade of shops nearby, or the WGV and the adjacent public house, The Aviator.

Furthermore, it is positioned further forward on Chester Road than the existing line of shops, which will exacerbate its dominance of the street scene and impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

We note that the former Bodycote building was positioned further back from the road than the proposed convenience store, in line with the shops and therefore had less impact on the street scene and openness of the Green Belt.

We have received feedback from residents who are very disappointed in the proposed design of the convenience store and feel it will be an eyesore for both old Woodford and WGV. It is not what people were expecting based on the consultation and the general design codes on the garden village.

We suggest that the site would be better arranged with the small units (with apartments above) arranged parallel to Chester Road (and wrapping around the corner into Verdon Roe Avenue if necessary) while the convenience store is positioned at the right angles to these units. This arrangement could provide greater continuity with the existing line of shops and the Chester Road street scene. The convenience store would be positioned deeper into the garden village and have less impact on the Chester Road street scene and the openness of the Green Belt.

The apartments and small shops need parking spaces. This should ideally be behind the shops, so pulling the shops forward would allow for space for parking for the shops to be able to transfer goods into the store and the apartments to have parking spaces.

We note that a fire escape may be needed from the upper floor.

The provision of 6 no. two-bedroom apartments is welcomed because, as noted in the Planning Statement, smaller dwellings are needed in Woodford.

Opportunities for employment and social interaction are welcomed.

More specifically:-

We are disappointed that the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan was not referenced in the Planning Statement. We believe the following WNP policies are relevant:

EMP1: New Businesses within the Area: *“The sustainable growth of local businesses and facilities, including the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses, will be supported, subject to development respecting local character, highway safety and residential amenity. The development of high quality communications infrastructure will be supported, subject to any such development respecting local character through sympathetic design and camouflage, where appropriate.”*

Assessment: The proposal would not conflict with this policy if the design of the convenience store was in keeping with local character. As it stands it does not comply.

DEV2: Replacement of Existing Dwellings: *“Development comprising the replacement of a dwelling should not be materially larger than the dwelling that it replaces and must have regard to local character and residential amenity.”*

Assessment: The proposal does not comply with this policy because it does not have regard to local character.

DEV4: Design of New Development: *“All new development in Woodford Neighbourhood Area should achieve a high standard of design. New residential development proposals should demonstrate how they respect and respond to the Neighbourhood Area’s rural character, to its ecology and to its landscape. Where appropriate and viable, the development of sustainable drainage systems, the retention and enhancement of landscape, wildlife and ecological networks and the achievement of high environmental and energy standards will be supported.”*

Assessment: The proposal does not comply with this policy because it does not respond to the Neighbourhood Area’s character (or the character of the WGV).

ENV3: Protecting Woodford’s Natural Features: *“The protection and/or enhancement of Woodford’s natural features will be supported.”*

ENV4: Supporting Biodiversity: *“The conservation, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity, including that found in open spaces, trees and hedgerows, in order to promote and support wildlife and other forms of biodiversity will be supported. Development should, where viable and deliverable, achieve net gains in biodiversity.”*

Assessment: We encourage and support the introduction of grass verges, flowering shrubs and native trees wherever possible in the proposals for the commercial centre. Trees will be particularly useful to soften the appearance of the development, to mitigate climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide and taking up water, and to reduce roadside air pollution by trapping particulate matter from vehicle exhaust fumes.

NPPF and Stockport Development Plan: We leave it to the expertise of Stockport Planning Officers to assess the proposal against the policies in the NPPF and the Stockport Development Plan, relating to Green Belt, design, local character and other issues relevant to this proposal.

Greater Manchester Police – No objections subject to condition.

Having looked at the documents submitted, we would recommend that a condition to reflect the physical security specifications set out in section seven of the Crime Impact Statement should be added, if the application is to be approved.

ANALYSIS

Background

In considering this application it is important to note that the application site covers two distinct areas: that previously occupied by the former Bodycote development to the north which is outside of WGV and does not benefit from any extant planning permission and that forming part of WGV to the south, which benefits from the grant of planning permission for a wider mixed residential and commercial development (DC053832 – the ‘hybrid consent’). It is important to note that with the exception of the commercial floorspace approved under the hybrid consent (which includes 1000m² of retail (A1, A3 and A5) and 300m² of D1 floorspace as well as 8,361m² of Class B1c floorspace), the hybrid consent has largely been implemented or commenced.

This current application proposes development in place of and in addition to that approved by way of the hybrid consent. In this respect the application proposes:-

- 1468m² of Class E floorspace (gross internal) instead of the 1000m² A1, A3 and A5 floorspace and 300m² D1 floorspace approved. Of the 1468m² now proposed, 431m² will comprise a convenience store (Class E (a)) and the remaining 1037m² could be used for any other purpose within Class E.
- 6no. 2 bed apartments in addition to the 920 dwellings approved under the hybrid consent.

Members are advised that Use Classes A1 (retail), A3 (café’s and restaurants), and D1 (non residential institutions such as medical centres, day nurseries, community and religious facilities) no longer exist and are now replaced with Class E which includes:-

- The display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food,
- The sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises
- Financial and professional services,
- Other uses appropriate in a commercial locality,
- Indoor sport and recreation, medical or health services (except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner) and
- Uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity such as offices, research and development of products or processes and industrial processes.

Development previously in Use Class A5 (hot food takeaways) is now Sui Generis and does not sit within a specific Use Class. Such development is however not proposed as part of this current application.

The northern part of the site that was previously occupied by Bodycote is within the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) area and that to the south of the site, which is within the consented development of WGV, is outside of the WNP area. For ease of reference this roughly equates to the part of the site where the building is proposed being in the WNP area and the access and car park being within the consented development of WGV.

It is in this context that this application is considered.

NPPF Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

The NPPF reminds us that purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (para 7). Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

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

Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (para 9).

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

- Approving developments that accord with an up to date development plan or
- Where the policies which are most important for the determination of the application are out of date (this includes for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the LPA cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing), granting planning permission unless:
 - The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of importance provides a clear reason for refusing planning permission or

- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.

In this respect, given that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year deliverable supply of housing, the relevant elements of Core Strategy policies CS4 and H2 which seek to deliver housing supply are considered to be out of date. As such para 11 directs that planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of importance (in this case those being the Green Belt) provides a clear reason for refusing planning permission or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. This assessment is set out below.

The main issues for consideration are:

- The loss of the employment land previously occupied by Bodycote
- The provision of Class E commercial floorspace
- The provision of residential development (housing delivery)
- The impact upon the Green Belt
- The impact on the character of the area and residential amenity
- Parking and highway safety
- Open space provision
- Ecology, trees
- Ground conditions and noise pollution
- Flood risk and drainage
- Crime Impact

Loss of Employment Land

In terms of policy considerations, Core Strategy policy AED4 encourages employment development in rural areas where it is an appropriate type and scale. This includes the encouragement of new economic development as well as the need for existing employment sites to be used for employment purposes rather than non employment, thus maintaining the supply of employment sites in these areas.

Core Strategy policy AED6 confirms that proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of employment sites outside designated employment areas which result in the loss of that use will not normally be permitted unless:

- (a) it can be demonstrated the site is no longer viable for employment,
- (b) the proposal will not adversely affect the operations of neighbouring premises,
- (c) the loss would not lead to significantly longer journey to work patterns; and
- (d) the development does not conflict with other policies.

Woodford Neighbourhood Plan policy EMP1 supports the growth of local businesses subject to development respecting local character, highway safety and residential amenity. Policy EMP2 confirms that proposals for the change of use of employment land should be supported by evidence that the existing land use is no longer viable.

The NPPF at para 81 notes that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. At para 83 it requires that planning decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

It is important to note that the policy consideration of employment here relates to that arising from offices, light industrial and general industrial uses rather than any employment generated by other uses as such a retail and the service sector.

This application will in part result in the loss of land historically used for B2 general industrial purposes. Whilst the floor area of these previously existing buildings is not known (having been demolished 7 years ago) the site that they occupied and which was used for employment purposes extended to circa 0.3ha.

In support of the application and to address the requirements of policies AED6 and EMP2, the applicant makes the following case:-

The area of the application site formerly occupied by Bodycote only comprises circa 0.2ha of the wider application site, and has not been in employment use for approximately 7 years. This land was acquired by Harrow Estates in October 2015 with the intention of incorporating it into the wider Woodford Garden Village development, to enable the delivery of improved commercial facilities in a convenient location for existing and future residents. The existing building was demolished in June 2016. It is not therefore currently in employment use and has not been identified by the Council as forming part of its employment land supply.

On the basis of the above, it is not considered that Policy AED-6 and Policy EMP2 are relevant to the determination of the current planning application, as the proposed development does not result in the loss of an employment use. However, for completeness, the proposals have been assessed against the criteria set out within Policy AED-6.

- *The sale of the former Bodycote to premises to Harrow Estates indicates that the retention of the business in this location was not economically viable. Following the demolition of the buildings and the redevelopment of the wider Woodford Garden Village site for residential use, the presence of this type of employment use (B2 General industrial) is no longer considered suitable in the context of the wider area.*
- *Technical studies undertaken in support of the planning application demonstrate that development would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity. The application site is accessed off Verdon Roe servicing arrangements for the site will be accessed internally and will have no impact on the operations of neighbouring premises.*
- *The site has not been in active employment use for approximately 7 years. The proposed development will not displace an existing employment use and will therefore not significantly increase journey to work patterns.*
- *The area of the site on which the employment use was previously located is situated within the Green Belt. As part of the planning application a 'very special circumstances' case, to justify the proposed development within the Green Belt, as required by the Framework [paragraph 147], has been presented. These circumstances are sufficient to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt associated with the proposals (i.e., in relation to both 'inappropriateness' and 'other harm'). There is no conflict with other relevant policies and the local centre is required to meet the needs of Woodford Garden Village. It is essential from a sustainability perspective and the significant investment into the site will have economic, social and environmental benefits.*

Overall, the incorporation of the land previously occupied by Bodycote into the wider Woodford Garden Village has provided the opportunity for a more comprehensive, mixed-use local centre to come forward. The proposed development has been designed based on place making principles and responds to the way in which people have changed the way in which they work, shop and undertake day to day activities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The site has not been in use for employment purposes for approximately 7 years, and when viewed in context of the wider Woodford Garden Village, it is considered that its use for B2 employment would not be suitable.

In response to that case, Members are advised that Officers are not wholly in agreement with the stance that the proposal does not result in the loss of an employment use. Whilst the buildings were demolished 7 years ago, no planning permission has been approved for an alternative use of that land as such it can be argued that there will be a loss of employment land.

Notwithstanding that it is accepted that the applicant has presented the required justification to demonstrate compliance with Core Strategy policy AED6 and WNP policy EMP2.

Core Strategy policy AED4 seeks to ensure that existing employment sites are used for employment purposes rather than non employment, thus maintaining the supply of employment sites in rural areas. Even though the loss of the employment land has been accepted through complying with the criteria set out in AED6, it should be noted that it is anticipated that the total Class E floorspace proposed will, when operational, generate 89 FTE jobs and a further 22 FTE indirect jobs through increased supply chain activity. Whilst this employment is not generated from Class E (g) uses (offices and light industry) but rather is that generated from retail and other commercial uses (such as financial and professional services or those appropriate in a commercial locality, indoor sport and recreation, medical or health services) it nonetheless demonstrates that a significant level of employment will be generated and one that is likely to be more than traditionally generated by the B2 use that has been lost. On this basis it is considered that the aim of AED4 to retain employment in rural areas is achieved.

As WNP policy EMP1 relates mainly to the growth of local businesses, it is not directly relevant to the consideration of this application other than seeking to demonstrate the importance of maintaining employment opportunities in the WNP area, which this development would do. The proposal also accords with para 81 of the NPPF in that it helps create the conditions in which businesses can invest.

Provision of Class E Floorspace

In order to protect the vitality and viability of the designated centres within the Borough, saved UDP Review policy PSD2.6 restricts the provision of local shops to a maximum of 250m² gross floorspace. Core Policy CS5 confirms that proposals for shops serving day-to-day local convenience needs that exceed 200m² net A1 floorspace (now Class E (a)) at out-of-centre locations will trigger the need for an impact assessment. As also confirmed in policy CS6, additional main town centre uses with a focus on A1 use will be provided within the identified centres of the hierarchy which includes 'Stockport Town Centre' at the top, followed by District Centres and then Local Centres. Impact assessments are required for planning applications for A1 use (Class E (a)) exceeding 200m² net floorspace at out-of-centre locations in relation to the District and Local Centres as confirmed by policy AS3.

The NPPF at para 87 sets out the parameters for a sequential test for applications that are main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Furthermore, it states that main town centre uses should be located in town centres then edge-of-centre and then out-of-centre. Para 88 notes that applicants and LPAs should 'demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored'. Para 90 sets out that an impact assessment is only required when assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside town centres which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan and where the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold. If this is not set then the default threshold is 2500m² of gross floorspace.

The hybrid consent for WGV included the provision of 1000m² of (what was then) A1 (retail), A3 (cafes and restaurants) and A5 (hot food takeaway) floorspace together with 300m² of D1 floorspace (non residential institutions). With the exception of the consented A5 floorspace (which is now not proposed by this application) all these uses now fall within Use Class E. Proposing 1468m² of Class E floorspace, this current application therefore will deliver only 168m² more commercial floorspace than that consented in the WGV (and which this application seeks to replace). Objections that such development is not needed in this location cannot be sustained. The Council's SPD for the redevelopment of WGV clearly confirms that a level of commercial development will be acceptable and indeed such has been approved in the grant of the hybrid consent. In response also to objections that if retail/commercial floorspace is to be approved, that it should be positioned further within the Garden Village, Members are advised that the outline plans approved under the hybrid consent show it being in this general location to the north of the Garden Village. Indeed it cannot now be accommodated further within the Garden Village due to the implementation of that planning permission and the resulting lack of land availability to accommodate such development.

The applicant has demonstrated through an updated retail impact study that the development and additional Class E floorspace proposed will cause no harm to the nearby retail centres of Bramhall and Poynton. As the need for a local centre to serve the population of WGV has been established through the grant of the hybrid consent, it is concluded again, that there is no requirement for a sequential test exploring the availability of more sequentially preferable sites.

In the interest of protecting the vitality and viability of Bramhall and Poynton centres conditions are however required to ensure that:-

- Of the 1468m² of Class E floorspace only 431m² shall be provided as a convenience food store within Class E(a) (as defined by the Town and Country Planning Act (Use Classes) Order 1987) of which a maximum 279m² will be net sales area and of that only 56m² devoted to comparison goods.

Reason: to accord with policies CS5, AS-1, AS-3 of the Stockport Core Strategy in the interests of protecting the vitality and viability of Bramhall and Poynton District Centres.

- No Class E unit at ground level (as defined by the Town and Country Planning Act (Use Classes) Order 1987) other than the convenience store shall exceed 250m² gross.

Reason: to accord with saved policy PSD2.6 of the Stockport UDP Review and in the interests of protecting the vitality and viability of Bramhall and Poynton District Centres in accordance with policies CS5, AS-1, AS-3 of the Stockport Core Strategy

It is recognised that the original hybrid consent through a condition restricted the conversion of the A3 and A5 floorspace to A2 uses (financial and professional services). As A2 is now covered under Class E and would be suitable in the proposed local centre the subject of this application, I am satisfied that there is no need for a similar condition.

On the basis of the above and subject to the imposition of the conditions as suggested, the proposed development will safeguard the vitality and viability of Bramhall and Poynton centres in accordance with saved UDP policy PSD2.6, policies CS5 and CS6 of the Core Strategy and Chapter 7 of the NPPF.

Housing Delivery

To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount of and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, (NPPF para 60). Small sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and local planning authorities should support the use of windfall sites and give great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes (NPPF para 69). That proposed will assist in meeting this objective having regard to the under supply housing within Stockport (as set out below).

In terms of housing need the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement. The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition, include a buffer of 20% where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply. The Council is in a continued position of housing undersupply and only has a 3.2 year supply vs the 5 year supply plus 20% as required by the NPPF. Whilst this application proposing only 6 additional dwellings will have a limited impact in terms of addressing this undersupply, collectively such applications do assist. Having regard to this continued undersupply, the titled balance in favour of residential development as set out in para 11 of the NPPF is invoked.

Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that a wide range of homes are provided to meet the needs of existing and future Stockport households. The focus will be on providing housing through the effective and efficient use of land within accessible urban areas. Core Strategy policy CS3 confirms that a mix of housing in terms of tenure, price, type and size should be provided to meet the requirements of new forming households, first time buyers, families with children, disabled people and older people. As advised by the Planning Policy Officer, the latest Housing Needs Assessment indicates that there is a shortfall of 2 bedroom apartments in the Woodford area and therefore the delivery of these units would be welcomed. On this basis and noting that the development could meet the requirements of new forming households, first time buyers or older people, the proposal is considered compliant with policies CS2 and CS3.

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

and Large Local Centres; and other accessible locations). This policy confirms that the focus is on making effective use of land within accessible urban locations. Whilst the priority for development is previously developed land in urban areas, policy CS4 in terms of housing delivery does not preclude the provision of housing on accessible Green Belt sites (para 3.107 first bullet point).

The accessibility of a site is scored using a model having regard to the location of that site in relation to public transport, town centres, places of employment and other services. Policy H-2 confirms that when there is less than a 5 year deliverable supply of housing the required accessibility scores will be lowered to allow the deliverable supply to be topped up by other sites in accessible locations. This position has been regularly assessed to ensure that the score reflects the ability to 'top up' supply to a 5 year position. However, the scale of shortfall is such that in order to genuinely reflect the current position in that regard the score has been reduced to zero. The provision of residential development on this accessible site within the Green Belt therefore accords with policy CS4.

There is no requirement for the provision of affordable housing in accordance with Core Strategy policy H3 having regard to the provisions of para 64 of the NPPF.

It is noted that the Planning Policy Officer has referenced saved UDP Review policy HP1.5. This policy supports the creation of residential accommodation in vacant and under utilised premises above shops. As this therefore refers to the conversion of existing properties rather than erection of new development, it is not directly relevant to the consideration of this application. It does however confirm the Council's commitment to the provision of accommodation in the manner proposed by this application.

Green Belt

Members are aware that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of the Green Belt is its openness and its permanence. The NPPF confirms that Green Belt serves 5 purposes:-

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

As such there is a presumption against the construction of buildings and certain other forms of development in the Green Belt in order to maintain openness. Policies in the UDP Review, WNP and NPPF however allow for certain forms of appropriate development. Inappropriate development is however harmful to the Green Belt and should only be approved in very special circumstances.

Noting that the entire site is within the Green Belt, saved UDP policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5 are material to the consideration of this application together with para 149 of the NPPF.

The southern section of the site, that forming part of the Garden Village and benefitting from the grant of the hybrid consent is designated within the UDP Review as forming part of a wider 'major existing developed site' (MEDS) in the Green Belt; as such saved UDP policy GBA1.7 applies to this part of the site.

The northern half of the site that being the element previously occupied by Bodycote, is excluded from the MEDS designation however is within the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan area (unlike that to the south which is not); as such WNP policy DEV1 applies to this northern section.

Saved UDP Review policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5 confirm that within the Green Belt there is a presumption against the construction of new buildings unless it is for one of several purposes including the limited infilling or redevelopment of Major Existing Developed Sites (MEDS) in accordance with policy GBA1.7.

GBA1.7 allows for the infilling or redevelopment of MEDS subject to several provisos, one of which is that the proposed development must have no greater impact than the existing development.

DEV1 of the WNP confirms that limited infilling of a small gap between existing dwellings for one or two dwellings will not be inappropriate in the Green Belt.

NB: It is noted that WNF have referenced WNP policy DEV2 as being relevant to this application. Members are however advised that DEV2 relates to the replacement of existing dwellings. As this application does not propose a replacement dwelling it is not material to the consideration of this application and has been disregarded.

Para 149 of the NPPF sets out excepted forms of the development including infilling and the redevelopment of previously developed land that would have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. Material to the consideration of the impact upon the Green Belt is the fact that the land forming the southern section of this site, as part of the wider WGV, benefits from planning permission for the erection of 1000m² of retail floorspace and 300m² of D1 floorspace. As such this quantum of development was considered appropriate in the Green Belt subject to it complying with the conditions imposed on that hybrid consent in relation to height and design. This current application in part seeks to replace this consented floorspace.

The Bodycote buildings fronting Chester Road were demolished several years ago and this part of the site along with the element that falls within WGV are now landscaped so as to provide an attractive entrance to the wider development beyond. As such this part of the site is not developed nor contains any buildings. Whilst the proposed development on this part of the site might have been considered as comprising the redevelopment of previously developed land had the buildings been retained, as the site is now vacant and devoid of any development, the proposal here will clearly have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development (as there is none existing). Noting also that the proposal fails to accord with any of the other excepted forms of development set out in the UDP Review and NPPF it must therefore be considered inappropriate in the Green Belt. It should also be noted

that as the proposal does not comprise the infilling of a small gap between existing dwellings for one or two dwellings, it does not accord with policy DEV1 of the WNP.

Comprising inappropriate development and as confirmed by para 147 of the NPPF the proposal can only be approved in very special circumstances (VSC).

The applicant acknowledges this position and sets out what they consider to be the VSC required to justify the proposed development. Their case is as follows:-

The assessment of VSC should only extend to that part of the site which was previously occupied by the Bodycote buildings. In considering the impact on the Green Belt, it is important to consider this part of the site in the context of the adjoining MEDS designation, the outline planning consent for commercial uses on the southern part of the site granted as part of the hybrid planning permission, as well as the development of the wider WGV.

Whilst the proposals represent limited infilling of previously developed land, the proposals would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development, as the Bodycote site has been cleared. It is therefore considered 'inappropriate' development within the Green Belt. As such VSC must be demonstrated.

In terms of harm to permanence, the site has not contributed to the permanently open nature of the Green Belt for some time. Whilst now cleared of buildings, the site is viewed in the context of the wider WGV, adjacent development of Woodford Park Garden Centre and the surrounding ribbon residential development along Chester Road. It is therefore considered that it does not contribute to the permanence of the Green Belt.

To a large degree, the site is enclosed by existing development and will not impact on the strategic Green Belt Purposes, as demonstrated in the assessment below. It is therefore ideally placed to come forward for development without harming the 'permanence' of the Green Belt further because the site will be defined by Chester Road to the north which represents a recognisable and permanent boundary; the part of the site within the Green Belt was previously occupied by an industrial use; and, the wider site forms part of the Woodford Aerodrome MEDs and benefits from hybrid planning consent.

In these circumstances, the proposals will provide a firm, clear and defensible long-term Green Belt boundary in this location and will have a limited impact in relation to 'permanence'.

In terms of harm to openness, openness is the absence of development. The proposals will therefore harm openness, however, the degree to which this is affected is largely ascertainable by objective means but also necessitates an assessment of more subjective issues such as the visual and spatial effect of the proposal. . In this context there are two issues to consider, the openness of the wider Green Belt; and the openness of the site.

The site is contained by an existing parade of shops and The Aviator Pub to the east; to the west by Verdon Roe Avenue; and to the north by Chester Road. When the site is viewed in context of the surrounding built development it is considered that the visual impact of the proposed development on the openness of the Green Belt will be limited. The immediate surroundings are not open in

nature and long-distance views are obscured by the development that is underway at the wider WGV.

In the context of the visual links to the wider Green Belt, the area of the site located within the Green Belt has become separated from adjoining parcels of Green Belt land to the west through the development of WGV. As a consequence, the development of the site will not reduce the visual openness of the wider Green Belt.

The impact of the proposals when viewed against the comprehensive redevelopment of the former Woodford Aerodrome is limited. The small area of the site situated within the Green Belt is located adjacent to Chester Road has previously been occupied by built development, therefore it has never truly contributed positively to openness. Since Bodycote has been demolished the site has remained vacant however, it continues to make a limited contribution to the openness of the Green Belt and does not contribute meaningfully to the surrounding townscape. The proposed development, whilst reintroducing built development onto the site, includes areas of public realm and landscaping to soften the boundary. The overall impact on openness is therefore negligible.

The extent to which the Green Belt meets the national policy purposes set out in the Framework is relevant to the degree of 'harm' to the Green Belt. In this respect:-

- The site forms a logical and visual part of the urban area and has a strong northern boundary in Chester Road. It is contained on all sides by built development and its release from the Green Belt would therefore not represent unrestricted sprawl.*
- It is not considered that the proposed development will have an impact on the merging of neighbourhood towns. The site is located within an existing settlement and is contained by existing development. The closest neighbouring towns are Poynton located approximately 2km east and Bramhall approximately 3km north. The majority of the application site benefits from hybrid planning consent, with approximately 0.2ha located within the Green Belt. Given the site's location, it is well contained by existing built development and as a consequence, the prospects for any further extension beyond the defined site are limited and will therefore not allow the merging of neighbouring towns.*
- The nature of the proposed development means that it would not see a loss or encroachment of the countryside. The 0.2ha of Green Belt included within the application site formed from land previously occupied by Bodycote. Moreover, the presence of strong physical boundaries ensures that the site is well contained and therefore safeguards the countryside from encroachment. The site is not located within a landscape setting which is open or generally rural in character and whilst the site does not currently include any built form, it has previously contained built development of a significant scale and mass, in addition to being influenced by surrounding urbanising uses, activities and built form. It is therefore considered that the degree to which the site assists in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment is relatively limited*
- The requirement to preserve the historic character of towns is not relevant in this instance.*

- *It is considered that the inclusion of the 0.2ha area of Green Belt land within the development proposals will have a positive impact on urban regeneration initiatives. The Green Belt as an urban regeneration tool is designed to deflect investment towards existing urban areas. The majority of the site is located within the MEDs for Woodford Aerodrome and benefits from extant hybrid planning permission. The inclusion of the area of land located within the Green Belt seeks to provide a more comprehensive, mixed-use local centre which will result in the creation of a truly high-quality community facility which is in keeping with the wider WGV development. The proposed development represents a significant investment in the wider local area.*

The proposed development will therefore not impact urban regeneration and will significantly benefit the wider Woodford Aerodrome development site.

In conclusion, there is 'definitional' harm caused to the Green Belt by reason of 'inappropriateness' and this must be given weight. However, the 'other harm' to the Green Belt and the environment is limited. It is considered that the harm to 'permanence' will be limited given the wider development of WGV and the firm, clear and defensible long term Green Belt boundary of Chester Road.

Given the previous use of the site and with the wider development of the WGV it is considered that the harm to the 'openness' will be limited and not substantial. The harm to the Green Belt purposes will also be limited because the proposals do not conflict the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Overall, when considering the key planning issues the proposed development will only result in a minimal degree of harm to the Green Belt.

In this instance, the analysis of the 'very special circumstances' case for the proposed development relates to the following issues:

- *The incorporation of the land previously occupied by Bodycote into the wider WGV has provided the opportunity for a more comprehensive, mixed-use local centre to come forward. The proposed development has been designed based on place making principles and responds to the way in which people have changed the way in which they work, shop and undertake day to day activities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The investment into this development is significant at a time when many communities are losing local facilities. In order to allow a range of prospective uses to come forward, planning permission is sought for a flexible Use Class E consent which is key to the long term vitality and viability of the local centre. The former Bodycote building did not contribute positively to the street scene and the proposals would bring the site back into beneficial use and introduce a landmark building to Chester Road. The proposals will also provide additional employment opportunities and other economic and social benefits.*
- *The local centre will provide a focus for community activity and has been designed as a place where all people can go to easily access their day to day needs, with areas of public realm and landscaping to encourage people to stay and socialise with one another. The proposals will represent a significant improvement to the Chester Road frontage and create a distinct centre for Woodford. The development of this site will also*

maximise accessibility for local residents and create a functional link between the new community at WGV and the existing community.

- *The proposals seek to provide a new local centre for WGV which is an essential element of the high-quality, sustainable community that Harrow Estates envisaged. As set out within the Woodford Aerodrome SPD, the scale of the WGV means that it would be necessary to provide a variety of ancillary uses as part of the new community. The SPD sets out that uses should be consistent with the scale and type normally associated with the 'Other Local Centre' as defined by Core Strategy Policy CS6. It continues, setting out that the Local Centre should comprise A1/A2/A3/A4 uses (now falling under Use Class E / Sui Generis) and be approximately 0.5ha, in line with the land area of other Local Centres within Stockport Borough.*
- *The granting of the hybrid planning consent established the principle of a new local centre on part of the site. The acquisition of the land to the north of the Woodford Aerodrome MEDs (i.e. Bodycote) has allowed for the creation of high-quality, mixed use commercial and community facility in keeping with the wider scheme. Whilst the proposals seek to provide slightly more floorspace than that envisaged as part of the hybrid planning permission, it is considered that the development will provide a local centre which is appropriate to the scale of the WGV and the surrounding residential area of Woodford and should be taken into account when considering the balance of very special circumstances.*
- *As the Council's strategic housing policies are more than five years old, the local housing need (LHN) figures should be used as the housing requirement in the assessment of the five-year supply (in accordance with paragraph 74 of the Framework). The latest LHN figure for Stockport (2022) is 1,186dpa, which is higher than the required 1,093 dpa identified in 2021, and significantly in excess of the previous housing requirement set out in the Core Strategy. The Stockport Housing Need Assessment 2019 [SHNA] identifies that there is currently an under provision of two-bedroom apartments within the Bramhall, Cheadle Hulme (south) and Woodford sub-area when considered against the identified need (-8.1 % variation from future dwelling requirements). It is important to note that this is based on the housing requirement set by the GMSF of 793dpa, it can therefore be assumed that in line with the most up to date LHN there is an even greater under provision of two-bedroom apartments. The development proposals seek to provide 6 no. two-bedroom apartments, which are not provided for as part of the wider WGV development. The inclusion of apartments will create a high-quality, diverse, mixed use Local Centre, reflective of other schemes in the Borough which offer commercial uses at ground floor level and apartments at first floor level. It is clear that there is a requirement for smaller two-bedroom dwellings within Woodford, and more specifically the WGV to meet the identified need. The development proposals will go some way to helping the Council meet the identified LHN of 1,186 dpa and should be taken into account when considering the balance of very special circumstances.*
- *The Housing Land Supply Position Statement 2021 identifies there is currently a 3.2 year housing land supply within Stockport, and the Council cannot therefore demonstrate a 5- year housing land supply. In line with Paragraph 11 of the Framework, where a five year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated the policies which are most important for determining the application should be considered out-of-date. It is clear*

there is a substantial and ongoing shortfall in housing land supply within Stockport which needs to be addressed. The development of the site will provide 6 no. two-bedroom apartments to meet the needs of the local community. This will go some way in addressing the current under supply of housing land and provide a greater mix of housing within WGV. It is anticipated that the site will be built out in 12 months, with construction starting in 2023. In the context of the five-year housing land supply deficiency this will see the provision of new homes in the market, in a relevantly short time scale. The clear lack of a five-year housing land supply should therefore be taken into account when considering the balance of very special circumstances.

In response to this case Members are advised that whilst Officers acknowledge and accept that part of the site already benefits from the grant of planning permission that has yet to be implemented, this current application proposes a greater level of development than that already approved (168m² in floor area). As such it can be argued that there is potential for a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt as a result of the proposed development albeit it over a larger site as a result of the inclusion of the former Bodycote site. It is also acknowledged that up until a few years ago there was development on the Bodycote site which will have impacted on the openness of the Green Belt. Had that been retained then the impact of that development vs that proposed on the openness of the Green Belt would have carried significant weight in the consideration of proposals. Given the demolition of these buildings that consideration is diminished however, as outlined further on below, is still afforded some weight.

Taking these issues into consideration, the position of the applicant that the consideration of Green Belt issues should only relate to the development on the former Bodycote site is not entirely agreed with by Officers. Rather it is the position of Officers that the compliance of the development as a whole with the relevant Green Belt policies in the Development Plan and NPPF should be considered and that the existence of the extant permission for the part of the site falling within the WGV is material consideration which should be afforded significant weight.

On this basis Members are advised as follows:-

It can be argued that the redevelopment of the site as a whole will not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. In this respect it is noted that the site is surrounded by development on all sides and thus the proposal will not result in sprawl or encroachment into the countryside. Furthermore, the development will not result in the merging of neighbouring towns nor the setting or special character of any historic towns.

Noting the lack of any development upon the site, that proposed fails to accord with any of the excepted forms of development set out in the UDP Review, WNP and NPPF and is therefore inappropriate development. Noting that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the openness of the Green Belt, in accordance with para 147 of the NPPF it can only be approved in very special circumstances.

The existence of an extant consent for the part of the site falling within WGV weighs heavily in favour of the proposed development. It should also be noted that the consented development was considered against a similar policy background as that

which exists today with the only change being the revision of the NPPF in 2019 and 2021, neither of which had any significant impact on the assessment of development in the Green Belt. The WNP has also been adopted since the grant of the hybrid consent however the part of the site benefitting from this consent falls outside of the WNP area. Clearly that development was considered acceptable in terms of its impact upon the Green Belt and therefore must be considered alongside that proposed by this application.

The extant development comprises some 1300m² of A1, A3, A5 and D2 floorspace. Being in outline form and no reserved matters application having been submitted yet for consideration, no proposals showing its layout, height, form or external appearance have been approved. The parameters plans and design codes approved as part of the hybrid consent however confirm that such development would be up to 10m in height. In comparison, that proposed comprises some 1468m² of floorspace and to Chester Road rises to 9.5m to the top of the roof and to Verdon Roe Avenue 8.7m. Whilst a direct comparison cannot be made, that proposed is clearly greater in area albeit lower in height than that approved under the hybrid consent.

It should also be considered that the extant permission was considered acceptable in terms of its impact on the Green Belt and approved at time when the Bodycote buildings were in existence. As such it could be argued that when approved, the combined impact of the extant development and Bodycote buildings would have been greater than that which is proposed by this current application.

Notwithstanding that the fact remains that having acquired the Bodycote site, the applicant took the decision to demolish those buildings with the intention of incorporating the land into the wider Woodford Garden Village development and to enable the delivery of improved commercial facilities in a convenient location for existing and future residents.

In this respect it is agreed that the inclusion of the former Bodycote site does allow for the better integration of WGV into not only Chester Road but also the wider Woodford area than would have been the case had the Bodycote buildings had been retained, replaced with other development through the grant of planning permission or simply demolished and the site left open.

The presence of the local centre on Chester Road will create a visible focal point and will also create a functional link, drawing in those living in WGV as well as those outside it from the wider area. In terms of the presence of the development on Chester Road and its impact on the openness of the Green Belt, the development is sited some 12m to 10m from the eastern side boundary of the site with the adjacent commercial parade and forward of it by 8.6m. The front elevation to Chester Road would be positioned 6.4m to 8m behind a landscaped strip. Here the building would measure 29.4m wide and 16m deep. Rising 7.4m to eaves with a gently curved roof structure, this element of the building would be a maximum of 9.5m high. The proposed development is then separated from that existing to the west on Chester Road by a distance of over 40m afforded by the width of Verdon Roe Avenue and the side garden of 443 Chester Road.

Submitted with the application are streetscene elevations and visual perspectives which are appended to this report. It is considered that these demonstrate that the siting of the development will afford sufficient space to either side so as to retain a sense of spaciousness on the site. Whilst the development will be positioned forward of the adjacent commercial parade and the residential properties to the west, this will serve to highlight the development as focal point on longer range views along

Chester Road and thus will assist in integrating the development on WGV into the wider Woodford community. Whilst the proposed building will be slightly higher than the adjacent properties on Chester Road this will be by 0.6m only such that it is not considered that it will not cause undue harm to the Green Belt.

The proposal delivers additional residential accommodation beyond that approved by the hybrid consent. At a time of continued housing undersupply, the provision of residential development is clearly welcome and will assist in addressing that undersupply.

The latest housing needs assessment identifies an under provision of 2 bed apartments in the locality and thus this provision is welcome and will help address an identified need.

The comments of the Planning Policy Officer in relation to VSC are noted. In particular whilst they acknowledge that the arguments presented go some way to demonstrating VSC, the Officer advises that the case could be strengthened further through the provision of affordable housing, high quality and sustainable buildings, reflecting guidance in the Landscape Character Area Assessment Study, ensuring access by sustainable modes of transport as well as delivering net gains to biodiversity, resilience to climate change, maximising opportunities for play and incorporating active design principles and making a contribution to the hedgerow network.

The issues raised by the Planning Policy Officer are addressed elsewhere in this report however to summarise:-

- As confirmed by the Planning Policy Officer in relation to housing, there is no policy requirement for the provision of affordable housing noting the small scale of development proposed. Whilst this provision would clearly be welcome, noting the other VSC presented, it is not considered that the lack of provision in this respect undermines the acceptability of the development in Green Belt terms.
- Whilst design is clearly a subjective matter, the applicant has demonstrated through the delivery of WGV that they are committed to providing a high quality development. Submitted with this application is a raft of information in the form of a Design & Access Statement which sets out the approach and philosophy of the proposal drawing reference from the aviation history of the wider site and seeking to articulate this in a contemporary fashion that respects the character of the wider locality. Also submitted with the application is an Energy Statement which, as confirmed by the Planning Policy Officer in relation to sustainable design, demonstrates that the proposal will accord with the Core Strategy and Part L of the Building Regulations. In this respect it is considered that the proposal will deliver high quality and sustainable buildings.
- The Landscape Character Area Study for Woodford, as referred to by the Planning Policy Officer, offers little guidance for development other than noting that the roads through the area are characterised by varying degrees of ribbon development making up the settlement of Woodford. Infill development has occurred over the years and it is likely that only a few opportunities for such development remain. Reinstatement of degraded hedges in the area, and the planting of new areas of woodland, particularly along the urban boundary and along the existing and proposed major road lines, should be encouraged. Compliance with saved policy LCR1.1 is assessed further on in this report, however, it is considered that the proposed development respects the

character of ribbon development along Chester Road and, as evidenced on the proposed site layout and landscaping plan will include new hedge planting albeit to Verdon Roe Avenue only. The extension of hedge planting to the frontage onto Chester Road could however be secured by condition if Members consider this appropriate and necessary.

- The layout of the development provides for cycle parking both long and short term. Charging points for 8 electric vehicles are proposed including for those using 2 of the disabled spaces. As such and as confirmed by the Highway Engineer, it is considered that the proposal will ensure access by sustainable modes of travel.
- Submitted with the application is a drainage strategy that has been considered and found to be policy compliant by the LLFA. As such it is considered that the proposal will be resilience to climate change.
- In accordance with saved policies L1.1 and L1.2, together with CS policy SIE2, the proposal will maximise opportunities for recreation in the wider locality. Furthermore the layout of the proposed development allows for a deep forecourt with seating in front of the commercial units which will assist in delivering an active frontage.

In conclusion, Members are advised that whilst the development is inappropriate in the Green Belt, the applicant has demonstrated that very special circumstances exist to sufficiently justify the proposals. The existence of the extant consent, the integration of the WGV development into the wider locality, the contribution that the proposal will make to the continued undersupply of housing and the meeting of an identified housing need all weigh heavily in favour of the proposed development. The presumption in favour of granting planning permission therefore applies.

Impact on the Character of the Area and Residential Amenity

The application site is situated within the Woodford Landscape Character Area therefore saved policies LCR1.1 and LRC1.1a of the UDP Review are considered relevant as are policies H-1, SIE-1, and SIE-3 of the Core Strategy as is policy DEV4 of the WNP.

CS policy LRC1.1 confirms that development in the countryside will be strictly controlled and will not be permitted unless it protects or enhances the quality and character of the rural areas. Where it is acceptable in principle, development should be sensitively sited, designed and constructed of materials appropriate to the landscape character area in which it is located and be accommodated without adverse effect on the landscape quality of the particular character area. Development proposals should amongst other matters not relevant to the proposed development not impede and where possible improve public access and protect or enhance the natural environment.

CS policy LRC1.1a confirms that proposals for development in the urban fringe should protect, conserve and improve the landscape quality and natural history of the locality.

CS policies H-1 and SIE1 together with DEV4 of the WNP seek to secure a high standard of design and require proposals to the townscape and landscape character of the local area, reinforcing or creating local identity and distinctiveness in terms of layout, scale and appearance. Where appropriate the retention and enhancement of landscape networks and the achievement of high

environmental standards will be supported. Development is required to provide and maintain satisfactory levels of amenity for future, existing and neighbouring users and residents.

The NPPF reflects this stance within Chapter 12 seeking to secure the creation of high quality development and places which function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Developments should create places that achieve a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. On the issue of amenity, regard is also paid to the Council's SPD 'Design of Residential Development'.

Straddling WGV and the wider Woodford area, the character of the locality is mixed. That of WGV to the south of the site, extending down to the boundary with Cheshire East is primarily of 2 to 3 storey residential dwellings. To the east of the site is the 2 storey Aviator PH within WGV and to the west will be an extra care development comprising bungalows and a 3 storey apartment building. On Chester Road itself are mainly 2 storey detached dwellings. The exception to this is the short 2 storey commercial parade to the east of and on the same side of Chester Road as the application site. On the opposite side of Chester Road is the large single storey expanse of Woodford Garden Centre to the north and a convenience store in a 2 storey detached building to the west. Materials of construction are mainly red brick, render and grey, brown and red roof tiles to hipped and pitched roofs. Properties regardless of their use are generally positioned a generous distance back from the frontage with the highway behind landscaped gardens. As such there is a spacious and verdant character to Chester Road and the wider locality.

The aim of this application through the siting of this development in this location is to provide an asset for the community that which not only support the residents of WGV but also those within the wider Woodford area. Crucially therefore the development is intended as a link and one which it is hoped will assist in the creation of a cohesive community. To do this visually as well as functionally, it is considered important that the development has a clear presence on Chester Road from outside WGV as well as from within.

In terms of the layout of the development, it is considered that the siting of the development to Chester Road behind a 6m to 8m deep landscaped area will respect the character of the streetscene. It is noted that the building will be positioned forward of the adjacent commercial parade and ribbon of development on the opposite side of the junction with Verdon Roe Avenue and as such it will be prominent in longer range views when travelling east or west along Chester Road. Noting however that one of the aspirations of the development is that it should act as a visual and functional focal point so as to integrate WGV into the wider Woodford area and draw customers, visitors and activity into WGV, this is not considered unacceptable noting the generous landscaping proposed between the building and the pavement on the southern side of Chester Road.

To Verdon Roe Avenue, the side elevation of that fronting Chester Road is positioned closer to the frontage, 2.4m to 5.8m distant however this is not considered unacceptable noting the wide vista afforded into WGV and beyond by the width of Verdon Roe Avenue (which is over 20m at this point). The rear wing of the development is set back further still over 14m from this frontage and is positioned behind a deep forecourt with tree and hedge planting and seating to make this an active space. The car park beyond this to the south will also be

enclosed by hedging to Verdon Roe Avenue and tree/shrub planting all around the boundaries and between the aisles of parking. This, it is considered proposes an appropriate response to the character of the area and streetscene and one that will continue the high quality of development evident in the wider WGV.

In terms of scale, massing and design, as outlined in the application the aim is create a focal point both visually and functionally. To do this, the building needs to have a presence in the streetscene. The approved design codes and building heights plan forming the hybrid consent for WGV confirmed that commercial development in this locality up to 10m in height with landmark buildings to define gateways, corners and frontages up to 12m in height would be acceptable. At 9.6m high the proposed development accords with those approved parameters. Whilst 0.6m higher than the adjacent commercial parade and 1.6m higher than the adjacent house to the far side of Verdon Roe Avenue, it is not considered that the proposed development will appear unacceptable obtrusive in the streetscene to Chester Road noting the degree of separation between it and these neighbouring buildings. There is also a variation in building heights to Chester Road noting that the Aviator PH is 9.6m high and that proposed will rise to the same height. Although it is accepted that through the inclusion of the Bodycote site, the development is closer to Chester Road than envisaged in the consideration of the hybrid consent, the development is considered acceptable in terms of its height.

The design of the building has clearly taken reference from the former use of the wider WGV, incorporating a curved, aeronautical inspired roof form. This echo of the former use of the site which has also been incorporated elsewhere into the wider WGV is welcomed. The two elements of the development to Chester Road and Verdon Roe Avenue are positioned under a floating roof aluminium roof form supported by timber beams. The entrances into the building are from the southern and east elevations, away from Chester Road so as to be in a convenient location closer to the car parking and cycle parking. With floor to ceiling shopfronts at ground floor level and similar depth windows above, the elevations to Verdon Roe, together with the landscaping of the public space in front of them, will present an appropriate design and form of development. It is acknowledged however that this, together with the operational requirements of the convenience store, results in a lack of fenestration at ground floor level to Chester Road. In seeking to address this, amended plans have been secured that replace what was a blank façade, particularly at ground level, with areas of recessed brick detailing, contrasting facing brick and to the corner of the building to Verdon Roe Avenue, solid aluminium powder coated panels within framed openings. At first floor level above to this elevation the window openings have been increased in depth such that they are now larger than originally proposed. Noting also that this elevation will be positioned behind a 6m to 8m deep landscaped area, which will include the planting of trees to Chester Road and which will assist in softening the appearance of this elevation particularly at ground floor level, it is not considered that there will be harm to the character of the area.

The objections to the design of the proposed store from neighbouring occupiers and residents is noted. In response to these the applicant has prepared a rebuttal which advises accordingly:

The new local centre sits at a key junction on the Chester Road and the entrance to the Woodford Garden Village and acts as an important landmark building. The design approach to the Local Centre has been informed by its distinct purpose for

the community, the activities and the uses it hosts, while referencing the important historic use of the site. The modern design of the local centre seeks to create a distinctive, land mark building, taking its cues from the sites heritage. The convenience store entrance is located on the southern elevation to attract pedestrian movement from within Woodford Garden, and seeks to separate the public realm and buildings from the car parking to create a strong pedestrian focused public realm.

The building layout, which has been broken down into two wings, seeks to breakdown the scale of the development and clearly identify the separate uses, whilst creating new public realm for all visitors, residents and work colleagues to enjoy. The design of the roof reduces the overall massing of the proposed development and an 'aeronautical' inspired roof profile in metal adds a characteristic form that hints to the historic use of the site.

Both wings of the development incorporate glazing to allow a visual connection between the internal and external environments, creating a sense of overlooking into the public realm. Due to the importance of locating the convenience store entrance onto the public realm, the Chester Road elevation incorporates a brick base at ground floor level to hide the internal merchandising layout. To meet operational requirements, it is likely that any windows at ground level would be obscured by merchandising runs which would result in a poorer aspect to the road. However due to the extensive use of glazing at first floor to the flexible commercial space, this elevation is still active with a visual link and overlooking onto Chester Road and enjoys good soft landscaping. The palette of materials has been chosen to reflect this history of the area. This includes natural aluminium roof sheets, timber structural beams, crisp brickwork with horizontal glazing and metal panelling to provide a familiar, scaled reference for the community.

When having consideration for the street scene images prepared as part of the application, these are illustrative and based on 3d modelling which utilises measured survey levels to the ridges of adjoining properties. Some of the images show existing buildings for comparative massing purposes without the existing landscape for clarity. These images should therefore be viewed in conjunction with the wider development proposals.

Having regard to the above and subject to the imposition of conditions to secure details of materials of external construction, the proposed development is considered to accord with the parameters established through the grant of the hybrid consent. The development in terms of its impact on the character of the area accords with saved policies LCR1.1 and LRC1.1a of the UDP Review, H-1, SIE-1, and SIE-3 of the Core Strategy, DEV4 of the WNP together with advice contained within the NPPF at Chapter 12.

In terms of the impact on residential amenity, the closest neighbouring residential occupiers are the houses to the west of the site on the opposite side of Verdon Roe Avenue, diagonally opposite on the north side of Chester Road and above the commercial parade to the east of the site. Present also are dwellings within WGV to the south of the site. In considering the impact on residential amenity regard is paid to the advice contained within the Council's SPD Design of Residential Development.

Comprising 2 storey development and being positioned over 45m from the closest house to the west, 14m from the commercial parade to the east, over

35m (and at an angle to) the cottage diagonally opposite the site and over 60m from the houses to the south, the siting of the development relative to these neighbouring occupiers is such that it is not considered that an adverse impact on amenity will arise. As assessed below, subject to compliance with the Noise Impact Assessment, the operation of the development will also not give rise to noise levels harmful to amenity.

The consideration of amenity also extends to the future occupiers of the development in relation to access to external space. The Council's SPD confirms that whatever the size or location of a dwelling there will always be a requirement for some form of private amenity space ranging from balconies, roof gardens and communal private space associated with flats to back and front garden space associated with conventional family housing. The SPD confirms that incorporating balconies and roof gardens is encouraged where they can be provided without compromising the privacy and amenity of neighbours, or harming the character of the area. They may be required where the private or communal space provision is insufficient. There may be some exceptional circumstances where it can be justified that careful innovative design rather than a blanket application of numerical space standards can be applied. The SPD advises that 35m² of external communal amenity space be provided for 2 bed apartments.

In this respect it is noted that each apartment will have a private balcony to their front elevation comprising circa 20m² of amenity space. This falls short of that suggested as appropriate by the SPD however it is acknowledged that each apartment will have a private balcony that is capable of meaningful use. The application site is also within a very short walk of the main village green forming part of WGV to which the residents of the development will convenient access to. On this basis it is not considered that the reduced level of amenity space would result in a loss of amenity to the future occupiers of the development that would harm their living conditions.

For the above reasons the proposed development in relation to residential amenity will accord with policies H-1 and SIE-1 of the Core Strategy together with advice contained within the NPPF at Chapter 12.

Ecology, Trees and Landscaping

Saved UDP Review policy NE1.2 confirms that the habitats and biodiversity of sites of biological importance will be protected and enhanced where possible. Development should seek to ensure the continuing viability of the habitat or the wildlife interest of the site through the nature, scale, layout and density of development, measures which remove or minimise damage to habitat and disturbance to wildlife and appropriate provision for the future maintenance of the site.

The Core Strategy at policies H1, CS8 and SIE1 requires development to be landscaped to a high standard, paying high regard to the natural environment, within which it is cited. Incorporating Green Infrastructure into development schemes also contributes to addressing key issues such as climate change. Policy SD6 also acknowledges the importance of landscaping particularly in the urban area and seeks to secure provision of appropriate green cover (shaded green space and tree cover), green roofs, walls and boundaries.

Policy SIE3 confirms that the Borough's landscapes and biodiversity combine to create a unique and distinctive local character of importance to residents and

visitors alike. Planning applications should identify mitigation measures that keep disturbance to a minimum and provide alternative habitats to sustain at least the current level of population as well as setting out a long term management for the site. Development proposals affecting trees which make a positive contribution to amenity should make provision for their retention unless there is justification for their removal to enable development to take place.

The WNP at policy ENV3 seeks the protection and/or enhancement of Woodford's natural features. Policy ENV4 confirms that the conservation, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity in order to support wildlife and other forms of biodiversity will be supported. Development should where viable and deliverable achieve net gains in biodiversity.

The NPPF at para 131 acknowledges that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in development, that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity, by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity (para 174). When determining planning applications if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Included with the application are hard and soft landscaping plans, a Landscape Design Statement, Ecological Survey, Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

The ecological survey confirms that the development is considered to be of low risk to protected species (such as roosting bats, badgers and great crested newt). The Council's ecologist agrees with this position. Subject to an informative advising the applicant to stop works should any protected species be found on site and to report such an incident to an experienced ecologist, it is not considered that the development will cause harm to protected species.

Conditions can also be imposed to control tree and vegetation removal during the nesting season, the submission and approval of a repeat ecological survey of the site if development is not commenced by April 2024 and further details of the lighting scheme to ensure that this causes no harm to the ecology of the locality can also be secured by condition.

In terms of biodiversity enhancements and measurable gains for biodiversity, the proposed increase in tree planting and the landscaping of the site (which now includes for locally native species) will clearly assist. Details of landscape management can be secured by condition as can the provision of bat and/or bird boxes within or mounted on the new building. Noting the designation of the site as an opportunity area within the LNRS for Greater Manchester, these measures will ensure that the development causes no harm to biodiversity and delivers net gains in accordance with saved UDP review policy NE1.2, Core Strategy policies

H1, CS8, SIE1 and SIE3, WNP policies ENV3 and ENV4 together with the Government's position set out in the NPPF.

The Council's Ecologist has requested that notwithstanding the lighting scheme submitted with this application that a revised scheme be submitted. In this respect it is considered that the lighting should be of a warmer colour (with an output of 3000 Kelvin or less, as opposed to the 4000K that is currently proposed). The best practice guidance referred to in the comments of the Council's Ecologist (Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Engineers) recommends that lighting is warmer in colour (3000K or less) as studies have shown that this causes less impacts on bat activity. This can be secured by condition.

In terms of landscaping, to Chester Road the development is positioned behind a 6m to 8m deep landscaped area to be planted with 7 trees, a grassed area planted with a flowering lawn mix and shrub planting. To Verdon Roe Avenue the shrub planting continues along the side elevation of the store and beyond the pedestrian link to the development it is proposed to landscape the public realm with 6 new trees, hedging and a grassed area planted with a flowering lawn mix and shrub planting. Behind this will be a hardsurfaced forecourt with tables and benches. The car park beyond will be enclosed to Verdon Roe Avenue by hedge planting positioned behind a grassed area planted with a flowering lawn mix with trees planted along this boundary as well as around the perimeter of the car park and within it. The planting schedule has been updated during the consideration of the application at the request of the Tree and Ecology Officers to include locally native species.

The comments of the Tree Officer in relation to historic tree loss are noted. In this respect Members are advised that none of the trees on the site were legally protected and as such there was no impediment to their removal. The landscaping plan shows that 21 trees of varying height and amenity value were removed; 40 new trees are being planted to replace those lost. Any existing trees remaining around the perimeter of the site will be protected by fencing during the construction works so as to ensure their retention; this will be secured by condition. A condition can also be imposed to ensure that no felling etc occurs other than that shown on the approved plans.

Noting the level of tree planting proposed vs that lost and the amendment of the landscaping scheme to include locally native species, it is considered that the proposals are acceptable. A condition can be imposed to ensure the implementation of the landscaping plan as submitted and the replacement of any planting that dies, becomes diseased or is removed within 5 years of first planting. On this basis the landscaping accords with the abovementioned policy position.

Highway, Parking and Traffic Generation

Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy DPD requires development to be sited in locations accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. The Council will support development that reduces the need to travel by car. This position is followed through in policy T1 which seeks to focus development in designated centres as these are the most accessible and development within them will facilitate a reduction in the need to travel. New development, notably that generating significant number of trips, will be required to be sustainably accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

Policy T2 requires parking in accordance with the maximum standards and policy T3 confirms that development which will have an adverse impact on highway safety and/or the capacity of the highway network will only be permitted if mitigation measures are proposed to address such impacts. Developments shall be of a safe and practical design.

This position is reflected in chapter 9 of the NPPF where at para 105 it confirms that significant development should be focussed on locations which are or can be made sustainable through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This para acknowledges that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural area and this should be taken into account in decision making. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The consideration of highway impacts needs to have regard to the extant grant of planning permission afforded by the hybrid consent that being for 1000m² of Class A1, A3 & A5 floorspace and 300m² of Use Class D1 floorspace. Noting the recent changes to the Planning Use Classes Order this effectively grants permission for 1300m² of Class E floorspace. Proposing 1468m² of Class E floorspace, a small increase of 168m² commercial floorspace is now proposed together with the 6 apartments.

As noted earlier in this report, the main access into the site for vehicular, cycle and pedestrian purposes will be from Verdon Roe Avenue with a second access for vehicular and pedestrian/cycle purposes via the adjacent pub car park. Off street car parking for 70 vehicles is proposed, including 8 disabled spaces and 8 spaces with electric vehicle charge facilities. Service vehicles will access the site from Verdon Roe Avenue and then manoeuvre and reverse to loading bays to the rear of the commercial units. A public realm area around the buildings will offer seating, cycle and electric scooter parking.

Notwithstanding the slight increase in development now proposed beyond that approved under the hybrid consent, the principle of such development has already been agreed. The provision of the local centre here will benefit residents of WGV and the wider Woodford community and will assist in terms of reducing the need to make car borne trips. In terms of trip generation it is noted that the two main access points from Chester Road, the roundabout and the western access, have sufficient spare capacity to accommodate that generated by the proposed development as when they were built they were designed to accommodate all the development proposed then by the grant of the hybrid consent. The additional 168m² of Class E floorspace and 6 apartments will have a negligible impact on traffic generation and as such both junctions will be capable of operating in a safe and efficient manner.

In respect of car parking, the 70 spaces proposed will serve the overspill from the adjacent pub as well as the development proposed by this application. Taking into account the 42 spaces remaining in the main pub car park this would equate to a total provision for both uses of 112 spaces. The Highway Engineer advises that having considered this and observed the existing use of the pub car park at peak times, he has no concern with insufficient provision or the risk of overspill parking. Disabled and electric vehicle parking accords with the required standards set out in the Development Plan and accords with national policy.

The application includes connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists from the eastern side of the overall Garden Village via a 3m wide shared footpath/cycle path alongside the access to the pub car park. This will link in with existing routes on Lancastrian Way and Verdon Roe Avenue. Conditions can be imposed to secure technical details as to the construction and use of these spaces.

The layout of the car park is acceptable and will allow for safe and convenient movement. Details of the servicing of the commercial units can be secured by condition such that it does not impact on the safe operation of the car park as can details of the short stay cycle parking.

For the above reasons the proposal accords with policies CS9, T1, T1 and T3 of the Core Strategy and the national policy position as set out in the NPPF.

Other Matters

Open Space - Saved UDP Review policies L1.1 and L1.2 together with Core Strategy policy SIE2 confirm that there is an undersupply of children's play facilities and formal recreation in the Borough. As such, applications for residential development are expected to make a contribution towards that undersupply. For minor residential developments this is usually by way of a commuted sum payment calculated in accordance with a formula set out in the SPD 'Open Space and Commuted Sum Payments' which is then secured by a S106 attached to the grant of planning permission.

With regards to children's provision, the catchment for assessing this is on a localised scale having regard to existing provision within a set distance from the application site. In this respect it is noted that policy SIE2 allows for some relaxation of the policy where provision in the local area exceeds minimum standards. From reviewing the information submitted as part of this application and the monitoring data to date, it is concluded that the level of children's play provision in the locality of the site exceeds the minimum standards and as such policy SIE 2 can be relaxed accordingly in this respect.

With regard to formal recreation, this is assessed on the provision across the Borough as a whole noting that users of such facilities will travel further to access formal recreation than is the case in relation to children's play. The applicant has presented a case to argue that the formal sports provision secured as part of the wider WGV over delivered having regard to the population of that consented development. That being the case they argue that there is capacity in that provision to accommodate the increased demand for formal sports arising from the proposed development. In response to this Members are advised that there are severe shortages across the Borough for formal sports provision across a range of sports and the demand is more acute in the south of the Borough where this application site is located therefore escalating the issue. Noting that any commuted sum secured in relation to formal recreation can be invested in any facility within the Borough in order to address the Borough wide shortfall, it is considered that the requirements of policy SIE2 should not be relaxed when dealing with the formal sports requirement of this development.

Subject to the completion of a S106 to secure a contribution to the enhancement of formal sports provision within the Borough, the proposal accords with this policy position.

Energy/Sustainable Design - Core Strategy policy CS1 seeks to ensure that all development meets an appropriate recognised sustainable design and

construction method where viable to do so in order to address both the causes and consequences of climate change. In particular all development will be required to demonstrate how it will contribute towards meeting the Borough's carbon footprint reduction by achieving carbon management standards. As confirmed by policy SD3, applications should include an energy statement showing how carbon reductions will be achieved.

Recent changes have been made to the Building Regulations to help the UK on its path to deliver net zero new homes and buildings by focussing on greater fabric performance, lower energy demand, and a move away from fossil fuels (gas and oil boilers) to electric heating systems. The changes should cut carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from new homes by around 31% and non-domestic new builds by 27%.

The standards for energy efficiency under Part L of the Building Regulations are now higher than that required by the current Core Strategy Policy SD-3. Notwithstanding this, developments are still expected to evidence as part of the planning application how they intend to meet or exceed the requirements of Part L of Building Regulations introduced in June 2022.

Submitted with this application is an Energy Statement which outlines how the development will contribute to the reduction in carbon emissions. In this respect it is proposed that residential element of the proposed development aims to target at least a 40% CO₂ reduction off Part L1A of the 2013 Building Regulations. The Statement demonstrates that after passive/efficiency measures and the incorporation of air source heat pump (ASHP) technology the emissions savings will total 34.10% over 2013 Building Regulations (65.90% over 2006 Building Regulations). In relation to the commercial element the required policy CO₂ emission savings can be achieved through the design of a high-performance thermal envelope, building services specification and PV. The fabric specification has been proposed to minimise thermal bridging and air infiltration, and energy efficient heating and controls. This will secure a 15.40% CO₂ emissions reduction over the TER Baseline in 2013 Part L Building Regulations.

In response to comment made by the Planning Policy Officer, the applicant advises that the proposed PV panels are not intended to serve the apartments at this stage. Rather they will serve the commercial units and/or be fed back into the grid. The roof has however been designed to accommodate additional PV panels. This addresses the comment made by the Planning Policy Officer and noting that the Energy Statement has been confirmed as being acceptable, it can be concluded that the development accords with policies CS1 and SD3 of the Core Strategy together with the national policy position set out in the NPPF.

Ground Conditions and Pollution – the Core Strategy at policy SIE3 and the NPPF at chapter 15 confirm that planning decisions should make sure a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from contamination. Decisions should also ensure new development is appropriate for its location having regard to the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment.

Submitted with the application is a contaminated land survey and noise impact assessment. The survey confirms that remedial works are required to bring the ground conditions up to a safe and suitable standard. Subject to the imposition of a condition to secure the carrying out of these works, the submission and approval of a validation report assessing the effectiveness of the works and to

ensure that no part of the development be occupied until all works necessary to prevent landfill gas migration into the development have been approved and carried out, it can be concluded that the development accords with the Core Strategy and NPPF.

In assessing noise impact it is noted that the nearest existing noise sensitive receptors to the site are dwellings on Chester Road, to the west and east, and also dwellings on Verdon Roe Avenue and Shackleton Road, to the south. Additionally, the proposed residential flats at first floor level of the southern block are considered in this assessment. The assessment concludes that:

- Subject to the noise level of any plant installed not exceeding specified levels, an unacceptable impact will not arise.
- Subject to deliveries taking place only between 7am and 7pm, having regard to existing background noise levels, the impact from deliveries would be acceptably low.
- Noting that Class E may allow the use of the floorspace as a gym, the impact of noise from amplified music has been considered. The report concludes that where music levels within the gym are likely to exceed LAeq 85dB, it would be considered reasonable to require a further acoustic assessment to be carried out to determine whether additional mitigation measures are required.
- Noting that Class E may allow the use of the floorspace as a café or restaurant the impact of noise on the proposed flats through the construction of the building and through open doors and windows has been considered. The report concludes that having regard to the construction of the development and existing background levels any noise generated in either of these scenarios would be acceptably low. This is however subject to the apartments being fitted with glazing with a specific acoustic performance specification (e.g. Pilkington 4/6-16/4) and trickle vents with a specific acoustic performance (e.g. Greenwood 4000 SBW (Hit and Miss))

Subject to a condition requiring compliance with the mitigation measures set out in the Noise Impact Assessment, it can be concluded that there will not be unacceptable level of noise pollution to either occupiers of existing or proposed residential dwellings. In this respect the application accords with Core Strategy policy SIE3 and chapter 15 of the NPPF.

Crime Prevention - Development that is designed to a high standard and which makes a positive contribution to a safe built environment will be given positive consideration (Core Strategy policy CS8). This is reinforced in the NPPF at para's 92, 97 and 130 where it confirms that decisions should aim to achieve safe places so that crime and disorder do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion.

The application is accompanied by a Crime Impact Statement which outlines the measures incorporated within the construction and layout of the development to minimise opportunities for crime. Design for Security (GMP) confirm that subject to the delivery of these measures that the development will assist in the reduction of crime. On this basis and subject to the imposition of an appropriately worded condition it can be concluded that the development accords with policy CS8 and the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage - Saved policy EP1.7 confirms that development will not be permitted where it would be at risk of flooding or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. CS policy SD6 requires all development to be designed in such a way

as to avoid, mitigate or reduce the impacts of climate change. In this respect development is required to incorporate sustainable drainage systems so as to manage run off water from the site. This position is reflected in the NPPF at Chapter 14.

The application site is not identified on the UDP Proposals Map as being in an area liable to flood and the Environment Agency identify the site as being within Flood Zone 1. A flood risk assessment and drainage strategy have been submitted with this application which advise that due to the unfavourable underlying ground conditions and underlying Aquifer, disposal of surface water via infiltration is not feasible in this instance. There is a network of existing sewers that have been designed and installed to service future plots of the wider adjacent development and it is therefore proposed to discharge flows from the development into the existing sewer within Verdon Roe Avenue to the west. The drainage discharges south towards an existing detention basin with flows ultimately discharging to an unnamed watercourse as greenfield runoff rates for the whole catchment. While the immediate discharge point doesn't follow the above hierarchical approach, the wider drainage strategy discharges flows to a watercourse and as such the approach is considered to satisfy this criterion.

Members are advised that the LLFA have considered the assessment and strategy and that subject to compliance with these documents (which can be secured by condition) then there is no need for any further details. On this basis the proposal accords with saved policy EP1.7, Core Strategy policy SD6 and the national policy position set out in the NPPF.

Conclusions

This application site includes land within the consented WGV development and that formerly occupied by Bodycote. The application proposes 1468m² of Class E floorspace instead of the 1300m² of equivalent floorspace secured through the hybrid consent on the wider WGV development together with 6 additional apartments in addition to the 920 already approved.

The applicant has satisfactorily addressed the loss of the employment land resulting from the historic demolition of the former Bodycote development such that compliance with Core Strategy policy AED6 and WNP policy EMP2 can be demonstrated. Having regard to the level of employment that will be generated through the proposed Class E development, it is considered that the aim of Core Strategy policy AED4 to retain employment in rural areas is achieved. The proposal also accords with para 81 of the NPPF in that it helps create the conditions in which businesses can invest.

Notwithstanding the additional floorspace proposed by this application, subject to the imposition of conditions it can be concluded that there will be not be an adverse impact on Bramhall or Poynton centres. The proposal therefore accords with saved UDP Review policy PSD2.6, Core Strategy policies CS5, CS6, As1 and AS 3 together with the national policy position in the NPPF.

The development of this accessible site within the Green Belt accords with Core Strategy policy CS4 in terms of housing delivery. In terms of housing need there is a requirement for all housing types and sizes and that proposed will therefore address CS policies CS2 and CS3. The development therefore addresses the aim of the NPPF in boosting the supply of homes.

The redevelopment of this site fails to accord with any of the excepted forms of development as set out in the Green Belt policies of the UDP Review and NPPF. As such the development must be considered inappropriate in the Green Belt and can only be approved where very special circumstances are demonstrated. For the reasons set out in the report above such VSC have been demonstrated to sufficiently justify the proposals. The existence of the extant consent, the integration of the WGV development into the wider locality, the contribution that the proposal will make to the continued undersupply of housing and the meeting of an identified housing need all weigh heavily in favour of the proposed development. The presumption in favour of granting planning permission therefore applies.

The development is considered to be of a size, siting and design such that there will be no harm to the character of the area or amenities of residential occupiers. The development therefore accords with saved policies LCR1.1 and LRC1.1a of the UDP Review, H-1, SIE-1, and SIE-3 of the Core Strategy, DEV4 of the WNP together with advice contained within the NPPF at Chapter 12.

The development in terms of its impact on ecology, trees and landscaping is considered acceptable and in accordance with Saved UDP Review policy NE1.2, Core Strategy policies SD6, H1, CS8, SIE1 and SIE3 together with WNP policies ENV3 and ENV4. The development in this respect also accords with the NPPF at chapters 12 and 15.

Having regard to the extant development afforded by the grant of the hybrid consent it is considered that the development will assist in reducing the need to travel by private car through the provision of a local centre to serve local day to day needs. The development will not give rise to traffic generation that cannot be safely accommodated within the local highway network and provides parking in accordance with Council's maximum standards to a level that will not give rise to overspill parking. The layout of the development will provide an environment that is safe and practical to use and one that considers the needs of vulnerable users. The proposal therefore accords with Core Strategy policies CS9, T1, T2 and T3 together with the national policy position set out in the NPPF.

The application demonstrates that there is a localised oversupply of children's play in the area such that no further contribution in this respect is required. Through the completion of a S106 agreement, the development will secure a contribution to formal recreation. On this basis the proposal accords with saved UDP Review policies L1.2 and L1.2 together with Core Strategy policy SIE2.

The energy statement submitted with the application confirms compliance with Core Strategy policies CS1 and SD3 of the Core Strategy together with the national policy position set out in the NPPF.

Subject to the imposition of conditions the proposal will result in a development that is safe to use having regard to ground conditions and results in no unacceptable harm to the living conditions of existing or future residential occupiers. On this basis the application is compliant with policy SIE3 of the Core Strategy and the national policy position in the NPPF.

Through the imposition of condition requiring compliance with the Crime Impact Statement the development will minimise opportunities for crime. The development therefore accords with policy CS8 and the NPPF.

Subject to a condition requiring compliance with the drainage strategy the proposal accords with saved policy EP1.7, Core Strategy policy SD6 and the national policy position set out in the NPPF.

Having regard to the above and the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in para 11 of the NPPF, Members are advised that the application of policies in the Framework that seek to protect areas of importance (the Green Belt) do not direct that planning permission should be refused. Furthermore, it is not considered that any adverse impacts granting planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION: Grant subject to conditions and S106 agreement

UPDATE Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme South Area Committee 1st December 2022

The Planning Officer introduced the application as a Departure from the Development Plan and outlined that the two-storey detached L-shaped building fronting Chester Road and Verdon Roe Avenue would accommodate a Convenience store at a ground floor level with commercial floorspace above with a further six ground floor commercial units with six, 2-bedroom apartments above in addition to the 920 dwellings approved under the hybrid consent at Woodford Garden Village.

Area Committee was advised that whilst the development is inappropriate in the Green Belt, the applicant has demonstrated that very special circumstances exist to sufficiently justify the proposals. The existence of the extant consent, the integration of the Woodford Garden Village development into the wider locality, the contribution that the proposal will make to the continued undersupply of housing and the meeting of an identified housing need all weigh heavily in favour of the proposed development.

The Officer recommended that the public benefits together attract substantial weight which is considered to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, accordingly very special circumstances exist to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Cllr. Powney raised questions relating to the hybrid consent and s.106 implications relating to play areas, the Planning Officer explained that the site covers two distinct areas: (i) that previously occupied by the former Bodycote Heat Treatment works to the north which lies outside of Woodford Garden Village and does not benefit from any extant planning permission; and (ii) that forming part of the former Woodford Aerodrome now often referred to as Woodford Garden Village identified as a Major Existing Developed Site to the south, which benefits from the grant of planning permission for a wider mixed residential and commercial development (DC/053832 – the ‘hybrid consent’).

The Officer provided Cllr. Bagnall with confirmation that the 6 apartments are all open market housing as opposed to affordable units and confirmed that the building would be positioned forward of the former Bodycote Heat Treatment works which is now demolished. Cllr. Bagnall noted that the proposed elevation addressing Chester Road with the exception of windows at a first floor level would appear blank and featureless. Cllr. Bagnall reaffirmed that the site covering the former Bodycote Heat Treatment works lies outside of Woodford Garden Village MEDS and within the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr. Bagnall questioned why the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan isn't referenced in the Planning Statement, in response the

Officer confirmed that policies of the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan are material so arguably should have been referenced. Cllr. Bagnall noted the size, scale and massing the proposed building and the Officer confirmed that the building would comply with maximum height parameters of 10 metres outlined within the Design Code. Cllr. Bagnall felt that a Construction Management Plan would be required to be secured by condition. Cllr. Bagnall noted the wide ranging uses under Class E and the need to control opening hours the Officer indicated that it would be appropriate to roll forward hours condition pertaining to the hybrid consent, namely 7am-midnight 12am. The Officer confirmed with Cllr. Bagnall that the application did not include details relating to signage/adverts or lighting and clarified that the photographic street scenes are not to scale just indicative. Cllr. Bagnall questioned the impact of the development on the Landscape Character Area, in response the Officer indicated that the landscape and visual effects would be contained within the existing boundaries and localised to views from Chester Road and surrounding development and the context would be less sensitive than open countryside

The applicant's agent spoke in favour of the application articulating that the proposal new mixed use local centre which is an essential element in delivering a high quality sustainable community reflecting the development already brought forward on the site.

Cllr. Bagnall questioned why the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan isn't referenced in the Planning Statement, and added that it would have been helpful if the Planning Statement had made appropriate reference. Cllr. Bagnall questioned whether conversations had taken place with Woodford Neighbourhood Forum in response the applicant's agent indicated that a public consultation exercise was undertaken. In response to Cllr. Bagnall's question regarding affordable housing the applicant's agent outlined that in policy terms there was no requirement for affordable housing given that there are only six units and policy compliant affordable housing has already been delivered on the wider site.

Cllr. Bagnall questioned whether the design is in keeping with the character of Woodford, in response the applicant's agent indicated that the design had evolved in negotiation with Council Officers. Cllr. Bagnall questioned whether the applicant's agent considers that the roof of the building is aeronautically inspired and it was confirmed that this is the case.

Cllr. Powney raised questions over the character of the development and relating to the fact that part of the site that lies within the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum Area.

Moving onto the debate Cllr. Powney acknowledged the tremendous benefits of the scheme to the residents of Woodford Garden Village and the wider community of Woodford and indicated that he was all in favour of approving the application.

Cllr. Bagnall followed up that there's just one Woodford and there's a need to integrate the two settlements, and expressed disappointed that the Planning Statement did not reference the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan, and whilst appreciating that design is subjective he remained unconvinced that the current proposal shows any fit with the existing character of Woodford village or indeed the new Woodford Garden Village.

Cllr. Bagnall considered that some affordable housing provision should have been included to make the case for approval a lot stronger.

Cllr. Bagnall expressed concern that whilst this would be a landmark building from Chester Road the view would be of a blank wall with some windows at 1st floor, it's not been designed to be part of the bigger settlement and doesn't respect Woodford which is a particular concern and concluded that there was some work to do and wouldn't support approval and suggested a deferral to allow the applicant time to incorporate Policies of the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan within the Planning Statement, look at the design particularly the height and design of the blank walls which face Chester Road, it would be helpful if the photographic street scenes are to scale.

Cllr. Bagnall acknowledged that we need the Local Centre but it needs to be right it needs to be a landmark imaginative scheme, and noted that it could look fantastic as a gateway to old Woodford and new Woodford, Cllr. Bagnall proposed deferral which was seconded by Cllr. Powney who asked the Officer to seek to negotiate affordable housing, the Officer outlined concern with the deferral given that the application before Area Committee was capable of being determined on its merits as submitted and confirmed that there was no policy requirement for affordable housing.

Cllr. Bagnall outlined that deferral would enable affordable housing to be reconsidered, design reviewed and conditions agreed particularly with regards to details of a Construction Management Plan and hours of opening and clarified that particularly in design terms the blank elevation fronting Chester Road needs to be rethought.

The Area Committee resolved to defer consideration to allow for further negotiation between officers and the applicants agent to address the outstanding issues of concern.