

ITEM 1

Application Reference	DC/081468
Location:	Gatley Golf Club, Styal Road, Gatley, Cheadle Stockport. SK8 3TW.
PROPOSAL:	Outline planning permission (access only) for up to 278 dwellings, retention of the existing Heald Green Community Theatre building, retention of the existing Clubhouse to facilitate its use as a community hub (sui generis) for flexible uses within Use Class E (a)(b)(e)(g(i)) and Class F2 (a)(b) (The combined retail and shop sales within Use Classes E(a) and F2(a) to be limited to a maximum of 200 sqm net floorspace), associated landscaping and open space and all user access from Pymgate Lane, Grasmere Road and Troutbeck Road and non-motorised user access from Styal Grove, Yew Tree Grove and Rose Vale Park.
Type Of Application:	Outline permission
Registration Date:	07/06/21
Expiry Date:	15/11/23 (Extension of time requested)
Case Officer:	Chris Smyton
Applicant:	Hollins Strategic Land LLP
Agent:	Mr Alun Davies

COMMITTEE STATUS

Planning & Highways Regulations Committee. Departure to the Development Plan and over four objections received.

UPDATE to report post Planning and Highways Regulation Committee 14th December 2024

The application was deferred at the Planning and Highways Regulation Committee on 14th December 2024 pending the receipt of additional information relating to the viability of Gatley Golf Club, affordable housing, construction traffic management, biodiversity net gain and public transport accessibility. Further information is provided on these matters below. The Committee report has also been updated.

Viability of Gatley Golf Club

Sport England does not take viability into consideration as an issue when assessing planning applications against its Playing Fields Policy and Planning for Sport Objectives. That is a matter for the Local Planning Authority to take into consideration when determining the planning balance, not Sport England. Sport

England has made it clear that following the consultation response outlined in the Committee report it will not engage further on this application as it is a non-statutory consultee and does not have the resources. England Golf will also not engage further.

Viability is considered in the Officer's introduction to the application at the Planning and Highway Regulation Committee. It is also considered in the Officer assessment under section 3 of the Committee report, and the consultee response from the Council's appointed Surveyor. Since the Planning & Highways Regulation Committee on 14th December 2023 the applicant has provided additional information on the measures taken to sustain the viability of the Club, and these are included with the Committee bundle. This is to support the 'Gatley Golf Club Report Regarding its Economic Viability (2021)', 'Gatley Economic Viability Commentary & Final Accounts 2015-2020 (February 2022)' and 'Gatley Golf Club Further Response to Stockport Council's Comments on Economic Viability (December 2022)' that had already been submitted with the application. In response to this, the Council's appointed Surveyor/ Valuer has commented as follows (in italics):

"I retain concerns on the level of focus being placed upon the financial aspects. Viability is one element of this application only.

Undoubtedly the financial situation has fluctuated and we've now received details of mitigating actions taken by the club; yet the scope of these initiatives appear limited. I retain areas of doubt, plus I'm unsure if all possible measures were taken to improve the trading situation.

The measures taken were relatively tame and co-incidentally ceased in 2018, hence any drive to retain and enhance the club's financial affairs may have been influenced by wider redevelopment prospects.

I also retain concerns about the club's decision to cease full membership in 2018 and this represents the core activity of similar clubs. The fall in bar sales is directly linked to the Covid 19 lockdown hence does not assist the Applicant.

I refer back to my email of 20th January 2023, specifically "I therefore consider reliance on the financial statements should be limited and other factors relevant to the planning application prioritised instead".

In view of these comments, it cannot be confidently concluded that the existing golf course and associated clubhouse are surplus to requirements. The report therefore assesses the merits of the loss of the recreation facility against paragraph 103 b) of the NPPF in section 3. In summary, it is accepted by Officers that the sports mitigation package outlined in that section offers reasonable qualitative improvements to offset the loss of the recreational golf facility. However (and this is a separate issue to the viability of the golf facility), Officers do not accept that the

sports mitigation would compensate for the quantitative loss of *open space* resulting from the development. This means that the development does not comply with the provisions of paragraph 103 of the NPPF, and Members must apply the tilted balancing exercise outlined in section 2 of this report. The application should be granted unless 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. In order to assist Members the negative and positive planning impacts of the development, when assessed against the Development Plan and the Framework, have been considered in detail in the following paragraphs. Officers have also indicated the planning weight that they consider should be applied to each.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is considered in the Officer's introduction to the application at the Planning and Highway Regulation Committee. It is also considered throughout the Committee report and specifically in the Officer assessment under section 4, as well as in the consultee response from the Council's Housing Lead. As stated in the report, 50% of the housing units will be affordable. This will be controlled by legal agreement. As the application is in Outline the precise make-up of the units is not known at this stage, however in accordance with the Council's Housing Needs Assessment 25.5% would be social rented while 74.5% would be for shared ownership.

Construction Traffic Management

As outlined in the Officer assessment under section 5 of the Committee report, a construction management plan would be secured under the terms of a planning condition to control the impact of construction and minimise disruption.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is considered in the Officer's introduction to the application at the Planning and Highway Regulation Committee. It is also considered throughout the Committee report and specifically in the Officer assessment under section 8, as well as in the consultee response from the Greater Manchester Ecology Unity (GMEU).

It should be noted that the golf course has a low ecological value, and as such GMEU is satisfied that at least 10% biodiversity net gain can be achieved on-site with the design code stipulating 20% (10% is the current desired minimum BNG, as this is the figure stated in the Environment Act 2021). The Design Code would be conditioned if the application is granted. This uplift in biodiversity over the minimum requirement is a benefit of the scheme. As this is an Outline application, the detailed BNG scheme would be determined at Reserved Matters stage.

Public Transport Accessibility

Public transport accessibility is considered throughout the Committee report and specifically in the Officer assessment under section 5, as well as in the consultee response from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). The Highway Engineer considers that the site does not benefit from high frequency or even reasonable access by buses, and the site is also considered remote from rail stations. This leads the Highway Engineer to conclude that for the proposed development to be considered to be within a walkable neighbourhood it will need to deliver interventions and improvement to the surrounding walking and cycling network. This would assist achieving more sustainable patterns of movement and reduce the likely reliance of people on car travel. The applicant has been proactive in engagement about potential interventions and improvements that would be delivered as part of the application, and these are outlined in section 5.

The Highway Engineer considers that the cumulative effect of these measures would provide a significant improvement to the accessibility of the site, and should help to encourage travel by means alternative to a private car. The development proposes a sufficient package of highway works to address accessibility concerns. Whilst there would no doubt be considerable benefits that would be accrued from any bus service improvement, this is not justified for the scale of development, trip distribution and the spread of the site on either side of a rail line. The off-site and internal interventions would be subject to detailed design under conditions imposed if the application is granted, and delivered under the terms of a suitable highway agreement.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks Outline planning permission for the re-development of Gatley Golf Club, a 9-hole private membership course, through the construction of up to 278 dwellings, of which 50% (140 homes) would be affordable housing, with associated landscaping, open space and highway works. The existing Heald Green Community Theatre building would be retained, together with the existing clubhouse to facilitate its use as a community hub (sui generis) for flexible uses within Use Class E (a)(b)(e)(g(i)) and Class F2 (a)(b). The combined total retail and shop sales within Use Classes E(a) and F2(a) to be limited to a maximum of 200 sqm net floorspace. Sui generis describes a number of uses which do not fit within a prescribed Use Class, so the clubhouse building could theoretically be used for a mixture of the following uses:

Class E – Commercial, business and Service Use, or part use, for all or any of the following purposes:

(a) for the display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food, principally to visiting members of the public,

(b) for the sale of food and drink principally to visiting members of the public where consumption of that food and drink is mostly undertaken on the premises,

(e) for the provision of medical or health services, principally to visiting members of the public, except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner,

(g) (i) an office to carry out any operational or administrative functions.

Class F.2 – Local community

Use as:

(a) a shop mostly selling essential goods, including food, to visiting members of the public in circumstances where:

(i) the shop's premises cover an area not more than 280 metres square, and

(ii) there is no other such facility within 1000 metre radius of the shop's location,

(b) a hall or meeting place for the principal use of the local community,

Further details on the proposals to retain the clubhouse buildings and Heald Green Theatre would be provided with future Reserved Matters Applications.

The application seeks approval for the principle of the development and the matter of access. The matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are not for determination, and if the application is approved would require future assessment as part of any subsequent Reserved Matters application(s).

Vehicular access is proposed from Pymgate Lane, Grasmere Road and Troutbeck Road. Vehicular access to the western parcel is from Pymgate Lane. The eastern access would be from a new access point at Grasmere Road and a new connection to Troutbeck Road. Pedestrian and cycle access would be provided along all routes. In addition, a continuous network of new publicly accessible routes is proposed across the site, linking all the areas of open space and development plots. These routes join up with the existing Public Right of Way 48CG which run east-west through the site across the existing railway bridge. In addition, a series of off-site improvements have been agreed as outlined in the 'Analysis' section of this report (see 'Highways').

For the avoidance of doubt, the plans for determination as part of this application are the 'Location Plan', 'Parameter Plan', 'Internal Road Layout & Access Arrangement Plan' and 'Building Heights' Plan. All other plans are submitted for illustrative

purposes only. The submitted Design Code is also for determination, and would establish key design principles to inform future Reserved Matters Applications.

An indicative Site Layout plan has been submitted. This, together with the 'Internal Road Layout & Access Arrangement Plan', 'Parameter Plan' and 'Building Heights Plan', gives an indication of how the site might be developed. The submitted indicative layout shows 196 homes on the eastern land parcel (made up of 1 and 2 bed apartments and 3 and 4 bed homes) and 82 homes on the western land parcel (comprising 1 and 2 bed apartments). Average density across the two land parcels on either side of the railway is 41.5 dwellings per hectare (dph). A higher density range could be achieved on the western land parcel of around 49dph with a slightly lower density provision on the eastern parcel. The indicative details show a mix of 36 x 1-bed, 118 x 2-bed, 74 x 3-bed and 50 x 4-bed units. Building heights would range from 2, 2 ½ to 3 storey. The layout illustrates a 'pepper pot' approach to delivering affordable homes across the site. A total of 38 affordable apartments are shown on the western parcel comprising of 20 x 1 bed and 18 x 2 bed homes. The eastern parcel shows a greater mix and spread of affordable housing which includes 16 x 1 bed, 56 2 x bed and 30 x 3 bed dwellings. The indicative layout demonstrates how affordable homes could be delivered across the site, in line with the Council's evidence base on housing need.

The submitted Parameter Plan shows a land take of 6.71ha for housing, 0.58ha retained for the community hub with the remaining 10.8ha as open space. Within the public open space elements there would be circa 5ha retained on the western parcel forming a new urban park, that would be connected to the existing Rose Vale Park via a further 1.87ha 'green wedge' on the eastern parcel. This would include a linear tree lined avenue. The proposals include further provision for allotments and tennis courts, together with the indicative provision of woodland and wildlife corridors. The newly created publicly accessible open space would be managed and maintained by a Council approved open space management company and would remain accessible to the public in perpetuity. This would be secured through a S106 legal agreement. The Parameter Plan demonstrates that approximately 59% of the total site area would be provided as public open space.

Tree losses to implement the indicative layout and highway arrangements total 41 trees and 19 tree groups, although this could change at Reserved Matters Stage when the layout becomes fixed. These comprise 21 Category B (moderate arboricultural quality and value), 34 Category C (low arboricultural quality and value) and 5 Category U (trees that are either dead or cannot be realistically retained as living trees in the existing context) specimens. No Category A trees (the site's principal arboricultural features) are proposed for removal. The application proposes replacement tree planting at a ratio of 10:1.

The applicant has agreed to enter into a S106 Agreement to secure the provision of:

- 50% affordable housing on-site, with the tenure and mix of the affordable housing to be agreed with the Council at Reserved Matters stage;
- an education contribution (£2,126,810.65 to ensure school place sufficiency based on current forecasts, and calculated in accordance with the Department for Education’s guidance ‘Securing developer contributions for education’ (August 2023) and ‘Estimating pupil yield from housing development (August 2023) however the final sum would be confirmed at Reserved Matters stage when the housing mix is fixed, and be based on current forecasts and guidance from the Department for Education at that time);
- mitigation for the loss of the recreational golf course, with contributions for improvements to Hockey (£350,000), Football (£950,000 for the construction of an 11v11 3G AGP), Golf (£150,000 to promote participation in golf in Stockport) and Tennis (the delivery of two on-site tennis courts as part of the development, with associated community facilities in the clubhouse); and
- a financial contribution towards recreational open space provision and maintenance based on the criteria set out in the Council’s Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments SPD (2019) (as amended). The final sum would be confirmed at Reserved Matters stage when the housing mix is fixed.

The application has been supported by a series of evidence papers, technical reports and plans covering:

Evidence Papers	Technical Reports & Surveys	Planning & Design
Socio-Economic Baseline Study.	Ecological Impact Assessment (updated July 2022) including Badger, Bat Activity and Roost Assessment, Bat Tree Climbing, Breeding Bird, Great Crested Newt eDNA, Otter Surveys and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.	Planning Statement.
Human Health Impact Assessment (July 2022).	Landscape and Visual Appraisal (updated July 2022).	Design & Access Statement.

Sports Needs Assessment (April 2021).	Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement.	Design Code.
Sports Needs Assessment Response Paper (March 2022).	Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy.	Statement of Community Involvement.
Sports Needs Assessments Response Paper (August 2022).	Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan (updated July 2022). Highway Improvement Plans (July 2022).	Parameters Plan.
Sports Planning Consultants Response Paper (to comments from England Golf, Sport England and SMBC) (December 2022).	Phase 1 Desk Study Assessment (Ground).	Access Plan.
Gatley Golf Club Report Regarding its Economic Viability (2021).	Air Quality Assessment.	Indicate Layout Plan.
Gatley Economic Viability Commentary & Final Accounts 2015-2020 (February 2022).	Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment.	Affordable Housing Mix Plan.
Gatley Golf Club Further Response to Stockport Council's Comments on Economic Viability (December 2022).	Heritage Assessment.	Building Heights Plan.
Open Space Review (August 2022).	Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.	Statement of Community Involvement (March 2021)
Sports Mitigation Report (August 2022).	Utility Study Level 1.	Access Plan and internal Road Layout Plan.
	Crime Impact Statement	
	Topographical Survey	

The development is discussed in further detail in the 'Analysis' section of this report.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site measures approximately 18 hectares and comprises a private members' 9-hole golf course, associated buildings and hardstanding, including the clubhouse, car park and Heald Green Theatre Company (a tenant of the Golf Club).

The site is located within the settlement boundary of Gatley and is sandwiched between residential areas along Grasmere Road to the east and Styal Road (B1566) to the west, the character of the immediate area is therefore predominately residential. Beyond these areas, to the west lies an area of open space around Gatley Brook, to the east Cheadle Royal Business Park, to the north Gatley local centre and to the south Heald Green local centre.

The application site is physically separated into two distinct parcels by the Manchester-Styal railway line located in a shallow cutting running north-south through the site. The western part of the site generally slopes towards the unnamed river corridor and becomes notably steeper in the north-west corner of the site where it is part vegetated by woodland. The site appears to naturally drain towards the unnamed river corridor. A series of undulations are also present on the green adjacent to the railway to the north of the golf course clubhouse. The topography in the eastern part of the site is generally flat. Such alterations in ground profile are common with golf course design and highlight the man-made changes that have been made to the local landform. A bridge over the railway line links the two parcels of land. Vehicular access to the site is currently gained via Pymgate Lane adjacent to the western parcel, whilst pedestrian access can be achieved via Yew Tree Grove to the west and Troutbeck Road and Grasmere Road to the east.

The eastern parcel comprises approx. 8ha and has a relatively level topography. The western parcel comprises approximately 10ha and is more undulating than the eastern parcel, including a brook that runs north-south along the western site boundary. A number of buildings and associated car parking are located centrally within the western parcel around the clubhouse and Heald Green Theatre.

Scattered trees are present across the site including a large number of individual scattered mature specimens forming a verdant backdrop to the golf course fairways, greens, and training areas. This includes established lines of mature tree cover along the site boundaries and a network of tree lines across the central areas of the site, along with a mix of more recently planted ornamental and successional stock from when the golf course was established.

Two public rights of way (PROW) (footpaths 48CG and 51CG) cross the site, connecting Yew Tree Grove and Pymgate Lane to Grasmere Road and Troutbeck Road. Both cross the bridge over the railway line and provide east to west pedestrian connectivity.

The whole of the application site is designated as Strategic Open Space and a Green Chain in the Council's adopted Development Plan.

POLICY BACKGROUND

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

The Statutory Development Plan includes:-

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

N.B. Due weight should be given to relevant SUDP and CS policies according to their degree of consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given); and how the policies are expected to be applied is outlined within the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') launched on 6th March 2014.

Saved policies of the SUDP Review

- L1.2 – Children's Play
- EP1.7 - Development and Flood Risk
- HP1.1 - Housing Land Allocations
- NE3.1 - Protection and Enhancement of Green Chains
- UOS1.2 - Protection of Strategic Open Space

Core Strategy Policies

- CS1: OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE
- CS2: HOUSING PROVISION
- CS3: MIX OF HOUSING
- CS4: DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING
- CS6: SAFEGUARDING AND STRENGTHENING THE SERVICE CENTRE HIERARCHY
- AS-3: Main Town Centre Uses, Hot Food Take Aways and Prison Development Outside Existing Centres
- CS8: SAFEGUARDING AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

- CS9: TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT
- CS10: AN EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT NETWORK
- SD-1: Creating Sustainable Communities
- SD-3: Delivering the Energy Opportunities Plans - New Development
- SD-6: Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change
- H-1: Design of Residential Development
- H-2: Housing Phasing
- H-3: Affordable Housing
- SIE-1: Quality Places
- SIE-2: Provision of Recreation and Amenity Open Space in New Developments
- SIE-3: Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment
- T-1: Transport and Development
- T-2: Parking in Developments
- T-3: Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance (Saved SPG's & SPD's) does not form part of the statutory Development Plan; nevertheless it does provide non-statutory Council approved guidance that is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

- 'Recreational Open Space and Commuted Payments' SPD (adopted July 2006)
- 'Transport & Highways in Residential Areas' SPD (adopted September 2006)
- 'The Design of Residential Development' SPD (adopted December 2007)
- 'Sustainable Transport' SPD (adopted December 2007); and
- 'Sustainable Design and Construction' SPD (adopted November 2010)

National Planning Policy Framework

A revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF/ Framework), issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities on 19th December 2023, replaced the previous NPPF (originally issued 2012 & revised 2018, 2019 and 2023). 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 can be viewed here: [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/121241/nppf-2023.pdf)

The NPPF represents the government's up-to-date planning policy which should be taken into account in dealing with applications, and 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”.

The NPPF (2023) confirms the plan-led approach to the planning system and that decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Relevant paragraphs within the NPPF include:

Paragraphs 1 and 2: Introduction

Paragraphs 7, 8, 11 and 12: Achieving sustainable development

Paragraph 20: Strategic Policies

Paragraph 38: Decision making

Paragraph 47: Determining Planning Applications

Paragraphs 61,62,63,64 and 65: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Paragraphs 75, 77 and 78: Maintaining supply and delivery

Paragraphs 96, 97 and 99: Promoting healthy and safe communities

Paragraphs 102, 103 and 104: Open space and recreation

Paragraphs 108, 109 and 110: Promoting sustainable transport

Paragraphs 114, 115, 116 and 117: Considering development proposals

Paragraph 123: Making effective use of land

Paragraphs 128, 129 and 130: Achieving appropriate densities

Paragraphs 131, 135, 136 and 139: Achieving well-designed places

Paragraph 157: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Paragraphs 159 and 162: Planning for climate change

Paragraphs 165, 167, 168, 173 and 175: Planning and flood risk

Paragraphs 180, 181 and 186: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Paragraphs 189, 190, 191, 192 and 194: Ground conditions and pollution

Paragraphs 200, 201 and 203: Proposals affecting heritage assets

Paragraph 209: Considering potential impacts

Paragraph 225: Annex 1: Implementation

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.

PLANNING HISTORY

- DC/086180 "EIA Screening Opinion Request"; Decision Date 26t-AUG-22; Decision EIA NOT REQUIRED
- J/63234 "Demolition of clubhouse and implement store, erection of new clubhouse and groundsman's hut and development of golf practice ground to form 19 houses with construction of new access off Yew Tree Grove"; Decision Date: 01-NOV-95; Decision: REFUSED
- J/61441 "Demolition of clubhouse, erection of new clubhouse and groundsman's shed and development of golf practice ground to form 19 detached dwellings and garages"; Decision Date: 07-APR-95; Decision: REFUSED

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The applicant submitted a 'Statement of Community Involvement' with the application documents. This details the public consultation it carried out prior to the submission of the planning application. It states that the applicant undertook a programme of public consultation to provide residents and stakeholders with an opportunity to view the proposals and share their views. This includes the following activities:

- Letters were issued to local stakeholders to provide information about the proposals and the consultation process.
- An information leaflet explaining the proposals, advertising the public engagement process and ways to provide feedback, was distributed to 1,868 residential and business properties located closest to the site.
- A dedicated consultation website was established (www.gatleyconsultation.co.uk) which provided more information about the scheme and ways to get in touch with a member of the project team. A feedback form was provided on the website, as well as an option for visitors to register an interest in the proposed new homes. The website was viewed a total of 16,018 times during the consultation period.
- Promotion of the proposals and public engagement process was also undertaken through a dedicated Facebook page. During the consultation, the social media adverts reached over 70,287 social media users and 4,387 people clicked through to the consultation website.
- A press release was issued to the *Manchester Evening News* and *Place North West* to advertise the consultation process and provide information on how

residents could get in touch with the project team.

- A Community Information Line, 0333 358 0502, was established and available from 9am - 5:30pm Monday to Friday (with a voicemail available outside these hours), to enable residents to speak with a member of the development team and provide feedback; and
- An email address, gatleyconsultation@havingyoursay.co.uk, was also provided to allow residents to request more information and provide feedback. In total, 108 email responses were received.

During the public consultation, a total of 336 submissions were received. The main themes that were raised during the public consultation included:

- Demand for new homes in the local area and the principles of development.
- Effects on local infrastructure and highways mitigation.
- Drainage and environmental effects.
- Effects on local services, such as GP surgeries and schools.
- Management during the construction phase and effects on site surrounding residents.

The document states that the development team took the time to consider these issues, and is confident that the issues are addressed within the various technical reports that have accompanied the planning application.

NEIGHBOURS VIEWS

Consultation has taken place by letter, site notice and press notice. Residents bordering the development site have been written to twice, the second time following the receipt of revised plans and details. The second period of consultation related to the plans now before Committee.

The consultation period has expired, and the comments received are summarised on the following pages. The splits in the tables present the leading key themes for the petitions, objections and support correspondence received. The figures represent how many times the keyword has been cited in all comments. In addition to these representations, a letter has been received from Mary Robinson MP that raises the following points:

- Importance of Green Chain Network and Strategic Open Space
- The need for housing is understood, but vital green lungs must be kept available for residents
- Strain on schools and doctors surgeries
- Impact on air quality and traffic
- The roads are unsuitable for heavy traffic flow

- Insufficient public transport
- The development may lead to localised flooding
- The Stockport Housing Plan is the perfect opportunity to protect the area, and preserve and enhance the space for the leisure use for local residents.

Petition data analysis

Received	Signatures	Unique addresses	Themes
Sep-22	155	41	Residents' safety - Roads and paths, Strain on local infrastructure - General Negative wildlife biodiversity impact, General pollution, Retain golf club
Oct-22	48	48	<i>The site is designated in the UDPR as green chain under saved policy NE3.1 and as Protection of Strategic Open Space under saved policy UOS1.2</i> Strain on local infrastructure - Public transport, Traffic Implications, Access to site is Inadequate. Residents' safety - Roads and paths, Brownfield sites not considered, Negative wildlife biodiversity impact, Greenfield site at risk
Jun-22	106	93	Access to site – Inadequate, Flood risk, Loss of amenity, Strain on local infrastructure – Healthcare, Strain on local infrastructure -School
Jan-22	43	43	Greenfield site at risk, Traffic Implications
Sept / Oct 2022	820	In progress	The site is designated in the UDPR as green chain under saved policy NE3.1 and as Protection of Strategic Open Space under saved policy UOS1.2 Traffic Implications, Residents safety - Roads and paths, Flood risk, Strain on local infrastructure - General, Strain on local infrastructure - Public transport, Air pollution, Brownfield sites not considered, Negative wildlife biodiversity impact, Greenfield site at risk

Second Consultation

Objection keyword Aug 2023	Count of Objection Keyword (Aug 2023)
Traffic Implications	136
Residents' safety - Roads and paths	72
Greenfield site at risk	68
Strain on local infrastructure - Healthcare	43
Strain on local infrastructure -School	38
Negative wildlife biodiversity impact	35
Strain on local infrastructure - General	30
General pollution	29
Noise pollution	24
Access to site – Inadequate	22
Air pollution	17
Removal of trees	17
General local transport concerns	16
Brownfield sites not considered	13
Flood risk	12
Loss of privacy	9
Overdevelopment	9
Health impacts	8
Negative environmental impact	8
Increased population	7
Increased crime	6
Recreation impact – General	6
Errors on the application documents	5
Loss of views	5
Negative carbon impact	5
TPO	4
Light pollution	3
Unsympathetic development	3
Climate change	2
Loss of amenity	2
Golf club members financial gain	1
Golf members	1
Historic and Heritage impact	1
Northern forest project	1
Not affordable housing	1
Site can be used as queen Elizabeth II memorial park	1
Grand Total	660

Row Labels	Count of Support Keyword (Aug 2023)
Require more housing	1
Grand Total	1

First Consultation

Objection keyword Feb 2023	Count of Objection Keyword (Feb 2023)
Traffic Implications	266
Residents safety - Roads and paths	192
Greenfield site at risk	156
Negative wildlife biodiversity impact	84
Access to site - Inadequate	66
Strain on local infrastructure - General	63
Strain on local infrastructure - Healthcare	60
Flood risk	56
Strain on local infrastructure -School	56
Noise pollution	49
Removal of trees	36
Strain on local infrastructure - Public transport	32
Air pollution	30
General pollution	30
TPO	27
Negative environmental impact	25
Brownfield sites not considered	24
Health impacts	18
Loss of Privacy concerns	18
strategic open space	13
Increased crime	11
Light Pollution	11
Parking Issues	11
Golf membership concerns	10
General local transport concerns	7
Increased population	7
Loss of views	7
Negative carbon impact	7
Errors on the application documents	6
Land erosion	6
Loss of amenity	6
Road surface damage	6
Strain on local infrastructure Water	5
General local access concerns	4
Overdeveloped	4
Against national planning policy	3
Not affordable housing	3
Recreation impact - General	3
Community asset	1
Confusing language	1
Dirt	1
Littering	1
manchester airport emergency landing site	1
No EIA	1
sold for profit	1
surveys carried out during covid restrictions	1
Grand Total	1426

Row Labels	Count of Support Keyword (Feb 2023)
Meets the affordable housing target	1
Other local golfcourses for people to use	1
We require more housing in the area	1
Golf course is for limited use of few, not used enough	1
Local gardens provide enough biodiversity and greenery	1
Whatelse would be done – no other plans for it	1
Encourages antisocial behaviour on the golf course if its left as it is	1
Grand Total	7

Amalgamated Responses (Both Consultations)

Objection keyword All 2023	Count of Objection Keyword All
Traffic Implications	402
Residents safety - Roads and paths	264
Greenfield site at risk	224
Negative wildlife biodiversity impact	119
Strain on local infrastructure - Healthcare	103
Strain on local infrastructure -School	94
Strain on local infrastructure - General	93
Access to site - Inadequate	88
Noise pollution	73
Flood risk	68
General pollution	59
Removal of trees	53
Air pollution	47
Brownfield sites not considered	37
Negative environmental impact	33
Strain on local infrastructure - Public transport	32
TPO	31
Health impacts	26
General local transport concerns	23
Loss of Privacy concerns	18
Increased crime	17
Increased population	14
Light pollution	14
strategic open space	13
Loss of views	12
Negative carbon impact	12
Errors on the application documents	11
Parking Issues	11
Golf membership concerns	10
Loss of privacy	9
Overdevelopment	9
Recreation impact - General	9
Loss of amenity	8
Land erosion	6
Road surface damage	6
Strain on local infrastructure Water	5
General local access concerns	4
Not affordable housing	4
Overdeveloped	4
Against national planning policy	3
Unsympathetic development	3
Climate change	2
Community asset	1
Confusing language	1
Dirt	1
Golf club members financial gain	1
Golf members	1
Historic and Heritage impact	1
Littering	1
manchester airport emergency landing site	1
No EIA	1
Northern forest project	1
Site can be used as queen elizabeth II memorial park	1
sold for profit	1

surveys carried out during covid restrictions	1
Grand Total	2086

Row Labels	Count of Support Keyword (Feb 2023)
Encourages antisocial behaviour	1
Golf course is for limited use of few	1
Local gardens provide enough biodiversity	1
Meets the affordable housing target	1
No other plans for the site	1
Other local golfcourses for people to use	1
Require more housing	1
Grand Total	7

Updated responses received following the 14th December 2023 Planning and Highways Regulation Committee

Two additional objections letters have been received. No new issues are raised in addition to those summarised above.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

The following section includes a summary of consultation responses. Where written consultation responses have been received, Members can view these if required on the Council's Planning application database ([Find planning applications - Stockport Council](#)).

Arboricultural Officer: No objections, subject to conditions.

Conservation & Heritage Team: The clubhouse and site is identified as non-designated heritage asset in accordance with Annex 2 of the NPPF and is considered to be 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'.

Whilst the proposed change of use of the clubhouse is considered acceptable in principle, the outline nature of the application means that no detailed information is provided in respect of physical alterations to the building / s. In respect of the important trees / tree groups at the site I also note that the application conveys the intention to retain 'as many as possible'. However, this vague intention does not offer comfort that the evidential value of the trees in delineating historic field boundaries will still be readable. It is also clear that the redevelopment of the golf course for housing and the associated infrastructure required to serve such development will further erode the relationship between the non-designated asset and its surrounding landscape, to the detriment of its significance.

The heritage assessment states that no external alterations are proposed to the former farmhouse. This would limit the impact of the development on the significance or existing character and appearance of the building in isolation, however it is not evident that consideration has been given to opportunities to better reveal the significance of the heritage asset by careful planning of its conversion and reuse, or opportunities to remove / replace more recent additions to the site that may be assessed as having a harmful impact on the significance of the site or to assist in the legibility of its historic value / character and appearance. Such matters are only referred to as forming part of a later reserved matters application. Equally, there is distinct a lack of information in terms of the design, scale, and materials of the proposed housing and the layout, materials and landscaping of the grounds, proposed site division by boundary treatments and the introduction of services, hardstanding etc. There is no information in respect of mitigation against the harm that may arise from the development within the setting of the asset.

Given the limited information provided in respect of the above matters, it is not possible to provide a more detailed response to the impacts of the proposal, other than to state that the development within the setting of the heritage asset would impact on its significance and as such Core Strategy policies CS8, SIE-1 and SIE-3 are relevant to the application and should be applied accordingly in its assessment.

If the application is resolved to be approved on the basis of the current submission / level of detail, it will be necessary for the above matters to be controlled via detailed conditions. Any future application for reserved matters would also need to be accompanied by a revised heritage statement which assesses the details of the development in the context of the above raised matters.

Director of Public Health:

Health Impact assessment: We welcome the submission of a health impact assessment for this proposed housing development. This thorough HIA has been taken into account in providing the comments below.

Social Infrastructure: it is considered by primary care colleagues that this area is currently well served by several GP practices and there does not appear to be a specific need for another GP premises in the area. There is nothing in the proposal to suggest that these new residents would be housebound or have needs that differ from those of people in the surrounding residential area. While access to dental services is constrained locally and pharmacy provision has declined in recent months, there is no data to suggest that access to these services is more constrained in this location than elsewhere. Our overall conclusion is that the impact of this development on primary care is acceptable.

This development also needs to be seen in the wider context of other recent and likely future housing development in the surrounding area. The Council's Public Health Team and the NHS Greater Manchester can be consulted as required by the Planning Officer and the applicant if there are any further social infrastructure related issues requiring consideration prior to any applications coming forward for this site (feel free to contact healthy.planning@stockport.gov.uk).

As noted in the HIA, this development proposes development of a 'Strategic Open Space', and as such would not normally be supported. The loss of this strategic open space may be partly mitigated by a commitment from the developer to enhance and protect a substantial proportion of the site as publicly accessible open space in perpetuity. A binding agreement to achieve this should be secured by a planning condition if permission is to be granted for this proposal.

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 and children in the immediate area, it is critical that the built environment contributes to benefiting provision or maintenance of recreational spaces. Child obesity levels in the Borough, and particularly in the immediate area around this proposed development, 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](#)). The renewed and strengthened commitments in the revised plans to open space, relating to the new urban park, new tree planting, new play areas, green avenue and allotments is welcomed.

Affordable Housing: the proposed affordable housing is 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](#)). It is important that future residents of affordable homes are not unfairly forced to bear the costs of the strategic open space commitments referred to above.

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.

We welcome the improvement to active travel infrastructure shown within the latest documents. Promoting active travel (which includes sufficient infrastructure for active travel modes) contributes to management of good public health in the Borough, especially healthy weight, and the lack of consideration for active travel within this application is concerning. 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. While this is an outline planning application, it is important to emphasise that appropriate provision of cycle parking is essential and must be demonstrated within the reserved matters application. Both the active travel network and adequate cycle parking should be secured through an appropriate condition.

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. Given the removal of Strategic Open Space proposed, It is essential that this proposal delivers ambitious Green Infrastructure that offers multifaceted health benefits ranging from addressing flood risk to tackling stress and its exacerbating effect on health, especially through retention of views of greenery and wildlife. 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. We note that the current proposal is more effective in protecting trees and promoting biodiversity than the initial proposal, and welcome these commitments.

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](#)).

Environment and climate change. A warming climate has serious implications for health ([The impacts of Climate Change on Health](#)), with extreme weather events associated with warmer summers and cooler, wetter winters expected to cause direct increases in mortality, as well as acting to promote mosquito-borne pathogens, heighten food scarcity and reduce the opportunities for outdoor recreation and physical activity, with impacts for mental as well as cardiovascular health. We welcome the increased ambition shown by this development proposal concerning environmental sustainability. The use of passivehaus design, photovoltaics, heat pumps and other technologies, together with adequate provision for EV charging is essential to reduce the climate impact of new developments and to avoid undermining the affordability of housing by creating needs for (more expensive) retrofitting of homes.

Drainage Engineer: No objections, subject to conditions and detailed design.

Education (The School Place Planning Board): No objections, subject to a financial contribution to alleviate forecast pressures on school places. Currently this would be £2,126,810.65, however this is based off the details submitted as part of the Outline application and is therefore an estimate. It will need to be recalculated when detailed matters are submitted in order to take account of house types/sizes and local educational needs. This will also take into account any updates to the methodology such as updated build costs and pupil yields.

Environment Agency: No objections. A clear 8 metre easement from the watercourse (Heald Green Brook) to any properties is required.

Environmental Health Air Quality: No objections, subject to conditions. I have looked at the submitted Air Quality Assessment and am happy with its findings. However, the mitigation measures proposed should be implemented and also a dust management plan submitted for the construction phase.

Environmental Health Contaminated Land: No objections, subject to conditions. I have reviewed the Brownfield Solutions Phase 1 report dated September 2020 submitted in support of the application. The report recommends an intrusive site investigation for soil and gas, and I am in agreement with this.

Environmental Health Public Protection: No objections, subject to conditions.

The NIA has demonstrated that a satisfactory residential internal acoustic design can be achieved. For a number of properties the recommended external garden noise limits exceed BS8233 and WHO guideline values.

Where noise impacts remain above the external acoustic design criteria on any private external amenity space, then that impact may be partially off-set, reference can be made to PPG-Noise, noise off-set criteria. Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 30-011-20190722, Revision date: 22 07 2019 (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/noise-2>).

A further NIA should be submitted at 'reserved matters' to address this services 'external amenity concerns and to confirm that the internal acoustic criteria can be achieved.

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS):

No objections, subject to conditions. The current application is seeking Outline permission, with all other matters (other than access) reserved. With regard to the necessity for any recording works required of the clubhouse, these will be considered in detail as part of any subsequent reserved matters application, and in consultation with the Conservation Officer for Stockport Council.

With regard to the below-ground potential of the wider site, GMAAS agree with the recommendations outlined in the archaeological DBA that archaeological implications of the development can be mitigated by a phased programme of works. Given that any remains are not likely to be of any more than regional significance, GMAAS are content that a scheme of works can be secured via a condition of any forthcoming Outline planning consent.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit: No objections. The revised plans appear to be a significant improvement from an ecological perspective.

Protected Species

The applicant has clarified that resurveys had occurred in 2021 including badger. I am therefore satisfied that no further surveys are required prior to determination. Updated surveys should however be provided as part of any reserved matters application. This should be conditioned.

Updated Biodiversity Metric

The applicant is of the opinion that 20% is achievable on-site and that as the layout may be amended that further updates of the metric are not necessary. From an ecological perspective, I am satisfied that 10% is achievable on the site, with no need to achieve 20% and therefore if they are willing to commit to 20% net gain the risk is theirs. I would therefore have no issue with a condition being set requiring any reserved matters application to demonstrate 20% net gain

I also would note that in order to maximise the net gain, that a high percentage of the landscape trees and woodland planting should be of locally native species. I note that field maple is included in both the woodland and hedge proposals, a species not typical to the NW woodland or as a hedge species as well as a number of ornamental species proposed for the open space.

Greater Manchester Police, Design for Security: Having looked at the proposed development, we would support the application subject to the layout issues within Section 3.3 being addressed and recommend that the physical security measures within Section 4 of the Crime Impact Statement are conditioned when full permission is sought.

Highway Engineer: No objections. The application has been the subject of extensive discussion, revision and evolution over the period of consideration of the proposal.

The proposed use of the clubhouse is acceptable.

In terms of the housing development, the submission has sought to address accessibility deficiencies by bringing forward a package of measures that will principally benefit walking and cycling opportunities and ensure that there will be meaningful and convenient linkage to the wider area. I have concluded that the extent of work and improvement proposed is relevant and necessary and that this is satisfactory to ensure the development would see the site's accessibility and sustainability significantly improved. This satisfies the tests of Core Strategy Policies CS9 'Transport and Development' and T-1 'Transport and Development' and NPPF Paragraphs 104, 110 and 112.

Traffic generation, distribution and assignment and the necessary mitigation has been given due consideration, alongside a review of the impact of development traffic on the operation and safety of surrounding highway network that has been undertaken. Whilst it has to be acknowledged that development and consequent increase in traffic movement will have an effect on the existing highway network and the amenity and lifestyle of residents in the wider area, I cannot reason or sustain, when having regard to the interventions that are proposed, that the impact would be severe or unacceptable. I am satisfied that the proposal is in accordance with the objectives of Core Strategy Policies T-1 'Transport and Development' and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' and NPPF Paragraphs 110, 111 and 112.

The detail for the site layout, access roads, walking and cycling routes, car parking and cycle parking have all been given the necessary consideration, and the design accords with the expectations and standards set by the Council and national design guidance. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal is in accordance with the objectives of Core Strategy Policies CS9 'Transport and Development', T-1 'Transport and Development', T-2 'Parking in Developments' and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' and NPPF Paragraphs 104, 110 and 112.

Manchester Airport: No objections, subject to conditions.

Network Rail: No objections provided the existing rail bridge linking the eastern and western parcels of land is not used by vehicles (Officer Note: There will be no vehicular use of the railway bridge associated with this planning application).

Planning Policy (Energy): No objections. An Energy Statement has been submitted that complies with Core Strategy Policy SD-3. The proposals will achieve the minimum carbon reduction target of 13% over current Part L of the Building Regulations through use of Air Source Heat Pumps on each dwelling.

(Note: Following the comments of the Technical Policy and Planning Officer, new Building Regulations came into force on 15th June 2022. These include changes to 'Part L' 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%.

The carbon reductions required through the new Building Regulation standards, that the development would need to comply with if constructed, are now higher than those required by Policy SD-3. Although the specific percentage reductions in CO₂ of Policy SD-3 have been superseded, the carbon reduction aims of the Core Strategy are still relevant.

The Design Code is a suitable response to the challenges posed by the climate emergency, and the approach laid out is supported in helping Stockport to meet its aim to be carbon neutral by 2038). This should be conditioned).

Planning Policy (Housing): No objections, subject to conditions.

Planning Policy (Open Space/ proposed Community Use of the Clubhouse):

Strategic Open Space

The application is on a site of privately owned Strategic Open Space, with some access provided by a public right of way across the site. The site is identified in the explanation to UDP Saved Policy UOS1.2 and described as an 'Area of some 25 ha. Between Gatley and Heald Green containing private and public recreation facilities and making a major contribution to the Green Chain network.' The proposed scheme would utilise around 6.71Ha for housing, with 0.58ha in use for the community hub and the remaining 10.8ha as open space.

In addition to UOS1.2, Core Strategy policy CS8 sets out the following requirements, from para 3.290 onwards:

"In general terms development that does not safeguard the permanence and integrity of areas of Strategic and Local Open Space will not be allowed. There

may, however, be situations in which other factors determine that the need to continue to protect existing assets are outweighed by the interests of achieving sustainable communities, in particular with regards to delivering mixed communities, meeting wider leisure needs, improving participation in the use of recreation facilities and improving parks. In such situations the objective of achieving sustainable communities may be best served by the development of limited areas of open space. Such development must be designed to meet a high standard of sustainability and pay high regard to the local environment.

In addition there may be circumstances where satisfying overriding community needs such as affordable/social housing may justify loss of open space. The Council's Sport, Recreation and Open Space Study audits the current level of supply against relevant assessments of demand. Also relevant is the nationally recognised Fields in Trust "6 Acre" standard which consultation confirms is an appropriate minimum standard to be applied to the borough. Such circumstances will only be considered acceptable where the study identifies a relative higher provision of recreational open space within an Area Committee area compared to other Area Committee areas in the borough. Any development resulting in a loss of open space within an area of relative high-levels of provision will be expected to off-set that loss by making improvements to existing open space or providing (at least) equivalent new open space in a Committee area of relative low provision so as to help not exacerbate the under-supply situation that exists across the borough as a whole.

Improved public access to these areas would make a valuable contribution towards meeting the Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt). This provides a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to places near to where people live."

In the case of both development plan policies, regard should also be had to paragraph 103 of the NPPF, which post-dates both and which sets out how local authorities should address proposals for development on land such as this:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.*

Following the appeal decision at Mirrlees, it is acknowledged that there are differences between paragraph 103 of the Framework and Policy CS8. The inspector noted that “The Policy seeks to protect open space, allows consideration of whether there would be a benefit in the public value of the open space and allows consideration of the ‘tilted balance’ and is consistent with the Framework in this regard. Nevertheless, reference to the development of ‘limited areas of open space’ results in some conflict with paragraph 103 of the Framework.” Consequently, it was determined that CS8 should be afforded moderate weight.

In relation to Policy UOS1.2, this seeks to protect strategic open space allowing only ‘limited development’. The overall aim of the policy to protect open space is consistent with paragraph 103 of the Framework. However, it was set out in the Mirrlees decision that “...as paragraph 103 allows for development if criteria a-c are met there is some conflict of the policy with the Framework.” Again, this resulted in the inspector attaching moderate weight.

Overall, despite the fact that there are differences between the policies CS8 and UOS1.2 and the provisions of the NPPF, it is important to note that inspector in the Mirrlees appeal concluded that the ‘basket of policies’ which seek to protect open spaces have ‘broad synergy’ with the NPPF and should therefore be considered to be up-to-date.

The open space is identified as taking on a number of different forms in the Design Code document, including an area for ‘allotments’, to the west of the railway line, ‘urban park’, around 5ha. in size and also to the west of the railway line and covering the majority of the northern parcel of the site, ‘woodland’ primarily around the boundaries of the site, and ‘green avenue’, which links to Rose Vale Park to the south of the application site.

In total, the Parameter Plan indicates that around 59% of the site area will be provided as public open space. Any benefit to be provided by the open space provision will have to address the quantitative loss with a degree of qualitative gain. As such a management plan for the areas of proposed open space typologies will be required which would include future maintenance of that publicly accessible land. If the application is granted, a legal agreement would require the approval and implementation of a management plan for the maintenance of the newly created publicly accessible open spaces, and there would be a requirement that the land is retained as open space with public access in perpetuity.

With reference to the open space provision in the area, the Council’s Open Space Assessment assesses supply in respect of several typologies. In respect of this site, most relevant are the shortfall in allotment provision (Table 8.1 of that document) and semi-natural greenspace (Table 5.1). In addition, there is a

shortfall in children and young persons' play space. However, as this proposal does not result in the loss of any such space and seeks only to address play provision in relation to the requirements of the new housing, there is no net change in that regard.

The shortfall in allotments, in terms of land size, equates to around 5.3Ha in the Cheadle area. In terms of the natural/semi-natural greenspace, this shortfall is a further 43.8Ha above the existing provision in the area. Given that the open space assessment does not provide an overall assessment of open space provision in an area, focussing instead of over/under-provision of typologies, it is necessary to look at the provision of each type. In respect of the loss of the golf course and whether this is surplus in that category of use, that matter is addressed by others. However, even if the entire site, at around 25Ha. were to be utilised as natural/semi-natural greenspace, this would not make up the shortfall for that use in the Cheadle area. Given the scale of surplus and shortfall of other typologies, it is clear that if simply taken as an area of open space, the land is not surplus to requirements in Cheadle.

Thus, whilst the addition of accessible public open space of the typologies proposed will help to address some of the shortfall, in neither case would that need be fully met. The loss of strategic open space when assessed against policies UOS1.2 and CS8, is considered to be contrary to both of those policies.

The matter of the loss and re-provision of sports land and associated facilities will be addressed elsewhere. However, in respect of the provision of replacement open space, it is acknowledged that the proposed space will deliver benefits with increased access to a significant area of open land by the public and the provision of allotments. Therefore, in respect of the shortfall of provision against at least two of the typologies (natural/ semi natural greenspace and allotments) there is considered to be a qualitative improvement in that regard. However, this does not outweigh the loss of open space in an area where there is a considerable shortfall in, for example, natural semi natural greenspace that would still exist post-development, and the potential for the land to be put to that purpose. When assessing the scheme in the light of para 103 of the NPPF, in particular part b), it is recommended that the benefits of the replacement open space should be given moderate weight.

Community Use

The existing clubhouse building is proposed to be used for community uses (Class F2) amongst a variety of Class E provision under a flexible permission. Notwithstanding issues regarding the loss of the clubhouse (a *sui generis* use) in connection to wider golf course use, there is no objection to this element of the proposal, subject to a requirement to restrict the amount of Class E floorspace in

any single planning unit. The community use would be of benefit to new and existing residents, as would the potential Class E uses. However, retail developments in excess of 200sqm would normally be required to address the impacts on other centres under Core Strategy policy AS-3. As such, as blanket permission without a condition restricting the scale of use could result in excessive Class E floorspace. The condition should seek to ensure that no unit in Class E can be more than 200sqm without planning permission being sought.

Play and Infrastructure Officer: The formal sport contribution from the development would be allocated to the formal sport priority list, and the play contribution to Rose Vale Park. There are no objections to the Sports Mitigation Package offered by the applicant.

There is no requirement for an on-site play facility noting the proposed improved connectivity to Rose Vale Park.

Public Rights of Way Unit: No objections. All the PRoW will be maintained on their current alignments, including footpath 51 CG despite the fact the applicant will be realigning the old drive along which it currently runs. The new northern access will cross 48 CG but seems to have a crossing point marked so has been considered. There is a new path shown which runs south to access Rose Vale Park to the east of the railway. The applicant could consider dedicating this as a new PRoW, but it is not essential

**Sport England:
Comments 16/02/23**

Thank you for your consultation on the latest information provided by the applicant for the above proposal. My colleague, Fiona Pudge, previously responded to earlier consultations but she left Sport England in October 2022. Fiona previously concluded to advise that Sport England's comments had been made on a non-statutory basis, were therefore advisory, and that Sport England did not have the capacity to engage further. She confirmed that the decision lay with the Local Planning Authority and hoped that her comments were of assistance to the LPA in making the decision. It is therefore for the LPA to determine whether the information provided, the developer contributions offered and the applicants mitigation package are appropriate in lieu of losing the sports facility, namely the golf course. On that basis Sport England has no further comments to make.

Comments 09/09/22

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the additional supporting information which is the 'Response to Sport England and England Golf Comments' and the 'Sports Mitigation Report'. All comments previously made by both Sport England

and England Golf in correspondence dated 18th March 2022, 2nd February 2022 and 21st September 2021 remain valid. However after consultation with England Golf I have the following comments to make, some of which are reiterations of comments previously made.

Response from Applicant to Sport England and England Golf

1. The Demand section of the Needs Assessment focuses on trends at the national level using tools that are associated with benchmarking. I was not able to find any concrete evidence of demand at the local level.

Trends seem to focus on affiliated members rather than looking at pay and play and other usage from other formats of the game in tandem with affiliation. Although the general conclusion is that participation in golf has dropped over the last 10 years that is a national trend and doesn't provide evidence that supply exceeds demand at all formats of the game at the local level. There are various references to Active People trends showing a decline in Golf. However, Active People has not been conducted since 2015 meaning the data is out of date.

Likewise the use of Market Segmentation is no longer appropriate as it was last updated in 2010 and is no longer used by Sport England, although it remains on our website for historic purposes. Active Lives is a national survey based on a randomly selected sample of around 175,000 households across England with a minimum of 500 people per local authority. Whilst it provides a general trend of activity across the country, and overview of the activity level at Local Authority level, it doesn't give an accurate number of people who play each sport. There is insufficient data provided to categorically say the land is surplus to requirement for any formats of golf.

2. England Golf's recent Facility Planning Report for Gatley concludes that within the Stockport local authority there is high demand for golf, greater than the average for the North West. The demand cuts across all 9 golfing profiles, both club based and independent. From Sport England's perspective there are too many contradictions in the available data sets to conclusively deem the golf course as surplus to requirements across all formats of the game.
3. There is very limited analysis of future demand which has not been quantified. Although there may be some spare capacity to accommodate existing users the lack of quantified unmet and future demand means there is no clear evidence the land will not be required to support a golf need in the future. For future need Sport England usually look at the Local Plan period as the end date for assessing future demand, in line with the Playing Pitch Strategy future

demand analysis period.

England Golf (Club Support Manager) has provided the following comments (in italics):

The biggest issue for me is their reliance on Active Lives which I cant see how they value more than a golf specific participation study. Whilst they have the ability to see AL data at a more local level I am sure there would be a way of analysing the numbers I have provided from a national perspective to give a more local picture. For example, if there are 56 million adults in England and 4.7 million of those have been active golfers, that represents around 8.4% of the population which could then be applied to adult numbers on a regional and local basis if required.

Overall, this does not come down to the question of keeping Gatley open but more the lack of an offer to mitigate this loss from a golfing perspective. I note from the mitigation proposal you shared that there is likely close to £1.5 million being spent and none of that is earmarked for golf. The most recent response from Sports Planning Consultants suggests those clubs who have commented gave an indication of where investment would be needed and I feel this is something that needs to be explored further, potentially through our own local consultation, to assess what developments are needed to help other local clubs improve and modernise their facilities.

Sports Mitigation Report

1. The Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) referenced in this report is not an evidence base document and is merely a list of potential projects should further feasibility and evidence show there is a strategic need for them with sporting benefits.

The LFFP should only be used to help identify potential mitigation sites and should not be used as an evidence base document. Every LFFP provides the following statement:

"How should this plan NOT be used?

A LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed demand and supply analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. It cannot be used as a replacement for a playing pitch strategy (PPS) and it will not be accepted as an evidence base for site change of use or disposal."

2. Analysis has been carried out at the Cheadle Analysis Area. Whilst this might meet Council requirements, Sport England look at sports catchment areas to identify the need for mitigation for loss and accommodating additional demand

from developments. It is often the case that sports catchment area cross over administrative areas especially where the site is located close to a boundary. Sport England has a catchment area tool called "Catchment Profile Single Location" on [Active Places Power](#) which can assist, using Gatley Golf Course as the centre point to establish walking and driving catchment areas for different sports.

3. Given England Golf have advised there is demand for other formats of the game it is unclear why there is no mitigation for Golf included in the Sports Mitigation Report. As commented on previously neither Sport England or England Golf consider there is any clear evidence the site is surplus to requirement to meet current and future demand. Specifically unmet and future demand has not been quantified nor has there been a comprehensive analysis of unmet and future demand for other formats of the game.
4. Mitigation proposals:
 - a. Two on site tennis courts - any on site sports facilities need to be managed and maintained to ensure sustainability. It is not clear who would manage and maintain these tennis courts.
 - b. Improvement of existing football and lacrosse pitches - whilst a contribution has been put forward of £355,000 there is no information to identify the sites where these works will be undertaken, or any feasibility studies that set out what works are required and what the associated costs would be.

It is important an Agronomy Report undertaken by a sports turf specialist is undertaken to help inform an appropriate mitigation contribution and the works required to carry out those works.

Sport England would not like to see the Council put in a position whereby the costs of improvements are more than the mitigation contribution and the Council have to fund the shortfall. Please note that where works are required to mitigate a loss of sports facility the use of public funds, such as from Sport England and the Football Foundation, cannot be used. Public funding bodies are only able to provide match funding where the works are required to accommodate additional demand for sport generated by developments, funding to mitigate a loss of sports facility will not be supported.

5. It's not clear how the mitigation has been established in terms of planning policy requirements. The mitigation seeks to establish qualitative improvements to meet existing pitch sport deficiencies within the Analysis Area (Cheadle) but Paragraph 99(b) of the NPPF requires "*the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.*" It's unclear how the Mitigation

Strategy meets this policy requirement.

Please note as these are non statutory advisory comments Sport England do not have the capacity to engage further. The decision lies with the Local Planning Authority and it is hoped these and previous comments will assist the LPA in making a decision.

Comments 02/02/22

Thank you for sending the proposed sports provision document for comment. I have the following comments to make:

1. I note the Off-site Open Space Contribution includes Improvements to the football pitch at Rose Vale Park but I would prefer to see that in the Sports Provision section. The off-site contribution might help add capacity to accommodate the additional demand for sport arising from the development.
2. Section 5 Sports Provision:
 - a) I would need to see the research that is referred to and see if it reflects the evidence of demand using Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator and Stockport's Playing Pitch Strategy to make sure any contribution is directed to the right pitch types and sizes to meet that demand. I can generate the report and provide an overview if required.
 - b) Although a Golf contribution is proposed this is likely to address the additional demand for sport but won't mitigate the loss of the course. Reference is made to negotiating a contribution with Sport England and England Golf, however, I think the negotiation needs to be with the LPA and relevant Council Open Space Officers but I'm happy to comment on any proposal.

Conclusion:

1. The proposed improvements and contributions are likely to address the additional demand for sport created by the residential development, although further work is required using Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator and Stockport's Playing Pitch Strategy to make sure any contribution is directed to the right pitch types and sizes to meet that demand.
2. The proposal does not address the need to mitigate the loss of the golf course, for golf or any other sporting use. The two additional information

requirements set out in my objection of the 21st September 2021 have not been addressed, which as a reminder are:

- a) a detailed supply/demand balance analysis that clearly demonstrates the course is surplus to requirement when assessed against paragraph 99 of the NPPF and Sport England's Planning Policy Objectives.
- b) An assessment that concludes the land is surplus to meet an identified need for an alternative sport.

If evidence shows the golf course is not surplus to requirement then mitigation is required that should be an equivalent or greater quantity and equivalent or better quality replacement within the locality.

Comments 18/03/22

Thank you for consulting Sport England and England Golf on the additional supporting statement and Viability Assessment. I have the following comments to make, most of which are reiterations of comments made in previous correspondence:

1. The new supporting information doesn't present any new evidence that Sport England have not already commented on.
2. The information and conclusions drawn still focus heavily around the viability of the course rather than the land use issues. As mentioned previously Sport England do not take viability into consideration as an issue when assessing planning applications against our Playing Fields Policy and Planning for Sport Objectives. That is a matter for the LPA to take into consideration when determining the planning balance, not Sport England.
3. The demand side of the Needs Assessment focuses on information from national surveys such as Active Lives, Market Segmentation, Active People all of which provide an indication of current, latent and future demand, which are all relevant sources of information but it should be used alongside of, and not used instead of gathering actual demand data. I was unable to locate any information for actual demand (membership) for Gatley or any other club. It is not clear what the evidence of actual demand is in the locality and what the spare capacity across other golf courses is. Other than statements being made that other courses could accommodate members from Gatley it is not clear to what extent. It is also clear the assessment was based on a desk top exercise due to the effects of Covid and that club consultation does not appear to have taken place.

4. Trends in participation over the last 5 years should not be taken as an absolute because the impact of Covid since the beginning of 2020 is still being felt and will have had an impact on participation.
5. As mentioned in previous correspondence the scope of the Needs Assessment was not discussed with Sport England and England Golf, and I am not aware if the Council were consulted or not . If it had then the issue of looking at the land with the potential for accommodating deficiencies identified in the Playing Pitch Strategy, or any open space study would have been raised during the scoping meeting.

I have consulted with England Golf and they have provided the following comments:

- We would not consider the use of Active Lives as an accurate indicator of participation in golf over recent years, especially when viewed in the context of all sport participation during the same period.
- Our research partner Sports Marketing Surveys has recently published their Golf Participation Report for 2021 which shows that there was a total of circa 4.7 million golfers during the year, a slight drop from 5.2 million in 2020, but still substantially higher than pre-pandemic levels of 2.8 million in 2018 and 3 million in 2019. This covers both 9 & 18 hole courses.
- In 2021 there were also 3.5 million users of driving ranges which further indicates the demand for more entry level facilities.
- There is no evidence to suggest that 18 hole courses are more popular than 9 holes, with reference only being made to Gatley struggling to retain more members. The rise in participation has resulted in a shift in the demographics of golfers and there is a strong appeal to a younger market to play shorter courses given their time constraints
- I am generally uncomfortable with the focus being made on how a 9 hole course is seen as putting them at a disadvantage in the market. This is supported by my initial comments that another nearby 9 hole course has in excess of 500 members which is higher than the national average for an 18 hole course.
- Whilst there is reference to the members voting in favour of their course being used for redevelopment, there is no mention of what their potential gain is which I think is obviously going to be a significant contributory factor in their decision making

Conclusion

Given the Needs Assessment has been largely based on secondary and tertiary information rather than primary information secured via consultation, no clear conclusion can be drawn that the golf course is surplus to meet the needs of golfers in the locality. In addition, the land could be retained to address a deficiency in another sport as evidenced in the Playing Pitch Strategy. That assessment hasn't been undertaken nor were Sport England consulted on the scope of the Needs Assessment that would have identified that as a requirement. I am aware the Council have indicated there may be some deficiencies in other open space typologies that this site could meet but that is a matter for the LPA to address not Sport England. Our remit is to ensure there is sufficient land available to meet current and future sports needs (informal and formal).

Comments 04/10/21

I consulted England Golf on the proposal but their response didn't arrive in time to help inform my response to you. Whilst I was on leave England Golf's comments arrived, see below (in italics) which supports my position with some additional issues.

- *The GNA references that the Stockport area has a much higher than average demand for golf than the county and region, and whilst it is easy to conclude that there is capacity at other courses which could accommodate the loss of Gatley, this is purely based on member numbers which in isolation does not necessarily indicate that other clubs have capacity. Each club is going to operate to its own individual model so having lower than national average member numbers does not always mean they can accommodate more golfers if they also have a healthy amount of pay & play traffic.*
- *As the report suggests, we have seen a recent spike in member numbers and those playing golf since the pandemic, and projections suggest that this will continue to grow again this year.*
- *Of the other 9 hole facilities that are referenced, Moorend has now permanently closed and Burnage Park operates predominately as a footgolf facility.*
- *The one affiliated 9 hole facility, Cheadle, has more than doubled its membership since 2018, now having 482 registered members which is in line with the average for an 18 hole facility – this further highlights the demand for shorter courses.*
- *There is also reference within the assessment to the quality of Gatley and the other available 9 hole facilities, stating that the alternative options provide a*

much better course than Gatley offers. However, I can see no evidence to show how this conclusion has been reached, and I am not aware of any existing framework that allows for course quality to be established.

Overall, I do have concerns over the loss of the course in the role it plays as more of an entry level facility and those who prefer to play shorter formats of the game. With Cheadle member numbers now high and other 9 hole facilities unavailable, I feel this would be a substantial loss to the facilities mix within the area.

I completely agree that at the very least some form of mitigation would be required to ensure that golfers using Gatley have access to another facility of a similar nature, and see that being best achieved through improvements to the other currently available facilities.

Comments 21/09/21

The Government, within their Planning Practice Guidance (Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Section) advises Local Planning Authorities to consult Sport England on a wide range of applications:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-andlocal-green-space#open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities>

This application falls within the scope of the above guidance as it relates to: loss of, or loss of use for sport, of any major sports facility.

Sport England assesses this type of application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and against its own planning objectives, which are:

Protect - To protect the right opportunities in the right places;

Enhance - To enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision;

Provide – To provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations. Further information on the objectives and Sport England's wider planning guidance can be found on its website:

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport>

The Proposal and Assessment against Sport England's Objectives and the NPPF

The proposal is in outline for the loss of Gatley Golf Course to the development of 297 dwellings and retention of the clubhouse for community purposes.

A Golf Needs Assessment (GNA) has been prepared and submitted as part of the planning application, as Appendix B of the Planning Statement. Although there is a considerable amount of information that sets out the supply and to a lesser extent

the demand for golf courses in the area there is no clear assessment of what the supply/demand balance is in land use terms. As the demand side of the assessment presents limited evidence it is not clear what the overall supply/demand balance for golf in the catchment is. The conclusion is “*that there is no clear and overriding case to retain the golf course*”, and on that basis the golf course is surplus to requirement to meet a community sport need. However, given the lack of detail around the supply/demand balance it presents a flawed conclusion at this stage. There does not appear to have been any consultation undertaken and the Needs Assessment appears to be based on a desktop analysis.

ANOG advises that in all cases, including assessments carried out by developers, the scope of the assessment should be agreed with key stakeholders. In this case the scope should have been agreed with the Local Planning Authority, Sport England and England Golf but there has been no engagement and therefore Sport England have not been able to help inform the GNA.

Considerable weight is given throughout the Planning Statement to the viability of the Golf Course. However, viability is not an exception contained within paragraph 99 of the NPPF or Sport England’s Planning Policy Objectives. Nor does paragraph 99 of the NPPF limit open space to its current or last known typology in terms of surplus to requirement. The question is whether the open space, irrespective of typology, is surplus to requirement:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

If the NPPF’s intention was to require assessments that only looked at the current/last known open space typology of the site, the NPPF would have been drafted as such. The GNA does not assess whether the sporting land could help address shortfalls in other sport types, although reference to the Playing Pitch Strategy is made and an acknowledgement that there are pitch deficiencies in the Analysis Area (Cheadle). Although the land currently in golfing use is not a playing field as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595), it is currently land that is in sporting use. Given the extent of current shortfalls in pitch provision within Cheadle, with many sites also operating at capacity, this land could be used to help address those deficiencies. There are currently deficiencies in all football pitch types except adult football. Those deficiencies are expected to increase to the year 2035. In terms of other sports there are shortfalls in junior cricket, hockey and lacrosse.

It is noted an off-site contribution towards pitch provision is set out in the s106 Heads of Terms. Presumably this is to meet the additional demand for sport rather than mitigation for loss of the sports facility although it is not clear.

Additional Demand for Sport Arising from the Housing Development

The occupiers of new development, especially residential, will generate demand for sporting provision.

The existing provision within an area may not be able to accommodate this increased demand without exacerbating existing and/or predicted future deficiencies. Therefore, Sport England considers that new developments should contribute towards meeting the demand that they generate through the provision of on-site facilities and/or providing additional capacity off-site. The level and nature of any provision should be informed by a robust evidence base such as an up to date Sports Facilities Strategy, Playing Pitch Strategy or other relevant needs assessment. Although the number of dwellings proposed falls below the advisory requirement to consult of 300 dwellings, as advised in the Planning Practice Guidance, Sport England considers it is a significant number which is likely to generate additional demand for sport. Sport England has a number of strategic planning tools using evidence from adopted and emerging sport related strategies that can be used to help estimate the additional level of demand for each pitch sport type.

Active Design (Housing)

Sport England has recently published a new 10-year strategy called “Uniting the Movement”. We believe sport and physical activity has a big role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities, and rebuilding a stronger society for all. More than anything, it seeks to tackle the inequalities we’ve long seen in sport and physical activity. Providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity, has never been more important.

<https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement>

To help implement Sport England’s Strategy a key objective is to create “Active Environments” which combines the concepts of Active Travel and Active Design. Active Design is Sport England’s contribution to the wider debate on developing healthy communities. Active Design is rooted in Sport England’s aims and objectives to promote the role of sport and physical activity in creating healthy and sustainable communities. Active Design wraps together the planning and health considerations that should be made when designing the places and spaces we live

in. It's about designing and adapting where we live to encourage activity in our everyday lives, making the active choice the easy choice.

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-costguidance/active-design>

The built environment can have major impacts on people's health and wellbeing, designing the Principles of Active Design into new, emerging, and established areas of the built environment is becoming increasingly desirable at national and local planning levels. BREEAM, HQM and CEEQUAL are schemes which can be used to ensure that the high-level principles of active design are met and implemented where possible during each stage of a project's lifecycle

<https://www.breeam.com/engage/research-and-development/consultation-engagement/active-designand-breeam/>

Conclusion

In light of the above and the lack of clear evidence of any exceptional circumstances Sport England objects to the application on the following grounds:

1. A detailed supply/demand balance analysis in land use terms that clearly demonstrates the golf course is surplus to requirement when assessed against paragraph 99 of the NPPF and Sport England's Planning Policy Objectives.
2. An assessment that concludes the land is surplus to meet an identified need for an alternative sport.

The objection may be withdrawn if the further information requested above is submitted to the satisfaction of Sport England.

Strategic Housing Lead: It is noted that the applicant has submitted further information within a planning statement that states the development will include affordable housing at 50% of the total number of proposed units in line with planning policy requirements, and of a tenure split that will be in line with the findings of the Housing Needs Assessment undertaken in 2019. The HNA identified that within the Gatley, Heald Green and Cheadle Hulme North housing market area, there was an unmet need for affordable housing for 1572 households (11% of total households). This site is in one of the most expensive parts of the borough with average sales values at £366k (Land registry Sept 2023) and limited development opportunities meaning that few new affordable housing units have been delivered in this area in recent years. The reality of the dire housing need position within the borough is increasing homelessness presentations which in turn led to the widescale use of bed & breakfast accommodation for the first time ever in 2022/23 at a cost of £150k, with an expectation that this year costs will be

significantly in excess of £500k. With 111 affordable units delivered boroughwide in 2022/3 and an expectation of 170 units this year, the provision of 140 affordable units in Gatley would be extremely welcomed and would provide much needed affordable accommodation in a part of the borough with one of the greatest needs. The statement also refers to the delivery of accommodation which is suitable for older people. Again, this is welcomed as the HNA has identified that there is a need for older persons accessible affordable accommodation across the borough.

The applicant will need to submit further details within an affordable housing statement to accompany the reserved matters application to demonstrate how the proposed affordable units will be genuinely affordable to those in need as per the findings of the HNA and also details the of the proposed delivery/funding mechanisms, standards of accommodation and how the units will be genuinely affordable in line with the affordability levels suggested in the HNA. The statement should also confirm the mix and the proposed tenures for the affordable housing. It should be noted that I have some concerns about the fact that the affordable housing is concentrated in the eastern part of the development, my view being that the affordable units should be spread more evenly through the whole development. Further information on affordable housing requirements is contained within guidance on the council's website – Affordable Housing Requirement in Stockport -Explanatory Note – July 2022.

The applicant is advised to engage with a partner Registered Provider with regards the delivery of the affordable housing as soon as possible and should note that the Council cannot support applications for affordable housing grant for non-partner RP's. A list of partner RP's is provided in the note mentioned above.

Surveyor/ Valuer (Consultant to SMBC):

Comments 26th January 2024

Further to our Teams meeting and the additional information provided, I retain concerns on the level of focus being placed upon the financial aspects. Viability is one element of this application only.

Undoubtedly the financial situation has fluctuated and we've now received details of mitigating actions taken by the club; yet the scope of these initiatives appear limited. I retain areas of doubt, plus I'm unsure if all possible measures were taken to improve the trading situation. The measures taken were relatively tame and co-incidentally ceased in 2018, hence any drive to retain and enhance the club's financial affairs may have been influenced by wider redevelopment prospects.

I also retain concerns about the club's decision to cease full membership in 2018 and this represents the core activity of similar clubs. The fall in bar sales is directly

linked to the Covid 19 lockdown hence does not assist the Applicant.

I refer back to my email of 20th January 2023, specifically “I therefore consider reliance on the financial statements should be limited and other factors relevant to the planning application prioritised instead”.

Comments 20/01/23

In carrying out this review exercise the surveyor has acted:

- Objectivity
- Impartially
- Without interference,

with reference to all appropriate sources of information at their disposal.

The intention is to establish if the Golf Club is unviable, as suggested by the Applicant. This is disputed by Sport England, England Golf and objectors.

The club was founded in 1912, has an extensive history, being a mature parkland course, situated within a dense catchment area and approximately 3 miles from Manchester area. The course is physically constrained, being 9 holes only and with no apparent scope to extend the layout to 18 holes, situated between residential areas along Styal Road (B5166) to the west and Grasmere Road to the east, plus the railway line which runs in a north-south direction and effectively intersects the site. The course can be played as a 5,900 yard 18 hole course with a par of 68 (ie playing the 9 hole course twice). The physical constraints do not preclude the course from operating effectively, in our opinion, should demand exist from members and the course is managed correctly; but the Applicant presents a bleak financial overview and deteriorating scenario.

Undoubtedly, financial viability is an important part of the decision making process, forming part of an overall evaluation. Initial thoughts confirm the site may have a far higher Alternative Use Value than as an existing golf course. There would appear a strong appetite to progress the current application for residential redevelopment, yet the Applicant has not included details of any initiatives to reverse what they state is a downturn in financial viability to sustain the golf course. Each course has its own merits and a specific model catering for the needs of its members.

Financial information has been considered and confirmation has been provided that full membership is now closed; and the club is not seeking or recruiting new members. The focus within the club has shifted therefore, with a strong emphasis on potential redevelopment. I therefore consider reliance on the financial

statements should be limited and that other factors relevant to the planning application prioritised instead.

Transport for Greater Manchester:

Comments 13th December 2023

Colleagues within TfGM HFAS have reviewed the updated information. It addresses previous queries and as such TfGM have no further comments.

Original Comments

Highways Overview Colleagues from within TfGM HFAS (Highways Forecasting Analytical Services) and TfGM UTC (Urban Traffic Control) have reviewed the Transport Assessment (TA) issued in support of the proposed residential development and have provided comments in respect of the highway section.

I. Road Accident Data Trends

Accident data used in the TA should be updated to 2023.

II. Traffic Flows

The counts used in the TA were collected during the pandemic therefore they are not considered valid by TfGM. The TA deems the counts to be valid by using a factor to update the counts to pre pandemic levels. This factor is based on a difference of 8% between February 2020 and November 2020 flows.

TfGM have checked permanent count data and have found that the difference locally is much higher than 8%. TfGM have analysed data from two permanent counts, one located on Kingsway (A34) / 400m SE of Eden Park Rd, Cheadle Hulme, Stockport and A555 Site 2 / 750m E of Wilmslow Rd, Stanley Green, Stockport. The flows in November 2020 were an average of 18% lower than flows recorded in February 2020 therefore we consider the factor used in the TA to be unsuitable. We would suggest that the best way forward is to collect new traffic counts.

III. Committed Developments

TfGM HFAS would refer to the LHA to confirm whether the statement within the TA, that committed developments would not affect the highway network in the vicinity of the development, is accurate.

IV. Trip Distribution

TfGM would need to see more info on the trip distribution before being able to validate the trip distribution exercise. For example, the extract which shows the list of postcode areas versus identified distribution routes should be provided.

V. Internal Access Arrangements

TfGM would refer to the Local Highway Authority to determine whether the proposed access arrangements are acceptable.

VI. Traffic Regulation Orders

TfGM would suggest that a review is undertaken of the Traffic Regulation Orders in the vicinity of the development, with a view to introducing additional parking restrictions as appropriate, as well as ensuring adequate parking restrictions remain in place, and are refreshed accordingly. This will help to discourage pavement parking associated with the development and therefore assist in improving the quality of the surrounding public realm.

VII. Other

A robust Construction Traffic Management Plan should be employed as part of the development.

Site Accessibility

I. Public Transport

The nearest bus stops to the site are located on Styal Road and Kingsway, however these do not offer access to regular services. The nearest bus stops offering frequent services are located on Finney Lane, around an 18-minute walk from the site. These stops provide access between Wythenshaw and Stockport every 20 minutes.

Heald Green Train Station is located around a 6-minute cycle journey from the site providing services to Manchester Airport, Liverpool Lime Street, Blackpool North and Wilmslow.

Peel Hall Tram Stop is located around a 7-minute cycle journey from the site with services along the Manchester Airport line.

As the public transport services available are not easily accessible on foot being outside recommended walking distances, it is important to ensure that sufficient

cycle connections, facilities and infrastructure are in place to support access to public transport.

II. Active Travel

In order to maximise the benefits of the site's location in relation to active travel, it should be ensured that the pedestrian and cycling environment is designed to be as safe, convenient and attractive as possible, so as not to discourage people from accessing the site on foot / by bicycle.

This should be applied both throughout the site layout, and also between the site and existing active travel networks and can be achieved through measures such as the appropriate use of surfacing materials, landscaping, lighting, signage and road crossings. The development should be designed so as to integrate with the surrounding area to create a safe pedestrian environment with natural surveillance.

To establish travel patterns at the beginning of occupation and encourage modal shift to sustainable modes of travel, it is important to ensure the facilities are in place to support sustainability. Therefore, improvements to the pedestrian environment are required to help encourage the uptake of active travel modes by future residents, as follows:

Recommendations:

- Any redundant vehicle access points surrounding the site should be reinstated as continuous footway to adoptable standards.
- Footway resurfacing and renewal undertaken as appropriate surrounding the site.
- Provision of continuous 2 metre wide footways throughout and surrounding the development.
- Tactile paving and dropped kerbs provided at all of the vehicle access points.
- Provision for walking and cycle signing to and from the site should be provided to relevant local destinations.
- Ensure footpath and cycle connections to the surrounding residential streets.

- Each dwelling should have provision for secure cycle parking within the site curtilage of the property.

III. Travel Plan

To encourage sustainable travel choices, it is important that the development is accompanied by a robust Residential Travel Plan with effective measures for bringing about modal shift, i.e. the use of incentives, provision of onsite and offsite infrastructure, along with a clear monitoring regime with agreed targets.

A Residential Travel Plan should include:

- A Travel Plan budget and resources for the implementation and day to day management of travel plan measures;
- Appropriate management structures;
- Detailed time frames for the delivery;
- Handover arrangements for the travel plan or its components, when the developer's responsibility ceases; and
- Targets and monitoring arrangements.

Ideally a Full Travel Plan should include tailored measures to overcome specific barriers or take advantage of opportunities presented by the site in order to encourage future residents to use sustainable modes of travel for appropriate journeys.

In order to encourage sustainable journeys to mitigate the traffic impact of the development, incentives should be offered through the Travel Plan to encourage residents to use public transport. These could include measures such as concessionary bus fares, discounted cycles, journey planning etc.

Condition: Should Stockport Council be minded to approve this application it is suggested that a condition for the development, submission, implementation and monitoring of a Full Residential Travel Plan be attached to any planning consent.

United Utilities: No objections, subject to conditions.

ANALYSIS

Introduction

This application seeks Outline planning permission for the re-development of a 9 hole golf course through the construction of up to 278 dwellings (of which 50% would be affordable housing), retention of the existing Heald Green Community Theatre

building, retention of the existing clubhouse to facilitate its use as a community hub (sui generis) for flexible uses within Use Class E (a)(b)(e)(g(i)) and Class F2, associated landscaping and open space, and all user access from Pymgate Lane, Grasmere Road and Troutbeck Road and non-motorised user access from Styal Grove, Yew Tree Grove and Rose Vale Park. The application seeks to establish the principle of development and means of access, with all others matters reserved.

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of this application the saved policies of the UDP Review and the Core Strategy DPD form the development plan. The NPPF and Council's SPD's are material considerations.

The NPPF confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (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 reconfirms this position and advises that for decision making this means:-

- c) approving developments that accord with an up to date development plan without delay; or
- d) where the policies which are most important for the determination of the application are out of date, granting planning permission unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed 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. The NPPF directs that planning permission should be approved unless the application of policies in the Framework that relate to protect areas of assets of particular importance direct refusal or unless the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole.

This is a complex application which requires detailed consideration. The main material considerations are:-

1. The principle of the development
2. The Tilted Balance
3. Loss of the Golf Course and Clubhouse/ Strategic Open Space/ Impact on Green Chain
4. Provision of Housing
5. Highways
6. Trees
7. Landscape
8. Ecology and Biodiversity
9. Heritage/ Archaeology
10. Residential Amenity
11. Recreation and Amenity Open Space
12. Public Rights of Way
13. Energy and Sustainable Design
14. Education
15. Contamination
16. Air Quality

- 17. Lighting
- 18. Drainage
- 19. Health
- 20. Planning balance and overall conclusion

Representations

In response to the Council's public consultation period a large number of representations have been received. These are summarised in the 'Neighbours Views' section. Where material planning considerations are raised they are addressed in the main body of the report below.

1. The Principle of the Development - Land Use

In terms of the proposed use of the clubhouse, further details on the mix of uses and car parking layout would be provided with future Reserved Matters Applications. However, due to the limited size of the retail element it complies with Core Strategy Policy AS-3 and no objections are raised by the Planning Policy Officer. The Environmental Health Officer (Public Protection) is also satisfied that the building is sited a sufficient distance away from houses to raise no residential amenity concerns, the Highway Engineer considers that adequate parking can be provided and the Conservation Officer and GMAAS have raised no objections to the intended use of the building (see considerations 5, 9 and 10 below). Therefore, assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan the proposed change of use is acceptable in land use terms.

The housing development is sited on an area of allocated Strategic Open Space. Saved UDP Review Policy UOS1.2 states that within the areas of Strategic Open Space only limited development will be permitted. Development which, by reason of its type, scale, siting, materials or design would be insensitive to the maintenance or enhancement of attractive green and open areas for public enjoyment and recreation will not be permitted. In addition, development proposals in strategic open spaces should:

- i) protect them from increased overlooking, traffic flows or other encroachment;
- ii) protect and enhance rights of way; and
- iii) safeguard biodiversity and nature conservation area interests.

The explanation to the Policy outlines that through the protection of clearly identified areas of Strategic Open Space the UDP seeks to safeguard particular open areas of structural importance, because of their own characteristics and contribution to the urban fabric.

Core Strategy Policy CS8 states that in general terms development that does not safeguard the permanence and integrity of areas of Strategic Open Space will not be allowed. There may, however, be situations in which other factors determine that the need to continue to protect existing assets are outweighed by the interests of achieving sustainable communities, in particular with regards to delivering mixed communities, meeting wider leisure needs, improving participation in the use of recreation facilities and improving parks. In such situations the objective of achieving sustainable communities may be best served by the development of limited areas of open space. Such development must be designed to meet a high standard of sustainability and pay high regard to the local environment. In addition, there may be circumstances where satisfying overriding community needs such as affordable/ social housing may justify loss of open space. Such circumstances will only be considered acceptable where the Council's Open Space study identifies a relative higher provision of recreational open space within an Area Committee area compared to other Area Committee areas in the borough. Any development resulting in a loss of open space within an area of relative high-levels of provision will be expected to off-set that loss by making improvements to existing open space or providing (at least) equivalent new open space in a Committee area of relative low provision, so as to help not exacerbate the under-supply situation that exists across the borough as a whole.

The above Policies are supported by robust and up-to-date evidence on recreational needs in the Council's Open Space Study, as required by the Framework.

Assessed against the above policies, the proposed housing development is non-compliant and the principle is not acceptable in land use terms (see consideration 3 below). It represents a departure to the Council's adopted Development Plan.

Notwithstanding this, the loss of the clubhouse building needs to be assessed against paragraph 103 of the Framework and this is discussed under consideration 3 below. Furthermore, Article 32 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 confirms that a local planning authority may grant permission for development which does not accord with the provisions of the Development Plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated. Further guidance is contained in the NPPG that states:

"The local planning authority may depart from development plan policy where material considerations indicate that the plan should not be followed, subject to any conditions prescribed by direction by the Secretary of State" Paragraph: 013
Reference ID: 21b-013-20150327, Revision date: 27 03 2015.

The detailed material considerations relevant to this application are considered below.

2. The 'Tilted Balance'

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan (as a whole) unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At a national level, the Framework is a material consideration that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) must have regard to.

Paragraph 11 of the Framework states that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. 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.

For applications involving the provision of housing, paragraph d) above makes it clear that the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date in where: (a) the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply (or a four year supply, if applicable, as set out in paragraph 226) of deliverable housing sites (with a buffer, if applicable, as set out in paragraph 77) and does not benefit from the provisions of paragraph 76; or (b) where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was below 75% of the housing requirement over the previous three years.

The application site is not classed in the Framework as an area or asset of particular importance, and criterion 11d)i is not relevant. However, the application is for housing, and following the receipt of the appeal decision at Mirrlees Fields the LPA currently has a position of 3.78 years housing land supply. Consequently, paragraph 11d)ii is engaged. This has the effect that the policies which are most important for determining the application are deemed out-of-date. It is this material consideration

that 'tilts' the balancing exercise for this application, from being neutral to one where the application should be granted unless 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.

Even though the tilted balance applies, in determining the application it is still necessary to consider and give weight to Development Plan policies as these will inform the balancing exercise required under paragraph 11d)ii. Due weight should be given to them according to their degree of consistency with the Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

3. Loss of the Golf Course and Clubhouse/ Strategic Open Space/ Impact on the Green Chain

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy CS8 states that development that does not safeguard the permanence and integrity of areas of Strategic Open Space will not be allowed. There may, however, be situations in which other factors determine that the need to continue to protect existing assets are outweighed by the interests of achieving sustainable communities, in particular with regards to delivering mixed communities, meeting wider leisure needs, improving participation in the use of recreation facilities and improving parks. In such situations the policy advocates that the objective of achieving sustainable communities may be best served by the development of limited areas of open space. In those circumstances, CS8 requires the development to be designed to meet a high standard of sustainability and pay high regard to the local environment. In addition, there may be circumstances where satisfying overriding community needs such as affordable/social housing may justify loss of open space.

The Stockport Open Space Assessment (2017) and Open Space Standards Paper (2017) audit the current level of supply against relevant assessments of demand. Also relevant is the nationally recognised Fields in Trust standard which consultation confirms is an appropriate minimum standard to be applied to the borough. The circumstances outlined in Policy CS8 will only be considered acceptable where the study identifies a relative higher provision of recreational open space within an Area Committee area compared to other Area Committee areas in the borough. Improved public access to these areas would make a valuable contribution towards meeting the Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard. This provides a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to places near to where people live.

Saved Policy UOS1.2 states that within the areas of Strategic Open Space shown on the Proposals Map, only limited development will be permitted. Development which, by reason of its type, scale, siting, materials or design would be insensitive to the

maintenance or enhancement of attractive green and open areas for public enjoyment and recreation will not be permitted. In addition, development proposals in strategic open spaces should:

- i. protect them from increased overlooking, traffic flows or other encroachment
- ii. protect and enhance rights of way; and safeguard biodiversity and
- iii. safeguard biodiversity and nature conservation area interests

The explanation to the Policy refers to the Gatley golf course/Rose Vale Park area of Strategic Open Space as an “*Area of some 25 ha. between Gatley and Heald Green containing private and public recreation facilities and making major contribution to Green Chain network*”. It outlines that the areas of Strategic Open Space identified on the Proposals Map are relatively large open areas (generally over 25ha) and possess one or more of the following characteristics:

- contribute to physical separation of distinct settlements (within the Borough or in adjoining Districts);
- contribute to the maintenance of the identities of communities;
- incorporate land currently or last used as major public or private recreation facilities (e.g. 9/18 hole golf course);
- provide actual or potential public access for informal recreation;
- include areas of importance and/or potential for nature conservation;
- make a significant visual contribution to urban fabric;
- make a major contribution to Borough-wide standards of recreational open space provision; and
- make a significant contribution to green chains of related open space.

Paragraph 103 of the NPPF states:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.*

Following the appeal decision at Mirrlees, it is acknowledged that there are differences between paragraph 103 of the Framework and Policy CS8 Safeguarding and Improving the Environment. The inspector noted that “The Policy seeks to

protect open space, allows consideration of whether there would be a benefit in the public value of the open space and allows consideration of the 'tilted balance' and is consistent with the Framework in this regard. Nevertheless, reference to the development of 'limited areas of open space' results in some conflict with paragraph 103 of the Framework." Consequently, it was determined that CS8 should be afforded moderate weight.

In relation to Policy UOS1.2, this seeks to protect strategic open space allowing only 'limited development'. The overall aim of the policy to protect open space is consistent with paragraph 103 of the Framework. However, it was set out in the Mirrlees decision that "...as paragraph 103 allows for development if criteria a-c are met there is some conflict of the policy with the Framework." Again, this resulted in the inspector attaching moderate weight.

Policy NE3.1 outlines that development which would detract from the wildlife or recreation value of the Green Chains identified on the proposals map will not be permitted. The Council will initiate and encourage measures to improve linkages and habitat value within and between these Green Chains, and, where appropriate, will require such measures through the development control process. The Policy explanation confirms that the presence of a Green Chain notation on the Proposals Map does not necessarily prohibit new development. In considering development proposals within Green Chains, the key factor from the point of view of the policy will be to avoid impedance to wildlife movement or to recreational use and to maintain the continuity of routes or habitats.

Policy NE3.1 is consistent with paragraphs 20(d), 96(c), 180 and 181 of the Framework.

Overall, despite the fact that there are differences between the policies CS8 and UOS1.2 and the provisions of the NPPF, it is important to note that inspector in the Mirrlees appeal concluded that the 'basket of policies' which seek to protect open spaces have 'broad synergy' with the NPPF and should therefore be considered to be up-to-date.

Officer Assessment

The application site is a privately owned Golf Club that is designated by the Proposals Map as Strategic Open Space. Whilst the Public Rights of Way across the land would need to be maintained (and although not presently raised as a possibility by the applicant), the potential for the applicant to exercise permitted development rights to fence off the rest of the land including along the public footpaths is a material consideration. This fencing could be up to 2.0m high, and would not have to be permeable fencing. Future public access to it beyond the Public Rights of Way, even for existing members of the Golf Club, cannot be guaranteed.

The submitted Parameter Plan shows a land take of 6.71ha for housing, 0.58ha retained for the community hub with the remaining 10.8ha as open space. Within the public open space elements, there would be circa 5ha retained on the western parcel forming a new urban park that would be connected to the existing Rose Vale Park via a further 1.87ha 'green wedge' on the eastern parcel. This includes a linear tree lined avenue. The Parameter Plan demonstrates that approximately 59% of the total site area would be provided as public open space. Furthermore, within the 10.8ha of open space the application would provide natural/ semi natural greenspace and allotments of which there is a deficiency of provision in the Cheadle Committee Area. The area specified for allotments (0.33 hectares) could deliver a mix of around 20 x 125 and 250 sq. yard plots, with the precise details to be provided at Reserved Matters stage. If the application is granted, a legal agreement would require the approval and implementation of a management plan for the maintenance of the newly created publicly accessible open spaces, and there would be a requirement that the land is retained as open space with public access in perpetuity. This would ensure that the land contributes towards meeting Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard.

Notwithstanding this, when assessed against policies CS8 and UOS1.2 the proposed development would not safeguard the permanence and integrity of the area of Strategic Open and does not involve the development of a limited area of this space. Furthermore, an Open Space Assessment for the borough was undertaken in 2017 and has been monitored since. The assessment indicated that there are deficiencies across the borough. In Cheadle there are deficiencies in natural semi natural and children's play space, as well as allotments, and these deficiencies would remain post-development. The assessment also highlights the deficit in terms of accessibility to various forms of open space. Recommendation 2 from the Open Space standards paper states that '*Sites helping or with the potential to serve areas identified as having gaps in the catchment mapping should be recognised through protection and enhancement.*' Cheadle Committee area does not have a relative higher provision of recreational open space compared to other Area Committee areas in the borough, and the development is contrary to the overall provisions of policies CS8 and UOS1.2. It is therefore a departure against the adopted Development Plan.

During consideration of the application, advice has been sought from the Council's Neighbourhood Officer and Active Stockport Manager regarding the potential for the recreational land and clubhouse to be re-purposed for another form of sport. Noting the desire to safeguard the viability of existing facilities, the Council's sports priorities and the topography of the site, this assessment concluded that they are unsuitable to meet an identified need for an alternative sport to golf. Regardless, Officers and Sport England do not consider that it has been demonstrated that the existing golf course and associated clubhouse are surplus to requirements despite the evidence

submitted by the applicant. In summary, and although this has been challenged by the applicant, Sport England considers that insufficient data has been provided to categorically say the land is surplus to requirement for any formats of golf; England Golf's recent Facility Planning Report for Gatley concludes that within the Stockport local authority there is high demand for golf, greater than the average for the North West; there are too many contradictions in the available data sets to conclusively deem the golf course as surplus to requirements across all formats of the game; and there is very limited analysis of future demand which has not been quantified, with no clear evidence the land will not be required to support a golf need in the future. The Council appointed Surveyor/ Valuer, who has appraised the evidence submitted by the applicant in detail, has stated that notwithstanding the bleak financial overview and deteriorating scenario presented by the applicant there are reasonable doubts that the measures taken to sustain the viability of the Club have been sufficient.

Notwithstanding the above, even if it was demonstrated that the golf course was surplus to requirements, the open space still has the *potential* to be used for informal recreation and/ or as another form of open space such as natural and semi natural greenspace where there is a considerable shortfall in the Cheadle Committee area. Having regard to the wording of paragraph 103 of the Framework, and what is said immediately before it in paragraph 102 about the importance of "robust and up-to-date assessments" of "what open space, sports and recreational provision" is needed in an area, the reference to 'requirements' is clearly a reference to requirements for open space, sports or recreational buildings or land generally within that area, not solely the particular form (or typology) of open space or sports provision for which the land and/or building(s) in question are currently used. Thus, in the present case, it is not sufficient for the applicant's assessment to show that there is a surplus of golfing provision within the relevant catchment. The advice of the Planning Policy Officer has not therefore been adequately addressed by the applicant

As the open space, golf course and clubhouse are not surplus to requirements, and the development is not for alternative sports and recreational provision (the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss), compliance with paragraph 103 of the Framework centres on 103 b) and whether the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land resulting from the development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location. In this regard, the application does not propose to replace the loss with an equivalent quantity in a suitable location, however (and although this is not specifically what the paragraph says) case law has held that paragraph 103 b) allows for quantitative losses of open space to be offset by qualitative improvements. It follows therefore that it is necessary to consider whether the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, would be mitigated by any qualitative improvements proposed by the application in a suitable location. The Council does not have an adopted formula or methodology for calculating the

qualitative improvements that would mitigate for the loss of open space and recreational land; rather it is a matter of planning judgement having regard to the advice from consultees. This has been considered by the Council's Senior Neighbourhood Officer, Planning Policy Team, Active Stockport Manager and Play and Infrastructure Officer, who have collectively accepted that the following measures are reasonable qualitative improvements to offset the loss of the recreational golf facility. They are based on and informed by the Council's current sports deficiencies and priorities. The applicant has agreed to the following measures.

1. TENNIS AND CLUBHOUSE - The provision of 2 on-site tennis courts for public use with associated community facilities in the clubhouse (to be delivered as part of the development).
2. HOCKEY - The hockey AGP at Bramhall High School has been identified as a strategic site in the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). It is the only full size hockey pitch (and competitive match play pitch) in the borough and needs to be protected. The hockey pitch serves school pupils, the general public and hockey club play. A contribution of £350,000 would be secured via a s106 agreement. It would enable the delivery of identified priorities in the PPS to the existing sand dressed facility and facilitate a refurbishment, consisting of repairs to perimeter fencing, upgrade to the existing floodlights to allow competitive match play, an upgraded key pad access and online booking system, and essential secure storage for club equipment.
3. FOOTBALL - The PPS was carried out in 2017 and a complete refresh has been commissioned and is expected in late Spring 2024. Although the 2017 strategy identified a requirement for junior pitches, the FA now recommends that full size adult 11v11 pitches are prioritised and marked out accordingly for junior play. Artificial grass is also preferable due to its durability and x80 carrying capacity when compared to grass. A contribution of £950,000 used towards the construction of a new full size 11v11 3G AGP would be secured via a s106 agreement.
4. GOLF - A financial contribution to be used to promote participation in golf in Stockport, particularly at junior level. £150,000 would be secured via a S106 agreement).

The Play and Infrastructure Officer and Active Stockport Manager have confirmed that the proposed mitigation sports investment could be sustained without seeking any additional funds or creating any additional maintenance liability for the Council. This would present a significant benefit to enable participation in a wider range of sports.

In considering the mitigation package, the Council's Active Stockport Manager has commented as follows (in italics):

"It is really important for Members to understand that the way in which people play sport, and where they choose to play sport, is not influenced at all by political boundaries. People travel to facilities and for a number of reasons – quality, availability, price, central venue (hubs of multi-mitches where youth leagues are often played). The mitigation includes a provision towards the hockey pitch at Bramhall High school – this is the only full size hockey pitch available in the borough and therefore serves all area committees. The golf mitigation is a sum to be provided to Life Leisure to deliver some golf activation in neighbourhoods, which is more equitable than making an allocation to one particular club for example. And the allocation for football will be determined by a number of factors – priorities identified in our new PPS (anticipated April 24), deliverability, availability of a partner club with match funding. So there is a possibility that it may go towards a provision in Cheadle, however I can't explicitly say this. Also it is worth noting that the Cheadle Committee area already has a very high number of 3G AGP's".

Despite these obvious benefits, the mitigation for the loss of the golf facility would not compensate for the quantitative loss of open space resulting from the development. The proposed improved public access to the retained natural/ semi-natural open space and the provision of allotments would be benefits of the scheme, but the loss of Strategic Open Space would result in significant harm. The Council's 2017 Open Space Standards Paper states that all golf courses in Stockport are already viewed as being of high value. This is attributed to health and social inclusion benefits as well as historical and economic value. The Paper outlines that assessing the quality and value of open spaces is used to identify those sites that should be given the highest level of protection by the planning system. The designation of the application site as Strategic Open Space within the Development Plan also outlines its wider contribution to the urban form and its recreational value, notwithstanding that it is a private member club.

The council has not accepted that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land are surplus to requirements. The application proposes qualitative improvements to sports that will not only offset the loss of the recreational golf facility, but will provide a significantly wider sports reach and opportunities for participation in sport. The land is also private whereas the development would secure future public access to 10.8ha as open space, as well as providing natural/ semi natural greenspace and allotments of which there is a deficiency of provision in the Cheadle Committee Area. Notwithstanding these significant benefits, Officers consider that the loss of approximately 6.71ha of high quality Strategic Open Space in an area of open space deficiency would be negative and should be afforded very significant weight in the overall planning balance.

Turning to saved Policy NE3.1, no objections are raised to the application on the grounds of ecology subject to planning conditions. Furthermore, as access to the application site beyond the public footpaths is presently restricted to golf course members, it is arguable that the provision of 59% of the total site area as public open space with connectivity to Rose Vale Park would not only safeguard but increase the existing recreation value of the Green Chain. On balance, the application complies with the overall provisions of policy NE3.1. Officers consider that the impact on the Green Chain is neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

4. Provision of Housing

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy CS2 seeks to ensure that a wide choice of high quality homes will be provided to meet the requirements of existing and future Stockport households. The focus will be on providing new housing through the effective and efficient use of land within accessible urban areas, and making the best use of existing housing. It states that provision will be made for a net additional 7,200 homes over the 15-year period from 2011 to 2026, accepting that this target is informed by an outdated housing target. The previously developed land target for housing is at least 90%, falling to a target of at least 80% of housing provision on previously developed land for sites providing 50% affordable housing or more or to all sites when there is less than a five-year deliverable supply.

Policy CS4 directs new housing towards three spatial priority areas (the Town Centre, District and Large Local Centres and, finally, other accessible locations). Urban Greenfield Development should accord with a sequential approach, with the use of accessible Urban Open Space sites being the third sequential choice but only where it can be demonstrated that there is adequate provision of open space in the local area or the loss would be adequately replaced, in accordance with Core Policy CS8.

Policy CS8 states that there may be circumstances where satisfying overriding community needs such as affordable/social housing may justify loss of open space. This will only be considered acceptable where the study identifies a relative higher provision of recreational open space within an Area Committee area compared to other Committee areas in the borough.

Policy H-2 states that the delivery and supply of housing will be monitored and managed to ensure provision is in line with the housing trajectory, the local previously developed land target is being achieved and a continuous five-year deliverable supply of land for housing is maintained. The local previously developed land target only applies when there is a five-year deliverable supply, and the required

accessibility score stipulated in the Policy for sites outside the first and second spatial priorities will be lowered if necessary to maintain such a deliverable supply. Having regard to the lengthy and continuing housing under-supply in the Borough, the current minimum accessibility score is set at 'zero'.

Policy H-3 sets out the Council's affordable housing policy and outlines that should any urban open space or Green Belt sites be released for housing at least 50% of the dwellings should be affordable.

Following the recent appeal decision at Mirrlees, the housing land supply position in Stockport is 3.78 years, and it must be accepted that the Council has been in a period of prolonged under-supply. Therefore, in such circumstances the 'Tilted Balance' is engaged and stipulates that Policies CS2, CS4 and H-2 are out of date. These policies are inconsistent with the aims of paragraphs 75 and 78 of the Framework, and can only be afforded limited weight in the determination of this application.

Policy H-3 is consistent with the aims of paragraphs 20 and 64 of the Framework.

Officer Assessment

A critical element in relation to housing provision is whether a local authority has a five-year deliverable supply of housing land, as required by the Framework. The current housing land position in Stockport of 3.78 years of supply clearly indicates that there is insufficient land with associated permissions in Stockport to meet that requirement. Given the age of the current Development Plan policy in this regard (Policy CS2 in the Core Strategy) and with a lack of a housing target being set in a more up-to-date plan, the government is very clear that the target should be taken from the local housing need (LHN) figure which is derived from the government's standard method. The 3.78-year supply figure noted above, is based on a local housing need of 1,125 units per annum (5,625 over 5 years). The provision of 4,256 units in the 5-year deliverable supply means that the shortfall is 1,369 units.

Since it has been identified that there is not a relative higher provision of recreational open space within Cheadle Committee area compared to other Committee areas in the borough, there is not adequate provision of open space in the local area and the loss of open space resulting from this development would not be adequately replaced, the application is contrary to the overall provisions of Policies CS4 and CS8 and is a departure against the adopted Development Plan. Notwithstanding this, as the Council continues to fail to meet the requirement to maintain a 5 year deliverable supply of housing sites when measured against the LHN, it is evident that Stockport does not currently have sufficient land to meet and maintain a five-year supply position. Given the scale of the deficit, this situation is likely to remain the case, at least until such time as the Council adopts its own housing target through a new local plan. As such, greenfield land in the urban area may be regarded as a possible location to deliver housing in order to meet the identified need. That does

not mean that all land is necessarily suitable, as other factors will need to be taken into account, but the lack of housing land to meet need, including affordable need, is a very significant material consideration to be weighed in the planning balance.

The proposal seeks up to 278 homes with 50% provision of affordable housing. Over an area of around 6.7Ha, this equates to around 41 dwellings per hectare (dph). It is considered that this is an appropriate density of development which would make an efficient use of the land should planning permission be granted.

Location of development

Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy directs new residential development towards the more accessible parts of the Borough identifying 3 spatial priority areas (Central Housing Area; Neighbourhood Priority Areas and the catchment areas of District/Large Local Centres; and other accessible locations). Policy H-2 confirms that when there is less than a 5-year deliverable supply of housing (as is currently the case) the required accessibility scores will be lowered to allow the deliverable supply to be topped up by other sites in accessible locations. This position has been regularly assessed to ensure that the score reflects the ability to 'top up' supply to a 5-year position. However, at present, 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.

Notwithstanding the site's allocation as Strategic Open Space, in locational terms (and subject to interventions and improvement to the surrounding walking and cycling network) the site is reasonably accessible. It is within the urban area and approximately a mile from large local centres to the North and South (Gatley and Heald Green), and is a similar distance from railway stations serving those areas.

Housing Supply

As stated, there is 3.78 years of published housing land supply in Stockport. This proposal for 278 dwellings has the potential to make an important addition to the housing land supply within Stockport, both for market housing but more specifically by providing 140 affordable homes. The Council's Strategic Housing Lead has commented:

"This site is in one of the most expensive parts of the borough with average sales values at £366k (Land registry Sept 2023) and limited development opportunities meaning that few new affordable housing units have been delivered in this area in recent years. The reality of the dire housing need position within the borough is increasing homelessness presentations which in turn led to the widescale use of bed & breakfast accommodation for the first time ever in 2022/23 at a cost of £150k, with an expectation that this year costs will be significantly in excess of £500k. With 111 affordable units delivered borough wide in 2022/3 and an expectation of 170 units this year, the provision of 140 affordable units in Gatley would be extremely

welcomed and would provide much needed affordable accommodation in a part of the borough with one of the greatest needs”.

It is considered that significant weight should be given to the positive impact on housing land supply, and in particular affordable housing, in line with paragraph 11 of the Framework. The proposed housing would help to meet the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS2 ‘Housing Provision’, and the housing need identified in the most recent assessment of local housing need (LHN), which at 1,125 dwellings per annum supersedes the targets in CS2.

The proposed density makes efficient use of the land in terms of housing delivery, whilst seeking to safeguard a large area of open space for community benefit, and aligns with the requirement to make optimal use of available land as outlined in section 11 of the Framework.

Housing Mix

This application is for an Outline application and therefore the housing mix is indicative at this stage.

However, the most recently submitted housing mix plan (September 2023) indicates the following breakdown across the two parcels of land:

Indicative Housing Mix					
PARCEL	1-bed apartment	2-bed apartment	3-bed house	4+ - bed house	TOTAL
West	20	62	0	0	82
East	16	56	74	50	196
TOTAL	36	118	74	50	278
%	13%	42%	27%	18%	100%

The illustrative layout shows an indicative mix of 140 affordable housing units and 138 for market housing. The affordable housing is broken down as follows:

AFFORDABLE HOUSING MIX				
PARCEL	1-bed apartment	2-bed apartment	3-bed house	TOTAL
West	20	18	-	38
East	16	56	30	102
Total	36	74	30	140
%	26%	53%	21%	

A range of housing types are proposed which is welcomed, and the proposal as it stands broadly meets the criteria set out in Core Strategy Policy CS3 (Mix of Housing). Stockport's Housing Needs Assessment (2019) notes that 'there is an ongoing need for all types and sizes of dwelling with strongest need for 3-bedroom and 4 or more-bedroom houses.' Notwithstanding this, the HNA indicates that within this area there is an insufficient supply of 1 and 2 bedroomed properties as well as an insufficient supply of houses with level access. In addition, the application is supported by a socio-economic baseline study. This study concludes that '*there is a significant older population in the area. To best meet the needs of this population, it may be beneficial to consider including an extra care facility in any emerging proposals.*' The proposal indicates that the 1 and 2 bed units would be level access, and that 50% of the 3-bed affordable units would be built to M4(3) standard. While this is an Outline application and the proposed mix of housing is not fixed, this requirement is stipulated in the Design Code to ensure delivery. The Design Code would be conditioned if the application is granted.

Core Strategy Policy H-3 requires 50% affordable housing on sites located on urban open space. The application proposes 50.4% affordable housing and is therefore consistent with this policy requirement.

The 2019 Housing Needs Assessment states that in the context of an annual affordable housing imbalance of 549 across the borough, the net shortfall of affordable housing identified in the HNA for the township of 'Gatley, Heald Green and Cheadle Hulme (North)' is 175 dwellings. This is split into the number of bedrooms and is as follows: 6.7% one bedrooms, 38.9% two bedrooms, 35.1% three bedrooms, 9.5% four bedrooms and 9.9% five or more bedrooms.

Given the above, the proposed varied mix of affordable housing including level access properties, is welcomed and should be afforded significant weight.

The policy starting point for a tenure split of that affordable provision would be 50% shared ownership, based on the Council's model, which is set in its affordable housing note, and 50% social rent. However, the Housing Needs Assessment has identified a greater need for shared ownership properties in this area and recommends that 25.5% should be affordable/social rented, while 74.5% should be for shared ownership. This recommended split is noted within the submitted planning statement, and the intention to deliver a variety of housing types and provision for different needs is supported. The applicant has agreed that the rented element would be required to be delivered as social rent, rather than affordable rent, as the former is a significantly more affordable product to address the specific housing need in Stockport. Consequently, subject to this being secured through any permission, there is no objection in respect of the affordable provision.

The council would secure the requirement to deliver affordable housing on the basis of the tenure split and percentage via a Section 106 agreement, with the precise requirements being determined at Reserved Matters stage.

In view of the housing deficiency, Officers consider that the contribution to market and affordable housing (including a greater than mandatory proportion of part M4(3) Building Regulations compliant homes) would have a positive impact and should be afforded very significant weight in the overall planning balance.

5. Highways

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy CS9 states that the Council will require that development is in locations that are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. The Council will support development that reduces the need to travel by car. Development will be required to consider the needs of the most vulnerable road users first.

Policy CS10 confirms that the Council and its partners will manage development and seek to implement strategies that ensure that no section of the community suffers unnecessary inequality as a result of their transport needs not being sustainably met. Local services, employment opportunities, education, community and cultural facilities will be provided in a way that is accessible to all by walking, cycling and public transport. The Council will continue to provide a network of safe, good quality walking and cycling routes and other Rights of Way.

Policies T-1 states that development will be focused in the Town Centre in particular and also other existing centres, as these locations are the most accessible and already contain a wide provision of services and amenities.

New development, notably that generating significant numbers of trips, will be required to be sustainably accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

New residential development should be designed taking into account the principle of Home Zones, whereby the layout of new developments should favour more "people friendly" streets and reduced vehicle speeds. Quality design is a key element in meeting the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes and the Council will look favourably on development that meets a high standard according to the code.

Planning applications for new development that may have significant or specific transport implications will be expected to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement and Travel Plan/Travel Plan Statement, the form of which will be dependent on the scale and nature of the development and its transport implications.

Where additional transport infrastructure and/or public transport and other passenger transport services are required to make the site accessible, developers will be required to provide such infrastructure and/or services. Alternatively, developer contributions may be sought towards the cost of new infrastructure and improvements to public transport services. Contributions will take the form of Section 106 contributions and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

New developments are required to maintain and enhance the connectivity, accessibility, convenience, safety and aesthetic attractiveness of the walking and cycling networks and other public rights of way for all users, and where appropriate, create new routes to fill gaps in the existing network. Any replacement of existing facilities should be of equal legal status to that being replaced.

The layout of new developments and their links to the surrounding walking network should take account of design features that discourage crime and antisocial behaviour.

Minimum standards for cycle parking in new developments are set out in the Council's adopted parking standards. Developers will also be required to provide other associated infrastructure in developments to support cycling, which could include showers, changing and drying facilities, and lockers.

Minimum parking standards for disabled parking and for powered two-wheelers are set out in the Council's adopted parking standards.

Policy T-2 requires that developments provide car parking in accordance with maximum parking standards for each type of land use as set out in the existing adopted parking standards. Developers will need to demonstrate that developments will avoid resulting in inappropriate on-street parking that has a detrimental impact upon the safety of the highway, and that they also avoid impacting negatively upon the availability of public car parking.

Policy T-3 confirms that development that will have an adverse impact on the safety and/or capacity of the highway network will only be permitted if mitigation measures are provided to sufficiently address such issues. Developments shall be of a safe and practical design, with safe and well-designed access arrangements, internal layouts, parking and servicing facilities.

These policies are consistent with the aims of paragraphs 108-110 and 116 of the Framework. Paragraph 111 advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Officer Assessment

The submission includes indicative and general site layout drawings and a Transport Assessment (TA). The TA has recently been revised and reissued to reflect the latest amendments to the submission and now, rather than as previously contained within various technical notes, the revised TA incorporates the detail, mitigation, drawings, technical appraisals and all other matters that have been the subject of discussion over recent months.

The submission has development proposed on either side of the railway line. To the western side of the site the principle access from Pymgate Lane would serve 82 apartments plus the theatre building and community hub. A pedestrian/cycle link into the site would be provided from the end of Styal Grove. A pedestrian link exists and would be retained from the end of Yew Tree Grove. To the eastern side of the overall site, 84 apartments and 112 dwellings are proposed with access to be provided from Troutbeck Road and Grasmere Road.

The determinant factors from a highway perspective for a relatively large-scale residential development are site accessibility; traffic generation, assignment and consequent impact on highway operation and safety; access arrangements and necessary mitigation/interventions and the internal site layout.

Site Accessibility

The Framework is clear in stating that significant forms of development should be within a location that is or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This will help to reduce congestion and emissions, improving air quality and public health. Furthermore, new development should ensure that opportunities to promote sustainable travel choice and alternative modes of travel are incorporated into the proposal.

The Council's Core Strategy is clear that development should be in a location that is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, which should reduce the need to travel by car. New development that generates a significant numbers of trips should be sustainably accessible by public transport, walking and cycling, and where additional transport infrastructure and/or public transport is required to make the site accessible then developers will be required to provide such infrastructure and/or services.

Accessibility is judged on residents having alternative modes of travel readily available should they not have access to a vehicle. To be a sustainable development it is expected that the frequency, safety, suitability and convenience of the alternative travel modes would be to such a level and quality that residents would be realistically encouraged to make the choice to travel by any alternative means other than a private car. For the proposed development to be considered to be within a walkable neighbourhood it will need to deliver interventions and improvement to the surrounding walking and cycling network. This would assist achieving more

sustainable patterns of movement and reduce the likely reliance of people on car travel.

The Highway Engineers considers that the site does not benefit from high frequency or even reasonable access by public transport (buses). There are presently no services that incorporate Styal Road within a route, the nearest bus stops and opportunity for any bus travel for the western site are located circa 2km away in Gatley Centre or circa 1.5km away in Heald Green Centre, with travel distances being further from within the development rather than from the edge of the development as measured. For the eastern side of the site the nearest bus stops are in excess of 1km away and these only offer limited frequencies and restricted direction of travel and return opportunities.

In terms of potential for rail travel and longer distance journeys, the site is also considered remote from rail stations. Neither side of the site is ideally located for giving rise to the reasonable likelihood that residents would choose rail travel with Heald Green Station circa 1.5km away and Gatley circa 2km. The lack of bus connectivity for connected journeys will not be likely to encourage modal choice and the walking and cycling environment, and potential connecting routes are far from ideal in terms of definition, widths, quality, safety and convenience, which would deter modal choice and connected journeys.

Essential services and amenities, apart from primary schools and a health centre, are a significant distance from the site. Whilst facilities may arguably be within distance guidance, the routes for example along Styal Road involve travel along relatively narrow footways where pedestrians are at risk with vehicle movement and emissions. Other routes through a park involve narrow, not ideal quality and unlit routes. These are not conducive to encouraging walking or cycling as being the principle mode of travel, in particular for commuters early morning or evening time. It is likely that these infrastructure deficiencies would deter residents from choosing walking and cycling as a principle travel mode.

This leads the Highway Engineer to conclude that for the proposed development to be considered to be within a walkable neighbourhood it will need to deliver interventions and improvement to the surrounding walking and cycling network. This would assist achieving more sustainable patterns of movement and reduce the likely reliance of people on car travel.

The applicant has been proactive in engagement about potential interventions and improvements that would be delivered as part of the application. After extensive discussion, the application includes the delivery of a package of measures summarised as:

Between the site and Gatley Centre/Rail Station:

- The non-motorised route from the westerly end of Foxland Rd, under the railway bridge and the Scholes Park to Hawthorn Road, would be widened to 3.5m, resurfaced and lit, for shared pedestrian / cycle use.
- Improvements to Birch Road between Hawthorn Road and Church Road, with resurfacing and lighting review/upgrade, to facilitate a defined 3.5m wide shared pedestrian / cycle link.
- Kerblines alterations and footway widening at the Gatley Road controlled pedestrian crossing adjacent to the Rail Station entrance.
- Minor improvements to the junctions of Troutbeck Road/Keswick Avenue, Gainford Avenue/Borrowdale Avenue and Gainford Avenue/Appleby Road, with entry radii tightening to 6m, dropped kerbs and tactile paving provided.
- Review and expansion of / implementation of 20mph zone, improved signage and roundels throughout the estate.

Between the site and the A34/East:

- Grasmere Road/Wasdale Drive junction, radii tightening, dropped crossings and tactile paving provision.
- Wasdale Drive/Buttermere Rd junction, radii tightening, dropped kerbs and tactile paving, improved 20mph signage.
- Grasmere Road, improved 20mph signage and roundels.
- Grasmere Rd/St Ann's Road junction, radii tightening, dropped crossings and tactile paving.
- Path from Buttermere Road to Silverdale Road, widened, resurfacing, lighting and signage, to facilitate shared footpath/cyclepath.
- Widen footway on west side Silverdale Road to 3.5m to connect between the path (referenced above) and the path link opposite, with crossing point with tactile paving.
- NCN cycle route 558 from Silverdale Road to be cleared and widened where necessary to 3.5m, with resurfacing and lighting, up to the A34 MRN segregated cycle route,

Between the site and Styal Road:

- Improvement to the link between Pymgate Lane and Styal Rd, resurfacing and lighting.
- Brown Lane/Styal Road junction, provide dropped kerbs with tactile paving.
- Provide a Toucan signal controlled crossing on Styal Road on NCN Route 558, to the south of the Brown Lane/Styal Rd junction.
- Introduce a 20mph speed limit (legal order, signage, roundels) for the entire estate that is accessed from Elmsleigh Road and Yew Tree Grove.

Between the site and Heald Green and Primary Schools:

- From site and through Rose Vale Park to Brandon Avenue, construct 3.5m wide shared path, flexipave surfacing and lighting (possibly low level within the park).
- Rose Vale, improve 20mph signage and roundels.
- Peakdale Avenue, improve 20mph signage and roundels, radii tightening at the junction with Neal Ave, dropped kerbs and tactile paving provided.
- Lytham Road/Brown Lane, Brandon Ave/Brown Lane and Brown Lane/St Ann's Rd North junctions, radii tightening and dropped crossings with tactile paving provided.
- Footpath from Brown Lane to Eastleigh Road to be resurfaced, improved signage and lighting.
- St Ann's Road North, provide a 3.5m wide shared pedestrian cycle link to Gleneagles Road with lighting and improved crossing point on St Ann's Road North.

Within the site:

- Provide a 3.5m shared footpath cycleway between the entrance off Pymgate Lane, over the rail line bridge that is central to the site and onwards to Troutbeck Road and Grasmere Road.
- Provide a 3.5m shared footpath cycleway on the east side of the rail line, from the bridge and running to and through Rose Vale Park.
- Upgrading of all the existing footpaths (public right of ways) crossing the site.
- Construction of a local road network that is suitable and safer for cyclists and pedestrian to use.

The Highway Engineer considers that the cumulative effect of these measures would provide a significant improvement to the accessibility of the site. These measures and interventions are reasonable, necessary, attributable, cost effective and meaningful, and satisfy National and Local Policies regarding accessibility and sustainability. The measures should help to encourage travel by means alternative to a private car, and as such it is considered that the development proposes a sufficient package of highway works to address accessibility concerns.

In conclusion, it would be difficult to justify an objection on these grounds. Whilst there would no doubt be considerable benefits that would be accrued from any bus service improvement, this is not justified for the scale of development, trip distribution and the spread of the site on either side of a rail line. The off-site and internal interventions would be subject to detailed design under conditions imposed if the application is granted, and delivery under the terms of a suitable highway agreement.

Access Arrangements, Approach Roads' Suitability, Mitigation and Interventions

The TA includes a review and summary of Personal Injury Accidents data for the period 2015-2020 and updated data has since been provided for all recorded accidents up to the end of October 2023. The study area covers an extensive length of Styal Road and side road junctions, part of Gatley Road, Finney Lane between Styal Road and St Ann's Road North, an extensive length of St Ann's Road North and residential approach roads on the eastern and western sides of the overall development.

The data provided shows there have been 19-recorded accidents within the study area over the 8-year period. The accidents include vehicles and pedestrians, a vehicle collision with a cycle and vehicle collisions. In all cases there have been no highway infrastructure related issues or concerns identified, the contributory factors being failure to observe other road users, darkness and wet conditions, misjudgement of available space, misjudgement of stopping distance and failure to drive to suit the road conditions.

In summary, the data and evidence show typically driver error and it does not identify any untypical accidents, any particular engineering issues or problems with the road network or junction layouts and/or any particular road safety issues near the site. The study area is extensive and many of the recorded accidents happened relatively remote from the site, in locations that are unlikely to be detrimentally affected by the additional traffic generated by the development or experience increased risk to highway safety.

The western side of the development would take access principally via two routes, travelling along Elmsleigh Road/Motcombe Road or Motcombe Grove/Yew Tree Grove. The Elmsleigh Road link is likely to be the preferred route for travel to and from a southerly direction and Yew Tree Grove for movement to and from a northerly direction.

On the easterly side of the site the principle access routes are from Grasmere Road and Troutbeck Road, with connections beyond the site requiring travel via St Ann's Road North, Silverdale Road, Borrowdale Avenue, Foxland Road and beyond. Numerous potential routes for travel will clearly help to dissipate the movement and impact of traffic, a situation that is typical of larger residential estates with various access throughout.

The entrance to the westerly site would be from Pymgate Lane with improvement to the existing access point. The crossroad junction of Pymgate Lane with Motcombe Road would be reconfigured, with the priority for vehicle movement to be changed and given to through traffic on Pymgate Lane. This has merit and is logical, as the greater flow of the two streams of traffic converging on the junction would be along Pymgate Lane. Carriageway widening, footway extension and amendments with the provision of crossing points have been identified on the submitted proposal, with a new access road into the development at 5.5m in width with footways on either side.

Footway widths around the radii on the north side of the junction are already restricted in width and would be afforded some widening, albeit this would not be to optimum standards. The widths of 1500mm would however provide betterment and are acceptable as the narrowing is localised. To further assist the safety of pedestrians crossing the junction and to manage vehicle approach speeds, the junction would be reconstructed with a raised plateau. This is in addition to the applicant's agreement to cover the cost for the whole of the residential estate on the western side accessed via Elmsleigh Road and Yew Tree Grove to have a 20mph speed limit introduced. The layout of the road network, the presence of kerbside parking, the nature of junctions and the existence of direct access points already helps restrain vehicle speeds to generally 20mph. Legislative control would help enforce this and benefit the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in particular.

Junction improvement work can be delivered under conditional control and an appropriate Highways Agreement, and as the configuration of the junction would not unacceptably compromise the safety of non-motorised users of the space the creation of a site entrance as proposed in this location is acceptable. The whole of the junction improvement scheme is deliverable within adopted highway and land that is under the title of the development site.

There is an existing pedestrian link into the site from Yew Tree Grove and this would be retained and improved in terms of surfacing. A 3.5m wide link from the end of Styal Grove for the purpose of pedestrian and cycle connectivity would also be provided. The site abuts adopted highway at the head of Styal Grove and is therefore capable of implementation. The link, which would be subject to access control to prevent vehicular use, would provide a convenient and attractive route for the movement of pedestrians and cyclists between the site and Styal Road/Gatley Centre.

On the easterly side of the site, the proposal is for site access to be taken from an extension to Troutbeck Road and a new priority junction to be created on Grasmere Road. Internal to the development, the site road infrastructure would link between these two points and a total of 196 residential units would be provided. Both of the new entrance points that are proposed are design standard compliant and would be suitable in design terms for the imposition of development traffic movements, without giving rise to highway capacity and safety issues. There is no specific concern relating to these site access points, and planning conditions and an appropriate highway agreement would cover the construction works. A pedestrian link to the site that runs between 44 and 46 Grasmere Road would also be retained with surfacing improvement to be provided.

The TA includes a review of the approach roads and nearby junctions that would be affected by development traffic in terms of their layout, suitability and design capacity. While the review within the TA of the suitability of the approach roads is

helpful it is not particularly comprehensive, and the Highway Engineer has reached his own conclusions informed by site observations and measurements and having regard to design standards.

On the westerly side of the site, the access routes to and from it would introduce additional travel along Styal Road, Elmsleigh Road, Clifton Drive, Motcombe Road, Pymgate Lane, Motcombe Grove and Yew Tree Grove. These roads serve a wider residential estate and are historic with fixed carriageway and footway widths and limited or no potential for improvement. This network layout is effectively Major Residential Access Roads as defined in the Council's design guidance for residential development. The majority of the roads are 5.5m in width or greater, albeit for a localised part of Pymgate Lane that reduces to circa 4.6m width and the Motcombe Grove link that is circa 4.6m width.

Major residential access roads have a theoretical design capacity for up to 300 dwellings, with carriageway widths of 5.5m and design speeds of 20mph. The majority of the approach roads on the westerly side accord with or exceed a 5.5m carriageway width. A width of 4.6m that exists in a couple of areas, notably a short length of Pymgate Lane and the length of Motcombe Grove, is adequate for two motor cars to pass safely. There is no evidence or accident data suggesting the operation and safety of these narrower sections is causing operational difficulty or unacceptable risk to highway safety.

The development would introduce an additional 82 apartments/residential units alongside a community hub and a theatre, which already exists. This number of units when considered alongside the extent of the existing wider estate would in total be below the guidance for 300 dwellings being served from major residential access roads. For robustness, consideration has not been given to the fact that a golf club already exists on the site so the net traffic increase is not simply that generated by 82 apartments; it is the difference between the proposed and existing site uses. In reality the increase in traffic that would be imposed on the westerly side, whilst being material, would not be such that it would effectively breach any threshold for the generally acceptable number of residential units that can be served via the overall estate. Furthermore, the applicant's agreement to the implementation of a 20mph speed limit throughout the estate would contribute towards enhancing the environment for pedestrians and cyclists, restraining vehicle speeds and afford a safety benefit.

Having regard to the upgraded site entrance off Pymgate Lane to be provided, the number of apartments proposed, the absence of any evidence of an accident record pertaining to the use of these estate roads, and the safety benefit that would be secured by restraining speeds, the Highway Engineer does not raise an objection in respect of the imposition or impact of development traffic on the operation and safety of the wider estate roads.

The Highway Engineer supports the layout of the junction of Elmsleigh Road with Styal Road. It has been observed operating in a safe manner and there is no evidence of any overriding concern. It is not considered that the proposal and consequent development related traffic would unduly change the characteristics or nature of this part of the network, or have a detrimental impact on overall road safety.

Extensive discussion has taken place about the imposition of development traffic on the Yew Tree Grove junction with Styal Road. In terms of safety, the Engineer has a longstanding concern that visibility to and for emerging drivers at the junction is substandard, and the likely intensification in use that would arise would increase risk to the safety of users of the junction. Following discussion with the applicant, the submission includes improvement to be provided at this junction with the kerblines radii to be increased to 4.5m and built out into Styal Road to enable the give way line to be moved forward and emerging driver visibility to be improved. To compensate for moving the give way line forward, which would clearly affect the carriageway width of Styal Road, localised compensatory carriageway widening would be provided along the western side within Styal Road. All this improvement work is within adopted highway land.

This scheme would not unacceptably impact the free flow of traffic along Styal Road, and would ensure that with the junction realignment visibility to and for emerging drivers would be improved. The works would enable a sightline measuring 2.4m by 52.0m to be provided in both directions which represents a significant improvement, and would be standard compliant and acceptable having regard to the measured speed of traffic passing this junction.

In conclusion, with this improvement scheme the imposition of development traffic on the junction would be tolerable and not cause unacceptable safety concerns, namely its impact would be less than severe. The visibility concern would be addressed and the scheme is considered in this respect. This matter has been critical in the Highway Engineer's assessment of the application, noting refusal of planning permission many years ago for development on the Golf Club site that included a reason that the development would intensify the use of the Yew Tree Grove junction, which is substandard for reason of visibility. The proposed improvement scheme overcomes this concern, and it has been demonstrated that with delivery of the improvement the development would not have an unacceptable impact on the safety of the Yew Tree Grove/Styal Road junction.

Access to the easterly side of the development would principally be from Troutbeck Road and Grasmere Road. Beyond the site and throughout the wider estate, travel would involve movement along St Ann's Road North, Silverdale Road, Borrowdale Avenue, Foxland Road and beyond.

The submission includes design detail for these two new access points and there are no overriding concerns with either. The Highway Engineer is satisfied with the proposed geometry, visibility provision and vehicle tracking for the entrances, and matters of detail are capable of conditional control with work delivered under a suitable highway agreement. There is no need for a right turn facility for the Grasmere Road entrance on safety grounds, and indeed this is further considered and concluded in the capacity assessment provided below.

As commented earlier, in addition to the network suitability review that has been included in the TA, the Engineer has reached his conclusions informed by observations, measurements and having regard to design standards. The starting point for assessment is again a review relative to the Council's design guidance for Major Residential Access Roads. The routes that would be principle travel corridors for access to the development on the easterly site, that being Troutbeck Road, Grasmere Road, Silverdale Road, St Ann's Road North and Borrowdale Avenue, are all in excess of 5.5m in width and are within a 20mph zone. The proposed site layout with two points of access and an internal link would give rise to various opportunities for alternative travel routes for residents accessing this part of the development. The layout of the existing estate with multiple road links and entry and exit points helps dissipate overall traffic volumes, and there is no overriding evidence that unacceptable traffic congestion occurs on the network throughout the overall estate.

A review of the two specific access points off Grasmere Road and Troutbeck Road, and the number of dwellings that these corridors, already serve shows that Grasmere Road gives access to circa 135 residential units and Troutbeck Road 50 units, plus a primary school. The easterly side of the development proposal is for a total of 196 residential units within a layout that links between the two principle access points. It is acknowledged that the number of residential units proposed is significant, but purely in terms of the design capacity of the road infrastructure that serves the area the geometry of these roads is suitable for carrying this new development traffic. Their design and geometry, although historic, generally accords with the Council's design guidance for a network to access expansive residential development. In reaching this conclusion, the Engineer is minded of the modest improvements that would be brought throughout the wider estate with various junctions benefitting from radii tightening, reduced crossing distances, dropped kerbs and tactile paving, and enhanced 20mph signage and roundels throughout.

There is no evidence of an overriding safety concern. It is not considered that the proposal would unduly change the characteristics or nature of this part of the network, or have a detrimental impact on overall road safety. Whilst there is no concern about the geometry of the estate road infrastructure and its ability to carry new development traffic, this does not address junction capacity and any issues,

delay or unacceptable congestion that may arise. A review of network junction capacity throughout this estate has been provided and is discussed below, in addition to traffic distribution and assignment onto the network.

The Engineer raised during scoping of the TA the critical need to review the Troutbeck Road corridor where the school exists, and the impact that development traffic would have on the safety and operation of this corridor and the operation of the school. The TA includes limited commentary on this matter and the Engineer has undertaken a number of observations on site in order to reach his own conclusion. It is clear that the area is subjected to an influx of traffic and kerbside parking during the typical school drop off and pick up periods and a parking survey provided in the TA shows that parking peaks for a 15/20 minute period in the morning and for about 30mins around the afternoon pick up time. It has been observed that parents/guardians all seem to follow and respect an informal one-way circulation arrangement, whereby the vast majority of vehicles approach the site along Troutbeck Road and depart along Keswick Avenue. This circulation clearly works well in practice and minimises the incidences of vehicles reversing on the highway, and conflicting head to head along corridors where the effective width is temporarily restricted by parked vehicles. As is generally typical for all schools, the drop off period is extremely quick and short and in this period no operational concern or particular difficulty has been observed for parents and children negotiating a safe route to school. Clearly the drop off period would be more likely to coincide with and potentially be impacted by new development traffic, whereas the afternoon school pick up period is before the evening peak period for new development traffic moving along the network.

It is predicted that the eastern side of the development would generate circa 116 car trips departing the site and 29 car trip arrivals. These figures are derived from TRICS data for new residential development.

From the submitted supporting baseline traffic survey data it is shown that the majority of morning peak vehicle trips generated within the existing estate move in a northerly direction. Having regard to this it is predicted that 90 of these outbound car trip movements would go in a northerly direction and circa 23 inbound car movements would come from the northerly side. Southbound trips would equate to 26 departures and 6 arrivals.

With the development proposal being two means of access on the eastern side it is difficult to be entirely accurate with the assignment of new development traffic onto the network. However, it is not unreasonable and would be a robust approach to evaluate a scenario where 50% of traffic generated by the development and emerging onto the wider network would use the Grasmere Road junction and then head north, and 50% would use Troutbeck Road. It is also reasonable to presume that all southbound traffic, equating to 26 movements, would be likely to travel via

the Grasmere Road entrance and connect thereafter to St Ann's Road. Using this scenario and when considering the Troutbeck Road link in particular with passage by the school, there would be circa 45 new car trips departing the site in the morning peak and there would be 12 new inbound trips. This level of additional movement equates to approximately one additional vehicle every minute across the 8am to 9am period.

It is clear that Troutbeck Road does experience a significant influx of school traffic during the morning peak period, relatively high levels of kerbside parking and significant numbers of movements along the footways and crossing roads involving children accompanied by parents or guardians. That being said the Engineer considers it would be difficult to argue and sustain that the imposition of one additional vehicle movement each minute during the peak drop off 20-30 minute period would cause a severe risk to highway operation or unacceptable risk to highway safety. In reality, if new residents start to experience difficulty or some delay to travel along Troutbeck Road there would be the alternative routes to consider and utilise. It also has to be noted and while not carrying determinant weight, that a school is not operational for a full year so across holiday periods and weekends the use of Troutbeck Road is not impacted by school traffic. The Engineer is satisfied that the traffic generated by the development can be accommodated on Troutbeck Road without causing unacceptable harm or risk to the safety of the network, and the operation and safety of the school. This judgement is further informed by junction capacity testing that has been undertaken (see below).

To conclude, the existing road networks serving both the easterly and westerly sides of the development are suitable in layout terms for carrying the traffic associated with the new development. The proposal would not unduly change the characteristics or nature of the surrounding highway network and would not have a detrimental impact on overall road safety. There is sufficient residual design capacity within the roads, they are in the main slightly wider than the Council's design guidance and all have suitable footway and street lighting infrastructure. The presence of a 20mph zone on the eastern side helps deliver an environment where vehicle speed is restrained and vulnerable road users can move around in more comfort and with less risk to their safety. The imposition of vehicle speed regulation on the westerly side would enhance this part of the network and help mitigate the impact of new development traffic. There would also be some minor improvement works delivered as outlined, which would benefit vulnerable person movement and restraining vehicle speed.

The Highway Engineer concludes there are no safety related issues arising from the creation of three new vehicular site entrances. Matters of detail with respect to the new entrances can be dealt with under conditional control and a suitable highway agreement.

Development Traffic Generation, Network Assignment and Impact on Junction Operation

To establish a base position in terms of daily traffic movement surrounding the development site, various link and junction surveys were commissioned by the applicant in November 2020. These focused on the peak traffic periods which is an acceptable approach having regard to the proposed development use being residential.

The pandemic clearly had an impact upon travel and associated traffic flows, and the Government produced data covering this in a Transport Note/National Paper, released in June 20 and updated since. In order to have regard to this data the surveyed figures needed to be and have been adjusted upwards for assessment purposes.

Notwithstanding this approach, TfGM has advised that a national paper data being included in the TA and flows being factored accordingly is not considered sufficient evidence. TfGM's own surveys at permanent count sites show a factor of difference of 18% compared to the 8% figure identified nationally and has been used for factoring. The applicant was therefore required to review the modelling work having regard to this concern.

The assessment has therefore seen all background traffic flows uplifted by 18% from the 2020 surveyed levels and flows subjected to growth factoring to the year 2029, utilising National Traffic Model factors. While it would be preferable to have a new set of link and junction surveys, to adjust flow figures relative to the evident localised uplift factors is considered to be a reasonable and acceptable approach. An 18% uplift is not unrealistic, and any minor discrepancies or difference would prove negligible in the modelling outputs.

For the original submission, subjecting traffic survey and development figures to growth to the year 2029 represented 7 years from the projected commencement date. The year 2029 still represents the potential first year of opening plus 5 years, which is acceptable practice.

The person trip rates for the proposed have been determined using the TRICS database. This approach and the parameters for new development selected is acceptable, and a summary of the likely level of person trips that would be generated by the proposed development is as follows:

East side residential, AM peak (0800-0900) 39 arrivals 154 departures; PM peak (1630-1730) 109 arrivals 59 departures.

West side residential, AM peak 16 arrivals 64 departures; PM peak 46 arrivals 25 departures.

West side theatre, AM peak 0 arrivals 0 departures; PM peak 3 arrivals 2 departures.

West side community centre, AM peak 11 arrivals 1 departure; PM peak 9 arrivals 10 departures.

In order to determine the forecast development vehicular trips, reference has been made to the National Census Journey to Work by mode of Travel data for this locality. This shows various modal splits with driving a car or van at 75%, as a passenger at 5%, walking 6%, train travel 5% etc. The 75% of trips by car-driver mode-split has been applied to the person trip generation and summarised below:

East side total, AM peak 29 vehicle arrivals 116 departures; PM peak 82 arrivals 44 departures.

West side total, AM peak 20 arrivals 49 departures; PM peak 43 arrivals 27 departures.

The road infrastructure on the eastern side of the overall site would, by virtue of the larger proportion of proposed development being to that side, be subjected to a greater increase in traffic flows. A two way total of 145 vehicles is predicted in the AM peak, a figure that although appearing significant is spread across the two access points and approach road infrastructure. This helps dissipating new traffic and does not equate to more than a couple of additional vehicles each minute on the wider network. There is spare capacity within the existing network links to both sides of the development, and their historic layout reflects Council standards for infrastructure that is capable of serving the existing estate plus the new development. Notwithstanding this conclusion on link suitability, there is the need to review the impact of development traffic on junctions across the wider estate, and critically those that would be subjected to additional traffic, to test whether sufficient capacity exists and to ensure delays do not arise and the development brings forward any necessary further mitigation.

It is noted that no reliance has been placed on offsetting the existing golf club site traffic in the junction impact assessments. The directional distribution of the traffic associated with the proposal has been assigned to the local highway network relative to the survey data that was obtained and using National Travel Survey Travel to Work Census Data.

Capacity assessments have been undertaken and submitted with the application, covering the junctions that would experience what is considered to be a significant increase in traffic. The junctions that have been assessed are:

The site access/Grasmere Road junction;
Troutbeck Road/Borrowdale Avenue junction;
Grasmere Road/St Ann's Road North junction;
Elmsleigh Road/Styal Road junction and the
Yew Tree Grove/Styal Road junction.

Assessment and modelling of these junctions has been undertaken using the PICADY module of the Junctions 9 program, with assessment of the 2029 'Without' and 'With development' scenarios. Picady junction modelling software is used industry wide for assessment of three and four arm unsignalised priority junctions and predicts capacities, delays and risk. The program uses the geometric parameters of the junction (road widths, visibility, radii and lane designation) with traffic flows to reach outputs and an RFC value (Ratio of flow to capacity). Generally, the maximum RFC is 0.85 for a junction not carrying very high traffic flows, which should ensure that it would operate without significant delay and safety risk.

The 2029 with development scenario modelling outputs for the various junctions show:

Assessment of the proposed site access shows that no arm at the junction would experience significant RFC values (maximum 0.06) or unacceptable queuing or delay and the junction is forecast to operate significantly below its design capacity during both peak hours.

Assessment of the proposed priority junction on Grasmere Road shows that no arm at the junction would experience significant RFC values (the maximum being 0.06 for the access road AM peak) or unacceptable queuing or delay and the junction is forecast to operate well within its design capacity during both peak hours.

Assessment of the Troutbeck Road junction with Borrowdale Avenue shows that no arm at the junction would experience significant RFC values (maximum 0.30 Troutbeck Road AM peak) or unacceptable queuing or delay and the junction is forecast to continue to operate below its design capacity during both peak hours.

Assessment of the Grasmere Road junction with St Ann's Road North shows that no arm at the junction would experience significant RFC values (maximum 0.17 Grasmere Road AM peak) or unacceptable queuing or delay and the junction is forecast to continue to operate significantly below its design capacity during both peak hours.

Assessment of the Elmsleigh Road junction with Styal Road shows that with development the peak impacts would be Elmsleigh Road arm AM peak with an RFC value 0.30 and Styal Road PM peak RFC 0.15. This shows the junction would continue to operate well within capacity during traffic peak periods and not experience unacceptable queuing or delay.

Assessment of the Yew Tree Grove junction with Styal Road shows that no arm at the junction would experience significant RFC values (maximum 0.27 Yew Tree Grove AM peak) or unacceptable queuing or delay and the junction is forecast to continue to operate below its design capacity during both peak hours.

It has to be acknowledged that the assessment of the two junctions on Styal Road was undertaken with the assumption and imposition of all western site development traffic flows to be routed via each individual junction. In reality this would not be the case as there would be split between traffic heading north via Yew Tree Grove and South via Elmsleigh Road. Nevertheless, this is a robust approach and shows that the impact of development traffic at these two junctions would be negligible and within satisfactory limits.

The Engineer does not dispute these findings and the assessment exercise that has been undertaken. The site has been visited regularly and the operation of each of these junctions has been observed for the purpose of validation during the critical peak traffic periods. It is agreed that the junctions have sufficient space capacity, and that even with the imposition of development traffic in the future this would not cause the junctions to fail operationally or suffer from unacceptable congestion and delay.

With respect to other junctions further afield but still within the surrounding network, the Engineer is satisfied when factoring in traffic dissipation that each would not experience a level of impact that would justify that additional bespoke modelling work is undertaken. The level of impact cannot be considered to be severe, and it would not cause operational or safety difficulties.

The junctions on the existing highway network are suitable to accommodate traffic generated by the development. The assessment of the Yew Tree Grove junction with Styal Road incorporates the identified improvements and justifies provision as this would assist capacity improvement as well as reducing safety concerns.

In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that the impact of development traffic on the wider network and junction capacity would not be severe. Suitable improvement/mitigation would be delivered, satisfying the test and policy requirements.

Proposed Site Internal Layout

In order to review the layout and provide assurance that each individual residential unit would be accessible on foot, cycle or by vehicle, an illustrative masterplan and an access plan have been provided. These layouts indicate a mix of road infrastructure as defined in a hierarchy that has been proposed by the applicant within the accompanying Design Code. The identified road types comprise residential access roads, shared surface streets, shared private drives and individual private drives. This hierarchy and the identified surfacing and kerblines materials respect and accord with the Council's design standards for new residential development and is acceptable. Design requirements and surface treatments for cycle and pedestrian routes also satisfy the Council's standards. These plans

provide sufficient detail to satisfy me that the scale of development and associated infrastructure can be accommodated within the site and that a design standard compliant network of roads and pedestrian and cycle links to the built environment can be developed.

Indicative detail with respect to junction treatments, localised traffic calming features and pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is shown on the drawings and referenced in the Design Code. The identified principles are acceptable, although some additional infrastructure would be required to improve site permeability and in particular to facilitate walking routes that are more convenient and shorter throughout the site. This can be addressed at Reserved Matters/detailed design stage, and has been acknowledged for provision within the Design Code. This would be conditioned if the application is granted.

Indicative detail is also provided to show a pedestrian cycle link running east west across the extent of the development site, and also how the site would connect with Rose Vale Park, Yew Tree Grove and Styal Grove with walking and cycling links to be provided. This principle is acceptable.

The submission has also reviewed and ensured that emergency vehicles can safely access the site from either side. On the easterly side, the provision of two vehicular entrances minimises risk and cul-de-sac distances, and on the westerly side there would be potential for emergency vehicles to utilise the footpath cycle link from Pymgate Lane in the event that the main spine road for any reason is unavailable for vehicle passage.

With respect to car parking space provision, the masterplan and Design Code indicate and reference that private dwellings would have two off street parking bays, some would have garages and carport areas, communal parking areas would be provided and adequate provision would be made to meet the demands of the community and theatre buildings. Parking areas should be practical to utilise and not affect the integrity and safe use of the roads to be constructed. Parking areas should also be designed to ensure safe access, adequate visibility to and for emerging drivers and to avoid extensive hardstanding areas. These matters can be ensured at Reserved Matters/detailed design stage.

Facilities for the charging of electric vehicles would be provided for each individual dwelling and within communal parking areas, in accordance with Council standards. All dwellings would also have covered and secure cycle parking facilities and communal spaces and community buildings would have publically available cycle parking in accordance with Council standards. All dwellings would have adequate provision of refuse and recycling receptacles, as would community and public areas. All matters with respect to parking, electric vehicle charging facilities, cycle parking

and refuse and recycling facilities would be controlled by condition if the application is granted.

The development would have a site wide travel plan that is operational and appropriately managed, this being a matter of detail and controlled by Planning condition.

Finally, it is acknowledged that construction of the development, in the event that permission is granted, could be disruptive to residents within the wider area and on approaches to the site. A health and safety and construction management plan would be secured under the terms of a planning condition to control the impact of construction and minimise disruption.

Officers consider that the overall highway impact of the development would be neutral, and the extensive package of accessibility improvements would be a benefit that should be afforded moderate weight in the overall planning balance.

6. Trees

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy SIE-3 states that development proposals affecting trees, woodland and other vegetation that makes a positive contribution to amenity should make provision for the retention of the vegetation unless there is justification for felling, topping or lopping to enable the development to take place. Even where there is a strong justification for a proposal, the design should maximise the potential for retaining some mature planting, and replacement planting of appropriate species and covering a similar area should be provided within the site or nearby.

This policy is consistent with the aims of paragraph 136 of the Framework.

Officer Assessment

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted, which has been accepted by the Council's Senior Arboriculture and Habitats Officer as an accurate record of the number and quality of trees on the application site. Although the application is in Outline and the proposed layout is not fixed, an indicative Layout Plan has been submitted to show how a residential development of up to 278 houses could be accommodated on the site. Based on this layout, and noting that actual tree loss would remain to be determined at Reserved Matters stage, tree losses to implement the indicative layout and highway arrangements total 41 trees and 19 tree groups. These comprise 21 Category B (moderate arboricultural quality and value), 34 Category C (low arboricultural quality and value) and 5 Category U (trees that are either dead or cannot be realistically retained as living trees in the existing context)

specimens. No Category A trees (the site's principal arboricultural features) are proposed for removal.

The application proposes replacement tree planting at a ratio of 10:1, as part of a wider Reserved Matters application(s) for landscaping. This level of compensatory planting has been accepted by the Senior Arboriculture and Habitats Officer who has raised no objections to the development. It would be a condition of a planning approval. Members will note from the Design Code that streets throughout the site would be tree-lined on both sides with trees planted at regular intervals, unless there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate in accordance with paragraph 131 of the Framework. Street trees would be a feature of the development. The Design Code would be conditioned if the application is granted.

It is accepted that within the context of a 278-house development, that also preserves a large useable area of the site as public open space, the illustrative layout has been designed around the principal stock and sought to retain as much mature planting as possible. The potential tree removals relate to direct conflicts with the indicative development layout and highway arrangement, but the extent of loss could be refined at the detailed planning and design stage once a fixed and fully detailed scheme is available.

The development would involve the removal of a lot of trees and vegetation, and Members must decide if this is acceptable. This should be a judgement based not only on quantity, but also on the quality, condition and contribution of the tree stock, efforts to retain the majority of tree cover across the site and proposals for compensatory planting. It is considered that the indicative proposals strike the correct balance in minimising tree loss, focusing loss on lower value trees as well as offering an opportunity to secure compensatory planting at a ratio of 10:1, which is a significant increase on the usual requirement for a minimum of 2:1.

Officers consider that the impact of the development on trees would be neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

7. Landscape

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy SIE-1 sets out that development should be designed with high regard to the built or natural environment in which it is sited.

Policy H-1 requires that new residential development should respond to the townscape and landscape character of the local area, reinforcing or creating local identity and distinctiveness in terms of layout, scale and appearance.

Saved Policy UOS1.2 points to the visual benefits of Strategic Open Spaces, outlining that they add to urban quality by providing visually attractive green spaces close to where people live.

These policies are consistent with the aims of paragraph 135 of the Framework, while the Glossary to the Framework makes it clear that open spaces can act as a visual amenity.

'The Design of Residential Development' SPD's overall purpose is to achieve high quality design in residential development.

Officer Assessment

As the application is in Outline, the final access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the development is not known. However, an indicative Layout Plan shows how a residential development of up to 278 houses could be accommodated on the site. The application details indicate that the homes would be split across the east and west land parcels. Building heights would range from 2, 2 ½ to 3 storey. There are no objections to this approach having regard to the topography of the site, wider character of the area and the relationship with adjoining residential properties. The final scale of the buildings would be determined at Reserved Matters stage, if this application is approved. Furthermore, a Design Code has been submitted to guide any future Reserved Matters application(s). This presents a series of site wide and neighbourhood design principles which future development of the site would be required to adhere to. Officers have assessed the Design Code, and have agreed to the principles therein. It would be conditioned if the application is granted.

The application site does not have any specific landscape designations, in that it is not a Landscape Character Area. Regardless, it is clear that the application site makes a significant visual contribution to the urban fabric and open spaces can act as a visual amenity. The applicant has submitted a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA). The scope of the appraisal is acceptable, and it is agreed that it addresses the key receptors that would be impacted by the development. The following is a summary of the main findings of the LVA, and Members can view the whole report if required on the Council's Planning application database ([Find planning applications - Stockport Council](#)).

Landscape Value Appraisal

The following aspects of the landscape are considered in the LVA to be relevant to the assessment process.

'Landscape Quality (condition)': A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas,

the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements. The site is judged as 'medium-low' in its landscape quality.

'*Scenic Quality*': The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses). The site is judged as 'medium-low' in its scenic quality.

'*Rarity*': The presence of rare features and elements in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type. Given the urban context of the site, the site is judged as 'low' in its rarity.

'*Representativeness*': Whether the landscape contains a particular character, and/or features and elements, which are considered particularly important examples. The site is judged as being typical and 'medium' in its representativeness.

"*Conservation interests*": The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of a landscape as well as having value in their own right. The site is judged as 'medium' in its conservation interests.

"*Recreation value*": Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important. The site is judged as 'medium' in its recreational value; and

"*Perceptual aspects*": A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities and/or tranquillity. The site is judged as 'low' in its perceptual character.

Acknowledging that the site is of local importance, it is judged as '**medium-low**' **landscape value**.

Landscape Susceptibility

It is determined that the site has **low susceptibility** to the changes proposed, as the development is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.

Landscape Sensitivity

Combining the susceptibility and landscape values given above and considering the urban context of the site, it is considered that the landscape local to and encompassing the site represents a **low sensitivity** landscape character resource. It exhibits a predominantly settled character, and features such as the historic field pattern have been downgraded through the creation and subsequent use of the golf course over time.

Magnitude of Change

It is accepted that there would be a change in urban form and use from a golf course to a mixed use, predominantly residential development. These changes would be noticeable, but the baseline situation would not change with regard to the overall perception of the receiving landscape character. The proposed development would retain, protect and enhance landscape features (existing and historic) that are applicable as locally valued characteristics.

The established Green Infrastructure framework within the site includes areas of broadleaved woodland, strips of continuous scrub and tree lines around the boundaries of the site. These habitats contain the site and would therefore limit the extent to which incongruous elements (e.g. during the construction phase) are visible which may be at odds with the character of the adjoining residential areas and an increase in vegetation cover would also be sought through the enhancement and strengthening of retained habitats / boundaries and internally through new soft landscaping which would further assist the assimilation of the development.

The effects of any new development need to be considered in light of the existing context and baseline scenario. This is not a landscape devoid of housing and other built development with a composition of landscape features that offer the opportunity for retention, improvement and restoration such that the proposed development would contribute towards landscape character in addition to providing publicly accessible formal and informal community open spaces, and pedestrian and cyclist connections. The site's relationship with the surrounding residential areas and the containment this provides increases its ability to assimilate development and fit with the existing character of both the surrounding settled land uses and the settlement edge context.

The proposed development is judged to generate a **medium magnitude of change** upon the site itself and a **negligible change** upon the perception and understanding of the surrounding urban character area.

Noting that the assessment of landscape impacts is subjective, Members must decide if those associated with this development are acceptable as part of the planning balance. The LVA submitted by the applicant is a material consideration, but it is open to Members to conclude that it under-estimates the contribution the housing site makes to the landscape.

The loss of approximately 6.71ha of high quality open space to a development of up to 278 houses and an access road, together with the loss of trees and vegetation, would undoubtedly have a significant impact on the way the landscape is perceived. These are critical factors that have a material influence on decision-making. The development would noticeably change the landscape and views of the site for visual receptors. Mitigation planting would help to soften this over the medium to long-

term, but this would not be at year 1 and visually it would not compensate for the loss of a large green lung in the urban area. Compared to the existing situation, it is also probable that the development would have an urbanising influence on some of the open space to be retained for public use. This is because of the proximity and visibility of the new housing development. Providing enhanced and guaranteed public access to an area of public open space would be a recreational benefit, as biodiversity net gain would be a biodiversity benefit, but it would not be a visual benefit. The land is already accessed by Public Rights of Way. The perceived landscape value of the application site as a whole is reflected in the number and nature of objections received to the development, and this would change considerably if it was implemented.

The application site is privately owned. In considering the landscape impacts of the development, it is pertinent to point out that while the Public Rights of Way across the land would need to be maintained (and although not presently raised as a possibility by the applicant), the potential for the applicant to exercise permitted development rights to fence off the rest of the land including along the public footpaths is a material consideration. This fencing could be up to 2.0m high, and would not have to be permeable fencing.

Officers consider that the impact of the development on the landscape would be negative and should be afforded moderate weight in the overall planning balance.

8. Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy CS8 states that the Council working with local communities, developers and partners, will protect, develop and enhance an integrated network of high quality and multi-functional GI that will, inter alia, protect and connect existing and potential sites of nature conservation value and historic landscape features, and seek to create new wildlife habitats as recommended in the GM Ecological Framework. Development will be expected to make a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of the borough's natural environment, biodiversity and geodiversity. Sites, areas, networks and individual features of identified ecological, biological, geological or other environmental benefit or value will be safeguarded.

Policy SIE-3 outlines that the borough's varying urban and rural landscapes, biodiversity, geodiversity and soils combine to create a unique and distinctive local character of considerable value to residents and visitors alike. This locally distinctive sense of place and character will be maintained and enhanced as follows:

- The Borough's urban and rural landscape will be conserved and enhanced in line with the borough's Landscape Character Assessment;

- Net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity will be prevented by applying a hierarchical approach to conserving and enhancing the network of nationally, regionally and locally designated sites and habitats;
- Applications for developments that would result in harm to the borough's biodiversity and geological conservation interests will be determined in accordance with the key principles set out in PPS9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation) and in particular sub-paragraph 1(vi); and
- Opportunities and locations for biodiversity enhancements will be identified and pursued by the creation, protection, enhancement, extension and management of green corridors through the development of green infrastructure networks in urban and rural areas to improve connectivity between habitats.

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 plan for the site. Proposals to create areas of ecologically beneficial natural habitat will be welcomed. Development should provide access to nature conservation areas for recreational and educational purposes, where appropriate.

Saved UDP Review Policy NE3.1 confirms that development that would detract from the wildlife or recreation value of the Green Chains identified on the Proposals Map will not be permitted.

These policies are consistent with the aims of paragraph 180, 181 and 186 of the Framework.

Officer Assessment

The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit has confirmed that a sufficient level of ecological information has been submitted to inform determination of the application. It has also confirmed that, compared to the initial submission, the plans for determination appear to be a significant improvement from an ecological perspective.

Measurable gains for biodiversity (BNG) are expected within development in accordance with national and local planning policy. From an ecological perspective, GMEU is satisfied that 10% BNG is achievable on the site (10% is the current desired minimum BNG, as this is the figure stated in the Environment Act 2021). The applicant is of the opinion that 20% is achievable on-site, and this is written into the Design Code. This uplift in biodiversity is a benefit of the

scheme. The detailed BNG scheme would be determined at Reserved Matters stage.

GMEU has confirmed that the indicative landscaping species lists in the Design Code are also acceptable.

The measures in the Design Code would be a condition of a planning approval. Other conditions relating to ecology, as recommended by GMEU, would also be imposed.

Officers consider that the biodiversity net gain that would result from the development is a benefit that should be afforded significant weight in the overall planning balance.

9. Heritage/ Archaeology

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy CS8 sets out the unique place the historic environment holds in Stockport's cultural heritage and the multiple ways in which it supports and contributes to the economy, society and daily life. It also recognises the historic environment as a non-renewable resource that is of a fragile and finite nature and sets out the conservation and management of this important resource as a key component of the wider principal of sustainable development that forms an overarching principal of the LDF. Policy CS8 goes on to say that development will be expected to make a positive contribution to the protection / and or enhancement of the borough's historic assets.

Policy SIE-1 states that development that is designed and landscaped to the highest contemporary standard, paying high regard to the built and/or natural environment within which it is sited, will be given positive consideration. The policy also sets out that specific account should be had of a number of issues, including appropriate materials, the special characteristics of the site, the potential to enhance the public realm and to incorporate the qualities and local distinctiveness of the historic environment

Policy SIE-3 states that development which preserves or enhances the special architectural, artistic, historic or archaeological significance of heritage assets will be welcomed, and defines heritage assets as buildings, sites, places, areas or landscapes, which are positively identified as having a degree of significance, meriting consideration in planning decisions. The policy requires 'clear and convincing justification' for any harm to heritage assets, including harm caused by development within their setting.

These policies are consistent with the aims of paragraph 200, 201, 203 and 208 of the Framework.

Officer Assessment

The application is supported by a Heritage Assessment (HA), in accordance with the requirements of para 200 of the Framework.

The Council's Conservation Officer and GMAAS consider that the clubhouse is a non-designated heritage asset (it was a former farmhouse), and the Conservation Officer also considers that the application site is a non-designated heritage asset due to the value of trees in delineating historic field boundaries and the relationship between the 'farmhouse' and its surrounding landscape. As such, the above-mentioned policies and paragraphs of the Framework are relevant to the assessment of the application and should be applied.

The Conservation Officer and GMAAS raise no objection to the proposed conversion of the clubhouse, and the heritage assessment states that it will not be altered externally. The significance and existing character and appearance of the building would therefore not be affected. However, the Conservation Officer has also raised concern that the Outline nature of the application means details of the design, scale and materials of the proposed housing and the layout, materials and landscaping of the grounds, proposed site division by boundary treatments and the introduction of services and hardstanding etc, have not been provided. There is also concern that there is no information in respect of mitigation against the harm that may arise from the development within the setting of the asset. Whilst these comments are noted, the applicant is entitled to submit an Outline application. It is unreasonable to require this level of detail to support it, particularly as these considerations can be made at the Reserved Matters stage. If the application is approved a condition would be applied requiring the submission of a further, detailed Heritage Assessment with Reserved Matters.

Notwithstanding this, approval for the principle of the development is being sought and any potential harm to the setting of the former farmhouse and the value of trees in delineating historic tree patterns needs to be considered. In this respect the submitted Parameter Plan', 'Building Heights Plan, 'Internal Road Layout & Access Arrangement Plan', 'indicative Masterplan', Heritage Assessment, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Landscape and Visual Appraisal, are sufficient to enable this assessment to be made.

Paragraph 202 of the Framework, which post-dates the Council's Core Strategy, confirms that the significance of any heritage asset should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal on that asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Paragraph 208 requires that the effect of an application on the

significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

As a non-designated heritage asset that has been significantly altered internally and externally over the years, the clubhouse has a low level of significance. The proposed development would have a neutral impact on the building as no external alterations are proposed. However, while the Parameters Plan and Masterplan seek to separate the development from the immediate setting of the clubhouse building and retain a large area of open land on the western land parcel, it is inevitable that the wider setting of the clubhouse would be altered. In heritage terms, and noting the Conservation Officers comments, the development would have an impact on this setting. Notwithstanding this, it is clear that the setting of the former farmhouse has already been irretrievably altered and harmed since 1912 through the formation of the man-made, engineered and manicured golf course, and more modern development. It is therefore concluded that any harm to the setting of the heritage asset would not be sufficient to justify the refusal the application.

In terms of the impact on historic tree patterns, it is evident that many of the historic tree lines within the site have already been lost since the golf club was established with more modern woodland planted to suit the design of the course. A review of historic mapping contained within the Heritage Assessment demonstrates that there is little evidence of the former field boundaries or trees that were located along those boundaries. The introduction of the railway line further alters the perception of the previous use. The former agricultural use has not been recognisable for over a century. It is accepted that the Parameters Plan, which preserves a large useable area of the site as public open space, has been designed around the principal tree stock and sought to retain as much mature planting as possible. This would be supplemented by significant additional tree planting to restore natural landscape features and characteristics, the details of which would be determined at Reserved Matters.

With regard to the below-ground potential of the wider site, GMAAS agree with the recommendations outlined in the archaeological DBA that the archaeological implications of the development can be mitigated by a phased programme of works. Given that any remains are not likely to be of any more than regional significance, GMAAS are content that a scheme of works can be secured via a condition of any forthcoming Outline planning consent.

Officers consider that the impact of the development on heritage and archaeology would be neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

10. Residential Amenity

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy SIE-1 sets out that satisfactory privacy and amenity for future, existing and neighbouring users and residents should be taken into account in new developments.

Policy SIE-3 confirms that new housing will not be permitted where existing pollution levels are unacceptable and where there is no reasonable prospect that it can be satisfactorily reduced through specific measures.

Policy H-1 requires that new residential development contributes to the creation of successful communities. Good standards of amenity, privacy and safety/security should be provided for the occupants of new housing, and good standards of amenity and privacy should be maintained for the occupants of existing housing.

These policies are consistent with the aims of paragraph 130 of the Framework.

'The Design of Residential Development' SPD's overall purpose is to achieve high quality design in residential development.

Officer Assessment

As the application is in Outline, the final layout of the development is not under consideration at this Outline stage. However, the indicative Layout Plan shows how a residential development of up to 278 houses could be accommodated on the site that provides satisfactory levels of amenity. This shows that separation distances between habitable room windows within the development would broadly accord with the guidance in the Council's adopted 'Space about Dwelling' standards in 'The Design of Residential Development' SPD, and that the development could achieve separation between the habitable room windows in the proposed dwellings and existing dwellings that are in excess of those standards. All house garden sizes would also broadly comply with the SPD, and level of apartment amenity space cannot be determined at the Outline stage as it will depend on the mix of 1 and 2 beds in each block and the extent of balconies.

The Design Code stipulates that the Council's space about dwelling standards would be met if/ when a Reserved Matters application for layout is submitted, unless there is a reasoned justification why not. The measures in the Design Code would be a condition of a planning approval.

The Environmental Health Officer (Public Protection) has raised no objections to the development in principle. A further Noise Impact Assessment would be required at Reserved Matters stage when the final layout of the development is known. This would be controlled by planning condition if the application is granted.

Officers consider that the impact of the development on residential amenity would be neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

11. Recreation and Amenity Open Space

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy SIE-2 outlines that development will be expected to take a positive role in providing recreation and amenity open space to meet the needs of its users/occupants. In those parts of the Borough with a deficiency in recreation and amenity open space, large new residential developments should include provision, within an agreed timescale, for recreation and amenity open space on or readily accessible to the site, based on the Council's guidelines. Where occupancy levels of 100 people or more are expected, open space at a standard of 1.7ha per 1,000 population for formal recreation and 0.7ha per 1,000 population for children's play and casual recreation should be provided.

As much as possible of the open space requirement should be accommodated within or adjacent to the proposed development. However, provision of some or all the open space off site or through financial contributions, to expand or improve an existing facility, will be permitted where the Council is satisfied that there is no practical alternative or that it would be better to do so.

Saved UDP Review Policy L1.2 states that in considering development proposals the Council will take account of children's play needs and will require, where appropriate, the provision of suitable and accessible space and facilities to meet these needs.

These policies are consistent with paragraph 102 of the Framework.

The 'Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments' SPD' seeks contributions from new residential development related to the population capacity of that development. Stockport's Development Plan adopts the Fields in Trust (FiT) standard of 2.4ha of open space provision per 1000 population of which 0.7ha is for children's play and 1.7ha is for formal recreation space. This standard is commonly used across the country as a model of best practice. The SPD notes that Stockport has 1.3ha of formal open space per 1000 population, and this is a shortfall of 105ha against the FiT standard. Table 4 on page 17 highlights the quantitative deficiency of children's play provision in the Cheadle Committee area (0.03ha per 1000 head of population set against the 0.25ha FiT standard – a deficiency of -0.22ha per 1000 head of population).

Whilst contributions will be made to formal recreation on all applications for residential development, those in relation to children's play will only be made if there are existing facilities within threshold distances of the site. The thresholds in place within the SPD for taking commuted sums for children's play facilities ensure the direct relationship test of Regulation 122 (CIL Regulations 2010) is passed. In this instance the Council's Play and Infrastructure Officer has confirmed that the

application site falls within the catchment area of Rose Hill Play Area and that Formal Sport would be allocated to the Formal Sport Priority List.

Officer Assessment

The 2017 Open Space Standards Paper records quantitative shortfalls across the Borough for a number of typologies of open space. It highlights at Table 3.9 that the Cheadle area has deficiencies for natural and semi-natural (1.04ha per 1000 population) and allotments (0.13ha per 1000 population). In response to its findings on the need for an update to the 2012/2013 Playing Pitch Assessment Report and Strategy at paragraph 4.10, the council undertook a review and adopted updated Playing Pitch Strategy and Needs Assessment documents dated December 2019. The Playing Pitch Strategy Document provides a summary of Cheadle sub area issues and opportunities that need to be addressed, in order to meet growing demand for formal recreation provision. This highlights:

- Deficits for football
- Deficits for cricket provision
- Deficits for rugby
- Additional capacity required for Lacrosse

For the reasons highlighted above, and the shortfall in children’s play and formal provision, there is a strong evidence base underpinning policy SIE-2 and the associated SPD that clearly demonstrates the quantitative and qualitative need and necessity for the proposed development to contribute towards both.

At the request of the Play and Infrastructure Officer, and due to the proximity of the application site to Rose Vale Park and the proposed connectivity from this site to the Park, no on-site play areas are proposed within the development. Rather a financial payment (commuted sum) would be required in accordance with the policy guidelines, to satisfy the recreational open space needs generated by the development. The intention is that this would be spent on enhancing the play area at Rose Vale Park with more play value and play opportunity. The Play and Infrastructure Officer has also confirmed that formal recreational open space needs are not required on site, and could again be covered by a commuted sum in accordance with the policy guidelines. This would be allocated to the Formal Sport Priority List. Based on the indicative layout these contributions would be as follows, although the final amount would be determined at Reserved Matters stage when the population capacity of the development can be determined.

	Population Capacity	972
Childrens' Provision	£ 391,230.00	

Childrens' Maintenance	£ 187,110.00	
Formal Provision	£ 545,292.00	
Formal Maintenance	£ 330,480.00	
Total	£ 1,454,112.00	

If the application is granted, the requirement for a recreation and amenity open space financial contribution would be secured through a S106 Agreement. The final amount would be determined if/ when a Reserved Matters application is approved that fixes the number of dwellings.

The development will provide recreation and amenity open space to meet the needs of its users/occupants. In this respect Officers consider that the impact of the development would be neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

12. Public Rights of Way

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy CS10 outlines that the Council will continue to provide a network of safe, good quality walking and cycling routes and other Rights of Way.

Saved UDP Review Policy L1.7 states that the Council will not permit proposals that would result in the loss of public rights of way and other recreation routes. All existing and proposed routes should be appropriately surfaced, signposted and waymarked and kept free from obstruction. The Council will negotiate for extensions and additions to the network and improvements in the standard of routes.

Saved UDP Review Policy L1.8 confirms that the Council will safeguard and enhance the network of identified Strategic Recreation Routes. Development that would conflict with the strategic recreation value of these routes will not be permitted. The Council will initiate measures to complete this network through the addition of missing sections and the creation of key links.

Development Plan policies CS10 and L1.7 are consistent with the aims of paragraph 100 of the Framework. However, paragraph 100 is more concerned with protecting and enhancing Public Rights of Way and access rather than the recreation value of Strategic Recreation Routes (such as the Fred Perry Way) as required by policy L1.8.

Officer Assessment

Noting that all the PRoW would be maintained on their current alignments, the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Officer has raised no objections to the development and it is considered that it accords with all relevant policies.

Regarding accessibility and sustainable travel, this is addressed in detail in the 'Highways' section of this report. Pedestrian and cycle access is provided along all routes. In addition, a continuous network of new and upgraded publicly accessible routes is proposed across the site, linking all the areas of open space, development plots and Rose Vale Park. These details are shown on the Internal Road Layout and Access Arrangement Plan.

Officers consider that the impact of the development on PRoW would be neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

13. Energy and Sustainable Design

Policy Background

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.

Policy CS8 outlines that development must be designed to meet a high standard of sustainability and pay high regard to the local environment.

Policy SD-3 requires applications to include an Energy Statement showing how carbon reductions will be achieved.

Policy SD-6 states that development should be designed in such a way as to avoid, mitigate or reduce the impacts of climate change. Development, particularly within the urban area of the Borough, that takes into account the urban heat island effect and incorporates measures to reduce this phenomenon will be given positive consideration.

Policy H1 requires proposals to consider the need to deliver low carbon housing.

These policies are consistent with the aims of paragraph 8 of the Framework.

Officer Assessment

An Energy Statement has been submitted with the application that complies with the requirements of Policy SD-3. Members should note, however, that new Building Regulations came into force on 15th June 2022 which include changes

to 'Part L' 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%. The carbon reductions required through the new Building Regulation standards, that the development would need to comply with if constructed, are now higher than those required by Policy SD-3. Although the specific percentage reductions in CO₂ of Policy SD-3 have been superseded, the carbon reduction aims of the Core Strategy are still relevant.

Members are aware that 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 CAN strategy was developed to underpin this agreement and was approved by the Council in October 2020. The strategy seeks to ensure that Stockport achieves carbon neutrality by 2038, in order to support global efforts to keep global warming below 1.5°C. Meeting the 2038 carbon neutrality target will require new development to achieve net zero carbon in advance of then, and homes should not be built which will require retrofitting in the near future.

The Environmental Law Foundation has suggested that climate emergency declarations should be regarded as material considerations in the determination of planning matters.

The Planning Policy Officer (CAN lead) considers that, in addition to compliance with Part L of the Building Regulations, the sustainable design measures included in the Design Code are an acceptable response to the challenges posed. The approach laid out is supported in helping Stockport to meet its aim to be carbon neutral by 2038. For example, the Design Code states that all dwellings would be built to passiv-haus house principles. The Design Code would be conditioned if the application is granted.

The site currently performs a role as a carbon sink, by virtue of trees and other planting absorbing CO₂. It therefore follows that constructing low or net zero buildings may still result in a net increase in emissions, because the site will no longer perform a carbon sink role. It is therefore proposed that replacement planting would perform a greater absorption role than that of any planting to be lost, by planting more trees than are removed. This would be a condition of a planning approval.

Officers consider that the impact of the development on energy would be neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

14. Education

Policy Background

The Council does not have a specific Development Plan policy requiring the payment of an education contribution, however paragraph 99 of the Framework states that it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. LPA's should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications.

The requirement for LPA's to consider the impacts of developments on school places is therefore a material consideration that should be given great weight.

Officer Assessment

The Education Department has outlined that presently, based on a scheme for 278 houses, a financial contribution of £2,126,810.65 would be required to alleviate forecast pressures on school places. This is not a benefit of the scheme, but is required to ensure adequate school places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities if the development proceeds. The applicant has agreed to the need to make an education contribution, however as the application proposes up to 278 houses and the final number and associated level of pupil yield is not known (noting that the application is in Outline), the final contribution is also unknown at this stage. If the application is granted the requirement for an education contribution would be sought through a s106 Agreement, with the final amount to be determined if/ when a Reserved Matters application is approved that fixes the number of dwellings.

Officers consider that the impact of the development on education would be neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

15. Contamination

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy SIE-3 confirms that new housing will not be permitted where existing pollution levels are unacceptable and where there is no reasonable prospect that it can be satisfactorily reduced through specific measures.

This is consistent with the aims of paragraph 189 of the Framework.

Officer Assessment

The Council's Environmental Health Officer (Contaminated Land) has reviewed the information submitted in support of the application. The majority of the site is not identified as potentially contaminated, although there are some localised areas where infilling has occurred and this means there may be some made ground. Some off-site activities also mean that an intrusive site investigation for soil and gas is

necessary. This would be required by condition in accordance with the Officer's recommendation, if the application is granted.

Officers consider that the impact of the development on contamination would be neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

16. Air Quality

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy SIE-3 confirms that new housing will not be permitted where existing pollution levels are unacceptable and where there is no reasonable prospect that it can be satisfactorily reduced through specific measures. An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared under the provisions of the National Local Air Quality Strategy and is subject to revision on a biennial basis. All development should be designed to ensure that adequate levels of air quality are achieved within buildings. Development that assists in reducing the existing levels of poor air quality within the declared AQMA will be given positive consideration. Development that would exacerbate the existing poor air quality levels within the AQMA will be permitted only where it is demonstrated that that exacerbation will be mitigated.

This is consistent with the aims of paragraph 192 of the Framework

Officer Assessment

The Site is located outside the AQMA, however an Air Quality Assessment has been submitted with the application. It is acknowledged that the proposals have the potential to cause air quality impacts because of dust emissions during construction, and road traffic exhaust emissions associated by vehicles travelling to and from the site both during construction and post-development.

It is accepted that potential air quality impacts from dust, if suitable dust control measures are implemented, are not predicted to be significant. Predicted impacts of NO₂ and PM₁₀ concentrations from traffic generation are negligible at all sensitive locations. The potential air quality impacts of the development overall are not considered to be significant.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer (Air Quality) has reviewed the information submitted in support of the application, and has accepted that the site is suitable for the proposed use with regard to air quality. A dust management plan to minimise emissions during construction activities would be implemented. This would be required by condition if the application is granted.

The development is not considered to have any significant adverse impact on air quality and therefore accords with the NPPF and CS Policy SIE3, with a neutral weighting in the planning balance.

Officers consider that the impact of the development on air quality would be neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

17. Lighting

Officer Assessment

As the application is in Outline, the provision of a satisfactory lighting scheme will be secured by condition if the application is granted.

18. Drainage

Policy Background

Core Strategy Policy SIE-3 outlines that when managing flood risk, all development will be expected to comply with the approach set out in national policy. Where planning permission is required, areas of hard-standing or other surfaces should be of a permeable construction or drain to an alternative form of SuDS.

Policy SD-6 requires development to be designed in such a way as to avoid, mitigate or reduce the impacts of climate change. In particular, all development will be required to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage the run-off of water from the site. Development on greenfield (not previously developed) sites will be required, as a minimum, to ensure that the rate of run-off is not increased.

Saved UDP Review Policy EP1.7 states that the Council will not permit development, including the raising of land, where it would:

- (i) be at risk from flooding;
- (ii) increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;
- (iii) hinder future access to watercourses for maintenance purposes;
- (iv) cause loss of the natural floodplain;
- (v) result in extensive culverting;
- (vi) affect the integrity of existing flood defences; or
- (vii) significantly increase surface water run-off

unless the applicant can demonstrate that satisfactory and sustainable measures will be implemented to overcome the adverse effects. All development that is likely to have an impact on drainage patterns should incorporate, as far as is

practicable, sustainable drainage systems taking account of current Government advice

These policies are consistent with the aims of paragraphs 165, 167, 168, 169, 173 and 175 of the Framework.

Officer Assessment

As the application is in Outline, the final drainage scheme cannot be designed. However, based on the submitted Outline drainage strategy, indicative layout and Design Code, no objections are raised from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Environment Agency (EA), United Utilities or Manchester Airport subject to conditions.

The majority of the application site is in Flood Zone 1, or land defined as having less than a 1 in 1000-year annual probability of flooding in any one year (<0.1%). Part of the site along Heald Green Brook is within Flood Zone 2, however the EA has confirmed this is acceptable as the proposed built development is located in Flood Zone 1. The development provides an 8.0m easement from the watercourse to any houses to allow for essential maintenance and emergency access to the watercourse. The site is also at low risk of flooding from all other sources, and it is accepted that flood risk would not be increased elsewhere

The development has been assessed against the Framework 'Sequential Test'. Taking into consideration that the built development is in Flood Zone 1 and there is no objection from the EA, the development is appropriate and the 'Exception Test' is not required.

The conditions requested by the LLFA, EA, United Utilities and Manchester Airport would be imposed if the application is granted.

Officers consider that the impact of the development on drainage would be neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

19. Health

Policy Background

Core Strategy Core Policy CS1 outlines that the Council will seek to reduce levels of significant social and economic deprivation in the Borough through development policies and proposals, and complementary strategies, that provide access for all to housing, employment, education, training, health, social, other services and facilities.

Policy CS2 seeks to provide a wide choice of high quality homes to meet the requirements of existing and future Stockport households.

Policy CS3 outlines that a mix of housing, in terms of tenure, price, type and size will be provided to meet the requirements of new forming households, first time buyers, families with children, disabled people and older people. New development should contribute to the creation of more mixed, balanced communities by providing affordable housing in areas with high property prices and by increasing owner occupation in areas of predominantly social rented housing.

Policy CS5 states that the Core Strategy will promote and safeguard a broad range and distribution of accessible, quality community uses across the borough. The Core Strategy will seek to enable adequate provision to be made for these uses to meet the needs of the borough's population through the plan period

Policy CS8 confirms that by working with local communities, developers and partners, the Council will protect, develop and enhance an integrated network of high quality and multi-functional Green Infrastructure that will, inter alia, improve health and wellbeing.

Policy CS9 states that the Council will require that development is in locations that are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. The Council will support development that reduces the need to travel by car. Development will be required to consider the needs of the most vulnerable road users first.

Policy SIE-3 confirms that new housing will not be permitted where existing pollution levels are unacceptable and where there is no reasonable prospect that it can be satisfactorily reduced through specific measures.

These policies are consistent with the aims of paragraphs 8, 20, 96, 97, 102, 109, 128, 135, 189, 191 and 192 of the Framework.

Officer Assessment

The Council does not have a specific Development Plan policy requiring the submission of a health impact assessment (HIA). Notwithstanding this, it is clear that the impact of the development on health is a material consideration. The NPPG further strengthens the relationship between health and planning, commenting that a HIA is a useful tool to use where there are expected to be significant impacts. In recognition of this, a HIA has been submitted. This has been reviewed (and accepted as a thorough document) by the Director of Public Health.

The following is an appraisal of the main potential health impacts identified in the HIA, and Members can view the whole report if required on the Council's Planning application database ([Find planning applications - Stockport Council](#)).

1. Population and Housing

The development includes the provision of 50% affordable housing, and would make a significant contribution to Stockport's supply of affordable homes.

The Director of Public Health notes 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, and mental health benefits of a less stressful expensive home.

2. Employment and the Labour Market

The development would generate temporary direct jobs during the construction period. Once complete it would also contribute economically active residents to the Borough's labour supply. The HIA states that there is potential for the training of local residents to be delivered as part of the development scheme through contractors, working in partnership through local training providers. This would be controlled by condition / via the S106 agreement if the application is granted.

3. Access and Active Travel.

The applicant has submitted an 'Internal Road Layout & Access Arrangement Plan' that shows a comprehensive package of potential upgrades to footways, Public Right of Ways and pedestrian/ cycle infrastructure. This has been accepted by the Highway Engineer and would be conditioned if the application is granted.

4. Education, Healthcare and Other Social Infrastructure

The Education Department has outlined that presently, based on a scheme for 278 houses, a financial contribution of £2,126,810.65 would be required to alleviate forecast pressures on school places. This is not a benefit of the scheme, but is required to ensure adequate school places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities if the development proceeds.

The Director of Public Health has confirmed that the area of the application is currently well served by several GP practices and there does not appear to be a specific need for another GP premises in the area. There is nothing in the proposal to suggest that these new residents would be housebound or have needs that differ from those of people in the surrounding residential area. While access to dental services is constrained locally and pharmacy provision has declined in recent months, there is no data to suggest that access to these services is more

constrained in this location than elsewhere. The overall conclusion is that the impact of this development on primary care is acceptable.

5. Open Space and Nature

The submitted Parameter Plan shows a land take of 6.71Ha for housing, 0.58ha retained for the community hub with the remaining 10.8ha as open space. Within the public open space elements, there would be circa 5ha retained on the western parcel forming a new urban park that would be connected to the existing Rose Vale Park via a further 1.87ha 'green wedge' on the eastern parcel, which includes a linear tree lined avenue. The Parameter Plan demonstrates that approximately 59% of the total site area would be provided as public open space and secured in perpetuity. Furthermore, within the 10.8ha of open space the application would provide allotments of which there is a deficiency of provision in the Cheadle Committee Area. The Public Rights of Way that cross the land would be retained, with improvements to the site's accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

Whilst improved public access to the remaining open space and the provision of allotments would be a considerable benefit of the scheme, as discussed in section 3. of this report the loss of Strategic Open Space would result in significant harm.

While the Public Rights of Way across the land would need to be maintained (and although not presently raised as a possibility by the applicant), the potential for the applicant to exercise permitted development rights to fence off the rest of the land including along the public footpaths is a material consideration. This fencing could be up to 2.0m high, and would not have to be permeable fencing. Future public access to it beyond the Public Rights of Way, even for existing members of the Golf Club, cannot be guaranteed.

The application as submitted could deliver a 20% biodiversity net gain, double the minimum requirement of 10%.

6. Air Quality and Neighbourhood Amenity

Potential impacts relating to air quality and noise have been assessed through the submission of an Air Quality Assessment and Acoustic Report. These are accepted by the Council's Environmental Health Service, and no objections are raised subject to conditions. A suitable external lighting scheme would be controlled by condition, if the application is granted. On this basis, it is accepted that the overall impact relating to air quality, noise and neighbourhood amenity is neutral.

7. Crime and Community Safety

Noting that measures to address crime reduction and community safety remain to be worked up, it is not possible to make any firm statement about the development

having an acceptable impact on crime reduction and community safety. That said, a Preliminary Crime Impact Statement undertaken by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) has been submitted with the planning application. GMP raise no objections to the development of the site from a security perspective, provided the recommendations in the report are addressed when more detailed proposals are developed. Where layout and design are considered at Reserved Matters stage, a full Crime Impact Statement should be submitted which appraises the design and layout of the scheme and takes into account the Preliminary Crime Impact Statement. This requirement would be a condition if the application is granted.

8. Healthy Food and Lifestyle Services

The HIA states that the proposed development does not comprise any opportunities for food retail uses. However, allotment space is proposed which would provide new and existing residents with the opportunity to grow their own food. This is considered to be a positive benefit of the scheme.

Officers consider that the impact of the development on health would be neutral and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

20 Planning balance and overall conclusion

This is a complex application. In order to assist Members the negative and positive planning impacts of the development, when assessed against the Development Plan and the Framework, have been considered in detail in the preceding paragraphs. Officers have also indicated the planning weight that they consider should be applied to each. The main impacts are summarised below.

Negative Impacts	Positive Impacts
<p>The loss of approximately 6.71ha of high quality Strategic Open Space in an area of open space deficiency.</p> <p>Very significant weight</p>	<p>Secured future public access to 10.8ha as open space. Within the public open space elements there would be circa 5ha retained on the western parcel forming a new urban park. There would be improved connection to the existing Rose Vale Park via a further 1.87ha 'green wedge' on the eastern parcel.</p> <p>Significant weight</p>

<p>The loss of a private golf course.</p> <p>Neutral weight in view of the sports mitigation</p>	<p>Contributions for improvements to Hockey (£350,000), Football (£950,000 for the construction of an 11v11 3G AGP), Golf (£150,000 to promote participation in golf in Stockport) and Tennis (the delivery of two on-site tennis courts as part of the development, with associated community facilities in the clubhouse).</p> <p>Moderate weight</p>
	<p>The provision of 0.33ha for allotments and a large area of natural/ semi natural green space, in an area deficient in these open space typologies.</p> <p>Significant weight</p>
<p>-</p>	<p>The provision of up to 278 houses, including 50% affordable. Contribution to the Council's housing need, including for affordable housing, in a period of significant under-supply.</p> <p>Very significant weight</p>
<p>Adverse Landscape/ Visual Impacts</p> <p>Moderate weight</p>	
<p>The removal of a large amount of trees and vegetation</p> <p>Neutral weight with replacement planting</p>	<p>Securing new on site tree planting that would significantly exceed the number of trees to be removed (at a ratio of 10:1).</p> <p>Neutral weight</p>
	<p>Biodiversity net gain of 20%.</p>

	Significant weight
	Economic benefits, including the creation of construction jobs. Limited weight

Members are well versed with the housing land supply position and the implications this has in respect of the presumption in favour of development and how the titled balance is engaged. In the case of this application, national planning policy is clear that planning permission should be granted *“unless 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”*.

The development would result in the loss of approximately 6.71ha of high quality Strategic Open Space in an area of open space deficiency, and the loss of a golf course. However, the land is currently private whereas the development would secure future public access to 10.8ha as open space. Within the public open space elements there would be circa 5ha retained on the western parcel forming a new urban park. There would be improved connection to the existing Rose Vale Park via a further 1.87ha ‘green wedge’ on the eastern parcel. Furthermore, Officers consider that sufficient mitigation is proposed for the loss of the private recreational golf facility, and this would provide a significantly wider sports reach and opportunities for participation in sport.

The development would result in the loss of a large amount of trees and vegetation, however new on site tree planting would be secured that would significantly exceed the number of trees to be removed (at a ratio of 10:1).

The development would result in localised adverse landscape/ visual impacts, but it would deliver up to 278 houses, including 50% affordable, making an important contribution to the Council’s housing and affordable housing needs in a period of significant under-supply.

The scheme seeks to deliver a wide range of complimentary uses in the clubhouse, and given that any retail element would be less than 200sqm net it is not considered that this would have any detrimental impact on the neighbouring large local shopping centres of Heald Green and Gatley. The retention and re-use of the existing Heald Green Community Theatre building, and clubhouse (a non-designated heritage asset), are welcomed. There are no planning objections

to the change of use of the existing clubhouse to a community hub (sui generis) for flexible uses within Use Class E (a)(b)(e)(g(i)) and Class F2.

Whilst layout is not a matter for consideration at this stage, the application has demonstrated that the scheme can deliver a satisfactory form of development. It would afford appropriate levels of amenity to occupiers of the new dwellings, as well as protecting the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring dwellings.

The application has been the subject of extensive discussions regarding highways and accessibility, and it is concluded that the highway arrangements, and package of off-site works appropriately mitigate for the impact of the development.

The phrase 'significantly and demonstrably' in paragraph 11 of the NPPF is crucial in coming to a view on this tilted balance. Even if Committee determine that the proposal causes harm it does not by default mean that permission should be refused. Rather, if Committee is to refuse the application it is necessary to demonstrate that any harm arising from the proposal is so great that it 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The application is finely balanced. However, taking into account the consultation responses received to the application and applying the tilted assessment, this is not considered to be the case. As such, the presumption in favour of development should be applied and the application should be granted. Notwithstanding this recommendation, noting the potential loss of a high quality area of Strategic Open Space and the number and nature of representations received, the implications of allowing the development are considerable for the local community.

If the application is approved, the decision will need to be deferred and delegated to Officers to enable completion of the legal agreement.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant, subject to completion of the necessary S106 Agreement.

UPDATE Cheadle Area Committee 28th November 2023

Members are advised that the discussion at Cheadle Area Committee was lengthy and as such the summary below only identifies the pertinent points that came out of the discussion. It is recommended that members watch the webcast of the meeting prior to Planning and Highways Regulation Committee to gain a full understanding of the discussion.

[Cheadle Area Committee - Tuesday 28 November 2023, 6:00pm - Start video at 0:38:16 - Stockport Council Webcasting \(public-i.tv\)](#)

The Officer introduced the application.

In response to questioning from the Committee, the Officer outlined that:

- The application site is not Green Belt, but it is designated as Strategic Open Space.
- The future maintenance of the public open space in perpetuity would be controlled via a legal agreement, requiring the approval of a management plan and Council approved management body. It would not be a cost to the Council.
- The Highway Engineer has fully assessed the application, and is satisfied that it is acceptable in highway terms.
- The traffic assessment took into account the Covid pandemic, and also the impact on streets surrounding the development.
- The development has been through a significant public consultation.
- 59% of the whole site will be public open space. The larger wedges of open space will comprise a 5ha public park on the western land parcel, and a 1.73ha area on the eastern land parcel.
- The viability of the golf course is part of the overall planning balance.
- The formal open space contribution arising from the development would be spent Borough wide in accordance with the Council's Formal Sports Priority List.
- The tilted balance applies when the Council has less than a 5 year housing land supply.
- Affordable housing will need to comply with the Council's adopted policy on affordability.

A member of the public spoke against the application.

The applicant spoke in favour.

Members debated the application, and agreed that the site should be visited by the Visiting Team to consider traffic concerns including its proposed connectivity and

sustainability. Both proposed site entrances should be visited, and distances to the nearby towns and transport should be considered. The visit should take place at rush hour. It was pointed out that NPPF para 103 states that “Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements”.

Members agreed not to give a recommendation as to whether PHR should grant or refuse the application.

UPDATE Planning & Highways Regulation Committee 14th December 2023

Members are advised that the discussion at Planning & Highways Regulation Committee was lengthy and as such the summary below only identifies the pertinent points that came out of the discussion. It is recommended that members watch the webcast of the meeting prior to next Planning and Highways Regulation Committee to gain a full understanding of the discussion.

[Planning & Highways Regulation Committee - Thursday 14 December 2023, 6:00pm - Stockport Council Webcasting \(public-i.tv\)](#)

The Officer advised that Outline Planning permission was sought for the erection of up to 278 dwellings, retention of the existing Heald Green Community Theatre building, retention of the existing Clubhouse to facilitate its use as a community hub, associated landscaping and open space and all user access from Pymgate Lane, Grasmere Road and Troutbeck Road and non-motorised user access from Styal Grove, Yew Tree Grove and Rose Vale Park. Full details of the proposal were included within the Committee report which identified the breakdown of potential uses within the proposed community hub. The application specifically sought approval for the principle of the development and the matter of access. The matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale were not for determination at this stage, and if the application was approved would require future assessment as part of any subsequent Reserved Matters application(s).

The proposal sought permission for the loss of an existing 18 hectare 9-hole private membership golf course to be redeveloped for housing. An overall land take of 6.71ha was proposed for use for housing, 0.58ha retained for the community hub with the remaining 10.8ha as open space. Within the public open space element there would be circa 5ha retained on the western parcel forming a new urban park, that would be connected to the existing Rose Vale Park via a further 1.87ha ‘green

wedge' on the eastern parcel of the site, including a linear tree lined avenue. The proposals included further provision for allotments and tennis courts, together with the indicative provision of woodland and wildlife corridors. The newly created publicly accessible open space would be managed and maintained by a Council approved open space management company and would remain accessible to the public in perpetuity secured through a S106 legal agreement. The Parameter Plan submitted with the application demonstrated that approximately 59% of the total site area would be provided as public open space.

Members were asked to note that there was considerable public interest in the application. A full assessment of areas of concern was included within the report.

One of the main areas of concern raised during the public consultation related to highways, and the impact of the development on the highway network. Members should note the application included a significant package of highways works to improve the surrounding walking and cycling network. These improvements were shown on pages 82-84 of the report. The cumulative effects of these measures would provide significant accessibility to the site, are reasonable, necessary, attributable, cost effective and meaningful, and satisfied national and local policies regarding accessibility and sustainability. It was considered that a condition should be attached to any planning permission requiring detailed design of the measures proposed.

Vehicular access to the site was proposed via improved junctions at Pymgate Lane, Grasmere Road and Troutbeck Road. The crossroad junction of Pymgate Lane with Motcombe Road would be reconfigured, with the priority for vehicle movement to be changed and given to through traffic on Pymgate Lane. Carriageway widening, footway extension and amendments with the provision of crossing points were proposed.

On the easterly side of the site, the proposal was for site access to be taken from an extension to Troutbeck Road and a new priority junction to be created on Grasmere Road.

The application was supported by a Design Code that established key principles to which future Reserved Matters applications would be required to adhere to. The design code was appended to the report.

The report identified that the development would result in:

- the loss of 6.71ha of high quality strategic open Space in an area of open space deficiency;
- the loss of a private golf course;
- Adverse landscape/visual Impacts;

- The removal of a large amount of trees and vegetation.

But would provide for:

- up to 278 houses, including 50% affordable, in a period of prolonged significant under-supply.
- would secure future public access to the 10.8 ha of open space.
- Would secure contributions for improvements to:
 - a. Hockey (£350,000)
 - b. Football (£950,000 for the construction of an 11v11 3G AGP)
 - c. Golf (£150,000 to promote participation in golf in Stockport) and
 - d. Tennis (the delivery of two on-site tennis courts as part of the development, with associated community facilities in the clubhouse).
- Would result in the provision of 0.33ha for allotments and a large area of natural/ semi natural green space, in an area deficient in these open space typologies.
- The proposed on-site tree planting would exceed the number of trees to be lost;
- There would be a post development biodiversity net gain of at least 10% (policy position), with the design code stipulating 20%,
- and the development would bring economic benefits, including the creation of construction jobs. A work and skills agreement could be secured by either condition or legal agreement to ensure that these job opportunities benefitted local people.

The applicant had agreed to enter into a S106 Agreement to secure the provision of:

- 50% affordable housing on-site, with the tenure and mix of the affordable housing to be agreed with the Council at Reserved Matters stage;
- an education contribution (£2,126,810.65 to ensure school place sufficiency based on current forecasts, and calculated in accordance with the Department for Education's guidance 'Securing developer contributions for education' (August 2023) and 'Estimating pupil yield from housing development (August 2023) however the final sum would be confirmed at Reserved Matters stage when the housing mix was fixed, and be based on current forecasts and guidance from the Department for Education at that time);

- mitigation for the loss of the recreational golf course, with contributions for improvements to Hockey (£350,000), Football (£950,000 for the construction of an 11v11 3G AGP), Golf (£150,000 to promote participation in golf in Stockport) and Tennis (the delivery of two on-site tennis courts as part of the development, with associated community facilities in the clubhouse); and
- a financial contribution towards recreational open space provision and maintenance based on the criteria set out in the Council's Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments SPD (2019) (as amended). The final sum would be confirmed at Reserved Matters stage when the housing mix was fixed; and
- a commuted sum to cover the cost of Traffic Regulation Orders for the introduction of a 20mph limit on the westerly existing residential estate road network.

Members were aware that the Council did not have a 5 year Housing Land Supply and as such paragraph 11 of the NPPF was engaged. The Framework tilted the balancing exercise for this application from being neutral to one where the application should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Members therefore needed to determine the weight that should be given to the negative and positive impacts of the development when determining the application.

Applying the tilted balancing exercise required by the Framework, it was on balance recommended by Officers that the application was granted, subject to conditions and a legal agreement. The application was referred to this Committee by the Cheadle Committee without a recommendation. The application site had also been subject to a Visiting Team inspection where no recommendation was made.

By way of update, further objections had been received from 5 addresses since the Cheadle Area Committee. No new planning issues were raised in addition to those already outlined in the report; and

The Council received correspondence from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 30th November as the Secretary of State had received a request for him to consider call-in of the application for his own determination. It had since confirmed that the Secretary of State had decided not to call in the application and was content for it to be determined by the local planning authority.

In response to specific questions that were raised at Cheadle Area Committee that could not be answered on the night, and points of clarification following the Visiting Team inspection, the Officer confirmed that:

- With the proposed improved connectivity to Rose Vale Park, Heald Green Train Station and Gatley Station would be located within an approximately 1,500m walk from the centre of the site using local roads and new footpaths. The Officer had been advised that they would be within the accepted 20 minute walking threshold contained in Institution of Highways and Transportation guidance.
- Cycle parking was available at both train stations, however in addition to the highway improvements previously outlined the applicant had agreed to a financial contribution of £25,000 (£12,500 per station) to fund horizontal cycle lockers that could accommodate all types of bikes (including bikes with mudguards). These were more suitable for older people and people with mobility issues who can find it difficult to lift bikes up within vertical lockers. This would be secured by legal agreement.
- The proposed emergency vehicular access works were all internal to the site, and there would be no vehicular link between Motcombe Road and Styal Road. The Committee was asked to refer to the 'Internal road layout and Access Arrangement Plan' attached to the Committee bundle;
- The viability of the golf course was an important material consideration. This had been taken into account when assessing the application against paragraph 99 of the NPPF (Officer note: Since the Committee paragraph 99 has been superseded by paragraph 103), and making the recommendation to Committee. Since Cheadle Area Committee, the applicant had re-iterated that the golf course was unviable, couldn't be made viable and it was anticipated that it would close at the end of summer next year to avoid the risk of insolvency. Notwithstanding this, and while it was disputed by the applicant, the independent advice the Officer had received from Council's appointed Surveyor who had reviewed the viability information provided with the application, was that the golf course should not necessarily be unviable subject to demand from members and correct management. In this case, however, membership was closed and the club was not seeking new members. It was concluded that its focus had shifted, with a strong emphasis on this development. Sport England and England Golf also did not accept that the golf course was surplus to requirements on the available evidence. Notwithstanding this, as outlined in the Committee report, Officers had accepted that suitable mitigation for the loss of the recreational golf facility was provided through the negotiated contributions to hockey, football, golf and tennis, that would be secured if the application was granted. However, even if it was accepted that the golf course was surplus to requirements it was not accepted that the open space was surplus to requirements because it had the potential to be used for informal recreation, and/ or as another form of open

space such as natural/ semi natural greenspace where there was a considerable shortfall in the Cheadle Committee area; and

- The proposal indicated that the 1 and 2 bed units would be level access, and that 50% of the 3-bed affordable units would be built to M4(3) standard. Part M4(3) is achieved when a new dwelling provides reasonable provisions for a wheelchair user to live in the dwelling and have the ability to use any private outdoor space, parking and communal facilities. This higher standard of accessibility was welcomed, as it is not mandatory or a requirement of the Council's adopted Development Plan.

The Planning Officer and Highway Engineer answered questions posed by the Committee. The application was then debated, with the decision deferred to a future meeting of the Committee pending the receipt of additional information relating to the viability of Gatley Golf Club, affordable housing, construction traffic management, biodiversity net gain and public transport accessibility.