

Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme South Area Committee

20th June 2024

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

<u>ITEM 1</u>	DC/088660
<u>SITE ADDRESS</u>	Blossoms K & C Ltd Kennels, Blossoms Lane, Woodford, Stockport, SK7 1RE.
<u>PROPOSAL</u>	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 8 dwellings.

INFORMATION

These applications need to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants [and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations] have the right to a fair hearing and to this end the Committee must give full consideration to their comments.

Article 8 and Protocol 1 Article 1 confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Unitary Development Plan, the Head of Development and Control has concluded that some rights conferred by these Articles on the applicant(s)/objectors/residents and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. He believes that any restriction on these rights posed by approval of the application is proportionate to the wider benefits of approval and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

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ITEM 1

Application Reference	DC/088660
Location:	Blossoms K & C Ltd Kennels Blossoms Lane Woodford Stockport SK7 1RE
PROPOSAL:	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 8 dwellings
Type Of Application:	Full Application
Registration Date:	18.05.2023
Expiry Date:	20230713
Case Officer:	Paula Fitzgerald
Applicant:	MCR1 LTD
Agent:	MacMarshalls Chartered Rural Surveyors & Planning Consult...

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

The application is taken to Area Committee as it has been called up by Councillor Powney. The application can be determined by Area Committee.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The application site currently accommodates buildings in use as a commercial kennel and cattery business located off Blossoms Lane, Woodford. The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of all buildings associated with the business and the redevelopment of the site for 8 detached dwellings with a single access road. The applicant owns a residential property fronting Blossoms Lane (at the entrance to the site) which does not form of the application site or development area. This dwelling benefits from a separate means of access to that forming the application site.

Access will be gained via the existing entrance on Blossoms Lane which will be improved through a small increase in what would be the effective carriageway width and an increased entry radii. Beyond this there will be a single road running through the middle of the site with 4 dwellings located off each side. Each dwelling will be of a contemporary chalet bungalow style with a pitched roof, gables front and rear and a flat roofed single storey outrigger. Accommodation at first floor level is within the roof space. Each dwelling will have its own private driveway, in curtilage parking and front and rear gardens.

Beyond the proposed dwellings and within the application site a large landscaped area is proposed. Access to private recreational buildings positioned beyond and outside of the application site to the north will be retained through this landscaped area.

As shown on the extract from the landscaping plan below, there will be 3 different house types, each 4 bedrooms and a breakdown of footprint and volume are described below.

House type A x 5

Ground floor area 134sqm

Volume 736m³

Ridge Height 6.9m and eaves height 3.3m

House type C x1

Ground floor area 132sqm

Volume 841m³

Ridge Height 7m eaves 3m

House type D x 2

Ground floor area 117sqm

Volume 842

Ridge Height 7m eaves height 3m



Exact details of materials are not confirmed yet however the application advises that the dwellings will be constructed from sections of rendering and timber cladding to the elevations and roof tiles.

The existing hedge along the eastern boundary of the site will be retained as will that along the western boundary. To facilitate the development 18 trees are proposed for removal. These include:

- Lombardy poplars, an elder and sycamore along the southern front boundary
- Copper beech, cherry plum, crack willow and Norway maple in the centre of the site and
- Crack Willow and groups of ash, silver birch, sycamore, Lombardy poplar and crab apple to the north of the site.

The application is best appreciated by the plans appended to this agenda and is also supported by the following documents:

- Planning, Design & Access Statement
- Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment
- Extended Phase One Habitat Survey (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal) Version 1
- Great Crested Newt Survey Version 1
- Bat Activity Report Version 1
- Protected Species Appraisal - Bat Roost Assessment - Version 1
- Bat Emergence Survey - Version 1
- Mitigation and Enhancement Measures Statement in relation to Bat Species – V1
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment V1
- Tree Survey and Constraints Report

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is located in a rural setting within designated Green Belt and a Landscape Character Area. The site comprises a variety of buildings, single storey in nature, positioned mainly around the perimeter of the site, providing a hard edge with little visibility into the site from the east and west. The site has a well established leylandii hedge to the eastern boundary (circa 12m high), a shorter, lower hedge to the western boundary and a mix of established trees interspersed in and around the site. The access through the site leads to land and buildings to the north used for private recreational purposes together with a pond (these being outside the application site).

The site is surrounded by agricultural land with open pastures to the west, east and south. To the south west beyond this open farmland is Three Ways Farm, comprising a farmhouse, various outbuildings and caravan storage. To the north is the land and buildings in private recreational use as referred to above. To the east beyond the open farmland are a collection of detached properties fronting Blossoms Lane. Other than the access, the application site is separated from Blossoms Lane by a pasture.

Blossoms Lane is a narrow, mainly single width road linking Moss Lane to the east and Church Lane to the south. The lane is designated under the UDP Review as a Quiet Lane.

There are no legally protected trees or public rights of way across the site.

POLICY BACKGROUND

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

The Development Plan comprises the saved policies of the UDP Review, the Core Strategy DPD and the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan. The NPPF is also material to the consideration of this application presenting the most up to date policy position.

UDP Review

LCR1.1 Landscape Character Areas
NE1.2 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
EP1.7 Development and Flood Risk
GBA1.1 Extent of Green Belt
GBA1.2 Control of Development in Green Belt
GBA1.5 Residential Development in Green Belt
L1.1 Land for Active Recreation
L1.2 Children’s Play
TD2.2 Quiet Lanes
MW1.5 Control of Waste from Development
<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/current-planning-policies>

Core Strategy

CS1 Overarching Principles: Sustainable Development – Addressing Inequalities and Climate Change
SD1 Creating Sustainable Communities

SD3 Delivering the Energy Opportunities Plans – New Development
SD6 Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change
CS2 Housing Provision
CS3 Mix of Housing
CS4 Distribution of Housing
H1 Design of Residential Development
H2 Housing Phasing
CS8 Safeguarding and Improving the Environment
SIE1 Quality Places
SIE2 Provision of Recreation and Amenity Open Space in New Developments
SIE3 Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment
CS9 Transport and Development
T1 Transport and Development
T2 Parking in Developments
T3 Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network
<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/current-planning-policies>

WNP

ENV3 Protecting Woodford's Natural Features
ENV4 Supporting Biodiversity
DEV4 Design of New Development
<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/development-plan/adopted-neighbourhood-plans>

Supplementary Planning Guidance

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

Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments SPD
Design of Residential Development SPD
Sustainable Transport SPD
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/current-planning-policies>

NPPF

A Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 19th December 2023 replaced the previous NPPF (originally issued 2012 & subsequently revised thereafter). The NPPF has not altered the fundamental legal requirement under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations (such as the NPPF) indicate otherwise.

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

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

Relevant paragraphs within the NPPF include:-
Para. 1-2: Introduction
Para. 7-14: Achieving Sustainable Development

Para. 38, 47, 55-58: Decision Making
Para. 60, 64-66, 70, 77: Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
Para. 96, 102: Promoting Healthy & Safe Communities
Para. 108, 109, 114-117: Promoting Sustainable Transport
Para. 123, 124, 127, 128: Making Effective Use of Land
Para. 131, 135-136, 139-140: Achieving Well Designed Places
Para. 142, 143, 152 – 155: Protecting Green Belt Land
Para; 157, 159, 162-163, 165, 173, 174: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding & Coastal Change
Para. 180, 186, 188-194: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
Para. 224, 225: Implementation
[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

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.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

J/2300; Kennels & Blossoms Dogotel, Blossoms Lane, Woodford. Proposal: Proposed Cattery. Approved 1975

J/52422; Blossoms Kennels, 60 Blossoms Lane Woodford. Proposal: Erection of detached dwelling for kennels manager (outline application). Refused 1991

J/55416; Blossoms Kennels, Blossoms Lane, Woodford. Proposal: Siting of mobile home for use as manager's accommodation. Approved 1992.

J/54707; Blossoms Kennels, Blossoms Lane, Woodford. Proposal: Demolition of existing kennels and erection of bungalow for occupation by kennels manager and replacement kennels. Refused 1992

J/64372; Blossoms Kennels & Cattery, 60 Blossoms Lane, Woodford. Proposal: Emergency temporary erection of 15 metre high antenna tower and equipment room for a maximum period of six months. Approved 1996

J/65047; Land At 60 Blossoms Lane, Woodford. Proposal: Erection of 22.5 metres high aerial tower with 6 sector antenna, 4 dish antenna and radio equipment cabin. Approved 1996

DC/068164; Land At Blossoms Lane, Woodford. Proposal: LDC to confirm that the use of a building and associated land as a single family dwelling, use of buildings and associated land as a cattery and kennels and use of buildings and associated land for recreational equestrian purposes is lawful. Approved 2018

The site has also been the subject of pre application discussions between the applicant and Officers initially seeking 28 dwellings on the site. Proposals were subsequently revised to 9 dwellings (ENQ/076575 November 2020).

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

The receipt of the application has been advertised by way of a site and press notice. The occupiers of 6 neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. A total of 5 letters have been received objecting to the proposals on the following grounds:-

- Overlooking from new dwellings into nearby properties
- This is a tranquil, picturesque setting used by many walkers, cyclists and horse riders who would be compromised
- The existing business only has traffic issues at peak times
- The development will result in dangerous conditions for existing users of the lane
- The site is not in a sustainable location, low accessibility score, 1.3km from the nearest bus stop, the development will be dependant on cars
- The development will cause harm to the loss of trees and hedgerows
- The development is contrary to national planning policy
- There is no reference to the Woodford NP in the supporting documents
- Blossoms Lane enjoys Quiet Lane status
- There will be inevitable disruption along the lane during construction works

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Tree Officer – No objection subject to conditions.

There are no legally protected trees within or adjacent to the application site.

The development should be carried out in accordance with the tree survey, impact assessment and method statement submitted with the application. The treatment of the existing and proposed hedgerow should be secured by condition.

New landscaping should include new tree planting. The following species should be considered if any opportunity allows for the increased tree cover on the site; Quercus robur 'Fastigiata' (Upright Oaks) or Ilex aquifolium varieties (Variegated Holly). This can be secured by condition.

Conditions are also required to ensure no tree works other than those proposed by this application and that protective fencing is installed to the retained trees prior to the commencement of the development.

Nature Development Officer – No objection subject to conditions

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

The application area is within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ), however, the proposed development does not fall within the description of developments which require notification to Natural England.

A range of ecology reports and assessments have been carried out as part of the application, however no BNG assessments were carried out as the application was submitted prior to the requirements for BNG to be statutory. The surveys found that a single building and a single tree on-site had moderate bat roost potential and were subject to two emergence surveys. The building was found to contain an active bat

roost, characterised as an occasional transitory roost for small numbers of pipistrelle sp. A low impact bat licence should be applied for prior to demolition to comply with the relevant legislation.

It is important that not only appropriate ecological mitigation is achieved but also that measurable net gains for biodiversity are secured in accordance with national and local planning policy (see NPPF and paragraph 3.345 of the LDF). NPPF Planning Practice Guidelines (para 23) states that “planning conditions or obligations, in appropriate circumstances, be used to require that a planning permission provides for works that will measurably increase biodiversity”. Paragraph 25 specifies the DEFRA metric as the recognized tool to use to calculate Biodiversity Net Gain. An updated landscape masterplan has been submitted in February 2024. This evidences that a sufficient level of biodiversity gain will be attainable on the site but falls short of the requirement for a measurable net gain to be demonstrated. The only exception to this is if, through clear evidencing of baseline ecology and a post-development landscaping / biodiversity strategy, it can be shown that significant biodiversity gains will be achieved on-site.

The current landscaping plan (February 2024) indicates that a vast majority of existing trees and hedgerows will be retained as well as additional provision of tree planting (circa 30 trees, mainly native species), mixed native species hedgerows and an area of wildflower planting. This latest landscaping strategy is acceptable in terms of biodiversity gains and can be conditioned alongside a long-term (30 year) management plan e.g. Biodiversity Net Gain Management Plan or Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

Highway Engineer – Objects

The principal concern is the relative accessibility of the site that is poor in terms of the displacement of the site from the major services, amenities and services that residents would reasonably expect to enjoy and the high likelihood that the site would have high dependence on motorised car travel.

NPPF Paragraph 83 states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. NPPF Paragraph 89 states that in rural locations developments must exploit opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport).

NPPF Paragraph 109 states that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.

NPPF Paragraph 110 states that planning policies should support an appropriate mix of uses across an area to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.

NPPF Paragraph 114 states that development should ensure that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken up given the type of development and its location.

Furthermore, NPPF paragraph 114 states that applications for development should, so far as possible, facilitate access to high quality public transport and deliver appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use. The location of the site and the nature of the proposed development does not accord with this principle.

Local Core Strategy Policy CS9 states the Council will require that development is in locations which are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport and will support development which reduces the need to travel by car.

Development Management Policy T-1 requires development to be in a location that is most accessible and already contains a wide provision of services and amenities and that development generating significant numbers of trips will be required to be sustainably accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

Local Core Strategy Policy CS4 'Distribution of Housing' also refers to development being in accessible locations, noting that new development could include measures that are demonstrated to improve accessibility to an appropriate degree and could then be considered acceptable.

Having regard to these Policies and Paragraphs I consider this proposal would be significant in the context of the area within which it is proposed and the displacement of the site from services, amenities and public transport opportunities would not effectively offer a reasonable proposition for sustainable travel mode choices to be made. The proposal does not represent a mix of uses and as such would not minimise the number of and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.

A review of the site's accessibility concludes it is fairly isolated and not within an existing town village or other such settlement. The site is about 2km from the nearest District Centre where services and amenities are available, is in excess of 2km from the nearest high frequency bus service, about 1500m from a low frequency bus service, 2500m from the nearest rail station and in excess of 2km to the nearest school. Furthermore, the site is not within reasonable walking distance of medical facilities, leisure facilities, other services or places of employment.

Such travel distances are highly likely to influence modes of travel to be predominantly car orientated and this departs from National and Local Policy that seeks to focus development towards areas where sustainable travel modes (walking, cycling and public transport) would be more realistic and likely to be prioritised. This site is not therefore considered accessible or appropriate for residential development and modal choice would be too reliant on motorcar travel, which is counter to the general National and Local principles and objectives of delivering sustainable development.

I acknowledge that Blossoms Lane has quiet lane status, that the site is within a reasonable cycling distance of some services and amenities and that Paragraph 109 of the NPPF outlines that local authorities need to take into account the fact that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas when making decisions. However I consider that the level of accessibility is such that few, if not any, trips would be made by sustainable modes. This is borne out by census data that outlines that 97% of households in the local area are car owners and 95% of these residents travel to work by car, which is significantly higher than for most other parts of the Borough.

As such, I do not consider that the site is accessible and would conclude that any occupiers of the dwellings, as well as their visitors, would be reliant on the private motor vehicle for the majority, if not all, their journeys. In addition, whilst the provision of an EV charging point for each household could allow journeys to be made using a sustainable mode (as defined in the NPPF), this would be subject to occupiers and their visitors owning an EV and available statistics currently show only around 2% of

journeys are currently made by an EV indicating this is unlikely to be the case at present.

My overall conclusion on site accessibility is that the proposal is contrary to Core Strategy Policies and paragraphs in the NPPF and I therefore feel that I have no option other than to recommend that the application should be refused on these grounds.

At pre-application stage I had expressed concern about the potential impact on development traffic on Blossoms Lane that is designated a quiet lane. No supporting information had been provided with respect to the existing site use and its evident traffic generation so I was unable to consider any comparison and reasonably concluded that a residential use would be likely to be more intensive.

This application has included within an accompanying Transport Note some traffic survey data of the existing kennels/cattery use of the site. This shows a daily variation but has figures in the region of 50-100 vehicular movements through the site access on different days. I cannot reasonably dispute this survey data and have no evidence to the contrary. By way of comparison, a development of eight residential units in this location would be likely to generate on average 6 movements per household, a figure that would not represent a higher volume of traffic than the existing site use on an average weekday. I could not therefore reasonably argue or seek to justify that the proposed development would give rise to a volume of traffic that would have an unacceptable impact on Blossoms Lane or be detrimental to its quiet lane status or the safety of its users.

When giving consideration to the internal site layout I am minded of NPPF Paragraph 114 that states development should ensure that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. In addition, Development Management Policy T-1 requires new residential development to be designed taking into account the principle of Home Zones with "people friendly" streets and reduced vehicle speeds. Development Management Policy T-3 requires developments to be a safe and practical design with well-designed access arrangements, internal layouts, parking and servicing facilities.

This informs that the design of road infrastructure should accord with the Council's design criteria and guidance to ensure that the road space, which will be of sufficient utility to the public, is built to a standard that is fit for purpose and would be considered suitable for adoption.

The submitted drawing shows some improvement to the site entrance with a small increase in what would be the effective carriageway width and increased entry radii. Whilst this design is not strictly in accordance with Council design standards, I have to give consideration to the reality that vehicles would be able to pass within the proposed carriageway width and therefore the risk of standing or reversing vehicles would be minimised. Notwithstanding this, I have significant concern with the extent of visibility that is achievable to and for emerging drivers at the site entrance. The existing entrance has visibility that is severely restricted in a south westerly direction for drivers emerging from the site and although some improvement to the entrance design is proposed, there is no improvement to visibility and indeed it is unclear and unlikely that any improvement can be afforded on land under the applicant's control.

Notwithstanding this concern I have to be minded that Blossoms Lane has quite lane status, that vehicle speeds moving along the road are generally low, that there is no accident record pertaining to the use of the access and that the proposed development would not typically give rise to any greater volume of traffic moving

through the access when compared to the current use. This leads me to conclude that it would probably be unreasonable and difficult to argue and seek to sustain an objection to the design of the site entrance for the purpose of development. The specific detail of the internal road layout could be addressed under conditional control, as could matters of access to the land use to the rear, plot car parking, surface water drainage, electric vehicle charge points, cycle parking and refuse and recycling arrangements.

In overall conclusion, whilst I feel I could not reasonably oppose the layout detail for the proposed development and could address specifics under conditional control, I have no option but to recommend refusal on the grounds that the site is not accessible or appropriate for residential development. The proposal is contrary to Core Strategy Policies and paragraphs in the NPPF.

The site scores 1 on the Greater Manchester Accessibility Levels (GMAL) map. This is a detailed and accurate measure of the accessibility of a point to both the conventional public transport network and Local Link flexible transport service, scoring within a range where 1 is the lowest level of accessibility and 8 being the highest.

Lead Local Flood Authority - No objection subject to a condition.

The scheme is acceptable in principle subject to a detailed design being submitted. Our records indicate that infiltration may be viable and results of infiltration investigations should be provided. The discharge rates from the proposed detention basin and the existing pond should be provided and the applicant should be advised that a 50% betterment will be required not 30%.

United Utilities – Request the submission of a SUDS strategy (which has been subsequently provided) and reconsultation with them.

Environmental Health (Noise & Dust) – No objection subject to informatives.

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land) – No comments received.

Woodford Neighbourhood Forum (WNF) - Object

The proposal is not compliant with the NPPF, or the Stockport Development Plan including the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan. The proposal is not compliant with the NPPF because it will harm the openness of the Green Belt due to the increased height of the buildings. There are no special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. The proposal will harm the landscape and environment due to loss of mature trees and the visibility of the dwellings.

The Design and Access Statement does not reference the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan, which provides the most up to date planning policies relating to the proposal.

We have not seen evidence that the use as a kennels is no longer viable, or evidence of attempts to market the business. This is not compliant with policies WNP EMP2 or Stockport UDP AED-6.

The proposal is not in keeping with character of Blossoms Lane or Woodford and contravenes policies WNP DEV4 and Stockport UDP Review LCR1.1.

Eight additional dwellings are likely to increase traffic compared with use as boarding kennels. Blossoms Lane has Quiet Lane status. Stockport UDP policy TD2.2 does not permit development that will increase traffic on Quiet Lanes.

The lane is used by vulnerable road users and their safety is a concern. Blossoms Lane is single track in many places with soft verges and deep ditches creating hazards for traffic.

The section of Blossoms Lane connecting to Church Lane is an unadopted road. It is used by Blossoms Lane residents heading to and from southerly destinations and the proposal will increase wear and tear.

ANALYSIS

Land Use

The application site has a lawful use as a boarding kennels and cattery (DC/068164 refers). Such a use does not fall into any of the designated classes as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Regulations. As such this use is considered to be 'sui generis', that being in a class of its own.

It is noted that the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum have objected to the application on the grounds that there is no evidence that the use as a kennels is no longer viable, nor evidence of any attempts to market the business. On this basis they consider the proposals are not compliant with policy EMP2 of the WNP or policy AED6 of the Core Strategy.

EMP2 confirms that proposals to change the use of employment land should be supported by evidence that the existing land use is no longer viable.

AED6 confirms that proposals for the redevelopment of employment sites outside designated employment areas which result in the loss of that use will not normally be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer viable as an employment use (amongst other matters).

Members are advised that policies in the development plan which seek to retain employment land or uses are typically aimed at traditional employment uses such as those falling within Use Classes B2 (general industry), B8 (storage and distribution) and what was previously B1 (offices and light industry) which now forms part of Class E. This is confirmed in the explanatory text to AED6 which notes that *"employment sites and units outside of allocated employment areas are an important source of commercial development. This includes mills, industrial, warehousing and office uses"*.

Many uses, such as that existing or hospitals, schools, shops and hotels for example, generate employment but none, like the lawful use of the site, fall into what would be considered an employment use class nor would be considered against policies EMP2 or AED6 should a change of use be sought. As such policies EMP2 and AED6 are not considered relevant to this consideration of this application.

To add weight to this consideration, Members are advised that the NPPF at para 127 (making effective use of land) confirms that local planning authorities should *"take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in the plans where this would meet identified development needs."* Such needs, those for example relating to the provision of housing, are discussed in this report below. Noting that this site is not

allocated for a specific purpose within the development plan, the alternative use proposed would accord with this element of the NPPF.

In terms of housing delivery Members are advised that the NPPF requires the Authority to have a 5 year housing land supply. As Members will be aware the Authority has experienced a shortfall in meeting that requirement for many years with the supply at present standing at 3.78 years. Core Strategy policy CS4 seeks to deliver housing within the Borough by adopting spatial priorities including '*other accessible locations*'. In accordance with policy H2, a score is applied to any site, calculated having regard to its accessibility to services and public transport. Residential development may then be considered acceptable if the site in question achieves the required accessibility score. This policy confirms that when there is less than a 5 year deliverable supply, accessibility scores will be lowered so as to bring more sites forward for consideration. Members are advised that given the significant and long-standing shortfall in housing supply in the borough, the accessibility score referred to in H2 is set to zero across the entire Borough. The impact of that is that if there are no other adverse land use policy implications arising from the redevelopment of any site within Borough, then the principle of residential development will be considered acceptable from a housing supply perspective.

Noting that there are no policy objections to the loss of the existing lawful use of the site, the principle of residential development on this site in terms of a land use, is compliant with the development plan.

Policy CS3 sets out that all residential developments should achieve a density of at least 30dph, however due to the Borough's position of significant undersupply, the policy should also be read in the context of the NPPF. The NPPF confirms that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes (para 123). Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site (para 129).

Based on a site area of 0.8 hectares and 8 dwellings the site will achieve a 10 dwellings per hectare density. This is considered to be a very low density and, given the undersupply of housing, one that does not reflect the NPPF or the Core Strategy. The consideration of density is however not simply the application of a numerical figure but regard has to be paid to the impact of the development upon the character of the area including, in this instance, the openness of the Green Belt. This is discussed in the report below and subject to a satisfactory assessment in this respect the density may be considered acceptable and in generally in compliance with policy CS3.

In terms of housing mix, the application proposes 8no. 4 bed houses. Core Strategy policies CS2 and CS3 confirm that a wide choice of high quality homes will be provided to meet the requirements of a range of households. Noting that there is a need across all housing types and sizes, the provision of family homes is welcomed and accords with this policy position.

Comprising minor development (less than 10 dwellings and not being a designated rural area where local policies set a lower threshold for affordable housing) there is no requirement for affordable housing (as confirmed by para 65 of the NPPF).

On the basis of the above, Members are advised that the residential redevelopment of this site accords with policies CS2, CS3, CS4 and H2 of the Core Strategy together with the NPPF (Chapter 5: Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes).

Green Belt

The site is wholly located within designated Green Belt. The Government through the NPPF attaches great importance to Green Belts with the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy being to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

Paragraph 143 sets out the 5 purposes of the Green Belt, those being:

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

Paragraph 152 of the Framework stipulates that inappropriate development, is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances (VSC). The construction of buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate (para 154) however exceptions include (amongst others) the complete redevelopment of previously developed land whether redundant or in continuing use which would not have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

UDP Review policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5 pre-date the NPPF and are more restrictive and not entirely consistent with it in that they do not allow for the redevelopment of previously developed land as within para 154 of the NPPF. Para 225 of the NPPF confirms that policies should not be considered out of date simply because they were adopted prior to the publication of the NPPF. Rather, due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to those in the Framework, the greater the weight can be given). Having regard to the requirements of para 225 of the Framework, Members are advised that limited weight should therefore be given to policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5 of the UDP Review in the overall planning balance. It is important to note that this approach is entirely consistent with the determination of other similar applications both locally by the Planning Authority and on appeal by Government appointed Inspectors.

It should also be noted that there are no Green Belt policies in the WNP which relate to redevelopment of previously developed land. As such the NP is not a consideration in the assessment of this issue.

The application is presented on the basis that it proposes the redevelopment of previously developed land within the Green Belt consistent with para 154g of the NPPF. Officers agree with this assessment and as such, it remains to be considered whether the proposed development would have a greater impact on openness than the existing development. Members are advised that openness is assessed in terms of the spatial impacts of development (its position, footprint and height) as well as its visual impact (views of, into and through the site). As confirmed by the NPPG the duration of the development and the degree of activity to be generated are also factors in the assessment of impact on openness.

From a spatial aspect, the site currently consists of a range of buildings across the site including areas of hardstanding. Supporting information has been provided by the applicant on the existing and proposed footprint and volume as set out below:

Existing Buildings on site		Proposed Dwellings	Difference
Total Footprint Area	2296.6sqm	1036sqm	-1260.6
Volume	6870.96m ³	6205 m ³	-665.96
Hardstanding	19811sqm	1583 sqm	-18,228

As can be seen by the comparison table, there is a significant reduction in footprint, volume and hardstanding across the site which would have a positive impact on the assessment of Green Belt openness. This table however does not take into account any changes in the height of development upon the site nor the siting of buildings in relation to each other or to the boundaries of the site.

In this respect Members are advised that the existing buildings on the site are generally single storey, are positioned close to the western and eastern boundaries and extend to the north boundary of the application site. In particular, that to the western side of the site is positioned immediately adjacent to this boundary. The existing buildings either have pitched roofs with the ridgeline running parallel to the western and eastern boundaries or flat/monopitch roofs.

Existing buildings typically rise to a maximum height of circa 4m along the western boundary of the site and 3m to 4m along the eastern boundary (save for a small tower feature rising circa 5m). In terms of siting, the existing buildings are generally positioned in a continuous linear form running north/south with little or no gaps in between. There is however a small area of the site to the northern end that is relatively free from any buildings other than 3 very small detached single storey structures. This pattern of development whilst relatively low in height forms a solid barrier to the west and east boundaries and offers little or no views into or through the majority of the site.

The siting of the existing buildings to each side boundary is such that there is a central area of open space that runs through the site north to south. This is wider at the southern end of the site than it is to north on account of the tapering of the site and footprint of the buildings. Any views into and through the site from either the north or the south are limited if not non-existent by the presence of these buildings.

The proposed dwellings in comparison to that existing would be positioned away from the southern, western and eastern boundaries of the site on account of the amenity space around them.

The southernmost bungalow would at its closest be positioned 1.2m from the boundary between the site and the open pasture between it and Blossoms Lane. At this closest point however the bungalow would be single storey with a flat roof with the main dwelling positioned 5.6m from the boundary.

The gable ends to the bungalows to the west of the site would be positioned 8.1m to 12.6m from the boundary with the flat roofed projections to the side of each dwelling being positioned 14.7m to 20.9m from the boundary. On this side of the site the bungalows would typically be positioned with space between each dwelling which at the closest would range from 2.2m to 3.8m.

The gable ends to the bungalows to east of the site would be positioned 6.4m to 12.5m from the boundary with the flat roofed projections to the side of each dwelling being positioned 5.9m to 15.1m from the boundary. On this side of the site the bungalows would typically be positioned with space between each dwelling which at the closest would range from 2.1m to 11.3m.

The proposed bungalows would measure 3m to eaves and 6.9m to 7m to the ridge. Each would have a flat roofed single storey projection measuring 3m high. Whilst there will be an increase in height of development on the site, this will only be to the ridge of each roof as the eaves and flat roofs will be a similar or lower height than the existing development. The dwellings are orientated such that their ridges would run away from the west and east boundaries (rather than being parallel to them as with the existing development) with only the gable ends of the roofs visible from these aspects. Due to the boundary of the site the southernmost bungalows would also have a side elevation facing the southern boundary of the site where the ridges of them would run parallel to this boundary.

In assessing the spatial aspects of the development in terms of openness it is concluded that whilst the proposed development would at its highest point (to the ridgeline of each bungalow) be circa 2.9m to 3.9m higher than the existing buildings, there would be a significant reduction in the volume and footprint of development (665.96m³ and 1260.6m² respectively). In addition to this, the proposed bungalows do not extend any further northwards than the existing development on the site and in fact are positioned such that their northwards siting is less than that existing. This together with the siting of the development away from the south, west and east boundaries and gaps between dwellings would add to the openness of the site. This would be reinforced and enhanced by the orientation of each dwelling with only its gable end facing the west and east side boundaries (rather than the length of the roofplane along the ridgeline) such that there will be further gaps between development at roof level. Whilst the southernmost bungalows would also have a side elevation parallel to the southern boundary, the siting of the development here away from this boundary and the reduction in volume and footprint is considered to be such that there will be a greater openness to the site than that which currently exists. Furthermore, the removal of the 3 small detached buildings to the north of the site and the landscaping of this area will afford a great sense of openness here that currently does not exist.

Noting this significant reduction in volume and footprint, even allowing for the increase in height, it can be concluded that in spatial terms, the proposed development would not have a greater impact on openness than the existing development.

In visual terms, the existing buildings to be demolished are set back from Blossoms Lane by approximately 25m to 40m. The scale and visual impact of the existing development is not appreciated from Blossoms Lane if viewing it from a point adjacent to the existing access on account of the hedgerow, the presence of trees, the narrowness of the entrance drive and the position of the existing dwelling. When travelling along Blossoms Lane from the east the existing buildings to be demolished are screened by the existing dwelling on the road frontage and the mature trees to the rear of it. When travelling in the opposite direction from the west (from Three Ways Farm) the site is again well screened from existing hedgerows and trees. There is however a brief view of the existing buildings to be demolished through a small gap afforded by the northerly/easterly access into the yard of Three Ways Farm. Existing trees and hedges around the perimeter adjacent to the field boundaries also help to screen the existing main built form. Viewed from the north, from Dairyhouse Lane, the existing buildings are not visible on account of the distance (circa 0.5km), the low level of the buildings and screening afforded by trees and hedging.

There is some tree removal proposed to the southern boundary adjacent to the existing pasture between it and Blossoms Lane which will open up this boundary and

views into the site across the internal access road to the front elevations of the bungalows. This view however is only likely to be achieved from within the adjacent pasture. Elsewhere, given the retained boundary treatments and the screening afforded by the existing adjacent dwelling and hedging on Blossoms Lane, it is considered that the proposed development, even allowing for the increase in height to the ridges, will have little or no visual impact when viewed from the points assessed above. It is possible that in winter months when the trees are out of leaf, that there may be a slightly greater visibility of the development however, given that there will not be greater spatial impact on openness, it is also concluded that there will be no greater visual impact. If the development is visible in winter months, it is considered that the orientation and siting of the dwellings away from the boundaries of the site and the gaps afforded between is such that there will be no greater impact on openness than that arising from the existing development.

On this basis Members are advised that the proposal in complying with para 154g of the NPPF constitutes appropriate development in the Green Belt. As the development is appropriate there is no need to demonstrate any very special circumstances to justify it.

Character of the Area

Policy LCR1.1 confirms that development in the countryside will be strictly controlled and will not be permitted unless it protects or enhances the area. Where acceptable in principle development should be sensitively sited, designed and constructed of materials appropriate to the area. Development should be accommodated without adverse impact on the landscape quality of the area. This is reiterated in policy CS8 which seeks to preserve and enhance the landscape and character of the Borough's countryside.

Core Strategy policy H1 'Design of Residential Development' requires that development should be of a high quality design and respond to the townscape and landscape character of the area. Good standards of amenity should be retained and provided. This is reiterated in Core Strategy policy SIE1 and policy DEV4 of the WNP both of which require new development to achieve a high standard of design, respect and respond to the rural character of the area.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

The UDP Review confirms that the application site is located within the Woodford Landscape Area. The character of this area is defined as follows:

Located at the extreme south of the Borough, the relative flatness of this LCA has facilitated the establishment of Woodford Aerodrome, the major part of which lies in Stockport. The land, which is in predominantly pastoral use with medium sized, even and rectangular field patterns, slopes away gently to the valley of the River Dean along the south-western boundary.

The roads through the area are characterised by varying degrees of ribbon development making up the settlement of Woodford. Infill development has occurred over the years and it is likely that only a few opportunities for such development remain. The northern part of the area has been affected by the construction of the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road and will be further affected by the construction of the Poynton Bypass.

The area contains a number of outdoor recreation facilities and while there may be scope for additional facilities their cumulative impact will need to be carefully monitored. This area contains a significant number of the remaining ponds in the Borough and these should be protected for their ecological value.

Reinstatement of degraded hedges in the area, and the planting of new areas of woodland, particularly along the urban boundary and along the existing and proposed major road lines, should be encouraged.

The character of the locality is mainly one of a rural, agricultural environment and is dominated by open farmland and associated farmsteads; boundaries are defined by hedgerows. This landscape is punctuated by sporadic built development; in particular there are a number of residential properties on the north side of Blossoms Lane positioned within small curtilages. The application site in terms of its area is larger than these residential curtilages, extending further into the farmland that surrounds it. The character of the application site on account of the siting and nature of development is also much more built up than other development and is clearly commercial in character.

There will be some changes in the character of the area given the proposed use of the site will be changing from commercial to residential. Given the existence of other residential development in the area, this change is considered acceptable. The existing buildings do not offer any architectural merit nor make a positive contribution to the rural character of the area and as such there is no objection to their demolition. The proposed site layout will maintain the set back of development from Blossoms Lane and whilst proposed access will be slightly wider than that existing, the development will generally be screened from this vantage point by the existing retained dwelling, the width and length of the access road and the hedgerow along Blossoms Lane. In winter months when the hedgerows and trees are out of leaf the development may be more visible from Blossoms Lane (as with the existing development) however given its layout and relatively low height, it is not considered that it will be visually obtrusive.

There are a variety of architectural styles and materials present in the area. The proposed development will present a contemporary design approach however the use of pitched roofs, gable ends, render and timber cladding is considered to respect the rural character of Blossoms Lane and the wider rural locality. Precise details of materials will be secured by condition. The overall layout is of a very low density and one which allows for generous space around the bungalows. In addition to this the land within the north of the site is to be left open for wildflower planting. The dwellings each have generous garden and the proposed landscaping plan will be conditioned to ensure that the proposed development is assimilated into the landscape without detriment to the existing rural character.

In terms of the impact on the Landscape Character Area, the condition of the existing buildings has little impact on the quality and character of the rural area given that they are not generally visible from public view points. Being of a low height, the existing buildings also intrude little on views in the area. Whilst the proposed development would introduce a more suburban nature of development in place of the somewhat ad hoc informal layout of the site, it is accepted that in terms of the reduction of floor area and volume of development, there would be a greater sense of space throughout the site. Whilst there is an increase in overall height of the buildings, on balance it is concluded that the proposed development will not cause harm to the character and quality of the Landscape Character Area.

On the basis of the above Members are advised that the proposed development accords with saved policy LCR1.1, Core Strategy policies H1 and SIE1, DEV4 of the WNP and the NPPF.

Landscaping, Trees & Ecology

As confirmed in Core Strategy policy CS8, development that is designed and landscaped to a high standard and which makes a positive contribution to a sustainable, attractive, safe and accessible built and natural environment will be given positive consideration. Development will be expected to make a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of the borough's natural environment and biodiversity.

Development proposals affecting trees, woodland and other vegetation which make 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 (CS policy SIE3).

The Woodford Neighbourhood Plan at policy ENV3 confirms that the protection and/or enhancement of Woodford's natural features... will be supported. The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity including that found in open space, trees and hedgerows in order to support wildlife and other forms of biodiversity will be supported. Development should achieve net gains in biodiversity where viable and deliverable (ENV4).

The importance of landscaping and contribution made by trees is acknowledged in paragraphs 135 and 136 of the NPPF. Chapter 15 reinforces the importance of biodiversity and development securing gains.

The application has been supported by various tree reports. None of the trees to be felled are legally protected nor are considered worthy of such protection. To compensate for this tree loss (18 trees) an amended and detailed landscaping plan has also been submitted. This plan refers to the retention of the established hedgerow on the eastern boundary this is not only important from an ecological and biodiversity point of view but its retention is important to the existing landscape character. To the north of the site is an area which will be left as a wildflower meadow interspersed with new tree planting. The western boundary of the site has an established tree line which is shown as being retained along with a new native mix hedgerow to be planted. Native hedgerows are also shown between the properties along with the planting of 31 new trees throughout the development (including species recommended by the Tree Officer). This landscaping scheme will ensure that the development helps retain its rural character.

In accordance with the comments of the Tree Officer, appropriate conditions can be imposed to ensure that the retained trees are appropriately protected during construction and that the landscaping plan is carried out as part of the wider development.

In terms of ecology and biodiversity, the application is supported by a raft of surveys and assessments. The submission of this application however predates the mandatory requirement for measurable biodiversity net gains.

The surveys found that a single building and a single tree on-site had moderate bat roost potential and were subject to two emergence surveys. As the building was

found to contain an active bat roost the developer will need to apply to Natural England for a low impact bat licence prior to demolition to comply with the relevant legislation. This can be secured by condition.

The updated landscape masterplan evidences through the landscaping of the site that a sufficient level of biodiversity gain will be achieved. This is acceptable from a biodiversity perspective and the delivery of this scheme will be secured by condition as well as the need for a long-term (30 year) management plan.

On the basis of the above Members are advised that the proposal accords with policies CS8, SIE3, ENV3, ENV4 and the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

Core Strategy policy H1 confirms that good standards of amenity and privacy should be provided for the occupants of new and existing housing. This is reinforced by policy SIE1 which confirms that satisfactory levels of amenity and privacy should be maintained for future and existing residents. The NPPF confirms that development should create places that promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The *Design of Residential Development* SPD sets out minimum space standards which should be adhered to ensure adequate levels of amenity for residents within new developments and those adjacent to them. They are given in the following table:

DWELLING HEIGHT	STANDARD
For 1-2 storey dwellings:	
Between habitable room windows on the public or street side of dwellings	21 metres
Between habitable room windows on the private or rear side of dwellings	25 metres
Between habitable room windows and a blank elevation, elevation with non-habitable rooms or with high level windows	12 metres
Between habitable room windows and site boundary (with special design, ground floor kitchen windows may be considered more flexibly)	6 metres
For 3 + storeys:	Add 3 metres per storey to the above distances

These distances are a useful guide for assessing the impact of any development, however it is acknowledged that depending upon the design of a development proposed and the topography, landscaping and layout of a site, development within closer proximity may be acceptable or greater distances of separation may be required.

The closest existing residential property is the dwelling immediately adjacent to the site. The layout of the proposed development in relation to this property is such that it fully accords with the above requirements. All other existing residential properties are a significant distance from the application site (77m to the east and 54m to the south west) such that the amenity afforded from them will not be adversely affected.

The consideration of amenity also extends to the future occupiers of the site. The proposed layout within the site fully accords with the above requirements. Furthermore each bungalow would be provided with a private rear garden in excess of 100m² thus exceeding the requirements of the SPD. In this respect it can therefore be concluded that the future occupiers would benefit from an excellent level of amenity.

Members are therefore advised that the proposed development would accord with policies H1 and SIE1 together with the Design of Residential Development SPD and the NPPF.

Highway Considerations

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

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

Blossoms Lane is designated within the UDP Review as Quiet Lane. Saved policy TD2.2 confirms that development that have an impact upon rural roads, which detract from their character and their value as Quiet Lanes will only be permitted where they can be justified on safety grounds. Any development that would result in a significant increase in traffic or conflict between different uses for these lanes will not be permitted.

This position is generally reflected in chapter 9 of the NPPF which seeks to promote sustainable travel.

The comments of, and objection from the Highway Engineer in relation to the location of the site and its suitability for residential development, noting the lack of connectivity to public transport are acknowledged. In this respect and in response to those comments, Members are advised accordingly:

Stockport does not currently have a 5-year housing land supply, that position currently standing at 3.78 years. Core Strategy Policy CS4 identifies spatial priorities for residential development and H2 sets out how sites might be assessed beyond those areas. Given the significant and long-standing shortfall in housing supply in the borough, the accessibility score referred to in H2 is set to zero. As such, and notwithstanding an assessment of the proposal against other relevant policies, the principle of new homes on this site is accepted from the housing supply perspective.

It is accepted that the site has poor connections to public transport and is also remote from existing commercial centres. It is also accepted that trips to the site will most likely be predominantly car borne. Neither policy CS9 nor T1 however state that all developments have to be in locations that are only accessible by

public transport, cycling and walking. Policy T1 in particular references only new development, notably that generating significant trips (my underline) being required to be sustainably accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. This is reiterated in NPPF para 109 advises that significant development (my underline) should be focussed on locations which are or can be made sustainable. The NPPF at para 109 acknowledges that there are reduced opportunities for sustainable travel in rural areas.

Clearly there is a correct focus in planning policy in directing development to accessible locations and it is accepted that this site is not accessible in terms of its proximity to existing centres and public transport. NPPF para 116 advises that 'as far as possible' developments should facilitate access to high quality public transport. This however does not confirm that all development must connect to public transport and noting the rural location of the site, it is acknowledged that it will not be possible to facilitate such access. This position is reflected in para 109 which advises that in rural areas connectivity to public transport is not always possible and that this should be taken into account.

Comprising only 8 dwellings, the proposed development will not be of a significant scale nor one that will generate significant trips (the Highway Engineer advises a max of 48 per day). As such and noting the location of the site within a rural area with reduced opportunities for sustainable travel, it is not considered that the proposal conflicts with the above policy position.

Material to the consideration of accessibility is the fallback position that is afforded from the lawful use of this site as a kennels and cattery. This use in itself will generate a level of traffic movements to and from the site and noting the lack of public transport connections and nature of this lawful use (which involves the transportation of dogs and cats) it is highly likely that the majority of these movements are already by private car. In this respect the applicant advises that the lawful use of the site is capable of generating 50-100 vehicular movements a day (not disputed by the Highway Engineer).

It is accepted that the future occupiers and visitors to the development will have difficulty accessing the site by public transport and as such, most movements will be by private vehicle. That however is no different to that experienced by those accessing the existing, lawful use of the site. Given that traffic movements to and from the proposed development will be lower than that associated with the lawful use of the site, it can be concluded that any harm in this respect will be less than that which arises from the existing lawful use.

Objections relating to the impact of the development on the Quiet Lane status of Blossoms Lane are noted. Given the reduction in traffic movements from the proposed development compared with the lawful use of the site, it can be concluded that the proposal will not give rise to any additional conflict between different users of the lane. For this reason it is also considered that there will be no highway impact upon this rural road and the proposal is compliant with policy TD2.2.

In relation to more technical highway matters, the proposed site entrance will be widened with and will be provided with increased entry radii. This will allow vehicles to pass without causing obstruction to the free flow of traffic on Blossoms Lane. It is noted however that despite these improvements, visibility in a south westerly direction is impaired (as it is at present) and as the applicant is not control of the adjacent land, there is no opportunity to improve this. Blossoms Lane is however used by relatively low levels of traffic and there are no records

of accidents associated with the use of this access. Taking this into account and noting the reduction in vehicles using the access compared with that which can arise from the lawful use, it is not possible to demonstrate that any specific harm will arise beyond the existing situation.

The internal layout of the development is acceptable in highway terms and will create an environment that is safe and practical to use. Parking will be provided in full accordance with the Council's parking standards. The layout of the development also ensures that access will be maintained to the land beyond the application site to the north. Conditions can be imposed to secure details relating to retaining access to the land use to the rear, plot car parking, surface water drainage, electric vehicle charge points, cycle parking and refuse and recycling arrangements.

On this basis the proposed development accords with policies CS9, T1, T2 and T3 of the Core Strategy DPD, saved policies MW1.5 and TD2.2 of the UDP Review and chapter 9 of the NPPF.

Energy and Climate Change

Core Strategy policy CS1 seeks to ensure that all development meets an appropriate recognised sustainable design and construction method where viable to do so in order to address both the causes and consequences of climate change. In particular all development will be required to demonstrate how it will contribute towards meeting the Borough's carbon footprint reduction by achieving carbon management standards. As confirmed by policy SD3, applications should include an energy statement showing how carbon reductions will be achieved.

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

The standards for energy efficiency under the Building Regulations are now higher than that required by the current Core Strategy Policy SD-3. Notwithstanding this, developments are still expected to evidence as part of the planning application through a short statement how they intend to meet or exceed the requirements of Part L of Building Regulations introduced in June 2022. This information has not been included in the application however does not go to the heart of whether permission is approved or not. As such this will be secured by condition to ensure compliance with CS1 and SD3.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Saved policy EP1.7 confirms that development will not be permitted where it will be at risk of flooding or result in flooding. Core Strategy policies SD6 requires development to be designed in such a way as to the avoid, mitigate or reduce the impacts of climate change. All development will be required to incorporate sustainable drainage systems. This is reflected in the NPPF at chapter 14.

The application site is not identified on the UDP Proposals Map as being in an area liable to flood and the Environment Agency identify the site as being within Flood Zone 1 (low risk). Having regard to the size of the site and scale of the proposed development there was no requirement for a Flood Risk Assessment, however the application has been supported by a Drainage Management Strategy.

This strategy advises that the key focus is on the sustainable management of surface water run-off to ensure no increased flood risk results from the development proposals. The surface water runoff management options have been assessed in accordance with the sustainable drainage hierarchy, which is discharge to ground, followed by a waterbody or finally the public sewer.

As infiltration is unlikely to offer a possible means of managing all the surface water run-off (based on the online datasets) other surface water discharge methods have been reviewed. The proposals are to mimic the existing situation and continue to discharge surface water runoff into the pond located adjacent to the western boundary of the site. Detailed design will determine with accuracy the attenuation requirements.

The proposed strategy is acceptable in principle subject to further investigations and a detailed design being submitted for approval. This can be secured by condition noting that the consideration of drainage does not go to the heart of whether permission is approved or not.

It is noted that United Utilities requested that they be reconsulted on the drainage strategy. UU are not a statutory consultee for this scale of development and noting that the LLFA are accepting of that proposed, no further consultation with UU has been carried out.

On this basis the proposal accords with saved UDP Review policy EP1.7, Core Strategy policy SD6 and the NPPF.

Pollution

Paragraph 191 of the NPPF states that policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment. This is reinforced in CS policy SIE3 which seek to protect occupiers of development against unacceptable pollution.

The site is not known to present any issues in relation to land contamination. An informative can however be attached advising the applicant of the appropriate steps to be taken if contamination is uncovered during construction works.

In terms of noise pollution, the occupation of the site will not give rise to noise that exceed normal residential levels and on this basis the amenities of the neighbouring residential occupiers will not be adversely impacted. Informatives can be attached advising the applicant of the appropriate steps to be taken during construction. This will ensure that the amenities of the neighbouring occupier in relation to noise, vibration and dust are safeguarded.

For these reasons the development is considered to accord with policy SIE3 and the NPPF.

Recreational Open Space

The NPPF confirms at para 98 that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Saved UDP Review policies L1.1 and L1.2 together with Core Strategy policy SIE2 confirm that there is an undersupply of formal recreation and children's play facilities in the Borough. As such,

applications for residential development are expected to make a contribution towards that undersupply.

As the application site is not within the catchment area of any children's play spaces, this development is only required to make a contribution to formal recreation. This sum, which will be invested in facilities within the Borough, has been calculated in accordance with the formula set out in the SPD and totals £36,040. This will be secured by S106 agreement which the applicant has confirmed their agreement to entering into with the Council.

Conclusions

There is no policy objection to the loss of the existing use of the site and the delivery of residential development accords with Core Strategy policies CS2, CS3, CS4 and H1 together with advice in the NPPF.

The application site lies within the Green Belt as defined by Saved policy GBA1.1 "Extent of Green Belt" of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review (UDP) and as identified on the Proposals Map of the UDP. In the assessment of the application the Council considers that the proposals accord with para 154 g) of the NPPF and therefore appropriate in the Green Belt. This exception follows that the proposed development should not have any greater impact on the Green Belt than the existing development. The Council has assessed the openness based upon the visual and spatial considerations which concludes there to be a clear reduction in the overall footprint and volume across the site and that there will be no greater visual or spatial impact.

The proposed development will protect and enhance the character of the locality and will deliver an acceptable level of amenity for existing, neighbouring and future residential occupiers and safeguard the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal therefore accords with saved UDP Review policy LCR1.1, policies H1, CS8, SIE1 and SIE3 of the Core Strategy, DEV4 of the WNP and the NPPF.

Whilst the application site is not close to services nor is well served by public transport, the proposed development will result in a reduction in vehicle movements to and from the site compared with the lawful use. As such it is considered that objections relating to the limited accessibility of the site in highway terms cannot be sustained. For similar reasons it is not considered that the proposed development will have an adverse impact on the Quiet Lane status of Blossoms Lane.

Noting the reduction in traffic generation, the proposed access is of a layout that will not result in conditions prejudicial to highway safety. The development will benefit from an internal layout and parking provision that is safe and practical use and will accord with the Council's standards. The proposal therefore accords with saved UDP Review policy TD2.2, policies T9, T1, T2 and T3 and the NPPF.

The proposal will cause no harm to protected species or their habitat and will deliver gains in biodiversity through the landscaping of the site. The development therefore accords with saved UDP Review policy NE1.2, Core Strategy policies CS8, SIE1 and SIE3, policies ENV3 and ENV4 of the WNP and the NPPF.

The proposal will cause no harm in relation to pollution and through the imposition of conditions will deliver a sustainable drainage scheme and an energy efficient form of construction. In this respect the proposal is compliant with saved UDP Review policy EP1.7, policies SD3, SD6 and SIE3 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Through the signing of a S106 agreement, the development will deliver improvements to formal recreation in accordance with Core Strategy policy SIE2 and the NPPF.

Tilted Balance

Members are well versed with the housing land supply position and the implications this has in respect of the presumption in favour of development. In short, where there is a shortfall against the required five-year supply, footnote 8 of the NPPF deems the policies which are most important for determining planning applications to be out-of-date, with the consequence that planning permission should be granted unless either:

- (I) The applications of policies in the 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 the Framework as a whole.

In respect of sub paragraph (I) the NPPF at Chapter 13 seek to protect areas or assets of particular importance, in this case being the Green Belt. As outlined in the report above, the application of those policies secures a development that is in accordance with the NPPF and therefore does not provide a clear reason for refusing planning permission.

In respect of sub paragraph (II) and as set out in the report above, it is not considered there are any adverse impacts that would outweigh the benefits of the development.

The proposal will therefore achieve sustainable development by:

- Ensuring the effective use of previously developed land of the right type is available in the right place and at the right time to support growth (the economic objective);
- Delivering new homes to meet the needs of the present and future generations. By fostering a well designed and safe place that reflects current and future needs and supports the health and social well being of the community (the social objective) and:
- Protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and adapting to climate change (the environmental objective).

The tilted balance in favour of development as set out in para 11 of the NPPF is therefore invoked and planning permission should be approved.

RECOMMENDATION Grant subject to conditions and the completion of a S106.