

ITEM

Application Reference	DC/091912
Location:	Stables On Land To Rear Of Longhurst Lane And Knowle Road Mellor Stockport
PROPOSAL:	Demolition of existing stables and tack room buildings and erection of 1 no. single storey self-build dwellinghouse with associated access, parking and landscaping.
Type Of Application:	Full Application
Registration Date:	20/05/2024
Expiry Date:	15/07/2024 (Extension of Time Agreed)
Case Officer:	Mark Burgess
Applicant:	Mr and Mrs Tufaro
Agent:	SF Planning Limited

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Marple Area Committee – Application referred to Committee due to receipt of more than 6 letters of objection, contrary to the Officer recommendation to grant.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of an existing stable and tack room building and the erection of 1 no. single storey self-build dwellinghouse with associated access, parking and landscaping at land to the rear of Longhurst Lane and Knowle Road in Mellor.

The proposed dwellinghouse would have a maximum width of 9.3 metres, a maximum length of 14.0 metres and a maximum height of 3.2 metres. The proposed dwellinghouse would be of single storey scale and contemporary flat roofed design, the materials of external construction specified as timber board cladding for the external walls and a green sedum roof. Amenity space to serve the proposed dwellinghouse would be provided by way of a lawned garden to the South East, along with a patio area to the North West.

The proposed dwellinghouse would be accessed via the sites existing narrow access track from Knowle Road. Car parking for 3 cars would be provided within the North Western front curtilage.

The application is accompanied by the following supporting documents :-

- Planning Statement.
- Design and Access Statement.
- Ecological Appraisal.
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.
- Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancements Plan
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- Arboricultural Method Statement.
- Hard and Soft Landscaping Plan.

- Landscape and Visual Appraisal.

The plans and drawings submitted with the application are appended to the report.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is located to the North of Longhurst Lane/West of Knowle Road in Mellor and comprises a stable building and tack room building with associated hardstanding. Access to the site is taken from Knowle Road via an existing narrow access track.

The site is adjoined to the North by woodland; to the East by Mellor Primary School and residential properties on Knowle Road; to the South by Mellor Primary School and residential properties on Longhurst Lane; and to the West by open land.

POLICY BACKGROUND

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

The Statutory Development Plan for Stockport comprises :-

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

The application site is allocated within the Green Belt and a Landscape Character Area (Marple Bridge), as defined on the UDP Proposals Map. The following policies are therefore relevant in consideration of the application :-

Saved UPD policies

- LCR1.1 : LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS
- LCR1.1A : THE URBAN FRINGE INCLUDING THE RIVER VALLEYS
- EP1.7 : DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK
- GBA1.1 : EXTENT OF GREEN BELT
- GBA1.2 : CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT
- GBA1.5 : RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN GREEN BELT
- L1.1 : LAND FOR ACTIVE RECREATION
- L1.2 : CHILDRENS PLAY
- MW1.5 : CONTROL OF WASTE FROM DEVELOPMENT

Core Strategy DPD policies

- CS1 : OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES : SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGES
- SD-1 : CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

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

Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents

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

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF, initially published in March 2012 and subsequently revised and published in December 2023 by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paragraph 11 states '*Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means :-*

c) Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless :-

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole'.

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

Paragraph 38 states '*Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way..... Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible'.*

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

Paragraph 225 states '*existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)'.*

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

NPPG is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place (launched in March 2014) and coincided with the cancelling of

the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- J.64246 : Extension to existing stables consisting of feed store/tack room, extension to stable yard and erection of fence : Granted – 07/05/1996.
- J.60889 : Change of use of land for grazing domestic horses, new stables and 2.5m gritstone track : Granted – 13/10/1994.

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

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

23 letters of objection have been received to the application. The main causes for concern raised are highlighted below :-

Green Belt

- The site is located on Green Belt land and within the open countryside where there is a presumption against development and is not designated as an area of permitted development.
- The land was sold as grazing land within the Green Belt, not as building land.
- The site previously only had a small stable built in one corner. The existing stables are a normal countryside feature.
- When permission was given for the current equestrian buildings, the Council was concerned that this would form a precedent for the use of the land. Given the land is still used for horses, how are the current facilities to be replicated? The proposed development could be used as a template for subsequent further encroachment and loss of Green Belt land and the Council must ensure this cannot happen.
- The granting of planning permission raises concern about precedent and future development on the land. What future developments might be allowed in the area and across the Borough? Once approved, the option to further develop on the additional land would be concerning. It would pave the way for future applications and properties which would impact the area greatly. Further development would be inevitable, through increasing the size of the property or by further dwellings.
- A precedent will be set if it is accepted that stables are defined as a pre-existing building. On this basis, anyone could build stables in the Green Belt, leave it vacant and then replace it with a dwelling. It is possible that the applicant would replace the stables within the neighbouring fields and then have an incentive to request further development based on the precedent from the current application.
- Question how such an application can be approved when there are many brownfield sites across the Borough that could be used for residential

purposes without affecting Green Belt land. There is an abundance of brownfield sites in the area in the area which should be developed first before development on Green Belt land is required. Developing sets a precedent for further encroachment of the Green Belt. Building on Green Belt land is wholly avoidable and should not be allowed whilst other suitable brownfield sites are available.

- It is disputed that this is a brownfield site. There is no existing permanent development. The larger stable building was built without planning permission and has no foundations so should not be considered as contributing to existing volume/footprint. The vast majority of the site is greenfield and classed as such.
- The Planning Report suggests the field would be used for planting trees and growing vegetables. This is a clear change of use from agricultural to garden for which planning permission is required and which would reduce the Green Belt further.
- The landscape remains unspoilt by urbanising influences. It has an intact and rural in character and displays characteristics of the countryside/
- This is a significant change of land use and constitutes a threat to the open countryside. Any such encroachment or development should be prohibited.
- The Council should not be encouraging development on Green Belt land and this has been the Council's past policy when opposing other developments in the Borough.
- If the Green Belt means anything, preservation is crucial.

Design

- This is a Conservation Area. The proposed design is completely at odds with the surrounding buildings, many of which are Victorian and Edwardian and contribute significantly to the visual appeal of the area
- Mellor is described as an ancient village. Composite and metal cladding are not in keeping with the local Edwardian or stone farmhouses.
- The visual style of the building is not attractive and not in keeping with local architectural styles in the vicinity. It looks like a large black box and would look out of place.
- The design is interesting, sleek and very modern, however the difference amongst other homes around it would be very significant.
- Visually disturbing to the area.
- There has been no maintenance of the access road, raising concerns as to the owners responsibility to maintaining any design and visual impact.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- Residents enjoy an open aspect to the rear and have paid handsomely for that privilege in the belief that no further development would be allowed. Residents are being let down if the application is approved.
- Residents chose to live in the area due to the open countryside to the rear which was a quiet place. Many appreciate and love the area for the tranquillity of country life. The use of the land was perfect for horses.
- Loss of countryside aspect.
- Neighbours have created gardens to the rear, providing a private, non-overlooked, peaceful area, away from traffic noise. Neighbours regularly sit out and eat in their gardens.
- The submitted Landscape and Visual Assessment fails to show the proximity of the site to neighbouring houses and gardens.
- The establishment of a new property will have an impact on privacy of neighbouring properties. As the site is very close to neighbouring gardens, this will mean increased visibility and noise from a new dwelling.
- Impact on privacy as the backs of existing houses look directly onto the site. Overlooking of and loss of privacy to neighbouring properties. Neighbouring gardens would be visible from the proposed dwelling. The existing tall Victorian/Edwardian buildings would overlook the proposed dwelling.
- Tree planting to screen the development would only be effective in the summer months unless evergreen trees are proposed which is unlikely.
- Parking along the access would result in loss of privacy.
- Odour from proposed septic tank.
- The single-track access runs along the boundaries of and is directly adjacent to a number of residential properties gardens and patios. The access is currently only used occasionally for access to the stables, has not been used regularly by vehicles and has limited traffic passing the back of neighbour gardens.
- The proposal for a permanent property to be in place would result in an increase in the amount traffic using the access and many vehicles passing neighbouring gardens both during construction and in the future, including potentially at night. The access would be used by residents, visitors, delivery vehicles, refuse collection vehicles, tradesmen and postal service.
- The additional traffic would create a thoroughfare which is not currently there any would result in an increase in noise, nuisance, disruption, disturbance, odour, air pollution and light pollution to residents, both during development and in the future in what is a rural section of Mellor. This would impact on neighbours amenity, lifestyles and health There is enough traffic to the front of properties without traffic at the rear.
- Once it is a dwelling, no restriction can be placed on the number of visitors, regularity of deliveries or scale of future maintenance work and associated machinery.

- The proposed dwelling has no connections to the service grid. There will be a need for service vehicles such as oil and natural gas deliveries and service for any septic tanks. Disruption and noise from this would be great.

Highways Concerns

- The access is only occasionally used by equestrian vehicles with very limited additional traffic. The development would significantly increase the amount of traffic.
- As previous owners of the land walked to the stables, there already has and will continue to be an increase in traffic accessing the road/land.
- Do not know how many vehicles will be passing or traffic created by the proposal. Some households in the area have 4 cars, plus visitors.
- Mellor is a small village which already experiences traffic and congestion. Future development would only add to this congestion.
- Access to the site is via a narrow track. The access is not designed or suitable for the size of vehicles. The access will not be able to sustain the additional traffic. Cars are unable to pass on the access in opposite directions and there is no scope for widening.
- The curvature of Knowle Road creates a blind spot where drivers leaving the site would be unable to see onto Knowle Road without fully entering the pavement.
- Cars would be turning blind onto the road as residents access the Sports Club field opposite. This stretch of road is of huge community importance.
- Additional traffic would be generated, especially along Knowle Road which is already heavily congested around School drop-off and pick-up times.
- Additional traffic movement and congestion in the vicinity of the School will affect the School and will impact on the safety and wellbeing of children
- Concerns over the safety of school children. It is chaos at school times on Knowle Road and Longhurst Lane and traffic around the School is very heavy during mornings and afternoons. Traffic is backed up along Knowle Road, making it difficult for parents to drop off and difficult and hazardous for children who cycle and walk to school alone.
- The access to Knowle Road would be unsafe for children at the adjacent School. Each day, twice a day, 200 children walk to school in relative safety along the footpath.
- The entrance to the site goes over the pavement close to the entrance of the School. At drop-off and pick-up times, this will be a very risky location for those trying to access or leave the property where visibility of children coming on foot, bike and scooter from either direction will be difficult. The road entrance/exit where children are passing to school is an accident waiting to happen.

- Serious concerns during the construction phase. How and when will deliveries by large heavy vehicles be made to site? Access from Knowle Road is difficult, large heavy vehicles cannot negotiate the two right angled bends and the lane between the School and neighbours gardens is tight. Issues and damage from large vehicles accessing the site has previously been witnessed by neighbours. At School drop-off and pick-up or when cars are parked on Knowle Road, this would result in traffic chaos and danger to children and pedestrians. Driver error could damage either or both or the wall collapsing into the School grounds with risk of injury or worse. Heavy vehicles would decimate the lane unless properly controlled. What controls will be put in place to control the times of delivery and contractor activity? A Construction Management Plan should be provided to manage the issues and ensure that danger to people and damage to property and underground services can be properly mitigated.
- The side access gate is within the property of and owned by the School. The plans indicate that the gate adjacent to Knowle Road would be left open during the day. All gates, including the secondary gate into the School land should remain and not be removed as proposed to provide protection and avoid danger to School children. The gates should be secured at all times, even when children are not in School. This element of the application should be amended to consider the safety of children and the wider community.
- The access is next to the School where children play. Children also play on the lane behind the houses. The School field is easy to get out of from each corner of the fields and via the 'Dell' woods.
- Concerns that delivery drivers who would have no concerns for speed restrictions around the School.
- There has been no maintenance of the access by the applicant since taking ownership of the land.
- The School and wider community support walking over car use and the Council are urged to take this into account.
- The proposed bin collection site would create a health and safety danger. Bins on the pavement and School road would cause an obstruction and impact on the safety of School children, pedestrians, pushchairs and wheelchair users as the pavement is not wide enough. The bin collection point should be within the lane adjacent to the closed gate.
- Access to the property for emergency services would be poor, due to the convoluted track layout.

Impact on Environment, Protected Species and Ecology

- The site is open countryside and naturally a whole ecosystem. There are woods, a stream and large areas of wild grassland.
- The site is a natural habitat and home to many species including wildlife, birdlife, owls, badgers, newts, squirrels, voles, hedgehogs, insects, foxes, bats, ducks, pheasants, newts, deer, mice, shrews and voles and contains a number of wildflowers and invertebrates.

- There is evidence of many protected species and habitats in the area which has been witnessed by residents and are clearly visible. The submitted Ecology Report appears to have missed a number of protected species and habitats in the area. It is feared that the Ecologist used photographs and did not attend the area.
- The submitted Ecology Report significantly underestimates potential activity and absence of activity is surprising. The Ecology Report should be rechecked. There is evidence of protected species activity and ponds within the site, therefore the Ecology Report is incorrect.
- The Ecology Report was not carried out at the correct time of the year when protected species are likely to be present and active. The Ecology Report should be repeated when animals are likely to be active or a new Survey should be made a condition.
- Trees, hedgerows and habitat would be destructed, disturbed and impacted by building work and additional traffic.
- Disappointing to see tree and shrub removal when we should be doing all we can to preserve the natural environment and wildlife. Trees should be preserved to ensure clean air.
- There is an important hedgerow, as defined in The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 and referred to in the application, demarking the boundary of a neighbouring property with the lane which has been maintained for many years. This hedgerow has birds nesting and has been damaged in the past by horse boxes travelling along the lane. It is expected that expect damage will be caused to this hedgerow by large construction traffic.
- There are a number of mature hedgerows and trees that would need to be removed which would further disrupt local wildlife.
- The proposed development would impact on 'The Dell' used by children of Mellor Primary School for their Forest School Education. The site is in proximity to the Schools well established beehives where noise and disruption would have a negative impact in the bees and cause them to swarm towards the children. This would result in danger to children and disappointment and upset when bees have to leave their homes after children have worked for many years to build the colony and collect the honey.
- Developing the site will have a detrimental impact on the wildlife and reduce the biodiversity of this beautiful area.
- Encroachment on any scale is unwelcome.
- Species enjoy the peace and quiet and regularly use the area.
- The local ecology and environment would be impacted by the proposed development. The noise and light from the development would have a massive impact at a time when wildlife and bee populations are under threat.

Other Concerns

- There are contradictions and false information on the supporting documents.

- The application states that neighbouring properties and the School were spoken to prior to the submission of the application and feedback was broadly positive. It is questioned whether any of the adjoining neighbours were approached.
- The argument that the proposal helps Stockport's housing provision is at best extremely marginal.
- There are plenty of houses in the area that are currently for sale and a shortage of grazing land. These houses should be encouraged to be used.
- Whilst it is accepted that affordable housing is needed, the application is for a single executive home and there are many of these on the market in the area. There is no evidence of a shortage of supply.
- There is not the infrastructure for the development. It will put more pressure on local roads and infrastructure which is already bursting at the seams and close to breaking point.
- The land has waterways and ponds. The field and adjacent School field get exceptionally wet, are a natural drain point in the area and provide essential rainwater drainage and run off into the nearby brook. Concerns over disruption of natural drainage in the area, given ongoing issues with water supplies and drainage. Cannot see that adequate drainage is in place.
- Since the current equestrian buildings were installed, there has been increased erosion/subsidence on the land behind. Given there will be a need for foundation works, there needs to be clarity as to whether there will be any effect on the bank stability, particularly given the likelihood of surge flows due to climate change, there could be adverse effects to adjoining properties and those further downstream.
- How will services for the property (gas, electricity, internet, telephone and water) be routed to the site? The site has no services and the provision of such would cause disturbance. How will mains services be accessed? Details of such and planned routes should be included, which may require excavations on the lane and at connection points and cause difficulties for residents and the School. Conditions should be imposed for construction works required on or under properties.
- The submitted documents are contradictory. One says a septic tank will be used, another does not know the sewage disposal method. Where will the septic tank be? If trenches are dug along the access lane, there is a chance that neighbours septic tank outfall which runs underneath and across the lane would be damaged. What precautions would be taken to mitigate any damage? The developer should do a camera trace on neighbours septic tank outfall to establish where it crosses under the lane.
- Neighbouring properties have a Consent to Discharge from United Utilities to discharge treated sewage from septic tanks and filter beds together with surface water, into the stone culverted watercourse owned by United Utilities. This watercourse runs along the bottom of neighbours gardens and crosses under the lane into the School to connect to the United Utilities culvert. For many years no issues have been experienced with this culvert as only light

vehicular traffic has ever used the lane. Concern that if the lane is not protected during construction, the stone culvert will be damaged by construction traffic, causing the drainage systems to block and back up causing smell and pollution together with difficulties for the properties. Recommend that a detailed underground survey is carried out to locate the exact position and depth of this culvert so that adequate protection can be ensured.

- Questions whether the stable/tack room was ever granted planning permission. It has been there for a few years therefore is not a temporary structure.
- There have been several attempts to build on the land which have been rejected to conserve the special feel of Mellor.
- The proposed house looks suspiciously small. Concerns that if permission is granted, further changes will be made through the backdoor, thus creating a much larger development than originally stated.
- The ownership boundaries do not reflect the current land layout which affects the impact on others.
- The application does not address how the houses on Longhurst Lane that back onto the access road would access the rear of their properties.
- The application refers to an eco-friendly house but does not contain design details or specifications regarding energy or water generation or consumption. Questions whether the building would provide sufficient energy and water to satisfy its need with electric vehicle charging facilities. Whilst solar panels would be installed, these are unlikely to be sufficient. The application should detail how the shortfall in power and water would be made up.
- The bins storage area would be located at the bottom of neighbours gardens which is strange given the long walk from the house to the bins along the wet and muddy access. There would be a temptation to jump in the car and drive to the bins. It would be easier to keep them at the house and walk them on collection day. Suspicious of the motive for locating the bins here, in terms of vermin and odour. The correct location for the bins should be adjacent to the house where the Council could collect them like they do with other properties.
- Increase in pollutant gases emitted near to the School and Sport ground would have an effect and possible risk of damage to children's and users health.
- Keeping the gate open at the shared access road with the School would cause safeguarding issues at the School, as staff and children walk up the track from the gate to retrieve balls which have gone over from the playground. It should be for the School to decide when the gate is opened or closed.
- Removal of the gate to the access road could result in increased burglaries as cars could get down the rear of properties, down an unlit access road and have a negative impact on the safety of houses. The gate when closed acts as a deterrent and there have been few problems for many years whilst it has been closed.

- The Planning Department make it difficult to find out about planning applications and access the plans.

1 letter of representation has been received to the application which asserts the following :-

- No objections, however there are a number of conditions and observations that require considerable thought.
- It is understood that the access road from the first gate to the second gate belongs to the School. During development, concerns are raised to the impact of heavy machinery and vehicle movements along the road. The integrity of the road may be at risk as it was not constricted to withstand heavy use. Conditions should be put in place to safeguard the integrity of the road and to make good any damage during construction and for use beyond construction. An assessment of potential risks should be undertaken to give reassurances and agreed outcomes.
- The left hand bend of the access road is subject to earth/gravel displacement when placed under stress from heavy vehicles. This results in a significant hollowing of the road on the outward curve of the depression causing deepening of the hollow. This will require strengthening and future proofing.
- The width of the access road will allow smaller vehicles, however concerns are raised to vehicular movement of large heavy delivery trucks at the point of entry, along the track and at the turning point. The School wall runs along the length of this stretch of track and there could be a risk of damage in the vicinity of children playing or working in the playground. An assessment should be undertaken regarding the suitability of the road to determine any size and weight restrictions.
- The access to the site involves a tight left hand turn to go through a gate. The access to the track cuts across the main pathway to the School at ninety degrees. Between the times of 8.30am to 9.20am and 2.30pm to 4pm the road, parking and pathways are subject to heavy car and pedestrian use. Vehicular access for deliveries will be required to be limited during key times of school movement, in particular drop off and pick up times. The access gate will also be required to be closed during these times.
- There may be small scale vehicular movement for employees of the main contractor and sub-contractors. All potential employees should be made aware of risks of moving in the vicinity of the School in accessing and leaving the site. Reassurances should be sought of insurance policies and procedures to limit the risks and provide clarity of outcomes due to inappropriate driving behaviours and accidents.
- The track is used to retrieve balls at School lunchtime and play times. Vehicles would have to be restricted during these periods.
- The School will reserve the right to lock the gate at times the school decides. Contractors may be required to visit the School office to enable access.

- The ecologist states there is “no evidence of badger activity”. The Ecology Appraisal shows badger and fox tracks running through the paddock.
- Badger activity is often witnessed, indicating that there are badger setts in the vicinity. Badger spoors are evident as well as animal ground movement activity. This activity is particularly evident in the Forest School Area, approximately 50m from the proposed site.
- A second Survey should be undertaken regarding ponds and water courses, as it is understood that there may be ponds in the locality previously not identified.
- The School has bee colonies in hives located at the northern point of the school perimeter, at the southern point of the applicants boundary line adjacent to the proposed property driveway. The bees form part of the School curriculum. The School will reserve the right to maintain the current location of the bee hives as they are well established.

4 letters of support have been received to the application which assert the following :-

- The scheme would enhance the land and would provide much needed additional housing in line with the Government's 'Right to Regenerate'.
- Positive to see plans for new properties in the area that include sustainable materials.
- Opportunity for a family to utilise the space for a beautiful sustainable building that will be part of the community for many centuries to come.
- Fantastic to see a local family waiting to make a better use of the land. The land is an eyesore and dangerous as it stands with a disused building.
- Will bring into use derelict land/structures. It would convert derelict buildings to a safe, well maintained family home in the vicinity of school premises.
- Design is very pleasant, in no way offensive and a lot more subtle than some of the other ghastly houses that seem to go up on Longhurst Lane without objections.
- Members of the community should be embracing a family wanting to start their life and bring economic and personal value to Mellor.
- Stockport has too many buildings lacking innovation.
- It is an exciting proposal and the plans would enhance the environment.
- The scheme is mindful of the impact on local residents. The scheme does not exceed the footprint of the existing buildings, is obscured by trees and is only overlooked by a small number of existing houses.

- It will enhance the ecology of the area by adding bat boxes and improving the range of planting.
- Sure that the applicant will seek to reduce the impact the build would have.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Highway Engineer

Original Comments

This application seeks permission for the erection of a 3-bed dwelling on the site of an existing stable block on land to the rear of Longhurst Lane, Mellor. The dwelling will be accessed via the site's existing access on Knowle Road, car parking will be provided for 3 cars, a cycle store and EV charging point will be provided and the submitted drawing shows a bin storage area being provided halfway along the site access drive. After examining the submitted drawings and documents, including a Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement, I would make the following comments:

- 1) The proposal should not result in a material increase in vehicle movements or change in character of traffic on the local highway network in the vicinity of the site (notably as the existing equestrian use at the site will cease – this should be conditioned in the event that the application is approved).
- 2) Parking will be provided in accordance with the adopted parking standards and at a level that should meet demand.
- 3) An EV charging point will be provided in accordance with policy / guidance. In addition, solar panels are proposed to be provided in accordance with guidance which should provide some of the electricity required to charge vehicles.
- 4) A turning area (for cars and vans) is proposed to be provided to ensure vehicles will be able to enter and exit the site in a forward gear and will not have to reverse along the site access drive.
- 5) The proposal should not result in a material increase in use of the site's existing access (notably as the existing equestrian use at the site will cease) and I would consider the access generally acceptable for serving a single dwelling. Whilst the level of visibility afforded to the south is party dependent on a third party not amending their site boundary, as the proposal should not materially increase the use of the access, I would conclude that an objection on such grounds would be hard to justify.
- 6) It is noted that a bin storage area is proposed to be provided a halfway long the access drive and the Planning Statement outlines that bins would be taken to the kerbside on collection day. Whilst this would mean that occupiers would have carry waste to their bins and wheel their bins a reasonable distance, I do not consider this would be grounds for refusing the application. The applicant should, however, check that these arrangements would meet Building Regulations and other legislation, such as BS5906:2005 'Waste management in buildings - Code of practice' for further advice.
- 7) Although a turning area is to be provided within the site for cars, it will not be large enough to enable fire appliances to turn. In addition, it is not clear that

fire appliances would be able to negotiate the site access track. As such, fire appliances will be unable to access the dwelling and would have to park on Knowle Road if attending a fire at the dwelling, which is approx. 320m from the highway. In lieu of amending the access drive to allow it to be used for fire appliances (this is also required for Building Regulations), a sprinkler system could be installed in the dwelling instead. The provision of this could be dealt with by condition.

- 8) A review of the site's accessibility concludes that it could not be regarded as being accessible. This is on the basis that:
- i) The site does not lie within an existing settlement / residential area (although it is accepted that it is close to a ribbon development).
 - ii) The site is not situated within 400m of a bus stop on a high frequency bus route.
 - iii) The nearest bus stop to the site (which is approx. 580m away) is served by a single bus service (385) which only operates hourly and does not operate early mornings, in the evenings or on Sundays.
 - iv) The site is not situated within 1km of a railway station with a frequent service. The nearest railway station is 2km away.
 - v) The site is not situated within 800m of a district shopping centre / Stockport Town centre (Marple District Centre is approx. 3km away).
 - vi) The site is not located within reasonable walking distance of a large food store / supermarket or a convenience store (the nearest supermarket or full-offer convenience store is approx. 3km away).
 - vii) Walking infrastructure in the area is lacking and is sub-standard. Footways are not continuous and are narrow in places. Dropped and kerbs and tactile paving are not provided at all crossing points.
 - viii) There is no dedicated cycle infrastructure in the area.
 - ix) Nearby bus stops do not benefit from raised boarding platforms, shelters or bus box markings.
 - x) The site is not within reasonable walking distance of a full range of shops, services, a high school or places of employment.
 - xi) Gradients in the area will deter many people from cycling.

Although I note that the Planning Statement outlines that there are a number of day-to-day services within 1.2km of the site, this is based on a fairly meaningless "as the crow flies" calculation and most facilities are much further from the site than this (as outlined above). Whilst I note that the Statement outlines that the applicant's live locally and their children attend the adjacent primary school, even if the dwelling is occupied by the applicant (this could not be guaranteed), their children would move on to high school and the family may eventually move on. In addition, whilst it refers to Paragraph 109 of the NPPF which 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, I would question whether the applicant has maximised opportunities and would highlight that other parts of the NPPF and local policies also need to be considered into account.

Policy CS9 'Transport and Development' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD 2011 states that "*the Council will require that development is in locations which are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport*", T-1 'Transport and Development' states that "*new development...will be required to be sustainably accessible by public transport, walking and cycling*" and 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”. Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that *“to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities”*, 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)”* and Paragraph 114 states that when assessing schemes it should be ensured that *“appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location”*. Having regard to these Core Strategy policies and those of the NPPF, I would conclude that due to the site’s accessibility and the fact that, other than providing cycle parking, the scheme includes no proposals to improve accessibility, a small proportion of trips are likely to be made by sustainable modes of transport and the occupiers of the dwelling, as well as their visitors, would be reliant on the private motor vehicle for the majority of their journeys. This is borne out by census data which outlines that a higher proportion of people who live in the local area travel to work by car compared with more accessible parts of the Borough. As such, I consider that the proposal would be contrary to policy in its present form and, as such, I feel that I have no option other than to recommend that the application be refused on these grounds unless the applicant was to table proposals to improve the site’s accessibility and maximise opportunities for sustainable travel (in line with Paragraphs 89 and 114 of the NPPF).

In conclusion, the proposal should not result in a material increase in vehicle movements on the local highway network or result in a material increase in use of the site’s existing access. Parking will be provided in accordance with the adopted parking standards and at a level that should meet demand and an EV charging point and turning area will be provided within the site. A review of the site’s accessibility, however, concludes that it could not be regarded as being accessible. As such and noting that the scheme does not include proposals to improve accessibility and maximise opportunities for sustainable travel, I feel that I have no option other than to recommend that the application be refused in its present form. If, however, the applicant was to table proposals to address this issue, the scheme could be reviewed. I therefore recommend that the application is deferred, and the applicant is advised to review the scheme with the aim of addressing this issue.

- Recommendation: Defer

Further Comments Following Submission of Additional Information

I write with reference to the revised plans and additional information that has been submitted since my Consultation Response of the 19th June 2024. After reviewing the plans and information, I would make the following comments:

- 1) The amendments to the landscaping plans do not have any highway implications.
- 2) I previously outlined that the applicant should check that the bin storage arrangements would meet Building Regulations and other legislation, such as BS5906:2005 ‘Waste management in buildings - Code of practice’. This has not been referred to in the letter from SF Planning. If this has not been done, I would recommend that the applicant does this.

3) In my previous comments, I outlined that I did not consider the site was accessible and, as such, and noting that the applicant had not tabled any proposals to improve the site's accessibility and maximise opportunities for sustainable travel, I outlined that I felt that I have no option other than to recommend that the application be refused on such grounds. In response, the applicant's agent has outlined that:

- The site is not in an isolated rural location and lies in relatively close proximity to a built-up residential area and the village primary school.
- The NPPF outlines that the opportunity to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.
- There are public transport opportunities within comfortable walking distance of the site.
- EV charging points and cycle storage is proposed to be provided.
- The above factors have been accepted in a number of appeal decisions, including the White House Farm appeal (SMBC ref: DC/080271).
- Whilst some people would find the distances to facilities unappealing, others may not.
- There are pavements (albeit some narrow) in the vicinity of the site.
- Whilst the proposal may not fully comply with the stated accessibility requirements, the ongoing lack of housing supply and the benefits arising from the application should be afforded appropriate weight in the decision-making process.

After reviewing this information, I would conclude that it does not change my original view or recommendation regarding the site's accessibility. Whilst I accept that the NPPF outlines that rural areas, in general, will be less accessible than urban areas, it nevertheless outlines that developments in rural locations 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)*" and that when assessing schemes it should be ensured that "*appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location*". In this case, the applicant is not proposing any measures to improve the site's accessibility. In addition, as previously outlined, whilst the applicant agent has attempted to argue that the site has a reasonable degree of accessibility, census data outlines that a higher proportion of people who live in the local area travel to work by car compared with more accessible parts of the Borough, highlighting that this is not borne out in practice. With respect to the White House Farm appeal decision, I would question how that appeal decision supports the comments on accessibility, noting that the Inspector concluded that the scheme would "*fail to promote sustainable forms of travel to access local services and facilities*".

Whilst I acknowledge that a wide range of factors, including housing supply, need to be assessed when considering a planning application, that is obviously for others to do.

In conclusion, I remain of the view that the site could not be regarded as being accessible. As such and noting that the scheme does not include proposals to improve accessibility and maximise opportunities for sustainable travel, I feel that I have no option other than to recommend that the application be refused.

- Recommendation : Refuse

The proposed dwelling would be sited in a location that has a poor level of accessibility due to its rural location, public transport provision, the nature of the pedestrian and cycle network in the area and proximity to shops, schools, services, leisure uses and places of employment, which would result in the occupants of the dwelling being heavily reliant upon the use of private motor vehicles. As such and noting that the scheme does not include any proposals to improve accessibility and maximise opportunities for sustainable travel, the proposal will be contrary to Policies CS9 'Transport and Development' and T-1 'Transport and Development' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD 2011 and Paragraphs 83, 84, 108, 114 and 116 of the NPPF.

Arboricultural Officer

There is no Conservation Area protection within this site or affected by this development.

There are legally protected trees within this site or affected by this development (UDC of Marple No.1 1950).

The proposed construction including associated infrastructure of the site predominantly sits within the informal grounds and hard standing areas of the site and will potentially not have an impact on trees on site or neighbouring the site.

The main concern for the development is the potential accidental damage during the construction stages of the build as well as the foundations stages on the site and the ever increasing urban aspect of the site and surrounding areas through tree loss.

There is a landscape plan which shows significant tree and hedge planting but as always further consideration along the drive and tree planting could be reviewed to enhance the ever increasing urban setting, while also considering the biodiversity and environmental aspect of trees within the rural setting.

The proposed development will potentially not impact on the trees through the demolition stages on site with a number of trees and shrubs being within proximity of the demolition/new build and without the tree survey details on their health condition, structural condition and impact from developments further comments cannot be made on the impact this may have. Due to the ever increasing urban aspect of Mellor a compensatory/enhancement planting scheme needs to be delivered in accordance with the Council's policy for tree cover in any proposed landscape scheme submitted to off-set the impact on the biodiversity of the site and enhancing the local environment with increased level of tree cover for the site as the current laurel planting proposal is not significant enough.

The tree planting will impact on biodiversity, aesthetics and general screening of the site. The development will need to supply protective fencing and advisory notices to prevent any damage, accidental spillage or compaction on the trees and their root systems.

In addition to the protective fencing some consideration should be given to the proposed tree planting as part of the scheme as whilst the plan shows a good level of proposed tree planting throughout the site that will enhance the local area the details of the tree size and species need to be reviewed as some species need to be assessed and all the sizes need to be the larger size as noted in the landscape plan.

In principle the proposed construction will not have an impact on the trees on site and within neighbouring properties, therefore it is acceptable in its current format

with the submission of a method statement for soft demolition, delivery of the landscaping schemes submitted to discharge the conditions and consideration of the above is given in these schemes, root protection plans for fencing at the side and rear of the site.

The root protection plan will need to be conditioned and approved prior to works commencing on site.

The following conditions would be relevant :-

- No existing tree within the site shall be cut down, topped, lopped, uprooted, willfully damaged or willfully destroyed without the prior written approval of the local planning authority, with the exception of those indicated otherwise on the approved plan. Any hedgerows, woody plants or shrubbery removed without such consent or dying or being severely damaged or being seriously diseased, within 5 years of the development commencing, shall be replaced within the next planting season with trees of such size and species as may be approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- No development shall take place until all existing trees on the site except those shown to be removed on the approved plans, have been fenced off in accordance with BS 5837:2012 "Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations". The fencing shall be retained during the period of construction and no work, excavation, tipping or stacking of materials shall take place within any such fence during the construction period.
- No development shall take place until details of all proposed tree planting, including the intended dates of planting, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All tree planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the development being brought into use.

Nature Development Officer

Nature Conservation Designations

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.

Legally Protected Species and Habitats

A preliminary ecological appraisal has been carried out and submitted as part of the application. The survey involved an extended Phase 1 Habitat survey to map the habitats present on site and an assessment of the site to support protected species. An initial survey was carried out in January 2024 but this survey did not encompass the whole of the red line application site (the access track was omitted from the survey). Furthermore, January is a sub-optimal time of year to carry out vegetation surveys. As such an additional ecology survey was carried out in August 2024 to encompass the whole application site and to repeat the January survey at a more

appropriate time of year. Survey work was carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist (Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd, Ecological Appraisal Rev A, 2024). Habitats present on site include modified grassland, bramble scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, scattered trees, bare ground and buildings.

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

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

Two stable buildings are present on site. The buildings were subject to an internal and external inspection to search for signs of roosting bats and to assess the potential for a bat roost to be present. No suitable bat roosting features were identified. Two trees were identified within the application site boundary and are scheduled for removal to accommodate the proposals. It has been confirmed to the LPA via email on 16th October (from the applicant: SF Planning) that the trees were included within the ecological assessment and do not offer potential to support roosting bats.

Buildings, trees and scrub vegetation offer potential habitat for nesting birds. All breeding birds and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). A swallow nest was recorded inside one of the stable buildings.

Badgers and their setts are legally protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. The woodland adjacent to the application site offers suitable badger habitat and records for badger exist within the wider local area. No evidence of badger activity was recorded on site during the surveys in January and August 2024. Precautionary working measures are advised given that badgers are a mobile species and are known to be in the local area. Further details regarding appropriate measures are provided below.

The site offers suitable habitat for hedgehog, which are a UK BAP Priority Species and listed as a Species of Principle Importance under the NERC Act 2006.

No evidence of or significant potential for any other protected species (such as great crested newt) was recorded during the survey.

Invasive Species

No invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were recorded on site during the ecological surveys carried out in January and August 2024.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Planning applications need to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as mandated by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). There are however exemptions to this. Information submitted with the application states that the application is self-build. Self-build and custom build developments are exempt from mandatory 10% BNG if they meet the following criteria. The development must :-

- consist of no more than 9 dwellings
- be on a site that has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares
- consist exclusively of dwellings that are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in [section 1\(A1\) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015](#)

As such it is considered that the current application would be exempt from mandatory BNG requirements. Further information on BNG and exemptions can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meet-biodiversity-net-gain-requirements-steps-for-developers>.

Developments that are exempt from mandatory BNG requirements are still however required to demonstrate a biodiversity gain, proportionate to the development as required by the NPPF. A Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been submitted (Revision C dated 15th October 2024) along with a BNG Assessment Report, Revision C (Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd, 2024). These documents detail the baseline habitats present on site and compare this with the proposed post-development habitats to demonstrate how a measurable gain for biodiversity would be achieved.

Habitats within the application site boundary comprise building, bare ground, modified grassland, bramble scrub, tall ruderal vegetation and scattered trees. Baseline biodiversity units are reported as 0.64 habitat units.

The strategic significance of the site has been entered as high as the site has been identified as an opportunity area within the pilot Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Greater Manchester

(https://mappinggm.org.uk/gmodin/?lyrs=gmeu_lnrns_existing_habitats,v_gmeu_lnrns_opportunities#os_maps_light/17/53.37900/-2.21961)

Most of the baseline habitats would be lost to accommodate the proposed scheme, apart from an area of bare ground and tall ruderal vegetation which would be retained. As part of the proposed landscaping scheme, the metric calculations and BNG Assessment report include creation of a green roof (moderate condition), modified grassland (0.635ha poor condition and 0.0183ha moderate condition), 0.0088ha mixed native scrub (moderate condition), six trees (moderate condition) and 43m of native hedgerow (moderate condition). Note that the number of proposed trees is reported incorrectly as 3 within the BNG Assessment Report but shown as 6 within the metric calculations (equivalent to 0.0244ha) and on the Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancements Plan. The Ecological Appraisal Report also recommends provision of bat roosting and bird nesting facilities on site.

The submitted metric calculates a post development biodiversity unit score of 0.68 habitat units (increase of 7.24%, or gain of 0.05 units) and gain of 0.17 hedgerow units (not possible to report this increase as a % since baseline hedgerow unit score is 0). This is a measurable gain for biodiversity and thus accords with NPPF requirements.

No information regarding how the target condition of proposed habitats would be reached –i.e. via outline management prescriptions – has been provided. The habitats to be created however appear generally reasonable and even in the event that not all target conditions are reached, a measurable overall gain in BNG is still broadly considered achievable. In this instance it is therefore considered that the detail of how target conditions of habitats (to include management prescriptions and details of which habitat assessment criteria would be passed/failed) can be secured by condition.

Planning Policy Framework

- Core Strategy DPD policy CS8 ‘Safeguarding and Improving the Environment’ (Green Infrastructure : 3.286; Biodiversity and Nature Conservation : 3.296).
- Core Strategy DPD policy SIE-3 ‘Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment’ (A - Protecting the Natural Environment : 3.345, 3.346, 3.347, 3.361, 3.362, 3.363, 3.364, 3.365, 3.366, 3.367 and 3.369).

Recommendations

There is considered to be sufficient ecological information available to inform determination of the current application.

No potential bat roosting features were identified in the stables or trees to be impacted by the proposals. The works are therefore considered to be of very low risk roosting bats. Bats are notoriously cryptic in their roosting behaviour however and can also regularly switch roost sites. As a precautionary measure an informative should therefore be attached to any planning consent granted so that the applicant is aware that protected species can sometimes be found in unexpected places. It should also state that the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the legislation in place to protect biodiversity. If at any time during works, evidence roosting bats, or any other protected species is discovered on site and are likely to be impacted, works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist be contacted for advice.

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

No evidence of badger activity was recorded on site during the ecological surveys. Records for badger exist in the local area and badgers are a mobile species and can quickly move into new areas. It is therefore advised that the following condition is attached to any planning consent granted (or alternatively this can be incorporated into a CEMP – see below).

To protect badgers and other wildlife which may pass through the site and prevent potential disturbance during works, any works which involve the creation of trenches or with pipes shall be undertaken following measures to protect badgers/hedgehog from being trapped in open excavations and/or pipework :

- a) creation of sloping escape ramps for badgers, which may be achieved by edge profiling of trenches/excavations or by using planks placed into them at the end of each working day; and
- b) open pipework greater than 100 mm outside diameter being blanked off at the end of each working day.

If works have not commenced within 6 months of the most recent ecology survey (August 2024) – i.e. by March 2025, an update survey for badgers shall be carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist not more than 3 months in advance of works commencing.

The site is located immediately adjacent to woodland. To ensure this habitat is protected from potential impacts the following condition should be used: No site clearance, excavation or construction works shall commence until an 'ecology' Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP shall include:

- a) risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities
- b) identification of 'biodiversity protection zones'
- c) measures and sensitive working practices to avoid or reduce impacts during construction
- d) location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity
- e) times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works
- f) responsible persons and lines of communication
- g) roles and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk or works (EcOW) where one is required
- h) use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs

and shall include details of measures to:

1. Avoid negative impact on sensitive ecological features during construction (such as adjacent woodland) and protect all retained features of biodiversity interest.
2. Avoid the impact on nesting birds
3. Sensitive working measures to minimise potential impacts to wildlife (including badger and hedgehog)
4. Details of any required pre-works surveys (e.g. for badger to identify any newly created setts no more than three months in advance of works commencing)

The current application is considered exempt from mandatory 10% BNG required by the Environment Act 2021, as it is self-build. Developments that are exempt from mandatory BNG requirements are still required to demonstrate a biodiversity gain, proportionate to the development (in line with local (paragraph 3.345 of the LDF) and national planning policy (NPPF)). A Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been submitted alongside a BNG Assessment Report and Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancements Plan to demonstrate how a measurable gain for biodiversity would be achieved. This is via the creation of grassland and scrub habitats, provision of a green roof and native hedgerow and native tree planting on site. The Ecological Appraisal report also recommends the provision of bat roosting and bird nesting facilities on site. These measures are welcomed given the designation of the site as an opportunity area within the pilot LNRS for Greater Manchester. The following condition can be used to ensure the proposals will deliver a measurable gain for biodiversity:

No development shall take place until a Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall follow the principles set out in the Ecological Appraisal Report Rev A and BNG Assessment Report Rev C by Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd. The management plan shall detail how the scheme will deliver a minimum gain of 0.05 (7.24%) Habitat Units and minimum increase of 0.17 Hedgerow Units as demonstrated by the submitted Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The biodiversity net gain management plan shall include :

- a) Detailed habitat creation proposals, for each habitat proposed
- b) Detailed habitat management and enhancement proposals for retained and improved habitats as applicable;
- c) Maintenance measures during the establishment periods;
- d) Maintenance measures beyond establishment until target condition acquired;
- e) Management and maintenance beyond target condition for a minimum of 30 years;
- f) Monitoring and review procedures with the Local Planning Authority (including regular update monitoring reports to be submitted to the LPA for review to demonstrate delivery of the required BNG (i.e. in years 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30))
- g) Potential contingencies should a proposed habitat and/or target condition be concluded to be unachievable; and
- h) Details of the organisations responsible and relevant legal/funding mechanisms for implementing, managing and monitoring the works.

The management plan shall also include mitigation and enhancement measures for nesting birds, bats and other wildlife: including bat boxes, bird boxes (including but not limited to swallows), and refugia for hedgehog. Product types, numbers of installations, locations, timetable for installation and details of management of the facilities within the development will be provided to the local planning authority for approval in writing. The approved biodiversity measures shall be provided and maintained in accordance with the approved details whilst the development is in operation.

Any proposed lighting should be sensitively designed so as to minimise impacts on wildlife associated with light disturbance (following the principles outlined in Bat Conservation Trust guidance: <https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2023/08/bats-and-artificial-lighting-at-night-ilp-guidance-note-update-released>)

Ecological conditions can change over time. In the event that works have not commenced (or, having commenced, is suspended for more than 12 months) within two survey seasons of the 2024 surveys (i.e by May 2026) it is advised that update survey work is undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist to ensure that the ecological impact assessment and protection measures are based on sufficiently up to date survey data and so that any required amendments to proposed mitigation can be identified and incorporated into the scheme. This can be secured by condition. The update ecological surveys will:

- i) establish if there have been any changes in the ecological baseline; and
- ii) identify any likely new ecological impacts that might arise from any changes.

Where the survey results indicate that changes have occurred that will result in ecological impacts not previously addressed in the approved scheme, the original approved ecological measures will be revised and new or amended measures, and a timetable for their implementation, will be submitted to and approved in writing by the

local planning authority prior to the commencement of development .Works will then be carried out in accordance with the proposed new approved ecological measures and timetable.

Drainage Engineer

Having reviewed the documentation for this application. The LLFA would like to raise the following comments : -

- We require a Drainage Strategy for the site.
- Our records indicate that infiltration may be viable. Please provide results of infiltration investigations.
- Surface water discharge rates must be reduced by 50% on developments.
- We require nature-based SuDS these include permeable paving and landscaping components such as swales, green roofs/walls, hydro-planters / tree pits, and rainwater gardens / harvesting.
- Establish if a connection to a watercourse is viable.
- Establish if a connection to a surface water sewer is viable.

The applicant will need to show that the site will be drained in an acceptable manner in accordance with Policies SIE-3 'Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment', 'SD-6 Adapting to the impacts of climate change', of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD and to provide sustainable drainage with Policy SD-6 of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD, Paragraph 163 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance.

Environmental Health Officer (Land Contamination)

I have reviewed the supporting information submitted and in addition this, I have also undertaken a review of the Council's GIS mapping.

Given the current/former land use there is the potential for contamination to have occurred on-site relating to the following: Storage/Agricultural Buildings - Bulk storage of fuels and/or chemicals, small scale fuel and chemical spills (i.e., fuels used for heating/agricultural machinery/other vehicles, oils and lubricants, herbicides/pesticides, fertilisers, paints/thinners, creosote, etc.). There is also the potential for localised/historical deposition of agricultural waste materials and animal effluent from the housing of livestock within the on-site buildings.

Furthermore, asbestos containing materials (ACM) may have been incorporated within the built structures in the past; the disturbance of any such materials may result in asbestos being present within the sub surface surrounding the buildings.

Although there is no evidence that any such waste disposal or infilling activities have taken place on the site there is the potential for this to have occurred given the nature of the site use.

The developer will need appoint an Environmental Consultant to undertake a Phase 2 site investigation and subsequent remediation and validation if required. This is a phased approach and I would recommend the following conditions for the decision notice :-

CTM1

No development shall take place until an investigation and risk assessment into contamination at the site, in accordance with a scheme to be approved in writing by the local planning authority, has been carried out. The investigation and risk assessment shall include recommendations for remedial action and the development shall not be occupied until these recommendations have been implemented.

CTM2

No development shall take place until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the specified use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme to be submitted shall specify but not be limited to :-

(i) the proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria

(ii) all remedial works to be undertaken including the quantities of materials to be removed from and imported to the development site.

(iii) the proposals for sourcing and testing all materials imported to the site including testing schedules, sampling frequencies and actual and allowable contaminant concentrations (as determined by appropriate risk assessment in accordance with the document "Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination" (CLR11)).

CTM3

The development shall not be occupied until the approved remediation scheme required to be submitted by Condition [XXXX] has been carried out. Within 3 months of completion of remediation measures, a validation report assessing the effectiveness of the remediation carried shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The report shall specify any further remediation measures necessary and indicate how and when these measures will be undertaken.

Coal Authority

I have reviewed the site location plan, the proposal and supporting information submitted and available to view on the LPA website and can confirm that the application site falls marginally within the defined Development High Risk Area (DHRA).

The Coal Authority's information indicates that a coal seam is conjectured to outcrop to the north west of the application site, dipping in a south easterly direction, such that the extreme north western corner of the site falls within the DHRA. This seam may have been worked in the past.

As you will be aware, the Coal Authority's general approach in cases where development is proposed within the Development High Risk Area is to recommend that the applicant obtains coal mining information for the application site and submits a Coal Mining Risk Assessment to support their planning application.

However, in this instance the proposed dwelling will be situated outside the DHRA, i.e. within the Development Low Risk Area. Only relatively minor works are proposed within the DHRA in the form of the installation of a septic tank. As such, the Coal Authority's Planning & Development Team does not consider that a Coal Mining Risk Assessment is required to support the proposal in this particular case and we do not object to this planning application.

However, we do recommend that the following wording is included as an Informative Note on any planning permission granted:

The application site lies in an area defined by the Coal Authority as containing potential hazards arising from former coal mining activity at the surface or shallow depth. These hazards can include: mine entries (shafts and adits); shallow coal workings; geological features (fissures and break lines); mine gas and former surface mining sites. Although such hazards are seldom readily visible, they can often be present and problems can occur in the future, particularly as a result of new development taking place.

If any suspected coal mining feature is encountered on site, this should be reported immediately to the Coal Authority on 0800 288 4242. Further information is available on the Coal Authority website at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority.

In areas where shallow coal seams are present caution should be taken when carrying out any on site burning or heat focused activities.

Under the Coal Industry Act 1994 any intrusive activities which disturb or enter any coal seams, coal mine workings or coal mine entries (shafts and adits) require the prior written permission of the Coal Authority since these activities can have serious public health and safety implications. Such activities could include site investigation boreholes, excavations for foundations, piling activities, other ground works and any subsequent treatment of coal mine workings and coal mine entries for ground stability purposes. Failure to obtain permission to enter or disturb our property will result in the potential for court action. Application forms for Coal Authority permission and further guidance can be obtained from The Coal Authority's website at: www.gov.uk/get-a-permit-to-deal-with-a-coal-mine-on-your-property.

United Utilities

- **UNITED UTILITIES' PROPERTY, ASSETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

It is the applicant's responsibility to investigate the existence of any pipelines that might cross or impact their proposed site and also to demonstrate the exact relationship between United Utilities' assets and the proposed development.

We recommend the applicant visits our website for further information on how to investigate the existence of water and wastewater pipelines and what to do next if a pipeline crosses or is close to their red line boundary: [Working near our pipes - United Utilities](#)

United Utilities will not allow building over or in close proximity to a water main.

United Utilities will not allow a new building to be erected over or in close proximity to a public sewer or any other wastewater pipeline.

Nb. Proposals to extend domestic properties either above, or in close proximity to a public sewer will be reviewed on a case by case basis by either by a building control professional or following a direct application to United Utilities.

Any construction activities in the vicinity of United Utilities' pipelines, including pipelines that may be outside the applicant's red line boundary, must comply with national building and construction standards and where applicable, our 'Standard Conditions for Works Adjacent to Pipelines' which can also be found on our website: [standard-conditions-for-works-adjacent-to-pipelines-issued-july-2015.pdf](http://unitedutilities.com/standard-conditions-for-works-adjacent-to-pipelines-issued-july-2015.pdf) (unitedutilities.com)

The level of cover to United Utilities pipelines and apparatus must not be compromised either during or after construction and there should be no additional load bearing capacity on pipelines without prior agreement from United Utilities. The applicant should not rely solely on the detail contained within asset maps when considering a proposed layout. Unless there is specific provision within the title of the property or an associated easement, any necessary disconnection or diversion of assets to accommodate development, will be at the applicant/developer's expense.

Where United Utilities' assets exist, it is essential that the applicant, or any subsequent developer, contacts our Developer Services team prior to commencing any works on site, including trial holes, groundworks or demolition.

- *DRAINAGE*

We strongly encourage all developments to include sustainable drainage systems to help manage surface water and to offer new opportunities for wildlife to flourish. We request that Local Planning Authorities and applicants do all they can to avoid surface water entering the public sewer. The flows that come from this surface water are very large when compared with the foul water that comes from toilets, showers, baths, washing machines, etc. It is the surface water that uses up a lot of capacity in our sewers and results in the unnecessary pumping and treatment of surface water at our pumping stations and treatment works. If new developments can manage flows through sustainable drainage systems that discharge to an alternative to the public sewer, it will help to minimise the likelihood of sewers spilling into watercourses and the flooding of homes and businesses.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) advise that surface water from new developments should be investigated and delivered in the following order of priority:

1. Into the ground (infiltration);
2. To a surface water body;
3. To a surface water sewer, highway drain, or another drainage system;
4. To a combined sewer.

The applicant should consider their drainage plans in accordance with the drainage hierarchy outlined above.

In the event that the applicant, or any subsequent developer, approaches United Utilities regarding a connection for surface water to the public sewer, it is likely that we will request evidence that the drainage hierarchy has been fully investigated and why

more sustainable options are not achievable. This will be managed through either our 'S106 Sewer Connections' or 'S104 Adoptions' processes.

- **CONTACT DETAILS FOR ANY QUERIES WHICH MAY RESULT FROM THIS EMAIL:**

Drainage / wastewater infrastructure: SewerAdoptions@uuplc.co.uk

Water supply / water infrastructure: DeveloperServicesWater@uuplc.co.uk

ANALYSIS

Policy Principle – Green Belt

The application site is allocated within the Green Belt, as defined on the UDP Proposals Map. As such, assessment of the proposal against the provisions of the saved policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5 and the NPPF is required.

Saved UDP policy GBA1.2 states that there is a presumption against the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt unless it is for one of four purposes (agriculture and forestry; outdoor sport and recreation; limited extension or alteration of existing dwellings; or limited infilling or redevelopment of Major Existing Developed Sites (MEDS)). Saved UDP policy GBA1.5 states that within the Green Belt, new residential development will be restricted to dwellings essential for the purposes of agriculture, the re-use of buildings and development which meets the requirements of policy GBA1.7 (MEDS). The proposal clearly does not fall within any of forms of development identified within saved UDP policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5 and is therefore considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt when assessed against saved UDP policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5.

The NPPF addresses the national approach to Green Belt policy under the heading entitled 'Protecting Green Belt Land' and takes as its fundamental starting point the importance of maintaining 'openness' on a 'permanent basis'. Paragraph 142 of the NPPF confirms that '*The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence*'.

Notwithstanding the requirements of saved UDP policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5, Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that a Local Planning Authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt, except in a number of limited circumstances. Such circumstances include as an exception to inappropriate development within the Green Belt within Paragraph 154 (g) :-

- *Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.*

Whilst saved UDP policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5 are broadly consistent with the NPPF, Paragraph 225 of the NPPF requires weight to be afforded to Local Plan policy, according to its degree of consistency with the NPPF. On this basis, the NPPF, which was introduced after adoption of the UDP, offers the most suitable and up to date policy position in relation to determination of applications for proposed development in the Green Belt. As such, no weight should be given to saved UDP

policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5 and greater weight should be afforded to the NPPF in consideration and determination of the application.

For the purposes of Paragraph 154 (g) of the NPPF, the application site is considered to comprise previously developed land, in the form of the existing stable and tack room building and associated hardstanding that currently occupy the site.

Openness can be considered as meaning an absence of built or otherwise urbanising development. The courts have also identified other matters in terms of assessing the impact on openness and have confirmed that the concept of 'openness of the Green Belt' is not narrowly limited to the volumetric approach. The word 'openness' is open-textured and a number of factors are capable of being relevant when it comes to applying it to the particular facts of a specific case. Openness is considered to be capable of having both spatial and visual impacts.

In assessment of the 'impact on openness' of the proposed development against the requirements of Paragraph 154 (g) of the NPPF, the following is noted :-

In spatial openness terms, information submitted in support of the application confirms that the existing buildings on the site have a footprint of 98 square metres and a volume of 273 square metres. The proposed dwellinghouse would have a footprint of 130 square metres square metres and a volume of 417 cubic metres. This would represent a 33% increase on the footprint of the existing buildings and a 52% increase on the volume of the existing buildings. Consideration must also be taken of the fact that the height of the proposed dwellinghouse (3.2 metres) would have a height lower than the height of the existing tack room building (3.4 metres), would result in the reduction in the amount of existing hardstanding on the site and would result in the concentration of built development within one portion of the site to reduce the overall spread of development within the site compared to the existing. On this basis, it is considered that the proposed development would have a limited impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development from a spatial perspective.

In visual openness terms, a Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been submitted in support of the application, which establishes the existing nature of the landscape and identifies and describes the changes that are likely to occur from the proposed development. In assessment, due to the siting of the proposed development in a location where public vantage points are not readily available, the mature vegetation screening that exists in proximity to the proposed development and the single storey scale and height of the proposed development in comparison to existing buildings on the site, it is considered that the proposed development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt from a visual perspective.

In summary, it is acknowledged that the proposal would be contrary to saved UDP policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5. However, in view of the requirements of Paragraph 225 of the NPPF, such policies should be afforded no weight due to the extent of inconsistencies between them and the relevant parts of the NPPF. When assessed against Paragraph 154 (g) of the NPPF, it is considered that the proposed development would comprise the redevelopment of previously developed land which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development on site that would justify the refusal of the application. As such, the proposal is not considered to amount to inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

Policy Principle – Residential

The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to identify and maintain at least a 5-year housing land supply against its defined housing requirements. Stockport is currently in a position of prolonged significant under-supply with only 3.78 years of housing supply when considered against the most up-to-date housing need position. In these circumstances, the NPPF notes that Local Planning Authorities should significantly boost the supply of housing. In the context of the current significant housing need and a lack of a five year housing land supply, the delivery of new housing at the site is welcomed.

Core Strategy DPD policy CS4 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). It is acknowledged that the Green Belt sites are last sequentially in terms of acceptable Urban Greenfield and Green Belt sites for residential development, as defined by Core Strategy DPD policy CS4, as is the inaccessible location of the site. However, Core Strategy DPD 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.

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

Impact on Visual Amenity and Landscape Character

No concerns are raised to the proposed demolition of the existing stable and tack room buildings at the site, which are not considered to comprise buildings of any architectural or visual merit worthy of retention.

As identified within the submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal, the proposed dwellinghouse would be sited in a relatively standalone position, well separated from the existing residential properties on Knowle Road to the East and Longhurst Lane to the South. Coupled with the single storey scale of the proposed dwellinghouse and the fact that public vantage points would be limited due to existing mature boundary screening, no concerns are raised to the contemporary design approach taken to the proposed development.

Suitably worded planning conditions would be imposed to secure appropriate matters of details, in relation to materials of external construction, hard and soft landscaping, boundary treatment and bin storage.

The density of the proposed development of 3.6 dwellings per hectare is considered acceptable in this particular case and is informed by development constraints on the site by way of its Green Belt designation. Ample private amenity space to serve the proposed dwellinghouses would be provided, comfortably in excess of the 75 square metres recommended by the Design of Residential Development SPD. On this basis, the quantum of development proposed is not considered to result in an unacceptable over-development of the site.

In view of the above, it is considered that the siting, scale, density, size, height, design and materials of the proposed development could be accommodated on the site without causing harm to the character of the Marple Bridge Landscape Character Area or the visual amenity of the area. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with saved UDP policies LCR1.1 and LCR1.1A, Core Strategy DPD policies H-1, SIE-1 and SIE-3 and the Design of Residential Development SPD.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The site is adjoined to the North by woodland and to the West by open land. Existing residential properties exist to the East of the site on Knowle Road and to the South of the site on Longhurst Lane.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed development would result in the introduction of residential use at the site, it is noted that the properties on Knowle Road and Longhurst Lane are all located adjacent to existing residential uses. The proposed dwellinghouse would be of single storey scale and would be well separated from the residential properties on Knowle Road and Longhurst Lane, comfortably in excess of the required minimum separation/privacy distance of 25.0 metres as defined by the Design of Residential Development SPD. Whilst it is acknowledged that activity along the access drive adjacent to the boundaries with the residential properties on Knowle Road and Longhurst Lane would inevitably increase as a result of the proposed residential use, consideration must be taken of the fact that this is an existing access to serve the existing stables as opposed to the creation of a new access adjacent to these residential properties.

In view of the above, notwithstanding the objections raised to the application, it is considered that the proposed residential development could be accommodated on the site without causing undue harm to the residential amenity of surrounding properties, by reason of overshadowing, over-dominance, visual intrusion, loss of outlook, overlooking, loss of privacy, noise or disturbance. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Core Strategy DPD policies H-1 and SIE-1 and the Design of Residential Development SPD.

Highways Considerations

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

The proposed dwelling would be accessed via the sites existing access from Knowle Road. Car parking would be provided for 3 cars and a cycle store and EV charging point would be provided.

It is considered that the proposal should not result in a material increase in vehicle movements or change of character of traffic on the local highway network in the vicinity of the site, subject to the imposition of a condition to require the existing equestrian use at the site to cease. The proposal should not result in a material increase in the use of the sites existing access, notably as the existing equestrian use at the site would cease, and it is considered that the access would be generally acceptable for serving a single dwellinghouse. Whilst the level of visibility afforded to the South is partly dependent on a third party not amending their site boundary, as the proposal should not materially increase the use of the access, a refusal of the application on such grounds would be difficult to justify. A turning area is proposed to ensure that vehicles would be able to enter and exit the site in a forward gear.

Parking would be provided in accordance with adopted standards and at a level that should meet demand. Appropriate cycle parking and EV charging facilities to serve the proposed development are proposed and would be secured by condition.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the submitted plans indicate a bin storage area being provided halfway along the access drive, appropriate bin storage facilities could be secured by way of condition. Noting the proposed layout of the site being such that it would not be large enough for fire appliances to access the proposed dwellinghouse, a condition to require the installation of a sprinkler system within the proposed dwellinghouse would be secured by condition.

Core Strategy DPD policy CS9 requires development to be sited in locations accessible by walking, cycling and public transport and states that the Council will support development that reduces the need to travel by car. This position is followed through in Core Strategy DPD policy T-1 which seeks to focus development within 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. This policy position is generally reflected in Chapter 9 of the NPPF which seeks to promote sustainable travel.

The concerns raised to the proposal from the Council Highway Engineer, in relation to the location of the site and its suitability for residential development, noting the lack of connectivity to existing centres, local facilities, public transport and cycling/walking infrastructure are acknowledged. In this respect and in response to these comments, Members are advised as follows :

Stockport does not currently have a 5-year housing land supply, that position currently standing at 3.78 years. Core Strategy DPD policy CS4 identifies spatial priorities for residential development and Core Strategy DPD policy H-2 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 Core Strategy DPD policy H-2 is set to zero. As such, and notwithstanding an assessment of the proposal against other relevant policies, the principle of residential development at the site is accepted from a housing supply perspective.

It is accepted that the site has poor connections to public transport, is remote from existing commercial centres and that trips to the site would most likely be predominantly car borne. However, neither Core Strategy policy CS9 nor Core Strategy DPD policy T-1 state that all development has to be in locations that are only accessible by public transport, cycling and walking. Core Strategy DPD policy T-1 in particular references only new development 'notably that generating significant numbers of trips' being required to be sustainably accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. This is reiterated in Paragraph 109 of the NPPF which advises that 'significant development' should be focussed in locations which are or can be made sustainable. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF also acknowledges that there are reduced opportunities for sustainable travel in rural areas and this should be taken into account in decision making.

Clearly, there is a correct planning policy focus in directing development to accessible locations and it is accepted that the application site is not accessible in proximity to existing centres, local facilities, public transport and cycling/walking infrastructure. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF 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 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF which acknowledges that in rural areas connectivity to public transport is not always possible and that this should be taken into account.

Comprising only 1 no. dwellinghouse, the proposed development would not be of a significant scale and, as acknowledged by the Highway Engineer, would not generate a significant number of trips. As such and noting the location of the site within a rural area with reduced opportunities for sustainable travel, notwithstanding the concerns raised by the Highway Engineer, it is not considered that the proposal conflicts with the above policy position in respect of site accessibility.

In view of the above and in summary, the neighbour objections raised to the application are noted and acknowledged. However, subject to the imposition of suitably worded planning conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable from a traffic generation, parking, access and highway safety perspective. Whilst the concerns raised by the Highway Engineer in respect of the accessibility of the site are acknowledged, for the above reasons, it is considered that the proposal does not conflict with Core Strategy DPD policies CS4, CS9 and T-1 and the advice contained within the NPPF in respect of site accessibility and sustainable travel. On this basis, notwithstanding the concerns raised by the Highway Engineer, the proposal is considered to comply with Core Strategy DPD policies SD-6, CS4, SIE-1, SIE-1, CS9, T-1, T-2 and T-3, the Sustainable Transport SPD and the Transport and Highways in Residential Areas SPD and the advice contained within the NPPF.

Impact on Trees

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

Notwithstanding the comments received to the application from the Arboricultural Officer, trees within the site itself are not afforded protection by way of either a Tree Preservation Order or Conservation Area status. As such, consideration must be taken of the fact that existing trees within the site could effectively be worked to or removed without the requirement for consent.

It is noted that the proposed development would not have an impact on existing trees within the site. In order to prevent damage to trees during the construction stage, conditions are recommended to require appropriate tree protection measures and to ensure that no existing tree is worked to. A further condition is recommended to require the submission, approval and implementation of a scheme of planting/soft landscaping, to enhance the site from a visual and biodiversity perspective.

In view of the above, in the absence of objections from the Arboricultural Officer and subject to conditional control, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on trees, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policies CS8, SIE-1 and SIE-3.

Impact on Protected Species, Ecology and Biodiversity

The application site has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise, however the site has been identified as an opportunity area within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) pilot study for Greater Manchester. An Ecological

Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment have been submitted in support of the application. The detailed comments received from the Council Nature Development Officer are contained within the Consultee Responses section above. There is considered to be sufficient ecological information to inform determination of the application.

Buildings and trees have the potential to support roosting bats, a protected species. The submitted Ecological Appraisal confirms that no potential bat roosting features were identified in the buildings or trees to be impacted by the proposals, therefore the works are considered to be of very low risk to roosting bats. The applicant will however be advised of the potential for protected species to be present, legislation in place to protect biodiversity and procedures to follow should protected species be discovered by way of informative.

Buildings, trees and vegetation offer potential habitat for nesting birds, a protected species, and a swallow nest was recorded within one of the buildings. As such, a condition is recommended to ensure that no demolition or tree/vegetation clearance should take place within the bird nesting season, unless checks are carried out for active birds nest and appropriate mitigation measures put in place.

Badgers and their setts are legally protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Badger Survey work has been submitted in support of the application, the contents of which are confidential and not for public viewing. Members are advised that the submitted Surveys have been assessed by the Nature Development Officer, who considers that subject to the imposition of conditions to require the implementation of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) during development and the requirement for the submission of update surveys should the development have not commenced within six months of the most recent Ecology Survey, potential impacts to any badgers that may be present on the site could be appropriately mitigated.

The site offers suitable habitat for hedgehog, a protected species. No evidence of or significant potential for other protected species such as Great Crested Newt was recorded during the Ecological Survey. Due to the fact that the site is located immediately adjacent to woodland and to ensure that this habitat is protected from potential impacts, a condition is recommended to require the submission, approval and implementation of an Ecology Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Due to the fact that the proposal comprises a self-build development, consisting of less than 9 dwellings and on a site less of than 0.5 hectares, the proposal is exempt from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement, as defined by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Nevertheless, a Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been submitted in support of the application, along with a BNG Assessment Report and Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancements Plan to demonstrate how a measurable gain for biodiversity would be achieved. This would include the creation of grassland and scrub habitats, provision of a green roof, native hedgerow and tree planting and bat roosting and bird nesting facilities. This is welcomed and would be secured by condition to require the submission, approval and implementation of a Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan.

Further conditions are recommended to require the submission and approval of update Ecology Surveys in the event that works have not commenced within two survey seasons of the submitted Ecology Surgery; and to ensure that any proposed lighting is sensitively designed to as minimise impacts on wildlife.

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

Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a low risk of fluvial flooding with less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding. Core Strategy DPD policy SIE-3 states that, in respect of flood risk, all development will be expected to comply with the approach set out in national policy, with areas of hardstanding or other surfaces, should be of a permeable construction or drain to an alternative form of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). Core Strategy DPD policy SD-6 requires a 50% reduction in existing surface water runoff and incorporation of SUDS to manage the run-off water from the site through the incorporation of permeable surfaces and SUDS.

In view of the fact that the proposal does not comprise a major development, as recognised by the Council Drainage Engineer and United Utilities, it is considered that appropriate surface water drainage for the proposed development could be secured by way of the imposition of a condition to require the submission, approval and implementation of a detailed drainage scheme. Subject to compliance with such a condition, it is considered that the proposed development could be drained in a sustainable and appropriate manner without the risk of flooding elsewhere, in accordance with saved UDP policy EP1.7 and Core Strategy DPD policies SD-6 and SIE-3.

Land Contamination

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

Given the former land use, there is the potential for contamination to have occurred on-site and there is also the potential for localised/historical deposition of agricultural waste materials and animal effluent. As such, it is recommended that conditions are imposed, which should be applied as a phased approach, to require the submission, approval and implementation of an investigation, risk assessment, remediation scheme, remedial action and validation report into contamination at the site. Subject to compliance with such conditions, it is considered that the proposed development would not be at risk from land contamination, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policies CS8 and SIE-3.

Coal Mining Legacy

The detailed comments received to the application from the Coal Authority are contained within the Consultee Responses section above.

It is noted that the majority of the site falls within the Development Low Risk Area, with only the proposed septic tank to be sited within the Development High Risk Area. As such, the submission of a Coal Mining Risk Assessment is not required with the application and the proposal is considered acceptable with regard to coal mining legacy impact on the proposed development, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policies CS8 and SIE-3. The applicant will be advised of coal mining features in the

area, separate permit requirements for intrusive activities and procedures to follow should coal mining features be encountered during development by way of informative.

Energy Efficiency

As the proposed development would not exceed 10 residential units, the proposed development does not trigger the Council's carbon reduction targets, as defined by Core Strategy DPD policy SD-3. The submission and approval of an Energy Statement, to confirm that energy efficiency measures would be incorporated within the fabric of the building, in order to comply with current Building Regulations and to assess the potential use of low and zero carbon technologies within the development would be secured by way of suitably worded planning condition. Subject to compliance with such a condition, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Core Strategy DPD policy.

Developer Contributions

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

In accordance with saved UDP policy L1.2, Core Strategy DPD policy SIE-2, the Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments SPD and the NPPG, there is a requirement to ensure the provision and maintenance of formal recreation and children's play space and facilities within the Borough to meet the needs of the residents of the development. Due to the fact that the site is located outside the catchment zone for which children's play facilities can be sought (1000 metres of a Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play, 400 metres of a Local Equipped Area of Play or 100 metres of Local Area of Play) only provision and maintenance of formal recreation facilities can be sought as part of the proposed development. On the basis of the population capacity of the proposed development (1 no. 3 bedroomed/4 person dwelling = 4), this requires a commuted sum payment of £3,604, which would be secured by way of a Section 106 Agreement.

SUMMARY

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF establishes three dimensions to sustainable development – economic, social and environmental and indicates that these should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of an existing stable and tack room building and the erection of 1 no. single storey self-build dwellinghouse with associated access, parking and landscaping at land to the rear of Longhurst Lane and Knowle Road, Mellor.

The site is located within the Green Belt and it is acknowledged that the proposal would be contrary to saved UDP policies GBA1.2 and GBA1.5. However, in view of the requirements of Paragraph 225 of the NPPF, such policies should be afforded no weight due to the extent of inconsistencies between them and the relevant parts of the NPPF. When assessed against Paragraph 154 (g) of the NPPF, it is considered

that the proposed development would comprise the redevelopment of previously developed land which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development on site that would justify the refusal of the application. As such, the proposal is not considered to amount to inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

It is considered that the siting, scale, size, height, design and materials of the proposed development could be accommodated on the site without causing harm to the visual amenity of the area, the character of the Marple Bridge Landscape Character Area or on the amenity of surrounding residential properties.

Subject to conditional control, the proposal is considered acceptable from a traffic generation, parking, access and highway safety perspective. Whilst the concerns raised by the Highway Engineer in respect of the accessibility of the site are acknowledged, it is considered that the proposal does not conflict with relevant local and national planning policies in respect of site accessibility and sustainable travel.

On the basis of the submitted information, in the absence of objections from relevant Consultees and subject to conditional control/legal agreement, the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of the issues of impact on trees; impact on protected species, ecology and biodiversity; flood risk and drainage; land contamination; coal mining legacy; energy efficiency; and developer contributions.

In view of the above, in considering the planning merits of the proposal against the requirements of the NPPF, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development. On this basis, notwithstanding the objections raised, the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant.

Should Marple Area Committee be minded to agree the recommendation and resolve to grant planning permission, the decision should be deferred and delegated to the Head of Planning, pending the applicant entering into a Section 106 Agreement to secure the relevant contribution towards open space.

MARPLE AREA COMMITTEE (4TH DECEMBER 2024)

The webcast of the meeting can be viewed at - https://stockport.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/929636/start_time/1251000

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

Members sought clarification from the Planning Officer on a number of matters, including the acceptability of the proposed access to the site in respect of highway safety; whether consultation had been undertaken with the adjacent School; whether the existing equestrian use would cease; the siting and design of the proposed development and impact on visual amenity and the character of the street scene; the potential for a precedent being set for development in the Green Belt; separation from surrounding properties and adopted privacy standards in terms of impact on residential amenity; how construction and heavy vehicle access would be managed; the definition of the proposed 'self-build' development; whether or the proposal would comprise a change of use; proposed hedgerow removal and associated impacts on

Biodiversity Net Gain; possible conditions to require a Construction Method Statement to manage impact on the adjacent School; possible impact on land contamination and coal mining legacy; the concerns raised by the Highway Engineer in respect of the accessibility of the site, bins storage and access for emergency services; how services would be provided to serve the development; and in respect of required biodiversity enhancements. The Planning Officer provided clarification to the matters raised by Members.

A member of the public spoke in objection to the application on behalf of residents who had objected to the application. Significant concerns were raised to the proposal on the grounds of the validity of the planning application in respect of land ownership matters; contradiction in the application in relation to proposed mains services; site erosion and land/bank stability issues; impact on neighbouring properties from resulting surge flows; drainage issues, additional surface water and potential flooding issues; the incorrect timing of the submitted Ecological Report in terms of presence of protected species; intensification of the access and associated noise, disruption, pollution and impact on wildlife and ecology impacts; impact on existing trees and hedgerows; lack of infrastructure in the area to support additional housing, supported by the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment; there are a number of other properties in the area available to purchase; contradictory to the Council's Climate Action Now Strategy in respect of flooding and biodiversity; contrary to the Council's Brownfield First Strategy, rather than development in the Green Belt.

Members sought clarification from the objector on a number of matters, including the current impact of the existing equestrian use on neighbouring properties; possible access issues on the access road during periods of snow; inaccuracies on the submitted plans in respect of site ownership; and the concerns in respect of setting a precedent for the further loss of Green Belt. The objector provided clarification to the Member questions.

The applicant spoke in support of the application. It was stated that the applicant lived in the area and was an active member of the community; the scheme was subject to pre-application engagement; a bespoke design approach was taken due to the sites sensitive location; the site comprised previously developed land and the proposal would have no impact on the openness of the Green Belt, supported by policy; the proposed development would be restricted to the existing built portion of the site and would not encroach onto the wider undeveloped part of the land, making it less prominent than existing buildings; whilst there was no requirement for mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, the scheme would provide native hedgerows, tree planting and a green roof and would be of sustainable construction; the development would not impact on residential amenity; there is no restriction on the number of trips or the size of vehicles that can use the access road; title deeds confirm that the access road forms part of the site and, apart from a portion that the School have access rights to, no properties on Longhurst Lane have access rights; the concerns raised by the Highway Engineer in respect of site accessibility were acknowledged, however local and national policy did not preclude residential development in more rural areas; cycle parking and EV charging facilities were proposed to improve sustainable travel; no objections were raised in respect of highway safety or impact on the highway network; the proposal comprised a high quality scheme that makes use of a brownfield site, in a sustainable location and had been design to minimise impact on the Green Belt, the local environment and neighbouring properties.

Members sought clarification from the applicant on a number of matters, including whether or not they were aware of the level of objection and whether concerns of residents had been expressed; whether or not any concerns had been raised by the

School; how it was proposed to access and travel to and from the site in periods of poor weather; proposals for access to the site by emergency vehicles; the approach taken to the siting, design and materials of the proposed development; how construction activities at the site would be managed in view of the restricted access; proposals for replacement planting and biodiversity enhancements; and in terms of the proposed bin location. The applicant provided clarification to the Member questions.

Members debated the application. The separation of the proposed development from neighbouring properties was noted and was considered to comply with required privacy standards. The nature of the land as 'brownfield', albeit within the Green Belt was discussed, along with any need to demonstrate 'Very Special Circumstances' and potential future 'Grey Belt' designation, for which clarification was provided by the Planning Officer. Whilst it was acknowledged that the proposal was NPPF compliant, impacts were minimal and the proposal for 1 no. dwellinghouse was noted, Members raised a number of concerns in relation to the access to the site which was unique and was considered to be a problem and issue. As such, a site inspection to assess the proposed access was considered to be necessary.

Following the debate, it was proposed, seconded and resolved that the application be referred to the Planning and Highways Regulation Committee for determination, following a site inspection from the Visiting Team to assess the proposed access.