

ITEM 2

Application Reference	DC/093768
Location:	Stockport Rugby Union Football Club to South Of Jacksons Lane Hazel Grove Stockport SK7 3AN
PROPOSAL:	Hybrid planning application comprising: a) Application for full planning permission for the provision of an Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and extensions and enhancements to the club house; and b) Application for outline planning permission for the erection of: - up to 60 new residential homes including 10% all affordable supported housing (Use Class C3); - a residential care facility (Use Class C2), for up to 75 beds; and - an extra care facility (age restricted 55+ years) (Use Class C3) for 70 all affordable units; together with landscaping and open space, with all matters reserved.
Type Of Application:	Outline Application
Registration Date:	16.10.2024
Expiry Date:	15.01.2025
Case Officer:	Jane Chase
Applicant:	Stockport Rugby Union Football Club (SRUFC) and Russell Homes (UK)
Agent:	Stantec

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Departure to the Development Plan in relation to the proposed outline development in the Green Belt. Stepping Hill Area Committee and Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme South Area Committee for comment. Planning & Highways Committee for a decision.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

This application is submitted in full and outline form (a hybrid application) and comprises the development as set out below:

Full Application

The full elements of the proposed development include the provision of an artificial grass pitch (AGP) to replace an existing grass pitch (the western pitch), and the erection of extensions and enhancements to the clubhouse.

The AGP would be positioned behind houses on Headlands Road and Jackson Lane where a grass pitch currently exists. This pitch would measure 70m wide by 116m long with an additional 3m run off to all 4 sides (so 76m x 122m in total) and would comprise a 3G artificial grass surface designed to mimic the playing characteristics of natural grass. The construction of this comprises a synthetic surface with sand and rubber infill laid over a rubber shock pad and asphalt surface. This pitch would

be marked out such that it can either be used for its entire length as a single pitch or as 3 smaller horizontal pitches facilitating use for full-sized men's rugby, football, and 5-a-side football.

The 4no. existing floodlighting columns positioned along the length of the pitch and which can be used between 4pm and 9.30pm on any day would remain to serve the AGP. As with that existing, no fencing is proposed to enclose or restrict unauthorised access to the pitch.

The application advises that this new pitch will allow for all weather use throughout the year which will be a significant benefit to the club as the grass pitches often become waterlogged due to poor drainage and over-use during wetter months. The provision of this pitch will also ensure that players do not have to use off site facilities as a result of the pitches becoming waterlogged and needing time to dry out and recover.

The extensions to the clubhouse comprise a part single, part 2 storey extension to the eastern elevation. This would be of a simple design with a monopitch roof sloping upwards and away from the existing building. This extension would provide 2 new changing rooms, a kitchen and associated store and accessible changing WC on the ground floor with an extended lounge at first floor level. As amended, a lockable gate and fence is proposed to restrict unauthorised access to the existing stairwell on the north elevation of the building. To the western elevation a two-storey flat roofed extension is proposed which will accommodate a new stairwell and accessible WC.

Externally it is proposed to extend the existing hardstanding between the clubhouse and adjacent play centre building by 2.7m in width and up to 20.5m in length.

A draft Community Use Agreement submitted with the application sets out the applicants' aspiration to make the AGP and upgraded clubhouse available for use by the community. This sets out that the AGP can accommodate community use for up to 7 hours per day, and it is proposed that a minimum of 10 hours to be reserved for such use throughout the week as part of the Agreement. This will be bookable in hourly slots by local teams and clubs on a rota system. This will include (but is not limited to) Bramhall High School, Hazel Grove High School, St James' School, Cheadle Hulme High School, Laurus Cheadle Hulme, Stockport School, Pownall Green Primary, Moorfield Primary, St Peters Primary, Laurus Primary, Neville Road Primary, Mountfield Rovers and Richmond Rovers.

Outline Application

The outline element of the application proposes a residential led development on land to the east of Wallbank Road and south of Jacksons Lane. All matters are reserved and as such, the application seeks to establish only the principle and quantity of development. The application is however supported by an indicative layout which seeks to demonstrate that the proposed development in relation to the outline proposals could be accommodated on site in a satisfactory manner.

Members are advised that this illustrative plan simply shows how the development could be carried out and not how it will be. If this hybrid application is approved, then a reserved matters application would need to be submitted and approved before development in relation to the outline proposals could commence. The reserved matters application would detail the proposed development in terms of the layout, appearance and scale of the development, the landscaping of the site and access into and within the development. Development would then be required to be carried out in accordance with the plans approved by the reserved matters application and

conditions imposed at that stage together with any conditions or legal agreement forming part of the hybrid planning permission.

On this basis, outline planning permission with all matters reserved is sought for:-

- the erection of up to 60 new residential dwellings (Use Class C3) including 10% supported affordable housing dwellings,
- a residential care facility with up to 75 beds (Use Class C2),
- an extra care facility (Use Class C3) for 70 units (all affordable housing) and restricted to those age 55 above together with
- landscaping and open space.

Whilst the outline element of this application seeks only approval for the principle and amount of development, the application is supported by an illustrative masterplan, an indicative landscaping plan and planting schedule, a parameter plan and phasing plan.

In this respect, the illustrative masterplan and accompanying Design & Access Statement present the proposals as follows:-

- The main access into and out of the site from Jacksons Lane.
- Pedestrian and cycle access into and out of the site from Wallbank Road.
- To the west of the access on Jacksons Lane, the erection of a 75 bed residential care home up to 3 storeys in height with communal gardens around and parking.
- To the east of the access on Jacksons Lane, the erection of a 70 unit extra care facility up to 3 storeys in height with communal gardens and parking.
- To the south of the residential care home and to the west of the site a variety of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses with each dwelling benefitting from 2 parking spaces and a private garden.
- A children's local equipped area for play (LEAP) is shown to the west of the site together with an area of public open space, landscaping, SuDS features and footpaths.

The application advises that the proposed AGP and extensions to the clubhouse will cost the club £2.1m. The applicant makes the case that it is not possible to secure this funding through RFU, World Cup Fund, Lottery Fund, or any other funding mechanism as funding from these sources does not extend to the level they require. This has therefore led them to explore the sale of their land to the east of Wallbank Road to a residential developer to fund and enable the improvements to the club. The application is supported by a Financial Viability Assessment which makes the case that the outline proposals in respect of the residential dwellings, extra care and residential care development are required to enable the club to construct the AGP and extensions to the clubhouse and propose no more development than is necessary to do so.

By way of general background to the proposed development, and which is explored further in the report below, Members are advised of the following which has been presented by the applicant:

SRUFC is an important and well-loved local facility. It currently has 662 members and is also used by the wider community including O2 Touch Rugby and Stockport All Stars. SRUFC also has a close relationship with local schools including Bramhall and Hazel Grove High Schools and host a High Schools Rugby competition that includes Bramhall, Hazel Grove, St James, Cheadle Hulme High, Laurus Cheadle Hulme, Stockport School, Marple High and Dukinfield. The club also works closely

with several primary schools and hosts a rugby competition that includes Pownall Green, Moorfield, St Peters, Laurus Primary & Neville Road. The Club hosts weekly training sessions and weekend matchdays, as well as annual community and charity events.

Membership of the club has grown in recent years. However, the existing clubhouse and pitches are in desperate need of improvement to keep up with the growing demand. Whilst SRUFC is a valuable local sports facility for both its Members and wider community, the quality of its existing facilities are preventing the club to operate at optimum capacity whilst catering for the needs of existing and future users.

The club currently operates on three main pitches within the Club's grounds. There is also a fourth 'overspill' pitch to the east of Wallbank Road (Wallbank pitch). However, this pitch is a 500m walk from the clubhouse and all of the Club's facilities. Wallbank pitch is used only on Sundays but due to its significantly poor drainage, this pitch was only used for 65% of the 2022/23 season. Wallbank pitch is not convenient for home and away teams due to its distance from the clubhouse.

The 3 main pitches also experience drainage issues, and during winter months are often unusable due to the pitches becoming waterlogged or needing time to recover between games. This restricts how frequently the pitches can be used and results in teams having to train and play matches at off-site facilities.

The clubhouse is in need of renovation and enlargement to be compliant with new and upcoming Rugby Football Union (RFU) regulations and to meet growing demands. It does not provide adequate shower or changing facilities, particularly for females, and the kitchen and dining facilities struggle to cater for demand on matchdays, resulting in meals being served from a tent outside. Furthermore, disabled access into the clubhouse is not currently possible and there are no disabled toilets/changing facilities which is a major drawback, particularly due to SRUFC hosting the only mixed ability team in Cheshire (Stockport All Stars).

Investing in these facilities is a key priority to realise the Club's ambitions to compete at the highest levels of domestic rugby competition, sustain and support its well established and growing Mini and Juniors (M&J), female and mixed ability teams, as well as enhancing the matchday experience and further support grass roots development which will help to support players of local teams and community organisations.

A Development Plan has, therefore, been prepared to set out a clear strategy to address these issues over the next 10 years. Key aspirations up to 2033 include:-

- Secure substantial investment for a new Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) which will enable a more durable all-weather pitch for year-round use.*
- Refurbish and extend the clubhouse which has become outdated and does not meet future RFU standards. Key aspirations are to include RFU compliant shower and changing facilities, and a larger kitchen and dining area.*
- Provide disabled access to the ground and first floor of the clubhouse which has been a long-term ambition but not realised due to funding, in addition to disabled toilet facilities.*
- Provide a new first aid room and a fit for purpose physio room.*

Critically, to achieve the above, the club will need to secure substantial investment, which is not possible through the RFU, World Cup Fund, Lottery Fund, or any other funding mechanism as noted above which has led to the pursual of alternative and

private funding. Given the absence of any available funding streams, SRUFC has worked with Russell Homes to establish if a development proposal could be brought to fund and enable these important works and upgrades to SRUFC.

Submitted with the application is a financial viability assessment (FVA) which concludes that if planning permission is granted the outline proposals are able to generate a land value which would fund the proposed sporting enhancements at SRUFC via capital receipts. This level of funding required for the new AGP and clubhouse improvements is reliant on the outline parameters coming forward and is not possible through RFU funding, World Cup Fund, Lottery Fund, or any other funding mechanisms, or a reduced amount of development. The outline element of the hybrid planning application is, therefore, essential to unlock the investment needed to deliver enhancements to SRUFC.

The application is supported by the following documents:

Planning Statement
Statement of Community Involvement
Stockport RUFC Development Plan
Community Use Agreement
Financial Viability Assessment
Design & Access Statement
Landscape & Visual Assessment
Agricultural Land Classification Report
Affordable Housing Statement
Planning Need Assessment (Care Homes)
Heritage Statement
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
Phase 1 Geo Environmental Site Assessment
Supplementary Site Investigation
Noise Impact Assessment
Air Quality Assessment
Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment
Nocturnal Bat Report
Bird & Bat Survey
Protected Species Report
Arboricultural Impact Assessment
Arboricultural Method Statement
Biodiversity Net Gain Metric
Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
Transport Assessment
Framework Travel Plan
Crime Impact Statement
Climate Change and Energy Strategy
Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy (Outline and Full)
Underground Utility Study
Draft Heads of Terms
NPPF Statement of Conformity

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site comprises 2 parcels of land that are located to the west and east of Wallbank Road.

That to the west of Wallbank Road is accessed from Headlands Road and accommodates a detached clubhouse building together with 3 grass playing pitches which are marked out for rugby. The western pitch upon which the AGP is proposed together with the eastern pitch benefit from floodlighting however the central pitch is

unlit. The clubhouse building is mainly 2 storeys in height with a 2 storey outrigger to the rear and single storey extension to the front, the flat roof of which in part is used as an external terrace. In front of the clubhouse is a forecourt that is also used for external seating. To the side and rear of the clubhouse is a surface level car park with spaces for circa 58 cars including 2 disabled parking spaces. A service road extends from this car park around the southern extent of the pitches to a gated access on Wallbank Road.

Behind the clubhouse is a part single, part 2 storey detached building which is occupied by an indoor soft play centre and which has the use of a further small car park to the side of the building.

This part of the site is bounded by the rear gardens of houses on Headlands Road to the west and the rear gardens of houses on Bridge Lane to the north. This boundary is formed mainly by a belt of mature trees albeit with a few gaps in places. Wallbank Road is to the east of the site and accommodates a single dwelling adjacent to the northern boundary and a further single dwelling adjacent to the southern boundary. This eastern boundary is formed mainly from hedging which extends in part along the southern boundary around the curtilage of the adjacent dwelling at the end of Wallbank Road. Happy Valley nature reserve adjoins the remainder of the southern boundary and here, particularly around the rear of the soft play centre is a large area of mature woodland which extends up to Headlands Road.

That to the east of Wallbank Road accommodates 3 parcels of land all of which connect to Wallbank Road via a gated access. The western most parcel of land accommodates a grass playing pitch (the Wallbank pitch) adjacent to which and at a slightly lower level is a further grassed area. Planning permission for this pitch along with 2 junior pitches was approved in 2011 (DC047556).

Beyond the Wallbank pitch to the east are 2 fields which it is understood have been used for the grazing of sheep. Part of the rear garden to a dwelling on Jacksons Lane (used as a private orchard) is incorporated into the application site.

This eastern part of the site is separated from Wallbank Road by a parcel of land to the west which, whilst accommodating a number of small trees, does not appear to be in active use. On the south side of Jacksons Lane there is a cluster of 4 houses to the west of the application site. To the east of these houses and forming part of the northern boundary of the site is a wide parcel of woodland. Beyond this woodland to the east are a further 2 houses one of which has a private orchard to the rear (which as mentioned above is included within the application site). The boundary of the site with these houses is mainly formed from mature trees however the side and rear boundary of the eastern most house in this group is formed from a fence. The remainder of the northern boundary to Jacksons Lane is fairly open and formed by hedging.

Adjacent to the eastern boundary is a detached dwelling fronting Jacksons Lane and its associated rear garden. The side boundary to this house is formed by a line of trees to the front and rear of the dwelling. Behind this dwelling to the south (and accessed from Jacksons Lane) is a large detached bungalow positioned within a substantial plot of land which extends in part along the southern boundary of the site. The boundary here is formed by a dense and fairly deep belt of trees. The remainder of the southern boundary is formed by fencing beyond which is what appears to be land within the curtilage of a detached dwelling at the southern end of Wallbank Road.

Opposite the site on the north side of Jacksons Lane is a 2 storey detached house and a terrace of 3no. 2 storey houses. To the east of these is the part single, part 2 storey 3 Bears PH adjacent to which is a part single, part 2 storey commercial development turning the corner to Dorchester Road.

There are no heritage assets above or below ground on or adjacent to the site or sufficiently close enough in the wider locality as to be impacted by the proposed development.

There is no public access to the application site other than that afforded to members of and visitors to the club and play centre. To the west of the site and accessed from Headlands Road is a public right of way (a Strategic Recreation Route) which extends through the Happy Valley Nature Reserve which runs west to east close to the boundary of the application site (PRoW 41HGB). Running to the north of this is the Ladybrook Valley Interest Trail. The Fred Perry Way connects into Happy Valley from Wallbank Road as does PRoW 46HGB (both Strategic Recreation Routes).

Further afield, both elements of the application site are positioned at the northern extent of land designated as being within the Green Belt. Where within the boundary of Stockport, this designation extends to the east all along Jacksons Lane, beyond Chester Road and wrapping around the southern extent of Hazel Grove. To the south it extends through Happy Valley, into Bramhall High School and Bramhall Golf Course extending down to the A555 and westwards around the southern extent of Bramhall into Woodford. To the north, west and south west of the site beyond Headlands Road, Bridge Lane and Jacksons Lane are the suburban areas of Bramhall and Hazel Grove.

POLICY BACKGROUND

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

The Development Plan includes:-

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

The application site is identified as being within the Green Belt and the Ladybrook Valley Landscape Character Area. Happy Valley Nature Reserve and the Ladybrook SBI are located to the south west and south of the application site. Strategic recreation routes extend from Headlands Road and Wallbank Road into Happy Valley connecting to a wider network. The following policies are therefore relevant to this application.

Saved policies of the SUDP Review

LCR1.1 Landscape Character Areas

LCR1.1A The Urban Fringe including the River Valleys

NE1.1 Sites of Special Nature Conservation Importance

NE1.2 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance

EP1.7 Development and Flood Risk

GBA1.1 Extent of Green Belt

GBA1.2 Control of Development in Green Belt
GBA1.5 Residential Development in Green Belt
L1.1 Land for Active Recreation
L1.2 Children's Play
L1.5 Countryside Recreation
L1.7 Recreation Routes: Maintenance and Expansion of Network
L1.8 Strategic Recreation Routes
L1.9 Recreation Routes and New Development
HP2.2 Sheltered Housing
CDH1.3 Care and Nursing Homes
MW1.5 Control of Waste from Development
<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/current-planning-policies>

LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies

CS1 Overarching Principles: Sustainable Development – Addressing Inequalities and Climate Change
SD1 Creating Sustainable Communities
SD3 Delivering the Energy Opportunities Plans – New Development
SD6 Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change
CS2 Housing Provision
CS3 Mix of Housing
CS4 Distribution of Housing
H1 Design of Residential Development
H2 Housing Phasing
H3 Affordable Housing
CS8 Safeguarding and Improving the Environment
SIE1 Quality Places
SIE2 Provision of Recreation and Amenity Open Space in New Developments
SIE3 Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment
SIE5 Aviation Facilities, Telecommunications and Other Broadcast Infrastructure
CS9 Transport and Development
CS10 An Effective and Sustainable Transport Network
T1 Transport and Development
T2 Parking in Developments
T3 Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network
<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/current-planning-policies>

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance does not form part of the Statutory Development Plan; nevertheless it does provide non-statutory Council approved guidance that is a material consideration when determining planning applications.
<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/current-planning-policies>

National Planning Policy Framework

A Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 13th December 2024. The NPPF has not altered the fundamental legal requirement under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations (such as the NPPF) indicate otherwise.

The NPPF representing the governments up-to-date planning policy which should be taken into account in dealing with applications focuses on achieving lasting housing reform, facilitating the delivery of a greater number of homes, ensuring that we plan for the right homes built in the right places of the right quality at the same time as

protecting our environment. If decision takers choose not to follow the NPPF, then clear and convincing reasons for doing so are needed.

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

The following paragraphs are considered relevant to this application:

Chapter 1 Introduction: para’s 1 & 2

Chapter 2 Achieving Sustainable Development: para’s 7 to 12

Chapter 4 Decision Making: Para’s 39 to 44, 48 to 51; 56 to 59

Chapter 5 Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes: Para’s 61 to 68, 71, 73

Chapter 8 Promoting Healthy & Safe Communities: Para’s 96, 98, 100, 103 to 105

Chapter 9 Promoting Sustainable Transport: Para’s 109 & 110, 115 to 118

Chapter 11 Making Effective Use of Land: Para’s 124 & 125, 129

Chapter 12 Achieving Well Designed Places: Para’s 131, 135 & 136, 139

Chapter 13 Protecting Green Belt Land: Para’s 142 & 143, 153 to 158

Chapter 14 Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change: Para’s 161, 163, 164, 166, 170, 173 to 179, 181 & 182

Chapter 15 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment: Para’s 187 193, 195 to 199

Annex 1 Implementation: Para 231, 232

Annex 2 Glossary

[National Planning Policy Framework.](#)

Planning Practice Guidance

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

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DC/017228 - Continuation of use of 3 portacabins and 2 container units for accommodation of coaching staff and physiotherapy treatment and storage of rugby equipment in connection with temporary use for training purposes by Sale Sharks. Approved 2005

DC046095 – Creation of a senior sized rugby pitch and two mini rugby pitches and formation of a vehicular access road. Withdrawn 2011

DC/041871 - Provision of an access track. Approved 2009

DC/047556 – Creation of 1no.rugby pitch and 2no. junior rugby pitches (resubmission of DC040695). Approved 2011

DC/060629 - Removal of 4no. 15m high existing lighting columns replacement with 4no. new 15m high low-light pollution columns. Approved 2016 with condition that lights not to be used after 9.30pm or before 4pm

DC/088609 - Proposed development of up to 100 dwellings, up to a 75 bed residential care facility and rugby club enhancements. Not EIA development as defined in the Town & Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (as amended)

DC/089037 - Hybrid application comprising

- a) Application for full planning permission for the provision of an Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and extensions and enhancements to the club house and
- b) Application for outline planning permission for the erection of up to 90 new residential homes (Use Class C3), (including policy compliant provision of affordable housing), a residential care facility for up to 75 beds (Use Class C2), together with landscaping and open space, with all matters reserved. Withdrawn 2024

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

The application has been advertised by way of site notices and a press notice. The occupiers of 209 nearby properties have been notified directly in writing. At the time of writing this report:

51 letters have been received from 49 people objecting to the proposals on the following grounds. This includes a submission from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) which is reported separately below:

Full Proposals Rugby Club

- The provision of the AGP will result in extended hours of use. We already have a problem with the floodlights on the existing pitch shining directly into our property, this will be made worse. The planning application does not address this issue and does not present any mitigation measures.
- The club should make the facility of the AGP available via booking and without prejudice to other local clubs and schools.
- Since the Rugby Club extended their parking provisions to the rear of the houses in Headlands Road our garden has become significantly wetter. The planning application does not have any mention of preventing surface water effects on the adjacent lower level properties, this should be an essential requirement.
- Stewarding of entry and exit to the rugby club at Headlands Road is never carried out properly, especially when cars and guests are leaving the event. This results in antisocial behaviour and traffic chaos. The club itself admits that there are insufficient parking spaces. Extending the club's facilities and hiring out the AGP would only lead to further chaos for local residents and impact on the traffic on Bridge Lane.
- There is no mention of the AGP being enclosed by a fence to restrict unauthorised access.
- The planning application states that there will be no effect on traffic on Headlands Road, if the AGP allows extended use this statement cannot be valid.
- The additional sporting facilities encroach on land adjacent to a nature reserve so are contrary to the NPPF (para 150e).

Outline Proposals Residential & Care Home Development

- Inappropriate development in the Green Belt and very special circumstances have not been demonstrated. The application site is not part of any draft local plan residential allocation, neither has the application site ever been considered suitable to be in any draft residential allocation in any earlier draft development plan. The Green Belt land performs well against the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Why is a brownfield site not being considered for development.
- Harm to the Landscape Character Area.

- There is not a lack of housing in the area with numerous empty homes and derelict brownfield sites within 30 minutes walk of the site as well as in Woodford.
- Local schools are already full (over subscribed). Hospitals, GP's & dentists are struggling with current demand. Local Council services are being cut. How is the local infrastructure meant to cope with an additional 200+ 'people' trying to access already over stretched services.
- Since the cycle lane was put in on Dean Lane/Jackson Lane the traffic has been a nightmare as pro cycles will not use the lane and the road is narrow and unable to pass a bike/ parked vehicle. School drop off/collection the area is chaos already for cars. Bus service not adequate as poor connections. Local train station has poor parking. The proposed residential development will make this all worse.
- Traffic associated with the care home will add further traffic congestion to the area. The Traffic Assessment makes a subjective assumption that as the proposed residential development is located near to bus and rail services, daily car use will be reduced. The local bus and train service is not really within normal walking distance. This renders the car usage assumption unrealistic. Additionally, the Traffic Assessment appears to exclude the additional traffic burden on the local roads created by the new AP school development (DC/092412).
- Loss of mature trees and habitat, despite whatever mitigation measures might be put in place.
- Impact on ecology and biodiversity from the development as well as being adjacent to a nature reserve.
- Inadequate monitoring of butterflies, small mammal, amphibians and reptiles. Badgers and bats use the site. The reports are flawed in their assessment of badgers on the site. The breeding bird report is flawed due to the limited time of survey and failure to note the full range of species that can be sighted.
- Adverse impact on the enjoyment of Happy Valley.
- Loss of protected trees and harm to the hedgerow that forms the boundary of the site. New trees and bushes should not be considered as they will take time to mature.
- Light pollution from the outline proposals which could impact species in the local nature reserve.
- Additional air pollution from the traffic associated with the development. It will be in contravention of Stockport Council's Climate Action Plan on greenhouse gases, carbon emissions and air quality.
- Flooding around the area has increased due to drains not being maintained, building a new road, removing trees to make way for a cycle lane. The proposed development will exacerbate this.
- Overlooking of neighbouring homes and gardens from the care home.
- Loss of light from the care home.
- 3 storey development is out of keeping with the character of the area.
- Noise from the care home development could lead to an adverse impact at night (such as from kitchens and refuse areas).
- The plans don't show where refuse areas for the care homes will be positioned. Large areas could cause an issue with vermin.
- Support objections from Sport England. The loss of the playing pitch is contrary to the NPPF.

The CPRE object on the following grounds:

- The proposed housing and care facilities constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As such they would by definition be harmful (NPPF para 147).

- Furthermore, the development would clearly be of substantial bulk and cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt (both in a spatial and visual sense). Openness and permanence constitute the essential characteristics of Green Belt (NPPF para 137) and any impact on openness must carry substantial weight. The development is also likely to contravene the following purposes of Green Belt (NPPF para 138):
 - (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and
 - (e) to assist in urban regeneration.
- Due to its location as part of a narrow strip of Green Belt separating Hazel Grove and Bramhall it is also likely to impact upon purpose (b) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another.
- The site forms part of the Ladybrook Valley landscape character area and is open green space. Whilst the valley is open it is also very narrow and very sensitive to encroachment by new development. By reason of its scale and nature the proposal would substantially reduce this sense of openness within this part of the Valley. Its approval would therefore conflict with Policy LCR1.1 of the Stockport UDP Review 2006. In this context, the proposals would also clearly conflict with Appendix 12 “Landscape Character Areas” of the UDP Review (linked to Policy LCR1.1) which confirms that *“the open valley isvery narrow for much of its length and it is vital to safeguard what remains of its countryside character”*. The landscape harm described above should carry substantial weight against the proposals.
- The site is very close to a nature reserve and we are aware of concerns raised that the proposal would cause harm to biodiversity interests. In particular in relation to the earlier application we noted concerns about shortcomings in the preliminary ecological appraisal; impacts on the nearby ‘Lady Brook’ Site of Biological Importance (SBI) and the ‘Happy Valley’ Local Nature Reserve; impact on the ‘traditional orchard’ priority habitat which is present on the site; and conflict with the scope for grassland habitat creation/restoration on the site identified in the Greater Manchester (GM) Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Pilot.
- All harms identified need to be properly addressed via the harm avoidance and mitigation hierarchy (NPPF para. 180a). Any significant residual harms which are not avoided should also be given substantial weight in the overall planning balance.
- We also note that the current proposal would lead to an on-site biodiversity loss of 4.98% in habitat units. A net gain of 10% must be achieved.
- We have also been made aware of concerns that, by increasing the amount of hard surfacing, the proposals could substantially increase run off into the Ladybrook Valley, within which there have been flooding incidents downstream from the site. Whilst we note the applicants’ proposal to include a Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SuDS) it would need to be proven that this would ensure no increase in surface water run off rates.
- We note that the applicants have submitted a number of points in support of their application. However, in CPRE’s view these would not clearly outweigh harm to Green Belt and other harms and therefore do not constitute the necessary “very special circumstances” to allow the development (NPPF para 148). Although the proposal would deliver new market sector and affordable housing, CPRE considers that the correct way to address housing supply is through a new Local Plan for Stockport, and there is an urgent need for the Council to restart this process so that the housing needs of the Borough can be considered in a strategic manner and speculative applications to develop in the Green Belt can be resisted. Similar considerations apply to the provision of residential care and extra care facilities.

- CPRE notes that the proposal also includes benefits such as a new artificial pitch and drainage of existing pitches, enhancement/extension of the rugby clubhouse and provision of greenspace (including a Locally Equipped Area for Play or "LEAP"). However, whilst these improvements may no doubt be welcomed, the applicants' statements about lack of alternative funding to cover the proposals (even in part only) would need to be fully assessed by the Council, as would the applicants' financial viability appraisal. The proposed loss of an existing grass pitch would also need to be considered. Furthermore, any lack of currently available alternative funding for the proposed improvements needs to be weighed against the very substantial and permanent harm that would be caused to the Green Belt and other matters detailed above by the proposals.
- The applicants' submissions related to landscaping of the site, sustainability/energy efficiency and temporary employment/economic benefits could also be applied to development in more suitable locations and carry limited weight at most. Even if the proposal were amended to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain this would merely replicate a standard requirement which would apply by law anyway.
- Whilst we acknowledge that the proposal would (like the earlier proposals) bring some benefits, we are not convinced that these would decisively outweigh the substantial harm to the Green Belt and other harms. Very special circumstances to approve the development have not therefore been established.

At the time of writing this report **78 letters have been received supporting** the proposals as a whole on the following grounds. This includes a submission from the Laurus Trust which is reported separately below:

- As a resident of Bramhall I feel this application has merit that far outweighs any loss of green belt, the green belt in question has no use to the local community neither is it accessible. This land in its current state offers no use or value.
- SRUFC is a long-standing club in the local community, having recently celebrated 100 years as a club, and continues to go from strength to strength. Growing from a single men's team to a wide range of teams including a strong female team, a popular and growing Mini and Juniors section ranging from 5-16 years old, and a team for mixed ability and disabled rugby.
- SRUFC have grown organically over the last few decades, ensuring that the club continues to provide the level of support and offer for all of its members and other local community groups, utilising donations from members and sponsorship to keep the club moving forward. However, whilst this approach to funding has kept the Club sustainable there is no other funding available other than through significant private investment to enable the Club to continue its growth and make necessary improvements to enable it to go to the next level. The Clubs Trustees own land that forms part of the wider proposals. This presents a unique opportunity for the value of the development proposals to be put directly back into the Club.
- The existing clubhouse and pitches at SRUFC are in need of significant investment to meet the future needs of its members and provide inclusive facilities to the benefit of the whole community (such as the inclusion of a new disabled lift to ensure the club is disabled access compliant). The provision of inclusive facilities should be welcomed & will provide security moving forward to a long-standing community club.
- It is important to have a strong community club to enable local children/young adults to grow and develop in a cohesive structure with the best facilities and support available. It is essential that clubs such as SRUFC continue to grow

and provide the best support and facilities available all year round, which these improvements will be able to deliver. Rugby provides an important social, health and well-being role, and any development like this, that achieves this, should be supported.

- It is becoming increasingly difficult to get younger people involved in Rugby set against other sports such as Cricket, Football and Golf. Ensuring that clubs like SRUFC are able to grow and develop and ensure that the community facilities are affordable and available to all ages is essential.
- The proposals will enable the Club to continue to grow organically and support the existing female, men's, junior and mixed ability teams and provide all of these teams with better clubhouse, playing and training facilities.
- An all-weather/3G pitch used throughout the year, will significantly increase the number of playing hours from approximately 60 hours to 118 hours every week. This will increase playing time throughout the day, to be used by members, local schools, other local sports teams and community groups.
- This pitch will provide the best playing conditions; substantially help to minimise fixture congestion and having to train off-site; and offer the wider community playing time. This directly benefits adult and young players.
- Further upgrades will enable separate women's changing facilities; and provide a disabled lift and accessible toilets / changing facilities at the clubhouse. These changes will help the Club to achieve inclusivity in sports ambition.
- Improved and extended kitchen / dining areas to better accommodate members and community groups; and provide new infrastructure to deliver workable showers.
- New First Aid/ physio suite to bring the Club up to Rugby Football Union standards required to compete at a higher league.
- The Club will be able to continue to nurture and improve young talent, for which they have a proud history of bringing young people through the ranks to a professional standing.
- This is a sensitively designed scheme that will provide much-needed multi-generational homes, in an area where new housing has not been delivered for a long time. Approving these plans will allow local older people who wish to remain in the area the opportunity to downsize, freeing up larger family homes for younger people looking for more spacious properties. The extra care facility is also very welcome, especially with the above average age demographic of Bramhall North and the surrounding wards.

The Laurus Trust support the application for the following reasons:

- The Laurus Trust is a Multi Academy Trust that operates 12 schools including 8 oversubscribed schools within Stockport Local Authority. Our Stockport schools educate nearly 6,000 young people in the borough. Competition and physical endeavour, alongside academic aspiration, is something we value highly to enable our students to open the door to the future of their choice. The Trust also has a unique partnership with Loughborough University to enable state educated student athletes to access world leading expertise in nutrition, strength & conditioning and biomechanics.
- Rugby is a key part of our Key Stage 3 PE curriculum in our high schools and we have been invited on several occasion to attend Rugby Camps at SRUFC as well as make use of the facilities for fixtures and extra-curricular activities. Due to the inclement weather, however, the facilities are not always available to us. Whilst the nearest secondary school to SRUFC, Hazel Grove High School, has its own 3G facility, it is not suitable for rugby as it does not have the required shock absorption.

- The construction of an all-weather pitch available for local schools during the school day would be hugely beneficial to the Laurus Trust. We would look to use the facilities as follows:
 - Weekly extra-curricular rugby sessions for Hazel Grove High School, with SRUFC coaches.
 - Trust wide “Varsity” fixtures between our six secondary schools.
 - Rugby competitions between all Stockport schools with SRUFC referees.
 - A venue for GCSE and A-level moderations. As an example, students may have to demonstrate skills such goal kicking and we therefore require a venue with rugby goal posts.
 - A girls rugby festival three times a year – we believe a venue away from the schools’ site will encourage participation.
 - Hosting Sixth Form sport, not just rugby fixtures.
 - Access to the SRUFC physio and physio suite.
- The improvements to the clubhouse will widen participation in rugby and create a more inclusive environment. Participation in sport has the ability to change people’s lives, improving health and wellbeing across the community.
- The construction of more houses will help meet Stockport’s housing development plans. The use of section 106 funds will also help increase the capacity of local schools such as Hazel Grove High School.

6 letters including submission from Friends of Ladybrook Valley have been received **neither objecting to nor supporting** the proposals as whole but making the following comments:

- The rainwater runoff from the existing rugby pitch was increased when the access road was constructed, resulting in water cascading into the gardens of properties on Headlands Road. The proposed all-weather pitch is likely to exacerbate this issue and I therefore ask the Council to ensure that adequate cut-off drains be installed to route both the surface water run-off and that from the pitch’s sun-base material away from the gardens and to a suitable outfall. What measures are proposed to reduce run off?
- There will be flood risk should Poynton Pool be breached. There is no requirement to warn Councils down-stream about potential flood risks from any breach. If this application is passed there are concerns that buildings could be severely affected by flood water if the dam was to breach.
- Functions at the club should have noise control to prevent further late night noise problems.
- Measures need to be in place to overcome road and drive parking blockages as more club use will result in more parking problems, disruption to privacy and noise.
- Will there be sufficient parking for the two residential care facilities?
- Has air pollution been considered in relation to the additional traffic?
- There need to be additional speed restrictions controls as the existing 20mph signage is generally ignored.
- Extra footfall that may come from the new estate. In the proposed plan there is a footpath from the estate directly linked to Wallbank Road, which in turn has access into the valley via a flight of steps. We are concerned that any extra footfall will increase the deterioration of the valley’s steps and footpaths (gravel and dirt) and therefore diminish the environmental value and the enjoyment of the valley for the existing local community.
- If lighting is to be installed to the proposed pitch then to ensure that wildlife is not adversely impacted upon this should be carried out having regard to guidance from the Council’s ecologist.
- If a rubber crumb or artificial grass blade pitches is proposed these can result in tiny pieces (micro plastics) ending up in water courses after being washed

down drains and possibly the Lady Brook if run off is still allowed to wash down the hillside road. There is also the possibility of these tiny pieces ending up on the players' clothing and when the clothing is washed they will also enter the drainage system. A natural field captures carbon, while a synthetic pitch creates emissions through the production of plastics.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which details the public consultation that was carried out by the applicant ahead of submitting this hybrid application for the development proposed, is included in the submission. This is an important element of the planning process and the determination of this application. Early public engagement as well as that with statutory and non statutory consultees is not only encouraged by this Planning Authority but also by the Government through the NPPF (para's 40 to 44).

The Statement advises that the applicant engaged with the local community and political stakeholders on the proposals in February 2023. This has included a meeting with local Members and the distribution of leaflets to approximately 700 residential and business addresses near the site. The leaflet provided an overview of the proposals, details of the exhibition and feedback channels. The consultation was also publicised through Facebook. A dedicated website was set up to provide an overview of the vision, masterplan, illustrative designs of the scheme, information about the impact of the proposals and outlined benefits the proposals would bring to the area.

A public drop-in event was held from 9am to 3pm on Sunday 5th March 2023 at the Stockport Rugby Union Football Club, adjacent to the site location. It provided an opportunity for residents to see the plans in person and raise questions directly with the technical team. In total 170 people attended, and 22 attendees completed a physical feedback form. A digital first approach was employed and so all materials directed respondents to the website where an online feedback form was provided to capture residents' views and comments. A dedicated email address and community information line were set up to receive feedback and answer enquiries from the public regarding the plans.

In total, 133 individual submissions were received during the public consultation, the majority of which were via the consultation feedback form – either online or hard copy at the exhibition.

Responses received can be summarised as follows:

- Suggest using a portion of the space for a community sports group
- Improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points.
- Impact on local traffic and highways.
- Impact on local Green Belt
- Agree with proposals and new homes in the local area
- Asked about ensuring that homes can be ringfenced for first time buyers
- Strongly in favour of addressing the local housing shortage by introducing new homes to the area.
- Recognising the need for more affordable housing options within the community.
- Appreciating the advantageous location of the site for the development of new homes.
- Supporting plans that bring investment to Stockport RUFC and create opportunities for youth engagement with a local sports club.

- Expressing concerns regarding the potential impact of the site on the local green belt and the related community infrastructure.
- Agree with the size and scale of the site to be in keeping with the local area.
- Where negative comments were raised, they were raised on the grounds of potential additional traffic on Jacksons Lane, potential impact of the development on public services and the use of “Greenbelt not Brownfield”. Others commented that local public transport was inadequate in the area, one asked that Hazel Grove High School be considered for any funding for sport provision and another wanted to ensure each home had adequate parking.

The applicant advises that the feedback received has informed the proposals for the site.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

SMBC Planning Policy Officer (Green Belt) – The AGP and clubhouse extensions are appropriate within the Green Belt and NPPF compliant. The residential dwellings, extra care and residential care home are not appropriate in the Green Belt, will cause harm to openness and can only be approved if very special circumstances (VSC) are identified. It is for the decision maker to determine how much weight to be given to the VSC set out in the application.

SMBC Planning Policy (Housing) – No objection. Noting the very significant undersupply of housing, very significant weight should be given to the provision of housing given that it will help meet identified need. The affordable housing provision in excess of the minimum policy position will help meet identified need and is supported. The extra care provision and older persons housing will also help meet identified need. No objection to the proposed density of housing.

SMBC Planning Policy Officer (Energy) - No objections to the outline proposals noting that the strategy proposes a very high level of energy efficiency and sustainability, going beyond the minimum set by building regulations, to further reduce carbon emissions.

SMBC Planning Policy Officer (Education) – No objections to the residential development proposed subject to a clause in the S106 to secure a detailed review of impact on school places at reserved matter stage.

SMBC Active Sports Manager - Supports the application and is encouraged by their commitment towards accessibility. This echoes the Councils own aspirations as set out in the Stockport Active Communities Strategy as well as the ‘Commitment to Inclusion’ taking place at pace and scale across Greater Manchester.

Sport England – Object to the application as it does not comply with Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Sport England’s policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of:

- all or any part of a playing field, or
- land which has been used as a playing field land remains undeveloped, or
- land allocated for use as a playing field

unless, in the judgement of Sport England the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.

These exceptions are as follows:

1 - A robust and up-to-date assessment has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of Sport England, that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, which will remain the case should the development be permitted, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.

2 - The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.

3 - The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
- result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or
- prejudice the use of any part of a playing field and any of its playing pitches.

4 - The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field:

- of equivalent or better quality, and
- of equivalent or greater quantity, and
- in a suitable location, and
- subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.

5 - The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.

Sport England considers there to be insufficient benefits resulting from the proposed AGP to justify the loss of playing field on the western side of the site nearest to the clubhouse.

Sport England considers that the replacement of the natural turf playing field to the west with an AGP has the potential to meet the requirements of Exception 5, however the loss of that playing field is currently not sufficiently outweighed by benefits to the development of sport. It has not been demonstrated that the sports lighting is sufficient for purpose; the wider benefits to sport have not been sufficiently established through the Community Use Agreement; there are concerns regarding the capability of the proposed AGP to provide for competitive adult football and the use of the facility by the Club has the potential to constrict access by the community beyond that of daytime educational use; the technical capability of the proposed AGP to meet World Rugby requirements has not been demonstrated.

The playing field to the east which includes the Wallbank pitch, is not proposed to be replaced in terms of quality and quantity sufficient to meet Exception 4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. Nor has there been a case presented to demonstrate that the 1.16ha of playing field and adult natural turf pitch, is no longer required in this location.

Sport England understands that the applicant is seeking to use the loss of the Wallbank pitch to fund the AGP and club facility improvements, this is contrary to

Exception 5 in any event and the advice within the Sport England Playing Field Policy and Guidance paragraph 80.

Part of the applicant's case is that both the Wallbank pitch and the pitches to the west suffer from being unplayable for large parts of the year despite efforts to address drainage. The applicant's submitted FRA maps (Fig 5 and Fig 6) show that both areas are within Flood Zone 1 and in the case of the western pitches, are in 'an area at very low risk of surface water flooding according to the Surface Water Flood Map' it also states on p.11 that their client (Russell Homes) had let them know that 'there is no known issue with the drainage of the existing site'. If the FRA is correct then Sport England challenge the information provided by the applicant in relation to the current western site drainage as this should not, if maintained appropriately, result in significant loss of pitch availability. If the current maintenance regime still results in flooding and pitch availability, then it is unlikely that the system as proposed will be able to cope with the addition of the AGP pitch.

The full proposal for the AGP pitch includes proposed area of tree planting towards the Wallbank Road boundary which would take place on playing field land and would compromise the flexibility to mark out pitches in alternative formats. It is noted that the area could accommodate a mini pitch and that the Club has emphasised the wish to develop mini and junior rugby. This is also a disbenefit in terms of Exception 5.

The Planning Statement refers to unsuitable 'ground conditions' that led to the nil use of the three western pitches for 3 weeks during season 23/24 however these are not defined. The 'drainage issues' referred to across the submission are not defined, e.g. are these as a result of the ground make up; current drainage provision; failure of drainage infrastructure. It is notable that the proposed outline scheme includes an area of SUDS (to drain to Lady Brook) partly on the site of the Wallbank pitch, this is part of the drainage proposal to support the 130 unit and 75 care facility, residential element. There is no explanation as to why an equally sustainable drainage system could not improve the current pitch. Paragraph 5.63 of the Planning Statement refers to the soakaway test that were undertaken in 2022. Sport England has not seen any details of what drainage measures have been either considered or installed by the Club.

Paragraph 8.159 states *'It is proposed to drain the AGP with filter drains around it. Soakaway tests will need to be undertaken to ensure the 3G rugby pitch can drain. If this is not feasible there is a surface water pipe that drains in the south-east of the Site that the AGP rugby pitch could possibly drain to if soakaways fail.'* This casts some doubt over the capability of the AGP pitch drainage which could have further consequences for the remaining grass pitches on the western part of the site. Sport England cannot comment on technical drainage matters, however, needs to be satisfied that the proposals will not worsen any current situation.

The submitted S106 heads of terms does not include any provision for a replacement playing field for the Wallbank pitch.

On the basis of the above assessment the proposal does not meet the Exceptions 4 and 5 in Sport England's Playing Fields Policy or paragraph 103 of the NPPF.

To conclude and summarise Sport England's consideration of this proposal:

- The proposed clubhouse extensions broadly meet Exception 2;
- The proposed AGP is not Exception 5 and NPPF 103c compliant in view of the loss of the natural turf pitch which it replaces; wider community use has

not been demonstrated and there is insufficient information with regard to the technical design of the pitch and sports lighting; it will result in the loss of playing field land (for tree planting) which would be capable of providing pitches and it has not been demonstrated that the AGP will be sufficiently drained.

- The proposed benefits of the AGP to meet Exception 5 would not result in sufficient benefit to outweigh the permanent loss of playing field known as the Wallbank pitch. Any benefits of the AGP that are demonstrated could only be used to address the loss of the single natural turf pitch which the AGP replaces.
- The proposed loss of the Wallbank pitch is not Exception 4 or NPPF 103 b) compliant. The outline proposal is for a residential use and assessed under the terms of Exception 4 and NPPF 103 b) accordingly; no replacement playing field or other form of mitigation is proposed.

Given the above, Sport England objects to the application because it is not considered to accord with any of the Exceptions to their Playing Fields Policy or paragraph 103 of the NPPF.

NB: Sport England commented on this application before the revision of the NPPF in December 2024. Having regard to that revision, reference to para 103 should now be replaced with reference to para 104.

SMBC Strategic Housing – Supports the affordable housing proposals subject to clarity regarding the precise level of affordable housing being proposed vs the policy requirement; the additionality in financial terms that this scheme will bring compared to that required under planning policy and confirmation that the levels of affordability would be in line with the findings of the Housing Needs Survey 2019.

Also supports the provision of extra care/supported housing given the need and undersupply of such accommodation within the Borough.

SMBC Highway Engineer – No objections subject to conditions and a S106 agreement.

SMBC Public Rights of Way Officer – No comments to make on the application.

Active Travel England – Offer standing advice as to active travel and sustainable development.

Transport for Greater Manchester - Offer advice on highways matters relating to proposed access arrangements for the outline proposals (in terms of swept paths) but defer to the local highway authority as to the acceptability of such. A review of traffic regulation orders is advised together with a construction management plan.

TfGM defer to the local highway authority to decide if it is necessary to relocate bus stops. In order to encourage walking and cycling, it should be ensured that the pedestrian and cycling environment, within and around the site, is designed to be as safe, attractive and convenient as possible, including natural surveillance where possible. This should provide sufficient links to the surrounding pedestrian and cycle networks. To establish travel patterns at the beginning of occupation and encourage modal shift to sustainable modes of travel, it is important to ensure the facilities are in place to support sustainability.

TfGM recommend that secure covered cycle stands are included in the design, of both the Rugby Club and residential uses, to encourage travel by sustainable modes. Cycle storage areas should be well lit and covered by CCTV.

The development will need to be supported by a full Travel Plan which should feature a range of measures promoting a choice of transport mode, and a clear monitoring regime with agreed targets.

SMBC Nature Development Officer- No objections subject to conditions and S106.

SMBC Tree Officer – No objections to the proposals in relation to the rugby club. The outline proposals will have a negative impact on the trees on neighbouring properties on all the boundaries but only to a small number of trees, and a section of hedge. These impacts could be easily off set through a detailed landscaping plan and root protection measures.

SMBC Environmental Health Officer (Air) – No objections subject to conditions to secure EV charging points and a construction environmental management plan.

SMBC Environmental Health Officer (Contamination) – No objections to the outline proposals subject to conditions to secure a site investigation and risk assessment in relation to contamination, a remediation strategy and validation report. Investigations and an assessment are also required in relation to the presence of landfill gas together with remediation measures as required.

SMBC Environmental Health Officer (Noise) – No objections to the proposals for the clubhouse subject to a condition to secure details of any extraction equipment proposed/required. No objections to the outline proposals subject to a condition to secure a noise impact assessment so as to ensure that future occupiers are afforded an acceptable level of amenity.

LLFA – No objections to the drainage for the full proposals to the clubhouse and pitch. No objections to the drainage for the outline proposals for C2 and C3 development subject to a condition securing a detailed drainage strategy.

Environment Agency – No comment other than to note that the application falls outside of their remit for consultation.

United Utilities – No objections to the outline proposals subject to conditions to secure the approval and implementation of a sustainable surface water and foul water drainage scheme. No objection to the full proposals subject to a condition to ensure that drainage for the development is carried out in accordance with the principles set out in the submitted Foul & Surface Water Drainage Design Drawing Figure 10: Concept Drainage Design, Dated October 2024.

SMBC Estates and Valuation – No objections and confirm that the level of enabling development proposed is that necessary to deliver the improvements to the rugby club.

Design for Security – No objections however note that the proposed extension to the club house creates a recessed area that could potentially generate criminal and/or antisocial behaviour as it is concealed from view. It is recommended that this staircase is gated or incorporated into the internal areas of the building.

The outline proposals should be supported by a Crime Impact Assessment at reserved matters stage.

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service - No objections and are content that the proposed development will not have any archaeological impact, and no further consideration of archaeological matters is warranted in this instance.

Manchester Airport – No objections subject to conditions. Exterior lighting shall be capped at the horizontal with no upward light spill. The proposed SuDS attenuation for the housing development is to be designed as to not result in regular or permanent areas of open water. The roof of the proposed care facilities should be pitched in design rather than have large areas of flat roof. Should this not be possible, then a Bird Hazard Management Plan would be required for the management of the roofs to monitor and mitigate against and populations of birds hazardous to aviation. In the interests of aviation safety, measures to minimise and manage the creation of dust and smoke should be implemented for the full duration of all construction works, including demolition and excavation, in accordance with the advice of Manchester Airport and the Civil Aviation Authority.

ANALYSIS

Members are reminded that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Members are aware that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply with the current position being 1.77 years of deliverable housing sites. Under paragraph 11d of the NPPF this means that where there are either no relevant development plan policies (note this does not apply for this application) or the policies which are the most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:

- the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance (the Green Belt in this instance) provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

Whilst two distinct proposals (full and outline) they are submitted as one application and cannot be implemented independently of each other. As such the application must be determined as a whole, with the outline proposals for the site east of Wallbank Road forming part of an enabling/cross-funding argument for the provision of an AGP together with extensions and enhancements to the clubhouse on land at Headlands Road/to the west of Wallbank Road.

Viability

The case made by the applicant is that it is not possible to secure the £2.1m required to construct the AGP and extensions to the clubhouse through RFU, World Cup Fund, Lottery Fund, or any other funding mechanism as funding from these sources does not extend to the level they require (with confirmation of such provided by way of correspondence from the RFU). The club advise that if the necessary level funding was available then they would have pursued the improvements independently without the need to consider enabling development. The funding that is available is more widely for smaller projects to support the running of the club/minor upgrades and not the type of development being proposed by this application. This has led the club to explore the sale of their land to the east of Wallbank Road to a residential developer to fund and enable the improvements to the club.

In this respect the application is supported by a financial viability assessment (FVA) which concludes that the outline proposals are of scale and nature (and no more than is necessary) to generate sufficient funds to install the AGP and erect the extensions.

The FVA has been considered by the Council's assessor and Members are advised that it is considered to be a robust and accurate assessment. It is well researched, with reference to current guidance and the methodology is accepted and agreed. The FVA sets out the costs to the club to construct the AGP and clubhouse extensions and also the costs (including anticipated S106 contributions) and values to the developer from the residential dwellings, care home and extra care facility.

Based on this information and the thorough assessments Officers agree therefore that the level of enabling development that is sought through the outline application would deliver sufficient funds (and no more than is necessary) to facilitate the development proposed by the club.

The assessment above addresses the comments of CPRE that the FVA needs to be fully assessed by the Council.

Loss of Existing Pitches and Provision of New/Extended Sports Facilities

Saved UDP Review policy L1.1 confirms that development of land currently or last used as playing fields will not be permitted unless:

- the proposed development is ancillary to the use of the site as a playing field (e.g. new changing rooms) and does not adversely affect the quantity or quality of pitches of their use;
- the proposed development only affects land that is incapable of forming a playing pitch (or part of one) and results in the retention and enhancement of pitches;
- the playing fields that would be lost would be replaced by a playing field or fields of equivalent or better quantity, quality, usefulness and attractiveness in a location at least as accessible to current and potential users; and
- the proposed development is for an outdoor or indoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the loss of the playing field.

Development which would result in the loss of existing community services and facilities will only be permitted where adequate replacement or special justification is shown. The supporting text to CTF1.1 states that where development is proposed involving either creation of new or enhancement of

existing community facilities, the potential for achieving the widest possible community use will be considered (Saved UDP Review policy CTF1.1).

The NPPF para 96 confirms that planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy places which promote social interaction and enable and support healthy lifestyles through the provision of sports facilities. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as sports venues) to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community (para 98).

Para 103 confirms that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well being of communities.

Para 104 of the NPPF confirms that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should not be built on unless the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Whilst interpretation of para 104 would suggest that any playing fields lost must be replaced by fields of the same number or more, the recent decision on Gatley Golf Club (DC/081468) affirmed a case made by the appellant that 104b should not be read strictly. As such this established that whilst there may be a quantitative reduction in pitches, a qualitative gain could still ensure compliance with para 104.

As existing the club has the use of 4 grass pitches, 3 to the west of Wallbank Road (including the western pitch) and 1 to the east of Wallbank Road (the Walbank pitch). The proposed development results in the loss of the western grass pitch and its replacement with an AGP and also the Wallbank pitch and adjacent grassed area with no replacement. This adjacent grassed area has extant permission for 2 junior pitches as part of that for the Wallbank pitch (DC/047556). These junior pitches have however never been constructed but as a material start has been made on the implementation of the planning permission they could be constructed without the need for planning permission. As such in quantitative terms there will be a reduction of 1 pitch having regard to the current provision onsite and loss of land that has permission for use as 2 junior pitches, but which have not been implemented to date.

Before considering the merits of the application it is important to understand the need for the proposed AGP and extensions by the club as well as the existing provision of grass pitches and AGP's within the Borough.

In terms of need, the application confirms that both the western pitch and Wallbank pitch experience significant drainage issues, particularly during the wetter months of the year. They are also under-utilised on weekdays due to these issues and having to allow them time to recover between games. This results in games and training sessions being cancelled, fixture congestion and teams having to train and play at off-site facilities (such as the AGP at Cheadle Hulme High School) due to the SRUFC pitches becoming waterlogged and the need to allow the grass pitches time to recover. When the grass pitches are

used, they need time to recover before they can be used again. In the 2022/23 season, the western pitch was unavailable in August, September and October due to repair being needed as a result of waterlogging and overuse in the previous year. In addition, all three pitches were not usable for 3 weeks of the last season due to ground conditions.

The Wallbank pitch is an overspill pitch and is used infrequently (by junior age groups on Sundays only) because it is not floodlit, has significant drainage problems which limits its use during the season, is isolated from the clubhouse and its facilities by a distance of approximately 0.5km and does not have any welfare facilities or parking causing inconvenience to users. In the 2022/23 season, Wallbank pitch was only used for 65% of the season (on Sundays only) and was only usable on three weekends during the period from the end of October to the end February.

The application includes a Site Investigation Factual Letter Report which confirms that soakaway tests were undertaken in November 2022 at the Wallbank area. The results of the investigations identifies clay ground conditions to a depth of 3.1m causing drainage issues and as a result of this concludes that infiltration is not effective in this location. As detailed in the application the western pitch also has the same ground conditions and experiences the same issues.

The clubhouse as existing comprises a catering area at ground floor alongside limited changing facilities. A bar, kitchen and lounge area are located at first floor. The application advises that the clubhouse struggles to cater for teams when SRUFC is at full capacity during match days. The kitchen and lounge area on the first floor of the clubhouse operate at over capacity to deliver meals for home and away teams. This results in meals being served from a tent in the outdoor seating area due to insufficient kitchen/dining space indoors which is particularly inconvenient during the winter.

The club has an inclusive membership ethos and hosts the only mixed-ability team in Cheshire, the Stockport All Stars. This team is a special tag rugby squad for young people with severe learning disabilities and or mobility problems however the clubhouse also does not have disabled access to the first floor or disabled changing/toilets, meaning less abled users are restricted to the ground floor and outside areas. Due to the limited facilities for those with a disability in the clubhouse and condition of the grass pitches (which only allows limited use by this team) they have to use facilities away from Stockport Rugby Club. The club strives for DDA compliance throughout to raise the profile of disabled rugby and show their support for this sector.

The current changing facilities are inadequate and are not RFU compliant. On Sundays there can be 10 mini and junior teams and a women's team playing. Home and away teams often have to share changing rooms and on Sundays there is no provision for a fully private women's changing facilities. The club find this extremely difficult to manage from a safeguarding position as people often have to pass through whilst women are using the facilities. The clubhouse does not have a first aid/physio room to deal with injuries which is expected by the RFU to treat injured players. The club requires improved infrastructure to enable showers and the water supply to operate properly. Currently, low water pressure means all showers cannot function at the same time, especially whilst the kitchen is also using water. It is advised that water issues often means home and away players cannot shower after games.

The aspirations of SRUFC to improve their ancillary facilities comes through as a recommendation in the Council's recently adopted 2024 Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). The club currently has 3 men's teams, 1 women's, 7 boys, 1 girls and 6 mixed teams. Demand and interest in sports has increased since the 2019 PPS and SRUFC has increased their team section by 2 since then. In addition to this is the 'All Stars' disability group.

The PPS provides an up-to-date assessment of the supply and demand of sports pitches in the Borough. This information is set out strategically as well as from an Area Committee perspective. The PPS has identified a profound increase in sports participation across the Borough since the previous study in 2019, Stockport Rugby Club included. As a direct consequence, there is a shortfall of sports pitches, not just grass pitches but in particular of World Rugby Compliant 3G AGP's such as that proposed by this application.

Grass pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected. As the main usage of pitches is for matches, it is appropriate for the comparable unit to be match equivalent sessions (MES). This converts both the amount of play a site can accommodate (carrying capacity) and how much play takes place (current use) into the same unit of demand to enable an analysis to be undertaken. Based on how the sports tend to be played, the match equivalent session unit for rugby union pitches relates to a typical week within the season for each sport.

The PPS in relation to grass pitches identifies a current borough shortfall of 20.5 MES increasing to 23 MES with anticipated future demand. The PPS recommends that most of the identified grass pitch shortfalls could be met by better utilising current provision, such as through improving quality, installing additional sports lighting and improving ancillary facilities.

There are currently only two World Rugby compliant 3G pitches in the whole of Stockport, with these located at Burnage Rugby Football Club and Cheadle Hulme School. The 3G pitch at Burnage Rugby Football Club is used for training and competitive demand by Burnage RUFC and ensures that there are no shortfalls across the site, whilst the pitch at Cheadle Hulme School is used to meet various curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The PPS recommends that due to shortfalls across grass pitches and training areas within Stockport, it is evident that there is scope for additional World Rugby compliant 3G facilities. For Stockport Rugby Club, overplay would be fully eradicated and there would be spare capacity across all pitches onsite if a 3G was developed.

Overall, the PPS identified a clear quantified shortfall of 12no. 3G AGPs that could only be rectified through the installation of new facilities. The development of 3G pitches could also help to alleviate grass pitch shortfalls via the transfer of play from overplayed grass pitch sites and facilitate the growth of teams and leagues that use them for the provision for their playing formats (e.g., mini 5v5 and 7v7 football).

3G pitches are widely accepted as the most reliable and effective pitch surface available. Their free-draining design means rainwater can drain through the perforated backing, leaving the surface free from standing water. They do not freeze or become muddy, and as a result, they are estimated to have 80 times the carrying capacity of a grass playing surface. Modern 3G pitches can now also

be designed to accommodate a variety of sports such as that proposed by this application.

The PPS identifies all the problems with the pitches and clubhouse at SRUFC as outlined in this application. It recommends that the club look to improve pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance; improve ancillary provision quality and support development of clubhouse; continue to explore feasibility for the development of a 3G pitch and look to improve clubhouse and changing facility provision.

The submission documents include letters from the RFU, Cheshire County FA Ltd, and Richmond Rovers expressing their support for the proposed development on the following grounds:

- The club have a proven track record of delivering both on and off the field having undertaken a noteworthy crowdfunding campaign during the Covid 19 lockdowns to help create a new outdoor catering facility; and in recent years having established Stockport Scarlets as a female section of the club and Stockport All Stars, which at the time was Cheshire's first mixed ability rugby team.
- Facilities at the club's Headlands Road site are well used by both members and non-members alike, with the club supplying 21 teams ranging from mixed mini squads to senior men's & women's teams. This is in addition to the myriad of community groups and third parties that hire the facilities for functions, events and activities. That being said, the current facilities do present an ongoing challenge for the Club to accommodate the level of demand. The changing facilities are outdated, too small and do not allow concurrent use by senior/junior or male/female teams; and the social space being on the first floor, without disabled access significantly impacts on the Club's ability to host all members, visitors and hires. Enhancing each of these, as proposed, would support the Club to become increasingly sustainable both on and off the pitch.
- Access to a World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant AGP on site would not only enable the Club to consistently host all its current teams on site for training and match demand but also provide the Club with capacity to accommodate future growth. In addition to this, due to a lack of appropriate facilities, in terms of a pitch and social space, on site, Stockport All Stars, the Club's mixed ability team must hire external venues for activity. Providing this group with access to an AGP on site would help embed the team within the Club, providing an increasingly more inclusive environment.
- The club keep rugby's values of Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship at the heart of everything they do, ensuring they are able to provide a good quality experience for all, both on and off the field. The presence of the Club within the local community, providing opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity to help contribute to overall wellbeing is commendable; and ensuring that this can continue by improving existing facilities is fully endorsed by the RFU.
- Stockport has shortfalls of artificial pitches with a lot of clubs struggling to get access to suitable training and match play facilities. Even though it is rugby led, new provision of artificial pitch will have a positive impact for football grassroots community too.

- The biggest FA club, Richmond Rovers, operating in the area currently are accessing facilities either out of borough or at very inconvenient times. Having an opportunity to access facility at their doorstep would help them to accommodate training for some of their existing teams locally and at convenient times.
- Another potential football user suggested is Stockport Metropolitan Junior League. League is offering central venue games for their mini soccer section, however struggle to gain access to enough sites to accommodate it. If they don't gain access to additional facilities, they will need to start turning teams away. Most of Stockport's mini soccer teams play in this league therefore the proposal would benefit a much wider Stockport football community than just local clubs.
- Football participation in Stockport has grown drastically since the last Playing Pitch Strategy therefore putting even more pressure on facilities to accommodate participation. Addition of an artificial pitch which could cater for both training and match play would be most welcomed by football community.

The proposed AGP will replace an existing grass pitch, will be of the same size as that existing and in the same location, it will however be of a durable all-weather construction. The outline proposals will result in the loss of the Wallbank pitch and adjacent land to the south which has extant permission for 2 junior pitches. As such whilst there will be a loss of 2 existing grass pitches, the replacement of the western pitch with an AGP reduces that loss to 1 pitch only (the Wallbank pitch).

The applicant presents the case that use of the grass pitches to be lost are restricted due to ground conditions affecting play, time required for the pitch to recover. In relation to the Wallbank pitch its distance from the clubhouse and lack parking and welfare facilities is also cited as being disadvantageous to its use. From the evidence submitted with the application relating to ground conditions which also includes the land to the south of the Wallbank pitch, it is considered that that the 2 junior pitches if constructed would also suffer from the same issues as the adjacent Wallbank pitch. These conditions in relation to both existing grass pitches to be lost clearly impact upon their quality, attractiveness and usefulness.

The application advises that the current average weekly usage of the existing grass pitches is 60.5 hours per week. However, during the driest period of the season, pitch usage increases to 80.5 hours per week. With the implementation of the proposed AGP, the forecast level of use of all pitches is 83 hours per week. When compared to the existing peak level, an additional 2.5 hours of use is not materially different however the AGP will allow more consistent use throughout the year and allow the Club to cope with poor weather and drainage issues which currently affect the usage of the grass pitches. As such the increase in usage beyond the current weekly average will be 22.5 hours.

It is clear through the up-to-date evidence presented in the PPS that there is demand for and a significant undersupply of 3G pitches not only in the Borough as a whole but within this locality which this application would help address. Despite the loss of 2 grass pitches and land where 2 junior pitches could be provided, it is considered that the proposed AGP will bring considerable benefits to sporting provision and will allow for all weather use consistently throughout the year for a variety of sports. This would benefit not only the club in terms of their

ability to train, play matches, compete in and host competitions at the site but will also facilitate better use by those with disabilities and also to the wider community through the CUA proposed as part of this application (which is not currently offered due to the condition of the pitches).

The objections of Sport England in relation the proposals are noted. In response Members are advised as follows:

- The benefits arising from the AGP are set in out in the report above in terms of its use all year round and the increased amount of play it will facilitate. The AGP will also facilitate sports that are currently not offered at the club through its marking out as a full sized football pitch and 3 five aside pitches in addition to a full size rugby pitch. The provision of this pitch will also mean that the club can train on site without having to travel to Cheadle Hulme. The marking out of the AGP in this way and so as to facilitate multi sports use would be secured by condition.
- The application proposes no changes to the existing floodlights which will be retained. If it subsequently transpires that changes are required then these will be subject to planning control.
- In terms of wider community use, having engaged with local schools, the Football Association (FA) and local football team Richmond Rovers the draft CUA clearly sets out the aspiration of the club to make the AGP available for local primary and secondary schools, football teams, other local organisations and the wider community when not in use by SRUFC Members. A minimum of 10 hours will be reserved for community use at the AGP throughout the week and will be booked on hourly slots. The provision of the AGP will, therefore, allow the Club to cater for a genuine cross-section of the local community throughout the year as the all-weather surface allows for consistent use without having to be rested between games or be at risk of training / fixture cancellation due to drainage issues. The Applicants have engaged with local schools, the Football Association (FA) and local football team Richmond Rovers who have expressed support for the AGP. A detailed CUA will be secured either by condition of S106 thus ensuring its implementation for the lifetime of the proposed development.
- With regard to the technical design of the pitch the application advises that they have liaised with the RFU and the proposed site plan and proposed block plan have been updated to show a 3m runoff as requested by them so as to ensure compliant play for both rugby and football.
- Whilst there are no known drainage issues with the site in terms of its drainage infrastructure, the grass pitches, comprising of clay, soil and grass, become churned up when used during and after wet periods and this poor condition means that they are unplayable. In effect the ground conditions are not compatible with the use of the grass pitches and infiltration will always be restricted. This can be avoided through the provision of an AGP. Even when compared to a 'good quality grass pitch', an AGP will provide more favourable playing conditions. The report above details the clay ground conditions and drainage issues which restrict the use of the existing grass pitches during wetter months of the year due resulting in cancellations AGP's are known to provide an all-weather surface an improved the carrying capacity of pitches. The application includes a drainage strategy for the AGP and further details of this would be secured by condition. Subject to this condition and given the

construction of the AGP it is not anticipated that there would be the same drainage issues with that proposed as there are existing. Given the clay soil conditions it is not envisaged that the performance of the grass pitches can be improved through drainage solutions as infiltration is not feasible and the pitches will not drain. Even if it was possible to improve ground conditions and the grass pitch was retained, the overall usage and benefits would still not match that of an AGP and the overall carrying capacity.

- The tree planting proposed to the west of Wallbank Road as part of the full application is required to ensure that the development as a whole achieves 10% BNG. This land is not used for active sports and as such its loss has no impact on the recreational use of the site.
- With regard to the loss of the land that SE refers to as comprising 1.16ha of playing field, Members are advised this is simply used to accommodate spectators watching matches on the adjacent pitch (the Wallbank pitch). Like the Wallbank pitch this land comprises clay, soil and grass and becomes churned up even when only accommodating spectators. Whilst it has planning permission to accommodate 2 pitches, these have never been constructed nor is the land used as a playing field. As such, it is difficult to attribute any weight to its loss when it does not and (given the ground conditions) is likely not to facilitate any active sporting use.

The assessment above addresses the comment by CPRE that the loss of the grass pitches needs to be considered.

For the above reasons the loss of the western grass pitch, Wallbank pitch and adjacent grassed area can be justified by the provision of an AGP.

The proposed extensions to the clubhouse will create 141.2m² of additional floorspace at ground floor level. This will allow for internal re-configuration to provide new accessible toilets, first aid and physio room, an accessible lift to the first floor, new female and disabled changing facilities, a new entrance and stair core, and relocated bar area. At first floor, the proposed development will create 118.9m² additional floorspace. This will allow for a larger kitchen area to prepare meals, a new stair core and accessible lift, accessible toilet, extended lounge area and viewing balcony.

The extensions will have no impact on playing pitches or fields. They will however benefit the club, visitors and community users considerably in terms of their ability to provide an inclusive environment for females and those with disabilities. In particular the 'All Stars' disability group that the club run will be able to train and play at this home site given the provision of facilities that meet their needs.

The club will be able host visiting teams as well as their members and supporters through hospitality and welfare facilities that are fit for purpose. Compliance with DDA requirements in relation to the provision of a lift, toilets and changing rooms together with changing rooms for women will not only provide equality for all but will ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place (and the need for which is highlighted in the Council's 2024 PPS). The provision of a first aid and physio room will offer players the support and care they need in order to participate to their maximum physical level possible. Infrastructure so as to allow all players to shower after games (and at the same time) will also improve the level of provision offered to players. The improvements to the clubhouse along with those arising from the AGP will allow the club to extend the use of their facilities to the wider community.

Externally it is proposed to extend the existing hardstanding between the clubhouse and adjacent play centre building 2.7m in width and up to 20.5m in length. This will have no impact on the existing playing pitches, or land capable of forming a pitch or the wider fields and will improve the circulation space and parking arrangement around the building.

The assessment above addresses objections that the AGP should be available via booking to local clubs and schools. Objections regarding the composition of the pitch and its environmental credentials are noted. There are however no planning policies upon which the refusal of planning permission could be sustained on this basis. On the contrary, both the development plan and NPPF support improvements to sports such as will arise from the AGP and the Council's PPS identifies the significant shortfall in AGP which this application will assist in addressing. The proposed development will also address the deficiencies at this club which are identified in the PPS.

In conclusion, Members are advised that the proposals are compliant with saved UDP Review policies L1.1 and CTF1.1 together with para's 96, 98, 103 and 104 of the NPPF.

Loss of Agricultural Land

Part of the outline application site comprises land which is used for agricultural purposes.

Development which involves the permanent loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the loss is outweighed by other factors (saved UDP Review policy GBA2.1).

Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land (NPPF para 187).

Agricultural land in England and Wales is graded between 1 and 5, depending on the extent to which physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use. Grades 1, 2 and 3a are defined as best and most versatile agricultural land. 3b is moderate quality, 4 is poor and 5 is very poor.

Submitted with the application is an Agricultural Land Classification Report which confirms that soil profiles have been taken and analysed together with an observation pit being dug. Assessment of land quality has been carried out according to the MAFF guidelines and soil profiles have been described according to the recognised source for describing soil profiles and characteristics. The report concludes that most of the site is limited by soil wetness and workability to subgrade 3b, with one profile showing a disturbed profile which is downgraded further to grade 4.

Records held by the Council confirm that this land is grade 3 however do not break that down into 3a or 3b. Given that the land historically has only been used for grazing it is very unlikely to be of grade 3a quality. On this basis the applicant's case that the development would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land is accepted. The proposal is therefore compliant with saved UDP Review policy GBA2.1 and para 187 of the NPPF.

For clarity, the loss of the private orchard that is included within the application site is not covered by the above policy position. The loss of this is considered in relation to trees, ecology and biodiversity net gains in the report below.

Housing Delivery

Core Strategy policy CS2 confirms that a wide choice of homes should be provided to meet the needs of existing and future households in Stockport. The focus will be on providing new housing through the effective and efficient use of land within accessible urban areas.

Policy CS3 confirms that a mix of housing will be sought in terms of tenure, price, type and size to meet the requirements of new forming households, first time buyers, families with children, disabled people and older people. New development should contribute to the creation of more mixed, balance communities by providing affordable housing in areas with high property prices. The overall strategic affordable housing target of the core strategy (2011) is 50% of total provision. The development plan advises that the Council will aim to achieve this with the assistance of Stockport Homes and other affordable housing providers on 100% affordable housing developments, by maximising opportunities on Council owned land, by releasing additional land for housing and through developer contributions. Support will be given to the provision of specialist and supported housing for older people and people with a disability. The mix of housing provided should be based upon the findings of up-to-date evidence. On sites that are capable of accommodating a range of housing types and sizes, development should contribute to the provision of an appropriate borough wide mix of housing reflecting the different types and sizes of housing likely to be required over the plan period. Developments in accessible suburban locations may be expected to provide the full range of houses and contain fewer flats however they should still achieve a density of 30 dwellings per hectare.

CS policy CS4 seeks to direct residential development in line with 3 spatial priorities including to accessible locations. 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 across the entire Borough (CS policy H2).

To help achieve the 50% overall strategic target, affordable housing will be sought on applications seeking residential development. On Green Belt sites the level of affordable housing provision should be at least 50% (CS policy H3).

To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet an area's identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community (NPPF para 61).

The size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children; older people

(including those who require retirement housing, housing with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes (para 63).

Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning decisions should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs, across Social Rent, other affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership tenures (NPPF para 66).

As part of the 'Golden Rules' for Green Belt development set out in paragraphs 156-157 of the Framework, a specific affordable housing requirement should be set for major development involving the provision of housing which may be permitted on land within the Green Belt. This requirement should:

a) be set at a higher level than that which would otherwise apply to land which is not within or proposed to be released from the Green Belt; and

b) require at least 50% of the housing to be affordable, unless this would make the development of these sites unviable when tested in accordance with national planning practice guidance on viability (para 67).

Mixed tenure sites can provide a range of benefits, including creating diverse communities and supporting timely build out rates, and local planning authorities should support their development through their policies and decisions. Mixed tenure sites can include a mixture of ownership and rental tenures, including Social Rent, other rented affordable housing and build to rent, as well as housing designed for specific groups such as older people's housing and student accommodation, and plots sold for custom or self-build (NPPF para 71).

The NPPF confirms at para 123 that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for new homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. This is reiterated at para 129 with a requirement that the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it be taken into account.

Local planning authorities are required to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old. The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer of 20% where there has been a significant under delivery of housing over the previous 3 years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply (para 78).

Following the publication of the updated standard method for calculating housing need published by government in December 2024 the current housing land supply position is currently established as 1.77 years. The level of supply was considered as part of the recent Gatley Golf Club appeal decision where the Inspector recognised that the level of supply is very significantly below the five-year deliverable supply position that local authorities should be able to demonstrate. As such the requirements of NPPF para 11d continue to apply to decision-making (the titled balance). This means that applications for residential development should be approved unless the application of policies relating to areas or assets of particular importance (defined in footnote 7 of the NPPF and

the Green Belt in this instance) provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed, or if any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the NPPF as a whole, with particular regard to directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and/or providing affordable homes.

Having regard to policies CS4 and H2 and noting that all sites within the Borough are now considered accessible for the purpose of housing delivery on account of the required accessibility score having been dropped to zero, this Green Belt site is therefore considered to be in an accessible location for the purposes of housing delivery. On this basis the proposed residential development will accord with the 3rd spatial priority set out in policy CS4.

The outline element of the application proposes the erection of up to 60 C3 dwellings including 10% which would be affordable supported housing dwellings and a 70 dwelling C3 extra care unit for those aged 55 and over (all affordable housing). For clarity Members are advised that C3 supported housing is accommodation that is specifically designed for those with a disability, C3 extra care is accommodation for residents who have their own independent unit (in this instance an apartment) but are provided with care on site and a range of communal facilities.

As this element of the application is in outline form with all matters reserved, the only consideration at this stage is the principle of development in terms of type and amount of residential development proposed. The final number, type and size of dwellings (up to that proposed) will be considered at reserved matters stage. In considering the proposed residential provision Members must have regard to the position of housing undersupply within the Borough. Having regard to the revised standard method for calculating housing need published in December 2024 which increased our LHN figure by over 700 dwellings per annum (dpa) to 1,815dpa, and based upon the number of deliverable homes granted planning permission over the next 5 years, Stockport has a shortfall of 7,043 dwellings over the next 5 years.

In relation to the need for supported housing, the 2019 HNA identifies a need for and shortfall across all of the types of housing falling within this category. Whilst the specific type of provision will need to be confirmed at reserved matters stage, the inclusion of such housing will assist in meeting an unmet demand. Their provision also as affordable housing will secure specialist housing for those who otherwise might not be able to afford a home that meets their specific needs.

With regard to housing for older people, the 2019 HNA also notes that the number of households headed by someone aged 60 or over is expected to increase by 13,933 (27.3%) by 2037. The majority of older people and 65 and over (74.8%) want to continue to live in their current home with support when needed according to the household survey, with help with repair/maintenance, gardening, cleaning and other practical tasks – key support which would help people remain in their own home. However, the household survey also points to a need to deliver a range of smaller dwellings for older people in the general market and specialist older housing provision.

Across the Borough, the 2019 HNA notes that there are around 6925 units of specialist accommodation of which 5300 comprise C3 extra care dwellings. Analysis of demographic change would suggest a need for an additional 2,414 C3 extra care dwellings to 2037. A key conclusion is that there needs to be a

broader housing offer for older people across the borough and the HNA has provided evidence of scale and range of dwellings needed.

The Council, in terms of its broader approach to social care and health needs, has a preference to maintain independent living for as long as possible. Helping people remain independent for longer in suitable accommodation, accessing support when they need it, not only reduces pressure on the Borough's limited housing stock, but also promotes physical activity/personal independence and often reduces the financial burden to both families and the public purse. The proposed supported housing and extra care housing will help towards ensuring residents can maintain their independence for as long as possible, and, as such, these elements of the proposed developed are welcomed.

Noting this very significant undersupply of housing, the 60 C3 dwellings and 70 C3 extra care home dwellings will help meet an identified need and will assist in addressing the shortfall.

The 2019 Housing Needs Assessment identified a need for 549 affordable dwellings per annum (2,745 over 5 years). To date and despite recent approvals for affordable housing developments there remains a significant shortfall (2,191 dwellings). The affordable provision proposed by this application includes 10% supported housing within the C3 dwellings and all 70 dwellings within the C3 extra care for those aged 55 and above. Equating to 58.4% of the residential development on site, this is in excess of the minimum policy requirement of 50%. The site is in an area defined as 'moderate' for the purposes of assessing the tenure mix, which means that the Council would expect affordable provision to be split 75/25 between shared ownership and social rented units. A 58.4% on site affordable housing provision accords with and exceeds that required in CS policy H3 and para 67 of the NPPF (that being 50%).

The application advises that the cost of providing affordable supported housing is circa 50% more than the delivery of standard affordable housing (market housing sold at a discounted rate). The specification of accommodation to support people (including elderly) with disabilities is the reasoning behind the cost increase. Supported Housing does not achieve any higher value than a standard affordable housing would do, but with approximately 50% additional cost. Therefore, the additionality to the scheme beyond policy is a significantly increased affordable housing delivery for an affordable tenure that would not be delivered through normal mechanisms/policy. On this basis, the application makes the case that the 10% all-affordable supported housing is equivalent to 15% traditional affordable housing (i.e. a further 5% uplift to 63.4% provision).

Members are advised that the provision of affordable supported housing in lieu of general needs affordable housing is supported in this case and has actively been encouraged by Officers in their negotiations with the applicant. The applicant's case with regard to the cost of providing affordable supported housing is not disputed and it is accepted that the cost of delivering affordable supported housing exceeds that of general needs housing. As such it is agreed that the affordable housing provision proposed is equivalent to that of a 63.4% provision of standard affordable housing.

Noting the significant undersupply, the provision of affordable housing within both the C3 dwellings and C3 extra care for older people anywhere but particularly in one of the more expensive parts of the Borough, at a level that exceeds both local and national policy requirements is very much welcome. That proposed will

help meet an identified and unmet need and therefore should be given significant weight.

The 60 C3 dwellings proposed equate to a density of 34.5dph. This is presented by the application as being a suitable density given the sustainable location of the site and makes optimum use of the Green Belt land. This must however also be weighed against the need for the scheme to deliver only the minimum housing required under a consideration of 'very special circumstances' in relation to the Green Belt impacts (and as set out in the report below). Having regard to these considerations the proposed density is considered acceptable.

The assessment above addresses objections that there is not a lack of housing in the area. On the contrary, there is a very significant shortfall of housing which this application will assist in addressing.

For the above reasons Members are advised that the application in terms of housing delivery accords with Core Strategy policies CS2, CS3, CS4, H2 and H3 together with para's 61, 63, 66, 71, 123 and 129 of the NPPF. The development also accords with para's 67 and 156a of the NPPF in relation to the 'Golden Rules' for major residential development in the Green Belt through the provision of at least 50% affordable housing.

Provision of C2 Residential Care Facility

The application proposes a C2 residential care unit for up to 75 beds. Members are advised that C2 care is residential accommodation where care is provided to people in need of care; residents would have a bedroom (either with ensuite or shared bathroom) and would share communal facilities such as a lounge and dining room. Some may reside in the facility permanently whilst others may be there only for a short period of time whilst they recover before returning home.

Saved UDP Review policy CDH1.3 confirms that a care or nursing home will be permitted subject to:-

- The provision a minimum of 15m² of amenity space per resident.
- The provision of car parking in accordance with the adopted parking standards together with a landscaping scheme to screen the parking.
- The home being within reasonable walking distance of local facilities.

The 2019 HNA notes that across the Borough there are around 1625 units of C2 residential care. It is anticipated that by 2037 an additional 740 units will be required. A key conclusion of the HNA is that there needs to be a broader housing offer for older people across the borough and the HNA has provided evidence of scale and range of dwellings needed. As a result, the proposed C2 care provision for up to 75 beds is welcomed and should be given weight.

The level of occupancy would not be confirmed until reserved matters stage however it is expected that even if a couple were to reside in the home together, they would most likely have a single room each. On this basis, 1125m² of amenity space would be required. Without counting narrow areas of limited use, the indicative layout shows that in excess of 1400m² of amenity space could be provided around the footprint of the building thus affording future occupiers an acceptable level of amenity.

As set out in the consideration of highway issues below, sufficient parking including provision for those with disabilities would be secured for the C2 care

home (supplemented by measures to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel) to accord with the Council's parking standards.

Landscaping is reserved for future consideration and details of the screening of the parking area would be confirmed at that stage. The indicative layout however demonstrates that there would be sufficient room to provide this screening.

In response to issues raised in objections, details of refuse storage will be considered at reserved matters stage also. Such facilities may be external or internal to the building. In either event the provision of facilities of an appropriate size and design should ensure that issues with vermin, odour and amenity are adequately addressed.

For the above reasons the proposed development is considered compliant with policy CDH1.3.

Highways and Parking

Saved UDP Review policy CDH1.3 permits care homes subject to acceptable levels of parking and being within reasonable walking distance of local facilities. MW1.5 requires adequate provision to be made for the storage, handling and removal from the site of waste arising from the development.

The Council will negotiate for extensions and additions to the network and improvements in the standard of recreation routes (saved UDP Review policy L1.7). The Council will safeguard and enhance the network of Strategic Recreation Routes shown on the Proposals Map (saved UDP Review policy L1.8). Where appropriate incorporation of attractive, safe and convenient new footpaths and other recreation routes will be required in new developments both within the site and to link with adjoining areas to promote such routes (saved UDP Review policy L1.9).

Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy DPD requires development to be sited in locations accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. This policy also confirms that the Council will support development that reduces the need to travel by car, a position which is followed through in policy T1. Parking (including accessible spaces and cycle parking) should be provided in accordance with the maximum standards (policy T2) and development which will have an adverse impact on highway safety and/or the capacity of the highway network will only be permitted if mitigation measures are proposed to address such impacts. Developments shall be of a safe and practical design (policy T3).

Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. Opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making (NPPF para 110).

In assessing specific applications for development, local and national policies seek to ensure that sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location. Safe and suitable access to the site should be achieved for all users; the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety,

should be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach (NPPF para 115).

Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe (para 116).

Applications for development should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second (as far as possible) to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use. Development should address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport; create places that are safe, secure and attractive which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards; allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations (NPPF para 117).

All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed (NPPF para 118).

Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure should be made (para 156 NPPF).

The application is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA), Framework Travel Plan (FTP), Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) and Designer's Response to the Audit. Having considered these documents together with the proposed and illustrative plans, Members are advised as follows.

With respect to the proposals for the rugby club, the TA outlines that the pitch and works to the club house are not envisaged to result in any change in how the club operates or increase the trip generation of the club. A Technical Note (TN) appended to the TA outlines that the 3 existing pitches together with the Wallbank pitch are used throughout the week for an average of 60.5 hours a week and 80.5 hours a week when the weather is better. They are not used before 9am and are mainly used at weekends and after 5.30pm on weekdays. There are no planning conditions which limit the use of the pitches (other than a condition restricting the use of the floodlight to the western pitch after 9.30pm) but adverse weather and the need to protect pitches mean that teams currently use facilities elsewhere.

The TN advises that if planning permission is approved all activities would take place on the AGP and the two retained pitches, the provision of an AGP will allow local people / teams to play at the site rather than have to travel elsewhere, average weekly usage would be 83 hours a week and theoretical maximum (but not expected) usage would be 114 hours a week, with the increased usage mainly being by local schools and groups. As such, the TN outlines that the development would essentially enable the same level of activity to take place throughout the year, with wet weather not limiting use, only a small increase in use on dry weeks is envisaged (2.5 hours more each week) and majority of

additional use is expected to come local schools, community groups and private hires.

Based on the submitted information it is concluded that although the proposal will increase vehicle movements on the local highway network on some weeks of the year, the average level of movements will not be materially greater than those on weeks when the existing pitches can be used unhindered. In addition, much of the additional use is expected to be by local schools and groups, enabling them to travel a shorter distance, and therefore potentially reducing longer distance trips on the highway network. As such and noting that the majority of activities at the club do not materially impact on the local highway network and, in general, the local highway network functions within capacity, it is concluded that the proposal should not have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network.

The proposal would, however, increase the number of hours each week that vehicles will be accessing the site on account of the AGP facilitating use in poor weather, increasing the risk of conflict on the site access drive. To address this potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicles it is considered that a dedicated pedestrian route 1.8m wide should be provided along the site access drive. This would be secured by condition.

The application outlines that cycle parking will be provided for the rugby club. It is agreed that this should be provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel and reduce reliance upon the use of motorised vehicles. This would be secured by condition. With regard to car parking both the TA and TN outline that the proposal should not result in a material change in activity the level of activity at the site at any time when compared with the maximum that already occurs and, instead, would allow the same activities to take place more consistently throughout the year and more regularly each week. In addition, some of the additional use is expected to come local schools, who are more likely to travel by coach. As such the TA and TN conclude that the provision of additional car parking should not be required and could not be justified. Members are advised that this assessment is considered accurate and acceptable. As such no additional parking is sought from this application noting especially that should school groups arrive by coach during the day (when the club is traditionally quiet) there is sufficient parking already available within the site.

It is noted that the club holds events for the community however the proposal should not affect these events; such events are currently marshalled. Given that there may be an increase in concurrent activities, which could result in an increase in parking demand at the start and end of such activities, it is considered that a car parking management plan should be drafted and implemented to ensure that activities are timed and parking is managed such that the existing parking facilities will be able to meet demand. The requirement to do this would be secured by condition.

The AGP will be constructed on the site of the existing grass pitch and will therefore not affect access, parking or servicing facilities within the site. The main extension to the club will be located on an existing area of hardstanding and so will also not affect access, parking or servicing facilities within the site. The smaller club extension will, however, affect part of the site's existing car park, affecting 3 parking spaces. The scheme, however, includes proposals to extend the car park slightly and reorientate the parking spaces to allow 3 replacement parking spaces to be provided. This amended layout is acceptable.

The construction of developments can have an impact on the local highway network, nearby businesses and dwellings and therefore needs to be carefully managed and this is even more important for developments such as the AGP and clubhouse extensions given their close proximity to the adjacent play centre which is visited by children. The TA does not include any information on construction although it is acknowledged that it will be possible to construct this development in a manner that does not result in highway or safety issues. A condition should be imposed to secure a construction management plan and which should include details on phasing, access arrangements, vehicle routing, contractor parking arrangements, site compounds and mud prevention measures, as well as details of measures to minimise the impact of the rugby club and Wild Things Soft Play Centre and ensure the centre can be safely accessed during construction work.

With respect to the outline proposals and in relation to traffic generation and highway impact, whilst access is not for consideration as part of the residential element of this application, the TA outlines that vehicular access to the residential site will be via a priority junction on Jacksons Lane (A5143). The TA has therefore assessed the highway impact of the residential scheme based on the site being accessed in this way.

With respect to traffic generation the TA outlines that, based on data contained in the TRICS database, the residential development (60 dwellings, a 75-bed care facility and a 70-unit assisted living facility) would be expected to generate 62 vehicle movements during the AM peak and 57 vehicle movements during the PM peak. This, it outlines, equates to approx. 1 additional vehicle movement on the highway network every minute.

The impact of these vehicle movements on the local highway network has been assessed, using junction modelling software for the year 2031 (opening year of the development plus 5 years). This takes into account expected growth on the local highway network and committed development in the area, including developments on Mirrlees Fields, Pepper Road and Hazel Grove High School. The results of this assessment are outlined in the table below.

Junction	Impact
Site access	The modelling indicates that the site access will operate within capacity with minimal queuing during both the AM and PM peak periods.
Jacksons Lane / Bridge Lane / Bramhall Moor Lane / Laneside Drive / Wallbank Road roundabout.	The modelling indicates that in 2031 the junction is expected to operate within capacity, both during the AM and PM peak periods, with queues of up to 2 vehicles. Future year modelling with the development occupied indicates that the junction will continue to operate within capacity, with only a minimal increase in queuing (less than 1 vehicle).
Jacksons Lane / Dorchester Road mini-roundabout	The modelling indicates that in 2031 the junction is expected to operate within capacity, both during the AM and PM peak periods, with queues of up to 4 vehicles. The Jacksons Lane East arm, however, would be approaching capacity during the AM peak. Future year modelling with the development occupied indicates that the junction will continue to operate within capacity, with only a minimal increase in queuing (less than 1 vehicle).

The impact on a number of links has also been assessed. This outlines that in the opening year of the development, the development will increase flows on the nearby roads by a maximum of 4.2% at peak time and majority of the network would see increases of less than 3%, which, the TA outlines, would not be material. The TA concludes that the modelling demonstrates that the residential development (dwellings, care facility and assisted living facility) are only anticipated to give rise to a negligible impact upon prevailing local highway network operational conditions, would not result in a 'severe' detrimental impact on local highway network operation" and the traffic generation would be "not at a level that could be considered to represent a reasonable reason for highways based objection.

After reviewing the assessments, the Councils Senior Highway Engineer concluded that they provide a reasonable indication of the impact that the residential scheme would have on the network. In addition, it is agreed that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network.

As modelling shows that the Jacksons Lane / Dorchester Road mini roundabout will be approaching capacity, it is considered that measures should be implemented to maximise the number of trips made by sustainable modes of transport to minimise any increase in vehicle movements at this junction. As such, if planning permission is approved this should be subject to a condition to secure the implementation of a Travel Plan and sustainable transport improvements in the area.

Whilst access is not for consideration as part of the outline application, there is nevertheless a need to determine whether the proposed development could be accessed in a safe and practical manner. As outlined above, the submitted indicative information outlines that vehicular access to the site will be via a priority junction on Jacksons Lane (A5143). This would be located approx. 100m to the west of the Jacksons Lane / Dorchester Road mini-roundabout junction. Key design parameters of the proposed access are:

- A 5.5m wide bellmouth access with 4m radii.
- A raised pedestrian and cycle crossing facility set back 8m from the Jacksons Lane kerb line, with priority provided for pedestrians and cyclists and requiring vehicles to give way.
- The provision of 2.4m by 43.0m visibility splays to each side of the access.
- Amendments to the existing footways and cycle track along the southern side of Jacksons Lane.

The location and form of the junction is generally acceptable, noting that a priority junction with a raised priority crossing for pedestrians and cyclists is considered an acceptable form of junction for accessing a development of the scale proposed and replicates similar junctions along Jacksons Lane. The set back of the cycle crossing (8m) is also acceptable, noting it replicates what is provided at other junctions along Jacksons Lane. It is also considered that an acceptable level of visibility could be provided (subject to buses not stopping within the visibility splays).

The provision of a 4m junction radii is not acceptable. Although a vehicle swept path tracking diagram is included in the TA which demonstrates that it would be physically possible for refuse and other large rigid service vehicles to turn into and out of the junction, they do show that such a manoeuvre would require vehicles to overrun the opposing lane and that there would be a high risk of

vehicles overrunning kerb lines. As the use of a 6m radii would be consistent with other junctions along Jacksons Lane and would reduce the risk vehicle impacts if vehicles are entering and exiting the site at the same time, it is considered that such radii should be used, as opposed to the 4m radii currently proposed. As however access is not for consideration as part of the outline application and it is clear that this issue could be addressed at reserved matters stage, this matter can be dealt with at the time of any subsequent application and there is sufficient land to enable this to be implemented.

With respect to visibility at the site access, a bus stopped at the adjacent bus stop would impair visibility at the access. Relocating the stop to address this, however, would make the stop less convenient for users (due to bus stop spacing and its location in respect to the crossing point) and would require the cycle track to be amended, as well as the loss of some trees. As such, there is a balance to be achieved between highway safety and convenience for users. At present the stop is only used by school buses and, as such, if buses only stop there for a limited time (to pick up a small number of pupils), buses would be restricting visibility for limited time periods and therefore it could be argued that the risk of accidents due to restricted visibility would be low. If the use of the stop increased (which could take place now bus franchising has taken place and a review of bus service provision is to be undertaken) and/or if buses stop there for reasonable periods of time at present), the risk would be greater.

As such, it is considered this issue needs further consideration, notably once it has been determined if usage of the bus stop will change following the review of bus services in the area. As access is not for consideration as part of this outline application and as there are alternative locations for where a stop could be relocated to if required, it is considered that this matter should be determined through any reserved matters application.

Noting also that the application in respect of the residential, extra care and residential development has been considered and found acceptable having regard to the main access being taken from Jacksons Lane with a priority junction, a condition would be imposed restricting the main access into the site from this location and in this form in the event that planning permission is approved.

In addition to the main access, a secondary access is proposed to be provided from Wallbank Road, which would be for use by pedestrians and cyclists. Noting that there is only one main vehicle access to the development from Jacksons Lane, this secondary access onto Wallbank Road would also need to be capable of use by emergency vehicles (albeit with physical and conditional control such that it is only used for vehicles in case of emergency). The Design and Access Statement outlines that a pedestrian and cycle connection would be provided into and through the rugby club to Headlands Road as an extension of that proposed within the development on Wallbank Road. Whilst details of this have not yet been provided, the corridor would be wide enough to allow a suitable link path (that complies with LTN 1/20) standards to be provided and therefore details could be agreed at reserved matters stage. Such proposals are welcome in terms of enhancing the accessibility of the site by modes of sustainable travel.

The illustrative proposed site layout does not currently accord with the Council's design standards in that the layout is very engineered, streets do not follow the correct hierarchy, there are issues with pedestrian routes in the site and shared private drives require turning areas. Disabled car parking, cycle stores and refuse stores are still not shown, nor all required pedestrian access routes. Developing an

acceptable layout however would not require fundamental changes to the general layout and the issues relating to the layout could be addressed through development of the scheme between outline and reserved matters stage. The level of detail provided for an outline is acceptable and detailed design would be a matter for any reserved matters application. As such, the layout is considered acceptable as only outline consent is being sought and matters of detailed design do not need to be considered at this stage.

With regard to parking, 2 car parking spaces for each dwelling would be in line with the adopted parking standards and should meet demand. As such, subject to detail, this level of car parking is acceptable. Cycle parking would be provided within either garages or lockable cycle stores in the gardens of properties without garages and this is also considered acceptable. If garages are to be used for cycle parking, they would need to be large enough to accommodate a car as well as cycles; this can be explored at reserved matters stage. Consideration is needed to be given to visitor car parking, with the access roads within the development designed to ensure that visitors who are unable to park in drives would be able to park on street without affecting access or highway safety. Short stay cycle parking should also be provided at the public open space. This would need to be taken into account when the detailed layout is being developed at reserved matters stage and is not a matter for further discussion at this stage.

With respect to parking for the residential care facility, the illustrative site plan shows 30 parking spaces being provided. None of these, however, are suitable for disabled persons (8 disabled spaces would be required for a 75-room facility) and the overall number of spaces would exceed the maximum number permitted under the adopted parking standards (27 spaces). This matter however can be addressed at reserved matters stage. The site plan also does not show any cycle parking being provided for the care home. This will need to be provided for staff and visitors along with scooter parking for occupiers and visitors. This can be addressed at reserved matters stage.

With respect to parking for the extra care facility, the illustrative site plan shows 37 parking spaces being provided. None of these, however, are suitable for disabled persons (a minimum of 3 disabled spaces would be required for a 70-unit facility) and the overall number of spaces will exceed the maximum number permitted under the adopted parking standards (24 spaces). A higher number of spaces may be able to be justified depending on the exact nature of the use taking into account occupiers of the facility. These matters, however, can be addressed at reserved matters stage. The site plan also does not show any cycle parking being provided for the extra care facility. This would need to be provided for occupiers, staff and visitors along with mobility scooter parking for occupiers and visitors. This can be addressed at reserved matters stage.

EV charging points would need to be provided for both the residential care and extra care facilities, as well as each dwelling. The provision of these would be secured by condition at reserved matters stage. A condition would only be necessary if the requirement would not already be delivered by the Building regulations

With regard to servicing, whilst access is not for consideration as part of this outline application, the illustrative site plan shows that the development would be served by a network of streets and that the development would be designed so it is fully accessible by larger service vehicles, such as refuse collection vehicles. Subject to detail, the access roads being designed to adoptable standard and the residential and extra-care facilities and any apartment buildings having a car park which can be accessed by service vehicles, this is acceptable. At reserved matters stage details of bin stores / bin storage areas would need to be provided and if, long shared private

drives are proposed, suitable bin collection points would need to be provided close to the highway.

Matters of detailed design do not need to be considered at this stage given the outline nature of the residential development. The applicant, however, would need to ensure that the final design of any development is such that all parts of the development can be safely accessed and serviced, emergency access is provided, a suitable level of parking is provided and access routes into and within the development are of a safe and practical design, integrate with the overall development and will be managed and maintained to a high standard for the life of the development. This will need to include:-

- All roads and paths being to adoptable standard and according with Home Zone / Manual for Streets / Streets for All principles, including the use of shared surface access roads in line with the Council's design standards and street trees, where appropriate (the layout shown / some of the details shown on the submitted drawings / details are not all in line with design standards / advise and therefore amendments will be required).
- Suitable access being provided for emergency vehicles. If the development includes a cul-de-sac that exceeds 250m in length, an emergency access will also be required (this could potentially make use of the pedestrian / cycle link path).
- The layout must have a high degree of permeability, notably for pedestrians and cyclists (cul-de-sacs must include pedestrian / cycle connections).
- Shared private drives must have turning areas.
- Cycle facilities must accord with guidance in LTN 1/20.
- Adequate parking facilities must be provided and these should be well located and meet expected demand.
- Suitable bin storage facilities and collection points (if applicable) must be provided.
- The needs of disabled people must be taken into account.

In terms of accessibility, the TA outlines that the site is within reasonable walking distance (2km) of much of Hazel Grove and parts of Bramhall, including Hazel Grove and Bramhall High Schools, Hazel Grove Leisure Centre, a number of primary schools and nurseries, industrial estates and a number of shops and leisure facilities. With respect to cycling, the TA notes that the Bramhall to A6 cycle route passes the site, there are a number of other cycle routes in the area and the site is within reasonable cycle distance (5km) of Offerton, Bramhall, Poynton and the southern outskirts of Stockport Town Centre. Regarding public transport, the TA outlines that although there are bus stops adjacent to the site frontage, these are only served by school services. It does, however, also outline that there are bus stops on Bramhall Moor Lane within 400m of the site which are served by a regular bus service (374), although this only operates hourly during the day and every two hours on evenings and weekends. With respect to travel by train, the TA outlines that the site is approx. a 1.8km walk from Hazel Grove Train station which is served by twice hourly services during the day and hourly services on evenings and Sundays.

Based on this assessment, the TA concludes that the site *“represents a highly appropriate location for residential and care facility development, being located within an acceptable walk and cycle catchment of key everyday destinations such as local schools, services and shopping facilities”*, that it is *“within recommended walking distances of regular bus and rail services to key regional employment and leisure destinations”* and that *“these services are anticipated to reduce the need for residents at the site to utilise the car for everyday journeys”*. The TA, however, does

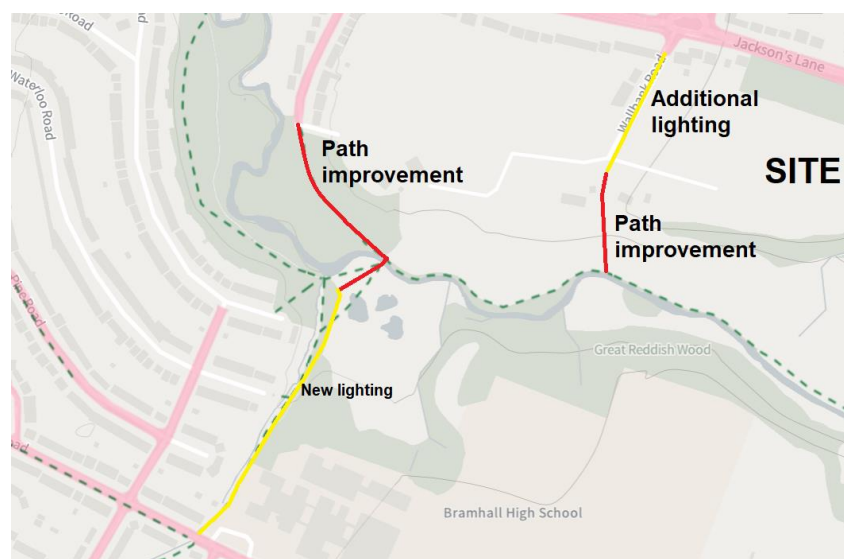
accept that the number of bus services available in the immediate area is relatively limited.

Having reviewed the TA and site's accessibility, it is concluded that whilst the site is within reasonable walking distance of various facilities, is within reasonable cycling distance of a wider range of facilities and various parts of the Borough, and there are various cycle routes in the area, the site is not within reasonable walking distance of district shopping centre or large food store, high quality pedestrian and cycle links are not available in all directions and public transport accessibility is poor as bus provision in the area is very limited and the site is not within a reasonable walking distance of a railway station. This is reflected with the site having a Greater Manchester Accessibility Level score of just 2.7 which indicates a reasonably low level of public transport accessibility (8 is a high level of accessibility and 1 a low level of accessibility). As such, it is concluded that whilst the site benefits from being accessible to some facilities and there are good quality pedestrian and cycle routes to some locations, the conclusions of the TA in respect to the site's existing accessibility are not agreed and it is considered that improvements are required to public transport and pedestrian and cycle routes in the area so as to ensure that occupiers, visitors and staff will be able to, and will be encouraged to, make journeys by sustainable modes.

Having regard to the scale and nature of the development, the following works should be carried out as part of the development to improve the site's accessibility by foot, cycle and mobility scooter and are considered necessary:-

- Upgrading of the existing public footpath between Headlands Road and the existing shared path between Bridge Lane and Seal Road to form a shared use path (suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility scooters), including the provision of new access controls, signage, lighting, surfacing (in Flexipave) and the upgrading / replacement of the existing footbridge over Lady Brook so it is suitable for use by cyclists.
- Provision of lighting on the existing shared use path between Seal Road and Lady Brook.
- Provision of a small number of additional street light columns on Wallbank Road to complement the 3 existing ones to ensure that the complete street is illuminated.
- Upgrading of the existing public footpath between Wallbank Road and Lady Brook, including new surfacing, signage, steps and access controls.

The routes in question are shown on the drawing below:



Upgrading these routes would provide high quality, all weather, safe and more direct routes for pedestrians, cyclists and users of mobility scooters between the site and Bramhall, including to Bramhall High School, Ladybrook and Pownall Green primary schools and Bramhall Railway Station. The applicant has confirmed their agreement to providing these enhancements; they would be secured by condition attached to the planning permission.

Regarding public transport, discussions have taken place with TfGM regarding options for improving public transport provision in the area (noting the limited bus provision in the area). These concluded that although it would be desirable to improve bus services in the area, a development of the scale proposed could not fund the cost of providing additional bus services. TfGM, however, have identified that the Ring and Ride service (which can be used by those with disabilities or over 70s who have difficulties walking, to enable them to attend social events, go shopping, attend health appointments etc.) that covers the area is operating at capacity which results in the service not being able to fulfil around 9% of trip requests. The provision of an additional vehicle and driver would provide the service with additional capacity, enabling it to cater for additional trips, including those that would be generated from the occupiers in living in the proposed residential home and extra care facility. TfGM are currently investigating the option of purchasing an electric vehicle (total cost £145,000 - £160,000) and may be able to secure some of the funding to do this (although it would need to be spent by March 2026). A contribution towards this would allow a vehicle to be purchased and for it to be available for use when the development was occupied. Alternatively, a contribution could be used to hire another vehicle which would enable the operator to put on more shifts and therefore provide more capacity to meet the transport needs of those eligible persons living at the development.

Having regard to the scale and nature of the development, it is considered that it would be unreasonable to require the developer to fund the full cost of purchasing an additional vehicle. This is because the proposed development is not of such a scale that it would generate sufficient demand for a single vehicle. A contribution of £50,000 (roughly 1/3 third of the total cost) would however be proportionate and is likely to assist TfGM to secure the remainder of the funding to purchase a vehicle or hire another vehicle as an alternative to this. The applicant has agreed to making this contribution and it would be secured by S106 agreement.

The outline application includes a Framework Travel Plan (FTP). This provides some general information on the proposed development and the site's accessibility, policy on travel plans, how the travel plan would operate (travel plan), targets (based on census data) and various measures that would be implemented to encourage sustainable travel including:-

- Production of Welcome Packs for residents and staff.
- Provision and maintenance of a travel noticeboard.
- Provision of changing facilities and lockers in the care home.
- Provision of cycle parking.
- Providing information on online personalised journey planners, local taxis, public transport, walking and cycling routes and cycle training.
- Promoting car sharing and home deliveries.
- Promoting national events to encourage walking and cycling.

The FTP also outlines that the Travel Plans would be funded by the developer and travel surveys (in the form of questionnaires and traffic count carried out at the site access) would be carried out for 5 years and survey results would be provided to the Council, along with review reports which would include details of new measures to

be implemented if target or objectives are not being met. It is proposed that the requirement for the development prior to occupation would be secure via condition.

The construction of all developments can have an impact on the local highway network, nearby businesses and dwellings and therefore needs to be carefully managed and this is even more important for developments of the scale of the development proposed and in the vicinity of schools, nurseries and facilities visited by children.

Whilst the submitted TA does not include any information on construction of the development it is considered that it should be possible to construct the development in a manner that does not significantly impact on the local highway network, businesses or local residents. In order to ensure that this is the case, a condition requiring the submission of a construction management plan for both the rugby club and residential elements of the development should be attached to any planning permission. The condition would include details on phasing, access arrangements, vehicle routing, contractor parking arrangements, site compounds and mud prevention measures, as well as details of measures to minimise the impact of the rugby club and Wild Things Soft Play Centre and ensure the centre can be safely accessed during construction work.

In conclusion on highway matters pertaining to both the full and outline proposals, it is concluded that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network. Whilst access for the residential element of the development is not for consideration, there is nevertheless a need to determine whether the proposed development could be accessed in a safe and practical manner. A suitable vehicular access (on Jacksons Lane) could be provided to serve the development and a suitable pedestrian and cycle link path (and emergency access) could be provided to Wallbank Road. Matters of detail would be agreed at reserved matters stage.

No changes are proposed to the existing access that serves the Rugby Club. This, however, does not benefit from a footway/s or any pedestrian facilities. As provision of the 3G pitch will increase usage of the access drive, which would increase the risk of conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, a dedicated pedestrian route should be provided along the site access drive and secured by condition.

Whilst the site benefits from being accessible to some facilities and there are good quality pedestrian and cycle routes to some locations, the connectivity of the proposed development to existing pedestrian and cycle routes in the west and south needs to be improved. The applicant has agreed to provide the accessibility enhancements set out above and on this basis it can be concluded that the site would benefit from an acceptable level of accessibility and there would be sufficient opportunities for occupiers, staff and visitors to walk and cycle to the / from the site. Provision of a path along the rugby club access road addresses concerns regarding the conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians on that access road. The illustrative site layout for the outline proposals demonstrates that an acceptable layout can be achieved and that a development of the scale proposed could be delivered in an acceptable manner.

The assessment above addresses objections relating to the stewarding of events at the clubhouse, insufficient parking for the rugby club, traffic generation, highway impacts and accessibility together with potential impacts on the path from Walbank Road to Happy Valley.

Subject to conditions and a S106 legal agreement to secure funding for enhancing the Ring and Ride service in the local area the proposed development is acceptable in respect of all highway considerations. The proposed development therefore accords with saved UDP Review policies L1.7, L1.8, L1.9, MW1.5 and CDH1.3, Core Strategy policies CS9, T1, T2 and T3 together with para's 110, 115, 117 and 118 of the NPPF. The development also accords with para 156b of the NPPF in relation to the 'Golden Rules' for major residential development in the Green Belt through improvements to local infrastructure.

Accessible Development

Accessibility for all is key to the attainment of sustainable development and is recognised as such within Core Strategy policies CS1, SD1, CS3, H1, CS8, SIE1, CS9, T1 and T2 which seek to influence the design and layout of new development. This is reflected throughout the NPPF in seeking to create places that are inclusive and accessible (para's 96 and 135).

The existing western grass pitch being constructed from grass and being impacted upon by the weather to the extent that it is not playable for considerable periods of time significantly reduces its use by those with a disability. The provision of an AGP will however enable and enhance participation in sports by those with a disability and in particular will allow the All Stars team to play at the rugby club where they are based. The clubhouse as existing does not have disabled access to the first floor or disabled changing/toilets, meaning less abled users are restricted to the ground floor and outside areas and have to use facilities which are not designed to meet their needs. The proposed extensions in providing a DDA compliant lift, changing rooms and toilets will ensure that the clubhouse is accessible to all and will enable the club to raise further the profile of disabled rugby and show their support for this sector.

Access to the residential development, care home and extra care facility will be considered at reserved matters stage through not only the design and access to buildings but also through parking provision for those with a disability and scooters.

On the basis of the above the proposed development can be considered compliant with Core Strategy policies CS1, SD1, CS3, H1, CS8, SIE1, CS9, T1 and T2 together with para's 96 and 135 of the NPPF.

Impact on the Character of the Area

The application site is designated on the UDP Proposals Map as being within a Landscape Character Area. In accordance with Saved UDP Review policy LCR1.1 development in the countryside will be strictly controlled and will not be permitted unless it protects or enhances the quality and character of the rural area. Development should be sensitively sited, constructed of materials appropriate to the area and be accommodated without an adverse impact on the landscape quality of the area. Development proposals should protect or improve existing recreational land so as to maintain the predominantly informal recreational role of the countryside. Development should not impede and wherever possible improve public access for all to the countryside. LCR1.1a confirms that proposals in the urban fringe should protect, conserve and improve the landscape quality and natural history of the locality.

Saved UDP Review policy L1.5 confirms that recreation development will only be permitted where it would not spoil the enjoyment of the river valleys or wider countryside through the introduction of excessive noise, traffic or other intrusive features or by damaging the landscape or appearance of the countryside. Proposals must be in accordance with Green Belt and other relevant policies of the UDP Review. The scale and location of recreational development should be

closely related to the ability of the landscape and ecology of the area to accept an increase in recreational use and to retain the character of land taking into account the Council's Landscape Character Assessment.

The design of residential development should be high quality, inclusive, sustainable and contribute to successful communities. Proposals should respond to the character of the area (CS policy H1). Development that is designed and landscaped to a high standard paying regard to the built and/or natural environment within which it is sited will be given positive consideration. Specific account should be had of the site's characteristics including landform, landscape and vistas as well as the sites context in relation to surrounding buildings and spaces (CS8 & SIE1 of the Core Strategy).

The Borough's varying urban and rural landscapes create a unique and distinctive local character of considerable value to residents and visitors alike and will be conserved in line with the Borough's Landscape Character Assessment (SIE3).

Planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment (para 123). Planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places (para 129). The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve (para 131).

Planning decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development including green and other public space (para 135).

The Ladybrook Valley LCA is described in the UDP Review as follows:

This LCA covers the full extent of the Ladybrook Valley within Stockport, from High Lane in the east to the junction with the Mersey Valley at Cheadle. From High Lane to just east of Bramhall the Ladybrook forms the boundary with Macclesfield Borough. Most of this area was included within the former statutory river valley local plan, though the area of Bramhall Golf Course has been added in defining the LCA boundary. The central part of the valley contains the parkland grounds of Bramhall Hall.

The valley forms a very valuable recreational and ecological resource penetrating the urban area and linking the Mersey Valley with the open land to the south east of the Borough. The open valley is, however, very narrow for much of its length and it is vital to safeguard what remains of its countryside character. For this reason even recreation facilities of a formal nature may not be appropriate.

To the west where the LCA leaves the Green Belt and winds through residential areas between Cheadle and Gatley, the safeguarding of domestic gardens from further encroachment by infill development will form an important part of safeguarding the character of this area.

Whilst the Ladybrook Valley LCA to the west of the application site is very narrow and elongated as is that to east, that part within which the application site is located opens up to extend southwards towards the A555 to include farmland and Bramhall Golf Club. Beyond the boundary of the LCA, Headlands Road and to the north of Bridge Lane and Jacksons Lane, the character is very much of suburban development comprising mainly 2 storey detached and semi detached housing.

In relation to the full proposals, the rugby club, its associated buildings and land use are well established in this location. However, it should be noted that both policy LCR1.1 and LCR1.1a encourage the use of land within the various LCAs, and in particular the river valley LCAs, for informal recreational use (e.g. walking, and cycling) rather than formal. Any enhancements to the rugby club facilities (and which are considered to be a formal recreational use) which might result in an increased landscape impact should be considered in this context.

The proposed AGP would be positioned to the western part of the wider site that is characterised by its formal recreational use. It would be in the same location as the existing grass pitch it replaces and like that existing, would be the western most pitch in a group of 3 that side of Wallbank Road. Measuring 76m x 122m in total, the AGP pitch would be of similar dimensions as that existing and would utilise the existing floodlights. The surface would be formed either from artificial grass or a polymeric material (rubber granules bound with polyurethane). The colour of the surface is not confirmed although is indicated as green on the proposed plans.

The proposed extensions to the clubhouse are considered to be of a size and siting in keeping with that of the existing building. The proposed design is also considered acceptable and overall will enhance the appearance of the clubhouse. Furthermore. the extension of the hardsurfacing to reorganise parking will not cause visual harm due to the similar character of the surrounding environment.

Subject to a condition to secure and approve details of the surface, it is considered that the AGP would not be visually obtrusive, out of keeping with the long established formal recreational use of the wider site nor would have an increased landscape impact. A condition is required to secure details relating to materials of external construction in relation to the clubhouse extensions and hardsurfaced area. On this basis it is considered that this development would protect the quality and character of the area including the LCA.

The outline element of the application seeks only the principle of the residential development in terms of type and amount of development proposed. As all matters are reserved, the ultimate number, type and size of dwellings (up to that proposed) along with access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale will be considered at reserved matters stage. Notwithstanding this, the application includes an indicative layout to show how the level of development sought could be accommodated on the site.

In this respect, the illustrative masterplan, parameters plan and accompanying Design & Access Statement present the proposals as follows:-

- The main access into and out of the site from Jacksons Lane.
- Pedestrian and cycle access into and out of the site from Wallbank Road.
- To the west of the access, the erection of a 75 bed residential care home up to 3 storeys in height with communal gardens around and parking.

- To the east of the access, the erection of a 70 unit extra care facility up to 3 storeys in height with communal gardens and parking.
- To the south of the residential care home and to the west of the site a variety of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses with each dwelling benefitting from 2 parking spaces and a private garden. Development would be 2 to 2.5 storeys with occasional 3 storey within the northern 2/3rds of the site away from the southern boundary with the adjacent open land.
- A children's local equipped area for play (LEAP) is shown to the west of the site together with an area of public open space, landscaping, SuDS features and footpaths.

A 2 way access with pedestrian footpaths to either side is proposed from Jacksons Lane. To the west of this is the proposed C2 care home and to the east the proposed extra care facility. Both are indicated as being in a position that reflects the siting of existing development to west in terms of set back from Jacksons Lane however the C3 extra care facility is shown as projecting forward of the existing dwelling to the east of the site by circa 11.8m albeit positioned circa 4.2m off the boundary. These elements of the development are described as being up to 3 storeys in height so could include single and two storey elements where required as well as 3 storey. As scale and appearance are reserved matters, it is not clear at present if the development would comprise 3 storeys with a roof over, 3 storeys with a flat roof or the 2nd floor accommodation being within the roofspace. This however will be formally considered at reserved matters stage.

The site is located within the Ladybrook Valley Landscape Character Area (LCA), designated under 'saved' UDP Review policy LCR1.1. As a river valley LCA, this area is also subject to the provisions of 'saved' UDP Review policy LCR1.1a. Both policies seek to strictly control development in those areas and ensure that development protects, conserves and improves landscape quality. Significant development within any LCA and the river valley areas is considered to be of particular sensitivity. The Stockport Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study (2018) sets out that the Ladybrook Valley LCA, across its entirety, has medium sensitivity to residential development of 2-3 storeys. However, the assessment notes (in relation to variability of sensitivity across the area) that *"The LCA as a whole would be highly sensitive to any major urban extensions or significant housing developments..."* The 2018 Study provides guidance for future development proposed within the LCA, including setting out *"Development within highly visible, open areas should also be avoided."*

In relation to the impact upon the character of the area and LCA, the applicant's broad case is that the development is not visually intrusive, primarily by way of its location in the LCA and as a result of vegetation screening. Whilst it is agreed that parts of the site as screened from public view, to the eastern end it benefits in part from an open frontage to Jacksons Lane circa 122m wide and from here there are clear views into the site and LCA. Whilst the site has only a very narrow frontage to Wallbank Road afforded by the proposed pedestrian access circa 6m wide and the main parcel is positioned circa 117m from Wallbank Road behind a naturally vegetated area containing small trees and scrub, glimpses of the development will be achieved from here, particularly in the location of the pedestrian/cycle/emergency access in winter months when leaf cover is sparse. Private views of the development are discussed in the report below in relation to impact on residential amenity however it is noted that some adjacent dwellings, notably Sevenoaks and Broadridge on Jacksons Lane and Wallbank Farm on Wallbank Road, whilst enclosed to a height of 2m on the boundary with the site, will be sensitive to the visual impact of development upon this site and how it responds to the character of the area.

The application site when viewed from the eastern end of Jacksons Lane and in varying degrees from neighbouring properties presents a large swathe of open, rural land which provides relief from the adjacent suburban development and a buffer between it and Happy Valley to the south. Development here, and which as shown on the indicative site layout would comprise 3 storey development fronting Jacksons Lane would be highly visible and prominent within the streetscene as well as from Sevenoaks and Broadridge on Jacksons Lane. Whilst the 2 to 2.5 (with occasional 3) storey residential development beyond, being positioned behind existing houses on the south side of Jacksons Lane, would be largely screened from public view, there will be views of it from Sevenoaks on Jacksons Lane, Wallbank Farm on Wallbank Road and from Wallbank Road itself at times of the year when trees are without leaf.

Policies LCR1.1 and LCR1.1a require development to protect or enhance the quality and character of the LCA. Development should be accommodated without adverse impact on the particular character area. General design policies such as CS8, SIE1 and SIE3 together with the NPPF reinforce this position requiring development to pay regard to the character of the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. The applicant seeks to argue that due to the disconnection of this site from the wider LCA such as that in Happy Valley and which is at a lower level than the application site, its closer relationship with the urban edge of Hazel Grove and there being few long range views (which further separates the site from the LCA), the proposed development would have no material effect upon the landscape character.

It is accepted that there are no long range views afforded across the application site of the landscape beyond however the rural landscape that it comprises, which is viewed against the backdrop of woodland to the south of the site, makes a positive contribution to this locality through the absence of development. It is not however accepted that the site is disconnected with the wider LCA, rather it forms part of this designated area that extends west to east along Bridge Lane and Jacksons Lane from the junction with Valley Road in the west to Chester Road to the east, a distance of circa 2km. The LCA designation here clearly has a close relationship with the urban edge of Hazel Grove but in many respects this strengthens the need to protect it so as to restrain the creep of urban development into this rural landscape.

The LCA Study referenced above identifies the sensitivity of the LCA to major urban extensions and significant housing developments and comments that development within highly visible open areas should be avoided. The most visually prominent aspects of the outline proposals will be the highest elements, those being the 3 storey residential care home and extra care facility fronting Jacksons Lane. Behind these and to the rear of houses on the south side of Jacksons Lane will be 2 to 2.5 storey houses with occasional 3 storey. Whilst it could be argued that elements of the residential development in terms of the provision of a variety of house types 2, 2.5 and occasionally 3 storeys high may be in keeping with or not cause harm to the character of development to the south and north side of Jacksons Lane and beyond outside of the LCA, it is considered that the introduction of a large development on land that is currently open and from parts of Jacksons Lane will be highly visible will cause significant harm to the LCA and character of the wider area.

The assessment above responds to objections that the outline proposals will cause harm to the LCA and wider locality.

For the above reasons whilst the proposed development in relation to the provision of an AGP and clubhouse extensions can be considered policy compliant, that relating to the residential, extra care and care home development is considered contrary. As such the development as a whole conflicts with saved UDP Review

policies LCR1.1 and LCR1.1a, Core Strategy policies CS8, SIE1 and SIE3 together with para's 96, 123, 129, 131 and 135 of the NPPF.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Care and nursing homes will be permitted subject to acceptable levels of amenity space (saved UDP Review policy CDH1.3). MW1.5 requires adequate provision to be made for the storage, handling and removal from the site of waste arising from the development.

The design of residential development should be high quality, inclusive, sustainable and contribute to successful communities. Proposals should maintain and provide for good standards of amenity. (CS policy H1). Development that is designed to a high standard and which makes a positive contribution to the environment will be given positive consideration. Specific account should be had of the safety and security of users and provision and maintenance and enhancement (where suitable) of satisfactory levels of amenity for users and residents (CS8 & SIE1 of the Core Strategy).

The Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Design of Residential Development' is a material consideration and sets out the Council's expectations as to the design and layout of residential development.

The NPPF confirms that planning decisions should aim to achieve safe places so that crime and disorder and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life (para 96).

Planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions (para 123). Planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places (para 129). The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve (para 131).

Planning decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, create places that are safe with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life (para 135).

Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, provision should be made for the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces (para 156)

In relation to the AGP, the nearest residential occupiers are to the west on Headlands Road and to the north on Bridge Lane. These houses have rear gardens that extend between 15m and 30m in depth to their boundary with the application site. Those to the southern end of Headlands Road are positioned at a lower level than the application site however towards and on Bridge Lane ground levels become comparable. Rear garden boundaries are formed by fencing together with varying degrees of tree cover.

The proposed AGP will be no closer to houses on Headlands Road than that existing. To the north the proposed pitch (including the 3m run off) will be positioned between 16m and 25m from the rear garden boundary of houses on Bridge Lane. The northern goal post will be 31m from this boundary so slightly further away than that existing (at 27m distant). The rear garden of 64 Bridge Lane extends down the side of the existing and proposed pitch being enclosed by a high hedge and various trees (increasing in cover to the rear boundary). That proposed will be no closer than existing being circa 4m to 6m distant.

It is understood that the existing pitches are not used before 9am and that they are mainly used at weekends and after 5:30 on weekdays. Given the long standing use of the site for outdoor sport, there are no planning conditions that control the hours of use other than imposed when the floodlights to the western pitch were approved restricting their use after 9.30pm. It is however acknowledged that the provision of an AGP will increase the use of this part of the site when compared to that of the existing pitch when it is hampered by ground conditions.

In this respect the application advises that the maximum amount that the existing western grass pitch alone has been used for is 42.5 hours a week subject to there being no cancellation for bad weather and/or poor pitch conditions as a result thereof. Typically however and as a result of those conditions, it is generally only used for 22.5 hours a week. As the AGP will not be affected by the weather nor need time to recover like that existing, it alone could theoretically be used for a maximum of 79 hours a week. This however assumes that it would be used at all times/days of the week with back to slots booked by the community when not in use by the club. The application advises however that whilst there will be demand for its use by the community, the much more realistic and anticipated scenario is that the AGP will be used for 48 hours a week.

The likely use of the pitch at 48 hours a week is not materially different to that which can occur at present when the existing western pitch is in a playable condition (42.5 hours a week). Crucially however the AGP will not be affected by bad weather nor need time to recover so could consistently be used unlike that existing.

In theory, the proposed current weekly usage could be increased to 114 hours a week if the AGP is fully booked out by the community in addition to club usage. The applicant advises however that whilst there will be use of the AGP by the community, demand is not expected to be so great as to result in it being used at every available hour. If however it were used greater than forecast then noting that such use would not extend beyond the times at which the existing pitches can already be used and would not result in noise levels greater than those which already occur, it is not considered that there will be any adverse impact arising in relation to residential amenity.

In response to objections, the impact of the existing floodlights in terms of light pollution was considered and found to be acceptable when permission for them was approved in 2016. There has been floodlighting on this part of the site for many years noting that those approved in 2016 replaced lights that were previously existing. These lights are to be retained and whilst they may be in use more than they are as existing, the impact on residential amenity will remain the same as that found to be acceptable in 2016. In view of this, it is not considered reasonable nor necessary to require mitigation measures to now be provided. As with that existing, no fencing is proposed to enclose or restrict unauthorised access to the pitch.

Having regard to the above it is considered that the increased usage of this part of the site arising from the replacement of the existing grass pitch with an AGP would not give rise to levels of noise or light pollution that are out of keeping with the long established use of this site for formal sports.

The proposed extensions to the clubhouse would be positioned a significant distance from neighbouring occupiers, at a distance of 104m to the boundary with the nearest house on Wallbank Road, 93m from that on Headlands Road and 105m from that on Bridge Lane. Given this considerable degree of separation, it is not considered that the extensions would give rise to an adverse impact on the amenities of these adjacent residential occupiers.

Comments from neighbours suggesting that events at the clubhouse should have noise control to prevent further late night noise problems are noted. The existing clubhouse, which has been in existence for many years, is not fettered by any planning conditions restricting the hours at which it can be used. That being the case and noting the relatively modest scale of the extensions proposed, it is not considered reasonable to now impose such restraints. Events at the clubhouse would in any event be controlled by Environmental Health licencing and colleagues in this service are better placed to deal with complaints regarding noise nuisance.

Submitted with the application is a Crime Impact Statement. This acknowledges that as the full/detailed element of the application relates to a new artificial sports pitch and extensions to the existing clubhouse, crime prevention measures are mainly management issues and reinforcement of current measures for the existing clubhouse facility. Notwithstanding that the Statement makes recommendations for improving resilience to crime that may also be relevant to the clubhouse extensions. In response to this and noting that the proposed extension creates a recessed area at the base of the external staircase that could potentially generate criminal/antisocial behaviour as it is concealed from view, amended plans have been secured to propose a lockable gate in this location. Use of this will ensure that access to this stairwell is restricted at times when the clubhouse is not in use. Noting that management issues in relation to reducing the impacts of crime extend beyond planning control, it is considered that this element of the proposed development incorporates sufficient measures to ensure the safety and security of users.

In relation to the outline proposals the indicative layout shows the C2 care home positioned 16.5m from the site boundary of the existing dwelling to the west and over 30m from the side elevation of this dwelling. This side elevation contains small secondary windows at both ground and first floor level (living room, kitchen/diner, and bedroom). It is understood from previous planning history on this property that all these rooms are also served by larger windows to the front and rear elevation.

Whilst the Council's SPD Design of Residential Development does not strictly apply to a C2 care home, it is a useful guide and notes that for 3 storey development there should be a distance of 9m between habitable room windows and the site boundary. In addition to this there should be 28m between facing elevations with habitable rooms. The siting of the proposed development to the boundary with this neighbouring dwelling and to its side elevation would accord with and exceed the SPD suggesting that there would not be an adverse impact on amenity in relation to overlooking to this neighbouring dwelling or its garden. Noting also the degree of separation between that existing and proposed and the location of that proposed to the east, it is not considered that any adverse impact would arise in terms of loss of light or the development appearing overbearing.

The indicative layout shows the C2 care home positioned 28.6m from the garden boundary of the terraced houses on the north side of Jacksons Lane and 36.5m from their front elevation. This separation would accord with and exceed that suggested in the SPD as being appropriate (9m and 24m respectively). As such it is considered that a loss of privacy would not arise. Noting also this degree of separation it is not considered that any adverse impact would arise in relation to loss of light or the development appearing overbearing. Should there be residential accommodation at first floor level above the Three Bears PH then noting the separation of over 36m, there would be no adverse impact.

Details of refuse storage for the C2 care home would be considered at reserved matters stage. Such facilities may be external or internal to the building. In either event the provision of facilities of an appropriate size and design should ensure that issues with vermin, odour and amenity are adequately addressed.

The indicative layout shows the C3 extra care facility positioned 4.4m to 5.9m from side boundary with the existing residential property immediately to the east of the site, projecting 12m forward of its front elevation and 10m beyond its rear elevation. The side elevation of this dwelling is blank with no window openings. In the front and rear garden of this house are trees along with boundary with the application site.

If shown in this position at reserved matters stage and being 3 storeys in height, it is likely that issues will arise in relation to the impact on amenity afforded by the occupiers of this neighbouring house on account of the forward and rearward projection close to the shared boundary and the development being overbearing and visually obtrusive. Care will need to be taken in designing this element of the proposals and it may be necessary to reduce the projection, height, massing and position relative to the boundary with this property. Consideration would also need to be given as to window and door openings in the side elevation facing this property so as not to result in an unacceptable level of overlooking. These matters would however all be considered at reserved matters stage and based on the indicative layout are capable of being satisfactorily addressed.

The indicative plans show a projecting wing to the rear of the C3 extra care facility projecting 30m. Even if containing habitable room windows, being over 47m from the side boundary to the rear garden of this neighbouring house, the development would comply with and exceed the requirements of the SPD in terms of its distance to this boundary (9m). This would ensure that there is no adverse impact in relation to loss of privacy. Given also the siting of this wing from this boundary to the west of this neighbouring house, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impact on light nor would it appear overbearing.

Should there be residential accommodation at first floor level above the Three Bears PH or the adjacent commercial premises then noting the separation of over 34m (in excess of the 24m required by the SPD) there would be no adverse impact in relation to overlooking. This degree of separation would also ensure that there is no adverse impact in relation to visual intrusion or loss of light.

The Council's SPD 'Design of Residential Development' confirms that whatever the size or location of a dwelling there will always be a requirement for some form of private amenity space ranging from balconies, roof gardens and communal private space associated with flats to back and front garden space associated with conventional family housing. Private amenity space should be usable, accessible, reasonably free from overlooking, allow for adequate daylight and sunlight, and have regard to the size of the dwelling and the character of the area. Unusable spaces such as narrow strips of ground adjacent to roads and parking, steeply sloping areas

or those in excessive shade should be avoided. Incorporating balconies and roof gardens is encouraged where they can be provided without compromising the privacy and amenity of neighbours or harming the character of the area. 1 bed apartments should have either a 5m² balcony or a minimum of 18m² communal amenity space per unit; 2 bed apartments should have 35m² communal amenity space per unit.

As the exact number and size of dwellings within extra care facility will not be established until reserved matters stage it is not possible to accurately assess the level of amenity space that would be required. Developments of this nature however generally comprise only 1 or 2 bed apartments as they are not intended to facilitate family living. As a guide however 70no. 1 bed apartments (with no private balconies) would require 1260m² of communal amenity space, 70no. 2 beds would require 2450m² and a mix of both with a 50/50 split (with no private balconies) would require 1855m². The indicative layout allows for circa 2600m² of space around the building which would be of sufficient size if all apartments were 2 beds. This could be laid out as communal gardens and designed so as to be private and reasonably free from overlooking. If flat roofs were proposed then it is possible that these could function as roof gardens to further enhance the amenity of future occupiers together with sensitively sited private balconies. The indicative layout therefore demonstrates that future occupiers of the development would be afforded an acceptable level of amenity.

Details of refuse storage for the C3 extra care facility will be considered at reserved matters stage. Such facilities may be external or internal to the building. In either event the provision of facilities of an appropriate size and design should ensure that issues with vermin, odour and amenity are adequately addressed.

In terms of the proposed C3 development, the indicative layout demonstrates that the dwellings could be positioned such that they exceed the separation distances set out in the SPD in relation to the boundary with neighbouring properties as well as to any facing elevations. As such it is concluded that the level of development proposed can be delivered without harm to the amenities of the neighbouring occupiers on Jacksons Lane by way of overlooking, loss of light or overbearing development.

Consideration must also be paid to the amenities of the future occupiers. In this respect the proposed layout is broadly acceptable however there are some instances where the interface between proposed dwellings is less than that suggested appropriate in the Council's SPD. The SPD however acknowledges that rigid adherence to the standards can stifle creativity and result in uniformity of development. Imaginative design solutions are therefore encouraged and may allow for a flexible approach between new dwellings. Noting that there is sufficient space within the site to accommodate the proposed development and minor variations to the layout of it, this matter can be addressed at reserved matters stage once the number of dwellings is confirmed.

Gardens to the proposed houses as shown on the indicative layout are of a varying size with some slightly below that suggested appropriate in the SPD and others in excess. Residents would however benefit from public open space within the development together with a children's play area; Happy Valley is also a short walk away. Taking this into account and noting that there is sufficient space within the site to accommodate the proposed development and minor variations to the layout of it, this matter can be addressed at reserved matters stage once the number of dwellings is confirmed.

As mentioned above, the application as well as proposing a children's play area also includes an area of public open space circa 5000m² in area. This will afford the future occupiers an excellent level of amenity ensuring that they have access to good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home.

In relation to the C3 development, the indicative layout therefore demonstrates that future occupiers of the development would be afforded an acceptable level of amenity.

The Crime Impact Statement notes the outline nature of the application and provides guidance to influence the design of the proposals as they advance beyond the consideration of this application. Members are advised that a further Crime Impact Statement would be required at reserved matters stage. This will ensure that the development would create a place that is safe and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life.

The assessment above addresses objections regarding the AGP resulting in extended use, amenity issues in relation to the floodlights and use of the clubhouse, fencing to the AGP and overlooking, loss of light and noise from the outline proposals.

For the above reasons it is considered that the proposed development would not give rise to a loss of amenity for existing, neighbouring occupiers and would deliver an acceptable level of amenity for future occupiers (in accordance with the Golden Rules at para 156 of the NPPF). The proposal is therefore compliant with saved UDP Review policies CDH1.3 and MW1.5, Core Strategy policies H1, CS8, and SIE1 together with para's 96, 123, 129, 131, 135 and 156 of the NPPF.

Green Belt

The proposed development is located within the Greater Manchester Green Belt as designated by 'saved' Stockport UDP Review policy GBA1.1 'Extent of Green Belt' and shown on the policies map (proposals map) of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review (UDP).

Saved UDP Review policy GBA1.2 'Control of Development in Green Belt' sets out a presumption against the development of new buildings in the Green Belt unless if it is for one of a number of specified purposes. These include agriculture and forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, limited extension, alteration and extension of dwellings and limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites (MEDS). Forms of development other than new buildings will not be permitted unless they maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

Development falling within these categories will only be permitted where it will not act to make adjoining Green Belt areas less defensible against encroachment.

New residential development in the Green Belt is controlled by saved UDP Review policy GBA1.5. This restricts development to dwellings essential for the purposes of agriculture, the re-use of buildings and development on MEDS.

NPPF Chapter 13, paragraph 142 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.

When considering any planning application, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (VSC). VSC will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (NPPF para 153).

NPPF para 154 confirms that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for one of various exceptions. These include:-

- a) buildings for forestry and agriculture,
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities including buildings for outdoor sport and recreation as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension of a building that does not result in a disproportionate addition to the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs;
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land and
- h) other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This includes engineering operations.

NPPF para 156 confirms that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, the following contributions ('Golden Rules') should be made:-

- a. affordable housing which reflects either:
 - (i) development plan policies or
 - (ii) until such policies are in place, the policy set out in paragraph 157 of the Framework (that being 15 percentage points above the highest existing affordable housing requirement which would otherwise apply to the development, subject to a cap of 50%)
- b. necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and
- c. the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

For the purposes of the full element of this application, whilst GBA1.2 broadly aligns with the NPPF Members are advised the NPPF is more flexible in terms of allowing 'appropriate' facilities for outdoor sport and recreation rather than 'essential' facilities as set out in GBA1.2. GBA1.5 does not however align with the NPPF being more restrictive.

The NPPF confirms at para 232 that 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). Having regard to this (and has been an accepted approach in the consideration of many planning applications and appeals) it is therefore considered that greater weight

should be afforded to the NPPF in the Green Belt considerations of the proposals.

The AGP would be an almost like for like replacement for the existing grass pitch save for its materials of construction. Comprising an appropriate facility for outdoor sport and recreation, this is clearly compliant with NPPF para 154b and is therefore appropriate development in the Green Belt.

The proposed extensions together with the resulting internal reconfiguration of the clubhouse would provide enhanced and necessary facilities as set out in the report above. Noting the lawful use of the site for formal recreation, all the development secured through the extension of the clubhouse is considered to comprise appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation. On this basis it is considered that the proposed extensions to the clubhouse are compliant with para 154b of the NPPF and are appropriate development

With regard to the small extension to the hard surfaced area Para 154h of the NPPF confirms that other forms of development in the Green Belt, provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it will be appropriate in the Green Belt; this includes engineering operations.

The creation of a hard surface is considered to be an engineering operation. That proposed will replace a surface that is currently laid with hardcore with a tarmac surface. Being level with the ground the hard surface will preserve the openness of the Green Belt. Whilst it will also facilitate parked vehicles which could be argued to impact on openness, that would be no greater impact than that which already occurs on the existing hardcore surface.

The purposes of including land within the Green Belt are set out at para 143 of the NPPF and are as follows:-

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

It is not considered that the replacement of an area of hardcore with tarmac conflicts with any of the above purposes. As such it is considered that this element of the proposed development is compliant with para 154h of the NPPF.

The outline proposals which are required to deliver the funding to the club so as to enable them to install the AGP and extend the clubhouse do not fall into any of the excepted forms of development in either saved UDP Review policies or para 154 of the NPPF. This element of the proposed development is therefore inappropriate in the Green Belt and by definition harmful to the Green Belt. Inappropriate development should not be approved except in VSC.

The applicant accepts the position that the outline development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and makes the case for VSC. The application sets out a number of factors which are identified as, or might otherwise be considered to be, contributing weight to the overall balance in terms of the existence of VSC. Principal amongst these factors are that the proposal would:-

- Contribute up to 60 new homes to the overall supply of housing, in the context of there being a significant undersupply of new homes;
- Provide extra-care and specialised housing, helping to meet the significant identified need for such facilities in Stockport;
- Within that residential element, contribute a minimum of 58% of the scheme as affordable homes, against the context of the requirements set out in Stockport Core Strategy policy H-3 and the significant need for affordable housing in Stockport;
- Facilitate and deliver improvements to facilities available at Stockport Rugby Union Football Club which would deliver wider community benefits.

Noting that the case for VSC includes a variety of elements relevant to the proposed development and which are discussed in the report above and below, the consideration of whether VSC exists along with all other material considerations in the application of para 11d of the NPPF (the planning balance) are considered at the end of this report.

In considering harm to the Green Belt however, a number of different aspects should be considered:-

- First, and arguably foremost, impact upon openness (openness, along with permanence, being an essential characteristic of Green Belts as set out in NPPF paragraph 142). Caselaw has established that openness itself has both a visual aspect and a spatial aspect; both should be considered.
- Second, the degree to which the land serves to meet the purposes of its inclusion within the Green Belt (as set out in NPPF paragraph 143 and assessed recently in the Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment 2016) and the extent to which that would be depleted by virtue of the development taking place.

It is important to note, however, that the extent to which land meets the purposes of its inclusion within the Green Belt is primarily relevant to the plan-making processes and is of lesser relevance to the consideration of whether or not inappropriate development within the Green Belt might be justified by the existence of very special circumstances. Once designated it has been given the role of helping to fulfil the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by being kept permanently open regardless of the extent to which it might be shown to do so.

With regard to the impact of the development upon the openness of the Green Belt, Members are advised that caselaw has confirmed that matters relevant to openness in any particular case are a matter of planning judgement rather than a matter of law, and it is for decision makers to determine how much weight is given to any individual factor. It is notable that (in considering the impact of the proposal in relation to the purposes of the Green Belt) the applicant places significant emphasis upon visual factors, noting the extent to which development would be screened from nearby vantage points by dense vegetation and topography. This may be the case from a number of viewpoints but is not the case from others; notably the residential element of the site is highly visible from key points along Jacksons Lane, outside of the Green Belt on its northern boundary. That part of the site most visible from Jacksons Lane is also proposed to accommodate the most significantly scaled building(s) in the form of the extra care facility (up to 3 storeys indicated), further increasing the impact on visual openness. More limited views into and across the site, particularly the residential element, will also be achieved from Wallbank Road to the west on account of the

lack of screening where the cycle/pedestrian access is proposed. Wallbank Road is used as part of the Fred Perry Way Strategic Recreation Route identified on the UDP Review proposals map and subject to saved UDP Review policy L1.8 so might expect to be used by a greater number of people on foot than might otherwise be the case. Additionally, there is likely to be significant visual openness into and across the site from the existing houses on Jacksons Lane and Wallbank Road which back onto it directly or onto the overgrown area referred to above. In overall terms it is considered that the development, taking place on currently open, undeveloped land, would have a very significant impact on the visual openness of the site within the Green Belt.

Caselaw has determined that openness has both a visual and a spatial aspect. The latter part essentially relates to the more strategic role of Green Belt; rather than whether development would be visually present where none currently is, it essentially requires a volumetric consideration, i.e. a consideration of the volumetric increase (or otherwise) in built-form within the Green Belt, both within the site and across a wider area. It is clear that with no built development currently in place within the housing part of the site any new built development would have a very significant impact on the spatial aspect of openness.

With regard to the impact on openness in visual terms, as has been discussed in relation to the impact of the development upon the LCA, the applicant's broad case with regards to the outline element is that the development is not visually intrusive, primarily by way of its location in the LCA and as a result of vegetation screening. In considering this matter the impact on the Green Belt and to the LCA are inherently linked and cannot be divorced from each other as across this site they occupy the same area. It is not proposed to repeat the case here as to why it is considered that the development will cause harm in this respect however the arguments as to why the visual impacts of the outline proposals will cause harm to the LCA are equally applicable to the visual impact on the Green Belt. Having regard to the above and taking the spatial and visual components of openness together, it is concluded that the harm would be very significant.

In terms of the degree to which the application site meets the purpose of including land within the Green Belt, Members are advised that the Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment 2016 considers the extent to which different parcels of land, including parcel SP69 (which contains this site) contribute to the purposes for which land is included within the Green Belt. The assessment considers a number of assessment criteria under 4 of the 5 purposes set out in NPPF paragraph 143, ranking the contribution of each parcel:-

- Purpose a - Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas
 - 1a - Does the parcel exhibit evidence of existing urban sprawl and consequent loss of openness? Rating = Moderate
 - 1b - Does the parcel protect open land from the potential for urban sprawl to occur? Rating = Strong
- Purpose b - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
 - 2a - Does the parcel prevent the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between neighbouring settlements? Rating = Strong
- Purpose c - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
 - 3a - Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development? Rating = Moderate
- Purpose d - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
 - 4a - Does the parcel contribute to the setting and 'special character' of a historic town(s)? Rating = No Contribution

In the supporting documentation the applicant seeks to disaggregate their site from the wider assessment of parcel SP69, making the case that, if assessed separately, it would have received different, lower ratings against each criterion. Whilst it is possible that such an approach would result in different outcomes, it fails to recognise that Green Belt is a strategic designation. It would undoubtedly be possible to sub-divide an area of assessment into smaller parcels which, because they are no longer being considered at a strategic scale, might be concluded to have lesser value in Green Belt terms. This approach does not consider the impact that developing a small sub-parcel might have on the ability of any retained Green Belt to meet the purposes. Furthermore, by undertaking an assessment of a single sub-parcel of land the overall consistent, objective approach applied to the entirety of the Greater Manchester Green Belt through the 2016 assessment is potentially lost.

Significant weight should be afforded to the evidence provided by the strategic-scale assessment set out in the Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment. Of particular note is the commentary given in its assessment under criteria 1a and 1b which places this part of parcel SP69 into the context of the wider parcel. The conclusion of the applicant, set out in Section 6 of the supporting Planning Statement, is that the site plays only a weak role within the Green Belt, when assessed against each of the key criteria. However, it does so precisely because it considers the site alone, outside of the wider strategic scale context; the same conclusion might equally be reached on other sub divisions of SP69 by virtue of failing to consider them as part and parcel of the wider strategic-scale area. Consequently, it is recommended that the conclusion of the applicant on this point be given little weight.

This is also relevant in relation to the definition of 'grey belt', which is defined in the recently revised NPPF (para 155) as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets of importance set out in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

A Green Belt assessment is currently underway which will amongst other things establish the presence of Grey Belt sites within the Borough (as required by revisions to the NPPF dated 27th February 2025). The applicant has however not made a case as part of this application that the site is Grey Belt and as such the application is not being assessed against para 155 of the NPPF. As advised previously therefore, the application should be assessed against para 155 and the existence of VSC having regard to para 153.

Notwithstanding this matter the NPPF also sets out at para 156 what are described as 'Golden Rules'. For completeness and for the purposes of this application, this states that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, the following contributions ('Golden Rules') should be made:-

- A. at least 50% of the housing to be affordable, unless this would make the
- B. development of these sites unviable; Necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and
- C. The provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

As has been discussed in the report above, the application proposes 58.4% affordable housing which not only complies with and exceeds the 50% minimum required by CS policy H3 but also that required of para 156 of the NPPF in relation to the 'Golden Rules'. Discussion on necessary improvements to infrastructure and the provision of green spaces is set out in the report above and as such it is considered that compliance with para 156 is evidenced. Compliance with para 156 however does not render the development appropriate in the Green Belt, rather it is simply another policy requirement. Paragraph 158 of the NPPF does however state that development which complies with the golden rules should be given significant weight in favour of granting planning permission

Drawing all the above together, Members are advised that the outline proposals do not fall within any of the accepted forms of development and are therefore inappropriate in the Green Belt having regard to saved UDP Review policies GBA1.2, GBA1.5 and para 154 of the NPPF. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt; that proposed will cause substantial harm to the Green Belt in that there would be a very significant loss of openness and the proposals would conflict with three of the five purposes of Green Belt to varying degrees. This harm to openness should be given very significant weight in the determination of this application. Inappropriate development can only be approved where VSC are demonstrated. The case presented by the applicant for VSC includes factors across many of the considerations relevant to the determination of this application and which are discussed in this report. As such the case for VSC is explored further at the end of this report.

The above assessment addresses objections that the outline proposals will cause harm to the Green Belt'

Recreation and Open Space Provision

Core Strategy policy SIE-2 "Provision of Recreation and Amenity Open Space in New Developments" sets out that "Development will be expected to take a positive role in providing recreation and amenity open space to meet the needs of its users/occupants." This expectation is linked to achievement of the Fields in Trust (formerly National Playing Fields Association) 'Six Acre Standard.' As confirmed in saved UDP Review policy L1.1 "Land for Active Recreation", the standard sets out that for each 1,000 residents there should be 2.4 hectares of recreation and amenity open space comprising of 1.7 hectares for outdoor sport and recreation space (including parks) and 0.7ha for children's play with about 0.25 ha of this, equipped playgrounds. This equates, through SIE-2, into a need to provide 17 sqm of formal recreation space and 7 sqm of children's play space per head of population. The need for development proposals to make provision for children's play is also confirmed in saved UDP Review policy L1.2 "Children's Play".

Core Strategy policy SIE2 confirms that where appropriate in new developments, landscaped amenity areas should be provided which are necessary and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development. In those parts of the Borough with deficiency in recreation and amenity open space large new residential developments should include provision for such on or readily accessible to the site. As much as possible of the open space should be provided within or adjacent to the new development and play provision should be based on the hierarchy set out within the policy. However, provision of some or all of the open space off site or through contributions to improve and/or expand an existing facility or create a new one will be permitted/required where the Council is satisfied that there is no practical alternative or that it would be better to do so. Any off site provision should align with policy requirements as well as being fairly

and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development proposed and should be in a location where it would be of direct benefit to the occupiers of the proposed development. Off site contributions will be secured by S106 agreement.

The NPPF at para 96 confirms that planning policies and decisions should achieve healthy places which enable and support healthy lifestyles through the provision of green infrastructure and sports facilities. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate (para 103).

The Council's SPD "Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments" provides further explanation as to the basis of this policy position as well as that relating to the application of these policies.

In terms of children's play, the 2017 Open Space Study records quantitative shortfalls across the Borough for a number of typologies of open space including within the area of the application site. In relation to formal provision, the 2024 PPS notes a range of capacity and quality issues across a number of sports in the area.

Applying the above policy position in relation to the outline proposals the expected population of the development (following the rates set out in Core Strategy paragraph 3.335) cannot be accurately assessed at this stage. The indicative site layout however shows the provision of a local area of equipped play (LEAP) within the landscaped area of the site to the west. Members are advised that the provision of a LEAP (which would serve 510 residents) significantly exceeds the children's play requirements of this site. The proposed development (if all houses were 4 bedroom, which they won't be) would yield 300 residents. Having regard to policy SIE2 and the accompanying SPD, this yield would only generate a requirement for a couple of much smaller local areas for play on the site (each serving 50 residents) with the remaining requirement usually being secured by way of a commuted sum payment to be invested on an existing area of children's play within the threshold distances set out in the policy and SPD (100m to a LAP, 400m to a LEAP and 1000m to a NEAP).

In this instance however there are no existing areas of play within these distances to the site (with the closest, the LEAP at Cheviot Road being over 400m distant). S106 contributions can only be secured where they are directly related to the development. The use of threshold tests as set out ensure that the direct relationship test is passed. If however an existing play facility is located beyond the distances set out above then it cannot be demonstrated that it would be used by residents of the development and therefore a commuted sum cannot be secured to improve the facilities at that site as it would be considered too far way for residents of the development to reasonably make use of.

Having regard to the above, the application of policy SIE2 and the SPD would secure only 2 small LAP's on site. Typically these are only 100m² in area and contain very few features of play. Instead, a LAP would be imaginatively landscaped to encourage play, although no play equipment or safety surface is to be provided. The play value should come from the enhancement of existing

natural features, the modification of the landform (i.e. mounding) and planting. A LEAP is much larger, 400m² in area and would contain at least 5 types of small play equipment. The LEAP shown on the indicative site layout is considered to be of an appropriate size and subject to details secured at reserved matters stage would exceed the requirements of policies L1.1, L1.2 and SIE2 and meet para's 96 and 103 of the NPPF.

In relation to formal recreation, Core Strategy policy SIE-2 sets out that new residential development should provide for formal recreation on the basis of 1.7ha per 1,000 population. Until the population yield of the development is established at reserved matters stage, the required contribution to formal recreation cannot be confirmed. For residential developments of the size proposed it is a pragmatic approach to manage formal sport and recreation spaces on a strategic, borough-wide basis (noting also that people are often prepared to travel to make use of such facilities). Given the size of the development (which is not such where on site provision for formal recreation would be expected) a financial contribution towards off-site provision (and maintenance) is a reasonable and acceptable means of meeting this element of SIE-2's requirements.

The provision of on site children's play through a LEAP will be secured at reserved matters stage and a contribution to formal recreation through a commuted sum payment will be secured by S106.

On this basis it can be concluded that the proposed development accords with and exceeds the requirements of saved UDP Review policies L1.1 and L1.2, Core Strategy policy SIE2 and para's 96 and 103 of the NPPF. The inclusion of a LEAP and the wider amenity space around it will also ensure compliance with para 156c of the NPPF in relation to the 'Golden Rules' for major housing proposals through the provision of new green spaces.

Education

Paragraph 100 of the NPPF confirms the importance of ensuring that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:-

- Give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and
- Work with early years, school and post-16 promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

As the site is also located in the Green Belt para 156 of the NPPF is also relevant and as set out in the consideration of Green Belt issues above, requires major developments involving the provision of housing is proposed on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application to make necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) adds further context to the NPPF. In September 2019, the PPG updated its guidance on planning obligations towards education. It sets out that contributions needed for education should be based on known pupil yields from housing developments. It also sets out that existing or planned and

committed school capacity should be considered to identify where additional capacity is required.

In August 2023, the DfE published its guidance 'Securing Developer Contributions for Education'. This document acknowledges that while there is government funding available, developers will still be expected to provide contributions to ensure adequate provision of education infrastructure. The guidance recommends that developer contributions should be sought for a range of school places, where need arises. This includes places primary, secondary and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

As the residential aspect of this planning application is outline, it is not possible to calculate the expected level of pupils generated from the development at this stage . The below provides a commentary of current school place provision in this area of Stockport.

Within the Primary Phase, Hazel Grove Primary Planning Area has 7% surplus capacity. The schools in the Hazel Grove Primary Planning Area are Brookside Primary School, Hazel Grove Primary School, High Lane Primary School, Moorfield Primary School, Norbury Hall Primary School, St Peter's Catholic Primary School, St Simon's Catholic Primary School and Torkington Primary School.

Moorfield Primary school is a 2-form entry primary school with attached resourced base. The resourced base is full however this issue is dealt with below as part of the SEND capacity assessment. While the final level of pupils generated from the development cannot yet be calculated, at present it is likely that the development will not directly impact school place sufficiency.

Within the Secondary Phase, the site is located in the South Secondary Planning Area which currently has no surplus places in mainstream sector and is expected to remain in this position for the next 5 years. Schools in this area are Bramhall High School, and Hazel Grove High School.

Hazel Grove High School is the catchment area school associated with the proposed development. Hazel Grove High School is a 9FE secondary school. Bramhall High School has had significant amounts of structural bracing added following discovery of RAAC. Interruptions and operational difficulties mean that the school has not been able to accept new in-year pupils. The school is however scheduled to be rebuilt.⁸ While the final level of pupils generated from the development cannot yet be calculated, at present it is likely that the development will sufficiency in this area and cause the Council to commission additional places.

In relation to SEND, Special Education provision within Stockport currently has a shortage of places available with at present too great a reliance on special and independent special school places. As noted in the Primary section of this report, the resource base at Moorfield Primary is full. While the final level of pupils generated from the development cannot yet be calculated, at present it is likely that the development will sufficiency in this area and cause the Council to commission additional SEND places.

A more detailed calculation will need to be undertaken at reserved matters stage once the schedule of accommodation is confirmed and this will take into account property types and the size of the dwellings. Furthermore, the calculation will be based on up-to-date built costs, pupil yields and educational needs. This is to ensure that required contribution is commensurate with the proposed scheme and based upon the most up-to-date evidence. The need to contribute to any additional school

places required as a result of the proposed development would be secured by S106 agreement.

On this basis the proposed development accords with para 100 of the NPPF. The development also accords with para 156b in relation to the 'Golden Rules' for major residential development in Green Belt through making the necessary improvements to local infrastructure.

Pollution

Core Strategy policy H1 requires new development requires development to be sustainable and contribute to the creation of successful communities. Good standards of amenity should be provided for occupiers of existing and proposed housing.

Policy CS8 confirms that development should take into account hazards including contamination, air water, noise, vibration, light and other pollution. Policy SIE3 seeks to ensure that development can be accommodated without adverse impacts in relation to pollution.

Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution and by remediating and mitigating contaminated land, where appropriate (NPPF para 187). Planning decisions should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from contamination (NPPF para 196). Where a site is affected by contamination responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner (para 197). Planning decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development (NPPF para 198).

The application is supported by a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) in relation to the outline proposals and which considers the impact of externally generated noise upon the amenities of the future occupiers having regard to background noise from road traffic. The NIA advises that subject to a higher specification of glazing for plots that front Jacksons Lane, for living rooms and bedrooms, located on the north facing facades, the future occupiers would benefit from an acceptable level of amenity in relation to noise. An overheating assessment would however need to consider closed windows for these facades at night.

The proposed details in relation to noise pollution are acceptable and demonstrate that the outline development can be accommodated so as to ensure an acceptable level of amenity. A detailed NIA would be required as part of the reserved matters application.

In relation to air pollution, the Air Quality Assessment (AQA) considers both the construction and operational phase of the outline proposals and their impact on adjacent occupiers in relation to dust and vehicle emissions. Potential construction phase air quality impacts from fugitive dust emissions were assessed as a result of earthworks, construction and track out activities. It is considered that the use of the identified site-specific control measures would provide suitable mitigation for a development of this size and nature and reduce potential impacts to an acceptable level.

Potential impacts during the operational phase of the proposals may occur due to road traffic exhaust emissions associated with vehicles travelling to and from the site. Dispersion modelling was therefore undertaken in order to predict pollutant concentrations at sensitive locations as a result of emissions from the local highway network both with and without the development in place. Results were subsequently verified using local monitoring data. A review of the dispersion modelling results indicated that air quality impacts as a result of traffic generated by the development were not predicted to be significant at any sensitive location in the vicinity of the site.

Based on the assessment results, the AQA concludes that air quality factors are not considered a constraint to development. Members are advised that a construction environmental method statement would be secured at reserved matters stage to assess the detailed impacts of the development in relation to dust pollution arising from construction works. This will also secure mitigation measures so as to reduce those impacts to an acceptable level. Whilst the AQA considers only the outline proposals, it is considered that the CEMP should cover the construction of the full proposals noting the proximity of residential gardens.

With regard to ground pollution the Phase 1 Geoenvironmental Site Assessment notes that one registered landfill site is recorded within 250m of the site, located at Norbury House Farm, 180m south east of the site. The site was authorised to receive uncontaminated rubble, hardcore, uncontaminated soil and clay. Material used to infill former historic ponds on and offsite also represents a potential source of ground gases. No invasive plant species were identified during the site walkover however some areas of the site were inaccessible and the presence cannot be ruled out. The site is unaffected by radon and is not in an area affected by shallow coal mining.

The Assessment notes that due to the largely undeveloped nature of the site, there are limited potential sources of contamination identified. However, localised areas of Made Ground may be present in the location of infilled ponds and field boundaries. Made Ground is present in the location of the access track in the south west.

Significant on-site sources of potentially mobile contaminants are not anticipated. The site is understood to be underlain by low permeability Glacial Till which will somewhat limit the vertical migration of any mobile contaminants. Given however the presence of a stream close to the eastern boundary and the presence of a Principal Aquifer beneath the eastern part of the site, it is considered that there is a low to moderate risk to controlled waters.

Former ponds are present in the east of the site and in the surrounding area which may be potential sources of alluvial / organic deposits which may be a source of carbon dioxide and methane. A landfill is also recorded within 250m of the site boundary which may also represent a possible source of carbon dioxide and methane. Carbon dioxide and methane have associated asphyxiation and explosive risks respectively and if present the risks can be appropriately mitigated through the careful design of building structures.

The Assessment concludes that a detailed Phase II intrusive Geo-Environmental Ground Investigation should be undertaken in order to confirm the findings of the initial conceptual site model and value engineer a development solution.

Members are advised that the assessment is considered to provide a robust overview of potential contamination. Subject to conditions to secure the carrying out,

submission and approval of a phase 2 investigation together with any required remediation measures, together with that to secure investigations and an assessment in relation to the presence of landfill gas, the proposed development would not give rise to any adverse impacts in relation to ground contamination and landfill gas.

As no detailed proposals form part of this application, there is no information as to the lighting of the outline proposals (noting that the full proposals rely upon existing lighting). A lighting scheme and strategy to mitigate against any adverse impacts can however be secured as part of the reserved matters application(s). Details of any extraction equipment required in connection with the extensions and improvements to the clubhouse would be secured by condition.

The assessment above addresses objections relating to air and noise pollution.

On the basis of the above Members are advised that the proposed development accords with Core Strategy policies H1, CS8 and SIE3 together with para's 187, 196, 197 and 198 of the NPPF.

Trees, Ecology & BNG

The full application site itself has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise as listed in Stockport's development plan (e.g. Site of Biological Importance, Local Nature Reserve, Green Chain etc.). The site sits adjacent to Happy Valley Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which is composed of deciduous woodland priority woodland habitat. Within this reserve is the Lady Brook Site of Biological Importance (SBI) which contains ancient and semi-natural woodland irreplaceable habitat. Green Chain areas are present to the north west (130m) and south west 1km) of the site however are sufficiently separated from it by residential development and the associated highway infrastructure so not to be affected. There are no legally protected trees within the full application site.

Saved UDP Review policy NE1.1 confirms that development which would destroy or adversely affect, directly or indirectly, the natural or wildlife value of a local nature reserve will not be permitted unless there is justification for carrying out development in that particular area which overrides any harm to the nature conservation value of that site. The habitats and biodiversity of sites of biological importance will be protected and enhanced where possible (NE1.2).

Development will be expected to make a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of the Borough's natural environment and biodiversity. Sites, areas, networks and individual features of identified ecological, biological or other environmental benefit or value will be safeguarded (CS8).

Development should pay regard to the characteristics of a site including landscape and biodiversity (SIE1). The Borough's carrying urban and rural landscapes and biodiversity combine to create a unique and distinctive local character of considerable value. This distinctive sense of place and character will be maintained and enhanced. Planning applications should identify mitigation measures that keep disturbance to a minimum. Proposals affecting trees, woodland and other vegetation which make a positive contribution to amenity should make provision for their retention unless there is justification for the loss so that development can take place (SIE3).

The NPPF at para 136 confirms that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments. Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing

valued landscapes and site of biodiversity, by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning decisions should ensure that existing trees are retained wherever possible (para 136).

Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting sites of biodiversity value (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan) and by recognising the benefits of trees and woodland (para 187).

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the principles that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused (para 193).

There are no legally protected trees in close proximity to the proposed AGP, extensions and enhancements to the clubhouse. Noting however the presence of trees along the boundaries of houses adjacent to the AGP, a condition requiring the installation of protective fencing prior to and for the duration of construction works, should be secured by condition. This condition will ensure that no adverse impacts will arise in this respect.

The extensions to the clubhouse are at least 25m from the nearest trees those being to the south on the opposite side of the parking area and access road (to the side of and behind the play centre building). This degree of separation will ensure no adverse impact arises from this aspect of the development.

The extension of the hardstanding between the clubhouse and play centre building will not extend beyond the existing storage containers positioned to the side of the play centre. There are trees positioned behind these storage containers however it is not expected that the minor excavation required to lay the hard surface will impact on the root system of these trees given the compaction that is already being caused by the storage buildings themselves and vehicles that have been driving over the hardcore for many years that is proposed to be replaced.

In response to an objection, the proposed AGP will not encroach any closer to the adjacent nature reserve than it does at present. The 2 storey rear extension to the clubhouse will be no closer to the nature reserve than the existing and whilst the small extension to the hardsurfacing to rear of the clubhouse will be slightly closer, it will be separated from the nature reserve by existing development. The larger extensions to the front of the clubhouse will be separated from the nature reserve by the existing building. It is not clear what paragraph of the NPPF the objector refers to as 150 relates to Green Belt development and not protecting nature reserves. That aside, it is not considered that the proposals will cause harm to the adjacent nature reserve.

The outline proposals are supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. This identifies the position, species and health of all trees and hedges on and immediately adjacent to the site. There are no legally protected trees in close proximity to the outline proposals however there are 7 individual trees, 1 group of trees and 2 hedgerows on the site. Of these and having regard to the indicative

layout, tree T3 (an 8.8m high maple on the highway verge), G1 (a 2.4m high group of apple and cherry in the private orchard) and H2 (a 4m high conifer hedge enclosing the private orchard) would need to be removed. H1 (a hazel, hawthorn, ash and holly hedgerow on the northern boundary) could be retained other than a small section to create the access into the site. T4 (a 8.6m high oak on the northern boundary) would need to be removed in any event due to its condition (stem decay).

Whilst any loss is unfortunate, none of the trees identified for removal are legally protected nor are worthy of such protection and could in any event be removed without the approval of this Planning Authority. Replacement tree and hedgerow planting can be secured through landscaping proposals for the site at reserved matters stage so as to ensure no adverse impact.

In terms of ecology the application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA). Considering the site as a whole habitats recorded are defined as modified grassland, other neutral grassland, traditional orchard, dense scrub, hedgerows, scattered trees, developed land, and buildings. Broadleaved woodland sits immediately adjacent to the site in places on its boundaries. All the trees and hedges to be removed are considered to offer potential for breeding birds. The fruit trees in the private orchard and hedge around it both of which will be removed offer potential for foraging/commuting bats. The decaying oak on the Jacksons Lane boundary is not considered to offer bat roost potential.

All species of bats, and their roosts, are legally protected. Under the Regulations it is an offence to deliberately capture or kill a wild EPS; deliberately disturb a wild EPS in such a way that significantly affects the ability of a significant group to survive, breed, rear or nurture young and the local distribution of that species; or to damage or destroy a breeding place or resting site of such an animal.

A bat transect activity survey was carried out across the site in May 2023 in optimal weather conditions. Common pipistrelles were recorded foraging in the eastern (outline) portion of the site. The associated report suggests that the removal of the hedge in the mid-section of the site will reduce foraging and commuting habitat, and that unmitigated lighting could result in roost abandonment.

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) (Collingwood Winter, May 2023) was carried out in May 2023 which assessed the site as offering locally valuable bat foraging/commuting habitat. The PRA identified two trees on the site as offering bat roost potential. Neither tree is proposed for removal.

The PRA found some potential bat access points on the clubhouse building, and evidence of bat occupation in the form of droppings and feeding remains in the main roof void. The building was given a moderate bat roost potential rating, therefore two activity surveys were recommended. These were carried out in May and June 2023 in optimal weather conditions. On the second survey two common pipistrelle bats were seen to emerge from two roof tiles on the south-west roof aspect (Nocturnal Bat Survey Report, Collington Winter, October 2023). No evidence of a regionally important maternity roost, or locally rare species was identified and the roosts were categorized as non-breeding summer roosts which will be lost under the proposed works. As such, a mitigation licence will be required. There is potential for an impact on bats in the neighbouring LNR and SBI from increased recreational pressure after completion of the outline application proposals.

All breeding birds and their nests are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Some species receive further protection through inclusion of Schedule 1 of the Act (although no Schedule 1 species were recorded). A breeding bird survey (Breeding Bird Survey Report, Collington Winter, June 2023) was carried out in May 2023. Three red and five amber list species were identified on site. The woodland and scrub areas were considered the most valuable to birds on the site, with less species using the open grassland areas.

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992. This makes it an offence to kill or injure a badger or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to a sett. It is also an offence to disturb a badger while it is in a sett. A badger assessment was carried out as part of the PEA in August 2021, and a badger walkover assessment was carried out in December 2022 (Protected Species Report, Collington Winter, October 2024). No setts were observed on site in either survey and potential signs of badger activity were limited to mammal paths identified across the site leading into the designated sites. The paths may be badger or fox.

Whilst there are sets in the surrounding area, no direct impacts to setts are anticipated by the proposed development but impacts to foraging habitat may occur through the loss of the traditional orchard, there is considered to be sufficient alternative foraging opportunities in the locality. There is however potential for an impact from increased recreational pressure to occur after completion of the outline application proposals.

One water vole record was identified in the desk survey detailed in the PEA. The author considered it to be a sufficient distance away to rule out potential impacts from the development. There is however potential for an impact from increased recreational pressure to occur after completion of the outline application proposals.

The PEA (Collington Winter, October 2024) deemed notable amphibians to be absent from all 4 ponds within 250m of site due to them being dry at the time of survey. As at least 3 years had passed since the ponds were detailed as being known to be dry an update visit was requested. The updated PEA (Collington Winter, November 2024) reports that P1, P2 and P3 were found to hold water during visit, however this cluster of ponds is considered to be sufficiently separated from the site by Ladybrook River to constitute a barrier for Great Crested Newts (GCN) migration to the site.

Himalayan balsam was recorded in the designated site adjacent to the application site. This species is listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to spread or otherwise cause to grow these invasive species in the wild. Appropriate management and treatment procedures will be required.

Having considered the above, Members are advised that neither the AGP nor the extensions and enhancements to the clubhouse will encroach into the adjacent Happy Valley nature reserve or Ladybrook SBI being sited sufficient distance from these assets. Notwithstanding that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) in relation to ecology should be submitted in relation to both the outline and full proposals to ensure that these assets are adequately protected during construction works. This can be secured by conditions such that the CEMP is included in support of the reserved matters application and that the

full proposals are not commenced until a CEMP has been submitted and approved by the Planning Authority.

The outline proposals in close proximity to the LNR and SBI are likely to result in an increase of visitors to the sites for recreational use. The submitted PEA recommends that no public access via new footpaths should be allowed into the designated sites, and that defensive planting with scrub should be used to deter the public from entering the habitat sites. A condition can be imposed to ensure that any future reserved matters application is supported by a landscape plan which includes a buffer of unbroken scrub planting along the southern boundary of the site for this purpose.

Evidence of two minor roosts of a relatively common bat species has been recorded in the clubhouse proposed for extension works. The proposals would result in the destruction of the bat roosts with the potential to kill or injure bats and damage their habitat without appropriate mitigation and compensation measures. As a result a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) or a Low Impact Class Licence (LICL) will be required from Natural England. The EC Habitats Directive 1992 requires the UK to maintain a system of strict protection for protected species and their habitats.

When determining the application, it is advised that the Council has regard to the 3 Habitats Regulation derogation tests: -

- Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Importance (IROPI)
- No satisfactory alternative solution
- Maintenance of the favourable conservation status (FCS) of the species.

The need for consideration of the three tests has been demonstrated by a number of judicial reviews, including R (on the application of Simon Woolley) v Cheshire East Borough Council, June 2009) and Morge (FC) (Appellant) v Hampshire County Council (2011).

Natural England standing advice states that the LPA must be confident that Natural England will issue a licence before planning consent can be granted: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bats-advice-for-making-planning-decisions#assess-the-effect-of-development-on-bats> (although there is currently no case law to support this and current case law refers to the LPA needing to 'have regard' to the 3 tests).

Having regard to the above derogation tests:-

- The imperative reasons of overriding importance in this instance are the benefits that the extension of the clubhouse will have to sports as set out in the report above.
- These benefits cannot be secured in any other acceptable way other than through the extension of the existing clubhouse.
- The maintenance of the favourable conservation status (FCS) of the species can be secured by the installation of bat boxes on nearby mature trees prior to works commencing and the replacement of existing roost features like-for-like on the completed building as a means of compensating for the loss of the roost. The timing and supervision of the development to the clubhouse will need to be secured to reduce the risk to bats which may be present when the works are completed.

On the basis of the above, the proposed mitigation/compensation is acceptable and is likely to maintain the favourable conservation status of the species of bat

concerned. Implementation of the measures would be secured via condition in relation to the full proposals.

Whilst neither the full nor outline proposals detail new external lighting, it may be required in connection with the clubhouse proposals and certainly will be required in relation to the outline proposals so as to ensure a safe and secure form of development. In accordance with the BCT Guidance Note 08/18 (Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK), details of any proposed lighting should be submitted prior to the commencement of the full proposals and in support of any future reserved matters application pursuant to the outline proposals and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme should consider both illuminance (lux) and luminance (candelas/m²). It should include dark areas and avoid light spill upon bat roost features, bat commuting and foraging habitat (boundary hedgerows, trees, watercourses etc.) aiming for a maximum of 1lux light spill on these features.

The scheme should also include a modelled lux plan and details of the:-

- Proposed lighting regime; Number and location of proposed luminaries;
- Luminaire light distribution type;
- Lamp type, wattage and spectral distribution;
- Mounting height, orientation direction and beam angle; and
- Type of control.

All external lighting should be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these should be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority. This can be secured by condition.

In relation to breeding birds, if not included within the CEMP, a condition can be imposed to ensure that no vegetation clearance is undertaken between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before vegetation clearance works commence and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site, including a minimum 4m exclusion zone left around identified active nests until nesting is confirmed complete by a suitably qualified person. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the Planning Authority.

GCN 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. Offences under the Regulations is as reported above in relation to bats.

As per the PEA (Collington Winter, November 2024), GCN are not currently considered to be a constraint to the proposals. Should works be delayed beyond February 2026 an updated GCN assessment will be required and can be secured by condition.

The Protected Species Report makes recommendations for Precautionary Working Methods for badgers, including a pre-works walkover to ensure continued absence of badgers on site. A condition can be imposed in relation to both the full and outline proposals requiring adherence to the report's recommendations.

A record exists of water vole activity within the local SBI. While the development is unlikely to disturb any water voles present during the construction phase, there is a potential of disturbance during the operation phase of the outline section of the site from increased recreational pressure on the SBI. This would likely be adequately mitigated against by the proposed buffer planting to the southern boundary of the outline application site as detailed in the report above.

On the basis of the above, Members are advised that the proposed development (full and outline proposals) will not result in adverse impacts upon any protected species, their habitats, the LNR or SBI.

The proposed development (full and outline) are subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gains (BNG) and as such are required to deliver 10% gains to biodiversity. The application is therefore supported by a BNG Assessment and DEFRA Statutory Metric calculation.

It is summarised that biodiversity losses resulting from the loss of grassland, scrub and traditional orchard habitats will be compensated for in part, onsite through the creation of modified and other neutral grassland, traditional orchard and scattered tree habitats, and by the enhancement of some retained other neutral grassland. The metric calculates an overall 6.86% net loss in habitat units (-0.84 units) and an increased 215.79% net gain in hedgerow units (+1.24 units).

The metric correctly places the site in a High Strategic Significance area. It was completed by converting data from the PEA which did not involve a detailed botanical survey.

Proposals are made for created and enhanced habitats in the completed development and their predicted conditions. This includes the planting of 134 new small size trees in the outline application site and 34 small size trees within the full application site. For the proposed orchard habitat to meet its target condition of moderate, it must pass at least 4 of the criteria including the essential criteria; or pass at least 6 criteria if the essential criteria are not passed. The revised BNG Assessment details 6 criteria passed.

The BNG Assessment report states that required offsite units (2.061 off-site units are required in order to reach 10% BNG) could be sourced from the LPA or a private habitat bank if required. As the metric calculates a net loss in habitat units, a BNG offsetting strategy will be required to ensure delivery of minimum 10% BNG and ensure the proposals accord with the Environment Act and the NPPF. The mechanism for delivery of mandatory BNG would be secured as part of a future Biodiversity Gain Plan. Government guidance asks however, for LPAs to consider adherence to the biodiversity hierarchy (i.e. maximising on site BNG gains) during determination and not leaving it as a post-permission matter.

In response to the above Members are advised that as the submitted metric predicts a net loss, a BNG offsetting strategy will be required to ensure delivery of minimum 10% BNG and ensure the proposals accord with the Environment Act and the NPPF. The mechanism for delivery of mandatory BNG would be secured as part of a future Biodiversity Gain Plan.

Much of the proposed landscaping and on-site mitigation would be regarded as significant and will therefore need to be covered in the Biodiversity Gain Plan and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) that will be supplied to discharge a future Biodiversity Gain condition. Significant (and any non-significant) on site BNG will be included within the HMMP. The ecological

information submitted with the application (PEA, BNG Assessment and Metric) includes target conditions of enhanced and created habitats (with details of which condition criteria would be passed/failed). The target conditions appear reasonable but details of management prescriptions to be adopted to ensure the relevant condition criteria are met will need to be included in the HMMP. Monitoring of significant on-site BNG will need to be secured by S106.

Conditions should therefore be imposed to ensure that the BNG Plan is submitted, approved and implemented in accordance with the BNG Assessment submitted as part of this application.

For the proposed tree planting to meet its target condition of moderate, it must pass at least 4 of the criteria including the essential criteria or pass at least 6 criteria if the essential criteria are not passed. The BNG Assessment details 6 criteria which it says will be passed, justifying a moderate condition target. It should be noted that one of the selected criteria is at least 95% of the trees are free from damage caused by humans or animals. Future habitat management and monitoring plans will be expected to detail how all the criteria will be met. Failure to do so would result in the habitat not meeting its required target condition.

For the required off-site units, where possible, it is encouraged that offsetting is carried out at a local level since BNG follows the spatial hierarchy (also called the proximity principle). This means that if BNG cannot be achieved on site, BNG can be delivered off-site instead, with priority given to local enhancements where possible.

The biodiversity gain condition is deemed to apply to every planning consent (unless exemptions or transitional provisions apply which is not the case in this instance). The LPA is strongly encouraged to not include the biodiversity gain condition in the list of conditions imposed in any grant of planning permission. Biodiversity Gain information (including suggested paragraphs) should be included on any decision notice.

Government guidance advises Planning Authorities to consider adherence to the biodiversity hierarchy (i.e. maximising on site BNG gains) during determination and not leaving it as a post-permission matter. LPAs must also consider the likelihood of a future biodiversity gain condition being discharged.

The BNG Assessment report states that required offsite units could be sourced from the LPA or a private habitat bank if required to discharge the general biodiversity gain condition, but no details of proposed Habitat Banks with agreements in principle are included. Whilst its feasible that the above unit loss could be achieved offsite, it would be expected that draft proposals for an offsetting strategy would be provided since this will create additional financial burden (e.g. information that discussions that are taking place with habitat bank(s), with purchase of statutory credits as a last resort etc). Local offsetting is encouraged since BNG follows the spatial hierarchy/proximity principle.

Notwithstanding and in addition to mandatory BNG biodiversity enhancements are expected as part of developments in line with Core Strategy policy SIE3 and para 192 of the NPPF. This planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate features to increase the biodiversity value of the final development in accordance with these policies. A condition can be imposed to ensure that prior to the commencement of the full proposals and as part of a reserved matters application in relation to the outline proposals, an enhancement strategy should

be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority to include proposals for the provision of:-

- features for nesting birds including swifts, and roosting bats (as a minimum it would be expected that at least one bat or bird box would be provided per new dwelling, and any external lighting should avoid light spill on the features);
- gaps in garden fences to facilitate the movement of hedgehogs;
- brash/dead wood piles, and;
- native species planting.

The proposals should be permanently installed in accordance with approved details.

The assessment above addresses objections relating to tree and habitat loss, impact on ecology and biodiversity, the delivery of BNG and the robustness of surveys and reports.

Members are advised that having regard to the above and subject to the imposition of conditions the proposed development will not have adverse impacts in relation to trees, designated habitats nor protected species. Subject to conditions and a S106 agreement the development will also deliver mandatory 10% BNG together with biodiversity enhancements. On this basis the proposed development is compliant with saved UDP Review policies NE1.1, NE1.2, Core Strategy policies CS8, SIE1 and SIE3 together with para's 136, 187 and 193 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk & Drainage

UDP Review policy EP1.7 confirms that the Council will not permit development where it would be at risk of flooding, increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, hinder access to watercourses for maintenance, cause the loss of the natural floodplain, result in extensive culverting, affect the integrity of the existing flood defences or significantly increase surface water run off.

The Core Strategy at policy SD-6 requires all development to be designed to avoid, mitigate or reduce the impacts of climate change. All development will be expected to incorporate SUDS so as to manage surface water run off from the site and development on previously developed land must reduce the unattenuated rate of surface water run off by a minimum of 50%. Areas of hardsurfacing should be of a permeable construction or drain to an alternative form of SuDS (policy SIE3).

The NPPF confirms at Chapter 14 that new development should be planned for in ways that avoid increasing vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems (para 164).

Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere (para 170).

When determining any planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate,

applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment (para 181).

Para 182 confirms that applications which could affect drainage on or around the site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, and which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal. These should provide multifunctional benefits wherever possible, through facilitating improvements in water quality and biodiversity, as well as benefits for amenity. Sustainable drainage systems provided as part of proposals for major development should:-

- A. Take account of advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority;
- B. Have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards; and
- C. Have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development.

Members are advised that the application site is not identified on the UDP Proposals Map as being in a location liable to flooding and as confirmed by the Environment Agency's mapping, is within Flood Zone 1. This means that the site has a low probability from flooding from rivers. In addition to this neither application needs to undertake a sequential test to establish whether the development should be directed to and accommodated in an area of lower flood risk. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (FRA & DS) for both the full and outline proposals.

The FRA & DS for the full application confirms the following:-

- In terms of flooding risk, Lady Brook is 80m to the west and south of the site and 7m lower; as such the site is at low risk from fluvial flooding. The site is in an area at very low risk of surface water flooding. With regard to that from reservoirs, canals and other artificial sources there is no risk within the vicinity of the site. The risk of flooding from groundwater is also low. The site as existing drains via soakaways and foul drainage discharges to Headlands Road, this therefore poses a low risk in relation to flood risk from sewers.
- The AGP will drain through two filter drains to either side of the length but that soakaway tests will need to confirm that it can drain. If this is not feasible there is a surface water pipe that drains in the SE of the site that the AGP could drain to if soakaways fail. The clubhouse will use the existing soakaway. Notwithstanding that suggested approach, a formal drainage design will be undertaken. The development will have storage up to and including the 1 in 100 year event plus climate change of 45%.
- In terms of maintenance a regular schedule (such as after heavy rainfall) is proposed to reduce the risk of blockage and ensure the system remains in good working order.

Members are advised that this broad strategy is acceptable however as acknowledged by the applicant, a detailed strategy will need to be designed subject to further investigation. This along with a maintenance strategy would be secured by condition.

The FRA & DS for the outline application confirms the following:-

- In terms of flood risk, the site is at low risk from fluvial flooding and surface water flooding. With regard to that from reservoirs, canals and other artificial sources there is no risk within the vicinity of the site. The risk of

flooding from groundwater is also low. The site has no sewers crossing it and risk from such is low.

- The existing site is greenfield and drains to the water course to the south. Infiltration is not possible given the presence of slowly permeable, seasonally wet loamy and clayey soils. It is therefore proposed to drain the site into the tributary of the Lady Brook.
- In moderate rainfall events it may be possible for some infiltration to ground to occur and therefore it is proposed to drain into swales, then into attenuation basins and finally to discharge to the watercourse. Communal parking will utilise permeable pavements which discharge into the attenuation basins and the adopted roads will have verge drains to collect the water and drain to the attenuation basins before discharging to the watercourse. Discharge will be restricted to 48.31l/s via a hydro brake in the 1 in 100 year event plus climate change. The development will have storage up to and including the 1 in 100 year event plus 45% climate change.

Members are advised that this broad strategy is acceptable however given the outline form of the application and therefore the drainage strategy, a detailed strategy will need to be designed having regard to the development proposed at reserved matters stage. This along with a maintenance strategy would be secured by condition.

In response to objections, it is understood that the application site is over 2m away from Poynton Pool. If there were a breach in the pool then it will drain following the lowest ground levels which are in the vicinity of the pool. Therefore, a dam burst will discharge down Norbury Brook and then down Lady Brook, which passes the site to the south. At the point that Lady Brook is near the site, the watercourse is within a gorge. The ground levels of Lady Brook according to OS maps is between 60 to 65m AOD and the proposed development between 81 to 85m AOD. Water level would need to be raised by 15 to 20m before the reservoir water would risk the site. It is understood that Poynton Pool does not have volume of water to raise the river levels by 15m to 20m over 2kms. As such any risk to the site from a breach in Poynton Pool seems highly unlikely.

The comments of Sport England in relation to drainage are noted. The ground conditions of the grass pitches are discussed in a Site Investigation Factual Letter Report which confirms that soakaway tests were undertaken in November 2022 at the Wallbank area. The results of these reflect the clay ground conditions to a depth of 3.1m causing drainage issues and as a result of this infiltration is not effective. As detailed in the application the western pitch also has the same ground conditions and experiences the same issues. Whilst the outline application has an area of SUDS in the provision of a swale draining to tributary of the Lady Brook, however that site is much larger than that where the western pitch is located and has the space to accommodate such feature; that is not the case where the western pitch is located. This part of the site is also 80m from the Lady Brook with no closer tributaries and connection to the Lady Brook would require engineering works through the LNR and SBI which will most likely have implications for trees, ecology and BNG. The drainage strategy for the AGP is considered to be acceptable and will ensure that the pitch drains in an acceptable manner that does not worsen current conditions.

A neighbour comments that since the club extended their parking provisions to the rear of the houses in Headlands Road their garden has become significantly wetter. The drainage strategy that will be approved will be expected to ensure

that it does not result in adverse impacts on neighbouring properties. As such this matter should be resolved.

For the above reasons the proposed development is considered compliant with saved UDP Review policy EP1.7, Core Strategy policies SD6 and SIE3 together with para's 164, 170, 181 and 182 of the NPPF.

Energy and Sustainable Development

Core Strategy policy CS1 seeks to ensure that all development meets a recognised sustainable design and construction standard where viable to do so. All development will be expected to demonstrate how it will contribute towards reducing the Borough's carbon footprint by achieving carbon management standards. Policy SD1 confirms that the Council will look favourably upon development that seeks to achieve a high rating under schemes such as BREEAM.

Policy SD3 requires development to demonstrate how it will assist in reducing carbon emissions through its construction and occupation through the submission and approval of an energy statement. Notwithstanding this Members will be aware that changes to Part L of the Building Regulations in June 2022 focus on greater fabric performance, lower energy demand, and a move away from fossil fuels (gas and oil boilers) to electric heating systems. The changes should cut carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from new homes by around 31% and non-domestic new builds by 27%. In existing buildings, regulations will typically apply to new build extensions or the installation of new materials or technology. These standards for energy efficiency are now higher than that required by policy SD-3.

Development should be designed in such a way as to avoid, mitigate or reduce the impacts of climate change (policy SD6). Measures might include:-

- Provision of appropriate green cover (shaded green space and tree cover);
- Provision of green roofs, walls and boundaries;
- Urban design that encourages air flow throughout the development;
- Passive cooling that allows natural ventilation to cool the building or development in preference to mechanical cooling;
- Solar shading designed into buildings to avoid internal overheating; or
- Water features such as lakes, ponds, fountains and watercourses."

The NPPF at para 161 confirms that the planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050. It should help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Submitted with the application is a Climate Change Strategy and Energy Strategy relating to the outline proposals. This confirms that the approach to sustainability includes:-

- A transport strategy which prioritises sustainable transport modes. The need for private car will be lessened, whilst all houses will be fitted with a 7kW charging point as standard, and shared charging points for all flat units.

- Connecting to an efficient network of pedestrian and cycle routes that link to the local centre, Bramhall Park and the adjacent Happy Valley Nature Reserve.
- Using high quality materials, creating a pleasant, green, and sustainable new community.
- Utilising a heat pump led energy strategy where all heating demand is met by low carbon technology enabling an easy transition to Net Zero preparation in line with the Future Homes Standard and the UK's trajectory to Net Zero Carbon by 2050
- Passive design measures such as glazing with solar shading, air permeability, and natural ventilation will be used wherever possible, to prevent overheating and avoid excessive requirements for heating and cooling.

The UK has set into law a target to bring all its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. In March 2019, Stockport Council declared a climate emergency and agreed that Stockport should become carbon neutral by 2038, in advance of the UK 2050 target. The Stockport CAN strategy was developed to underpin this agreement and was approved by full council in October 2020. The strategy sets out to ensure that Stockport achieves carbon neutrality by 2038, in order to support global efforts to prevent global warming going above 1.5°C. The Environmental Law Foundation has suggested that climate emergency declarations should be regarded as material considerations in the determination of planning matters.

Meeting our local 2038 carbon neutrality target will require new development to achieve net zero carbon in advance of then, and we should avoid where possible building homes, workplaces, community uses or schools which will require retrofitting in the near future. It is important to note that most microgeneration technologies (e.g. solar panels), and other climate change mitigation / adaptation measures are significantly easier to install at the time of building rather than retrofitting later.

Stockport's Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) has been led by local government (GMCA and Stockport Council) and developed collaboratively with defined stakeholders. The results are a fully costed, spatial plan that identifies the change needed to the local energy system and built environment, detailing 'what, where and when and by whom'. The LAEP sets out the total costs, changes in energy use and emissions, and sets these out over incremental time periods to meet our target % reduction in emissions, to stay within our carbon budget. The LAEP scope addresses electricity, heat, and gas networks, future potential for hydrogen, the built environment (industrial, domestic and commercial) its fabric and systems, flexibility, energy generation and storage, and providing energy to decarbonised transport e.g. electricity to electric vehicles and charging infrastructure.

In terms of solar PV, Stockport's LAEP sets out that: *"the electricity grid will need to reach almost zero carbon by 2050 for the UK to meet its net zero commitments, with very low or even negative levels of emissions anticipated as early as 2035, Stockport will need to shift to zero carbon electricity earlier than the nation as a whole in order to stay within the carbon budget. This will mean generating much more zero carbon energy locally. All modelled scenarios found increases in locally generated renewable energy, primarily through solar PV."* The scale of solar PV identified in the LAEP is a highly ambitious aspiration and requires further detailed consideration, particularly from a network capacity perspective in terms of the optimal places to locate generation.

The submitted strategy for the outline proposals sets out a demand reduction approach to energy noting that it is typically a more cost-effective means of achieving carbon savings than providing low or zero carbon technologies. Prioritising energy demand reduction and taking a fabric first approach will assist in avoiding, mitigating and reducing the impacts of climate change. The following energy efficiency measures will be incorporated in the development:-

- A highly insulated building fabric with external walls, floors and roofs of low U-Values to reduce heat loss
- Efficient double glazed windows
- Use of natural ventilation
- Where feasible dwellings will be designed to allow for cross-ventilation to reduce the risk of overheating and help them stay cool in warmer conditions
- Low energy lighting and
- Strong continuity of insulation at building junctions to reduce thermal bridging heat loss.

A review of district wide low carbon technologies and renewable energy has been undertaken including connection to an off site district heat network, solar park, battery storage network, on site district heat network, wind power and hydro power. The strategy confirms that none are technically possible for various locational and logistical reasons. A review of building low carbon and renewable technologies however shows that:-

- There is expected to be suitable roof space to accommodate PV to buildings with south facing roofs.
- Heat recovery technology would be appropriate to incorporate into new buildings and can be considered on either the ventilation or wastewater systems.
- Heat pumps are a suitable technology to meet the hot water and heating demand of new homes and are an appropriate technology to meet the Future Homes Standard.
- Battery storage at building level could reduce peak electrical demands. Domestic battery storage technology is however currently expensive, but this is likely to decrease over the next five to ten years. Further investigation at design stage is required to confirm whether this approach would be appropriate.
- There is expected to be roof space available to provide solar thermal technology, however it may be considered more appropriate to provide PV instead of Solar Thermal to meet electricity demand as PV is more beneficial to support both EV charging and any potential heat pumps.
- Building-integrated wind turbines and wind turbines sited in urban areas perform poorly due to unfavourable wind microclimate and
- Biomass would not be feasible due to concerns regarding the delivery of biomass fuel to the residents and the development being unlikely to comply with the Future Homes Standard.

In relation to the full proposals to the clubhouse a sample simplified building energy model has been submitted. This confirms that the development will comply with Part L of the Building Regulations through a fabric first approach linked to the use of low carbon technologies (heat pump) for the heating and hot water and the use of photovoltaics to generate electricity.

Members are advised that both strategies are considered acceptable and will ensure compliance with Core Strategy policies CS1, SD1, SD3 and SD6 together

with para 161 of the NPPF. Conditions should be imposed in relation to both the full and outline proposals to secure detailed strategies and plans showing the location, size and design of any technologies external to the envelope of buildings.

Other Matters

Policy SIE5 confirms that development which would adversely affect the operational integrity of Manchester Airport will not be permitted. In response to comments from Manchester Airport, Members are advised that no new lighting is proposed at this stage however it is expected that there will be such required in connection with the outline proposals. The impact of this upon aviation safety will be considered at reserved matters stage in consultation with Manchester Airport and conditions could be imposed then as necessary. On this basis it can be concluded that the development would accord with policy SIE5.

Details of the drainage for the outline development including any swales would be considered at reserved matters stage once the layout of the development is submitted for approval. Similarly, the likelihood of roof areas being attractive to birds for rest and nesting, would be considered once a reserved matters application is submitted. Should flat roof areas be proposed then a condition could be imposed to secure a bird hazard management plan. Construction activities would be controlled by a construction environmental method statement secured by condition at reserved matters stage.

Having regard to the above the development will accord with policy SIE5.

Objections regarding the lack of sufficient dentists and doctors and the impact of the development in this respect are noted. As set out in the report above, the Council is and has been for many years in a position of housing under supply. As such applications which propose new residential development are afforded significant weight. Notwithstanding that, it is appreciated that the delivery of new homes has the potential to place an added burden upon services within the Borough however there is no policy requirement for large scale residential developments to include such provision within those developments. Rather, policies in the UDP Review and Core Strategy welcome and encourage the provision of healthcare facilities and that additional provision where proposed can be made within the community in line with that policy position in order to meet the demand generated by the level of housing need within the Borough.

The application makes the case that the proposals will also bring short to long-term economic benefits to the area through both the construction and operational phases of development. A Socio-Economic Benefit Infographic shows likely economic benefits associated with the outline proposals. These include:-

- The creation of 168 direct, and 67 indirect construction jobs.
- The generation of £36.3m gross value added during construction.
- An anticipated generation of £3.2m gross value added per annum based on 139 residents.
- The creation of £1.4m per annum in local expenditure.
- £800,000 savings to the NHS
- £140k Council Tax per annum
- Approximately 90 new jobs will be created on-site, providing £3.2m GVA per annum.

The application also makes the case that the detailed element of the proposed development will also bring economic benefits to SRUFC. The club currently has to spend circa. £9,000 a year to use off-site pitch facilities. The provision of an AGP will allow SRUFC to reinvest this money into their facility maintenance and development programme. Furthermore, the AGP will allow the club to hire out the all-weather pitch during the week which will provide another important revenue stream for the club to continue its important work for the community. As well as providing much-needed homes, the provision of high-quality family housing in this location will help to attract and retain higher-income households. As well as creating a new high-quality, safe and attractive neighbourhood for families, this will also help to boost inward investment and economic growth both in Hazel Grove and across the Borough.

Members are advised that the above is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application noting that the NPPF in seeking to build a strong, competitive economy confirms that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (para 85). In response to this it is acknowledged that new housebuilding in the Borough, and the contribution of this sector to the local economy, is currently constrained by the very significant shortfall in the five-year housing land supply. Whilst the above figures quoted by the applicant have not been verified, it is evident that the development will contribute to the economy in the areas identified.

Noting that inappropriate development in the Green Belt is sought in order to fund the construction of an AGP and extensions to the clubhouse, a condition should be imposed to ensure that the development in respect of the rugby club is delivered as part of the implementation of the planning permission. This condition will include details relating to the phasing of the development to ensure that the rugby club proposals are delivered in a timely manner having regard to the enabling development. Noting that this application seeks up to 60 new C3 dwellings and a C2 residential care home with up to 75 beds, this condition should also secure a review of viability at reserved matters stage to ensure that the final quantity of development sought at that stage not only remains sufficient to deliver the rugby club development but also remains no more than is required to do so.

Very Special Circumstances

The development in respect of the outline proposals do not fall within any of the excepted forms of development set out in GBA1.2, GBA1.5 and para 154 of the NPPF and are therefore inappropriate in the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt; that proposed will cause substantial harm to the Green Belt in that there would be a very significant loss of openness and the proposals would conflict with three of the five purposes of Green Belt to varying degrees. This harm to openness should be given very significant weight in the determination of this application.

When considering any planning application, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. VSC will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (NPPF para 153).

In terms of other harm arising from the proposals, as explored in the report above, there is also harm to the LCA which is considered to be significant. Whilst the outline development will result in the loss of the Wallbank pitch and grassed area adjacent, that loss is mitigated for by the AGP and as such it is considered that moderate weight be given to the loss of the pitches and limited weight to the loss of the grassed area given that it is only used by spectators. In accordance with para 153 this collective harm must be weighed against other considerations so as to demonstrate VSC.

In the consideration of VSC Members are advised that the application indicates that the proposed development will deliver the following benefits which the submission considers amount to VSC:

- The residential development, extra care and residential care proposed by the outline element of this application are required to deliver funds that will enable the club to install an AGP and extend the clubhouse. A viability assessment has demonstrated that the level of development sought is that required (and no more) to deliver these funds and the required S106 contributions. It is considered that moderate weight should be given to this.
- The club have evidenced the problems that they experience with the western grass pitch and Wallbank pitch and the impact that this has on their ability to use these pitches. They have also evidenced the deficiencies of the clubhouse in providing fit for purpose facilities that are accessible to all. As existing, use by those with disabilities is restricted or precluded and there are inadequate facilities for women and children.
- The proposed AGP would not only result in a facility that can be consistently used all year round, but it would also provide a playing surface that allows for multiple uses and is accessible by those with disabilities. The resulting clubhouse would be accessible throughout by those with disabilities with a bespoke changing room and WCs and would also provide fit for purpose changing rooms for use by women thus addressing safeguarding issues.
- The provision of an AGP and clubhouse extensions would not only address issues highlighted in the Council's 2024 PPS but would also allow the use of the facilities to be made available to local schools and clubs at times when they are not in use by the rugby club. The application evidences the demand and need for the facilities they propose not only through representations made by the RFU, Cheshire County FA Ltd, Richmond Rovers and Laurus Trust but also through the Council's PPS.
- Having regard to the above it is concluded that the proposed AGP and clubhouse proposals will deliver improvements to sport that cannot be achieved other than with the funds generated by the residential development, extra care and residential care proposed by the outline element of this application. These improvements not only benefit the club and participants in sports in terms of sporting provision, but also those with disabilities in terms of accessing development. It is considered that significant weight should be given to this.
- The outline proposals through the provision of C3 residential and extra care will deliver 58.4% of dwellings on site as affordable dwellings. The C3 dwellings will comprise supported housing for those with physical or

learning difficulties whilst the extra care dwellings are specifically designed for older people. Officers have spent a considerable amount of time discussing housing need and tenure with the applicant prior to the submission of this application to ensure that the development proposed assists in meeting the most acute need. The inclusion of these types of housing together with the proposal that they comprise affordable housing is particularly welcomed as not only will this element of the development meet a need that to date has been very much under represented but they will secure affordable housing for those who cannot access housing to meet their needs within the open market. It is accepted that it costs more to deliver supported affordable housing than it does to secure standard affordable housing. Therefore, the additionality to the scheme is a significantly increased affordable housing delivery for an affordable tenure that would not be delivered through normal mechanisms/policy. On this basis, it is accepted that the affordable housing provision is equivalent to a 63.4% standard provision. This is in excess of the 50% required by Core Strategy policy H3 and para 67 and 153a of the NPPF in relation to the 'Golden Rules'. In particular, this provision in respect of supported housing for those with disabilities and for older people is very much needed and will assist in addressing the undersupply that has existed over a prolonged period of time. It is considered that significant weight should be given to this.

- The development will deliver a number of improvements to recreation routes within the vicinity of the site and will also make a contribution to the Ring and Ride service. Whilst these are required to make the development acceptable having regard to accessibility, they would also provide benefits to the wider community. It is considered that moderate weight should be given to this.
- The outline proposals will deliver a LEAP on site which will provide for significantly more residents than the development will yield and which also exceeds the requirements of policy SIE2. This facility would therefore bring benefits to the wider community noting that the nearest play area is on Cheviot Road over 400m from the site. It is considered that moderate weight should be given to this.
- The development through its construction and occupation will deliver economic benefits to the economy. It is considered that moderate weight should be given to this.

Drawing the above together, Members are advised that whilst there will be harm arising from the loss of openness to the Green Belt, to the character of the LCA and from the loss of the Wallbank pitch, there will be considerable benefits as outlined above. Having regard to the collective weight of these benefits, it is considered that when balanced against the harm, they are of such weight that they will outweigh it. In conclusion therefore, Members are advised that whilst there will be harm to the Green Belt and other harm arising from the outline proposals, VSC exist to justify the proposed development having regard to the application of Green Belt policy.

Planning Balance and Conclusions

Returning to para 11d of the NPPF, Members are reminded that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. As the policies which are the most important for determining the application are out of date (these are the housing delivery policies of the Core Strategy in this

instance given that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply) this means granting planning permission unless:-

- i. The application of policies in the Framework that protect the Green Belt provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

In relation to para 11d (i), it has been established that officers consider that VSC exist so as to justify the development in relation to Green Belt policy. As such, the application of policies in the Framework that protect the Green Belt do not provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed.

In relation to para 11d (ii), the adverse impacts of granting planning permission need to be weighed against the benefits. In order to assist Members, the adverse impacts and benefits arising from the proposed development when assessed against the Development Plan and NPPF are set out below together with the weight that should be attached to each.

Adverse Impacts	Benefits
The harm to the openness of the Green Belt arising from the outline proposals Very Significant weight	The improvements to sport that the residential development will bring and which has been evidenced through a FVA as being no more than is required to deliver these improvements. Moderate weight
The harm to the LCA arising from the outline proposals. Significant weight	The improvements that the AGP and clubhouse extensions will bring to sporting provision, to the community and to addressing inequalities experienced by women and those with disabilities. Significant weight
Loss of the Wallbank pitch Moderate weight	The contribution that the C3 development (130 dwellings) will make to the very significant under supply of housing Very significant weight
Loss of the western grass pitch. Moderate weight	The contribution that C2 residential care and C3 older persons and supported housing will make to addressing need. Significant weight
Loss of the grassed area to the south of the Wallbank pitch. Limited weight	The provision of 58.4% affordable housing including that for supported housing which is equivalent to 63.4% standard provision and which will assist in meeting an identified and unmet need.

	Significant weight
	The improvement of recreation routes and contribution to the Ring & Ride service which would also provide benefits to the wider community Moderate weight
	The provision of a LEAP on site which will provide for significantly more residents that the development will yield and which will bring benefits to the wider community. Moderate weight
	The provision of over 5000m2 of public open space. Moderate Weight
	Economic benefits, including the creation of construction jobs. Moderate weight
	The development will not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Limited weight
	The development will cause no harm to highway safety and will make acceptable provision on site for parking. Limited weight
	The development will make a financial contribution to formal sports which will be used across the Borough to fund improvements to existing facilities or provision of new. Limited weight
	The development will make a financial contribution to the provision of school places required to accommodate pupils from the dwellings where there is not sufficient existing provision. Limited weight
	The development will cause no adverse impact on residential amenity. Limited weight
	The development will cause no harm to pollution in terms of air, noise and land. Limited weight
	The development will have no adverse impact in relation to trees or ecology. Replacement planting will be secured as part of the reserved matters application. Limited weight
	The development will deliver 10% gains to biodiversity in addition to

	replacing habitats that will be lost as a result of the proposals. Limited weight
	The development will have no adverse impact in relation to flood risk or drainage. Limited weight
	The development will be constructed and occupied such that it assists in the reduction of carbon emissions. Limited weight
	The development will be constructed such that it will not cause harm to aviation safety. Limited weight
	The development will be designed so as to be resilient to crime and deter crime. Limited weight

In terms of the planning balance that is required under para 11d (ii) and as discussed above, the adverse impacts from the outline proposals in terms of the harm to the Green Belt, the LCA and loss of the Wallbank pitch and adjacent grassed area is outweighed by the case made for the need for enabling development; the improvements that the AGP and clubhouse extension will bring to sports, the community and addressing inequalities; the provision of on site supported housing and extra care housing as affordable housing which equates to a 63.4% provision when compared to standard affordable housing; the improvements to recreation routes and the Ring & Ride service; the delivery of a LEAP and benefits to the economy from construction and occupation. Whilst the full proposals result in the loss of the western grass pitch, that is also outweighed by the above mentioned benefits that will arise from AGP.

Material also to the planning balance are the benefits that will arise from the contribution that the 130 C3 dwellings will bring to the very significant position of housing undersupply; the contribution that the C2 residential care and C3 supported housing and older persons housing will make to addressing acute need. In addition, the development is policy and NPPF compliant in relation to the loss of agricultural land and highway matters and will deliver improvements to formal recreation, provide public open space within the development and fund any new school places required as a result of it, again in compliance with the Development Plan and NPPF. There will be no harm to residential amenity, pollution, flood risk or drainage, the development will deliver mandatory BNG, will incorporate measures to assist in the reduction of carbon emissions, and will be resilient to crime and deter crime, all in compliance with the Development Plan and NPPF. Finally, there will be no adverse impact in relation to trees, protected species, ecology or aviation safety, again all in compliance with the Development Plan and NPPF.

In conclusion therefore, having taken into account all the objections to and support for this application, consultation responses, Development Plan policies, the NPPF and any other material considerations, it is concluded that the adverse impacts of granting planning permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. In coming to this view and as required by para 11d(ii), particular regard has been paid to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes. The

presumption in favour of sustainable development therefore applies and planning permission should be approved.

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

STEPPING HILL AREA COMMITTEE 11TH MARCH 2025

The Planning Officer introduced the application and responded to questions from Members in relation to the weight attached to the protection of the Green Belt, bat habitats, usage of the pitches, community use, shortage of pitches across the Borough vs the projected use and the flexibility of changes in the proposals between outline and reserved matter stage. The Officer also responded to questions in relation to bird mitigation and use of flat roofs for amenity space, the extent of issues to be considered at this stage, highway issues including accessibility and traffic generation, flooding and drainage and biodiversity net gain. Questions were asked and responded to in relation to the merits of the proposal in terms of improving access for those with disabilities and facilities for female players and the weight to be attached to these considerations. The Officer was asked about the weight attached to the economic benefits.

A person spoke in opposition to the application and raised objections in relation to the impact of the proposals upon the Green Belt and Happy Valley nature reserve.

The applicant spoke in favour of the application and the chair of the rugby club responded to questions from Members about the problems that the club face in terms of their facilities, community use, the position and involvement of Sport England together with potential funding for the improvements from sources other than from the receipt generated by the outline proposals. Members also asked questions in relation to the drainage of the pitches, the impact this and ground conditions have on the use of the pitches together with the phasing of the development. Both responded to questions from Members.

Members then sought further clarification from the Planning Officer about grey belt and the status of this site together with measures to reduce the spread of micro plastics from the pitch into the wider environment and polluted run off. The Officer responded to those questions and advised Members that further information in relation to micro plastics would be provided to the Planning & Highways Committee.

Members debated the application and whilst Members were very supportive of the club, concerns were raised in relation to flooding, the impact on the green belt, landscape character area, reduction in green space, amenities of neighbouring occupiers, the lack of bus routes and traffic impacts finding it difficult to weigh the adverse impacts against the benefits. Members noted that similar proposals have been refused locally by Members and then allowed on appeal. It was suggested by a Member that there are no reasons to refuse planning permission noting the benefits but that a site visit should be carried out by Planning & Highways. Members sought clarification from the Officer about decision making process and why they could not determine the application without it being referred to Planning & Highways. Another Member noted that the Council does not have the land supply we need and don't have a local plan in place which has led to applications being allowed on appeal. They considered that the application has a lot of merits and difficult decisions have to be made.

Members resolved to recommend the application for refusal and a site visit by the Planning & Highways Committee.

The webcast of the meeting can be viewed via the following link: [Stepping Hill Area Committee - Tuesday 11 March 2025, 6:00pm - Stockport Council Webcasting](#)

BRAMHALL AND CHEADLE HULME SOUTH AREA COMMITTEE 13TH MARCH 2025

The Planning Officer introduced the application and responded to questions from Members in relation to the nature of the application being a single proposal and how that impacts on the consideration of the development on the Green Belt. Questions were responded to questions in relation to the impact on Happy Valley and BNG and why only limited weight had been attached to these considerations when there will be adverse impacts. The Officer explained that there will be no adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated for by conditions or the S106. Questions were asked about pollution and the impact of the pitch on Happy Valley. The Officer advised the impact of micro plastics is not a planning matter and it is understood that no grant of permission has been subject to conditions to prevent the spread of such rather this is a regulatory matter for central government.

A person spoke in opposition to the application and noted that the site is not designated in the plan for residential development. The development will be harmful to the area and green belt, visible from all around and will merge the built development in the area destroying habitats and wildlife. The benefits should not be allowed to result in the destruction of the green belt. Members asked the speaker questions about the impact on the area and where it will be visible from.

The applicant spoke in favour of the application. The chair of the rugby club also responded to questions from Members about the community use agreement and spoke about the existing pitches, the issues they face with them and how they impact on the club. Members were advised of the benefits of the AGP and clubhouse in relation to community use. Questions were also asked about community events, parking and management of these events (not sporting) and how the development would impact on these events. Members were advised that the AGP would not impact on those events and will only be hired out to schools and clubs. The position of Sport England was raised and their opposition to the loss of the grass pitches and were advised that SE do not consider the benefits that will arise from the AGP.

Members debated the application noting that they cannot make a decision on the application. It was questioned why so much time had been spent discussing the rugby club and so little time on the housing development. The complex nature of the application was noted and it was suggested that no recommendation, other than a site visit be carried out, should be made to Planning & Highways. Other Members noted their concerns with regard to the impact on the green belt and on Happy Valley. The position set out in the Playing Pitch Strategy about the need for pitches was noted however the inclusion of the outline proposals are of concern. Flooding was mentioned again and it was questioned whether the area can accommodate more development. Traffic congestion is high in the area especially at weekends and this needs to be considered.

Members resolved to recommend a site visit to both sites by Planning & Highways Committee with no recommendation as to the determination of the application.

The webcast of the meeting can be viewed via the following link: [Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme South Area Committee - Thursday 13 March 2025, 6:30pm - Stockport Council Webcasting](#)