

Application No: 15/4406M

Location: ADLINGTON GOLF CENTRE, LONDON ROAD, ADLINGTON,  
CHESHIRE, SK10 4NG

Proposal: Change of use of land to a nine-hole graduate golf course with associated works and re-orientation of driving range

Applicant: Adlington Golf Centre Ltd

Expiry Date: 28-Dec-2015

**SUMMARY:**

The proposed development comprises the change of use of land presently used for grazing purposes, in order to deliver a new nine-hole graduate course. It is also proposed to undertake a minor realignment of the existing driving range in order to enhance its functionality for players.

Extensive areas of ecological enhancement and creation would be included within the proposed development. Such measures include extensive hedgerow planting, tree planting, wildflower areas and species rich grassland. It would not be necessary to remove any trees in order to facilitate the proposed development.

The proposed development would result in the beneficial use of the Green Belt and is fully compliant with the provisions of the NPPF in terms of Green Belt planning policy.

The proposals are considered to have an acceptable impact on the character of the area.

Consideration has been given to the impact on neighbouring amenity and subject to the impact on the occupiers of Sandhole Farm, this is considered to be acceptable.

The proposals are considered to be acceptable with regards to highway safety and car parking and have no harmful impacts on trees or landscaping, or ecology.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve subject to conditions

## **REASON FOR REPORT**

Due to the size of land involved, the application is required to be determined by the Northern planning Committee.

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site extends to 21ha and is located within the open countryside, to the southwest of the built-up area of Poynton and to the northwest of the village centre of Adlington. The site is also located adjacent to Adlington Road Industrial Estate.

Adlington Golf Centre has been established for many years and it operates on a 'pay-and-play' basis. There is no requirement for formal private membership and the facilities serve a broad spectrum of the population from beginners to advanced players. However, the business has outgrown the present facilities in terms of popularity and demand.

The wider site is presently used for purposes related to Adlington Golf Club and comprises the following:

- nine-hole graduate course to the northernmost parcel of land extending across an area approximately 10ha in size;
- nine-hole academy course to the west of the main reception buildings;
- a number of buildings comprising the main reception and associated shop, restaurant and changing facilities;
- a driving range comprising 45 floodlit bays;
- internal access road leading to the main reception buildings from London Road; and
- car parking areas.

This planning application effectively seeks to 'renew' planning permission previously granted by the Council in the early 2000's (001518P) for the change of use of the application site to create a nine-hole golf course. This permission establishes the appropriateness of the site as a golf course in planning policy terms.

Following an announcement by the government that it would make funding available for the delivery of the relief road, the Council recently resolved to adopt the 'Green Route' as its preferred route for the new Poynton Relief Road.

This planning application is made on a 'standalone' basis in response to unmet demand for additional facilities. It would be delivered regardless of whether the Poynton Relief Road comes to fruition. However, should the Poynton Relief Road proceed on the basis of the preferred 'Green Route' then the proposed development would help to facilitate its early delivery; the preferred route would seriously undermine the viability and feasibility of the existing nine-hole graduate course at Adlington Golf Centre and the applicant would have issues should the business not as near as possible be fully operational during construction of the relief road. The early commencement of the proposed scheme would avoid that situation and ensure it is available when works commence on the road.

The Poynton Relief Road would provide a direct link between the Manchester Airport Relief Road (A6MARR) with the A523 London Road. It aims to provide improved links to Macclesfield and ease congestion through Poynton.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

The proposed development comprises the change of use of land presently used for grazing purposes, in order to deliver a new nine-hole graduate course. It is also proposed to undertake a minor realignment of the existing driving range in order to enhance its functionality for players.

The new course would encompass an area of land approximately 17ha in size with the holes laid out such that players negotiate it in a legible and industry accepted fashion with the final hole being located adjacent to the existing club house with play proceeding in a clockwise direction. Associated works would include landscaping, new tees, greens and drainage.

Extensive areas of ecological enhancement and creation would be included within the proposed development as shown in the associated Ecological Appraisal. Such measures include extensive hedgerow planting, tree planting, wildflower areas and species rich grassland. It would not be necessary to remove any trees in order to facilitate the proposed development.

The proposed development would not include any new structures, buildings or areas of hardstanding.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

Adlington Golf Centre opened in 1992 as a driving range; the first of its kind within the Borough of Macclesfield at that time. It subsequently expanded in the mid-1990s, and again in the early 2000s, to incorporate an academy course, a pitch and putt course and a graduate course.

- 01/1640P Construction of new access road (to serve associated development within Stockport Borough), security lodge and landscaping – Approved 09-Sep2004
- 00/1519P Extension and improvements of existing driving range facilities, new car parking provision and new 9-hole golf course and access – Approved 02-Oct-2000
- 00/1518P Change of use of land to two 9-hole golf courses – Approved 02-Oct-2000
- 75579P Retention of floodlighting – Approved 07-feb-1994
- 73346P Retention of floodlighting (7) – Refused 24-Mar-1993
- 66008P Golf driving range associated parking and landscaping – Refused 03-Apr-1991

## **POLICIES**

## **Local Plan Policy**

NE1 – NE3 landscape protection and Enhancement  
NE7 Woodland  
NE11 Nature Conservation  
BE1 Design Guidance  
H13 Protecting Residential Areas  
RT1 Open Space  
RT18 Access to the Countryside  
DC1 New Build  
DC3 Amenity  
DC6 Circulation and Access  
DC8 Landscaping  
DC9 Tree Protection  
DC33 Outdoor Commercial Recreation  
DC37 Landscaping  
T1 General Transportation Policy  
T7 Safeguarding routes  
DC63 Contaminated land

## **Other Material Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)

## **CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)**

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure – The proposals have been assessed in relation to road safety, sustainability, access, car parking and traffic impact and is satisfied that the development proposals can be safely accommodated on the adjacent highway network and raises no objection to the planning application. In addition, the proposed golf course lies immediately to the west of the proposed Poynton Relief Road (PRR) and would in future be accessed from the PRR should a planning application for the PRR come forward. Having reviewed the PRR proposal along side this planning application, the HSI concludes that any planning consent for this application would not prejudice the delivery of the PRR.

Environment Agency – No comments to make on this application

Public Rights of Way – No objections subject to conditions and informatives.

Archaeology - The proposed development lies within an area evaluated by The Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit in 1993 for the A523 Poynton By-Pass. A single trial trench was excavated in the eastern half of the wooded area known as Sandholes Moss, which encountered surviving peat deposits, thought to be associated with a glacial kettle hole, and therefore likely to contain deposits suitable for palaeoenvironmental sampling.

The current proposals however, do not require any disturbance to this part of the wooded area, and no archaeological mitigation is therefore considered necessary.

Manchester Airport – comments awaited

Environmental Health – comments awaited

## **VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Adlington Parish Council – No objections

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

East Cheshire Ramblers object to the diversion of FP41 as it will result in a loss of view eastwards by screening the hedge.

An objection has been received on behalf of the owners of Sandholes Farm, who object to the planning application due to the position of the golf course in relation to their land and property. Whilst they have no objection to the principle of a golf course in this location they raise concerns with the position of the third hole, which runs parallel with the paddock situated at the rear of their house and outbuildings. The position of the blue tee and green are such that golf balls would be driven into the paddock. Matters of personal safety and the effects of golfers “ball strike” are material considerations when the Council determine the application. It is therefore requested that the course layout is amended to ensure that golf balls will not be hit into the neighbours land.

This threat to personal safety would be detrimental to the amenities currently enjoyed by the neighbours on their land and the proposal would, therefore, fail to satisfy the requirements of Saved Local Plan Policies DC3 (Amenity) and DC33 (Outdoor Commercial Recreation). Similarly, the proposal would fail to satisfy one of the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework which is to always seek *“a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of land and buildings.”*

## **APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

The information that has been submitted alongside the plans, drawings and Environmental Statement include:

- i) Design and Access / Planning Statement
- ii) Landscape Visual Impact
- iii) Transport Statement
- iv) Ecological Appraisal
- v) Flood Risk Assessment
- vi) Arboricultural Impact Assessment

The planning statement concludes:

- Adlington Golf Centre operates on an ‘inclusive’ business model basis and provides sports and recreational opportunities for a broad spectrum of the population from beginners to advanced players. The proposed development would satisfy unmet demand for additional facilities.

- The use of the land as a golf course is fully compliant with paragraph 81 of the NPPF, which seeks to secure the beneficial use of the Green Belt to provide opportunities for outdoor and recreation.
- The scheme effectively seeks to 'renew' a planning permission granted by the Council in the early 2000s, which established the appropriateness of the site as a golf course in planning policy terms.
- The proposal would result in a number of significant benefits, including the health and wellbeing of the population, additional jobs as a result of the expansion of a rural enterprise and ecological benefits in terms of habitat creation and enhancement.
- Although this planning application is made on a 'standalone' basis, the proposal would also facilitate the early delivery of the Poynton Relief Road, a strategic priority for the Council, should this infrastructure project come to fruition.
- Feedback received during the consultation has been considered and where appropriate incorporated within the design of the Golf Course.
- The FRA highlights that the proposed development is located in Flood Zone 1 and is not considered to be at risk of flooding.

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **Sustainable development**

At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Whilst there are public transport options in the vicinity of the site, it is unlikely that these would be widely used by users of the golf course given the need to transport equipment. However, there is no doubt that as a form of outdoor sport and recreation it will serve to support the community's health and social well-being. Given that the proposal does not increase the level of activity on the site as it is a reconfiguration of the existing course, it is considered to be broadly neutral in terms of its sustainability credentials, when compared to the existing situation on site.

Therefore, the key question is whether there are any significant adverse impacts arising from the proposals that would weigh against the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

#### **Green Belt**

Paragraph 89 and 90 of the Framework identify the exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Included within the paragraph 90 exceptions are engineering operations provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. The proposed development site comprises creating a new nine-hole graduate course.

Whilst there would be some earthworks to alter the contours of the land, these changes are considered to be relatively limited in their extent. No new buildings or structures are proposed and as such the proposal is considered to preserve the openness of the Green Belt. Similarly, there is not considered to be any conflict with the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt. It is therefore considered that the proposal is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

However, the Agent has acknowledged that the change of use of land to a nine-hole graduate course would constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt as it is not listed in paragraphs 89 or 90. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Adlington Golf Centre attracts customers from a broad spectrum of the population without formality or the need for private membership. It provides opportunities for sport and recreation to a significant population within a highly sustainable countryside setting and it fully complies with paragraph 81 of the NPPF.

The proposed development would support the aims of the NPPF with regard to health and wellbeing of the population and this also weighs heavily in favour of the proposed development (paragraph 73). This should also be considered in the context of this area of the Borough almost entirely comprising Green Belt outside of the built-up settlement limits. Notwithstanding the proposal being linked to an existing facility, sustainably locating such a facility will inevitably result in the use of a Green Belt site.

Furthermore, the proposed development would also facilitate the expansion of a rural enterprise, which would result in additional jobs directly and indirectly. The proposal is fully compliant with paragraph 28 of the NPPF in supporting the rural economy.

Finally, the proposed development would facilitate the early delivery of the Poynton Relief Road should this infrastructure project come to fruition and this would significantly benefit the local community and the wider sub-regional economy.

There are positive and over-riding very special circumstances that would clearly outweigh any harm associated with the proposed development being inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

The proposed use of the land would ensure that it remains open and rural in character and appearance. The engineering operations would be modest in scale and would not have a material impact on the openness of the Green Belt or the main purposes of including within it.

### **Amenity**

Local Plan policies H13, DC3 and DC38 seek to protect the amenity of residential occupiers. Policy DC3 states that development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property due to matters such as loss of privacy, overbearing effect, loss of sunlight and daylight and traffic generation and car parking.

Although the applicants Agent does not endorse the report submitted on behalf of the neighbours at Sandhole Farm, the applicant and course architect have revised the layout in order to address their concerns. Hole no. 3 has been amended to include the removal of one of the tees. Hole nos. 2, 4, 5 and 6 have been revised very slightly as a result. Further consideration is being given to the revised plan and the neighbours have been reconsulted. Members will be updated on this issue prior to the committee meeting.

There are a few private residential dwellings scattered around the vicinity of the proposed course. However, golf is not a particularly noisy activity, and it is not thought that any other significant amenity issues are raised.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Highways**

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure – The proposed golf course lies immediately to the west of the proposed Poynton Relief Road (PRR) and would in future be accessed from the PRR should a planning application for the PRR come forward. Having reviewed the PRR proposal along side this planning application, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure concludes that any planning consent for this application would not prejudice the delivery of the PRR.

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure has reviewed the Transport Statement (TS) submitted by the applicant in support of the development proposals and finds the following:

#### Local Highway Network

##### A523 London Road

The site is accessed from the A523 London Road, which links Macclesfield to the south of the site with Stockport to the north. In the vicinity of the site Macclesfield Road around 11.0m, wide it is flanked on both sides of the carriageway by grass verges and a footway is provided on the west side (site side) of the carriageway only. It has street lighting and is subject to a speed limit of 40mph although immediately to the south of the access, the speed limit increases to 50mph.

##### Road Safety

There has been just one Personal Injury Accident (PIA) recorded in the vicinity of the site access (around 160m to the north) in the last five years, the PIA was classified as slight.

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure concludes that the local highway network in the vicinity of the site has a good road safety record and that the existing site access operates safely.

##### Sustainability

It would be unlikely that the site would be accessed by sustainable forms of transport, due to the nature of golf, which involves the transportation of bulky items of equipment to and from the course.

##### Access and Car Parking

The development proposals will be served by the existing site access, which is a priority ghost island junction with the A523. It is also proposed that the existing 151 space car park will serve the development site and evidence is presented in the TS to demonstrate that the existing car park has sufficient capacity to accommodate any additional parking demand associated with the development proposals.

The proposals for access and car parking are acceptable.

##### Traffic Impact

The TS presents an assessment of the morning and evening commuter peak period traffic generating potential of the development proposals. Table 1 presents the results:

### **Table 1 – Anticipated commuter peak hour traffic generation**

	Arrivals	Departures	Total
0800 – 0900	3	1	4
1700 - 1800	7	6	13

The level of peak hour traffic generation associated with the development proposals, set out in Table 1, would not be expected to have a material impact on the operation of the adjacent or wider highway network.

#### Highways summary

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure is satisfied that the development proposals can be safely accommodated on the adjacent highway network; accordingly, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure has no objection to the planning application.

#### **Trees / Landscape**

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment dated September 2015

An amount of pre-determination tree felling has historically taken place on site which has established a degree of separation between the central woodland area. Google maps clearly depicted the woodland joined as one along the southern boundary.

The development proposals identify the removal of two sections of hedgerows H2 and H3 only, and no trees. Section 5.2 of the report identifies that a full hedgerow assessment in accordance with the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations has not been undertaken. This is required to determine if either of the hedgerows is deemed to be important. A full botanical and historic assessment should be undertaken. Mitigation in the form of new planting is only appropriate once the status of the hedgerows has been determined.

A revised tree report, which shows the hedgerow to be lost as a result of the proposal has been submitted. This indicates that 229m of hedgerow would be lost i.e. H2 and short sections of H3 only. There would be 1,177m new hedgerow planting carried out.

In addition, a hedgerows regulations assessment has also been submitted. None of the hedges to be removed have been considered important in the context of the Regulations, and should be seen in the context of the extensive new planting being carried out.

This information (received above), has been considered by the Council's Arboricultural Officer and an update on this matter will be provided prior to the committee meeting. The Arboricultural Officer has confirmed that the hedgerows identified for removal are not considered to be important in terms of the 1997 hedgerow regulations.

The AIA identifies a number of trees and their associated RPA's being potentially compromised by the alterations to ground levels to form new greens and tees. The report offers additional construction methodologies such as aeration piping to mitigate the adverse effect of ground level changes. The main area of impact relates to two individual trees one group and the southern edge of the woodland. It is anticipated that the Beech T7 will not accommodate such alterations, and additional losses are inevitable. The impact of these losses on the amenity of the immediate area and the wider landscape are considered to be moderate

The use of heavy machinery on the site needs to be controlled and managed by the use of robust protective fencing, to ensure retained trees are not compromised. No specific details have been provided, but this can be dealt with by condition should the application proceed

The pruning identified to facilitate access accords with the requirements of current best practice BS3998:2010

Subject to the satisfactory submission of the additional detail relating to the hedges, should the application be approved that following conditions will be required.

The proposed golf course development would not have a significant impact on the character of the wider landscape or have any significant visual impacts. The impact upon the character of the area is therefore considered to be acceptable. The proposal complies with policies BE1, DC1 and DC8 of the Local Plan.

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted with the planning application and considers the impacts of the proposed development.

The proposed development would not comprise any additional structures or areas of hardstanding. The LVIA notes the modest topographical changes necessary to facilitate the proposed development with the scheme being minimalistic and following natural forms. The proposal should also be seen in the context of the benefits associated with the significant additional planting being carried out.

During the construction period the LVIA concludes that there would be short-term adverse impacts from two of the receptor points identified. This is an inevitable consequence of development. With regard to post-development, certain receptor points would experience either noticeable change, mitigated through new planting, or negligible change.

The proposed development would integrate well with the surrounding landscape and is acceptable against the provisions of Policy BE1 and Policies NE1, NE2 and NE3 of the adopted local plan.

## **Ecology**

The Nature Conservation Officer has assessed the application.

### Sandholes Moss

The two tees for hole 2 are located with 'Sandholes Moss' which appears on the UK inventory of priority habitats. Habitats of this type are a material consideration for planning. The two tees have however been sited on a cleared, disturbed area of habitat which is dominated by bracken and tall ruderal vegetation of low nature conservation value. The woodland habitats located to the west and east of the cleared area of substantial nature conservation value but would be unaffected by the proposed development.

The Nature Conservation Officer, therefore advises that whilst the two tees are located within the boundary of the identified priority habitat as it appears on the inventory, the tees have however been located on habitat of low nature conservation value.

### Great Crested Newts

Great Crested Newt have been recorded at the pond on site during surveys undertaken to inform the emerging proposals for the Poynton Relief Road. The submitted report states that the woodland and hedgerows within the site would form key terrestrial habitats for GCN. In order to avoid harm to great crested newts the submitted report recommends that Reasonable Avoidance Measures are employed during construction process. These measures include timing of the works and having a licenced ecologist being on site in order to supervise the removal of the hedgerows etc.

The Nature Conservation Officer advises that provided these measures are implemented the proposed development would be highly unlikely to result in a breach of the Habitat Regulations. Consequently, it is not necessary for the Council to have regard to the Habitat Regulations during the determination of this application.

### Badgers

Two badger setts have been recorded on site. Based on the submitted information the Nature Conservation Officer advises that considering the location of the setts and the level of engineering works proposed, the proposed development would be unlikely to significantly effect the two setts. Brief mitigation proposals including restrictions on the types of works undertaken in the vicinity of the setts has been included with the submitted ecological assessment.

There does however remain the risk that the setts could be disturbed if the works proceeded in an insensitive manner. The Nature Conservation Officer, therefore recommends that if planning consent is granted a condition should be attached which requires the submission of a more detailed badger mitigation method statement prior to the commencement of the proposed development.

### Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a priority habitat and hence a material consideration. The proposed development would result in the loss of a number of sections of hedgerow. The submitted ecological layout plan however, the Nature Conservation Officer identifies a number of opportunities for the establishment of new hedgerows as part of the proposed development. Based upon the revised assessments a considerable greater length of hedgerow would be planted compared with that lost.

A detailed specification for the proposed hedgerow planting should however be provided as part of a landscaping scheme put forward for the development. The Nature Conservation Officer advises that this matter could be dealt with by means of a suitable planning condition.

### Ecological enhancement/landscaping

In order to ensure the proposed planting and landscaping works are implemented appropriately, the Nature Conservation Officer advises that conditions should be attached requiring the submission of a detailed landscaping prior to the commencement of development.

### Nesting Birds

If planning consent is granted a condition should be attached to safeguard nesting birds.

Additionally, if planning consent is granted, the Nature Conservation Officer advises that the following conditions should be attached:

- Implementation of great crested newt mitigation
- Submission of detailed badger mitigation strategy
- Submission of detailed landscaping scheme
- Safeguarding of nesting birds

### **Air Safety**

Although comments are awaited from Manchester Airport. However, given the location of the existing golf tees / holes, it is not considered likely that the Airport would raise an objection.

### **Public Rights of Way**

The development, if granted consent, would affect Public Footpath No. 41, Adlington as recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement, the legal record of Public Rights of Way.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that *“planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails”* (para 75).

The proposed development would have a direct and significant effect on the Public Right of Way, which constitutes *“a material consideration in the determination of applications for planning permission and local planning authorities should ensure that the potential consequences are taken into account whenever such applications are considered”* (Defra Rights of Way Circular (1/09), Guidance for Local Authorities, Version 2, October 2009, para 7.2).

The PROW team suggest that the following condition be attached: -

- a) Prior to the commencement of development, a Public Rights of Way scheme of management shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority in liaison with the Public Rights of Way team as the Highway Authority. The scheme shall include provision for:
  - i. the design of access and Public Rights of Way routes within the development and their surfacing, widths, gradients, landscaping and structures;
  - ii. any proposals for the diversion or extinguishment of any Public Right of Way under section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; and,
  - iii. any proposals for the temporary closure of any Public Rights of Way, along with alternative route provision.
- b) The line of the Public Right of Way shall be marked out on the development site prior to the commencement of and during the development.
- c) Pre-commencement and post-completion condition surveys of the surface of the Public Right of Way shall be undertaken by the developer, with the developer restoring any degradation identified.

Proposed developments should present an opportunity to deliver and improve walking, cycling and equestrian facilities for transport and leisure purposes, both within the proposed development site and in providing access to local facilities for education, employment, health etc. These aims are stated within the policies and initiatives of the Council's statutory Local

Transport Plan and Rights of Way Improvement Plan and also within the Local Plan Strategic Priority 2: *“Creating sustainable communities, where all members are able to contribute and where all the infrastructure required to support the community is provided. This will be delivered by:*

*2. Ensuring that development provides the opportunity for healthier lifestyles through provision of high quality green infrastructure and cultural, recreational, leisure and sports opportunities*

*4. Improving links between existing and new neighbourhoods by giving priority to walking, cycling and public transport and providing a genuine choice of transport modes and supporting community integration”.*

Local horse riders have, under the Council’s statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan, registered an aspiration (ref. H28) to see the current cul-de-sac Public Bridleway No. 42 in Adlington extended so that it can be used as part of the local network by horse riders and cyclists, in addition to pedestrians. The Public Rights of Way team and Cheshire East Local Access Forum are seeking to secure non-motorised routes within the Woodford Aerodrome development to be made available to all three categories of user: pedestrian, cyclist and horse rider. It would therefore be advantageous for the local community for that part of Public Footpath No. 41 in Adlington affected by the proposed development to be upgraded in legal status and physical specification to Public Bridleway standard. Additional informatives are also suggested.

Since the above comment was made by the PROW team, it is understood that the applicant and PROW team have reviewed the definitive line of Footpath 41, which passes down the edge of the new course and which was proposed to be diverted approximately 3-5 metres to the west as part of the application.

In light of the objection from East Cheshire Ramblers, the formal process required for diversion and the timescales for delivery of this proposal related to Poynton Relief Road, the applicant now proposes to retain the footpath on the definitive line and there would be no need to divert the footpath. There will be no need to materially amend the course layout, as the hedgerow boundary shown to the western edge of the site will simply be moved approximately 3-4 metres to the East. Given the scale of the submitted plans, the change will not be apparent on the drawings.

In physical terms, a new hedgerow would be planted adjacent to hole 6 at the southern end of the course, to create an “avenue” to contain the footpath which will be at least 3.5 metres wide to allow mechanical maintenance of the hedge. Moving north, a completely new hedgerow will be planted as previously proposed along the western boundary of holes 7 and 9. This will simply be moved further east than previously anticipated and in time the existing fence forming the existing boundary will be removed, slightly enlarging the field to the west. “Kissing Gates” will be installed at the field boundaries where necessary.

The above has been discussed and agreed with the PROW team who are happy that there is no material impact on the footpath from these revisions and that the relationship between the footpath and golf course are acceptable.

The above amendment would appear to address the concerns of the East Cheshire Ramblers. There is no diversion now proposed and the matter of views is not a planning

consideration, as the exact same hedge could be planted by the applicant in the absence of the golf course land, without the need for planning permission.

### **Archaeology**

The Environmental Statement includes an archaeological desk-based assessment. The Council's archaeologist has advised that the site is identified as having limited archaeological potential. It is, however, acknowledged that some of the field boundaries on the site pre-date the tithe map of 1841 and may be of some antiquity. It is suggested that where these are to be removed by development work, a section should be recorded across the field boundary in order to make a record of its form and, perhaps, recover dating evidence. This modest programme of archaeological mitigation can be carried out as part of the development process and may be secured by condition.

### **ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**

The proposed development would also facilitate the expansion of a rural enterprise, which would result in additional jobs directly and indirectly. The proposal is fully compliant with paragraph 28 of the NPPF in supporting the rural economy.

### **Other matters**

The comments raised from the East Cheshire Ramblers Association has been addressed above. The comments from the neighbour with regard to ball strike are being considered and the negotiations have resulted in the submission of a revised plan. An update on this will be provided in an update report.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

The proposal is considered to be an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. The openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt will be adequately maintained. Subject to resolving the issue of ball strike and potential impact on land in the ownership of Sandhole Farm, the proposal will not result in any significant injury to the amenity of nearby residential properties. The impacts on ecology have been satisfactorily addressed, and in some cases enhanced. The visual and landscape impacts of the development are acceptable. No significant environmental effects have been identified.

The proposal is considered to be a sustainable form of development under the definition of The Framework. The proposal is in accordance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure raises no objections to the proposals as the proposal is not considered to generate any adverse traffic, or highway safety issues.

Consequently, for the reasons outlined above, and subject to resolving the matter relating to the Hedgerow Regulations, there are not considered to be any significant adverse impacts that would outweigh the presumption in favour of sustainable development in this case. The application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Approve subject to conditions.**

**In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions / informatives / planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Planning & Enforcement Manager has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Northern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.**

Application for Full Planning

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to following conditions

1. A01LS - Landscaping - submission of details
2. A03FP - Commencement of development (3 years)
3. A01AP - Development in accord with approved plans
4. A04LS - Landscaping (implementation)
5. A22GR - Protection from noise during construction (hours of construction)
6. A32HA - Submission of construction method statement
7. The proposed development to proceed in strict accordance with the Great Crested Newt Reasonable Avoidance Measures.
8. Submission of a more detailed badger mitigation method statement prior to the commencement of the proposed development.
9. Breeding bird survey to be submitted
10. Development to be carried out in accordance with submitted mitigation strategy

