

Application No: 19/2202M

Location: Land Between Clay Lane and Sagars Road, Handforth SK9 3HF

Proposal: Application for reserved matters approval (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) for the erection of 224 dwellings, landscaping, public open space, internal access roads, garages, car parking, and associated infrastructure.

Applicant: Alex Wigfield, Anwyl Homes

Expiry Date: 25-Oct-2019

SUMMARY

The proposal seeks to provide 224 dwellings on a site that has outline planning permission for up to 250 dwellings and which is allocated in the CELPS for around 250 dwellings. 67 affordable dwellings are to be provided, which are widely pepper potted across the site, and will contribute towards a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. The abundant and strong green infrastructure around the perimeters of the site is retained. Whilst there is an under provision of play and amenity open space in terms of areas on a plan and having regard to the amounts specified in policy SC 6 of the CELPS; what is proposed is considered to be of quality, is well located and will be a real asset of the site, and will complement the other nearby facilities available at Meriton Road Park. Dobbin Brook forms a natural buffer between existing dwellings to the north and east and the new development and ensures appropriate separation distances are achieved between existing and proposed dwellings to safeguard the living conditions of neighbouring properties. Relationships within the development also ensure satisfactory distances are established between the new dwellings.

The access into the site has previously been approved as part of the outline permission (17/3894M) and the separate full planning application for the access (19/1797M), consequently no access issues are raised with regard to this reserved matters submission. The internal road network meets relevant highways design standards and adequate car parking is provided in accordance with parking standards identified in the CELPS. Added to this a proposed footway / cycleway provides excellent permeability through the site north to south and east to west, which provides links to Styal to the west, south onto Sagars Road towards the train station and east towards Meriton Road Park and Handforth centre.

Whilst some landscape details require further clarification, the main tree / landscape objective of LPS 34 of the CELPS, namely the *“Retention of trees and woodlands on the edges of the site, with new planting to re-enforce important landscape features and to properly define a new Green Belt boundary”*, has been achieved within the proposals. Similarly, there have been a number of amendments made to design and layout of the proposal during the course

of the application which have sought to address issues raised by officers, and whilst some clarification is needed on some, relatively minor, matters the proposed design has developed to a point where it is now considered to be acceptable, when considered against the requirements of policies SD2 and SE1 of the CELPS, and the CEC Design Guide.

Air quality, flood risk and contaminated land matters were addressed either at the outline stage, or have been previously approved as part of the access application, and the current reserved matters application raised no further points of concern on these matters.

The comments received in representation have been given due consideration in the text below. However, subject to the satisfactory clarification on the specific matters referred to in the main body of this report, the proposal is considered to comply with the development plan as a whole and is therefore a sustainable form of development. In accordance with policy MP1 of the CELPS, the proposals should therefore be approved without delay. Accordingly a recommendation of approval is made.

Summary Recommendation:

Approve subject to conditions

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is an area of agricultural land that is enclosed by Sagars Road to the south, Clay Lane to the west, residential properties on Windermere Road and Ullswater Road to the north and Hampson Crescent to the east. Much of the site boundary consists of mature trees and hedgerows, with additional hedgerows within the site dividing fields. A small wooded area to the north east of the site separates the application site from the adjacent open space at Meriton Park. Dobbin Brook runs along the rear of the existing properties on Hampson Crescent, along the eastern boundary. Also included within the application site boundary is 15 Hampson Crescent, which is a two-storey, detached dwelling. The site is identified as site LPS 34 in the CELPS, which is allocated for residential development. The majority of the site lies within the Parish of Styal, with just the access from Hampson Crescent located within Handforth Parish.

Some work has commenced on site following the full planning permission for the access, which was approved at the July SPB meeting.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application seeks approval for the reserved matters following the outline approval 17/3894M, which granted outline planning permission for the erection of up to 250 dwellings with associated works including the demolition of 15 Hampson Crescent. Access was approved at the outline stage, and the current proposal seeks reserved matters approval for the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 224 dwellings.

During the course of the application, as a result of extensive discussions with officers, the applicant has sought to address concerns raised by officers in a positive manner through the submission of revised plans. The latest revised plans (December 2019) have increased the proposed dwelling numbers from 217 to 224.

RELEVANT HISTORY

17/3894M - Outline planning application (access to be considered) for erection of up to 250 dwellings with associated works including the demolition of 15 Hampson Crescent – Approved 02.08.2018

19/1797M - Demolition of 15 Hampson Crescent, diversion and culverting of Dobbin Brook and formation of both vehicular and pedestrian access from Meriton Road / Hampson Crescent including associated infrastructure and landscaping works, and creation of temporary construction haul road and compound from Sagars Road – Approved 09.08.2019

POLICIES

Development Plan

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

MP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

PG1 Overall Development Strategy

PG2 Settlement hierarchy

PG4 Safeguarded Land

PG6 Open Countryside

PG7 Spatial Distribution of Development

SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 Sustainable Development Principles

IN1 Infrastructure

IN2 Developer Contributions

SC1 Leisure and Recreation

SC2 Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities

SC3 Health and wellbeing

SC4 Residential Mix

SC5 Affordable Homes

SE1 Design

SE2 Efficient use of land

SE3 Biodiversity and geodiversity

SE4 The Landscape

SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE6 Green Infrastructure

SE7 The Historic Environment

SE9 Energy Efficient development

SE12 Pollution, land contamination and land stability

SE13 Flood risk and water management

CO1 Sustainable travel and transport

CO3 Digital connections

CO4 Travel plans and transport assessments

LPS 34 Land Between Clay Lane and Sagars Road, Handforth

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan saved policies (MBLP)

NE9 Protection of River Corridors
NE11 Nature conservation
NE17 Nature conservation in major developments
NE18 Accessibility to nature conservation
RT5 Open space standards
H9 Occupation of affordable housing
DC3 Residential Amenity
DC6 Circulation and Access
DC8 Landscaping
DC9 Tree Protection
DC14 Noise
DC17 Water resources
DC35 Materials and finishes
DC36 Road layouts and circulation
DC37 Landscaping
DC38 Space, light and privacy
DC40 Children's play / amenity space
DC63 Contaminated land

Handforth Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)

H8 Landscape and Biodiversity
H9 Trees and Hedgerows
H11 Encouraging High Quality Design
H12 Surface water management
H16 Congestion and Highway Safety
H18 Promoting sustainable transport
H19 Improving access to the countryside in Handforth and the surrounding area

Given that the majority of the site is located within Styal, the HNP can only be applied to a very small section of the site around the site access.

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)
National Planning Practice Guidance
Cheshire East Design Guide

Styal Neighbourhood Plan

Regulation 7 stage reached – Neighbourhood Area Designation
No policies to give weight to at the present time

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

There have been two rounds of public consultation (in June and October 2019) and the comments below are the most recent comments from each consultee.

It should be noted that whilst there has been an increase of 7 dwellings from the original number of 217 in the latest revised plans, these have not been re-consulted on. The site has outline permission for up to 250 dwellings, and the amendments that have been made make virtually no change to the plots along the north and west boundaries shared with neighbouring properties, and do not significantly alter the built form within the site. As such further consultation is not considered to be necessary.

Environment Agency – No objections

United Utilities – Comments not received at time of report preparation

Manchester Airport – Comments not received at time of report preparation.

Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) – No objections

Environmental Health – Raise concerns regarding impact of use of access road upon neighbouring properties on Hampson Crescent. Recommend conditions relating to hours of construction, piled foundations, dust management and floor floating (polishing of large surface, wet concrete floors)

Housing Strategy & Needs Manager – No objections

Education – No comments received

Public Rights of Way – Existing track in the western corner of the site adjacent to Spurs Lodge should be upgraded.

Head of Strategic Infrastructure – No objections

ANSA – No objections

Handforth Parish Council – No objection, but reiterate strong objection over proposals to allow construction traffic to use Sagars Road for site access.

Styal Parish Council - No objections in principle but objects to the current allocation of the S106 monies associated with the development

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

During the two rounds of public consultation, 16 letters of representation have been received from interested parties objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Meriton Rd, Sagars Rd, Hampson Crescent, The Link and Bulkeley Rd all unsuitable for access
- Additional traffic
- Weight restriction of Sagars Rd
- Increased risk to highway safety
- Impact on wildlife and trees
- Impact on already stretched local services, infrastructure, schools, doctors, etc.
- Access should be from Styal

- Brownfield land should be used, not Green Belt
- Suitable site for houses where Knowle House used to be
- Reports used to support outline application were wrong and misleading
- Surface water drainage proposals not achievable (condition 4)
- Impact of construction on Dobbin Brook
- Diversion of Dobbing Brook will be detrimental to ecology
- Construction management plan inadequate (condition 11)
- Health & safety of local residents
- Impact on air quality
- Noise, disturbance and dust
- No mention how the habitat will be temporarily homed during works, and not enough focus on Dobbin Brook and the wildlife/ecology beyond the site (condition 14)
- Temporary parking restriction not acceptable
- Dust control measures not sufficient (condition 16)
- No remediation strategy provided (condition 18)
- Not enough detail to assess external materials properly (condition 25)
- Bridge will cause problems
- Increased risk of flooding
- Impact on visual amenity of the area
- Site compound results in loss of privacy, increased noise, increased artificial light and dust.
- Impact of construction traffic on parking, congestion, noise levels, damage to property, safety, flood risk and weight loading on Sagars Rd
- Working hours should be weekends only
- A proper Stakeholder Management Strategy should be produced by the developer
- Devaluation of property
- Village is already overloaded with cars that parking in the village is scarce
- Previous planning applications to build in this area have been rejected. (Knowle House).
- Site is protected Green Belt land
- Appears that consulting the public is simply a box-ticking exercise because the comments go completely ignored
- It is unsurprising that the reputation of CEC is in the gutter
- Housing requirement figures do not reflect predicted population growth
- Addition of 217 dwellings virtually doubles the housing stock in Styal
- Perimeter of site used by many people enjoying the Green Belt, and its loss will have significant negative impact on amenity and health of general public
- Low water pressure will be exacerbated
- Japanese Knotweed is present on the site
- Unnecessary development given plans for North Cheshire Garden Village
- Loss of privacy
- Proximity of access road to immediately adjacent properties and associated impact on living conditions
- Bridge structure will dominate adjoining gardens and result in overlooking
- Potential to affect structural integrity of adjoining property
- HGVs will not be able to enter the site or manoeuvre safely
- Recording of existing traffic conditions inadequate

- Increased run off into Dobbing Brook and associated impacts on River Dean and River Bollin.
- Not all residents have been notified of the application
- Separate applications are confusing
- Little discussion and liaison with the residents of Handforth
- Flood risk to properties in close proximity of proposed ponds
- Loss of privacy arising from footpath to rear of Hamp[son Crescent/Sagars Rd properties and increased security risk
- Proximity of properties to rear of Hampson Crescent / Sagars Rd creates noise, light and privacy issues

One letter has been received making the following general observations:

- Every house should be fitted with electric charging point for cars
- For every one tree that is removed at least five should be planted
- Strange that the s106 monies include no reference to Styal, even though all the houses proposed are within the boundaries of Styal, but there is a substantial amount proposed for sports facilities in Wilmslow.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of development

The application site is an allocated Strategic Site for housing in the CELPS. Site LPS 34 states that the development of the land between Clay Lane and Sagars Road over the Local Plan Strategy period will be achieved through:

- The delivery of around 250 dwellings;
- Provision of a direct cycle and pedestrian link from the site to the west to improve connectivity. A link to the open space to the east should also be provided as part of any development; and
- Retention of trees and woodlands on the edges of the site, with new planting to re-enforce important landscape features and to properly define a new Green Belt boundary.

The outline planning permission approved the development of the site for up to 250 dwellings, in accordance with the allocation in the CELPS. The current reserved matters application proposes 224 dwellings, which is a 10.4% shortfall from the approved 250 dwelling maximum. However, for the purposes of the policy, 224 dwellings is considered to meet the requirement for “around 250 dwellings” in LPS 34. This is of course subject to other policies within the development plan including those related to the efficient use of land and the residential mix of housing developments. The delivery of the site for residential development will contribute towards the Council’s housing land supply and assist in meeting the development requirements of Handforth / Styal and the wider Borough. The further requirements of policy LPS 34, and other relevant policies, are considered below.

Housing

Affordable Housing

30% of the dwellings on site were secured as affordable housing as part of the outline permission, in accordance with policy SC5 of the CELPS. As a development of 224 dwellings, 67 dwellings are required to be provided as affordable dwellings. 44 units should be provided as Affordable/Social rent and 23 units as Intermediate tenure.

The current number of those people on the Cheshire Homechoice waiting list with Handforth as their first choice is 318. This can be broken down to 142x 1 bedroom, 105x 2 bedroom, 42x 3 bedroom, 15x 4 bedroom and 14x 5 bedroom dwellings. There is no information for Styal.

The SHMA 2013 showed the majority of the demand annually up to and including 2018 in Handforth and Wilmslow was for 49x 3 and 5x 5 bedroom dwellings. The SHMA also showed an annual requirement for 13x 1 bedroom and 3x 2 bedroom dwellings for older persons. These can be provided by Bungalows, Ground Floor Flats, Cottage Style Flats or Lifetime Standard homes.

An affordable housing scheme has been submitted with this reserved matters application, in accordance with the requirements of the s106 agreement on the outline permission. The submitted details do indicate that 65 dwellings will be provided as affordable units. These are to be provided as:

- 14 x 1 bed ground floor apartments (2-storey building)
- 14 x 1 bed first floor apartments (2-storey building)
- 1 x 2 bed first floor apartment (2-storey building)
- 18 x 2 bed mews / semi-detached (2-storey)
- 19 x 3 bed mews / semi-detached (2-storey)
- 1 x 4 bed detached (2-storey)

The proposed mix of affordable properties is considered to meet the identified needs outlined above, and will contribute to the creation of a mixed, balanced and inclusive community. The revised plans also now show the affordable houses to be widely pepper potted throughout the site. It is therefore considered that the proposal now complies with policy SC5 and the affordable housing requirements of LPS 37 of the CELPS.

Residential Mix

Policy SC4 of the CELPS states that new residential development should maintain, provide or contribute to a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. In addition, to meet the needs arising from the increasing longevity of the borough's older residents, the council will require developers to demonstrate how their proposal will be capable of meeting, and adapting to, the long term needs of this specific group of people.

Including the affordable units, the proposal provides the following mix of dwellings (all 2-storey or 2.5 storeys):

- 39 x 1 bed apartments (17%)
- 36 x 2 bed dwellings (mews / semi-detached) (16%)
- 70 x 3 bed dwellings (semi-detached / detached) (31%)
- 74 x 4 bed dwellings (detached) (33%)
- 5 x 5 bed dwellings (detached) (2%)

Whilst there is clearly a predominance of 3 and 4 bed dwellings, the above information suggests a broad mix of dwelling types and sizes is provided within the development. The mix of open market dwellings has also been amended during the course of the application to provide more smaller, 1 and 2 bed, properties at the expense of 4-bed detached dwellings.

The proposed development comprises the following open market dwellings:

10 x 1 bed apartments (2-storey)

18 x 2 bed semi-detached (2-storey)

33 x 3 bed mews / semi-detached (16 x 2-storey and 12 x 2.5 storey)

18 x 3 bed detached (2-storey)

73 x 4 bed detached (54 x 2-storey and 19 x 2.5 storey)

5 x 5 bed detached (2-storey)

There is currently no Neighbourhood Plan for Styal, and whilst the provisions of the Handforth Neighbourhood Plan only apply to its designated area (i.e. the area to the east of Dobbin Brook, and not the entire application site), there is some helpful commentary within the justification for HNP policy H2. This policy justification highlights the fact that the proportion of the population in Cheshire East of pensionable age and above will continue to grow (the SHMA 2013 stated that it would “*increase from 83,521 in 2010 to 124,544 by 2030.*”). The justification for this policy also explains that it is essential that a greater balance of house types is introduced to cater for a wider section of the community, and ensure that suitable accommodation is included to allow younger residents to reside in the local area alongside older residents who wish to move to smaller homes but remain in the area. This is considered to reflect the requirements of policy SC 4 of the CELPS, where it requires a mix of housing to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. The proposed mix of housing outlined above is considered to achieve this objective and as such complies with policy SC 4 of the CELPS.

Open Space

One of the site specific principles of development of this site listed within the local plan allocation (LPS 34) is that “*Provision should be made for public open space, possibly utilising Dobbin Brook as a focus for green infrastructure.*”

Policy SE 6 of the CELPS sets out the open space requirements for housing development which are (per dwelling):

- Children’s play space – 20sqm
- Amenity Green Space – 20sqm
- Allotments – 5sqm
- Green Infrastructure (GI) connectivity 20sqm

(These figures are per family dwelling. However, there is no definition of a family dwelling within the CELPS. Any dwelling could potentially be a family dwelling and therefore the figures below relate to all dwellings proposed and therefore represent the absolute maximum requirement.)

Policy SE 6 states that it is likely that the total amount of 65sqm per home (plus developer contributions for outdoor sports) would be required on major greenfield and brownfield development sites. Contributions towards outdoor sports provision was secured as part of the outline planning permission.

The proposal for 224 dwellings triggers a requirement for 4,480sqm of formal and informal play provision in line with policy SE6 of the CELPS. Two equipped play areas are now proposed – one to the eastern side of the site close to Dobbin Brook and another, smaller

facility, within the centre of the site. The applicant's latest public open space (POS) plan suggests that 4,308sqm of children's play space will be provided, which is a slight shortfall from the policy compliant amount of over 4,000sqm.

4,480sqm of amenity greenspace and 4,480sqm green infrastructure is also required, and the submitted POS plan suggests that 3,060sqm of amenity greenspace will be provided, together with 14,705sqm of green infrastructure. This shows that there will be an under provision of amenity greenspace and a significant over provision of green infrastructure.

However, the GI includes the policy requirements of LPS 34, new Green Belt boundary, retained tree belts, buffer to Dobbin Brook, retained and enhanced ponds and ecological mitigation. In addition it should be acknowledged that the applicant has made a number of significant and positive changes to the layout to give better clarity to the perimeter GI and subsequent maintenance issues in response to previous concerns raised by ANSA. The applicant has also focused on the quality of features at the request of officers, including the surfacing of the footpath / cycleway, pond fencing and entrance features.

Amenity green space is more limited and is focused around the pedestrian and cycleway routes around the site and some smaller pockets of incidental open space, but it should be acknowledged that the GI which is 10m wide in some areas will also serve to satisfy the amenity greenspace requirements on the site.

With regard to play provision, whilst it is questionable whether the entire 4,308sqm of children's play space shown on the POS plan would truly qualify as children's play space, the applicant has introduced a central LAP in addition to a LEAP, which is situated close to the proposed bridge into Meriton Road Park and made several changes to the equipment as requested by ANSA. This has resulted in two attractive, inclusive play areas with a key climbing unit that will provide a focus for play and provide a challenging play environment. This will also complement the facilities available in Meriton Road Park. The applicant has focused on the quality of these areas and the play value they offer. Both areas are fenced as they sit adjacent to footpaths through the site but both also sit within wider green space for social and more active play adjacent to them.

In terms of allotments, the requirement is 5sqm per family dwelling. For 224 dwellings this would amount to 1,120sqm of allotment space. No financial contributions were secured for allotments at the time of the outline planning permission. Therefore, there should be a requirement for them to be provided on site. However, if they were provided on site it would result in an inevitable reduction the number of dwellings, which is not wanted from a housing supply point of view, given that the 224 dwellings currently proposed are notably below the allocation for this site. It has therefore been suggested that areas of productive planting are provided with fruit trees, etc. to compensate for the absence of allotments. Whilst the principle of this idea can be supported, due to the proximity to Manchester Airport, and the potential for such planting to attract birds, which would conflict with the safeguarding requirements of the airport, confirmation is awaited from Manchester Airport on this matter.

Overall, whilst there is an under provision of play and amenity space in terms of areas on a plan, what is proposed is considered to be of quality, is well located and will be a real asset of the site. The substantial over provision of GI is acknowledged and whilst it will not replace play or amenity space, it does bring a different offer to future residents, bringing more natural

environments close to home and opportunities for more informal enjoyment. In this case, it can be accepted that whilst the GI will not replace the play and amenity space, it is considered to be sufficient to mitigate for the shortfall, particularly give the proximity of other facilities at Meriton Road Park. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the open space requirements of LPS 34 and policy SE 6 of the CELPS.

Living conditions

Saved policy DC3 of the MBLP seeks to protect the living conditions neighbouring properties in terms of loss of privacy, overbearing effect, loss of light, noise, smells, fumes, dust etc. Policy DC38 of the MBLP set out guidelines for space between dwellings, and states that new residential developments should generally achieve a distance of between 21m and 25m between principal windows and 14m between a principal window and a blank elevation. This is required to maintain an adequate standard of privacy and amenity between residential properties, unless the design and layout of the scheme and its relationship to the site and its characteristics provide a commensurate degree of light and privacy between buildings.

However the CEC Design Guide states separation distances should be seen as guide rather than a hard and fast rule. The Design Guide does however acknowledge that the distance between rear facing habitable room windows should not drop below 21m. 18m front to front will also provide a good level of privacy, but if this applied too rigidly it will lead to uniformity and limit the potential to create strong streetscenes and variety, and so this distance could go down as low as 12m in some cases.

The nearest existing properties to the north of the application on Windermere Road and Ullswater Road meet the above distance guidelines. Similarly, the existing properties to the east, on Hampson Crescent, are over 50 metres away from the nearest of the proposed dwellings. Number 58 Sagars Road is slightly closer with a 37 metre separation distance to the nearest dwelling at plot 17 of the development, which is still well in excess of the recommended distances. Finally, Spurs Lodge, adjacent to the north west site boundary is approximately 50 metres from plot 84.

The layout within the site ensures the relationships between the new dwellings result in acceptable standards of space, light and privacy for future occupants, having regard to the distance guidelines set out above.

Environmental Health has raised concern regarding the potential impact upon the occupiers of existing, neighbouring residential dwellings on Hampson Crescent and their very close proximity to the proposed vehicular and pedestrian access. Whilst there will be some impact upon neighbouring properties arising from construction activities and the use of the access road, the proposed access has already been approved under outline application 17/3894M and the separate full planning application for the access (19/1797M). Accordingly, the Council has previously found the access to be acceptable, and there has not been any material change in planning policy, site circumstances or the proposal itself, and in these circumstances, an alternative view now would not be justified.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with policies DC3 and DC38 of the MBLP.

Air Quality

Air quality impacts were also addressed at the outline stage, and mitigation measures were secured as part of that consent, which will need to be complied with. The mitigation included requirements for a travel plan, a dust management plan and electric vehicle charging points.

Accessibility / Public Rights of Way

The application site is adjacent to a Public Right of Way, namely Restricted Byway no. 87, Wilmslow. It appears unlikely however, that the proposal would affect the Public Right of Way, although the PROW team has requested that any approval of planning permission includes an informative to ensure that developers are aware of their obligations with regard to the right of way.

Policy LPS 34 in the CELPS requires the *“Provision of a direct cycle and pedestrian link from the site to the west to improve connectivity. A link to the open space to the east should also be provided as part of any development”* and one of the site specific principles of development for the site is to *“Improve the connectivity and accessibility into and out of the site to Handforth town centre and the wider local area with the provision of cycle paths and pedestrian linkages”*.

Policy CO1 of the CELPS seeks to encourage a modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking.

As noted above the proposed footway / cycleway provides excellent permeability through the site north to south and east to west. This path provides the required links to the west and the open space to the east, where a bridge is proposed, and a financial contribution was secured as part of the outline permission towards a hard surfaced path from the proposed bridge crossing through the adjacent park. Further linkages are provided to the north / west onto Clay Lane and Sagars Road (towards Styal) and to the south onto Sagars Road.

However, as part of the Section 106 agreement, £18,000 was secured for the improvement of the surface of Restricted Byway no.87, which runs along Clay Lane to the north / west of the site, up to where it meets Sagars Road. There is an existing track identified on the Landscape masterplan within the western corner of the application site adjacent to Spurs Lodge, which is shown to be retained in its current form. Given the improvement works being carried out to the restricted byway, outside of the site, it is considered that this should also be upgraded to a standard suitable for accommodating cyclists and horseriders currently using this route to link Sagars Road to Clay Lane. This would require retaining a width of at least 3 metres and providing a suitable surface other than compacted gravel as suggested. The linking spur from the internal road network to this section of path is also shown to be provided as a footway / cycleway, and therefore it follows that the path should be upgraded also.

The applicant has raised concerns that this section of track has historically been used by vehicles and if it was upgraded to a standard footway / cycleway, vehicles would need to be prevented from using it due to the additional loading arising from motor vehicles on such a surface. If they were prevented from using it as part of the proposals, it may raise legal questions about who can and cannot use the track as local stakeholders may well have accrued prescriptive rights of way over the road by virtue of using it over the preceding years. Further details will be provided as an update.

Highways

Whilst access was approved as part of the outline permission, this reserved matters submission seeks approval for the internal road layout of the site. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure has commented on the application and noted that the main routes within the site are 5.5m wide and have either one or two footways and the cul-de-sacs are typically 4.8m wide shared surface roads, thereby meeting relevant Highways design standards.

In terms of car parking, the CELPS advises that parking bays should be 4.8m x 2.5m in size, and the parking bays provided within the site do now comply with these dimensions. Cycle stores are identified in the rear gardens, and clarification is awaited regarding cycle parking for the apartments.

The site is located within Styal, and as such the relevant car parking standards are those for the Remainder of the Borough outside of Principal Towns and Key Service Centres. Parking standards within the CELPS are:

Principal Towns and Key Service Centres

1 bedroom - 1 space per dwelling;
2 bedrooms - 2 spaces per dwelling;
3+ bedrooms - 2 spaces per dwelling

Remainder of Borough

1 bedroom - 1 space per dwelling;
2/3 bedrooms - 2 spaces per dwelling;
4/5+ bedrooms - 3 spaces per dwelling

The key difference between the two standards is that 4 and 5+ bed properties should have 3 spaces rather than 2 spaces in areas outside of Principal Towns and Key Service Centres. All properties now have adequate car parking in accordance with the standards for the Remainder of the Borough.

Trees / Landscape

Policy LPS 34 in the CELPS requires the *“Retention of trees and woodlands on the edges of the site, with new planting to re-enforce important landscape features and to properly define a new Green Belt boundary”*, and one of the site specific principles of development for the site is to *“Provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme which retains existing mature trees and hedgerows particularly on the perimeter of the site”*.

Trees

Policy SE5 of the CELPS states *“Development proposals which will result in the loss of, or threat to, the continued health and life expectancy of trees, hedgerows or woodlands (including veteran trees or ancient semi-natural woodland), that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character or historic character of the surrounding area, will not normally be permitted, except where there are clear overriding reasons for allowing the development and there are no suitable alternatives”*.

Condition 29 of the outline permission requires an arboricultural impact assessment to be submitted with the reserved matters submissions. One has been received (and updated to reflect revised plans) in accordance with this condition as well as a shade assessment.

Selected individual and groups of trees within and adjacent to the site (predominantly along the Sagars Road and Clay Lane boundaries) are protected by the Cheshire East Borough Council (Wilmslow – Handforth Land to the north of Sagars Road) Tree Preservation Order 2017 which was confirmed without modification on 8 March 2018.

The majority of trees along the site boundaries are to be retained as part of the development. The submitted Assessment identifies a number of low category trees for removal. Initially, a Horse Chestnut (T36) protected by the TPO was also proposed for removal due to its condition. This tree was graded as a Moderate (B) category tree with a life expectancy of in excess of 20 years, and following concerns being raised regarding the removal of this tree, it is now shown to be retained.

The Assessment indicates that there will be encroachment within the root protection area (RPA) of a number of trees. Excavations (to provide a proposed footway/cycleway) within the RPA of T28 (a protected Horse Chestnut tree) will be carried out under arboricultural supervision. Subject to this, and given the limited extent of the encroachment, specialist surfacing for footway / cycleway should not be necessary. Encroachment into the RPAs of three other trees (T33, T36 and T37) is acceptable subject to the satisfactory implementation of the Tree Protection Scheme.

A shading assessment of retained trees has been provided which is considered to be acceptable in terms of addressing shading from trees within the layout.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policy SE5 of the CELPS.

Landscape

The key landscape requirement within LPS 37, as noted above, is the retention of trees and woodlands on the edges of the site, with new planting to re-enforce important landscape features and to properly define a new Green Belt boundary. This is achieved within the current proposal, and the majority of hedgerows within the site are also retained in accordance with one of the site specific principles of development listed under LPS 37.

A number of specific landscape details are still being clarified and will be reported as an update to Members, and conditions recommended as required.

Ecology

Policy SE3 of the CELPS requires all development to positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity and should not negatively affect these interests. One of the site specific principles of development listed under policy LPS 34 is *“New development will be expected to respect any existing ecological constraints on site and where necessary provide appropriate mitigation”*.

A number of conditions attached to the outline planning permission are relevant to ecology matters in the reserved matters submission, and are discussed, in turn, below:

Condition 8 - Provision of gaps for hedgehogs

The submitted Landscape and Habitat Management Plan includes acceptable proposals for small, 5-inch square gaps that will be provided at the base of garden fencing panels to allow hedgehogs and other small mammals to move between gardens. These hedgehog holes will

be incorporated into fences that run along the edges of the site to maintain connectivity with the surrounding landscapes.

Condition 13 – Ecological enhancement strategy

This condition requires proposals for:

- Features for nesting birds and roosting bats
- Native species planting
- New wildlife ponds.

Acceptable native species planting and new ponds have been included on the submitted landscape plans and proposals for the provision of features for nesting birds and roosting bats are included in the submitted Landscape and Habitat Management Plan.

Proposals for the provision of additional wildlife ponds are further discussed below.

Condition 14 - 10 year management plan

The Landscape and Habitat Management Plan that has been submitted in support of this reserved matters application provides acceptable management arrangements for a period of 25 years.

Condition 15 – 10m undeveloped buffer to Dobbin Brook

The submitted layout plan has sought to address previous concerns relating to the buffer around plots 205 and 206. However, whilst the buffer has been achieved, the pathways to the entrances of plots 206-211 has been removed leaving only grassed areas leading to the main entrances to these properties, which is an impractical solution and will need to be looked at again. Further details will be provided as an update.

Condition 21 - Updated badger and otter survey

An updated protected species report has been submitted in accordance with this condition. No evidence of these species was recorded and they are therefore unlikely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.

Condition 27 – Retention of hedgerows and mitigation for any hedgerows removed.

Hedgerows are a priority habitat and hence a material consideration in the determination of the application. As anticipated at the time of the determination of the outline application, the development of this site will result in the loss of a number of sections of hedgerow. The majority of the existing hedgerows are to be retained as part of the proposal, and an acceptable level of compensatory hedgerow planting is proposed as part of the latest landscaping scheme to compensate for that lost.

Ponds

Three ponds were identified on site during the surveys undertaken in support of the outline application. Of these it appears feasible for one pond to be retained (identified as pond 3 by the ecological assessment submitted with the outline), which lies close to the Clay Lane boundary to the north / west of the site. Pond two is present in the central hedgerow, and would be lost as a result of the proposed development. However, further surveys carried out as part of the outline application confirmed that this was not in fact a pond. Pond 1, which would be lost under the layout, appears as a pond on the 1891-1912 OS maps and again appears on the 1904-1939 OS. This habitat was also considered to be a pond during

amphibian surveys submitted in respect of the outline application. Therefore as this pond is lost to the proposed development a new pond must be provided to compensate for its loss.

Two new ponds were proposed within the red line of the access application (19/1797M); these were however provided under that application to ensure that the proposed access scheme delivered a net gain for biodiversity in accordance with Local Plan Policy SE3. The two ponds were not intended to compensate for the loss of biodiversity from the main part of the development site. As part of the current proposals, one of the ponds secured as part of the access application has been repositioned to the western boundary of the site, and an additional small wildlife has now been incorporated into the proposed layout to compensate for the loss of Pond 1. This new pond is shown in the close to the existing pond to the west of the site (pond 3). Following concerns raised by Manchester Airport regarding the potential for the ponds to attract birds, pond 3 has been broken up into smaller waterbodies, which is intended to reduce their attractiveness to birds, but do still maintain their ecological value. There is therefore overall a satisfactory level of pond creation within the proposed development. A condition would be required to secure the detailed design of the ponds.

Nesting Birds

Due to the hedgerow removal that is required, if planning consent is granted a condition will be required to safeguard nesting birds.

Updated bat survey

An updated bat survey of 15 Hampson Crescent, which is proposed for demolition, did not record any evidence of roosting bats. Therefore, roosting bats are unlikely to be present or affected by the proposed demolition of this property.

The nature conservation officer has noted that whilst the application site offers limited opportunities for roosting bats, bats are likely to commute and forage around the site to some extent. To avoid any adverse impacts on bats resulting from any lighting associated with the development, a condition was attached to the outline consent requiring any proposed lighting to be agreed with the LPA.

Subject to the above conditions, and the satisfactory provision of the 10m buffer zone, the proposal will comply with relevant conditions on the outline permission, the requirements of policy SE3 of the CELPS, and the site specific principles relating to ecology of LPS 34.

Layout / Design

Another of the site specific principles of the site listed in LPS 34 is that *“The development must be a high quality design which reflects and respects the character of the area and the amenities of neighbouring properties”*.

Amongst other criteria, policy SD2 of the CELPS expects all development to contribute positively to an area’s character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of:

- a. Height, scale, form and grouping;
- b. Choice of materials;
- c. External design features;
- d. Massing of development - the balance between built form and green/public spaces;
- e. Green infrastructure; and

f. Relationship to neighbouring properties, street scene and the wider neighbourhood

Policy SE1 of the CELPS expects housing developments to achieve Building for Life 12 (BfL12) standard, and that development proposals consider the wider character of a place in addition to that of the site and its immediate context, to ensure that it reinforces the area in which it is located. These principles are also reflected in the CEC Design Guide. BfL12 uses a traffic light system, with the aim of eliminating reds, whilst maximising the number of greens. The Council's Design Officer has undertaken a BfL12 assessment of the application, which is reflected in the commentary below.

Connections - **GREEN**

The site is located within a semi-rural location on the eastern edge of Styal immediately adjacent to the settlement of Handforth. The sole vehicular access will be across Dobbin Brook from Hampson Crescent to the east from Handforth. Pedestrian and cycle links are also provided to Sagars Road and Clay Lane connecting to the north, west and south and a further pedestrian connection is provided to the open space at Meriton Road park. These links provide the necessary connections to the existing surrounding development and leisure offer. Generally the development relates well to the adjacent open countryside beyond the site, providing a green buffer on the outskirts, as required by LPS 34. Although the interface and relationship between the existing buildings, the Brook and the development to the north east could be stronger.

Facilities and services - **GREEN**

The development is within a 10 minute walk to shops, schools, healthcare, community facilities and public transport within Handforth centre, and is within a 5 minute walk to Meriton Road Park. All these local facilities are therefore accessible on foot from the application site

Public transport - **GREEN**

The scheme is within a 10 minute walk of public transport facilities – bus stops and a local train station serving local areas as well as providing links to national destinations. The scheme provides a pedestrian and cycle route within the site that links with the wider infrastructure.

Meeting local housing requirements – **GREEN**

As noted above, the revised proposals for a range of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bed dwellings present a more balanced range of homes available with a variety of tenures. The affordable dwellings are also widely spread out across the application site.

Character - **AMBER**

Whilst this scheme departs in some ways from a standard housing development, the proposal has perhaps not exploited the context of the site as far as it could. This translates at several levels in terms of urban design, the approach to blue and green infrastructure and the design of buildings. For example, where water bodies are included they are not being exploited for positive layout purposes and their location is primarily an engineering/ecology response rather than considered place making.

That being said, the latest revisions to the proposals do alter the density of the development with the rebalancing of the housing mix on offer and the redistribution of the affordable units.

The density of the development along the western (Clay Lane) boundary to the Green Belt beyond remains relatively low.

There has been an attempt at translating local character details and architectural reference onto a standard type but the scale of the height of details such as ridge and eaves have not been analysed and transferred to the type designs. Admittedly for a volume house builder such detail is difficult to achieve, and there is some variation to eaves and ridge heights across the housing development to create interest. A number of house types with hipped roofs have been replaced with gabled roofs in the latest revisions to reflect the characteristics of the area.

The use of black window frames has been retained within the development, with the exception of the dwellings within the country fringe areas, which will be green; and are intended to acknowledge the GI and open countryside beyond.

Working with the site and its context - AMBER

The main landscape features of the site are the trees and woodland to the edges of the site, the hedgerows dividing fields, Dobbin Brook and a small number of ponds. The majority of existing landscape features are being retained as required by LPS 34. Other features are being altered or replaced within an alternative location on site.

A sustainability statement has been submitted with the application, but the development does not take into account the opportunity to harness passive and active energy creation with the use of south facing units and photovoltaic technology.

Creating well defined streets and spaces - AMBER

There is a hierarchy within the street design, and the latest revised plans show an increase in the creation of GI where pavements have been replaced with service strip style verges which contribute positively to the greening of the street scene.

In places buildings positively address corners but there were previously some concerns about the strength of corner turning designs, and whether there is sufficient emphasis on both elevations in terms of architectural quality and interest. The revised plans show additional features added to corner turners to aid legibility and any rear elevations visible from the public realm will match the primary elevations in terms of quality of materials and detailing.

The layout is heavily reliant on the quality of landscaping and materiality for streets and whilst, as noted above, steps have been made to increase the GI, the proposed hard surfacing is not in compliance with the materials palette for North Cheshire Fringe areas stated in the Design Guide. Further details will be provided as an update.

Easy to find your way around - GREEN

The scheme is generally legible and as noted previously more has been done to reinforce that through stronger landscaping of the principal and secondary streets. Additional detailing to the roof materials (decorative ridge tiles), the inclusion of chimneys to feature buildings/corner turning types have also improved the legibility of the site.

Streets for all - GREEN

Within the cells of development the reduced street width and hierarchy should identify these streets as mixed environments for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as vehicles, punctuated by squares and areas of shared surface.

The increase in GI within the street structure has enhanced the environment within the streets, and is now considered acceptable. Clarification on the surfacing materials will be provided as an update.

Car parking - GREEN

A mix of parking solutions is encouraged by the Design Guide to ensure that the street scene is not dominated by vehicles. Many of the plots do still have the parking spaces to the front of the units, however, changes to the parking proposals have included the insertion of landscaping and the breaking up of groups to enable a greener street scene to be achieved.

The inclusion of soft structural and layered green boundary treatments to the courtyard parking to give a higher quality environment has addressed previous concerns relating to the need to make parking courts feel usable and safe.

Public and private spaces - GREEN

The main spine of open space incorporating the pedestrian and cycle route provides the potential for an attractive green core to the development. The revised plans now provide additional space for the footway/cycleway close to plots 217 and 218 (formerly plots 211 and 212) so that it is not so enclosed. The main gateway to the site and eastern area of public open space has been simplified since the access permission, and does offer the potential for a distinct landscape feature within the site.

The upgrading of boundary treatments, changes to rear/publicly viewable elevations and additional and refined GI and public open space within the layout has led to an acceptable level of design throughout the proposals.

External storage and amenity - AMBER

External storage facilities (which appear to be sheds) are shown to be provided for the majority of the plots, with the exception of the apartments. The “*approximate location of bin storage*” is also shown on the waste management plan, again excluding the apartments. In addition, no details of what form these facilities will take have been provided. Therefore, whilst some positive steps have been made with regard to external storage, further information is still required, and any additional details that are submitted will be reported as an update.

Design conclusions

There have been numerous amendments to the proposal which have addressed the majority of the issues that have been raised with the applicant during the course of the application. As noted above, there are still some design and layout matters that require further clarification, such as the external storage for the apartments, the appearance of those storage facilities that are proposed, and the hard surfacing materials. Subject to the satisfactory clarification of these points, it is considered that the proposed design has developed to a point where, as a whole, the scheme is now of an acceptable standard, when considered against the requirements of policies SD2 and SE1 of the CELPS and the CEC Design Guide.

Flooding

Policy SE13 of the CELPS states that developments must integrate measures for sustainable water management to reduce flood risk, avoid an adverse impact on water quality and quantity within the borough and provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation.

The application site lies within flood zone 1, which is land that has a less than 0.1% chance of flooding. The proposals do include the diverting and culverting of a section of Dobbin Brook. These same proposals have already been approved as part of the access application (19/1797M), and have previously been found to be acceptable.

The Environment Agency and the LLFA raise no objections to the proposal, and relevant conditions relating to flood risk were attached to the outline permission, which will ensure that the development complies with policy SE13 of the CELPS.

Contaminated Land

Contaminated land matters were considered and appropriately conditioned at the outline stage. No further contaminated land matters are raised by the proposed reserved matters.

Other matters

The comments received in representation are acknowledged, and are addressed within the preceding text, or were considered as part of the outline planning application, which has been approved.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The proposal seeks to provide 224 dwellings on a site that has outline planning permission for up to 250 dwellings, and which is allocated in the CELPS for around 250 dwellings. 67 affordable dwellings are to be provided, which are widely pepper potted across the site, and will contribute towards a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. The abundant and strong green infrastructure around the perimeters of the site is retained. Whilst there is an under provision of play and amenity open space in terms of areas on a plan and having regard to the amounts specified in policy SC 6 of the CELPS; what is proposed is considered to be of quality, is well located and will be a real asset of the site, and will complement the other nearby facilities available at Meriton Road Park. Dobbin Brook forms a natural buffer between existing dwellings to the north and east and the new development and ensures appropriate separation distances are achieved between existing and proposed dwellings to safeguard the living conditions of neighbouring properties. Relationships within the development also ensure satisfactory distances are established between the new dwellings.

The access into the site has previously been approved as part of the outline permission (17/3894M) and the separate full planning application for the access (19/1797M), consequently no access issues are raised with regard to this reserved matters submission. The internal road network meets relevant highways design standards and adequate car parking is provided in accordance with parking standards identified in the CELPS. Added to this a proposed footway / cycleway provides excellent permeability through the site north to south and east to west, which provides links to Styal to the west, south onto Sagars Road towards the train station and east towards Mertion Road Park and Handforth centre.

Whilst some landscape details require further clarification, the main tree / landscape objective of LPS 34 of the CELPS, namely the *“Retention of trees and woodlands on the edges of the site, with new planting to re-enforce important landscape features and to properly define a new Green Belt boundary”*, has been achieved within the proposals. Similarly, there have been a number of amendments made to design and layout of the proposal during the course of the application which have sought to address issues raised by officers, and whilst some clarification is needed on some, relatively minor, matters the proposed design has developed to a point where it is now considered to be acceptable, when considered against the requirements of policies SD2 and SE1 of the CELPS, and the CEC Design Guide.

Air quality, flood risk and contaminated land matters were addressed either at the outline stage, or have been previously approved as part of the access application, and the current reserved matters application raised no further points of concern on these matters.

The comments received in representation have been given due consideration in the preceding text. However, subject to the satisfactory clarification on the specific matters referred to in the main body of this report, the proposal is considered to comply with the development plan as a whole and is therefore a sustainable form of development. In accordance with policy MP1 of the CELPS, the proposals should therefore be approved without delay. Accordingly a recommendation of approval is made.

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 Head of Planning has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Board, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee’s decision.

Application for Reserved Matters

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to following conditions

1. To comply with outline permission
2. Development in accord with approved plans
3. Materials as application
4. Tree retention
5. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details in the submitted Landscape and Habitat Management Plan
6. Detailed design of ponds to be submitted
7. Nesting bird survey to be submitted
8. Development to be carried out in accordance with submitted tree protection scheme and arboricultural method statement

