

Application No: 21/2589M

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

Proposal: Construction of an Adventure Golf Course with associated works (re-submission of 20/2925M)

Applicant: Adlington Golf Centre Ltd

Expiry Date: 04-Feb-2022

SUMMARY

The site lies within the North Cheshire Green Belt. National and local policy affords significant protection to the Green Belt. Whilst the existing use of the land is as a golf course, and the proposal for an Adventure Golf Facility would fall within the same use, the proposal would involve the provision of a substantial number of structures and significant engineering operations to re-profile the land. Whilst the provision of buildings (which would also include the themed structures) could be considered as 'appropriate facilities' for outdoor sport and recreation as well as the associated engineering operations, this is subject to their impact on openness.

Taken as a whole, the various structures, features and associated means of enclosure would have a material impact on openness and cause encroachment into the countryside thereby undermining the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. By reason of the harm to openness, the proposed development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The benefits of the proposal in terms of promoting the health and wellbeing of users and the positive impact on the local economy including tourism are not enough to outweigh the substantial harm to the Green Belt. The proposal is therefore contrary to the advice of the NPPF and Development Plan Policies PG 3 of the CELPS and saved GC1 of the MBLP.

In considering the previously refused application, it was determined that there would be 'other identified harm' in the form of harm to the landscape contrary to policies SE 1 and SE 4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. However, this application is supported by revised landscape mitigation proposal that would include extensive native woodland planting surrounding the Adventure Golf Course. Also, there are a number of woodland blocks located in close proximity. In time this would mitigate the proposals and would be beneficial in what is a changing landscape in the locality and so the revised landscape proposals are acceptable.

The site lies within the Manchester Airport Safeguarding Zone. The Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport has confirmed that the likely threat to aircraft from birdstrike arising from the revised scheme, which is a material consideration, could be addressed by condition. Thus, the previous reason for refusal relating to aircraft safety has now been resolved.

There are no objections on the grounds of residential amenity, ecology, trees, highways, public rights of way, flood risk or heritage assets. However, these considerations do not outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and so the application is recommended accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

SITE DESCRIPTION

This application relates to land associated with Adlington Golf Centre, which is located to the south west of Adlington Business Park in Poynton. Adlington Golf Centre currently comprises of a driving range, academy course, a pitch and putt course and a graduate course with a clubhouse building and car park. This application relates specifically to the original 9-hole graduate golf course situated to the north east of the existing golf centre. The site measures approximately 4.5 ha in size. The land sits directly to the west of the proposed Poynton Relief Road which would run on a north to south alignment. The site remains fairly open with some variance in levels across the site. Adlington Bridleway No.42 runs along the northern and western boundaries to the site providing access to Shirdfold Farm which is located approximately 70 metres to the north. The site lies within the North Cheshire Green Belt and Manchester Airport's Safeguarding Area.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought to construct an Adventure Golf Course with associated works in place of the original 9-hole graduate course, which has been replaced by a newly opened 9-hole graduate course located to the south of the golf centre. The original graduate course had to be replaced as a result of the proposed Poynton Relief Road as it severed the course. The applicant is seeking to re-purpose the remaining land to the west of the proposed road with an 18-hole Adventure Golf Course based on Australian themes as well as a service hut of approximately 10 metres x 5 metres, with ground engineering works. This application follows the refusal of an earlier similar scheme determined under planning ref; 20/2925M. The differences between this and the earlier refused scheme are:

- Revised landscape proposals
- Ayres Rock: This structure has been reduced in height by 0.5m and it would be lower than the level of the landscaped embankment.
- Sydney Harbour Bridge: This structure has been reduced in height by 0.25m

The original scheme was refused for the following reasons

1. The site lies within the North Cheshire Green Belt. The proposed development, whilst not inappropriate development by definition, would lead to a loss of openness and encroachment in the Green Belt. The various structures, features and associated means of enclosure would have a material impact on openness and cause encroachment into the countryside thereby undermining the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. By reason of the harm to openness, the proposed development represents

inappropriate development in the Green Belt. There are not considered to be material considerations that clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of loss of openness and other identified harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy PG 3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy and saved Policy GC1 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

2. The proposal would result in the introduction of large features which would appear incongruous in the landscape and countryside, contrary to Policies SE 1 and SE 4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.
3. Insufficient information has been submitted with the application to determine the likely threat to aircraft from birdstrike, which is a material consideration. Approval of the scheme contrary to the advice of the Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport would be contrary to the advice the Town and Country Planning (safeguarded aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas) Direction 2002.

These revised proposals seek to address these reasons for refusal.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

00/1519P – EXTENSION AND IMPROVEMENTS OF EXISTING DRIVING RANGE FACILITIES, NEW CAR PARKING PROVISION AND NEW 9-HOLE GOLF COURSE AND ACCESS – Approved 05-Oct-2000

01/1640P - CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ACCESS ROAD (TO SERVE ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT WITHIN STOCKPORT BOROUGH), SECURITY LODGE AND LANDSCAPING – Approved 01-Oct-2004

20/2925M - Construction of an Adventure Golf Course with associated works – Refused 19-Nov-2020

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – 2010-2030

PG3 – Green Belt

SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles

IN 1 - Infrastructure

SE 1 - Design

SE3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SE 4 - The Landscape

SE 5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE 7 – Heritage Assets

SE 13 - Flood Risk and Water Management

SC 1 – Leisure and Recreation

SC 2 – Indoor and Outdoor Sports facilities

SC 3 – Health and Wellbeing

EG 2 - Rural Economy

CO2 – Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure

Macclesfield Local Plan (Saved policies)

BE.1 – Amenity
BE.3 – Access and Parking
BE.4 – Drainage, Utilities and Resources
NE.5 – Nature Conservation and Habitats
NE.9 – Protected Species
NE.17 – Pollution Control
NE.20 – Flood Prevention
GC1 – Green Belt

Adlington Neighbourhood Plan (Stage 7 – Neighbourhood Area Designation) Adlington has been designated as a 'Neighbourhood Area', which is a very early stage in the Neighbourhood Planning process and can be afforded limited weight at this stage.

Other Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Environmental Protection – No objection subject to informatives relating to construction hours and contaminated land

Flood Risk Manager – No objection subject to a condition that the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)

Highways – No objection

Manchester Airport (MAN) – No objection subject to conditions requiring submission and approval of bird hazard management plan measures and informatives in relation to protecting aircraft.

National Grid – No objection but advise that there is gas apparatus in the vicinity of the site that may be affected by the proposals.

Public Rights of Way (PROW) – No objection - Although the proposed development appears to be adjacent to a Public Right of Way, namely Bridleway No.42 in the parish of Adlington, it is unlikely the development will impact on the adjacent PROW it is recommended that an advice note be attached to any approval reminding the developer of their obligations.

United Utilities – No objection

VIEWS OF ADLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

No Objection - Adlington Parish Council strongly support this planning application. The Parish Council is of the view that this is a positive development which will not have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Greenbelt in this area.

VIEWS OF POYNTON TOWN COUNCIL

No objection.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Representations have been received from 104 addresses, on the following grounds:

- Fully support it. Families would use it regularly.
- Will bring jobs and tourism to Poynton, Adlington and Macclesfield. Increases trade for other hospitality businesses. Also benefits wider South Manchester/Stockport/Cheshire East region.
- Need open space recreation more than ever now due to pandemic. Nearest similar attraction 30+mins drive away.
- As the existing golf business has lost land through the Poynton relief road CPO, we must give the business a chance to continue.
- The development would introduce the younger generation to golf.
- No reason why this should be refused as land is already used for golf.
- Will protect the green belt. Reduces risk of more housing.
- Gives something for our young people to do. Allows them to meet up. Somewhere for families to go and have some quality time together.
- The designs will improve biodiversity. Low environmental impact.
- Will help reduce the visual impact of the new bypass
- Will help maintain better mental and physical health.
- Current site will get overgrown and disused.
- Object to the plans [reasons not given].

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) affords the Green Belt significant protection stating at para 148:

“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

NPPF Para 149 states that a Local Planning Authority should regard the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt as inappropriate development unless it meets with one of the exceptions listed. One such exception is:

“b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

NPPF Para 150 (b) states that, amongst other things, other certain forms of development including 'engineering operations' are not inappropriate development provided they also preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

Policy PG 3 of the CELPS and saved Policy GC1 of the MBLP similarly afford significant protection to the Green Belt and resist inappropriate development. Both policies permit proposals for outdoor sport and recreation where they preserve openness. However, saved Policy GC1 is more restrictive than the NPPF and CELPS PG 3 in that excepted buildings will only be permitted where they are 'essential'.

The proposal does not involve a change in the use of the land as it would remain in use as a golf course. However, the proposal does seek permission for some significant engineering operations including a re-profiling of the land to facilitate its use as a 'themed' Adventure Golf Facility. Added to this, there would be a substantial number of structures erected to accompany the theme of each hole, some of which would be sizeable. Similarly to the refused scheme, it is indicated that these would be centred around an Australian theme, so for example, the course would feature scale versions of Ayers Rock and the Sydney Opera House.

The provision of buildings (which would also include the themed structures) could be considered as 'appropriate facilities' for outdoor sport and recreation. However, this is subject to their impact on openness. The engineering operations are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt either, again, subject to the impact on openness.

Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and keeping land permanently open is a fundamental aim of Green Belt policy. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

The proposal would include the construction of a single storey 'service hut' building, which would serve as the point of sales area with a small office for administration purposes. This building would have a footprint of approximately 10 metres by 5 metres and would measure 4.5 metres in height to the apex of the proposed pitched roof, which would be a modest size. Individually, this structure would be of small scale and would therefore have a limited impact on openness. However, the impact on openness needs to be assessed in the round, taking account of the cumulative impacts of the whole development.

With regard to the layout of the site, this is only really shown indicatively with 'sketch proposals'. However, it does show that the facility would typically include pathways, greens and the various proposed themed structures on and in between the holes. It would also include varying boundary treatments, again to accommodate the theme of the facility. The structures would be of varying height, size and scale.

The largest structure would be a scale model of Ayers Rock on hole 15. Again, the plans are not detailed and just show a sketch drawing. However, this indicates that it would measure some 24 metres in length with an overall height of nearly 5.5 metres. On hole 16, there would be water tower to mimic a gold mine. This structure would have a height of approximately 4 metres in height. Other notable structures include a bridge on hole 5, which would measure approximately 16 metres in length, 2 metres wide and would have a height of approximately 3 metres and hole 4 which would have a replica of Sydney Opera House structure measuring approximately 3.4 metres in height. There would be various other themed structures of a smaller size ranging from a 'Ute', kangaroo, 'dunny' and boomerangs.

In terms of their impact on openness, this needs to be considered in the context of the proposed land levels, as the engineering operations would comprise of a cut and fill exercise in order to create a central

lake feature and to re-profile the land to create the 18 holes. This would in part reduce the overall height of some of the structures relative to the existing ground levels. However, taken as a whole, the various structures, features and associated means of enclosure would have a material impact on openness and cause encroachment into the countryside thereby undermining the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. There would be tangible harm to the openness by virtue of the cumulative size and scale of the structures which would serve to undermine both the visual and spatial aspects of openness. By reason of the harm to openness, the proposed development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

For this scheme to be granted planning permission, the identified harm to the Green Belt (and any other harm) must be *clearly outweighed* by other considerations and whether there are any 'very special circumstances' which exist to outweigh the identified harm. Whilst the applicant did not initially put forward a case of very special circumstances, the following have been cited by the applicant as being sufficient to amount to very special circumstances:

- Without the structures proposed, the adventure golf course scheme could not be delivered
- It accords with the national and local policy imperatives to promote healthier lifestyles: see e.g. Local Plan Strategic Priority 2(3)
- The Scheme would lead to the efficient and effective use of the golf course land rendered unviable by the PRR
- The proposals are consistent with and supported by Golf England's Strategy (2017 – 2021) and research carried out by the R&A and European Golf Association which underline the importance of adventure or mini-golf as an entry point to the sport
- Significant economic benefits will flow from the Scheme both in terms of job creation and bringing money into the local economy. Paragraph 81 of the Framework provides that substantial weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth.
- The facility would complement the range of facilities already on offer at Adlington Golf Centre. It would serve to diversify the business and attract a wider spectrum of paying participants, including younger people and families in particular as well as sustaining a well-established business
- The proposed development would satisfy demand for additional opportunities for sport and recreation within a highly sustainable location. It would significantly benefit the community in terms of their health and well-being and attracting a wider spectrum of the population e.g. younger children and families
- The extensive shrub and tree planting would not only deliver a net biodiversity gain but sequester carbon in line with one of the Government's most important policy objectives

The applicant states that the structures / buildings would be necessary to facilitate the proposed recreational use as an adventure golf course. Whilst it is accepted that an adventure golf course by its very nature would require themed structures to serve its purpose and attract users, this does not warrant the overly large structures proposed in this case. This could be achieved with an alternate theme or by reducing the largest structures. Similarly, the health and wellbeing benefits and also the benefits derived from promoting leisure use within the Green Belt are acknowledged, but again could be achieved with a more sensitive scheme. For these reasons, these points attract limited weight in the context of the proposals put forward.

The applicant contends that the proposal would lead to the efficient and effective use of the golf course land rendered unviable by the Poynton Relief Road (PRR). Whilst the relief road would indeed sever the former golf course, this has already been compensated for and the course that was lost has also been

replaced with a brand-new replacement golf course by the Council. The construction of the relief road will result in a change to the appearance of the area to the east. However, this places greater importance on maintaining openness of the Green Belt to the west. Accordingly, this is given limited weight.

The applicant's very special circumstances, such as the benefits the proposal would have on the health and wellbeing of users and the positive impact on the local economy including tourism are noted. It is acknowledged that the proposal would provide additional recreational facilities which would assist the health and wellbeing of the community as well as the local economy these considerations are given moderate weight. These considerations do not override the fact that both national and local policy direct decision makers to attach substantial weight to harm to the Green Belt. The weight of these other considerations is not enough to outweigh the substantial harm to the Green already identified contrary to the advice of the NPPF and Development Plan Policies PG 3 of the CELPS and saved GC1 of the MBLP.

Landscape Impact

The application site is an open, undulating landscape, bound to the east by the Adlington Industrial Estate, a residential development - Shirdfold Farm to the north, the remainder of the Golfing facility to the south and the wider rural landscape to the west, with the former Woodford Aerodrome site and Stockport at a distance to the west. The application site, part of a golf course, is gently undulating, with sparse tree cover along with some boundary hedgerows, further to the south are a number of woodland blocks.

The application has been supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA). This identifies the baseline landscape setting of the application site and that of the surrounding landscape including the commencement of the Poynton Relief Road. The appraisal identifies the National character area – NCA61 – Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain, and also the local landscape character, as identified in the Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 2018, which indicates that the application site is located within the LCT 11: Higher Wooded Farmland type and specifically LCA 11a: Adlington.

The proposed Australian themed adventure course will be partly at a lower level than the surrounding area and contained with higher earthworks – the submitted cut and fill drawing indicates that this will range from a mean level of 99.00 in the central plateau area to a maximum mound height of 106.00, although surrounded topography rises from east to west on the whole, from 99.00 on the edge of the western part of the mound to 102 on the outer boundary of the eastern extent of the mound.

The submitted Holes document identifies in sketch form the separate Australian themed features for each hole. While this includes no accurately dimensioned drawings a scale bar has been included with each illustration– although it is not possible to accurately measure each installation, it appears that for the larger items the Sydney Opera House is approximately 4m in height, the Sydney Harbour Bridge approximately 3.5m, Ayres Rock approximately 4.75m, the Gold mine approximately 4m and the Spider and Bats Hole appears to be 1.3. The remaining features are smaller or fairly horizontal and range from a rider on a horse to rocks and a Kangaroo.

The landscape proposals indicate that softworks associated with the proposals would include native species woodland and understorey, themed native species and marginal planting within the golf playing area. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal indicates that the landscape sensitivity for landscape features is Low, for landscape character is Low Sensitivity and that the Magnitude of Effect on landscape features

would be low and adverse at year 1 and by year 15 low to medium and beneficial, and that the landscape effects would be Low/ Medium and adverse at year 1 and Low – Medium and beneficial at year 15. Visual effects are identified as ranging from negligible – Moderate adverse at year 1 to negligible to minor/moderate beneficial at year 15.

While the Council's Principal Landscape Architect broadly agrees with the Landscape and Visual Appraisal, he does not fully agree with all the summary and conclusions. While the appraisal highlights Stockport Council's LCA and identifies that the Urban Fringe Farmland type would be a more appropriate baseline, the application site lies within Cheshire East and the Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment provides the baseline landscape character, this indicates that the application site is located within LCT 11: Higher Wooded Farmland type and specifically LCA 11a: Adlington. Policy SE4 – The Landscape of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy identifies that all development should conserve the landscape character and quality and should where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness of both rural and urban landscapes; and that development will be expected to incorporate appropriate landscaping. In this instance, the Council's Principal Landscape Architect agrees that the extensive native woodland planting surrounding the Adventure Golf Course would be appropriate. Also, there are a number of woodland blocks located in close proximity and it would not appear incongruous in the wider landscape. In time it would also mitigate the proposals and would be beneficial in what is a changing landscape in that locality and so do not consider that the landscape proposals are contrary to Policy SE 4 – The Landscape.

The Council's Principal Landscape Architect does however agree with the appraisal that the introduced hole features could be considered incongruous (7.12) but does not consider that they are introduced features that one would normally associate with a golf course. While the Council's Principal Landscape Architect accepts that the proposed landscape mitigation proposals would screen some items immediately and some in the longer term, it is also the case that a number of the introduced items are substantial built structures and of a scale in scale that may be an issue in what the submission identifies as being development within the Green Belt, in which Policy PG 3 – Green Belt applies. However, the Council's Principal Landscape Architect does not object on landscape grounds.

Trees

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA). It identifies 5 trees for removal to accommodate the proposed adventure golf course. The AIA concludes that these tree losses could be appropriately mitigated for with replacement planting as part of a landscape strategy. It also concludes that retained trees would be able to be protected with suitable measures. The loss of trees would be compensated for by the landscaping proposals.

Ecology

The Council's Nature Conservation Officer (NCO) has reviewed the application with regard to the following species:

Great Crested Newts - This protected species is known to occur at a number of ponds in this broad locality. The application site however offers very limited habitat for great crested newts and the proposals would not result in the fragmentation or isolation of great crested newt habitat. Considering the scale and nature of the proposed development and its distance from the nearest ponds, the potential impacts of the proposed development are limited to a low risk of any newts that venture onto the site being killed or

injured during the construction process. In order to address this risk, the applicant's ecological consultant has recommended the installation of an amphibian fence for the duration of the works. The NCO has advised 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 and the impact on the scheme on this species is acceptable.

Bats - A single tree has been identified as having potential to support roosting bats. However, the said tree is located outside of the application site and so would not be affected by the proposed development. 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, if planning permission is granted, a condition should be attached requiring any additional lighting to be agreed.

Badgers - Whilst this species is known to occur in the wider locality, no evidence of a sett was recorded during the latest survey of the application site. This species is not reasonable likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.

Biodiversity Net Gain - Local Plan Policy SE 3 requires all developments to contribute positively to the conservation of biodiversity. Whilst this application has not been supported by a Biodiversity Metric, the very low value of the existing habitats on site mean that the proposed development is likely to lead to an increase in biodiversity value of the site as a result of the associated native planting.

Conditions are recommended requiring the submission of details of lighting, protection of nesting birds and accordance with proposed great crested newt mitigation measures. Subject to this, the scheme is found to be acceptable in terms of nature conservation and compliant with CELPS Policy SE 3 and saved MBLP Policy NE 5.

Manchester Airport Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport has assessed the proposed development against the aerodrome safeguarding measures. The creation of the lake as part of the proposals has the potential to increase the risk of Birdstrike to aircraft using Manchester Airport. Manchester Airport is satisfied that details as to how the site operators would prevent geese and other bird species from that are hazardous to aircraft from becoming established at the site as well as visiting feeding water birds could be secured by a condition requiring submission of a bird hazard management plan. Other conditions regarding lighting and prohibiting the use of solar photovoltaic (of which none are proposed) would ensure that the safety of aircraft is maintained by the proposals. Subject to conditions, the proposal would accord with the advice the Town and Country Planning (safeguarded aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas) Direction 2002 and therefore the previous reason for refusal regarding aircraft safety has been addressed.

Highway Implications

The proposed course would be open between 09.00 and 21.00 hrs Mon-Sun and would employ 8 new staff to operate the course. The existing Adlington Golf Centre car park has 163 spaces would be used for the parking requirements of the new adventure course. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI - Highways) has confirmed that no highways objections are raised on the basis that the proposed new adventure golf course is located at an existing golf centre. The HSI has confirmed that the scheme does

not raise any highway concerns in respect of traffic impact or parking. The scheme is found to be acceptable in terms of highways and parking.

Residential Amenity

The nearest residential property, 'Shirdfold Farm', is located some 70 metres of the northern boundary of the proposed Adventure Golf Course. Given that the lawful use of the site is already as a golf course, it is not considered that the proposal would materially harm neighboring amenity by reason of noise. The proposals are also of sufficient distance away so as to not cause material harm by reason of loss of light, visual intrusion or loss of privacy.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

The proposed development lies adjacent to a Public Right of Way, namely Bridleway No.42 in the parish of Adlington. The Council's Public Rights of Way Unit has confirmed that it is unlikely that the development will impact on the adjacent Bridleway. However, it is recommended that an advice note be attached to any approval reminding the developer of their obligations.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 where flooding from rivers and the sea is very unlikely with less than a 0.1 per cent (1 in 1000) chance of flooding occurring each year. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment. In the absence of any objection from the Council's Flood Risk Manager, the scheme is found to accord with Policy SE 13 of the CELPS and saved Policy NE 20 of the MBLP.

Heritage Assets

The closest designated heritage asset is the Grade II Listed Lostock Hall Farmhouse to the north. However, the proposed site is far enough away from the building and its curtilage not to directly affect its setting and therefore will be acceptable in this regard. The proposal accords with CELPS Policy SE 7.

CONCLUSIONS AND PLANNING BALANCE

The site lies within the North Cheshire Green Belt. National and local policy affords significant protection to the Green Belt. Whilst the existing use of the land is as a golf course, and the proposal for an Adventure Golf Facility would fall within the same use, the proposal would involve the provision of a substantial number of structures and significant engineering operations to re-profile the land. Whilst the provision of buildings (which would also include the themed structures) could be considered as 'appropriate facilities' for outdoor sport and recreation as well as the associated engineering operations, this is subject to their impact on openness.

Taken as a whole, the various structures, features and associated means of enclosure would have a material impact on openness and cause encroachment into the countryside thereby undermining the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. By reason of the harm to openness, the proposed development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The benefits of the proposal in terms of promoting the health and wellbeing of users and the positive impact on the local economy including tourism are not enough to outweigh the substantial harm to the Green Belt. The proposal is therefore contrary to the advice of the NPPF and Development Plan Policies PG 3 of the CELPS and saved GC1 of the MBLP.

In considering the previously refused application, it was determined that there would be 'other identified harm' in the form of harm to the landscape contrary to policies SE 1 and SE 4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. However, this application is supported by revised landscape mitigation proposal that would include extensive native woodland planting surrounding the Adventure Golf Course. Also, there are a number of woodland blocks located in close proximity. In time this would mitigate the proposals and would be beneficial in what is a changing landscape in the locality and so the revised landscape proposals are acceptable.

The site lies within the Manchester Airport Safeguarding Zone. The Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport has confirmed that the likely threat to aircraft from birdstrike arising from the revised scheme, which is a material consideration, could be addressed by condition. Thus, the previous reason for refusal relating to aircraft safety has now been resolved.

There are no objections on the grounds of residential amenity, ecology, trees, highways, public rights of way, flood risk or heritage assets. However, these considerations do not outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and so the application is recommended accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reasons:

- 1. Green Belt - The site lies within the North Cheshire Green Belt. The proposed development, whilst not inappropriate development by definition, would lead to a loss of openness and encroachment in the Green Belt. The various structures, features and associated means of enclosure would have a material impact on openness and cause encroachment into the countryside thereby undermining the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. By reason of the harm to openness, the proposed development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. There are not considered to be material considerations that clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of loss of openness. The proposal is therefore contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy PG 3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy and saved Policy GC1 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.**

In order to give proper effect to the Board's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chair (or in his absence the Vice Chair) of the Strategic Planning Board to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

