

# Strategic Planning Board

## Agenda

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**Date:** Wednesday, 20th December, 2017

**Time:** 10.30 am

**Venue:** The Assembly Room - Town Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1EA

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Please note that members of the public are requested to check the Council's website the week the Strategic Planning Board meeting is due to take place as Officers produce updates for some or all of the applications prior to the commencement of the meeting and after the agenda has been published.

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and in the report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making and Overview and Scrutiny meetings are audio recorded and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website.

### **PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT**

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **Declarations of Interest/Pre Determination**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests and for Members to declare if they have a pre-determination in respect of any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2017 as a correct record.

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**Please Contact:** Sarah Baxter on 01270 686462

**E-Mail:** [sarah.baxter@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.baxter@cheshireeast.gov.uk) with any apologies or request for further information

[Speakingatplanning@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:Speakingatplanning@cheshireeast.gov.uk) to arrange to speak at the meeting

#### 4. **Public Speaking**

A total period of 5 minutes is allocated for each of the planning applications for the following:

- Ward Councillors who are not members of the Strategic Planning Board
- The relevant Town/Parish Council

A period of 3 minutes is allocated for each of the planning applications for the following individuals/groups:

- Members who are not members of the Strategic Planning Board and are not the Ward Member
- Objectors
- Supporters
- Applicants

5. **17/4521M-Full planning application for the erection of 174 residential dwellings, new roundabout onto Stanneylands Road, public open space, pedestrian/cycleway connection between Linneys Bridge and the River Dean, a new bridge crossing of the River Dean, and associated works, Land at Stanneylands Road, Wilmslow, SK9 4ER for Andrew Taylor, Barratt & David Wilson Homes North West (Pages 13 - 40)**

To consider the above application.

6. **17/4370M-The proposal includes the creation of a new, single storey building to house a heritage exhibition and visitor centre. In conjunction with this, new footpaths, landscaping and associated enabling works are provided, Jodrell Bank Observatory, Macclesfield Road, Jodrell Bank, Cheshire for University of Manchester (Pages 41 - 54)**

To consider the above application.

7. **17/4371M-This application relates to the improvement of visitor arrivals and capacity. It comprises of the modification and extension to the existing visitor car park and the construction of an external ticket booth / entry portal adjacent to the existing Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre Planet Pavilion. It includes landscaping works, fencing and associated enabling works, Jodrell Bank Observatory, Macclesfield Road, Jodrell Bank, Cheshire for University of Manchester (Pages 55 - 68)**

To consider the above application.

8. **17/3374N-Approval of reserved matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale), pursuant to 14/0378N for phase 1 of the Basford West development site, Crewe Road, Crewe, Basford West Development Site, Crewe, Cheshire for Goodman (Pages 69 - 80)**

To consider the above application.

9. **17/3853M-Outline planning application with means of access to be determined (all other matters reserved for subsequent approval) for the erection of up to 260 dwellings (Class C3); the provision of serviced land for allotments; a community orchard, a playing pitch, landscaping and open space; new internal highways, car and cycle parking; sustainable drainage measures including surface water retention ponds, provision of utilities infrastructure; earthworks and all ancillary enabling works, Land North Of Northwich Road, Knutsford for Mr Steve Melligan, The Crown Estate (Pages 81 - 118)**

To consider the above application.

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## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Strategic Planning Board**  
held on Wednesday, 22nd November, 2017 at The Capesthorne Room -  
Town Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1EA

### **PRESENT**

Councillor G Merry (Chairman)  
Councillor J Hammond (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors B Burkhill, S Edgar (Substitute), T Fox, S Hogben, D Hough,  
J Jackson, S Pochin, M Sewart and L Smetham

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr A Crowther (Major Applications Team Leader), Ms S Dillon (Senior Lawyer), Mr K Foster (Principal Planning Officer), Mr S Hannaby (Director of Planning & Sustainable Development), Mrs M Hopley Environmental Health Officer), Mr N Jones (Principal Development Officer), Mr R Law (Principal Planning Officer) and Mr D Malcolm (Head of Planning (Regulation))

### **59 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Macrae and L Wardlaw.

### **60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PRE DETERMINATION**

In the interest of openness in respect of applications 17/4521M and 17/3896M, Councillor J Hammond declared that he was a Director of ANSA who had been a consultee, however he had not made any comments or discussed the application.

In the interest of openness in respect of applications 12/3747N and 12/3746N, Councillor J Hammond declared that he was a member of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust who had been a consultee, however he had not made any comments or discussed the application.

In the interest of openness in respect of applications 17/4521M and 17/3896M, Councillor S Hogben declared that he was a Director of ANSA who were had been a consultee, however he had not made any comments or discussed the application.

In the interest of openness in respect of application 17/4521M, Councillor T Fox attended a public meeting where the application had been discussed, however she had not made any comments.

In the interest of openness in respect of application 17/3896M, Councillor M Sewart declared that he was a member of Poynton Town Council but he had not discussed the application.

In the interest of openness, Councillor D Hough declared that he was a member of TSS and whilst applications often referred to public transport he had not made any comments. In addition he declared that he had taken a telephone call from Parish Councillor John Davenport who was a member of Stapeley and District Parish Council, however he had only provided procedural advice.

In the interest of openness in respect of application 17/4521M, Councillor L Smetham declared that she was a member of the National Trust.

In the interest of openness in respect of application 12/3747N, Councillor L Smetham declared that she was a member of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust who had been a consultee, however she had not made any comments or discussed the application.

In the interest of openness in respect of application 17/4521M, Councillor J Hammond declared that he was a member of the National Trust.

It was noted that the majority of Members had received correspondence in respect of a number of applications on the agenda.

**61 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**62 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

**RESOLVED**

That the public speaking procedure be noted.

**63 17/4521M-FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF 174 RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS, NEW ROUNDABOUT ONTO STANNEYLANDS ROAD, PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, PEDESTRIAN/CYCLEWAY CONNECTION BETWEEN LINNEYS BRIDGE AND THE RIVER DEAN, A NEW BRIDGE CROSSING OF THE RIVER DEAN, AND ASSOCIATED WORKS. LAND AT STANNEYLANDS ROAD, WILMSLOW FOR ANDREW TAYLOR, BARRATT & DAVID WILSON HOMES NORTH WEST**

Consideration was given to the above application.

(Councillor D Stockton, the Ward Councillor, Town Councillor Keith Purdom, representing Wilmslow Town Council, Stuart Redgard, an objector, Mr Weinberg, an objector and Andrew Taylor, representing the applicant attended the meeting and spoke in respect of the application).

**RESOLVED**

That the application be deferred for further information in respect of detailed diagrams regarding the access roundabout and driveways on to Stanneylands Road (including the Pedestrian crossing), proposed footpath details across the site and their linkages and sustainability matters including distances to facilities.

(The meeting adjourned from 1.20pm until 1.50pm for lunch).

**64 17/3882N-REMOVAL OF CONDITIONS 29 & 31 ON APPLICATION 17/0341N FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 5 STEEL FRAMED UNITS TO BE PART OF A COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, LAND OFF UNIVERSITY WAY, CREWE FOR MR JONATHAN BEESON**

Consideration was given to the above application.

**RESOLVED**

That for the reasons set out in the report and in the written update to the Board the application be approved subject to the following conditions:-

1. Time (3 years)
2. Plans
3. Materials as per discharge – 17/3996D
4. Landscape – Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
5. Boundary treatment - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D (unless otherwise altered by another condition of this permission)
6. Retaining wall - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
7. Levels - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
8. Tree Protection – Implementation
9. Arboricultural Method statement - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
10. Woodland and Ecological Management Plan - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
11. Construction Management Plan - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
12. Hedgerow frontage retention
13. Bat mitigation strategy – Implementation
14. Attenuation pond design - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
15. Bat friendly lighting proposals - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
16. Updated badger survey and mitigation strategy - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D

17. Nesting birds survey
18. Provision of features for nesting birds - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
19. Proposals for the safeguarding of the adjacent watercourses during the construction process - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
20. Details of the safe provision of route(s) into and out of the site - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
21. The finished floor levels should be set no lower than - Unit 1 (48.8 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)), Units 2 & 3 (49.4 metres above AOD).
22. Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems
23. Piling method statement - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
24. Dust mitigation scheme - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
25. Floor Floating Method Statement - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
26. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure - Implementation as per discharge – 17/3996D
27. Phase II contaminated land report - Submission / approval of remaining aspects of condition not discharge by 17/3996D
28. No plant or equipment shall be installed on the facades of the buildings facing residential properties to the northeast unless mitigation approved in writing by the LPA
29. Prior submission/approval of a high standard acoustic fence details required along the north-eastern boundary of the site (extent to be agreed)

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 (Regulation), in consultation with the Chairman (or in her absence the Vice Chairman) of 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.

**65 17/3896M-OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS FORMING NO. 199 CHESTER ROAD AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPING WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED FOR FUTURE APPROVAL WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ACCESS, LAND AT CHESTER ROAD, POYNTON FOR JOHN BROOKS, AINSCOUGH STRATEGIC LAND**

Consideration was given to the above application.

(Town Councillor Ian Hollingworth, representing Poynton Town Council, Dennis Westbrook, an objector, Chris Bateman , an objector and Stephen Ball, representing the applicant attended the meeting and spoke in respect of the application).

## RESOLVED

That for the reasons set out in the report and in the written update to the Board the application be approved subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement securing the following:-

- Affordable Housing comprising 30% (65% of which will be for social / affordable rent and 35% for shared ownership / intermediate tenure)
- Education contributions of £238,618 (primary) £294,168 (secondary) and £45,500 (Special Educational Needs) = total of £578,286
- Highways contributions of £5,555 per dwelling towards the Poynton Relief Road
- Public Open Space:
  - o On site Provision of amenity open space and children's provision - 65m<sup>2</sup> per family dwelling and a LEAP and LAP play area
  - o Financial contribution towards indoor sports – £19,500 to provide 3 pieces of equipment at Poynton Leisure Centre.
  - o Financial contribution towards outdoor sports - £1,000 per market dwelling used for pitch improvements at Deva Close playing fields
- NHS contributions of £120,986 towards 2 GP Practices in Poynton

And subject to the following conditions:-

1. Standard Outline Time limit – 3 years
2. Submission of Reserved Matters
3. Accordance with Approved Plans
4. Access to constructed in accordance with approved plan prior to first occupation
5. Submission of an Environmental Management Plan (incl dust control)
6. Noise mitigation to be carried out in accordance with Acoustic Report
7. Submission of a travel plan
8. Provision of electric vehicle infrastructure (charging points)
9. Submission of contaminated land survey
10. Details of drainage strategy to be submitted
11. Development to be carried out in accordance with submitted Flood Risk Assessment
12. Scheme of foul and surface water drainage to be submitted
13. Reserved matters application to be supported by updated Bat Survey
14. Reserved matters application to be supported by updated Badger Survey
15. Reserved matters application to be supported by a method statement for the management of invasive non-native plant species
16. Development to be carried out in accordance with in accordance with the recommendations of the submitted Ecological Report

17. Nesting Birds Survey to be carried if works are to be carried out during the bird breeding season
18. Proposals for the incorporation of features into the scheme suitable for use by roosting bats and nesting birds to be submitted
19. Details of pile driving operations to be submitted
20. Reserved matters application to be supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment
21. Detailed lighting scheme to be submitted in support any future reserved matters application.
22. Bin storage
23. Cycle storage
24. Design Code
25. Broadband

In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Board'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 (Regulation) 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 Board's decision.

Should this application be the subject of an appeal, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation) in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Board to enter into a planning agreement in accordance with the S106 Town and Country Planning Act to secure the Heads of Terms for a S106 Agreement.

- 66 **12/3747N-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT UP TO A MAXIMUM OF 189 DWELLINGS; LOCAL CENTRE (CLASS A1 TO A5 INCLUSIVE AND D1) WITH MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA OF 1800SQM GROSS INTERNAL AREA (GIA); EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT (B1B, B1C, B2 AND B8) WITH A MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA OF 3,700SQM GIA; PRIMARY SCHOOL; PUBLIC OPEN SPACE INCLUDING NEW VILLAGE GREEN, CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA AND ALLOTMENTS; GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING ECOLOGICAL AREA; NEW VEHICLE AND PEDESTRIAN SITE ACCESS POINTS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS, LAND BETWEEN AUDLEM ROAD/BROAD LANE & PETER DESTAPLEIGH WAY, STAPELEY FOR MR CARL DAVEY, MULLER PROPERTY GROUP**

Consideration was given to the above application.

(Pat Cullen, an objector and Steve Bourne, representing the applicant attended the meeting and spoke in respect of the application).

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Board be minded to refuse the application for the following reasons:-

1. The proposed development is unsustainable because it is located within the Open Countryside contrary to Policies PG6 (Open Countryside), SD1 (Sustainable Development in Cheshire East) and SD2 (Sustainable Development Principles) of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, Policy RES.5 (Housing in the Open Countryside) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan, and Policies H1.5 & H5 of the Stapeley Neighbourhood Plan, and the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seek to ensure development is directed to the right location and open countryside is protected from inappropriate development and maintained for future generations enjoyment and use.
2. The proposal will result in loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land and given that the Authority can demonstrate a housing land supply in excess of 5 years, the applicant has also failed to demonstrate that there is a need for the development, which could not be accommodated elsewhere. The use of the best and most versatile agricultural land is unsustainable and contrary to Policy SE2 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

**67 12/3746N-NEW HIGHWAY ACCESS ROAD, INCLUDING FOOTWAYS AND CYCLEWAY AND ASSOCIATED WORKS, LAND OFF PETER DESTAPELEIGH WAY, NANTWICH FOR MR CARL DAVEY, MULLER PROPERTY GROUP**

Consideration was given to the above application.

**RESOLVED**

That the Board be minded to refuse the application for the following reason:-

In the absence of planning permission for development of the adjacent site, there is no justification for approving an access road in open countryside which would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and contrary to policy PG6 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 4.25 pm

Councillor G Merry (Chairman)

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Application No: 17/4521M

Location: Land at Stanneylands Road, Wilmslow,, SK9 4ER

Proposal: Full planning application for the erection of 174 residential dwellings, new roundabout onto Stanneylands Road, public open space, pedestrian/cycleway connection between Linneys Bridge and the River Dean, a new bridge crossing of the River Dean, and associated works.

Applicant: Andrew Taylor, Barratt & David Wilson Homes North West

Expiry Date: 22-Dec-2017

### **SUMMARY**

The site is allocated within the Local Plan for residential use and consists of the entire LPS56 allocation. The development accords with the Local Plan policy relating to its allocation by providing housing.

The applicant is providing financial contributions required in order to make the development acceptable and is providing the full amount of affordable housing on site which is essential in order to make developments sustainable in the future. It is considered that the proposals are environmental, socially and economically sustainable and accord with the development plan and the framework. The site is sustainably located within the town and the proposals represent an efficient use of the land.

Cheshire East is currently able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing however this site is included within the 5 year supply and as a result this proposal will make a valuable contribution in maintaining this position.

The design and layout of the development are in accordance with the Cheshire East Design Guide and no issues have been identified in respect of overlooking or other amenity impacts.

It has been demonstrated the development will not have a detrimental impact on the local highway network, the trees on and around the site, to local ecology. Although some matters must be dealt with by way of conditions at this stage.

It is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development and accords with the development plan policies outlined in the report and national planning policy and guidance. Therefore for the reasons mentioned above the application is recommended for approval.

### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

**Approve subject to Section 106 Agreement**

## REASONS FOR DEFERRAL

The application was deferred at the meeting of the Strategic Planning Board on 22 November 2017 for the following reasons;

- For the provision of visibility splays in respect of the private drives accessed from Stanneylands Road.
- Details of the proposed roundabout.
- Provision of a pedestrian crossing on Stanneylands Road.
- Details of the route from the footbridge to Sagars Road.
- Distances to local services.
- Lack of information on ecology

Additional information has been submitted following the deferral at the previous meeting and this is assessed below.

### For the provision of visibility splays serving the private drives accessed from Stanneylands Road.

Plans have been submitted that show visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m on each of the private drives. The plans also show the creation of a 3 metre wide footpath along Stanneylands Road from the roundabout to the south. This plan has been assessed by the Council's highway engineer and no issues have been identified with what is proposed.

### Details of the proposed roundabout.

Plans have been submitted that show the lines of visibility for vehicles entering the roundabout. This plan has been assessed by the Council's highway engineer and the levels of visibility are considered to be acceptable and not result in any highway safety issues.

### Provision of a pedestrian crossing on Stanneylands Road.

A plan has been submitted showing a signalised crossing on Stanneylands Road. This is considered a suitable location for a crossing at the end of the newly created footpath and whilst a signalised crossing is shown on the plan when this is properly audited it may be considered this is not an appropriate form of crossing and a Zebra crossing will suffice.

The site of this pedestrian crossing is within the red line of the application site. Therefore an additional condition to those listed at the end of this report will require details of a pedestrian crossing at the location shown to be implemented before the first occupation of any dwellings on the site.

### Details of the route from the footbridge to Sagars Road.

This route will be along existing paths and the contributions secured through the development on Sagars Road will improve the condition of this path. The topography of the land is such that this path will not be accessible for people with mobility issues and cyclists are likely to need to dismount. A plan of the route will be included in the officer's presentation and demonstrates it is the most direct available route without utilising the garden centre land.

### Distances to local services.

The table below outlines the distances from the site to the services set as set out in Policy SD2 of the Cheshire East Local Plan.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Rec distance</b>	<b>Location of service</b>	<b>Distance</b>
Bus Stop	500m	Manchester Ro / Highfield Cres	650m
Public Right of Way	500m	FP19 (Linneys Bridge – Styal Green)	290m
Railway Station	2km	Handforth railway station	900m via Wilmslow Garden Centre 1.3km via River Dean / Sagars Road 1.7km via Stanneylands Road
Outdoor Sports	500m	The Carrs Park	1.4km
		Handforth Hall Tennis Club	1.4km via Wilmslow Garden Centre 1.8km via River Dean / Sagars Road 2.2km via Stanneylands Road
		Wilmslow Rugby Club	2.3km
Public Park and Village Green	1km	Lacey Green Park	850m
Convenience Store	500m	Lacey Green Newsagent / Retail Base, Twinnies Road	1km
Supermarket	1km	Lidl, Dean Row Road	1.1km
Post Box	500m	Corner of Stanneylands Road / Stanneylands Drive	210m
Post Office	1km	Post Office, Wilmslow Road, Handforth	980m via Wilmslow Garden Centre 1.2km via River Dean / Sagars Road 1.8km via Stanneylands Road
Bank or Cash Machine	1km	Lacey Green Newsagent / Retail Base, Twinnies Road	1km
Pharmacy	1km	Well Pharmacy, Handforth Health Centre	900m via Wilmslow Garden Centre 1.1km via River Dean / Sagars Road 1.7km via Stanneylands Road
		Lloyds Pharmacy, Summerfield Village	1.1km
Primary School	1km	Lacey Green Primary Academy	1.2km
Secondary School	1km	Wilmslow High School	2.7km
Medical Centre	1km	Handforth Health Centre	900m via Wilmslow Garden Centre 1.1km via River Dean / Sagars Road 1.7km via Stanneylands Road
Leisure Facilities	1km	Wilmslow Leisure Centre	2km
Local Meeting Place / Community Centre	1km	Wilmslow Parish Hall, The Carrs Honford Hall Community Centre	1.4km 750m via Garden Centre 1.3km via River Dean / Sagars Road 1.5km via Stanneylands Road
Public House	1km	Bulls Head	600m via Garden Centre 1.2km via River Dean / Sagars Road 1.4km via Stanneylands Road
		Wilmslow Tavern	1.1km
Child Care Facility (nursery or crèche)	1km	Fun Frogs Day Nursery Bright Horizons Summerfield Day Nursery & Pre-School	1.2km 1.2km

The site meets the standards of the majority of the distance with or without the pedestrian/cycle link across the garden centre site. In any event the sustainability of the site was considered through the site selection process for the Local Plan and deemed a sustainable site suitable for development. The site is therefore considered to be sustainable.

### Lack of information on Ecology

The previous report to members outlined the position on ecology. Sufficient information has been submitted to allow the Council's Ecologist to make his assessment and the conditions requested in respect of ecology issues have come from the comments made by the Ecologist. Therefore no further information has been submitted at this time and it is reasonable that additional information be submitted by condition.

### **Update on Other Matters**

#### Footpath across the Garden Centre

Whilst not a specific reason for deferral the option of a pedestrian/cycle route from the site to Manchester Road across the Wilmslow Garden Centre has continued to be explored. The garden centre has now indicated they remain 'open to entering discussions with the Council or developer regarding use of part of the car park subject to agreement on terms'.

The applicant has agreed a financial contribution of up to £150,000 to provide this pedestrian/cycle link. The funding should now enable the Council to work more closely with the garden centre to create this link. Should it become clear the link cannot be provided the money will be put towards other schemes to improve connectivity between the site and Manchester Road.

#### Future of the Open Space

Discussions have been on-going over the future of the public open space and should the land be passed to the Council a commuted sum of £488,293 will be required to allow the management of the land over the next 15 years.

As the amount of open space well exceeds the level of open space that would normally be required it has been agreed with the applicant the financial contribution of £122,000 for recreation open space (earmarked for the Jim Evison playing fields in Wilmslow) would be waived should the applicant decide to pass the land to the Council. Should the applicant decide to retain the land and manage it through a management company the £122,000 contribution will require to be paid.

#### Amended Section 106 requirements

The amended list of requirements has been updated as follows;

- Provision of 30% affordable units.
- Educational contribution of towards secondary and SEN provision of £499,567
- Contribution towards ROS of £122,000 if the public open space is to be maintained through a management company.
- Contribution to Indoor Recreation of £25,500

- Contribution towards health provision of £185,679
- Management Plan for the on-site public open space and LEAP or transfer of this to the Council to maintain with a commuted sum of £488,293
- Contribution for monitoring of Travel Plan £5,000
- Provision of the bridge across the River Dean
- A financial contribution to be agreed for the provision of a direct pedestrian / cycle route to Manchester Road or improvements to the local cycle and footpath network between the site and Manchester Road of £150,000.
- A financial contribution to the provision of MOVA on the junction of Manchester Road and Stanneylands Road of £80,000.

### **CONCLUSION ON MATTERS OF DEFERRAL**

The matters for which the application was deferred have been fully addressed. It has been demonstrated that adequate visibility can be achieved for vehicles leaving the site from the private driveways and the roundabout. The position of the pedestrian crossing is considered acceptable and the details of the type of crossing will be agreed through an additional condition on the decision notice. The site is a sustainable site and the proposals are acceptable from an ecological perspective. The application continues to be recommended for approval in accordance with the heads of terms above and the conditions listed in the main report.

### **PREVIOUS REPORT TO STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD**

#### **PROPOSAL**

The application is for full planning permission for the erection of 174 residential dwellings, a new roundabout onto Stanneylands Road, public open space, pedestrian/cycleway connection between Linneys Bridge and the River Dean, a new bridge crossing of the River Dean, and associated works.

The following levels of accommodation are proposed;

8 properties – 1 Bedroom  
19 properties – 2 bedrooms  
35 properties – 3 bedrooms  
112 properties – 4 bedrooms

The properties are made up of 24 apartment and 150 dwellings with each property having access to 2 off road parking spaces.

#### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site consists mainly of grazing and paddock land in association with stables located on adjoining land. The part of the site to be developed for housing is generally flat and

is located alongside Stanneylands Road. Mature trees are located both within the site and along its boundaries, In the north eastern part of the site the levels change significantly down the valley of the River Dean. Much of the along the Dean Valley and paddocks in the north western of the site are included within the application site but remain in the Green Belt and are not proposed to be built upon.

Stanneylands Road forms the boundary of the site to the west with the Stanneylands Hotel being located opposite the proposed access into the site. The River Dean forms the northern boundary of the site whilst Wilmslow Garden Centre and existing residential properties on Carlton Avenue form the boundary of the site to the east. The remaining small paddock and stables associated with Little Stanneylands are located at the southernmost point of the site.

### **RELEVANT HISTORY**

No relevant applications.

### **NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY**

#### **National Policy**

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

#### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy**

The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy:

- MP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- PG1 Overall Development Strategy
- PG2 Settlement Hierarchy
- PG7 Spatial Distribution of Development
- SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
- SD2 Sustainable Development Principles
- SE1 Design
- SE2 Efficient use of land
- SE 3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- SE 4 The Landscape
- SE 5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
- SE 6 Green Infrastructure
- SE 13 Flood Risk and Water Management
- CO 1 Sustainable Travel and Transport
- CO 4 Travel Plans and Transport Assessments
- SC 1 Leisure and Recreation
- SC 2 Outdoor Sports Facilities
- SC 3 Health and Well Being
- SC 4 Residential Mix
- SC 5 Affordable Homes
- IN 1 Infrastructure
- IN 2 Developer Contributions

Directly relevant to this site is the following allocation for the entire site:

- Site LPS 56 Land at Little Stanneylands, Wilmslow

It should be noted that the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was formally adopted on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017. There are however policies within the legacy local plans that still apply and have not yet been replaced. These policies are set out below.

NE3 – Protection of Local Landscapes

NE11 – Protection and enhancement of nature conservation interests

NE17 – Nature Conservation in Major Developments

RT5 – Open Space Standards

DC3 – Amenity

DC6 – Circulation and Access

DC8 – Landscaping

DC9 – Tree Protection

DC15 – Provision of Facilities

DC17 – Water Resources

DC35 – Materials and Finishes

DC36 – Road Layouts and Circulation

DC37 – Landscaping

DC38 – Space Light and Privacy

DC40 – Children’s Play Provision and Amenity Space

DC41 – Infill Housing Development

### **Other Material Considerations:**

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

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

**Environmental Health** – No objection. Conditions have been requested relating to noise, electric vehicle charging points and contamination. These will be included on the decision notice. An Air Quality Assessment has been submitted and subject to conditions is acceptable.

**United Utilities** – No objections. Conditions have been requested in respect of surface water drainage from the site and that the site shall be drained on separate systems.

**Highways** – No objection. The comments made by the highway engineer and all highway and access matters are addressed in full later in this report.

**Housing Strategy** – No objection. The development triggers an affordable housing requirement and this matter is addressed in detail later in this report.

**Flood Risk** – No objection. Conditions have been requested relating to surface water drainage and the development being carried out in full accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment.

**Education** – No objection. This is based upon the applicant committing to pay a financial contribution for the provision of additional school places generated by the development. This is addressed in detail later in this report.

**ANSA** – No objection. This is subject to a financial contributions being agreed in respect of recreation open space, indoor recreation provision, details of the play area, and details of how the open space will be managed in the future. This is addressed later in this report.

**Countryside Rights of Way** – No objection. No public rights of way cross the site.

### **VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL**

*Wilmslow Town Council - Wilmslow Town Council's Planning Committee recommend refusal of this application on the grounds of the inadequate access onto Stanneylands Road both towards Styal and Dean Row, the primary access for the development should be directly from Manchester Road. In addition, this application should be refused in order to comply with Section 10 of the recently adopted Local Plan due to the lack of a sound infrastructure plan. The application should be refused until Cheshire East Council undertakes an up-to-date independent traffic assessment which challenges the published SEMMMS data which indicates that Stanneylands Road will experience a reduction of circa 60% in traffic movements which is a substantially greater reduction than the predicted impact on neighbouring routes.*

### **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

Approximately 815 representations of objection/comments have been received raising the following comments;

- Inadequate access into the site
- Increase in traffic and impact on highway safety
- Stanneylands Road is already congested
- The proposed roundabout will not ease congestion
- Access should be taken from Manchester Road
- Stanneylands Road is unsuitable for construction traffic.
- The bridge on Styal Road is too narrow
- Schools are already beyond capacity in the area.
- Capacity issues at local doctors.
- Impact on drainage in the area.
- Increase in flood risk as the site is prone to flooding
- Loss of trees
- Loss of Green Belt
- Removal of the site from the green belt is not legally compliant
- Loss of countryside
- Too many houses being built in the area.
- The development will have a detrimental impact on ecology
- Over-development of the site
- Inappropriate design that is out of character with the area.
- Not enough affordable housing
- Impact on privacy/overlooking

- The affordable housing will not be genuine affordable housing.
- Impact on local air quality
- A legal challenge has been made to the Local Plan.
- The footpath and cycle links should not cross local farmland.
- The footpath will be used as a 'rat run' for vehicles.
- Existing footpaths should be used.

### **APPRAISAL**

#### **Key Issues**

- Principle of development
- Sustainability
- Affordable Housing and Housing Mix
- Education
- Open Space and Recreation
- Health Provision
- Residential Amenity
- Impact on Local Highway Network / Access
- Design and Layout
- Ecology
- Trees
- Flood Risk
- Economic Sustainability
- Section 106 agreement
- CIL
- Representations
- Conclusions
- Recommendation

#### **PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

On 27th July 2017 the Council adopted the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. Accordingly the new Local Plan now forms part of the statutory development plan. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that “where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise.” This is the test that legislation prescribes should be employed on planning decision making.

The ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ at paragraph 14 of the NPPF means: *“approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay”*

As a consequence where development accords with the adopted Local Plan Strategy the starting point should normally be that it should be approved – and approved promptly.

The Inspector’s Report on the Local Plan was published on 20 June 2017 and signalled the Inspector’s agreement to the plans and policies of the Local Plan Strategy. The Inspector has

now confirmed that on adoption, the Council will be able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land. In his Report he concludes:

*“I am satisfied that CEC has undertaken a robust, comprehensive and proportionate assessment of the delivery of its housing land supply, which confirms a future 5-year supply of around 5.3 years”*

The Council have recently released the Annual Housing Monitoring Update and this has shown that the Council now has a supply of 5.45 years.

On 8 November 2017 the White Moss Quarry (WMQ) appeal was dismissed due to conflict with the LPS settlement hierarchy and spatial distribution of development. The appeal related to an outline application for up to 400 homes as a second phase to the existing White Moss Quarry development.

However, the Inspector did not come to a clear conclusion whether Cheshire East has a five year housing land supply. His view was that there was a deliverable housing land supply of between 5.07 years (a headroom of 200 dwellings) and 4.96 years (a deficit of 130 dwellings). He concluded that on the evidence before him and the risk of the housing supply falling slightly below the 5-year requirement, he could not be confident that there is a sufficiently robust deliverable supply: *“I conclude that it would be both cautious and prudent in the circumstances of this case to regard policies for the supply of housing to be considered not up-to-date, thus engaging the tilted balance of paragraph 14 of the Framework.”*

As the Council won the appeal, the decision will not be challenged by the Council. However, having reviewed it, there are serious concerns about the inspector’s findings that are material to your deliberation and which will form the basis for the Council’s case in relation to other appeals:

- the Council disagrees with the WMQ Inspector’s findings on the five year housing land supply;
- in several cases, the WMQ Inspector, reached incorrect conclusions on the evidence before him;
- the Council’s housing supply witness at the Park Road Inquiry was able to demonstrate a robust 5 year housing land supply;
- development lead-in time assumptions agreed by the Local Plan Inspector through the more extensive and inclusive Local Plan examination process should be followed, particularly so soon after the publication of the Local Plan Inspector’s report (June 2017);
- the Council’s approach on the *deliverability* of housing is consistent with the judgement of the Court of Appeal in St Modwen (20/10/17) which post-dated the White Moss Inquiry. This judgement confirmed that ‘deliverability’ in the context of NPPF paragraph 47 means a realistic prospect of the site being delivered. There is no need to demonstrate that every home in the five year supply will be built;
- updated information is now available to further support the Council’s judgements as to the contribution that particular sites will make towards the five year supply.

The Council has submitted to the Park Road Inspector that he should find that the Council can demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land. There are material differences between the evidence that was before the WMQ Inspector and the evidence that is before the Park Road Inspector to warrant the Park Road Inspector reaching a different conclusion.

For the purpose of determining current planning applications it is therefore the

Council's position that there is a five year supply of deliverable housing land.

The application site consists of the entirety of the LPS 56 allocation that was a site released from the Green Belt in order to assist the Council in achieving a five year supply of housing. Therefore the principle of residential development is acceptable in this location and subject to all other matters being satisfied the application should be determined without delay.

In addition to around 200 dwellings the development is expected to deliver the following;

- Provision of a direct cycle and pedestrian link from the site to Manchester Road, linking the site to Handforth Railway Station and centre;
- Provision of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the River Dean and improvement of public access along the river valley to include a footpath link from Linneys Bridge to Manchester Road.
- Retention of trees and woodlands at the edges of the site, with new planting to re-enforce landscape features - to properly define a new Green Belt boundary and to maintain the setting of existing properties and protect the amenities of those occupiers.

### **Site Specific Principles of Development**

- a. The development must be a high quality design which reflects and respects the character of the area and the amenities of neighbouring properties.
- b. Provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme which retains existing mature trees and hedgerows where possible.
- c. Creation of a new vehicular access to Stanneylands Road, or as an alternative to Manchester Road.
- d. Improve the connectivity and accessibility into and out of the site to Handforth centre and the wider local area with the provision of cycle paths and pedestrian linkages.
- e. Provision must be made for public open space to the north and west of the site utilising the river valley. Any new development will be expected to make contributions to playing fields and children's play facilities where these cannot be provided on site.
- f. New development will be expected to respect any existing ecological constraints on site and where necessary provide appropriate mitigation.
- g. Provide contributions to health and education infrastructure.
- h. The Local Plan Strategy site is expected to provide affordable housing in line with the policy requirements set out in Policy SC 5 'Affordable Homes'.
- i. Provide for a long-term management strategy for land along the Dean Valley shown as Protected Open Space.
- j. Respect for the setting of listed buildings adjacent to the site.
- k. A minimum of a Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment for contaminated land should be carried out to demonstrate that the site is, or could be made, suitable for use should it be found to be contaminated.

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustainability is the golden thread running through the National Planning Policy Framework, and proposals for sustainable development should be approved without delay. There are three strands to sustainability, social, economic and environmental.

## **SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Cheshire East Local Plan Policy SC5 states in Settlements with a population of 3,000 or more the percentage for affordable housing for all allocated sites will be a minimum of 30%, in accordance with the recommendations of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment carried out in 2013. This percentage relates to the provision of both social rented and/or intermediate housing, as appropriate. A ratio of 65/35 between social rented and intermediate housing is required.

The SHMA 2013 shows the majority of the demand in the Sub Area of Handforth and Wilmslow Per Year until 2018, is for 49x 3 and 5x 4 bedroom General Needs dwellings. The SHMA also shows a need for 13x 1 bedroom and 3 x 2 bedroom dwellings for Older Persons. This can be via bungalows, lifetime homes, cottage style flats and flats. The majority of the demand on Cheshire Homechoice is for 71x 1 bedroom, 108x 2 bedroom, 31x 3 bedroom and 6x 4 bedroom dwellings. Therefore a mix of 1, 2, and 3 bedroom dwellings on this site would be acceptable and this should include provision for older persons and those with access issues.

This is a proposed development of 174 dwellings therefore in order to meet the Council's Policy on Affordable Housing there is a requirement for 52 dwellings to be provided as affordable dwellings.

The Affordable Housing IPS requires that the affordable units should be tenure blind and pepper potted within the development, the external design, comprising elevation, detail and materials should be compatible with the open market homes on the development thus achieving full visual integration. This issue will be addressed through the reserved matters application.

The affordable housing should be provided no later than occupation of 80% of the open market dwellings and this will be addressed within the s106 agreement. The s106 agreement also ensures the following;

- requires the affordable units to transfer any rented affordable units to a Registered Provider
- provide details of when the affordable housing is required
- includes provisions that require the affordable homes to be let or sold to people who are in housing need and have a local connection. The local connection criteria used in the agreement should match the Councils allocations policy.
- includes the requirement for an affordable housing scheme to be submitted prior to commencement of the development that includes full details of the affordable housing on site.

Given the above the proposal complies with the requirements of Local Plan Policy SC5 and point h of Policy LPS 56.

### **EDUCATION PROVISION**

The Local Plan is expected to deliver 36,000 houses in Cheshire East; which is expected to create an additional 6,840 primary aged children and 5,400 secondary aged children. 422 children within this forecast are expected to have a special educational need. This development of 174 dwellings is expected to generate the following need:

33 primary children  
26 secondary children  
2 SEN children

The development is expected to impact on both secondary school and SEN places in the locality. Contributions which have been negotiated on other developments are factored into the forecasts both in terms of the increased pupil numbers and the increased capacity at schools in the area as a result of agreed financial contributions. The analysis undertaken has identified that a shortfall of secondary school and SEN school places still remains.

Special Education provision within Cheshire East Council currently has a shortage of places available with at present over 47% of pupils educated outside of the Borough. This is an existing concern, however the 3 children expected from this development will exacerbate the shortfall. The 2 SEN children who are thought to be of mainstream education age have been removed from the calculations above to avoid double counting. The remaining 1 SEN child is expected to be 1 EYFS child. The Service does not claim for EYFS or Sixth Form at present therefore those children cannot be removed from the calculation above.

To alleviate forecast pressures, the following contributions would be required:

$25 \times \pounds 17,959 \times 0.91 = \pounds 408,567$  (secondary)  
 $2 \times \pounds 50,000 \times 0.91 = \pounds 91,000$  (SEN)  
Total education contribution:  $\pounds 499,567$

The contribution has been agreed by the applicant and will be delivered through the s106 agreement. The proposal therefore complies with point h of Policy LPS56.

### **PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

The application site includes a large area of land identified as protected open space within the Local Plan allocation. This area will not be developed with some of the land retained by the current landowner and used for his horses with the remainder of the land forming the open space serving this development. The area is more than sufficient to meet the POS requirements.

Currently the application does not detail the management of the open space area or play area. Proposals about management of the site are essential to its future development and value as amenity and recreational spaces. The POS area provides an attractive walking, cycling and leisure environment that links in with wider areas of open space in the Wilmslow/Handforth area. Given the importance of this area and the associated footpath links provided through it the s106 will allow for either a management company to manage the site or for the site to be controlled by the Council following the receipt of a commuted sum to maintain the land.

The general location of the toddler/junior play area is acceptable, however the submitted details of the play area are not deemed acceptable at this moment. This matter is one that is reasonably addressed through a condition on the decision notice and its future maintenance will be dealt with in the same way as the open space.

There is a requirement to provide Recreation and Outdoor Sport (ROS) in line with Policy SC2 of the Local Plan and the playing Pitch Strategy. In this instance the developer has opted to make a contribution rather than on-site provision. This contribution is £122,000 and will be put towards the improvements to the sports facilities at Jim Everson playing fields.

Policies SC1 and SC2 of the Local Plan Strategy provide a clear development plan policy basis to require developments to provide or contribute towards both outdoor and indoor recreation

The Indoor Built Facility Strategy has identified that any existing shortfalls for Handforth should look to focus on improvement of provision at Wilmslow Leisure Centre. Whilst new developments should not be required to address an existing shortfall of provision, they should ensure that this situation is not worsened by ensuring that it fully addresses its own impact in terms of the additional demand for indoor leisure provision that it directly gives rise to. Furthermore, whilst the strategy acknowledges that the increased demand is not sufficient to require substantial indoor facility investment through capital build there is currently a need to improve the quality and number of health and fitness stations at Wilmslow Leisure Centre to accommodate localised demand for indoor physical activity.

The requirement is calculated as follows;

- 174 houses at 1.61 people per residence = a population increase of 280
- The annual Sport England Active People Survey Results for 2016 showed 42.7% participation rate for Cheshire East. = 119 additional “active population” due to the new development in Wilmslow
- Based on an industry average of 25 users per piece of health & fitness equipment this equates to an additional five (5) stations. Requirement for - x3 running machines (£6,500 per treadmill) , x 2 resistance / weight pieces (£3,000 per piece). Total £25,500

The applicant has accepted the need for this contribution although the level of contribution may change based on the number of houses eventually approved on site. The contribution will be delivered through the s106 agreement. The proposal therefore complies with points e and i of Policy LPS56.

### **ACCESS TO HEALTH FACILITIES**

Eastern Cheshire has the fastest growing over 65 and over 85 populations in the North West with more than one in five people being over 65 which will become nearer to one in four people by 2021. The number of very elderly people is growing even more rapidly, with a higher estimated average annual growth rate when compared to England (2.7% vs. 2.3%). The overall population is forecast to grow by 28,000 (14%) by 2035. Although deprivation levels in Eastern Cheshire are lower than the national average people living in these more deprived local areas experience worse health outcomes than those living in areas identified locally as least deprived.

The Handforth Health Centre GP practice is a 1970's single storey building in need of some improvements if the predicted patient growth over the next 10 years (37% increase) is to be accommodated. Space utilisation analysis has demonstrated that the Handforth Health Centre currently has a 44% shortfall in required space in order to adequately provide primary care services to the existing patient population. Additional growth in patient numbers will add further pressures to the GP practice, with an increase in clinical and non-clinical staff required in order to meet these future patient needs. Such an increase in clinical and non-clinical staffing numbers will require expansion or redevelopment of the Handforth Health Centre site.

It is suggested that the Section 106 funding for the planning application under consideration is based on a calculation consisting of occupancy x number of units in the development x £360. This is based on guidance provided to other CCG areas by NHS Property Services.

<b>Size of Unit</b>	<b>Occupancy Assumptions Based on Size of Unit</b>	<b>Health Need/Sum Requested per unit</b>
1 bed unit	1.4 persons	£504 per 1 bed unit
2 bed unit	2.0 persons	£720 per 2 bed unit
3 bed unit	2.8 persons	£1008 per 3 bed unit
4 bed unit	3.5 persons	£1260 per 4 bed unit

For the planning application in question the CCG requests a contribution to health infrastructure via Section 106 of £185,796 based on the above calculation and the details provided within the planning application, i.e. 26 x 1 bed units, 19 x 2 bed units, 14 x 3 bed units, 115 x 4 bed units.

Allocated Section 106 funding will be used to contribute towards the improvement of the Handforth Health Centre premises in order to facilitate a greater level of capacity for the delivery of Primary Care services to the local population. It is envisaged that multiple Section 106 funding allocations obtained from the various local housing developments planned in the area will be pooled to maximize the potential scope of the development of the Handforth Health Centre.

### **RESIDENTIAL AMENITY**

In order for the proposals to be acceptable, it is important that they do not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of existing residents. Local Plan policies DC3, DC38 and H13 seek to ensure that new development does not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property.

The separation distances between the existing properties on Carlton Drive and those proposed is a minimum of 33 metres and is up to 46 metres in places. The required distance set out in Policy DC38 is 25 metres and as such the proposals will not cause an unacceptable level of overlooking or have an unacceptable adverse impact on privacy. The vast majority of the trees along the site boundary with the existing properties are retained and they will effectively screen the development from neighbouring properties.

Environmental Health has commented on the application and has raised no objections with regard to contaminated land or noise and vibration subject to conditions. It is inevitable that some disturbance will occur as part of the construction process. However this will be for a temporary period only and separate legislation is in place to ensure this does not occur.

### **Social Sustainability Conclusion**

The proposals for the residential development will make an affordable housing contribution through the provision of 52 units of the correct tenure. The scheme does make a valuable contribution towards affordable housing which will be secured through a Section 106 agreement.

The proposed development will make a full education contribution, health contribution and will make a contribution towards open space, indoor recreation and outdoor sport. The affordable housing provision will meet the requirements

Overall the provision of a reasonable mix of housing for the community as part of a large strategic allocation along with on site affordable housing and education and open space and outdoor recreation contributions which can be provided by the development are considered to be socially sustainable.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **IMPACT ON HIGHWAY NETWORK/ACCESS**

Discussions regarding the location of the access to the site have taken place and the applicant is unable to provide vehicular access to Manchester Road but has submitted the application for access off Stanneylands Road. This is fully consistent with the Local Plan Policy (Point c of LPS56) that states the site can be served either from Manchester Road or from Stanneylands Road.

The roundabout access into the site is a compact roundabout design and will be delivered via a Section 278 Agreement in which the technical design will be assessed. It is agreed that in principle a roundabout is a satisfactory access to the site. In addition to the roundabout there are two other small private drive accesses onto Stanneylands, these are to serve no more than five units and visibility has been provided at each of the access points.

### **Internal Road Layout**

The main spine road is 5.5m wide with 2m wide footways and the minor roads and shared surfaces being a minimum of 4.8m wide. There are a number of junction tables indicated on the layout plan these are acceptable but they should not be raised as the speeds internally would be low. There is a road narrowing between plots 154 and 169 where the road crosses the footway, this is acceptable as the narrowing is for a short distance only. The level of parking provision for the units is 200% and is either driveway or garage parking, the number of spaces provided for each unit accords with the parking standards in the Local Plan.

### **Traffic Impact**

Stanneylands road provides a connection with Styal Road and Manchester Road and is a rural road in parts with it serving residential development at its eastern end towards Manchester Road. It currently has problems with additional traffic using the road due to its connectivity with Styal Road and Manchester Road although there is likely to be a marked

reduction in vehicles using Stanneylands Road following the opening of the A6 MARR (Manchester Airport Relief Road). The applicant has assessed the impact of the development with the A6 MARR in place and undertaken capacity assessments using the predicted flows from the SEMMMs model on Manchester Road and Stanneylands.

The level of traffic generation submitted is considered low and is not representative of traffic generation levels in Wilmslow although using CEC trip generation data the likely traffic generation for the site is 115 peak hour trips as opposed to the 90 peak hour trips in the applicants assessment. Overall, the additional trips is not considered to have a significant impact on the assessments undertaken as the capacity assessments of the site access and the signal junction at Manchester Road/Stanneylands Road have sufficient spare capacity to accommodate the additional flows.

### Accessibility

The site will have a pedestrian/cycle footway fronting the site and is to be connected to the existing footways network by a uncontrolled crossing south of the proposed new roundabout access. The provision of a shared pedestrian/cycleway between Linneys Bridge and the River Dean is also proposed, a new bridge link over the river is being provided.

### Summary

The site has been identified in the Local Plan as a strategic site, consideration has been given to the points of access to serve the site. Both Manchester Road and Stanneylands Road were identified as possible access point to the site, given land ownership constraints to gaining access to Manchester Road the Stanneylands road access has been proposed in the application.

The proposed new roundabout complies with highway design standards and is accepted as an appropriate form of access, internally the road layout is an acceptable design with suitable road widths for the level of development served.

The traffic impact resulting from the development on Stanneylands Road has been assessed and although the peak hour traffic generation arising from the development would not have led to a link capacity problem on Stanneylands Road, the introduction of the A6 MARR is forecast to reduce traffic flows even with the development in place.

The existing signal junction of Manchester Road/Stanneylands Road is currently operating over capacity, it is with the reduction in traffic from the A6 MARR scheme that it is predicted to operate within capacity. Although reduction in flows on Manchester Road are predicted, there are existing congestion issues at the signal junction, the developer has agreed to contribute to providing MOVA at the junction to optimise the cycle times and thereby improving capacity. Therefore not taking into account the anticipated reduction of traffic on Stanneylands Road it is not considered the proposal will have an unacceptable impact on the capacity of the local highway network on the basis of the contribution for the MOVA installation.

In summary, the site design is acceptable and does provide linkages to the pedestrian and cycle network, the traffic impact is not considered severe although a financial contribution of £80,000 is required, and has been agreed, for the introduction of MOVA at the signal junction of Manchester Road with Stanneylands Road.

### Pedestrian / Cycle Access

Policy LPS56 of the newly adopted Local Plan has the following requirements;

- Provision of a direct cycle and pedestrian link from the site to Manchester Road, linking the site to Handforth Railway Station and centre;
- Provision of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the River Dean and improvement of public access along the river valley to include a footpath link from Linneys Bridge to Manchester Road.

Whilst the above policy requirements are listed separately the bridge over the River Dean could perform both functions. Following the public consultation exercise carried out in respect of this application the bridge has been re-located to reduce any impact on the farmer currently tenanted the Council owned land on the opposite side of the River Dean. It is now proposed to site the bridge to the west of the initial position and the path leading from the bridge will tie into the improved footpath network secured as part of the Sagars Road application.

Two pedestrian access points will be available from Stanneylands Road into the site. One being by Linneys Bridge, and one taking advantage of the existing tree lined path already in place on the site. Both of these footpaths will join at the location of the children's play area and continue to the bridge over the River Dean. This will complete a formal footpath network from The Cars up to Sagars Road and beyond. Once on Sagars Road easy pedestrian access is available to the shops and services in the centre of Handforth and provides pedestrian access to Handforth Station.

In respect of the direct pedestrian and cycle link it is clear that the most direct route to Manchester Road is through the site of Wilmslow Garden Centre, this being the shortest most direct route. The applicant has approached the garden centre but the owners of the garden centre are unwilling to allow any form of access over their site. The Council have also approached the garden centre separately and received the same response. Therefore as it currently stands this option is not available.

To ensure this issue could be revisited in the future the proposed layout of the site allows for a path that will be built up to the boundary between the site and the garden centre. Additionally the applicant has agreed a financial contribution to provide this footpath link in the future should the garden decide different. Alternatively the contribution will be spent on measures to further improve the pedestrian and cycle conditions between the site and Manchester Road.

The provision of the pedestrian and cycling links across the site and the provision of a bridge over the River Dean, in the revised position now shown on the plans, comply with the requirements to improve footpath links in the area. Given the preferred access across the garden centre site to Manchester Road is not possible the alternative using footpaths up to Sagars Road is considered to be appropriate pedestrian access to Handforth Station. This access is just 150 metres longer than the alternative route through the garden centre to Handforth Station does provide the most direct currently available link.

The difficulties encountered with the garden centre have led to a financial contribution from the applicant to continue to explore a more direct future cycle and pedestrian link. The

linkages provided, along with the commuted sum, ensure compliance with points 2 and 3 and point d of Policy LPS56.

### **DESIGN & LAYOUT**

The importance of securing high quality design is specified within the Framework. Paragraph 61 states that:

*“Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.”*

This approach is fully consistent with CELPS policy SE1 and the recently adopted Cheshire East Design Guide.

The local area comprises a variety of house types including modern and more traditional semi-detached and detached housing.

The site is contained within the landscape, and other than the access point into the site and it would not be prominent from public vantage points. Following discussions the proposals have been amended during the application process and various improvements have been made to the layout to create a greater sense of place and to take advantage of the mature woodland setting of the site,

The layout benefits from a consistent approach through the site to ensure that most streets enjoy views of the woodland and the sensible grouping of buildings around the site. The Buildings enclose spaces well, having been designed turn corners with active frontages. Additional detailing on house types has providing increased visual interest. The layout employs a number of methods to accommodate the required off-street car parking and this ensures parked cars will not dominate the character of the site. The highways design has been agreed with the Highways Officer and is designed to an adoptable standard.

The application has been assessed using the criteria set out in the Cheshire East Design Guide and overall is scored green, The development did have some yellows but these are generally relating to issues of detail that will be agreed through conditions on the decision notice whilst others refer to the house types not being specific to the site. Whilst the house types are of a good standard and include features that reflect the character of the area they are not bespoke to this site. The Council’s Design Officer has assessed the proposal and following amendments has no objections to the proposal.

A landscape masterplan has been agreed that takes advantages of views through the site and the mature landscape setting of the site. The entrance of the site will be tree lined to frame the site and provide mitigation for trees that are lost on Stanneylands Road. A detailed landscape scheme will be submitted as part of the conditions on the decision notice.

The proposal provides a mix of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom properties and this is considered to comply with Policy SC4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

It is considered that the amended scheme is of an acceptable design/layout has been achieved it is considered that the proposed development accords with the principles of the Cheshire East Design Guide, Policy SE1 and points a, b and J of the adopted Local Plan Strategy .

### **ECOLOGY**

The application is accompanied by a comprehensive ecological assessment that addresses the following issues;

#### Grassland Habitats

An area of grassland habitat (TN24) has been identified on site which is of Local Wildlife Site/Priority habitat value. Such habitats are a material consideration for planning and this habitat would be lost as a result of the proposed development.

In order to compensate for the loss of this area of grassland the applicant is proposing to translocate the soils from the grassland in order to establish more species rich grassland within the open space area of the proposed development. A detailed method statement for the translocation of the existing soils is required and will be agreed by condition on the decision notice

#### Badgers

A number of badger setts have been recorded on site including a main sett and a number of supporting setts. In the absence of mitigation the proposed development would be likely to result in the disturbance of badgers as a result of the loss of two supporting setts and a partial loss of the established main sett. In order to mitigate the impacts of the proposed works it is likely that a number of sett entrances will require temporary or permanent closure under the terms of a Natural England license. The applicant's are also proposing the creation of an artificial sett as compensation for the loss of the existing setts.

The submitted badger mitigation method statement is acceptable to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development upon badgers. However, the precise impacts of the development and the detailed specification of the mitigation required would depend on the status of badgers on site at the time that development commenced. Therefore a condition will be attached which requires an updated badger survey and mitigation strategy to be submitted prior to the commencement of development.

#### Bats

A number of trees have been identified on site that have Moderate to High potential to support roosting bats and the submitted Ecological Assessment states that these trees would be retained as part of the proposed development. A condition will be included on the decision notice requiring all trees with bat roost potential to be retained as part of the development.

To avoid any adverse impacts on bats resulting from any lighting associated with the development a condition will be attached requiring any additional lighting to be agreed. Any proposed lighting should be low level and directional and the design of the lighting scheme informed by the advice in *Bats and lighting in the UK- bats and the built environment series*, (Bat Conservation Trust, 2009).

### Water Voles

A population of water voles recorded has been recorded within marshy grassland, this habitat must be safeguarded in order to avoid any impacts on this species declining protected species. The landscape plan and illustrative drainage scheme have been amended to ensure that no works take place in this area of the site.

The submitted ecological assessment states that the water vole population may be vulnerable to increased disturbance once the development is completed and recommends that proposals be developed for the creation of additional wetland habitat to allow the population to relocate in the face of increased pressure. Therefore a condition will be attached to the decision notice requiring the submission of a water vole mitigation and compensation strategy.

### Otter

An Otter spraint was recorded during the submitted survey which indicates that Otters may occasionally occur on the River Dean at this location, the proposed development is not reasonable likely to result in an offence under the habitat Regulations in respect of this species. However, as the status of this species may change over time a condition will be attached which requires an updated otter survey to be submitted prior to the commencement of works on the proposed bridge crossing. The bridge crossing itself should also be designed to ensure that it does not result in any impediment to the movement of Otters.

### Barn Owls

This protected species is known to occur in the locality of the proposed development. A detailed survey has been submitted in support of this application and no evidence of barn owls was recorded on site. Therefore this species is unlikely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.

### Priority Woodland

An area of Priority Woodland is present towards the north of the proposed housing. Habitats of this type are a material consideration for planning. An acceptable buffer zone has been provided between the proposed development and the woodland.

### Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a priority species and hence a material consideration. The proposed site access will result the loss of a section of hedgerow. However, sufficient replacement native planting is proposed to compensate for this loss.

### Nesting Birds

A number of priority bird species were recorded on site. These species were all associated with woodland, scrub and riverside habitats. There would be a loss of some scrub as a result of the proposed development, but the retention of retention of the woodland and riverside habitats and the proposed additional planting would help to reduce the impacts of the proposed development upon these species. Conditions are required to safeguard nesting birds and to ensure some additional provision is made for nesting birds and roosting bats as part of the proposed development:

### Pond

The landscape masterplan has been amended to show the retention of all ponds. The submitted bat survey recommends pond and wetland creation within 40m of linear habitat features to provide increased foraging habitat for bats. A new wetland is proposed as part of the surface water drainage scheme.

### Moths

A number of Priority moth species have been recorded adjacent to the application site by a local naturalist. These species are mostly associated with woodland edge habitats and so their habitat would be retained as part of the proposed development. However some species present are associated with grassland habitats and so may be affected by the loss of grassland habitat to the proposed development. The grassland moth species are however fairly common throughout Britain and the loss of better quality habitat on the site would be compensated for as described above.

### Polecat

This priority species has been recorded within 1km of the application site. The retention of the hedgerows, woodland habits would help to reduce the potential impacts of the proposed development upon this species.

### Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are a biodiversity action plan priority species and hence a material consideration. There are records of hedgehogs in the broad locality of the proposed development and so the species may occur on the site of the proposed development. A condition will be included on the decision notice requiring details of how Boundary treatments on the site will allow for the free movement of hedgehogs.

### Ecology Conclusion

The applicant has provided the requested ecology buffers and this has had a significant influence over the layout of the site. Subject to the inclusion of the conditions referred to above the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on any protected species and therefore complies with all relevant policies in respect of nature conservation and point f of Policy LPS 56.

## **IMPACT ON TREES/HEDGEROWS**

Policy LPS 56 of the Local Plan Strategy allocates the site as a housing site. Retention of trees and woodlands on the edges of the site, with new planting to re-enforce importance landscape features are cited as some of the site specific principles to achieve the development.

The trees to the south and east of the site are protected by the (Macclesfield Borough Council [Wilmslow Little Stanneylands] TPO 1979, and [Wilmslow - Land North of Carlton Avenue] TPO 2000) and the application is supported by an Arboriculture Impact Assessment (TEP dated August 2017).

### Trees protected by the Tree Preservation Order

Existing protected trees to the south and east of the site, including the group of Pines to the North West of Carleton Avenue and Little Stanneylands. are shown for retention as part of the

submitted proposals. A number of (U) category trees have been identified which have been identified for removal by virtue of their deteriorating condition.

The key requirements outlined in Section 5.3.4 of BS5837:2012 relating to buildings and spaces around them having low daylight and sunlight levels and the impact of dense shading from retained trees have largely been resolved and are considered broadly acceptable in design terms, and it is accepted that the blocks of unmanaged protected Pine may require some sensitive low impact thinning in the long term.

Special mitigation measures have been identified where proposed footpaths, an internal access road and a small area of car parking slightly encroach onto root protection areas of retained trees. It is accepted that these matters can be satisfactorily be addressed by an Arboricultural Method Statement that will be agreed as part of the conditions on the decision notice.

### Proposed Access/roundabout – Stanneylands Road improvements

Detailed discussions have taken place over a period of time on the proposed Stanneylands Road realignment. To accommodate the proposed improvements and ground level changes it will be necessary to undertake the removal of two established moderate (B) category Silver Birch and two low (C) category groups, comprised of Holly, Sycamore, Pine and Larch. Whilst it is recognised that cumulatively these trees contribute to the sylvan character of Stanneylands Road, some, in particular a group of Larch within Group G34 are structurally compromised.

Discussions with the applicant have sought to offset this loss by the provision of space for large canopy species, particularly at the new access to Stanneylands Road which has been incorporated in the design by incorporating wide grass verges with properties set back at the junction with Stanneylands Road.

### Existing Lime Avenue

Discussions with the developer have sought to retain a distinctive avenue of Lime either side of an existing track located opposite the Stanneylands Hotel. These trees present a significant contribution to the landscape and sylvan character of the area and the proposed layout retains the integrity of avenue save for the provision of an internal access to the western section of the site which will require the removal of one moderate category tree. The internal access is located where there is minimal tree loss and impact upon the collective value of the group and with provision for additional compensatory planting of high canopy species to the northern end will provide the appropriate mitigation.

A low category group of small mixed broadleaves to the north of the site will require removal for flood attenuation measures and a two early mature Oak adjacent to the river will require removal to accommodate new footpaths and a new bridge across the River Dean. It is agreed that the loss of these trees are not considered to present a significant impact upon the wider amenity of the area and that they can be adequately compensated elsewhere within the application site.

Subject to appropriate conditions the proposals will not have detrimental impact on the health of the retained trees and protection of those remaining. The layout of the site has retained all the trees located on edges of the site with the only tree loss being to create the access to the

site and this will be mitigated against. The proposal complies with point 4 and b of Policy LPS56.

## **FLOOD RISK**

The site of the proposed houses is classified as Very Low Risk (former EA Flood Zone 1), which is land that has a less than 0.1% chance of flooding (less than 1:1000). The River Dean a designated Main River, this is controlled and maintained by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency have considered the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and further submitted information and have raised no objections to the proposals. A condition has been requested for a landscape management plan, however this will not be included on the decision notice as the information required is covered by other conditions. The Council's Flood Risk team have raised no objections to the proposal.

United Utilities has commented on the application and raised no objections to the proposals. No objections have been raised in relation to flooding and drainage subject to suitably worded conditions.

### **Environmental sustainability conclusion**

It is considered that the proposed development is environmentally sustainable. The proposed design of the site is acceptable, there are conditions required in respect environmental matters raised above.

## **ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**

### **EMPLOYMENT**

The proposed development will provide employment in the short term during the clearance and construction of the development in the area.

### **ECONOMY OF THE WIDER AREA**

The addition of 174 units within the town will undoubtedly boost the economy in the local area through the increased use of shops and services making them more sustainable, which is especially important in Handforth and Wilmslow Town Centres to be sustainable into the future. Additional population can create more demand for local services, increasing the likelihood that they will be retained into the future and improvements and investment made.

### **Economic sustainability conclusions**

The proposals will result in additional employment in the sort term through the construction of the site along with an economic boost locally through the increase in population to this area of the town. It is considered that the proposals will make efficient use of the site which is part of a wider strategic allocation.

### **SECTION 106 (see *update following deferral*)**

A section 106 agreement will accompany the application and is required to secure the following:

- Provision of 30% affordable units.
- Educational contribution of towards secondary and SEN provision of £499,567
- Contribution towards ROS of £122,000
- Contribution to Indoor Recreation of £25,500
- Contribution towards health provision of £185,679
- Management Plan for the on-site public open space and LEAP or transfer of this to the Council to maintain with a commuted sum to be determined.
- Contribution for monitoring of Travel Plan £5,000
- Provision of the bridge across the River Dean
- A financial contribution to be agreed for the provision of a direct pedestrian / cycle route to Manchester Road or improvements to the local cycle and footpath network between the site and Manchester Road.
- A financial contribution to be agreed for footpath improvements to the north of the River Dean.
- A financial contribution of £80,000 for the installation of MOVA at the traffic signals on the junction

### **CIL REGULATIONS**

In order to comply with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010, it is necessary for planning applications with legal agreements to consider the issue of whether the requirements within the S106 satisfy the following: a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; a) Directly related to the development; and b) Fair and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. It is considered that the contributions required as part of the application are justified meet the Council's requirement for policy compliance. All elements are necessary, directly relate to the development and are fair and reasonable in relation to the scale and kind of development. The non-financial requirements ensure that the development will be delivered in full. On this basis the S106 the scheme is compliant with the CIL Regulations 2010.

### **COMMENT ON REPRESENTATIONS**

The majority of the points of objection have been addressed in the main body of the report or are issues that will be considered as part of the future reserved matters application.

A number of representations objected on the grounds the site is within the Green Belt and therefore should not be developed. However, on adoption of the Local Plan the site was removed from the Green Belt and is now allocated for residential use.

The Local Plan is subject to a Legal Challenge. However this is disputed by the Council and previous case law has already established that Local Plans continue to carry full weight whilst subject to challenge.

### **CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE**

The site forms the entire allocated site LPS56. The proposed development accords with the Local Plan policy relating to its allocation by providing housing and all the other policy requirements. Shortfalls in health and education provision are mitigated through financial contributions to improve existing facilities. The applicant is providing further financial contributions in order to make the development acceptable and is providing the full amount of affordable housing on site which is essential in order to make developments sustainable in the future. It is considered that the proposals are environmental, socially and economically sustainable and accord with the development plan and the framework. The site is sustainably located within the town and the proposals represent an efficient use of the land.

Cheshire East is currently able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing however this proposal will make a valuable contribution in maintaining this position.

It is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development and accords with the development plan policies mentioned in the policies section of this report and national planning policy and guidance. There are no material considerations that justify a decision other than that in accordance with the Development Plan. In accordance with section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 planning permission should be granted. Therefore for the reasons mentioned above the application is recommended for approval.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The application is recommended for **approval subject to the conditions** listed below and the completion of the s106 agreement for the measures outlined in the report.

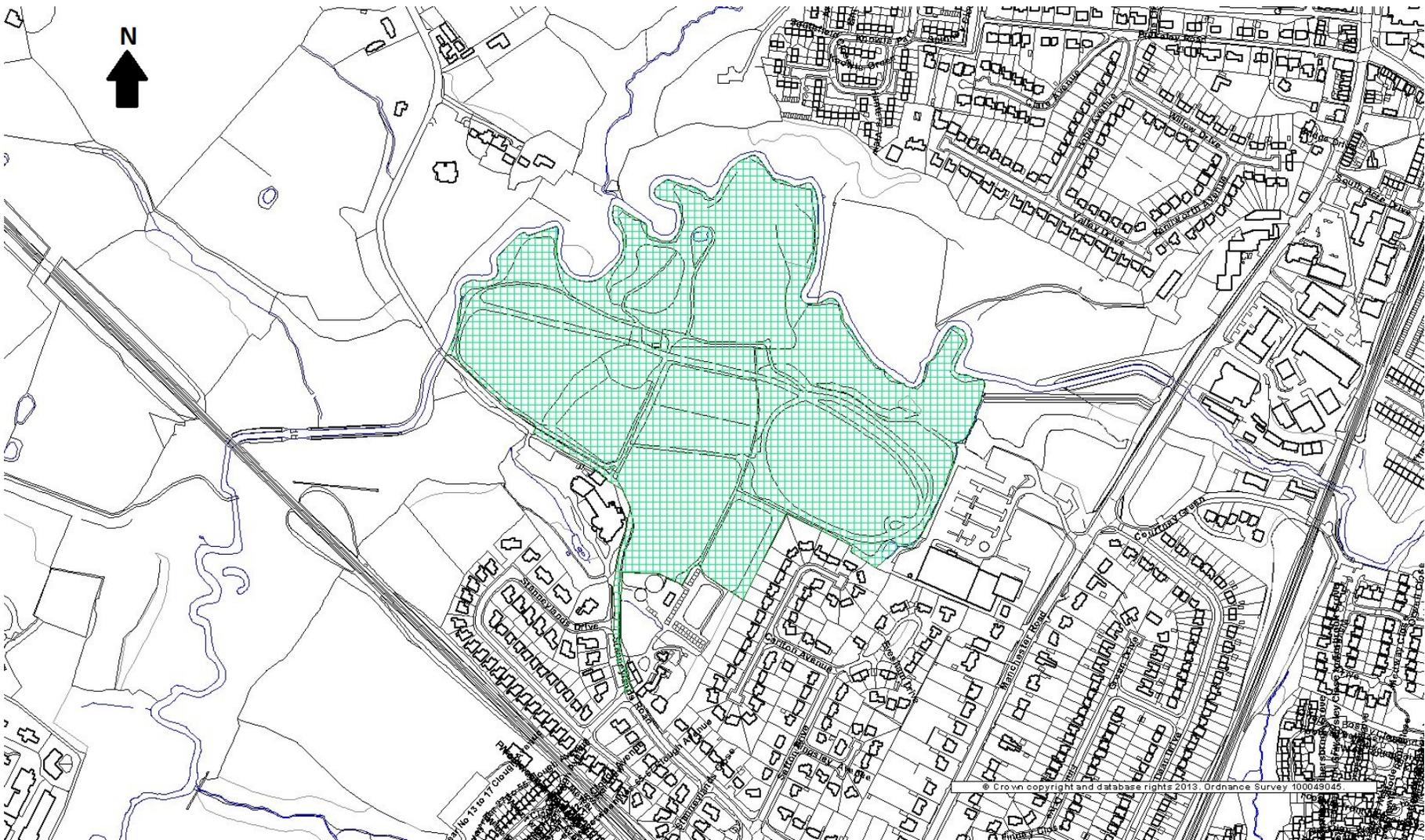
*In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions / informatives / planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Planning (Regulation) delegated authority to do so in 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 Full Planning

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. CONTAMINATED LAND CONDITION
2. IMPORTATION OF SOIL
3. UNEXPECTED CONTAMINATION
4. Tree retention
5. Tree protection
6. Arboricultural method statement
7. Landscaping - submission of details

8. Landscaping (implementation)
9. Time period to implement permission.
10. Plans
11. Implement in accordance with FRA
12. Levels details
13. Pedestrian and cycle signage
14. Submission and implementation of Travel Plan
15. Pedestrian cycle routes through the site
16. Implement noise recommendations
17. Construction environment management plan
18. Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points
19. Details and implementation of bridge
20. details of play area
21. proposals to incorporate features for breeding birds.
22. Landscape and habitat management plan
23. Bird nesting season
24. Provision for hedgehogs through the site
25. updated badger survey
26. bat friendly lighting scheme
27. retention of trees
28. Water vole mitigation
29. Updated Otter Survey
30. method statement - gressland relocation
31. surface water details
32. materials as submitted
33. cycle facilities for apartments
34. refuse storage for apartments



Application No: 17/4370M

Location: JODRELL BANK OBSERVATORY, MACCLESFIELD ROAD, JODRELL BANK, CHESHIRE, SK11 9DL

Proposal: The proposal includes the creation of a new, single storey building to house a heritage exhibition and visitor centre. In conjunction with this, new footpaths, landscaping and associated enabling works are provided.

Applicant: University of Manchester

Expiry Date: 08-Dec-2017

### **SUMMARY**

The site is the Granada Arboretum at Jodrell Bank. The application site is the Jodrell Bank Observatory which is set in an isolated location in Lower Withington located partly within Goostrey Parish and partly within Lower Withington Parish. The observatory is home of the Sir Bernard Lovell telescope which, approximately 60 years after its construction remains the third largest. The outstanding significance of the telescope has been recognised through its designation as a grade I listed building, which places it in the top 2.5% of the most significant listed buildings in England. The site has a series of buildings on it forming part of the University of Manchester research facility.

The Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre forms a main part of the site which is a public outreach arm and hosts approximately 150,000 visitors per year.

The proposals are for the First Light Project, a heritage exhibition and visitor centre to compliment the existing scientific exhibitions and visitor centre at the site. The building is of a unique architectural design and is an architecture led project. The building forms a dome shaped earth mound which will provide a new visitor attraction.

It is considered that the proposed development is a very important project to provide a new element of Jodrell Bank as a key tourist destination within Cheshire East. The proposals will provide a visitor centre and exhibition focused on the history of Jodrell Bank, a part of the story which is not told at the site currently as the focus is on science and in particular astronomy. The proposals will provide a key expansion of the site for the First Light Project with a unique architectural design based on a carefully considered design concept.

The design will integrate well into its surroundings within the Granada Arboretum and will not have a detrimental landscape impact or impact on the Grade I listed Lovell Telescope and associated buildings. It is considered that the proposal will maintain the intrinsic character and beauty of the Open Countryside in this area and will not detract from it. The proposed development accords with development plan policies and is therefore considered to be a sustainable form of development.

Sustainable forms of development that accord with the development plan must be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise, in this case it is considered

that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions and is therefore recommended for approval.

**Summary recommendation: Approve subject to conditions**

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site is the Jodrell Bank Observatory which is set in an isolated location in Lower Withington located partly within Goostrey Parish and partly within Lower Withington Parish. The observatory, which is home of the Sir Bernard Lovell telescope which, at the time of its construction 1952-57, was the largest steerable radio telescope in the world and approximately 60 years after its construction remains the third largest. The outstanding significance of the telescope has been recognised through its designation as a grade I listed building, which places it in the top 2.5% of the most significant listed buildings in England. The site has a series of buildings on it forming part of the University of Manchester research facility.

The Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre is also present at the site which is a public outreach arm and hosts approximately 150,000 visitors per year.

The SKA (Square Kilometre Array) project is also located at the site, and has been based at the site since 2012. The SKA located their headquarters at Jodrell Bank in 2012 and in 2016 took the decision to expand their presence on the site. SKA Organisation is an international science project that operates in the field of radio astronomy. Although there are regular interfaces with the Jodrell Bank Observatory, SKA operates their own scientific equipment, independent of the Lovell and MKII telescopes.

There are two vehicular accesses to the Jodrell Bank site, the northern access is the main access to the site for staff and visitors, however there is a secondary access to the south of the site onto the A535 which is subject to alterations as part of a previous approved project at the site.

This application deals with the existing arboretum area of the site, which is located to the east of the main discovery centre and the Lovell Telescope.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

The application proposes a new heritage project at the site, the First Light Project.

The Discovery Centre at Jodrell Bank is the public facing organisation of the site that has grown in popularity considerably. This is thanks to the presence of the Lovell Telescope, the unique landscape and inspiring programme of education, talks and events.

Much of the current exhibition and interpretation material throughout the site is focused on Radio Astronomy and the science around it, with little emphasis on the story of how a rural site south of Manchester became its home.

To address this, a new Heritage Exhibition is proposed. This is also an opportunity to examine issues that arose in parallel with the centre's success, such as ticket queues, parking and an oversubscribed cafe. The First Light Pavilion and its associated works are aimed at resolving

this issue.

Since its inception, the Discovery Centre at Jodrell Bank has had aspirations for the First Light Pavilion. There has been a focus around a new visitor experience that enhances the offer of the current Discovery Centre, building on its success over recent years at attracting new audiences whilst retaining those that already visit regularly.

The proposal is for a new fully integrated earth dome shaped building providing exhibition space, auditorium, outdoor café area, office, WCs, education space. This will include landscaping and circulation space and paths which link to the remainder of the site, in order for this project to be integrated into the wider site. The building itself will have paths on it externally so visitors will be able to walk to the top.

The design concept is described in the design section of the officer's report.

The project links to the car park and visitor ticket booth application which are being considered as part of application 17/4371M as part of the masterplan to upgrade the site.

### **Planning History**

10/0875M, Erection of two buildings to provide new visitor facilities and associated works, approved, 30/04/2010

11/4001M, Erection of a single storey office building, car parking, cycle parking and associated works, approved, 13/02/2012

13/1092C, Erection of external lighting to approach and car parking between Jodrell Bank Control Centre Building and SKA Project Office, approved, 31/05/2013

13/1519C, Replacement of lift cars and associated lift gear to 2no goods lifts within the towers of the Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank, Approved, 01/07/2013

13/5068M, Erection of a new free-standing single storey building to form part of the existing Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre and associated external works. Erection of a permanent canopy structure over the existing terrace of the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre Cafe. Extension of the existing timber decked terrace, Approved, 28/01/2014

14/4350M, New build, single storey building providing short-term overnight accommodation for up to six visiting scientists, Approved, 02/12/2014

15/5496M, Demolitions, refurbishment, two storey extension and landscaping to the Grade 1 Listed Observatory Building at Jodrell Bank. The project will include restoration of the retained facades; demolition of several extensions added in the 1960's; internal demolitions, remodelling and extension of the retained buildings to better suit their contemporary use, Approved, 08/03/2016

15/5498M, Listed building consent for demolitions, refurbishment, two storey extension and landscaping to the Grade 1 Listed Observatory Building at Jodrell Bank. The project will include restoration of the retained facades; demolition of several extensions added in the

1960's; internal demolitions, remodelling and extension of the retained buildings to better suit their contemporary use, Approved, 08/03/2016

16/2706C, Erection of new single storey research and administration building and associated landscape, car parking and road works, Approved, 30-Aug-2016

### **POLICIES**

#### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 Adopted July 27<sup>th</sup> 2017**

Policy MP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy PG6 Open Countryside

Policy EG4 Tourism

Policy SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

Policy SD2 Sustainable Development Principles

Policy SE1 Design

Policy SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy SE4 The Landscape

Policy SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands

Policy SE7 The Historic Environment

Policy SE13 Flood Risk and Water Management

Policy SE14 Jodrell Bank

#### **Local Plan Policy**

Para 215 of The Framework indicates that relevant policies in existing plans will be given weight according to their degree of consistency with The Framework.

##### Macclesfield Borough Local Plan

BE2 - Preservation of Historic Fabric

BE15 – Listed Buildings

BE17 – Preservation of Listed Buildings

GC6 – Outside the Green Belt, Areas of Special County Value and Jodrell Bank Zone

GC14 – Jodrell Bank

##### Congleton Borough Local Plan

PS8 – Open Countryside

PS10 – Jodrell Bank protection policy

BH2 – Listed Buildings

#### **Goostrey Neighbourhood Plan**

Policy SC1 – Science Facilities

Policy VDLC 3 – Hedgerows and Trees

Policy OCEH1 – Biodiversity

Policy OCEH2 – Views and Vistas

Policy OCEH3 – Heritage

Policy TTT5 – Lighting

## National Planning Policy Framework

14 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

17 Core planning principles

Part 7 – Requiring good design

109 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Part 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

## CONSULTATIONS

**Environment Agency** – No objection in principle to the proposed development but would make the following comments. Advice to applicant:

The discharge of foul effluent associated with this development will require an Environmental Permit under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016, from the Environment Agency, unless an exemption applies.

**PROW** - Local user groups have registered an aspiration under the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ref. T72) for the creation of a low-traffic route for pedestrians and cyclists between the site and Goostrey Station in order to create an attractive and feasible option for sustainable transport for visitors to and from the site. It is realised that the full scope of this aspiration may be outside of that of the applicant. However, discussions as to its feasibility could be undertaken, with delivery of those elements within the control of the applicant, and with contributions towards its construction being provided.

Facilities that are within the control of the applicant are the provision of best practice cycle parking on site; the application documents refer to the provision of additional Sheffield stands adjacent to the main entrance. Consideration to the provision of covered cycle parking stands could also be given in line with best practice standards.

Further, the feasibility of a cycle/e-cycle hire facility at Goostrey station could be explored in partnership with the station operator and the Friends of Goostrey Station. An assessment of the route between the station and site may be required to identify and implement any improvements and signage required.

Information on such facilities should be made available for visitors so that they have informed choices of transport modes whilst planning their visit, ahead of arrival.

**Highways** – No objection, but detailed comments awaited.

**Environmental Health** – The Contaminated Land team has no objection to the above application subject to the following comments with regard to contaminated land:

- Visitor attractions introduce sensitive receptors to the site that could be affected by any contamination present or brought onto the site.
- The reports, WYG October 2016 and January 2017, submitted in support of the application recommends no remedial measures and we are in agreement with this.

Conditions recommended in respect of contaminated land and an informative in relation to hours of construction.

**Flood Risk Team** - . The application is ok in principle. Going forward with this application the site needs to be limited to existing greenfield run-off rate agreed with ourselves LLFA. This also needs to demonstrate no adverse surface water flooding to existing / proposed properties up to 1 in 100 year + 30% climate change demonstrated within a hydraulic model. It is recommended that the developer undertake a detailed drainage survey to outfall identifying any debris / blockages within existing system which site is proposed to discharge into. Subject to conditions.

**Goostrey Parish Council** – No comments received.

**Lower Withington Parish Council** - Has made the following observations:

1) That the impact of increasing the number of visitors to the site upon the highway network, particularly at the junction of Bomish Lane and Holmes Chapel Road (A535), has not been addressed. It is considered that traffic management strategies are requested and are incorporated into the decision making process to ensure the safety of all highway users (including pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian users) along Bomish Lane and safe access to/from Holmes Chapel Road, in both directions.

2) That landscaping work associated with the proposed development should include work to improve the amenity of nearby residential properties (i.e. pollarding and pruning of boundary and close proximity trees). The Parish Council has been made aware that trees on the site are having a significant adverse impact on the provision of telephone lines to residential properties. Furthermore, roadside boundary trees and hedges should be maintained in such a manner that they do not negatively impact upon the safety of highway users.

## REPRESENTATIONS

2 letters of objection received

–Concerns over the location plan showing The Old Cheshire Hunt property within the location plan

- We express concern as to how Bomish Lane would cope with the increase in traffic.

## OFFICER APPRAISAL

### Key Issues

-Principle of development

-Design

-Tourism

-Highways

-Heritage Assets

-Landscape

-Trees

-Ecology

-Flood Risk

-Amenity

-Accessibility

-Recommendation

## Principle of Development

The site is within the Open Countryside where development is restricted, however there are exceptions to policy PG6 where the proposed development is for:

- development that is essential for the expansion or redevelopment of an existing business or;
- for development that is essential for the conservation and enhancement of a heritage asset.

The application is for the first light heritage project which is a new exhibition space proposed at the site, within the arboretum area of the site to the west of the main Lovell telescope, discovery centre and control and university buildings. The proposed first light project is to focus on the heritage story of Jodrell Bank. The project is part of the expansion of the Jodrell Bank site to create an extra exhibition space for visitors. The proposed expansion is expected to attract greater numbers of visitors which in turn will contribute to sustainability of Jodrell Bank and in particular the Grade I Lovell Telescope. Due to the expansion proposed along with the increased popularity of the site the numbers of visitors expected at the site is set to increase from 150,000 visitors annually to 225,000 visitors annually and the dwell time on site is expected to increase to 4 hours.

The First Light project is considered to be essential for the expansion of the Jodrell Bank site as a visitor attraction. The site already provides a comprehensive visitor experience in relation to the science of radio astronomy, with the Discovery Centre however, the First Light Project will set out the history of the site and according to the information provided has been an aspiration of the university for many years.

The project has received heritage lottery funding of around £12m along with an announcement in the 2017 budget for a further £4m in funding. It is considered to be a unique project, not least because of the design concept of the building itself.

The proposed development is therefore considered an acceptable form of development within the Open Countryside as it is key in the expansion of the Jodrell Bank site as a tourist attraction. The development is also important in maintaining the long term security of Jodrell Bank through providing a new attraction of the site which will ensure the protection of the Grade I listed building in the long term. The First Light Project is considered to be important in enhancing the existing heritage asset, as the exhibition will be largely around the historical value of the site and educating visitors in this respect.

The proposal would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the countryside in this location as it is self contained within the site and has an appropriate design.

The Lovell Telescope and part of the Jodrell Bank site is within Goostrey Parish, however the Granada Arboretum, site of the proposed First Light Project is not, notwithstanding this policy SC1 of the Goostrey Neighbourhood Plan states that:

*The development and expansion of the buildings for scientific research and associated education and exhibition facilities at JBO will generally be supported. This includes the 'First Light' Project, the restoration and enhancement of the Sir Bernard Lovell*

*Telescope, extension of the original control buildings and the construction of the world headquarters for the SKA project.*

Therefore it is considered that the proposed development which is enhancement of the existing facilities at Jodrell Bank is supported through neighbourhood plan policy SC1. The First Light Project is specifically mentioned, therefore it is considered that this policy attracts full weight in the determination of the application.

Lower Withington is currently preparing a neighbourhood plan which is in the very early stages of preparation a Designated Neighbourhood Area has been established however no policies have been formulated.

The principle of the development in the open countryside is therefore accepted and in accordance with appropriate policies.

### **Design**

The building takes the shape of a dome and appears as an earth mound. The building measures around 79m wide at the base and around 8m at the highest point. As the shape is a mound it increases in height very gradually, the paths on the mound will allow visitors to walk up it to the top, where there is a sundial on a flat platform. There are two main areas cut out of the shape fully glazed to allow light into the building, the main entrance and the café area, which are on opposite sides of the building.

The information provided with the application sets out the design concept of the project. This is based on 3 elements; the relationship with the earth and sky; measurement of time and landform as observatory.

The relationship with earth and sky: 'The mirrored facade facing due south forms the main entrance and most visible part of the design. At an angle of 53° it sits perpendicular to the celestial equinox and provides a reflection of the sky upon the visitors' approach.'

Measurement of time: 'The exhibition extends beyond the circular space at the core of the building through the landscaped space outside the main entrance and exit of the building. It provides a surprise element to the visitor and starts to introduce the first exhibition theme "*Our relationship with the Sky*". By tilting our glazing to the celestial equator, we can map time using the position of the sun and the shadows cast internally from its rays.'

Landform as observatory: 'All elements of a building should be used, especially the roof. Providing an elevated platform for hobby astronomers allows 360° stargazing unobstructed by the surrounding trees. Creating a sweeping mound allows access from all sides and merges the building with the arboretum. The diameter of the created mound mirrors the size of the Lovell Telescope Dish: 76.2m.'

It is considered that the proposed design is acceptable within this location in the arboretum, the arboretum part of the site is often waterlogged and is under utilised compared to the main attractions at Jodrell Bank. The earth mound design is considered to be acceptable within the rural setting, the site has large structures on it, particularly the Lovell Telescope, the building will in no way compete with this in the skyline, and will be subservient to this feature. The

design therefore accords with policy SE1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan.

### **Tourism**

Policy EG4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan relates to tourism, and recognises Jodrell Bank as a tourist attraction and the policy states that tourist attractions will be protected and appropriate and that sustainable tourist related development will be supported. The policy states that the Local Plan Strategy will protect and enhance the unique features of Cheshire East whilst encouraging investment. The policy goes on to state that it will promote the enhancement and expansion of existing visitor attractions and the provision of new visitor and tourism facilities.

It is considered that the proposed development will enhance the existing site through the development of the First Light Project a heritage exhibition at the Jodrell Bank site. It is considered that the proposal will attract more visitors to the site which will enhance the local tourist economy.

It is considered therefore that the proposal is in accordance with policy EG4 of the CELPS.

### **Highways**

The application proposes to use the existing visitor access and the application sits alongside the application for the expansion of the car park. The application was accompanied by a transport statement.

No objections have been raised to the car park application and therefore the capacity of the site, however detailed comments on this scheme are still awaited and will be provided by way of an update to members.

### **Heritage Assets**

It is considered that this innovated designed structure will fit well into the environment at Jodrell Bank particularly as it replaces an existing earth mound. The structure will add to the public face at Jodrell Bank with associated school trips etc. the positioning and concealment of this structure will not be detrimental to the character of the site.

The Lovell Telescope is a Grade I Listed building and the associated control buildings within its curtilage are curtilage listed. The site is in the process of being put forward for world heritage site status, due to the buildings themselves and the importance of the Lovell Telescope and Jodrell Bank science facility in the history of radio astronomy. The proposed heritage project is located to the east of the main Jodrell Bank site within the arboretum. Due to the separation distances involved which are significant and the concealment of the proposed development, it is not considered that the proposal will have a detrimental impact on the setting of the Lovell and Mark II telescopes on the wider setting of the control buildings. Therefore the proposal accords with the relevant policies in the development plan including policy SE7 of the CELPS.

### **Landscape**

The design process was shared with the Heritage and Design team, along with a number of site visits. The proposals that have been submitted follow the pre-application stages and no objections are raised to the proposals.

In terms of the landscape proposals the application indicates that 81 trees will be removed as part of the design package and that this requires 162 replacement trees in order to adhere to the UoM 2:1 replacement policy. Drawing No: PL1648-103 (Pavilion Package Softworks contains a table showing a total of 181 trees, including extra heavy standard trees that will be planted. A landscaping scheme is required to show where the replacement planting will be placed.

### **Trees**

This proposal is for a new heritage exhibition and visitor centre with associated enabling works and landscaping within the Jodrell Bank Granada Arboretum. Established in 1971/72 the Arboretum originally held the National Collections of *Sorbus* (Rowan and Whitebeam) and *Malus* (Crab Apple). The proposed Visitor Centre and an attenuation pond is to be located within what is currently the Galaxy Garden which was planted to the design of TV gardener Chris Beardshaw in collaboration with Jodrell Bank.

The application has been subject of a pre-application meeting with the Environmental Planning Team (Landscape, Forestry, Conservation and Ecology). The submitted application is broadly in accordance with discussions held with the applicant and their Agents.

The application site contains over 3000 trees and shrubs with a wide range of species some of which are rare specimens. Many trees have been planted close together in groups and have not been thinned out over the years. The site also suffers from poor drainage which has resulted in the decline of some trees.

The Application is supported by an Arboricultural Report in respect of trees located within the Granada Arboretum. The report is supported by an Arboricultural Plan.

A Landscape Masterplan and Landscape Softworks proposes the planting of 17 Extra Heavy broadleaved trees (comprising of Sycamore, Sweet Chestnut and Oak), 32 semi mature Scots Pine and 114 smaller 'Nurse' trees (1.5 metre whips) comprising of indigenous species.

The Arboricultural Report has identified a number of trees that are of arboricultural/ecological significance:-

Tree 1234 *Quercus dentata 'carl ferris miller'* a young tree that can be transplanted. Trees 1244, 1245, 1246 and 1250, four Oaks with veteran potential or transitional Veteran trees along the northern boundary of the site. Tree T1332 – A columnar form of Hornbeam. A collection of Hornbeam identified as T1333-1340

The Arboricultural Report does not provide any specifics on the number of trees proposed for removal, however it is understood from the landscape proposals that around 80 trees will require removal to accommodate the development. The majority of these trees are semi mature or early mature low (C) or Moderate (B) category specimens

Apart from the notable rare tree (T1234) referred to above which will be transplanted, the remaining notable trees including veteran potential trees and the Lovell Hornbeam (RT1332) will not be directly by the proposal.

The principle of replacement planting identified in the submitted landscape proposals appears to provide adequate mitigation for proposed losses, subject to detailed landscape plan showing exact positions of replacement trees.

### **Ecology**

#### Great Crested Newts

A number of ponds are located within 250m of the proposed development and this protected species has been recorded at a number of ponds in close proximity to the proposed development. The application site however offers limited habitat for great crested newts.

The potential impacts of the proposed development on this species are mostly associated with the 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 constant has recommended a suite of 'reasonable avoidance measures' be implemented and outline measures are detailed in the submitted Phase One Habitat Survey report.

It is advised that provided these measures are implemented the proposed development would be 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. A condition in relation to Great Crested Newts has been recommended.

#### Nesting birds

Conditions have been recommended by the Council's ecologist in relation to the safeguarding of nesting birds.

#### Brown Hare, Common Toad, Hedgehogs and Polecats

These priority species have been recorded in the broad locality of the current application. Considering the scale of the proposed works I advise that these species are unlikely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.

#### Woodland

Part of the Jodrell Bank Arboretum appears on the national inventory of Priority Woodland Habitats. The Phase One survey however suggests the habitats present as being more characteristic of amenity grassland with areas of tree and shrub planting. The Council's ecologist is familiar with this site and advises that the habitats present do not readily fall within the definition of priority woodland habitats. The proposed development will not therefore affect any woodland habitats considered to be a priority for nature conservation.

The addition of Wych Elm in the landscaping scheme would provide a benefit for white letter hairstreak, a priority butterfly species, which has been recorded in this locality. It is therefore recommend that this species be included in the landscaping scheme for the site.

It is not considered that the proposal will have negative ecological implications therefore accords with the relevant development plan policies in respect of protected and priority species.

### **Flood Risk**

The site is located within flood zone 1 which is the lowest risk of flooding. The Flood Risk Team has been consulted on the application. It is important to ensure that all surface water is drained within site boundary at a limited to existing greenfield runoff rates. It is recommended that the developer undertake a detailed drainage survey to outfall identifying any debris / blockages within existing system which site is proposed to discharge into. The flood risk team has raised no objections and conditions have been recommended.

### **Amenity**

There are no residential properties directly affected by the proposed development. However an hours of construction informative has been recommended by the Environmental Health Team. With regard to contaminated land, detailed information has been submitted as part of this application and has been assessed as acceptable by the Environmental Health Officer, subject to conditions.

### **Accessibility**

The proposed development does not directly affect a public right of way, however the rights of way team has commented on the application in relation to the aspirations locally to improve links from Goostrey railway station which is within close proximity to the site. It is true that the road network to the site consists of some narrow country lanes without footpaths. This aspiration has also been reflected in the views of a representation made on the proposal. Improved links for alternative modes of transport would be welcomed such as cycle routes. However, this is not a requirement of the development. The site is existing and has been well established for many years, the proposal simply improves the existing offer at the site.

The improved parking facilities proposed at the site take into account the increase traffic generation predicted for the First Light Project. Due to the nature of the Jodrell Bank site and its purpose as a science facility and attraction it has to be located in a rural area to ensure the dark skies are maintained. The car parking proposal being considered separately to this application does include provision for cycle parking and coach parking, as many parties arrive at the site by coach. In order to further promote more sustainable vehicles the car parking proposal is required to provide 5% electric vehicle charging points which is encouraged to improve air quality within Cheshire East through new developments.

The local road network is not within the control of the applicant and it would be unreasonable to request improvements outside of the site as this is not required by the highways department to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms. It is considered that the development therefore is acceptable in terms of accessibility.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION**

It is considered that the proposed development is a very important project to provide a new

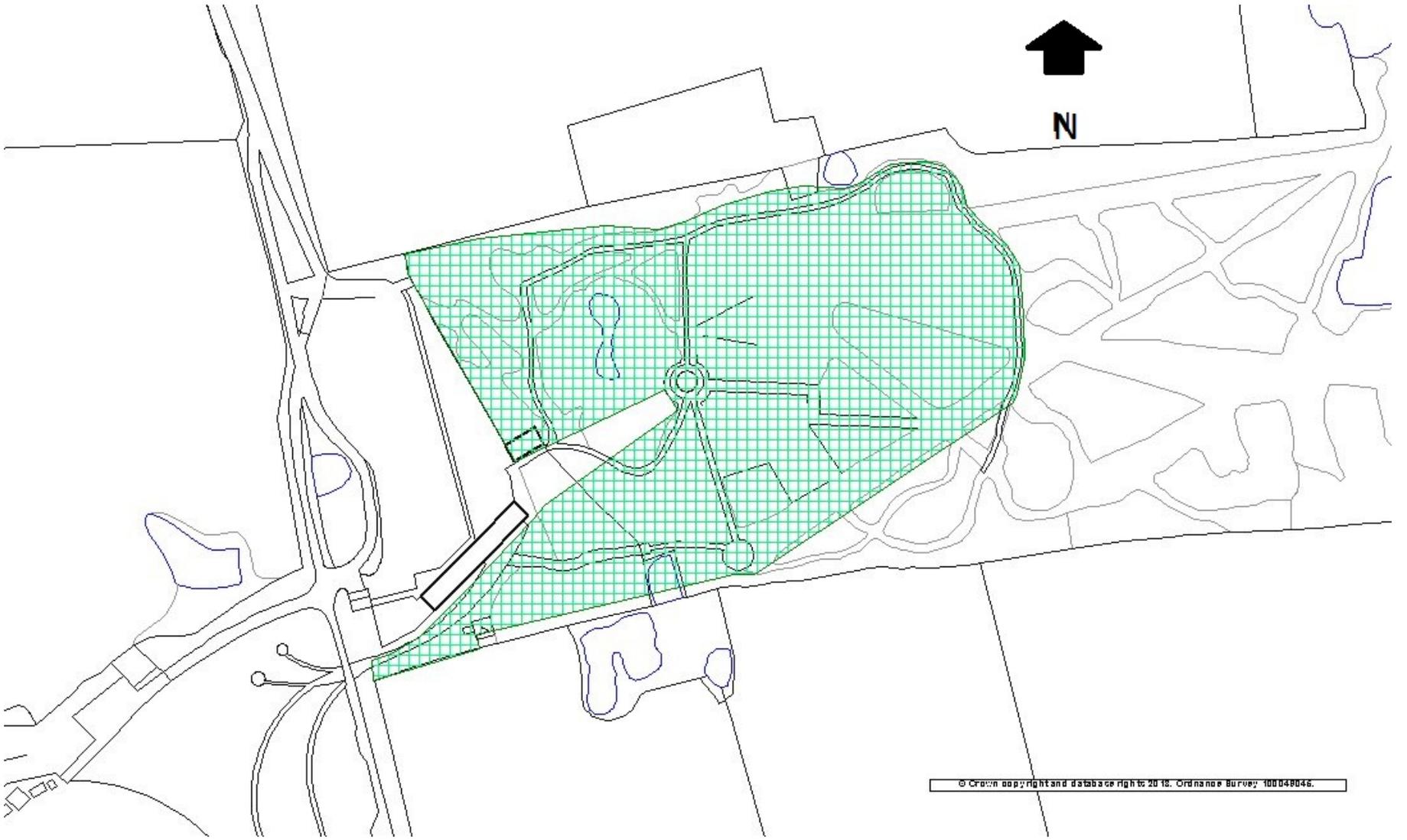
element of Jodrell Bank as a key tourist destination within Cheshire East. The proposals will provide a visitor centre and exhibition focused on the history of Jodrell Bank, a part of the story which is not told at the site currently as the focus is on science and in particular astronomy. The proposals will provide a key expansion of the site for the First Light Project with a unique architectural design based on a carefully considered design concept. The design will integrate well into its surroundings within the Granada Arboretum and will not have a detrimental landscape impact or impact on the Grade I listed Lovell Telescope and associated buildings.

It is considered that the proposal will maintain the intrinsic character and beauty of the Open Countryside in this area and will not detract from it. The proposed development accords with development plan policies and is therefore considered to be a sustainable form of development. Sustainable forms of development that accord with the development plan must be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise, in this case it is considered that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions and is therefore recommended for approval.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

APPROVE subject to conditions

1. Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Landscaping Scheme to include Wych Elm and the details of location of replacement planting.
4. Landscape Implementation
5. Materials as per application unless otherwise agreed
6. Prior to the commencement of development a detailed method statement of Great Crested Newt Reasonable Avoidance Measures is to be submitted to and agreed by the LPA. The proposed development to proceed in accordance with the agreed method statement.
7. Nesting Birds Safeguarding
8. Lighting scheme to be submitted
9. Tree Retention unless otherwise agreed
10. Tree Protection measures to be submitted
11. Tree pruning felling specification
12. Arboricultural Method Statement
13. No development shall take place until a detailed strategy / design and associated management / maintenance plan of surface water drainage for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage design must also include information about the discharge rates, designs storm period and intensity (1 in 30 & 1 in 100 (+30% allowance for Climate Change))& any temporary storage facilities included, to ensure adequate drainage is implemented on site.
14. (a) Any soil or soil forming materials to be brought to site for use in or soft landscaping shall be tested for contamination and suitability for use prior to importation to site.  
(b) Prior to occupation, evidence and verification information (for example, laboratory certificates) shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the LPA.
15. Unexpected contamination to be reported to the LPA.



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Application No: 17/4371M

Location: JODRELL BANK OBSERVATORY, MACCLESFIELD ROAD, JODRELL BANK, CHESHIRE, SK11 9DL

Proposal: This application relates to the improvement of visitor arrivals and capacity. It comprises of the modification and extension to the existing visitor car park and the construction of an external ticket booth / entry portal adjacent to the existing Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre Planet Pavilion. It includes landscaping works, fencing and associated enabling works.

Applicant: University of Manchester

Expiry Date: 01-Dec-2017

### **SUMMARY**

The proposal is a visitor car park and entrance area to the Jodrell Bank site. Jodrell Bank Observatory is set in an isolated location in Lower Withington located partly within Goostrey Parish and partly within Lower Withington Parish. The observatory is home of the Sir Bernard Lovell telescope which was the largest steerable radio telescope in the world and approximately 60 years after its construction remains the third largest. The outstanding significance of the telescope has been recognised through its designation as a grade I listed building, which places it in the top 2.5% of the most significant listed buildings in England. The site has a series of buildings on it forming part of the University of Manchester research facility.

The Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre forms a main part of the site which is a public outreach arm and hosts approximately 150,000 visitors per year.

The proposals are for the expansion to the car parking facilities at the site which will see a car park capacity increase from 174 to 275 spaces + 50 temporary spaces, an increase in 101 permanent spaces along with a new ticket booth/entry portal building adjacent to the existing discovery centre, with path to the west.

It is considered that the proposed development is essential for the future effective operation of Jodrell Bank which is a key tourist destination within Cheshire East, in the short and medium term. The proposals will provide adequate facilities for the proposed expansion of the site with the First Light Project along with the expected capacity increases expected at the site in general. The proposed development accords with development plan policies and is therefore considered to be a sustainable form of development when considering the three strands. Sustainable forms of development that accord with the development plan must be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise, in this case it is considered that the proposal is acceptable subject to carefully worded conditions and is therefore recommended for approval.

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions**

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site is the Jodrell Bank Observatory which is set in an isolated location in Lower Withington located partly within Goostrey Parish and partly within Lower Withington Parish. The observatory, which is home of the Sir Bernard Lovell telescope which, at the time of its construction 1952-57, was the largest steerable radio telescope in the world and approximately 60 years after its construction remains the third largest. The outstanding significance of the telescope has been recognised through its designation as a grade I listed building, which places it in the top 2.5% of the most significant listed buildings in England. The site has a series of buildings on it forming part of the University of Manchester research facility.

The Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre is also present at the site which is a public outreach arm and hosts approximately 150,000 visitors per year, it is part of the University of Manchester.

The SKA (Square Kilometre Array) project is also located at the site, and has been based at the site since 2012. The SKA located their headquarters at Jodrell Bank in 2012 and in 2016 took the decision to expand their presence on the site. SKA Organisation is an international science project that operates in the field of radio astronomy. Although there are regular interfaces with the Jodrell Bank Observatory, SKA operates their own scientific equipment, independent of the Lovell and MKII telescopes.

There are two vehicular accesses to the Jodrell Bank site, the northern access is the main access to the site for staff and visitors, however there is a secondary access to the south of the site onto the A535 which is subject to alterations as part of a previous approved project at the site.

This application deals with the main visitor entrance to the site and car parking facilities provided.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

The application proposes an increase to the visitor carpark to increase capacity at the site, due to existing capacity issues, and future capacity demands which will be placed on the site with the new First Light Project which is subject of an application currently being considered alongside this application.

The proposals will see a car park capacity increase from 174 to 275 spaces + 50 temporary spaces, an increase in 101 permanent spaces. This is largely done through the reconfiguration of the existing car park into a more formal arrangement; however some expansion of the car park will also take place mainly to the west of the site adjacent to the staff only access which runs parallel with the car park, which will involve the removal of some landscaping. The proposals also include a new ticket booth/entry portal building adjacent to the existing discovery centre, with path to the west.

## **Planning History**

10/0875M Erection of two buildings to provide new visitor facilities and associated works,

approved, 30/04/2010

11/4001M Erection of a single storey office building, car parking, cycle parking and associated works, approved, 13/02/2012

13/1092C Erection of external lighting to approach and car parking between Jodrell Bank Control Centre Building and SKA Project Office, approved, 31/05/2013

13/1519C Replacement of lift cars and associated lift gear to 2no goods lifts within the towers of the Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank, Approved, 01/07/2013

13/5068M Erection of a new free-standing single storey building to form part of the existing Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre and associated external works. Erection of a permanent canopy structure over the existing terrace of the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre Cafe. Extension of the existing timber decked terrace, Approved, 28/01/2014

14/4350M New build, single storey building providing short-term overnight accommodation for up to six visiting scientists, Approved, 02/12/2014

15/5496M Demolitions, refurbishment, two storey extension and landscaping to the Grade 1 Listed Observatory Building at Jodrell Bank. The project will include restoration of the retained facades; demolition of several extensions added in the 1960's; internal demolitions, remodelling and extension of the retained buildings to better suit their contemporary use, Approved, 08/03/2016

15/5498M Listed building consent for demolitions, refurbishment, two storey extension and landscaping to the Grade 1 Listed Observatory Building at Jodrell Bank. The project will include restoration of the retained facades; demolition of several extensions added in the 1960's; internal demolitions, remodelling and extension of the retained buildings to better suit their contemporary use, Approved, 08/03/2016

16/2706C Erection of new single storey research and administration building and associated landscape, car parking and road works, Approved, 30-Aug-2016

## **POLICIES**

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 Adopted July 27<sup>th</sup> 2017**

Policy MP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy PG6 Open Countryside

Policy EG4 Tourism

Policy SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

Policy SD2 Sustainable Development Principles

Policy SE1 Design

Policy SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy SE4 The Landscape

Policy SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands

Policy SE7 The Historic Environment

Policy SE13 Flood Risk and Water Management

Policy SE14 Jodrell Bank

### **Local Plan Policy**

Para 215 of The Framework indicates that relevant policies in existing plans will be given weight according to their degree of consistency with The Framework.

#### **Macclesfield Borough Local Plan**

BE2 - Preservation of Historic Fabric

BE15 – Listed Buildings

BE17 – Preservation of Listed Buildings

GC6 – Outside the Green Belt, Areas of Special County Value and Jodrell Bank Zone

GC14 – Jodrell Bank

#### **Congleton Borough Local Plan**

PS8 – Open Countryside

PS10 – Jodrell Bank protection policy

BH2 – Listed Buildings

#### **Goostrey Neighbourhood Plan**

Policy SC1 – Science Facilities

Policy VDLC 3 – Hedgerows and Trees

Policy OCEH1 – Biodiversity

Policy OCEH2 – Views and Vistas

Policy OCEH3 – Heritage

Policy TTT5 – Lighting

National Planning Policy Framework

14 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

17 Core planning principles

Part 7 – Requiring good design

109 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Part 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

#### **Supporting Documents**

Jodrell Bank Transport Study

Habitat and Landscape Management Plan

Extended Phase I habitat Survey

Transport and Car Parking Statement

The Granada Arboretum Arboricultural Report

Masterplan document

### **CONSULTATIONS**

**Historic England** – Do not wish to comment, seek advice from Conservation Officer.

**PROW** - Local user groups have registered an aspiration under the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ref. T72) for the creation of a low-traffic route for pedestrians and cyclists between the site and Goostrey Station in order to create an attractive and feasible option for sustainable transport for visitors to and from the site. It is realised that the full scope of this aspiration may be outside of that of the applicant. However, discussions as to its feasibility could be undertaken, with delivery of those elements within the control of the applicant, and with contributions towards its construction being provided.

Facilities that are within the control of the applicant are the provision of best practice cycle parking on site; the application documents refer to the provision of additional Sheffield stands adjacent to the main entrance. Consideration to the provision of covered cycle parking stands could also be given in line with best practice standards.

Further, the feasibility of a cycle/e-cycle hire facility at Goostrey station could be explored in partnership with the station operator and the Friends of Goostrey Station. An assessment of the route between the station and site may be required to identify and implement any improvements and signage required.

Information on such facilities should be made available for visitors so that they have informed choices of transport modes whilst planning their visit, ahead of arrival.

**Highways** - This application is to provide an extension to the visitor car park at the Discovery Centre at Jodrell Bank and also to construct a ticket booth.

There are currently 167 car parking spaces that serve the Discovery Centre with access from the north off Bomish Lane. The proposal is to increase the number of spaces to 325 spaces to accommodate the predicted increase in visitor numbers to the site.

Although there is an increase in car parking spaces on the site, this is not considered to result in capacity problems on the local road network.

In summary, there are no objections to the application.

**Environmental Health** – No objection - Electric Vehicle Infrastructure on 5% of new car park.

**Flood Risk Team** - The application is ok in principle. The key going forward with this site is ensuring all surface water is drained within site boundary at a limited to existing brownfield run-off rate equivalent or provides a betterment on the existing system with appropriate attenuation on site. I note there is also a pond on site which could currently be benefit existing drainage systems, it is advised that the developer undertake a detailed survey to ensuring no drains are abandoned during new carpark extension works. No objections subject to condition.

**Goostrey Parish Council** – Goostrey Parish Council has no objections to the application to improve visitor arrivals capacity.

The Parish Council believes however, that an opportunity has been missed to improve access for pedestrians especially those arriving by train at Goostrey Station. The Parish Council proposes that it is made a condition of approving this application that a pedestrian access to

the new car park area is built into the new boundary fence which would enable a new footpath to be established which would allow pedestrians to safely approach Jodrell Bank across the fields to the South and West of the site rather than having to follow Bomish Lane which is a narrow, hedged lane with no pavements which is totally unsuitable for pedestrians.

**Lower Withington Parish Council** - Objection: Lower Withington Parish Council raises the following objections to the above planning application:

1) That the extension of the car park will result in a loss of trees on the site which is considered unacceptable and unnecessary. It is considered that, should the car park extension be permitted, a greater number of replacement trees should be incorporated within the overall car park design to create a more natural, rural appearance.

2) That the car park extension will create a significant expanse of hard material (tarmac and stone) which is not consistent or sympathetic with the rural environment. It is requested that, should the car park extension be permitted, use of alternative surface options, such as 'grasscrete', are incorporated as a condition of the decision to create a more natural, rural appearance.

## REPRESENTATIONS

2 letters of objection received

- Concerns over the location plan showing The Old Cheshire Hunt property within the location plan

- Concerns over loss of trees

- Goostrey Footpaths Group feels strongly that no further development of the Discovery Centre should be made until safe pedestrian access to the site from the nearest railway station (Goostrey) has been established, The Discovery Centre's website tells those arriving by train they can walk along Blackden Lane and Bomish Lane in daylight. Although it cautions that these are narrow lanes, it does not caution that traffic makes them unpleasant and dangerous for pedestrians. Quite outstandingly dangerous for a family with a push-chair, and scarcely safe for cyclists.

With a national drive to encourage the use of public transport in preference to motor transport, surely a public attraction of Jodrell's standing should have safe, pleasant off-road pedestrian and cycle access from Goostrey Station? Perhaps even a cycle-hire facility at the station?

## OFFICER APPRAISAL

### Key Issues

-Principle of development

-Tourism

-Highways

-Heritage Assets

-Landscape

-Trees

-Ecology

-Flood Risk

-Amenity

- Accessibility
- Conclusion
- Recommendation

## **Principle of Development**

The site is within the Open Countryside where development is restricted, however there are exceptions to policy PG6 where the proposed development is for:

- development that is essential for the expansion or redevelopment of an existing business or;
- for development that is essential for the conservation and enhancement of a heritage asset.

The application for the expansion and reconfiguration of the car park along with the proposed ticket booth building, and considered to be essential for the business to function effectively on the site. The discovery centre in particular attracts 150,000 visitors annually and this is expected to increase to 225,000 visitors annually and the dwell time on site is expected to increase to 4 hours.

Due to the increase in visitor numbers in the medium and long term due to planned activities at the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre there is a need to increase the car parking capacity for the visiting public. This application is being considered alongside the First Light Heritage project which if supported will create higher demands on car parking in the medium term.

The existing situation during all bank holidays and during school holidays is that additional car parking is required. Information submitted shows the end of May bank holiday is the worst scenario such that when a visit time is around 4 hours the car park capacity required is 230% so the existing situation would clearly be substandard. The information provided also shows that even with short visits of around 2 hours in the short and medium term, all bank holidays (excluding Christmas and Boxing Day) capacity exceeds 100%. Therefore the need is pressing during these peak times in order for the attraction to function effectively and continue to be a desirable visitor destination.

The First Light project being considered under application 17/4370M, is expected to create further demand on car parking provision which has been assessed in the transport information provided as being the medium term. The car park is not sufficient during peak times at the current time, therefore the situation will be exacerbated into the future. The First Light project is a heritage led project which provide visitors with the background to the Lovell Telescope and the history of the Jodrell Bank site as opposed to the discovery centre which is a science led exhibit.

It is considered that this proposal would enhance the heritage asset by providing the heritage exhibition at the site. The improvements to be made through this application to the car park and ticket booths are intended to improve the customer/visitor experience which together will improve the desirability of the site and help to fund the site and make the heritage asset sustainable into the future as a Grade I listed building and science facility.

It is considered therefore that the proposal is essential for the expansion or redevelopment of the existing business and further is essential for the conservation and enhancement of the

heritage asset. Therefore it is an acceptable form of development within the Open Countryside, subject to all other material considerations.

The site for the car park is partially within the Goostrey Neighbourhood Plan area, policy SC1 of the Goostrey Neighbourhood Plan states that:

*The development and expansion of the buildings for scientific research and associated education and exhibition facilities at JBO will generally be supported. This includes the 'First Light' Project, the restoration and enhancement of the Sir Bernard Lovell Telescope, extension of the original control buildings and the construction of the world headquarters for the SKA project.*

Therefore it is considered that the proposed development which is enhancement of the existing facilities at Jodrell Bank are supported through neighbourhood plan policy SC1.

Lower Withington is currently preparing a neighbourhood plan which is in the very early stages of preparation a Designated Neighbourhood Area has been established however no policies have been formulated.

### **Tourism**

Policy EG4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan relates to tourism, and recognises Jodrell Bank as a tourist attraction and the policy states that tourist attractions will be protected and appropriate and that sustainable tourist related development will be supported. The policy states that the Local Plan Strategy will protect and enhance the unique features of Cheshire East whilst encouraging investment. The policy goes on to state that it will promote the enhancement and expansion of existing visitor attractions and the provision of new visitor and tourism facilities.

It is considered that the proposed development will enhance the existing site through the improvement of the visitor experience by providing the necessary car parking facilities and enhanced ticket booth area.

It is considered therefore that the proposal is in accordance with policy EG4 of the CELPS.

### **Highways**

There are currently 167 car parking spaces that serve the Discovery Centre with access from the north off Bomish Lane. The proposal is to increase the number of spaces to 325 spaces to accommodate the predicted increase in visitor numbers to the site.

There is an increase in car parking spaces on the site, this is not considered to result in capacity problems on the local road network. The highways officer has raised no objections to the proposal.

It is considered that the proposal will work towards alleviating an existing problem which is demonstrated through the information provided to be an issue in the short and medium term.

### **Heritage Assets**

This application relates to the improvement of visitor arrivals and capacity. It comprises of the modification and extension to the existing visitor car park and the construction of an external ticket booth / entry portal adjacent to the existing Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre Planet Pavilion. It includes landscaping works, fencing and associated enabling works. While there is considerable amount of work required for this operation it is considered that this essential work will not affect the setting of the listed structures at the site, therefore the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in heritage terms subject to conditions.

### **Landscape**

The landscape officer has been consulted on the application and has raised no objections, however does concur with the tree officer's comments in relation to the species mix, which should be larger species for replacement planting. The proposed conditions will include a landscape scheme, and should include larger trees, native hedging and some Wych Elm.

### **Trees**

The application has been subject to a pre-application meeting with the Environmental Planning Team (Landscape, Forestry, Conservation and Ecology). The submitted proposals are broadly in accordance with the discussions held with the applicant and their Agents.

This application, together with the accompanying application for the new Visitor Centre (App 17/4370M) is supported by an Arboricultural Report (ACS consulting dated June 2017) in respect of trees located within the Granada Arboretum. The report is supported by an Arboricultural Plan (Ref ARB/34560/Y/100 B).

A Tree Retention and Removal Plan Planit LLP (Car Park Package drawing PL1648-004 and Landscape Softworks Planit LLP (Car Park Package Softworks Drawing PL1648 -003) has also been submitted in support of the proposed car park extension.

Whilst the Arboricultural Report does not provide specific detail on the numbers of trees proposed for removal the Planit Tree Removal and Retention Drawing shows around 65 trees located around the existing car park that will require removal. The greater proportion of these are low (C) category specimens, although one high (A) category group (G2053) comprising of Birch, Poplar, Cherry and Field Maple adjacent to the eastern boundary and access road to the car park present a moderately high contribution to the landscape.

The submitted landscape drawing proposes 13 replacement semi mature trees comprising of varieties of flowering Cherry, Maple and Oak located in proposed turfed areas around the periphery of the car park. In terms of mitigation for the loss of trees around the car park the replacement provision does not provide for a net benefit in canopy cover or like for like replacement. Over half the proposed replacements are small canopy species (Prunus) and given the loss of high category trees around the edge of the car park and the extensive area of hard standing proposed, a greater emphasis is expected on provision of high canopy replacements commensurate with the University 2:1 replacement policy and climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Whilst there are no principle objections to the proposal, significantly more high forest replacement planting is expected than what is currently proposed. There is scope for

additional planting on the site, therefore this will be secured by a landscaping condition.

## **Ecology**

### Great Crested Newts

A number of ponds are located within 250m of the proposed development and this protected species has been recorded at a number of ponds in close proximity to the proposed development. The application site however offers limited habitat for great crested newts and the more suitable habitat available is partially fragmented by the presence of the existing car park.

The potential impacts of the proposed development on this species are mostly associated with the 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 constant has recommended a suite of 'reasonable avoidance measures' and outline measures are detailed in the submitted Phase One habitat survey.

It is advised that provided these measures are implemented the proposed development would be 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. A condition in respect of GCN is required.

### Brown Hare, Common Toad, Hedgehogs and Polecats

These priority species have been recorded in the broad locality of the current application. Considering the scale of the proposed works it is advised that these species are unlikely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.

### Ponds

The proposed development will result in the loss of an existing pond. Whilst this pond does not support great crested newts it may still be of nature conservation value. Further more detailed surveys undertaken next year would be required to fully assess this pond.

It was originally advised that the pond be retained, however following discussions between the ecologist and the agent for the application, it has been agreed that the proposed pond for the first light project would provide sufficient compensation for this loss. However in the event that the first light project is not implemented a condition requiring details of a compensatory pond on site is to be submitted prior to commencement, to ensure that in any event, that a pond is created on the Jodrell Bank site.

### Reptiles

It is advised that reptiles are not reasonable likely to be present or affected by the proposed development.

### Nesting birds

Conditions in relation to the safeguarding of nesting birds are required.

### Trees with bat roost potential

Four trees were identified as having low bat roost potential during the submitted habitat survey. Based on the submitted landscaping plan it appears likely that some of these trees would be lost as a result of the proposed development.

As these trees have only 'low' potential for roosting bats further surveys are not required. The trees should however be felled under reasonable avoidance measures as recommended by the submitted report.

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 it is recommended that a condition attached regarding lighting.

### Hedgerows

Native species hedgerows are a priority habitat and hence a material consideration. The submitted ecological assessment states that 130m of hedgerow will be removed as part of the proposed development.

The ecologist has advised that this loss must be compensated for as part of the landscaping of the site, therefore replacement hedgerow must be considered as part of the landscaping scheme to be conditioned.

The addition of Wych Elm in the landscaping scheme would provide a benefit for white letter hairstreak, a priority butterfly species, which has been recorded in this locality. It is recommended that this species be included in the landscaping scheme.

### **Flood Risk**

The site is located within flood zone 1 which is the lowest risk of flooding. The Flood Risk Team has been consulted on the application. It is important to ensure that all surface water is drained within the site boundary at a 'limited to existing brownfield run-off' rate equivalent or provide a betterment on the existing system with appropriate attenuation on site. There is a pond on site which could currently be of benefit to existing drainage systems. It is advised that the developer undertake a detailed survey to ensuring no drains are abandoned during new carpark extension works. The flood risk team has raised no objections and conditions have been recommended.

### **Amenity**

There are no residential properties directly affected by the proposed development.

### **Accessibility**

The proposed development does not directly affect a public right of way, however the rights of way team has commented on the application in relation to the aspirations locally to improve links from Goostrey railway station which is within close proximity to the site. It is true that the road network to the site consists of some narrow country lanes without footpaths. This aspiration has also been reflected in the views of a representation made on the proposal.

Improved links for alternative modes of transport would be welcomed such as cycle routes. However, this is not a requirement of the development. The site is existing and has been well established for many years. The proposal simply improves parking facilities on the site, due to the nature of the Jodrell Bank site and its purpose as a science facility and attraction it has to be located in a rural area to ensure the dark skies are maintained. The proposal does include provision for cycle parking and coach parking, as many parties arrive at the site by coach. In order to further promote more sustainable vehicles the proposal is also required to provide 5% electric vehicle charging points which is encouraged to improve air quality within Cheshire East through new developments.

The local road network is not within the control of the applicant and it would be unreasonable to request improvements outside of the site as this is not required by the highways department to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms. It is considered that the development therefore is acceptable in terms of accessibility.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION**

It is considered that the proposed development is essential for the future effective operation of Jodrell Bank which is a key tourist destination within Cheshire East, in the short and medium term. The proposals will provide adequate facilities for the proposed expansion of the site with the First Light Project along with the expected capacity increases expected at the site in general. The proposed development accords with development plan policies and is therefore considered to be a sustainable form of development. Sustainable forms of development that accord with the development plan must be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise, in this case it is considered that the proposal is acceptable subject to carefully worded conditions and is therefore recommended for approval.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

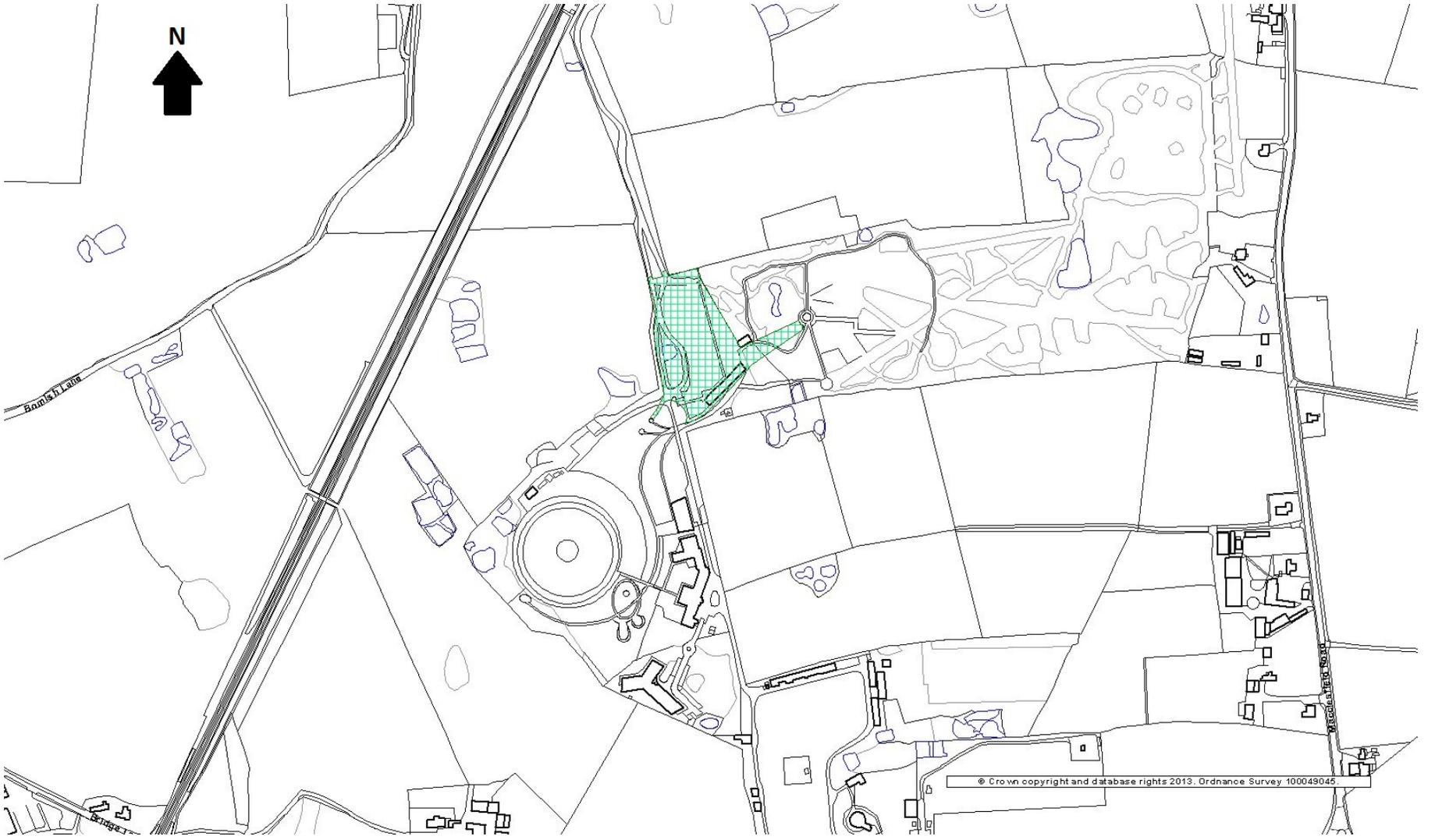
#### **APPROVE subject to conditions**

1. Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Landscaping and Floorscape Scheme to include replacement hedgerow planting, Wych Elm and larger species trees around car parking area.
4. Landscape Implementation
5. Materials as per application unless otherwise agreed
6. Prior to the commencement of development a detailed method statement of Great Crested Newt Reasonable Avoidance Measures is to be submitted to and agreed by the LPA. The proposed development to proceed in accordance with the agreed method statement.
7. Nesting Birds Safeguarding
8. Features for breeding birds to be submitted and installed
9. The felling of any tree identified as having low bat roost potential should be undertaken in accordance with the measures detailed in paragraph 5.3.5 of the submitted Extended Phase One Habitat Survey prepared by WYG dated February 2017
10. Lighting scheme to be submitted
11. Tree Retention unless otherwise agreed
12. Tree Protection measures to be submitted
13. Tree pruning felling specification

14. Arboricultural Method Statement

15. No development shall take place until a detailed strategy / design and associated management / maintenance plan of surface water drainage for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage design must also include information about the design's storm period and intensity (1 in 30 & 1 in 100 (+30% allowance for Climate Change)) & any temporary storage facilities included, to ensure adequate drainage is implemented on site.

16. 5% of spaces to include electric vehicle charging points.



Application No: 17/3374N

Location: BASFORD WEST DEVELOPMENT SITE, CREWE, CHESHIRE

Proposal: Approval of reserved matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale), pursuant to 14/0378N for phase 1 of the Basford West development site, Crewe Road, Crewe

Applicant: Goodman

Expiry Date: 03-Oct-2017

### **SUMMARY**

This is a reserved matters application pursuant to outline planning permission 14/0378N. It relates to the approval of details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for a warehouse and distribution unit which constitutes Phase 1 of employment development within the Basford West strategic development site.

The site is an integral part of the area known as Basford West which is identified for residential and employment development by the CELPs under Policy LPS 3. The provision of employment development is the principle overriding objective of the Basford West site and the delivery of the employment elements of the site are considered to be of vital importance to the delivery of "All Change for Crewe".

The principle of significant employment development and associated infrastructure has been established under outline planning approval 14/0378N, and therefore it is considered critical that this viable scheme is progressed.

The proposal is considered to be of acceptable siting and design, subject to compliance with the conditions of the outline approval, and further conditions including the need to ensure the provision of landscaping, ecological mitigation measures and suitable footpath link.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development in accordance with the Development Plan and is recommended for approval.

### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

Approval subject to conditions

### **PROPOSAL**

This is a reserved matters application pursuant to outline planning permission 14/0378N. It relates to the approval of details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for development constituting Phase 1 of employment development within the Basford West strategic development site.

The proposed development comprises a warehouse and distribution development (Class B8). This large building will have a maximum height of 18m and provide a total floor space of 22,010 sq. metres. It will incorporate warehouse facilities and also ancillary office accommodation (1010 sq.m) split over the first and second floors of the building within it's the north western corner.

The building is orientated to ensure its glazed office element faces towards Jack Mills Way. Its warehouse elevations will be constructed with trapezoidal profiled metal cladding used in both vertical and horizontal orientations and of contrasting colours.

The proposal also includes the provision of landscaped planting areas including areas of water balancing / attenuation ponds and ecological mitigation. A footpath connection to link with future phases of the employment area is also proposed to run alongside the southern site boundary with A500.

Vehicular access to the development is from the first roundabout junction onto Jack Mills Way, close to the A500. The development provides 184 car parking spaces, parking for 43 HGVS and service yards. Docking facilities will be provided with service yards to the long side of the buildings creating separate goods-in and despatch facilities.

The commercial vehicle entrance to the unit has double lanes to provide waiting space for 2 of the largest heavy goods vehicles. A manned security gatehouse is proposed to control incoming and outgoing goods vehicles. In addition, the proposals also include 2.4m high security fencing, cycle storage facilities, smoking shelters, galvanised steel water storage tanks (10m diameter x 6.0m high) for a fire fighting sprinkler system, and the potential provision of vehicle wash and refuelling facilities (subject to future occupier application).

### **SITE**

The application site forms Phase 1 of the approved outline planning permission for employment development at Basford West Strategic Development Site (14/0378N), located approximately 2.5km to the south of Crewe Town Centre.

The site is located to east of John Mills Way, which is the spine road, running north/south through the strategic development site and was a component of the two Basford West planning permissions (13/0336N and 14/0378N).

Access to the site is from the southern roundabout of Jack Mills Way.

Land to west of the application site is approved for mixed uses and is screened by landscaped bunding and drainage ponds. Land on the western side of Jack Mills Way has detailed approval for residential development which is currently being implemented by Taylor Wimpey.

The southern site boundary adjoins the A500.

### **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 14/0378N Outline planning application for B2 (general industry) and B8 (storage and distribution) comprising 1,042,500 sq ft with ancillary offices and maximum storey height of 18m, and associated works including construction of new spine road with access from Crewe Road and A500, creation of footpaths, drainage including formation of swales, foul pumping station, substation, earthworks to form landscaped bunds and landscaping – Approved 18/07/2017
- 15/2943N Reserved Matters application pursuant to outline planning permission ref. 13/0336N for the construction of 370 dwellings, associated on site highways infrastructure, car parking and pedestrian routes, formal and informal open space provision and associated works. Approved 24/09/2015
- 17/1071N Construction of road to provide access to approved development plots within Basford West Development site. – Approved 07/04/2017
- 17/1360N Erection of a Pub/Restaurant including managers flat, car parking and ancillary works – Approved 06/07/2017

### **POLICY**

#### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Adopted Version (CELP)**

LPS3 Basford West, Crewe  
MP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
PG1 Overall Development Strategy  
PG7 Spatial Distribution of Development  
SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East  
SD2 Sustainable Development Principles  
EG1 Economic Prosperity  
EG3 Existing and Allocated Employment Sites  
SE1 Design  
SE2 Efficient Use of Land  
SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity  
SE4 The Landscape  
SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland  
SE6 Green Infrastructure  
SE9 Energy Efficient Development  
SE12 Pollution, Land contamination and land instability  
SE13 Flood risk and water management  
CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport  
CO2 Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure  
CO4 Travel plans and transport assessments

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was formally adopted on 27th July 2017. There is however policies within the legacy Local Plan that still apply and have not yet been replaced. These policies are set out below.

## **Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan**

NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats)  
NE.9 (Protected Species)  
NE.10 (New Woodland Planting and Landscaping)  
NE17 (Pollution control)  
NE.20 (Flood Prevention)  
BE.1 (Amenity)  
BE.3 (Access and Parking)  
BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)  
BE.5 (Infrastructure)  
TRAN.3 (Pedestrians)  
TRAN.4 Access for the Disabled)  
TRAN.5 (Cycling)  
TRAN.6 (Cycle Routes)  
RT.9 (Footpaths and Bridleways)

## **Weston and Basford Neighbourhood Plan**

Regulation 19 - Referendum vote in favour

LC2 - Landscape Quality, Countryside and Open Views  
LC3 - Woodland, Trees, Hedgerows and Walls  
LC5 - Footpaths  
D2 - Environmental Sustainability of buildings  
D3 - Employment Development  
D5- Adapting to climate change  
T1 - Footpaths, Cycle ways and Bridleways  
T2 - Traffic Congestion  
T3 - Improving Air Quality  
T6 - Cycle parking

## **Other Material Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)  
National Planning Practice Guidance

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**Environmental Health** – No objection

**Highways Officer** - No objection

**Environment Agency** - No objection

**United Utilities** – No objection subject to condition requiring details of management arrangements for the sustainable drainage system.

**Flood Risk** – No objection in principle, but further clarification required of details of site drainage system.

**Public Rights of Way** - No objection subject to details of pedestrian route along southern site boundary and signage scheme for route

### **VIEWS OF WESTON PARISH COUNCIL**

No objection, but considers that the screen planting on the southern boundary of the site (Shavington Bypass A500) should be strengthened and should include evergreen species”.

### **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

None Received.

### **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

The key issues to be considered in the determination of this application are set out below.

#### **Background**

The site is an integral part of the area known as Basford West which is approximately 52 hectares in size and identified for residential and employment development by the CELPs under Policy PS 3.

The site is also identified in the Weston and Basford Neighbourhood Plan as a strategic allocation. The Neighbourhood Plan has passed its referendum stage and can be given full weight.

The principle of developing this area has been accepted in previous Development Plans. The strategic site is a development plan allocation for regional and strategic employment identified in the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan and known as Basford West. An outline planning application (ref P03/1071) for employment uses and associated works was granted permission on 13 May 2008

Outline planning approval (14/0378N) was granted on the eastern portion of the Basford west site for 96,851 square metres of B2 and B8 uses on 18 July 2014. In addition outline approval was granted in August 2013 (13/0336N) on the remaining western part of the site, for residential development (up to 370 units), offices, local centre, restaurant, hotel, car showroom and new spine road. Reserved matters approval for up to 370 dwellings, local centre (A1), public house (A3/4), hotel (C1) and car showroom was subsequently granted on 24 September 2015.

#### **Principle of Development**

The principle of employment development and the point of access has therefore been established following the approval of the outline application 14/0378N in July 2014.

This application relates to the approval of the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for Phase 1 of the employment development.

### **Design and Context**

Outline planning approval established the principle of siting large industrial building within the Basford West site, and within approved parameters including the maximum building height is limited to 18 metres across the site.

CELPS Policy SE1 advises that new development will only be permitted so long as it would achieve a high standard of design. In particular development should have due regard to the site and wider setting in respect to layout, movement and connections, scale and height, landscape character, townscape character and in their appearance both in terms of architectural quality and materials. These requirements are reflected by Policy D3 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The proposal seeks the erection of a large commercial/industrial unit within the south-western corner of the approved Basford West employment area. It will accommodate a warehouse and distribution unit which falls within Use Class B8, together with an ancillary office accommodation.

The unit consists of a long spanning steel portal frame, creating large column free internal areas, for maximum flexibility of the internal space. Importantly, the proposed height of the building is within the maximum 18.0m set within the outline approved parameters. This is required to achieve a clear internal height to the underside of the steel structure of 15.0m for appropriate pallet rack storage and thereby creating units which are commercially viable

The first and second floor office elements are accommodated within the north western corner of the building, and its predominantly glazed frontage faces towards the Jack Mills Way where it would be visible from the roundabout junction. The warehouse elevations are constructed with trapezoidal profiled metal cladding used in both vertical and horizontal orientations of a colour scheme of silver metallic, slate grey, anthracite and white.

Together with the office element, the different profiles and contrasting colours of the cladding materials add visual interest, and help reduce the overall massing of this large building. In addition the roof design has a series of shallow curved profiles designed to soften the buildings profile and further reduce its visual impact.

To further assist with the visual impact of the development, landscaped bunds are already provided along the Jack Mills Way, and also provide a screen to the western boundary. Landscaping in the form of a bund and woodland planting will also be provided along the southern boundary with the A500.

As a result of the above, it is considered that the layout, form, scale and appearance of the proposal would be acceptable given the context of this large development site, and would therefore accord with Policy SE. 1 of the Local Plan.

### **Landscape**

The outline planning approval determined that a scheme for woodland/landscape and SUDs (sustainable urban drainage) area, sited between the employment land and the housing area on the western side of Jack Mills Way was acceptable, and would achieve the highest degree of buffering without significantly compromising the viability of the scheme. This scheme has since been implemented and is considered to provide a robust landscape structure for the development and an appropriate landscape for this important gateway into Crewe.

The width of the landscaping/bunds/SUDs alongside Jack Mills Way was agreed on the basis that the buildings within the employment area would have a maximum height of 18m. This was subsequently set out in the outline approval (14/0378N) and the proposed unit accords with these parameters.

The outline approval also allows for the provision of a landscaped bund alongside the southern site boundary with the A500. To maximise the effectiveness of landscaping alongside the A500 site boundary, amended plans have been submitted. This has repositioned the landscaped bund closer to the proposed building, re-routed the footpath link to run alongside the A500 boundary and also include a more robust woodland planting mix. The Council's Landscape Officer considers that the revised plan will create better space for the proposed footpath, and allow for more effective planting with larger woodland trees to be achieved. Filter views and help soften the appearance of the development from the south. As approximately a third of the planting mix of amended landscape proposals will comprise of evergreen tree species, this is considered to satisfactorily address the concerns raised by Weston Parish Council.

The outline approval (14/0378N) includes several conditions relating to the overall provision of landscaping within the wider site. However it is considered that conditions are required to be attached to this Reserved Matters approval for the detailed specification of construction of the bunding and to ensure that subsequent implementation of the planting scheme.

### **Highways**

The outline application was approved on the basis of a Transport Assessment which related to the entire Basford West development site, including both the residential elements and employment area. A key infrastructure requirement of the outline approval was the provision of a spine road (Jack Mills Way) serving the scheme, which linked the A500 with Crewe Road, Gresty (B5071). This road link was fully completed and operational in July 2015.

The Council's Highway Engineer considered that the proposal allows for satisfactory access to the site from Jack Mills Way and also subsequent phases of the Basford West employment area. The highway engineer does not consider that traffic movements generated by this development will have an adverse impact on highway safety or traffic management on the local highway network.

The Highway Engineer has also advised that the design of the access road meets the required highway standards to serve an industrial development and has raised no concerns

regarding the internal layout of the site. There are two access points to the site, a western access serving the staff car parking and the eastern access for HGV vehicles. The Highway Engineer considers that these arrangements are acceptable and also the proposed level of car parking provision on site accords with CEC standards with appropriate disabled spaces provided. Whilst the number of car parking spaces to be provided within the development has been optimised, a condition of the outline approval requires the provision of a travel plan with the aim of balancing the need to provide sufficient operational car parking without encouraging excessive car use.

## Ecology

### Background

The EC Habitats Directive 1992 requires the UK to maintain a system of strict protection for protected species and their habitats. The Directive only allows disturbance, or deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting places

- (a) in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, and provided that there is
- (b) no satisfactory alternative and
- (b) no detriment to the maintenance of the species population at favourable conservation status in their natural range

The UK has implemented the Directive in the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 2010 (as amended) which contain two layers of protection (i) a requirement on Local Planning Authorities (“LPAs”) to have regard to the Directive’s requirements above, and (ii) a licensing system administered by Natural England and supported by criminal sanctions.

Local Plan Policy NE.5 states *“the Local Planning Authority will protect, conserve, and enhance the natural conservation resource.”*

Circular 6/2005 advises LPAs to give due weight to the presence of protected species on a development site to reflect EC requirements. “This may potentially justify a refusal of planning permission.”

The NPPF advises LPAs to conserve and enhance biodiversity: if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts) or adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, planning permission should be refused.

Natural England’s standing advice is that, if a (conditioned) development appears to fail the three tests in the Habitats Directive, then LPAs should consider whether Natural England is likely to grant a licence: if unlikely, then the LPA should refuse permission: if likely, then the LPA can conclude that no impediment to planning permission arises under the Directive and Regulations.

The Basford West Site has been subject to protected species surveys, and mitigation strategies have been implemented on-site in respect of bats, badgers and great crested newts. Ecological mitigation areas have been established on the western part of the broader site and most recently alongside Jack Mills Way. The outline approval (14/0378N) established that no additional significant impacts associated with any of these species are anticipated in respect of the site and details of habitat creation and associated infrastructure are provided. These elements of the Basford West development were also approved in detail in respect of 13/0336N for the adjacent residential/mixed use development and 12/1959N for the 'Mercer land' in the far south eastern corner of the employment area.

As regards this reserved matters application, and in accordance with Condition 45 of the outline approval, a detailed habitat management plan has been submitted in support proposals. Whilst relating to the whole Basford West development, it includes specific proposals for GCN mitigation on this site, as set out below.

### Great Crested newts (GCN)

Several Great Crested Newts (GCN) ponds are proposed alongside the southern boundary of the site, adjacent to the landscaped bund. To ensure the suitability of these ponds for use by GCN, the Council's Ecologist recommends that a condition should be imposed requiring the submission of the detailed design of the ponds prior to the commencement of development.

During the determination of adjacent application 17/1360N for the development of a public house as part of a mixed uses scheme on land to the west, it became apparent that great crested newts had colonised two of the SUDS pond adjacent to this proposed development as a result of a breached amphibian exclusion fence. However the applicant's ecological consultant has confirmed that great crested newts have now been excluded and removed from the two SUDS ponds. The Council's Ecologist is satisfied that the proposed development is not reasonable likely to affect Great Crested Newts.

### Provision of features for breeding birds including house sparrow

In accordance with Condition 44 of the outline approval, proposals have been submitted for the provision of features for breeding birds. However the Bird Box Strategy has been revised to relocate some of the bird boxes away from the south facing elevation of the building, satisfactorily addressing concerns raised by the Council's Ecologist.

### Updated badger survey

An acceptable updated badger survey has been submitted in accordance with condition 47 of the outline approval. However, the Council's Ecologist recommends that a condition should be attached which requires the submission of a further updated badger survey, if development has not commenced by October 2018.

### **Amenity**

The impact of noise arising from the operation of the Employment Area was considered during the determination of the outline application. The Environmental Health

Officer has confirmed that the conditions imposed at the outline stage as regards noise impact are sufficient to safeguard amenity.

It was determined at the outline stage that operational noise levels from the employment development were at acceptable levels in the day and night-time periods at the adjacent residential development beyond Jack Mills Way and all existing residential properties. Conditions were imposed on the outline approval requiring the submission of a noise assessment to be undertaken for each unit and a noise mitigation scheme implemented prior to the commencement in use of buildings.

It was considered that mechanical services plant would need to be located well away from the nearby residential units to meet noise level requirements and a condition was imposed on the outline approval to secure this. Furthermore, proposed noise mitigation measures including the 3m high bonding alongside Jack Mills Way, which has since been provided, would reduce the effects of both road traffic and operational noise.

The outline approval also includes conditions requiring an environmental management plan covering noise and disturbance, waste management and dust generation during construction as well as details of floor floating operations to reduce the impact of noise and vibration on neighbouring sensitive properties. Conditions also control construction hours and the future provision of lighting within the site.

### **Air Quality**

The Environmental Health Officer has raised no objections to the proposals on the basis that air quality issues were fully addressed at the outline stage (14/0378N) given the agreed assumptions and estimates of traffic movements as set out in the transport assessment. Conditions for the implementation of a low emission strategy, provision of electric vehicle infrastructure and the approval of a travel plan for each phase, were imposed on the outline approval to mitigate air quality impact.

### **Flood Risk**

No objections are raised to the proposal by the Environment Agency or United Utilities as flooding and drainage matters were fully considered at the outline stage. A series of planning conditions relating to on-site drainage and in respect to the provision of sustainable urban drainage methods, are attached to the outline approval.

Whilst drainage arrangements are considered acceptable in principle, the Council's Flood Risk manager requested further clarification for why the drainage design had been amended to omit a swale feature to the north of unit. In addition hydraulic calculations and associated modelling have also been requested. The applicant has provided additional information setting out that the previously proposed swale feature provided drainage storage, over and above that provided within the SUDS network along Jack Mills Way and is not therefore required. This information is currently being assessed by the Flood Risk Manager and an update of the position will be provided.

### **CONCLUSION**

The site is an integral part of the area known as Basford West which has identified for residential and employment development by the CELPs under Policy LPS 3. The provision of employment development is the principle overriding objective of the Basford West site, and the delivery of the employment elements of the site are considered to be of vital importance to the delivery of “All Change for Crewe”.

The principle of significant employment development and associated infrastructure has been established under outline planning approval 14/0378N, and therefore it is considered critical that this viable scheme is progressed .

The proposal is considered to be of an acceptable scale, layout and design and includes appropriate landscaping. This combined with compliance with the conditions of the outline approval and further conditions to ensure the provision of landscaping, ecological mitigation measures and suitable footpath link ensures its overall acceptability.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development in accordance with the Development Plan and is recommended for approval.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE Subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. To comply with outline permission**
- 2. Development in accord with approved plans**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. Implementation of Ecological Mitigation and Habitat Management Plan**
- 5 Details of GCN ponds**
- 6 Detailed specification of bunding alongside A500**
- 7 Implementation of landscaping**
- 8. Details of footpath link and signage**

**In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Board'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 (Regulation) 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 Board's decision.**



Application No: 17/3853M

Location: LAND NORTH OF, NORTHWICH ROAD, KNUTSFORD

Proposal: Outline planning application with means of access to be determined (all other matters reserved for subsequent approval) for the erection of up to 260 dwellings (Class C3); the provision of serviced land for allotments; a community orchard, a playing pitch, landscaping and open space; new internal highways, car and cycle parking; sustainable drainage measures including surface water retention ponds, provision of utilities infrastructure; earthworks and all ancillary enabling works

Applicant: Mr Steve Melligan, The Crown Estate

Expiry Date: 26-Oct-2017

## **SUMMARY**

The application is an outline planning application for the development of 260 dwellings. With all matters reserved save for access. As part of the application a parameters plan has been submitted, along with an illustrative masterplan.

The site forms part of a strategic allocation for the North West Knustford LPS 36(A). Whilst the proposal does see an increase in numbers it is considered that the site can accommodate this and mitigation ensures that the town can accommodate the additional 85 units. It is considered that the proposed development accords with the Local Plan policy relating to its allocation by providing housing.

The applicant is providing contributions required in order to make the development acceptable and is providing the full amount of affordable housing on site which is essential in order to make developments sustainable in the future. It is considered that the proposals are environmental, socially and economically sustainable and accord with the development plan and the framework. The site is sustainably located within the town and the proposals represent an efficient use of the land.

Cheshire East is currently able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing however this proposal will make a valuable contribution in maintaining this position.

It is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development and accords with the development plan policies outlined in the report and national planning policy and guidance..

## **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

**Approve subject to Section 106 Agreement**

## **PROPOSAL**

The application is an outline planning application for the development of 260 dwellings at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph), with all other matters reserved save for access. As part of the application a parameters plan has been submitted, along with an illustrative masterplan.

The application proposes dwellings, infrastructure, including a roundabout to the southwest of the site on Northwich Road, within the site a playing field is proposed in the northwest corner of the site with allotments along the eastern boundary which are to be adopted by the Town Council. These features are a requirement of the allocation for the site. The site is allocation LPS 36(A) Land North of Northwich Road (175 dwellings) which forms part of the wider North West Knutsford allocation consisting of several sites.

The application proposes 51 affordable units 27 intermediate tenure units and 182 market units, all being provided as houses.

### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site extends to approximately 15.65ha located to the north of Northwich Road. The site is a greenfield site in arable production. The site is bounded by hedgerows with a strong hedgerow along the boundary with Northwich Road. The site has Warren Avenue and Spinney Lane to the east, Acacia Avenue and Lilac Avenue across Northwich Road to the south, with open fields to the north and west. The site is currently accessed off Northwich Road. However the access point will be further to the west where a new roundabout will be created. Two local schools are located to the south of Northwich Road. The town centre is located approximately 850m from the southern portion of the site. Knutsford Railway Station is located approximately 1.07km from the site as the crow flies.

### **RELEVANT HISTORY**

None

### **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**

#### **Local Plan:**

#### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 July 2017**

The following are considered relevant material considerations

SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles

SE 1 Design

SE 2 Efficient Use of Land

SE 3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SE 4 The Landscape

SE 5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE 9 Energy Efficient Development

SE 12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability

SE 13 Flood Risk and Water Management

CO 1 Sustainable Travel and Transport  
CO 2 Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure  
CO 4 Travel Plans and Transport Assessments  
SC 1 Leisure and Recreation  
SC 2 Outdoor Sports Facilities  
SC 5 Affordable Homes  
IN 1 Infrastructure  
IN 2 Developer Contributions  
PG 1 Overall Development Strategy  
PG 2 Settlement Hierarchy  
PG 3 Green Belts  
EG 1 Economic Prosperity  
EG 5 Town Centres First

## **LPS 36 Northwest Knutsford**

### Requirements of Northwest Knutsford Sites.

2. Appropriate retail provision to meet local needs;
3. Appropriate:
  - i contributions towards educational facilities; and
  - ii. Provision of open space, and provision of / contributions toward sports and leisure facilities;
4. Incorporation of green infrastructure where required, including:
  - i. Allotments; and
  - ii. Community orchard or community gardens; and
5. Pedestrian and cycle links to new and existing residential areas, shops, schools and health facilities;
6. The existing sports grounds situated between Mereheath Lane and Manchester Road to the south of LPS 36(C) are removed from the Green Belt. These are identified as protected open space within LPS 36 as shown on Figure 15.43 and will be retained in their entirety as such, and enhanced if possible. The existing allotment gardens to the east of Mereheath Lane remain in the Green Belt as protected open space.

### Site Specific Requirements of LPS 36(A)

- a. Protection and enhancement of the setting of Tatton Park.
- b. The sites will deliver housing which will contribute to the local character of Knutsford through the use of appropriate density, architecture, style, form and materials and reference to CEC most up to date Design Guidance.
- c. A mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to comply with Policy SC 4.
- d. Proposals will be expected to be of a high quality design that respects the setting of nearby designated heritage assets, parkland and the character of the surrounding area. Development adjacent to

the Toll House on Northwich Road must be set back from the road by a buffer zone of mature planting to mitigate the visual impact of development on the Toll House.

e. Proposals will be expected to include a Landscape Character Assessment to guide the scale and massing of new development.

f. Provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme which retains existing mature trees and hedgerows where possible, or provide appropriate mitigation.

g. Any replacement and/or new sports provision should be in accordance with an adopted up to date and robust Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Sports Strategy and with Policy SC 2 'Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities'.

h. Provision of additional community facilities.

i. Contributions to health infrastructure.

j. Improve the connectivity and accessibility into and out of the sites to the town centre and wider local area with the provision of, or contribution to, cycle paths and pedestrian linkages.

k. Creation of a network of green infrastructure and accommodation of SuDS requirements.

l. Provision of high quality landscaping to enhance ecological features.

m. Provision of new woodland belts within the sites and to create site boundaries.

n. Contribute to road infrastructure in the area including roundabout improvements at the junction of A50/Northwich Road and Canute Place and Improvement to the A50 Corridor. Provision within LPS 36(A) and LPS 36(B) for a principal access road which, in the longer term, would connect Northwich Road to Manchester Road and ensure connectivity within the North West Knutsford sites.

o. An archaeological pre-determination evaluation will be required for these sites in addition to a desk based archaeological assessment.

p. Any development that would prejudice the future comprehensive development of the adjacent safeguarded land will not be permitted (site references LPS 39 / LPS 40).

q. The Local Plan Strategy site is expected to provide affordable housing in line with the policy requirements set out in Policy SC 5 'Affordable Homes'.

r. A minimum of a Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment for contaminated land should be carried out to demonstrate that the sites are, or could be made, suitable for use should they be found to be contaminated. Further work, including a site investigation, may be required at a pre-planning stage, depending on the nature of the sites.

s. The sites will be developed only where it can be demonstrated that there is no adverse impact on the Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar, Rostherne Mere Ramsar and Tatton Mere SSSI particularly in relation to changes in water levels and quality and recreational pressures. This should

include a Habitats Regulations Assessment of the direct and indirect impacts of the development on the features of special interest. Where impacts cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation measures will be required to ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of the sites.

### **Macclesfield Borough Local Plan**

In addition to the now adopted LPS, saved policies of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan also form part of the development plan.

The relevant Saved Policies are: -

#### Environment

NE3 – Protection of Local Landscapes

NE11 – Protection and enhancement of nature conservation interests

NE17 – Nature Conservation in Major Developments

#### Housing

H9 – Occupation of Affordable Housing

#### Recreation and Tourism

RT5 – Open Space

RT6 – Allocated for additional Informal Recreational Facilities

RT7 – Recreation / Open Spaces Provision

#### Development Control

DC3 – Amenity

DC6 – Circulation and Access

DC8 – Landscaping

DC9 – Tree Protection

DC15 – Provision of Facilities

DC17 – Water Resources

DC35 – Materials and Finishes

DC36 – Road Layouts and Circulation

DC37 – Landscaping

DC38 – Space Light and Privacy

DC40 – Children’s Play Provision and Amenity Space

DC41 – Infill Housing Development

DC63 – Contaminated Land

The saved Local Plan policies are consistent with the NPPF and should be given full weight.

### **National Policy:**

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Of particular relevance are paragraphs 14, 23-27, 47, 89 and 90.

### **CONSULTATIONS (External to planning)**

**Housing** – No objections

**Education** - The development of 260 dwellings is expected to generate:

48 primary children (260 x 0.19) – 1 SEN

38 secondary children (260 x 0.15) – 1 SEN  
3 SEN children (260 x 0.51 x 0.023%)

The development is expected to impact on SEN school places in the locality. Special Education provision within Cheshire East Council currently has a shortage of places available with at present over 47% of pupils educated outside of the Borough. The Service acknowledges that this is an existing concern, however the 3 children expected from the Land North of Northwich Road application will exacerbate the shortfall. The 2 SEN children who are thought to be of mainstream education age have been removed from the calculations above to avoid double counting. The remaining 1 SEN child is expected to be 1 EYFS child. The Service does not claim for EYFS at present therefore this child cannot be removed from the calculation above.

To alleviate forecast pressures, the following contributions would be required:

$3 \times £50,000 \times 0.91 = £136,500$  (SEN)  
Total education contribution: £136,500

**ANSA** – The developer has provided an illustrative plan with indicative housing types and numbers. Until the housing schedule is finalised it is not possible to accurately calculate the Public Open Space (POS) requirements. However, in line with the Policy SE6 of the CEC Local Plan, we will expect 65m<sup>2</sup> POS per family dwelling. On a development of this size we would expect to see all the POS on site and that does seem to be reflected on the submitted plans. ROS is provided on site, no objections.

**Highways** – No objections subject to financial contribution towards Canute Place roundabout improvements and signalised pedestrian crossing across Northwich Road.

**Environmental Protection** – No objections subject to conditions

**PROW** – No objections subject to condition relating to information packs.

**Natural England** - Statutory nature conservation sites – no objection  
Natural England has assessed this application using the Impact Risk Zones data (IRZs) and is satisfied that the proposed development being carried out in strict accordance with the details of the application, as submitted, will not damage or destroy the interest features for which Tabley Mere SSSI has been notified. We therefore advise your authority that this SSSI does not represent a constraint in determining this application.

**United Utilities** – No objections subject to conditions.

**NHS England** – Comments to be provided by way of an update.

### **VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Knutsford Town Council** – The Town Council strongly objects to the application and recommends its refusal on the grounds that:

- a. The number of properties proposed exceeds the local plan site allocation by 49%

- b. The proposed access is considered to be excessive in configuration in relation to the number of houses proposed (notwithstanding the drastic increase in number compared with the site allocation) and that such access should be contained within the allocated development site and not extending into an area of greenbelt.
- c. The increasing in housing numbers will result in a significant increase in vehicles which has not be considered as part of the Local Plan and will have significant highways implications especially at Canute Place.
- d. The increase in the level of housing results in a significant increase in the requirements for education, leisure, health and community facilities which are not addressed in the Local Plan.
- e. Whilst the layout is indicative, the proposal is not considered to be of an appropriate density insofar as it does not reflect the character of the site on the outskirts of the town
- f. The significant increase in housing numbers would set a precedent of permitting a housing numbers in excess of the need the Local Plan Inspector identified was required.

The Council further notes that there are significant drainage issues affecting the site and surrounding residential properties which have not been adequately addressed to date.

**Tabley Parish Council** - Tabley Parish Council met on 11th September 2017 and discussed the application above. I can advise that they object to this application on the following grounds.

1. The original quote was for 175 units, the plans now show 260 units. It is considered that this number is too high for the area.
2. The infrastructure as it is at present cannot sustain the addition of so many houses. The schools/GP surgeries/dentists currently struggle with the number of residents. The addition of so many houses would put a considerable strain on the current over-burdened facilities and they will not be able to cope with the influx of so many people
3. The highways in the area are already at crisis point. The quantity of traffic in this area is already extremely high with congestions being part of the daily life. A further 260 houses, each with the probability of up to two cars, would further add to frustration to motorists using this area.
4. There must be a high percentage of affordable housing. It is essential that the site includes a high percentage of Affordable Housing”.
5. Overdevelopment in the Greenbelt area. The whole site is an overdevelopment in what is in fact a Greenbelt area.
6. If approved, the infrastructure must be in place before the houses are built. If this application is approved, then Tabley Parish Council would ask that the issues with the infrastructure are address prior to the commencement of the building of the houses.

Tabley Parish Council concur with all the comments included in Knutsford Town Council’s response.

## REPRESENTATIONS

**North Knutsford Community Group and South Knutsford Residents Group - OBJECT to application 17/3853M Land north of Northwich Road, Knutsford**

**INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE**

1. The adopted Local Plan allocates 950 new dwellings including a 5% buffer to Knutsford, 925 of which are on strategic sites of more than 150 dwellings. The shortfall of 25 is more than made up by completions and commitments within the town which raise the number to over 1000.
2. On the basis of well-documented Objectively Assessed Housing Need, the Local Plan allocates 175 dwellings for this site LPS36A but the application proposes 260, an increase of 85 dwellings [49%] over that required. The applicant cannot therefore argue that it is seeking to meet unmet need. The proposers have produced no statistical or market signal data to justify an increase in housing numbers on this site.
3. Knutsford Community Groups argued successfully at the Examination in Public of the then draft Local Plan Strategy that all or virtually all of Knutsford's housing allocation should be accommodated on strategic sites. That was accepted by Planning Inspector and by Cheshire East and incorporated in the adopted Local Plan. It is well documented in the Examination proceedings. The arrangement is to allow the creation of new communities with their own distinct identities but well integrated into the town. It is to avoid a series of small 'bolt-on' estates around the periphery as awkward adjuncts to established areas.
4. Therefore, the size of sites in Knutsford as allocated under the Local Plan is deliberately generous. It allows lower density and more extensive landscaping and tree planting in order to create architecturally attractive and generously proportioned layouts, including for 'affordable' housing. The new communities will thereby complement Knutsford's existing sense of place and 'rus in urbe' setting. These 'model' garden village developments are intended to be as attractive in their own right as the historic parts of Knutsford. In the process, the town will be strengthened as a visitor destination. Cheshire East officers have not indicated any change of planning approach to Knutsford Community Groups or the Town Council.
5. The substantial increase in housing numbers will sabotage the carefully thought-out strategy for building a new community. It fails to respect the sense of place, especially as site LPS36A is the new western gateway into the town. Residents are surprised that additional numbers are now being sought.
6. The sense of space and the 'greening' of the development is set at risk. The more crowded ambience will damage the fundamental spatial planning intentions for this part of the town.
7. The proposers knew and understood these aspirations through their participation in constructive meetings held prior to the submission of planning applications. These intentions are being incorporated into the emerging Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan policies and are incorporated in the draft Knutsford Design Guide.

**DAMAGE TO INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING IN KNUTSFORD**

8. Previously, the Town Council and Community Groups had a clear idea of the number of new homes to be located in north-west Knutsford [ie 500] and the necessary infrastructure improvements they would occasion. The small compensatory reduction proposed in this application for LPS36B Manchester Rd West still increases the overall number of dwellings. If this application is approved, the door will be open for a similar increase in density in Manchester Rd East LPS36C and this proposal hints at unconfirmed numbers of 275 units and an 80-place care home on this site.

9. Without certainty of numbers a piecemeal and haphazard response to infrastructure will be forced on the town instead of comprehensive solutions. The implications are not confined to essential road traffic improvements in the area and throughout the town.

10. The opportunity to reserve land is threatened for location or relocation of doctors' surgeries and health-related services; for convenience retail; for sport, leisure and community facilities; for necessary open spaces and green infrastructure; and for additional primary school places - at least one additional form of entry will be necessary by 2025. NB the present locations and sizes of primary schools in the town is inimical to accepting additional numbers from new housing in north-west Knutsford after 2025. [See Education Evidence paper for Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan]

11. No consideration has been given to the linking of the spine road in LPS36A with a possible spine road in LPS36B, not least because no firm proposals are evident for the Manchester Rd West site.

Such a road would relieve some pressure on the Canute Place bottleneck. The impact of additional traffic on this node from LPS36A Northwich Rd has yet to be resolved.

12. No masterplan exists for the 7.5ha of employment land on the northern section of LPS36B Manchester Rd West to show how the office accommodation there relates to housing in the southern section of the same site, which is also without a Masterplan. Equally, no agreement is evident on planned access to these two sites from A50 or to LPS36C Manchester Rd East. No Masterplan is currently published for that site either. 1

3. Overall, further increases in housing numbers will use up available land and either prevent essential infrastructure or force its location onto unsuitable or difficult-to-access sites.

## SUSTAINABILITY

14. The implication of the above factors threatens not only the sustainability of this site but also the soundness of the Local Plan itself. For example, the proposers argue that the site is too generous for 175 dwellings, yet their location of the access roundabout necessitates the release of more Green Belt land. Access could have been accommodated within the site area. It is noticeable that some plans show the area to the west of Sudlow Lane and south of Northwich Rd marked as 'development potential'. If exploited, a continuous built form will stretch from Lilac Avenue to the motorway service area.

15. Since the application was registered, McCarthy and Stone, retirement home specialists, are consulting with the community for their proposals for 46 one- and two-bedroom apartments on the site of the War Memorial Hospital adjacent to site LPS36A. If approved, this would bring the total number of units north of Northwich Road to 306.

16. The issues of flooding in the south-east corner of LPS36A are well-known and no doubt capable of solution by structural/mechanical means. However, the impact of an additional 85 dwellings on the foul water sewerage system will not be so easily solved and has major cost implications for the utility company and the local authority.

17. The number of additional dwellings and the increase in density puts in jeopardy compliance with key Local Plan policies such as SE1 Design. The higher proportion of buildings and smaller plot sizes limit the space to create an effective Sense of Place. They restrict the opportunities for Design Quality and Sustainable Urban Architecture [SE1] and Landscape Design [SE4]. They reduce the opportunities to plant trees, create hedgerows between properties and create new spinneys of trees [SE5], and they thereby damage the opportunities for green corridors and green infrastructure [SE6].

18. Any additional emissions from heating systems, the planned rise in aircraft movements to and from Manchester Airport and additional vehicles on Knutsford roads will increase pollution

in an area already subject to intermittent excessive exposure to levels of nitrogen dioxide and other air-borne pollutants. They place policy SE12 at risk.

19. The allocation of children to primary schools in areas of the town beyond reasonable walking distance increases car travel, adds to congestion and threatens policy CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport.

## CONCLUSION

20. The effect of all the above factors demonstrates that the increased number of dwellings in this application has been proposed in isolation from consideration of the impact on the two other strategic sites in north-west Knutsford, from the infrastructure requirements for the local area and the town centre, and for the spatial strategy for the town as a whole. Residents wish the application to revert to the original number of dwellings or be at least deferred to allow full consideration of the implications, and plans and cost implications for necessary improvements.

**Nether Ward Community Group** - 1. The Crown Estate (TCE) have stated in the Knutsford Guardian (November 9th 2017) "While this site was originally earmarked to deliver 175 new homes, further assessments, undertaken in close consultation with CEC, have shown that an increase to 260 would make a more efficient use of a site this size" (my italics). NWCG cannot let this statement pass unchallenged.

That TCE/BW have persuaded CEC planners that the site is large enough to deliver more houses is not surprising BUT it insufficient grounds for changing the allocation specified in the Local Plan. It begs the question "why is the site so large?". There may be several answers; a mistake in the original outline of the site (the northern boundary is an arbitrary curve which bears no relation to existing field boundaries), an intention to provide land for a school or local retail provision (subsequently dropped), or maybe the land was needed so that the density of housing would be low enough to maintain Knutsford's landscape and street-scene characteristics, particularly its rural setting and its existing sense of place.

The third possibility seems most likely, given the evolution of the Local Plan and the assurances given to NWCG and other local groups during the various consultation periods and summarised in the Local Plan Development Strategy (at paragraph 5.51) as "Knutsford is one of the two key historic towns in Cheshire East and its heritage and distinctiveness need to be maintained and enhanced." Also the recently-adopted Local Plan (at paragraph 15.429) states "[sites in north west Knutsford] present an opportunity for high quality, sympathetic low density residential development with community facilities and the creation of open space."

Whatever the reason, if that extra space (already released from the Green Belt by the Local Plan) were now to be used for more houses, it would not only contravene the Local Plan but fly in the face of any sense of "consultation" and make any assurances worthless. More than that, it could make future engagement seem worthless.

2. In the same Knutsford Guardian article, TCE say "We will continue to work closely with the council and the local community in order to make our plans for North West Knutsford a success." NWCG would encourage this.

NWCG has had several meetings with TCE and its agents Barton Willmore (BW) to discuss various aspects of the Local Plan and their proposals for their sites now designated LPS36A

and LPS36B. Following those meetings, TCE/BW may feel entitled to say that they have consulted with the local community. They may even claim to have broad support for their plans... but this is not exactly the case.

NWCG would like to make clear to CEC's Strategic Planning Board just where the limits of that "broad" support lie. While we recognise the efforts of TCE/BW to engage and we are appreciative of their interaction with the community in designing some details of the developments, we cannot accept this "out of the blue" figure of 260 houses on the Northwich Road site (LPS36A). It is beyond the numbers allocated in the Local Plan and it was never discussed with the community.

We urge TCE/BW to continue to work closely with the council and the local community in order to make the plans for North West Knutsford a success. As a starting point, NWCG suggest they revise the proposed number of houses downwards.

NWCG ask that this planning application for up to 260 houses be refused.

**Combined response from  
Knutsford Conservation and Heritage Group (KCHG)  
Nether Ward Community Group  
North Knutsford Community Group  
South Knutsford Residents Group  
South East Knutsford Residents Association  
Knutsford Community Spirit – Full response can be viewed on the planning file on the CEC website.**

As previously, the CGs are aligned in our views. We object strongly to the application and recommend CEC refuses planning permission.

3. Grounds for refusal of planning permission:

3.1 Principle. In a national Plan-led Planning system, the centrepiece of the Cheshire East Local Plan is its Local Plan Strategy [LPS], adopted by CEC on 27 July 2017. The application exceeds significantly (by 49%) the LPS residential use provision for the site, in effect challenging the LPS. If this application were to be approved, CEC would be risking the "soundness" of the LPS, setting aside its development provisions and flying in the face of the Inspector's 20 June 2017 report on the LPS Examination.

3.2 Bad precedent. In Knutsford and perhaps elsewhere in the Borough, this case can be interpreted as a precedent in its significant variance from LPS provisions. Each planning application is determined on its merits by a local planning authority, but so soon after LPS adoption it is reasonable to assume developers and landowners will consider this case as a precedent.

3.3 Exceeding Knutsford's cumulative housing requirement, as assessed by CEC in its LPS working.

3.4 Lack of sustainability. For LPS adoption CEC Councillors were briefed that the LPS "will be a vital tool for achieving the aim of sustainable development in Cheshire East and will provide an up to date planning framework by which to assess and determine planning

applications, providing increased certainty and supporting the wider aims and objectives of the Council and its partners”1. This application makes insufficient highways and education provision, and is inadequate in providing for no local retail use. Moreover the scale of proposed development exacerbates concerns as to the lack of availability and ‘fitness for purpose’ of health facilities in Knutsford.

90 letters of representation received at time of writing:

- Supports comments of NWCG
- Numbers too high not 175
- Slow rail service, pressure on schools, healthcare
- Overdeveloped with no infrastructure
- Increase in numbers never discussed with the community
- Pressure on road network unacceptable
- Wear and tear on historic fabric of the town
- Not sustainable
- CE has 5 year land supply extra numbers not required
- Normal level of affordable housing should be provided
- Site is susceptible to flooding
- Proposals will rip the town apart
- Air pollution, concerns over air quality particularly on existing air quality problem areas within the town
- A relief road is desperately needed
- Ruin the view from neighbouring property
- Concerns over insufficient GCN survey.
- Pressure on public car parks with increase in population
- Increase in cars will put pressure on Northwich Road during rush hour
- Overdevelopment of the site
- A bus stop should be provided
- Play area should have changing rooms
- Contributions to other formal sports should be encouraged
- Contributions to the leisure centre should be sought
- Loss of good quality agricultural land
- Knutsford has already had its fair share of development
- Building on greenfield land could harm the character of the town
- Will the towns events be able to cope with the change?
- A new road must be built as a by-pass
- Doctors and dentists oversubscribed
- Request that construction traffic be kept on site not on adjacent roads
- St Johns Knutsford and Toft in favour of application for following reasons:
- Located in appropriate part of the town, provision of affordable homes, pleasant mix of green space, ecological measures and simple legible streets. Would like to see a community building as part of the proposals in order to establish an Anglican congregation in that part of the town.

### **APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- Design and Access Statement
- Noise Impact Statement

- Planning Statement
- Transport Assessment
- Air Quality Statement
- Travel Plan
- Tree Information
- Agricultural Land Classification
- Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Landscape Methodology
- LVIA
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Archaeology and Heritage Assessment
- Soil Infiltration Testing Information
- Geo-Environmental Report

### **APPRAISAL**

#### **Key Issues**

- Principle of development
- Density
- Local Plan Update
- Affordable Housing and Housing Mix
- Education
- Public Open Space & Recreation
- Indoor Sport
- Highways
- Public Rights of Way/Access
- Urban Design
- Landscape Impact
- Trees
- Ecology
- Amenity
- Flood Risk
- Section 106 agreement
- Representations
- Conclusions
- Recommendation

#### **Principle of development**

The site is located within Knutsford to the north of Northwich Road. The site forms part of the wider North West Knutsford allocation LPS36 in the newly adopted Cheshire East Local Plan. This site forms parcel LPS36(A) and has been allocated to deliver 175 dwellings. The policy does not set this as a maximum figure, just that the site must deliver this number in order to be policy compliant.

The principle of residential development is acceptable in this location being a parcel of a wider strategic allocation in the newly adopted local plan.

The site is in agricultural use at the current time, and is classified historically as Grade 2 agricultural land which falls into the category of BMV agricultural land, which includes Grades 1, 2 and 3a. The application has been accompanied by an Agricultural Land Classification survey. This has determined through testing of the soils on the site that 82% of the site falls into subgrade 3a with the remainder as Grade 2.

Paragraph 112 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.

Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that when preparing local plans, local authorities should: put in place policies to ensure worked land is reclaimed at the earliest opportunity, taking account of aviation safety, and that high quality restoration and aftercare of mineral sites takes place, including for agriculture (safeguarding the long term potential of best and most versatile agricultural land and conserving soil resources), geodiversity, biodiversity, native woodland, the historic environment and recreation.

Whilst the land does fall within Grades 2 and 3a, these are both BMV classifications, although the land is not as good quality as it's original classification of 2 across the whole site. Through the Local Plan process at the allocation stage, the constraints and sustainability of the sites to be allocated was carefully considered and each site went through the SA/SEA process. The inspector agreed that this site be allocated for residential use, therefore the principle of the loss of BMV in this location has been agreed through the allocation of the site and is now set out in the Local Plan. Unfortunately, significant areas of BMV agricultural land are adjacent to towns and therefore the loss of some of this land is inevitable if the town is to accommodate housing growth in a sustainable location adjacent to the edge of the settlement.

The policy set out within allocation LPS36(A) states that the site must provide for residential development. The requirements also include those expected to be delivered through the other North West Knutsford Sites 36 (B) and 36 (C).

The policy sets out that the new developments must provide Allotments, further it must not have a detrimental impact on Tatton Park, it must provide appropriate landscaping including a buffer/woodland belt, new sports provision on site, contributions to health infrastructure, suitable connectivity and accessibility, green infrastructure and SUDs, an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures, provide affordable housing, contribute to the improvement of Canute place roundabout, must not have a detrimental impact on the SSSI and must not prejudice the future development of adjacent safeguarded land.

The allocation, provides the location for the housing and associated infrastructure, however in order to provide the necessary infrastructure and connectivity of the site, a small part of land to the south of the site on Northwich Road is required to provide the roundabout. This parcel of land is located within the Green Belt.

Within the Green Belt there is a presumption against inappropriate development, however certain types of development are not restricted, those listed in paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF and as set out in policy PG3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan. The roundabout will cause an encroachment into the Green Belt as it will result in the widening of the Northwich Road which at that point is washed over by Green Belt. However, paragraph 90 of the NPPF

states that the following is an acceptable form of development providing it maintains openness:

- local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- 

The roundabout proposed will serve the new development, however following discussions with Cheshire East Highways, the roundabout is also required to ensure a connection to the safeguarded land. Policy LPS36 of the CELPS states at point (p) that the development that prejudices the future comprehensive development of adjacent safeguarded land will not be permitted. Therefore in order for the proposal to not prejudice but to help facilitate the safeguarded land and to serve the existing site, it is considered that the local transport infrastructure is required in this Green Belt location, and a roundabout is the most comprehensive solution. By the nature of a road proposal, it is considered that whilst there is inevitably some encroachment, the proposal will maintain openness. Therefore complies with paragraph 90 of the NPPF and PG3 of the CELPS.

### **Density**

The density proposed as part of the development is 30dph, this is a fairly standard density for new housing developments. This is acceptable providing that the development does not appear cramped and the relevant public open space and other infrastructure is provided. The allocation is for 175 dwellings, however it is clear within the policy that this is not a ceiling, but that the site must accommodate this amount.

The proposal includes a playing pitch, considerable amounts of green infrastructure, a significant buffer to the east of the site of 50m, and from the illustrative layout will be able to accommodate varying house types, with detached units, semi-detached units and small terraces. These are all required on new developments to provide a reasonable inclusive mix of properties.

It is important that new developments make efficient use of land especially allocations, as through providing additional numbers comfortably within the confines of the site prevents the pressure on the release of other land in the future.

There have been a significant number of objections to the proposal in relation to the increased numbers. However the objections relate to the pressure this will put on existing services and infrastructure, not in relation to the site constraints itself. The illustrative layout shows a spacious development with adequate green space, especially along the boundaries of the site which will be most sensitive in the landscape from outside the site.

The local plan and NPPF do not set out ideal densities for new development, therefore an increased number on this large allocated site is not contrary to local or national planning policy. The increase in numbers by 85 will help contribute to maintaining a 5 year housing land supply, and further will balance those sites across the borough where in some cases fewer houses than allocated are to be delivered on strategic sites, due to various site specific constraints. It will also provide higher numbers of affordable units which are desperately needed in the local area.

The final layout and design of the site will be agreed at the reserved matters stage but it is important that this maintains the concept as set out in the illustrative masterplan, as this way the density does not jeopardise the scheme.

The proposal will provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the additional numbers, through road improvements, and financial contributions towards, education, indoor sport and NHS England, all of which have been raised as points of concern by the public through the consultation process.

It is considered that the proposed density of 30dph is acceptable, and the increase in numbers would not be a reason to withhold planning permission as the site can accommodate the increase.

### **Local Plan Update**

On 27th July 2017 the Council adopted the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. Accordingly the new Local Plan now forms part of the statutory development plan. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that “where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise.” This is the test that legislation prescribes should be employed on planning decision making.

The ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ at paragraph 14 of the NPPF means: *“approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay”*

As a consequence where development accords with the adopted Local Plan Strategy the starting point should normally be that it should be approved – and approved promptly.

The Inspector’s Report on the Local Plan was published on 20 June 2017 and signalled the Inspector’s agreement to the plans and policies of the Local Plan Strategy. The Inspector has now confirmed that on adoption, the Council will be able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land. In his Report he concludes:

*“I am satisfied that CEC has undertaken a robust, comprehensive and proportionate assessment of the delivery of its housing land supply, which confirms a future 5-year supply of around 5.3 years”*

The Council have recently released the Annual Housing Monitoring Update and this has shown that the Council now has a supply of 5.45 years.

On 8 November 2017 the White Moss Quarry (WMQ) appeal was dismissed due to conflict with the LPS settlement hierarchy and spatial distribution of development. The appeal related to an outline application for up to 400 homes as a second phase to the existing White Moss Quarry development.

However, the Inspector did not come to a clear conclusion whether Cheshire East has a five year housing land supply. His view was that there was a deliverable housing land supply of between 5.07 years (a headroom of 200 dwellings) and 4.96 years (a deficit of 130 dwellings). He concluded that on

the evidence before him and the risk of the housing supply falling slightly below the 5-year requirement, he could not be confident that there is a sufficiently robust deliverable supply: “*I conclude that it would be both cautious and prudent in the circumstances of this case to regard policies for the supply of housing to be considered not up-to-date, thus engaging the tilted balance of paragraph 14 of the Framework.*”

As the Council won the appeal, the decision will not be challenged by the Council. However, having reviewed it, there are serious concerns about the inspector’s findings that are material to your deliberation and which will form the basis for the Council’s case in relation to other appeals:

- the Council disagrees with the WMQ Inspector’s findings on the five year housing land supply;
- in several cases, the WMQ Inspector, reached incorrect conclusions on the evidence before him;
- the Council’s housing supply witness at the Park Road Inquiry was able to demonstrate a robust 5 year housing land supply;
- development lead-in time assumptions agreed by the Local Plan Inspector through the more extensive and inclusive Local Plan examination process should be followed, particularly so soon after the publication of the Local Plan Inspector’s report (June 2017);
- the Council’s approach on the *deliverability* of housing is consistent with the judgement of the Court of Appeal in St Modwen (20/10/17) which post-dated the White Moss Inquiry. This judgement confirmed that ‘deliverability’ in the context of NPPF paragraph 47 means a realistic prospect of the site being delivered. There is no need to demonstrate that every home in the five year supply will be built;
- updated information is now available to further support the Council’s judgements as to the contribution that particular sites will make towards the five year supply.

The Council has submitted to the Park Road Inspector that he should find that the Council can demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land. There are material differences between the evidence that was before the WMQ Inspector and the evidence that is before the Park Road Inspector to warrant the Park Road Inspector reaching a different conclusion.

For the purpose of determining current planning applications it is therefore the Council’s position that there is a five year supply of deliverable housing land.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability is the golden thread running through the National Planning Policy Framework, and proposals for sustainable development should be approved without delay. There are three strands to sustainability, social, economic and environmental.

### **SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **Affordable Housing and Housing Mix**

This is a proposed development of 260 dwellings therefore in order to meet the Council’s Policy on Affordable Housing there is a requirement for 78 dwellings to be provided as affordable dwellings.

The SHMA 2013 shows the majority of the demand in Knutsford Per Year until 2018 is for 8x 1 bedroom, 34x 2 bedroom and 49x 4 bedroom dwellings for general needs. The SMA 2013 is also showing a need for 10x 1 bedroom Older Persons dwellings.

The SHMA shows an over supply for 3 bedroom General needs and 1 bedroom Older Person accommodation.

The majority of the demand on Cheshire Homechoice is for 2 x 1 bedroom, 214x 2 bedroom, 84x 3 bedroom, 19x 4 bedroom and 2x 5 bedroom dwellings.

Therefore a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings on this site would be acceptable. 51 units should be provided as Affordable/Social rent and 27 units as Intermediate tenure.

On the above it is important to note that as the house prices for both sale and rent are so high in the Knutsford area, Housing would be looking to have Social rent over Affordable rent and also to have a larger discount on the Intermediates. This is to ensure the affordable housing is genuinely affordable.

The applicant on this outline application is intending to supply a compliant 30% Affordable housing with the required 65%/35% tenure split. The detail can be confirmed on the following reserved matters if outline permission is granted. Housing does not object to the outline application.

The Affordable Housing IPS requires that the affordable units should be tenure blind and pepper potted within the development, the external design, comprising elevation, detail and materials should be compatible with the open market homes on the development thus achieving full visual integration and also that the affordable housing should be provided no later than occupation of 50% of the open market dwellings

It is considered that the proposed affordable split is acceptable for a development of this size. However the housing mix will be determined at the reserved matters level through details of housetypes. At the reserved matters stage the development will be expected to contribute towards meeting the shortfall identified above in the SHMA of affordable housing mix. Further the market mix will be expected to provide a genuine mix of dwellings which will be secured by condition at this outline stage.

### **Education**

A large number of objections raised relate to the inadequacy of the schools locally to be able to cope with the increased numbers proposed. Notwithstanding this Education Services have been consulted on the application and the following is required by the development in order to make it acceptable. The mitigation required is sufficient to support the 260 dwellings proposed. The development of 260 dwellings is expected to generate:

48 primary children (260 x 0.19) – 1 SEN  
38 secondary children (260 x 0.15) – 1 SEN  
3 SEN children (260 x 0.51 x 0.023%)

The development is expected to impact on SEN school places in the locality. Special Education provision within Cheshire East Council currently has a shortage of places available with at present over 47% of pupils educated outside of the Borough. The Service

acknowledges that this is an existing concern, however the 3 children expected from the Land North of Northwich Road application will exacerbate the shortfall. Therefore in order to alleviate forecast pressures, the following contributions would be required to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms:

3 x £50,000 x 0.91 = £136,500 (SEN)  
 Total education contribution: £136,500

No contribution towards general educational needs is required by the proposed development. The below table shows the educational need locally.

<b>Development</b>	Land North of Northwich Rd				Number of Dwellings		260				
<b>Planning App Number</b>	17/3853M				Primary Yield		48		Less 1 SEN Child		
<b>Date Prepared</b>	reassessed from Pre-App 8.9.2017				Secondary Yield		38		Less 1 SEN Child		
					SEN Yield		3				
					PUPIL FORECASTS based on October 2016 School Census						
	PAN Sep 17	PAN Sep 18	NET CAP May-17	any Known Changes	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Comments	
Primary Schools within 2 miles											
Bexton	60	60	420	420	434	439	440	441	444		
Egerton	30	30	210	210	222	231	223	230	235		
Manor Park	45	45	315	315	202	205	203	200	192		
St Vincents	30	30	210	210	211	208	208	208	208		
Total School Capacity				1,155							
Developments with S106 funded and pupil yield included in the forecasts				32							
Developments pupil yield not included in the forecasts									2		
Pupil Yield expected from this development									48		
OVERALL TOTAL	165	165	1,155	1,187	1,069	1,083	1,074	1,079	1,129		
OVERALL SURPLUS PLACES PROJECTIONS based on Revised NET CAP					118	104	113	108	58		
					PUPIL FORECASTS based on October 2016 School Census						
	PAN Sep 17	PAN Sep 18	NET CAP May-17	any Known Changes	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Secondary Schools within 3 miles											
Knutsford Academy	180	180	1,300	1,300	828	837	863	878	893	915	916
Knutsford Academy, The Studio	75	75	150	150	60	74	75	79	78	79	80
Total Schools Capacity				1,450							
Developments with S106 funded and pupil yield included in the forecasts				0							
Developments pupil yield not funded and not included in the forecasts											0
Pupil Yield expected from this development											38
OVERALL TOTAL	255	255	1,450	1,450	888	911	938	957	971	994	1,034
OVERALL SURPLUS PLACES PROJECTIONS					562	539	512	493	479	456	416

## Public Open Space and Recreation

Amenity greenspace must be functional, varied and flexible space, to serve the current and future needs of the community that it serves. Therefore, amenity greenspace should be a minimum width of 40m. Areas/buffers around the perimeter of the site of less than 40m wide will not be considered amenity greenspace.

Allotment provision is included on site, in line with the Local Plan requirement and is within close proximity to existing allotments. Suitable boundary treatments need to be in place and suitable parking arrangements this information would form part of a reserved matters application.

As far as possible POS should be linked by accessible traffic free routes to encourage people of all abilities to access the spaces and make the most of the recreational opportunities they present. As highlighted by PRow these connections should link to the wider environment to encourage community cohesion and safe routes to important facilities in the town.

All POS should reflect local wildlife/heritage/culture to create distinctive, high quality spaces that compliment and strengthen the identity of the overall development and wider community, encouraging community cohesion.

There is a requirement to provide Recreation and Outdoor Sport (ROS) in line with policy SC2 CEC Local Plan. The ROS provision has been addressed with an on site grass football pitch. The developer needs to consider the associated infrastructure such as access and parking.

It is therefore considered that subject to adequate detail at the reserved matters stage the POS and ROS requirements have been met through on site provision. Therefore the development is policy compliant in this respect.

### **Indoor Sport**

Policy SC2 of the CELPS states that developments must 3. "Make sure that major residential developments contribute, through land assembly and financial contributions, to new or improved sports facilities where development will increase demand and/or there is a recognised shortage".

The development will increase the need for local indoor leisure provision and as such a financial contribution should be sought towards Knutsford Leisure Centre.

The Indoor Built Facility Strategy has identified that there are existing shortfalls in provision in Knutsford at the Leisure Centre as set out in the attached Assessment and supporting Strategy (page 37). In particular there is currently an identified under provision within the Knutsford Leisure Centre of health and fitness studio space and equipment (fitness stations). Whilst new developments should not be required to address an existing shortfall of provision, they should ensure that this situation is not worsened by ensuring that it fully addresses its own impact in terms of the additional demand for indoor leisure provision that it directly gives rise to. 260 houses at 1.61 people per residence = a population increase of 418.

The annual Sport England Active People Survey Results for 2016 showed 42.7% participation rate for Cheshire East. = 178 additional "active population" due to the new development in Knutsford

Based on an industry average of 25 users per piece of fitness equipment equates to seven (7) additional stations. Requirement for - x3 running machines (£6,500 per treadmill), x 2 spin bikes (£4,500 per bike) x 2 resistance / weight pieces (£3,000 per piece). Total £34,500.

### **Social Sustainability Conclusion**

The proposals for the residential development will make a 30% affordable housing contribution of the correct tenure. The scheme does make a valuable contribution towards affordable housing which will be secured through a Section 106 agreement.

The proposed development will make a full education contribution and makes an on-site contribution for POS and ROS and a financial contribution towards indoor sport provision therefore it is considered that the proposal makes a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of the future residents of the dwellings and the wider area.

Overall the provision of a reasonable mix of housing to be determined at the reserved matters stage, for the community as part of a large strategic allocation along with on site affordable housing and education and open space and outdoor recreation contributions which can be provided by the development are considered to be socially sustainable.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Highways**

This is an outline application for up to 260 dwellings and the details to be determined are the access details only and not the internal layout of the site.

There is one main access point to the site and this will be via a new roundabout created at the existing junction of Northwich Road/Sudlow Lane. The main spine road is 6.75m wide with a footway/cycleway on both sides of the access.

The capacity of the new roundabout/site access has been assessed and is shown to operate well within capacity with the development traffic added in both 2021 and 2026. The provision of a new roundabout access to serve the development is accepted and can operate without resulting in undue congestion problems.

### Development Impact

The traffic impact of the development has been discussed with the applicant and the principal impact that the development will have is at the Canute Place roundabout. There are extensive queues in peak hours on the approaches to this roundabout that results in other inappropriate roads being used to avoid the junction. As this development would have a direct impact of the Canute Place roundabout, it is clear that if this development proposal can be supported a mitigation scheme is required at the junction that would at least mitigate the development traffic resulting from the development.

The applicant has submitted a further Technical Note that assesses the operational capacity of the existing junction using current traffic flow data and confirms that the junction is operating over capacity in all weekday periods and will worsen with the development traffic added.

To address the congestion issues at the junction a revised enlarged roundabout design has been submitted by the applicant and supported by a capacity model assessment. The design has been tested with the likely traffic generation from the north Knutsford LP sites added (Land north of Northwich Road, Land west of Manchester Road and Land east of Manchester

Road), the results indicate that the roundabout would operate within capacity in 2021 and at capacity in 2026.

As development proposals are required only to mitigate the impact of their development, the roundabout design submitted more than mitigates the traffic impact of the application and in regard to traffic impact the revised roundabout is considered acceptable.

In order to increase the capacity at the Canute Place roundabout, there is a requirement to reduce the number of arms that feed into the roundabout and the design submitted includes the closure of Gaskell Avenue to through traffic. In addition, the proposal includes the relocation the pedestrian crossings further away from the junction. It is likely that the location of the crossing on the King Edward Road arm would need to be closer to the junction than shown on layout plan due to the pedestrian desire lines.

### Site Accessibility

It is important that the site be linked to the footpath network and the new roundabout access does provide new footway/cycle facilities and will link with the existing footway network on Northwich Road. As the application is in outline the internal pedestrian/cycle links will be determined at reserved matters stage. There is a requirement that the site has a safe pedestrian link to the local schools that are located on the opposite side of Northwich Road that currently does not have any crossing facilities. Therefore, a new pedestrian crossing should be provided as part of the application and located on Northwich Road.

### Safeguarded land – Spine Road

The proposed access to this development site has been designed to accommodate the traffic generation from the safeguarded land that lies north of this site should they come forward. It is proposed that the internal site layout be designed so as to accommodate a future road link between Manchester Road and Northwich Road. The new road link would reduce the number of development trips having to use the Canute Place roundabout.

### Summary and Conclusions

The details to be decided in this application relate to access only, it is important that the access provided is suitable to serve the development but also can provide access for the safeguarded land in the Local Plan. The roundabout proposed is of a scale that can accommodate the future levels of traffic that is expected to be generated by the new developments and as such there are no objections to the access proposal.

The principal traffic impact of the development is at the Canute Place roundabout that has existing traffic congestion problems. To mitigate the impact that traffic associated with the development would have at this roundabout a new larger roundabout scheme has been submitted. CEC has identified this junction in the Local Plan as a key node that requires improvements to accommodate the planned development in Knutsford, the scheme submitted is capable of providing capacity to allow the north Knutsford development sites to come forward.

In summary, it is considered that the proposed new roundabout scheme will mitigate the development traffic impact and as such is accepted. As there are a number of developments in the north west area of Knutsford it is preferable if the development provides a financial

contribution of £353,000 to a final scheme designed by CEC at this junction. In addition, a contribution of £60,000 to a signal controlled pedestrian crossing on Northwich Road.

Subject to the contributions being secured in a S106 Agreement there are no objections raised to the development.

### **Public Rights of Way/Access**

The development does not appear to affect a Public Right of Way recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement, the legal record of Public Rights of Way.

Proposed developments should present an opportunity to deliver and improve walking, cycling and equestrian facilities for transport and leisure purposes, both within the proposed development site and in providing access to local facilities for education, employment, health etc. These aims are stated within the policies and initiatives of the Council's statutory Local Transport Plan and Rights of Way Improvement Plan and also within the Local Plan Strategic Priority 2.

The application documents describe facilities for pedestrians and cyclists which would increase the permeability of the site to non-motorised users. The proposed routes for pedestrians and cyclists link the site with the existing highways network. The local user group Cycle Knutsford have identified key constraints on the network of routes for cyclists within the town, including the Canute Place roundabout and the A50 between Canute Place and the railway station.

One of these pedestrian/cyclists accesses is at the northeast of the site, presumably via Cheshire East Council owned land to Warren Street. The legal status, maintenance and specification of this route, and the finance for its construction, would need to be agreed with the Council and would be dealt with as a separate matter to the planning application.

Pedestrian and cyclist routes should be designed and constructed to best practice in terms of shared use or segregated infrastructure, accessibility and natural surveillance, set within green infrastructure corridors to create a sense of Quality of Place. Properties should have adequate and best practice cycle storage facilities and all highway designs should incorporate accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians.

As part of the proposals a condition is required that new residents are provided with information about local walking and cycling routes for both leisure and travel purposes, with key routes signposted.

Detailed pedestrian and cycle links through the site will be provided at the reserved matters stage.

### **Urban Design**

The proposal is outward facing and provides a green buffer to the edges, softening the appearance from the long views over the adjacent landscape.

The access seems in a logical place and the addition of a roundabout provides the opportunity for a gateway not only into the development, but into the town. The roundabout

will naturally slow the traffic, making pedestrian connectivity to adjacent sites (particularly Knutsford Academy, Leisure centre, Health provisions and central Knutsford) easier.

A change to the material on the main road could also further emphasise the gateway.

Connectivity throughout the site is good with pedestrian routes through to adjacent existing developments and future proofing the north/south route has been indicated.

### Density

The density is 30 units per hectare but the site appears to be able to withstand a small increase in numbers without losing the Green Infrastructure.

The placement of the sports field seems out of the way and may cause problems if local small clubs use this as a base with an influx of vehicles at the weekend; this is especially exacerbated with the position being to the northwest corner of the site with only one access to this part of the site.

The adjacent existing housing estate is predominantly 1930 stock semi-detached dwellings of two storeys. This is reflected in the layout with a number of the units being of a similar type.

The Council's urban design officer has commented on the proposals with regard to the detail of the illustrative layout which is a clear indication as to how the site could function at reserved matters stage. Whilst there are no objections as such at this stage in relation to the number of dwellings, in order to meet the requirement of the policies and with particular reference to the Cheshire East Design Guide, it may be at the reserved matters stage the numbers/house types will need to be reduced slightly, in order to accommodate features such as green infrastructure and to provide adequate gaps between buildings.

### Hierarchy of streets

Clear hierarchy of streets set by tree-lined landscape to the main spine road and front of plot tree planting. Illustrative street sections have been provided to demonstrate that this is possible.

The boundary treatment to the front of the properties can further enhance the hierarchy, with a more formal approach to the spine road and softer detailing to the rural/green edges of the site.

The set back of the units to the frontage is presented as uniform whereas a varied approach will be more distinctive, providing a clearer *genus loci*. Likewise the road layouts are linear in nature which results in a grid, potentially encouraging higher vehicle speeds.

### Form

Terraced blocks could benefit from diversity of form within the block – the length of the block may need to be reduced to 5 units to enable this. (The middle three blocks could be half a storey higher)

Units to the corner need to be dual fronted to avoid blank gable ends and lack of surveillance facing side boundary treatments.

## Materials

Cues are to be taken from the local character/vernacular (see design guide), not necessarily to create a pastiche but to create a site unique design.

## Parking

Good mix of on/off road parking solutions throughout.

Courtyard parking is not an ideal solution if not gated/and or over looked. Spatially the courtyards are very tight and not always provision for landscape.

Parking provision for the allotment – condition to provide for local residents to restrict car journey and minimise parking provision requirements.

## Affordable housing and mix

The units need to be pepper potted around the proposal and be detailed with the same quality as the rest of the development to ensure tenure blindness. The usual ‘tell’ with affordable housing is that the parking is commonly to the front of the units which make the car a dominant feature of the street scene. A more acceptable solution would be to break up the parking with soft landscaping.

The larger units are located in the same area and could do with being mixed in with the smaller units to provide a more diverse community.

Overall the proposed development pushes the recommended units from 175 to 260. The reserved matters application will be required to address the above points in terms of the detailed layout of the site. Overall the scheme is considered to be acceptable at this outline stage.

## **Landscape Impact**

As part of the application a Landscape and Visual and Green Belt Impact Assessment has been submitted, based upon the recommendations and methodology in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition published by The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment in April 2013 (GLVIA3).

The LVIA identifies the baseline landscape character at the national, regional and county and district level, in this case Landscape Type 10: Lower Farms and Woods, and specifically the Arley Character area (LFW3). The Assessment indicates that across the site, vegetation losses would be limited, with a number of breaches to existing hedgerows and the loss of six trees. In terms of the visual impacts the assessment indicates that there would be limited adverse effects from the wider landscape to the south, west and north, and that the most adverse effects would be on those residential properties located to the east and south of the site. It should however be noted that the effects have been assessed taking into account the design parameters; if these parameters were to be changed or reduced, the effects may easily increase in adversity.

As the LVIA indicates, the site comprises roadway corridors and part of four fields, one being a very small fragment of a field to the north, and that the site has a gentle fall from the north western area to the east and the south and a small ridge along the western part of the site area. The assessment notes that the site is bound with hedgerows of native species, but with no hedgerow trees along the western boundary or along the southern Northwich Road

boundary. The assessment indicates that the hedgerows within the site are of medium-high value and that the hedgerows around the site are of medium-high sensitivity, that trees within the site are of high value and are of medium –high sensitivity to the type of development proposed. those around the site. Whilst there is broad agreement with the LVIA, it is not agreed that the site is more closely associated with the urban area than the wider landscape to the west; while the presence of the urban area to the east is visible, the site clearly forms part of the wider rural landscape.

This is an outline application for up to 260 dwellings, and while the submission includes a Green Infrastructure Parameters Plan (Drawing No: RG-M-09), a Masterplan (Drawing RG-M15) and an Illustrative Layout (Drawing RG-M-17) and reference to the Cheshire East Design Guide, it is important that as the proposals develop the Cheshire East Design Guide is followed closely so that the proposals do create a sense of place based on an enhance and coherent green infrastructure and achieve the aims as described in the submitted Design and Access statement.

No landscape objections are raised in respect of the application.

### **Trees**

The site is identified as a strategic site within the LPS (LPS 36A) Land North of Northwich Road. The allocation requires site specific principles for provision of buffer planting adjacent to Toll House on Northwich Road, a comprehensive landscape scheme that retains existing mature trees and hedgerows where possible (or appropriate mitigation) and provision of new woodland belt. The justification requires any development to include the retention of valued trees and hedgerows, to contain development, provide habitat for wildlife and to respect the setting of Tatton Park.

The Macclesfield Borough Council (Knutsford – War Memorial Hospital) Tree Preservation Order 1992 protects groups of trees within the former War Memorial Hospital on Northwich Road locate adjacent to the site to the south.

The application is supported by a Tree Survey and Impact Assessment based upon the recommendations in BS5837:2012..

The Tree Survey identifies 61 individual trees within and immediately adjacent to the site, 3 groups of trees (those located offsite and protected by the TPO) and 6 Hawthorn hedgerows. The Impact Assessment states that only trees affected by the proposed road junction (roundabout) will be affected. Nine individual trees and two sections of hedgerow are proposed to be removed either side of Sudlow Lane and along the northern section of Northwich Road. Of these, five trees are mature Oak which are classified as Moderate (B) category specimens in accordance with BS5837:2012 Tree Quality Assessment contributing to the landscape quality of the area. The remaining trees comprising of Holly, Oak and Elm are deemed to be low (C) category or have been classified as Category (U) whereby by virtue of their condition they cannot be realistically retained. These losses, whilst having a local adverse impact shall need to be considered in terms of the overall planning balance. In this regard the indicative layout suggests that there is adequate scope for new planting both around the new roundabout and within the site to potentially offset these impacts.

Existing protected trees located offsite within the former War Memorial Hospital Site are unaffected by the proposals

The illustrative layout provides areas of green infrastructure around the boundaries of the site which will provide for the retention of existing trees that are located to the eastern and northern boundary of the site. It is noted that the proposed SUDS is to be incorporated within these areas and consequently the rooting environment of existing trees need to be taken into consideration in the overall design.

The arboricultural officer has raised no objections subject to a condition.

### **Ecology**

#### Designated Sites

This application falls within Natural England's SSSI Impact risk zones. An 'assessment of likely significant effects' under the Habitat Regulations has been completed by the applicant and submitted in support of this application. The submitted assessment concludes that the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites.

It is noted that Natural England have been consulted on this application and raised no objections in respect of statutory designated sites.

It is advised that the Council adopts the Assessment of Likely Effects prepared by the applicant and the planning officers report should state that no likely effects on the Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites are likely and that an appropriate assessment under the Habitat regulations is not required.

#### Great Crested Newts

A pond is located adjacent to the northern boundary of the application site. No evidence of great crested newts was recorded as part of the amphibian survey undertaken as part of the submitted ecological assessment.

The submitted report states that the amphibian surveys were undertaken under suitable weather conditions, and confirmation of this has been received from the applicant's ecological consultant. It is therefore advised that this species is not likely to be present or affected by the proposed development.

#### Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a priority habitat and hence a material consideration.

It is likely that the proposed development will result in the loss of sections of hedgerow to facilitate the site access points and the proposed roundabout. In the event that planning permission is granted it must be ensured that sufficient hedgerow planting is incorporated into the detailed design produced at the reserved matters stage to compensate for that lost.

#### Bats

A number of trees with bat roost potential were identified as part of the submitted ecological assessment. Suitable trees anticipated as being lost as part of the development of the site were subject to a climbing survey which did not identify any evidence of roosting bats.

Whilst no impacts on roosting bats are anticipated at this stage it is possible that the status of roosting bats on site may change following the grant of planning permission and the impacts on the identified trees would depend on the detailed design proposed at the reserved matters stage.

It is therefore recommended that in the event that planning permission is granted a condition should be attached which requires an updated bat survey to be undertaken in support of any future reserved matters application of any trees to be removed as part of the development.

Whilst no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the tree survey, common bat species do commute and forage around the site to some extent. To avoid any adverse impacts on bats resulting from any lighting associated with the development I recommend that if planning permission is granted a condition should be attached requiring any additional lighting to be agreed with the LPA as part of the reserved matters application.

Any proposed lighting should be low level and directional and the design of the lighting scheme informed by the advice in Bats and lighting in the UK- bats and the built environment series, (Bat Conservation Trust, 2009).

### Badgers

Two minor badger setts were recorded outside of the application site boundary. It is advised that these setts are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.

The proposed development will result in the localised loss of badger foraging habitat. It is recommended that this loss could be partly compensated through the incorporation of fruit trees into the landscaping scheme for the site. It is recommended that this matter be dealt with by means of a condition in the event that planning permission is granted.

As the status of badgers can change in a short time scale it is recommended that in the event that outline planning permission is granted a condition should be attached which requires any future reserved matters application to be supported by an updated badger survey.

### Birds

A range of bird species have been recorded during the submitted survey including a number of species considered to be a priority for nature conservation.

The retention of hedgerows would assist with mitigating the impacts of the scheme on some species, however there would still be a loss of habitat for ground nesting birds associated with open habitats. To compensate for this impact the applicant is proposing to provide off site compensatory habitat for ground nesting birds and to commit to managing this for a period of 10 years. It is advised that this approach is acceptable. In the event that planning permission is granted a condition securing this is required.

### Polecat and hedgehog

These two priority species have been recorded in the broad locality of the application site and may occur on the application site on a transitory basis. The application site is however unlikely to be of any particular importance for these species. A condition is recommended in respect of this.

## Ecological Enhancement

This planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate features to increase the biodiversity value of the final development. It is therefore recommended that if outline planning permission is granted a condition should be attached which requires the submission of an ecological enhancement strategy in support of any future reserved matters application. The strategy should include proposals for the provision of features for nesting birds and roosting bats, a wildlife pond and native species planting.

## Japanese Knotweed

The applicant should be aware that Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is present on the proposed development site. Under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence to cause Japanese Knotweed to grow in the wild. Japanese knotweed may be spread simply by means of disturbance of its rhizome system, which extends for several meters around the visible parts of the plant and new growth can arise from even the smallest fragment of rhizome left in the soil as well as from cutting taken from the plant.

Disturbance of soil on the site may result in increased growth of Japanese Knotweed on the site. If the applicant intends to move any soil or waste off site, under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 any part of the plant or any material contaminated with Japanese Knotweed must be disposed of at a landfill site licensed to accept it and the operator should be made aware of the nature of the waste.

## **Amenity**

In order for the proposals to be acceptable, it is important that they do not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of existing residents and that the development is not located within an area which would harm the amenities of future residents, or the proposals would not cause undue harm by overlooking, loss of light or loss of privacy to future or existing residents.

## Aircraft Noise

The most recent 'Average Summer Day' aircraft noise contour plan, have been obtained from Manchester International Airport Planning Department for summer 2016. The government treats the 57dB LAeq 16 hour contour as the average level of daytime aircraft noise marking the approximate onset of significant community annoyance.

The application site is located outside the aviation noise contours giving rise to concern. Therefore aviation noise impact (as detailed in summer 2016 aircraft noise contour plan) at this location is not a material planning consideration.

## Traffic noise impact – Northwich Road (A5033)

Provided that the noise mitigation measures as detailed in the supporting noise impact assessment are applied in order to meet BS8233 and WHO noise limits; it is considered, that there should be no adverse impacts on quality of life resulting from road traffic and commercial noise at this location affecting future occupants.

The site is subject to amenable road and commercial noise impact. On balance, it is considered that the proposed location is suitable for the promotion of residential development. As the final layout of the site has yet not been confirmed; a detailed scheme of appropriate:

- acoustic glazing,
- acoustically treated ventilation and
- localised noise barriers

to reduce the noise from traffic in the worst affected outdoor living areas to Northwich Road, shall be prepared and submitted at the Reserved Matters application stage.

## Air Quality

Air quality impacts have been considered within the air quality assessment submitted in support of the application by BWB Consulting dated May 2017. The report considers whether the development will result in increased exposure to airborne pollutants, particularly as a result of additional traffic and changes to traffic flows. The assessment uses ADMS Roads to model NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> impacts from additional traffic associated with this development and the cumulative impact of committed development within the area.

A number of modelled scenarios have been considered within the assessment. These were:

- 2016 baseline – model verification
- 2021 without development
- 2021 with development

It should be noted that the report uses diffusion tubes CE40 and CE45 for its verification and the values attributed to them for the year in use (2014) is 33.4 and 31.1µg/m<sup>3</sup> respectively. These figures are marginally different than the most up to date figures for these tubes from 2014 which stand at 31.53 and 28.93 µg/m<sup>3</sup> respectively. Whilst these differences are significant, the actual data used is effectively an over-prediction of the developments effects and can be considered a worst case scenario. It should also be noted that the assessment uses a different year for the meteorological data than that of the diffusion tubes, although it is highly unlikely the use of the same year for both would alter the overall conclusions.

The assessment concludes that the impact of the future development on the chosen receptors will be negligible with regards to both NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations, with one of the receptors experiencing a slight adverse effect for NO<sub>2</sub> and the rest a negligible effect. However, one of the receptors, R5, is located within the nearby AQMA and it is this department's opinion that any increase in concentrations within an AQMA is considered significant as it is directly converse to our local air quality management objectives, the NPPF and the Council's Air Quality Action Plan.

Also there is a need for the Local Planning Authority to consider the cumulative impact of a large number of developments in a particular area. In particular, the impact of transport related emissions on Local Air Quality. Taking into account the uncertainties with modelling, the impacts of the development could be significantly worse than predicted.

Knutsford has an Air Quality Management Area, and as such the cumulative impact of developments in the town is likely to make the situation worse, unless managed.

Poor air quality is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the public and also has a negative impact on the quality of life for sensitive individuals. It is therefore considered appropriate that mitigation should be sought in the form of direct measures to reduce the adverse air quality impact. The report also states that the developer should implement an adequate demolition and construction dust control plan to protect sensitive receptors from

impacts during this stage of the proposal and there has also been a Travel Plan submitted in support of the development.

However further robust mitigation measures are required to reduce the impact on sensitive receptors in the area. Therefore, the scheme is required to provide electric vehicle charging points for each dwelling with off road car parking and dust mitigation.

### Contaminated Land

The Contaminated Land team has no objection to the above application subject to the following comments with regard to contaminated land:

The application area has a history of agriculture including ponds which may have been infilled and therefore the land may be contaminated.

This site is currently adjacent to a hospital with tanks within its grounds therefore there is the potential for contamination of the site and the wider environment to have occurred.

The application is for new residential properties which are a sensitive end use and could be affected by any contamination present or brought onto the site.

The Phase 1 Geo-environmental Assessment, produced by BWB, dated April 2017 submitted in support of the application recommends a ground investigation should be undertaken to confirm the ground model and quantify the identified pollutant linkages.

Conditions are require in respect of contaminated land in order to make the development acceptable.

### Residential

The internal layout is not set at this stage by the outline application and will be dealt with at the reserved matters stage. The nearest existing residential dwellings to the proposed development are located on the eastern edge of the development. The eastern edge of the development has a buffer zone of 50m with neighbours at Warren Avenue and Spinney Lane which is a considerable distance from neighbouring dwellings. It is considered that the distances from dwellings on the opposite side of Northwich Road is sufficient with a set back of at least 15m from the road.

Therefore the proposals accord with policy DC3 of the Macclesfield Borough which aims to protect the amenity of existing and prospective residents of dwellings.

### **Flood Risk**

It is important that new developments are not at risk from flooding, or that the development itself would not exacerbate flooding in an area. The Flood Risk Team has commented that they have no objections in principle to the proposals, however we would request that the applicant submits finalised plans that propose a sustainable drainage system that does not increase the risk of flooding on or off site, which can be secured by a pre-commencement condition. The applicant should look to introduce flood risk management techniques to protect the private properties along the eastern boundary of the site in the event of the proposed swales overflowing in an intense storm event.

United Utilities has commented on the application and raised no objections to the proposals. No objections have been raised in relation to flooding and drainage subject to suitably worded conditions.

## **Environmental sustainability conclusions**

It is considered that the proposed development is environmentally sustainable. The proposed design of the site is acceptable, there are conditions required in respect environmental matters raised above. It is considered that the proposal is environmentally sustainable subject to a suite of conditions and planning obligations to secure highway improvements.

## **ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Employment**

The proposed development will provide employment in the short term during the construction phase of the development in the area.

### **Economy of the wider area**

The addition of 260 units within the town will undoubtedly boost the economy in the local area through the increased use of shops and services making them more sustainable, which is especially important in Knutsford Town Centre to be sustainable into the future. Additional population can create more demand for local services, increasing the likelihood that they will be retained into the future and improvements and investment made.

## **Economic sustainability conclusions**

The proposals will result in additional employment in the short term through the construction of the site along with an economic boost locally through the increase in population to this area of the town. It is considered that the proposals will make efficient use of the site which is part of a wider strategic allocation.

## **Section 106 agreement**

The following planning obligations have been required through the application process:

- Provision of 78 affordable units.
- Educational contribution of £136,500 towards SEN places.
- Allotments to be provided
- Recreation open space secured + management
- Public open space on site provision secured
- £353,000 to a final scheme designed by CEC for Canute Place junction.
- £60,000 to a signal controlled pedestrian crossing on Northwich Road
- £34,500 towards fitness equipment at Knutsford Leisure Centre

A total of 548,000 agreed.

NHS England have stated that a contribution will be required towards healthcare facilities in order to mitigate the harm caused by the increased population, however the final figure will be reported to committee by way of an update.

## **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations**

In order to comply with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010, it is necessary for planning applications with legal agreements to consider the issue of whether the requirements within the S106 satisfy the following: a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; a) Directly related to the development; and b) Fair and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. It is considered that the contributions required as part of the application are justified meet the Council's requirement for policy compliance particularly given the policy requirements of the allocation. The non-financial requirements ensure that the development will be delivered in full. On this basis the S106 the scheme is compliant with the CIL Regulations 2010.

## **Representations**

A large number of representations have been received in relation to the application, with strong objections in relation to the increased numbers. This matter has been addressed as part of the officer's report. Many representations relate to the increased pressure housing will put on the road network, which is problematic in Knutsford. However the proposals are considered to be acceptable in relation to highways matters subject to mitigation to be delivered to ease pressure on Canute Place.

There were also objections relating to flooding, loss of agricultural land, and particularly the impact on existing services such as doctors surgeries, and schools, which a site of 260 dwellings would inevitably do, however these matters can be effectively mitigated through financial contributions. Therefore are not reasons to withhold planning permission, especially in outline stage on an allocated site.

Due to the sustainable location of the development, walking and the use of public transport is a realistic option which could reduce the demand of the private car on the site. Those comments relating to this scheme and its merits have been addressed in the main body of the report.

Having taken into account all of the representations received including internal and external consultation responses, the material considerations raised have been addressed within the main body of the report.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that should be approved without delay unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The site forms part of a strategic allocation for the North West Knutsford. Whilst the proposal does see an increase in numbers it is considered that the site can accommodate this and mitigation ensures that the town can accommodate the additional 85 units. It is considered that the proposed development accords with the Local Plan policy relating to its allocation by providing housing. The applicant is providing contributions required in order to make the development acceptable and is providing the full amount of affordable housing on site which is essential in order to make developments sustainable in the future.

The proposals are environmental, socially and economically sustainable and accord with the development plan and the framework. The site is sustainably located within the town and the proposals represent an efficient use of the land.

Cheshire East is currently able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing however this proposal will make a valuable contribution in maintaining this position.

It is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development and accords with the development plan policies mentioned in the policies section of this report and national planning policy and guidance. Therefore for the reasons mentioned above the application is recommended for approval.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Approve subject to a S106 planning obligation to secure**

- **Provision of 78 affordable units.**
- **Educational contribution of £136,500 towards SEN places.**
- **Allotments to be provided**
- **Recreation open space secured + management**
- **Public open space on site provision secured**
- **£353,000 to a final scheme designed by CEC for Canute Place junction.**
- **£60,000 to a signal controlled pedestrian crossing on Northwich Road**
- **£34,500 towards fitness equipment at Knutsford Leisure Centre**

**and the following conditions**

1. Outline time limit
2. Reserved matters to be submitted, to include landscaping, scale, layout, appearance
3. Phasing plan to be submitted as part of reserved matters
4. Approved Plan and document condition
5. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a full detailed drainage strategy detailing on and off site drainage works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The strategy shall include a detailed maintenance regime of the proposed system. The strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before completion of the development. Thereafter the drainage system shall be retained, managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.
6. Foul and surface water to be drained on separate systems.
7. Any future reserved matters application shall be supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan in accordance with para 5.4 and 5.5 of BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction Recommendations.
8. Each phase of the development hereby approved shall incorporate a mix of units of -
  - 1 bed and/or 2 bed dwellings – between 10% and 30% of the number of dwellings
  - 3 bed dwellings – between 20% and 40% of the number of dwellings
  - 4 bed and/or 5 bed dwellings – between 20% and 40% of the number of dwellings, and

- a minimum of 5 % of the units shall be bungalows or units for single storey living.

The 1st reserved matters application shall provide a strategy for the distribution of all the housing across the site in accordance with these parameters. Thereafter the housing on each phase of development shall accord with the housing mix details provided unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority

9. Major development construction phase environmental management plan
10. At the reserved matters stage a noise impact report shall be submitted demonstrating that the residential properties can achieve:  
BS8233:2014:
  - Internal ambient noise levels for dwellings and
  - Design criteria for external noise
  - WHO 1999 Guidelines for Community Noise 45 dB LAmax for inside bedrooms.
11. Hours of Construction
12. Piling method statement to be submitted
13. Dust control method statement
14. Prior to first occupation, a Residents' Travel Information Pack shall be submitted to and agreed by the LPA.
15. Electric vehicle charging point for every dwelling with dedicated off road parking
16. Phase II Ground investigation to be completed
17. Imported soils to be tested for contamination.
18. Reporting of unexpected contamination.
19. Broadband connection to be made available to all dwellings
20. Any future reserved matters application to be supported by a strategy for the creation of habitat suitable for ground nesting priority bird species. These proposals to be supported by a 10 year management plan. Proposals to include the following unless agreed in writing by the LPA:
  - Habitat creation to be located on either arable land or temporary grassland in winter cereal fields with open aspects.
  - Habitat creation plots a minimum of 1ha and a maximum of 5ha in size, in fields which must be a minimum of 5ha (or 10ha if woodland forms at least a quarter of the field boundary)
  - Creation of the cultivated plots to be completed by 20 March each year
  - Plots must be at least 100m away from woods, in-field and hedgerow trees, buildings, overhead power-lines, main roads and public rights of way, and at least 200m away from wind turbines.
  - Where natural regeneration covers more than 70% of the plot by 30 April, restoration of suitable bare-ground nesting habitats to be undertaken.
  - Habitat creation areas retained until 31 July each year.The agreed strategy to be implemented in full.
- 21 Updated bat and badger surveys to be undertaken and submitted in support of any future reserved matters application.
22. Reserved matters application to be supported by detailed specification for any additional lighting. Lighting to be designed so as to minimise impacts on wildlife.
23. Reserved matters application landscaping scheme to include planting of fruit trees to provide an additional food source for badgers.
24. Reserved matters application to be supported by submission of a strategy for offsite habitat creation for ground nesting priority bird species.

25. Submission of ecological enhancement strategy – including provision for roosting bats and nesting birds, provision of a wildlife pond and native species planting.
26. Any future reserved matters application to be supported by proposals for the incorporation of gaps for hedgehogs to be incorporate into any garden or boundary fencing proposed. The gaps to be 10cm by 15cm and located at least every 5m.

*In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substances of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation) in consultation with the Chairman (or in their absence Vice Chairman) of the Strategic Planning Board to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, including wording of conditions and reasons, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice. Should the application be subject to any appeal, the following Heads of Terms should be secured as part of any S106 Agreement.*



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