

Application No: 19/0399M

Location: Hollytree Cottage, 52 Moss Lane, Styal, SK9 4LG

Proposal: Development of a car park associated with the operation of Manchester Airport, demolition of 48 and 52 Moss Lane with associated outbuildings, provision of a new landscaping belt, footpath and ecological mitigation

Applicant: Mr Andrew Cowan, Manchester Airport plc

Expiry Date: 12-Jul-2019

## **SUMMARY**

The proposal is considered to be an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, which reduces openness, encroaches into the countryside, and contributes to the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

The considerations in favour of the proposal, including the applicant's strategy to reduce the amount of kiss and fly / taxi journeys to the airport, the limitations of the existing public transport services, the operation of existing on site car parking facilities at capacity during the summer months, and the reduction of third party off site car parking options over recent years are considered to demonstrate that the car park is necessary for the operational efficiency and amenity of the airport in accordance with policy T23 of the MBLP. Compliance with this policy is considered to amount to the required very special circumstances to outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt.

The visual amenity of the Green Belt will be adequately maintained, and the proposal will not result in any significant injury to the amenity of nearby residential properties. The impacts on ecology have been satisfactorily addressed, and in some cases enhanced. The proposal is not considered to generate any adverse traffic or highway safety issues. The visual and landscape impacts of the development are acceptable. No significant environmental effects have been identified.

The proposal is therefore considered to be a sustainable form of development under the definition of The Framework.

Consequently, for the reasons outlined above, there are not considered to be any significant adverse impacts that would outweigh the presumption in favour of sustainable development in this case. Therefore, the application is recommended for approval subject to the satisfactory receipt of outstanding consultee responses, consultation with the Secretary of State (due to the scale of the proposal in the Green Belt), and conditions.

## **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

Approve subject to conditions

## **REASON FOR REPORT**

The application has been referred to Committee because the site area exceeds 2 hectares and under the Council's Constitution such an application is required to be determined by Planning Committee.

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site comprises two residential properties, one of which is vacant, and a paddock with stable building, all located to the south of the site. To the centre and north, the site is relatively open with some overgrown coniferous plantation former nursery stock present. The site is bordered to the north and west by existing surface parking serving the airport, and Moss Lane to the south. The application site extends to 2.9 hectares in area and is located within the Operational Area of Manchester Airport and the Green Belt as identified in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

This application seeks full planning permission to demolish 48 and 52 Moss Lane and their associated outbuildings, and construct an extension to an existing surface car park comprising 800 spaces associated with the operation of Manchester Airport with a new landscaping belt, footpath and ecological mitigation. The car park will operate 24 hours a day, and customers will self-park and then board buses to access the terminals.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

05/2968P - DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SURFACE CAR PARK AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPE WORKS – Refused 27.02.2006, Appeal dismissed 04.07.2007

18/3657M - Prior notification of a proposed demolition of a dwelling unit named Holly Cottage – Prior approval not required 29.08.2018

## **POLICIES**

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)**

Relevant policies of the CELPS include:

MP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

PG1 Overall Development Strategy

SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 Sustainable Development Principles

IN1 Infrastructure

IN2 Developer Contributions

SC1 Leisure and Recreation

SE1 Design

SE2 Efficient use of land

SE3 Biodiversity and geodiversity

SE4 The Landscape

SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE6 Green Infrastructure  
SE12 Pollution, land contamination and land stability  
SE13 Flood risk and water management  
CO1 Sustainable travel and transport  
CO3 Digital connections  
CO4 Travel plans and transport assessments

**Macclesfield Borough Local Plan saved policies (MBLP)**

NE11 Nature conservation  
NE17 Nature conservation in major developments  
GC1 Green Belt  
T20 Impact of Airport on Green Belt  
T21 Airport related development  
T23 Airport Operational Area  
DC3 Residential Amenity  
DC6 Circulation and Access  
DC8 Landscaping  
DC9 Tree Protection  
DC14 Noise  
DC63 Contaminated land

**Other Material Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)  
National Planning Practice Guidance

Styal Neighbourhood Plan

The Styal Neighbourhood Plan has reached Regulation 7 (Neighbourhood Area Designation) stage. No draft plan or policies are currently available; therefore no weight can be afforded to it.

**CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)**

Manchester Airport (safeguarding) – No objection subject to conditions relating to bird hazard management plan, lighting and glint and glare assessment.

Environment Agency – No objection

United Utilities – No objection subject to development being carried out in accordance with the submitted drainage design drawing.

Health & Safety Executive – No comments received

Cheshire Constabulary – No comments received

Manchester City Council – No comments received

Environmental Health – No objection subject to condition relating to contaminated land

Flood Risk Manager – Comments awaited

Strategic Infrastructure Manager – No objection

Public Rights of Way - It appears unlikely that the proposal would affect the public right of way

Styal Parish Council – No comments received

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

None received

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Green Belt**

Paragraph 146 of the Framework and policy PG3 of the CELPS identify engineering operations and local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location as forms of development that are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, subject to them preserving the openness of the Green Belt and not conflicting with the purposes of including land within it.

Saved policy T20 of the MBLP relates specifically to airport related development in the Green Belt and states that *“the Borough Council will seek to minimise the impact of the airport within the Green Belt and development will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances, in accordance with the Borough Council's policies”*.

Further to this, saved policy T21 of the MBLP states that *“Airport-related development other than that referred to in policy T20 will not be permitted. The Borough Council will encourage development to be located within the airport operational area or within nearby urban areas where this is compatible with other local plan policies”*.

The car park would provide 800 new parking spaces and the hard surfacing would cover an area of approximately 2 hectares. Whilst the existing buildings on the site would be demolished, these only occupy a very small part of the existing site, with the majority currently undeveloped. Such a scale of development within this context would significantly reduce the openness of the Green Belt, and would conflict with two of the purposes of Green Belts, namely safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. The proposal is therefore considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 144 of the Framework advises that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The applicant has put forward a number of material considerations in favour of the proposal, which they consider do amount to the required very special circumstances to outweigh the identified harm. These are explored in detail later in this report.

## **Landscape / character**

CELPs policy SE4 states that all development should conserve the landscape character and quality and where possible enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and manmade features that contribute to local distinctiveness of both rural and urban landscapes. Policy SD2 of the CELPS expects all development to contribute positively to an area's character and identity, and reinforce local distinctiveness.

The existing site comprises two residential properties, one of which is vacant, and a paddock with stable building, all located to the south of the site. To the centre and north, the site is relatively open with some overgrown coniferous plantation former nursery stock present. Airport operations are evident to the north and west of the site due to the presence of the existing Jet Parks 3 car park serving the airport.

The proposed development comprises loose bound granular material for parking areas with tarmac running lanes to match the adjoining car park and paladin fencing to the car park boundaries, also to match the existing. The northern and western boundaries will border the existing car park, and a landscaped buffer ranging from 13m to 34m in depth is proposed along the southern and eastern boundaries, providing a softer edge to the wider Green Belt.

The application includes a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment third edition. The appraisal considers eight photo viewpoints within the zone of theoretical visibility which show that the site is generally well screened by vegetation within the wider landscape and along its southern and eastern boundaries.

The appraisal does not include a viewpoint from Moss Lane directly in front of the proposed development, however visualisations of the existing view, at year 1, at year 7 and at year 15 have been provided, which illustrate that views of the development from Moss Lane would be largely screened or filtered after 15 years.

The LVIA concludes that:

*"Important landscape and visual effects of the proposed development are much localised and are during construction and year one. No important effects remain by year fifteen. It is considered that due to the appropriate screening and sympathetic retention of existing vegetation along the southern and eastern boundaries as part of the landscape and ecology mitigation plan, the proposed development would result in acceptable changes in landscape character and visual amenity".*

Whilst there will be a significant change to the character of the application site, the proposal is an extension to a substantial car park, which borders the site to the north and west. The most sensitive views of the site will be from the south and east, and the conclusions of the LVIA are broadly accepted. However, whilst the landscape proposals are generally acceptable, landscape conditions are recommended to secure amendments to the landscaping to include the filling of gaps along the Moss Lane frontage with hedging (such as Holly) and some standard trees - to improve screening from the outset. Minor amendments to the proposed native hedgerow mix are also required and further details should be submitted for the proposed pond, fencing planting, footpath, bridge, benches etc. Subject to these conditions, the proposal is considered to comply with policies SE4 and SD2 of the CELPS.

## **Living conditions**

The objectives of policy SE12 of the CELPS include seeking to ensure all development is located and designed so as not to result in a harmful or cumulative impact upon noise or light pollution which would unacceptably affect the natural and built environment, or detrimentally affect amenity or cause harm.

Policy DC3 of the MBLP seeks to protect the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential properties, and policy DC13 of the MBLP states that noise generating developments which cumulatively would increase the ambient noise level to an unacceptable level, will not normally be permitted.

## Air Quality

In terms of air quality, the site is located in an area that is dominated by the airport and associated operations, including car parking, all of which will have an impact upon air quality by their very nature. An air quality assessment has been submitted with the application, which identifies that both the construction and operation phases of the development will have a negligible impact upon local air quality. The proposed car park is a relatively modest extension to an existing facility and is not considered to result in any significant impact upon air quality. Environmental Health has also raised no objections in terms of air quality, noting that the proposal is also not suitable for electric vehicle charging due to its use as a long stay car park, and as such so cars will not be able to be left charging for that length of time.

## Noise

The nearest residential properties are located on Moss Lane. Number 46 lies immediately adjacent to the south east boundary of the application site, and is the nearest receptor to any noise arising from the car park. The proposed layout plans show a 13m wide landscape buffer to the eastern boundary and therefore any car parking will be over 13m from this neighbour's boundary. It is also important to note that there will not be any access to the proposed car park from Moss Lane. All vehicles accessing the site will use the existing access from Hollin Lane, which serves the wider car park, and therefore vehicles will approach the site from the north, away from the nearest residential properties. Consequently, whilst there will be some noise associated with the comings and goings within the car park, potentially 24 hours a day, it is considered that the extent to which it will impact upon the living conditions of 46 Moss Lane, will be limited given the long stay nature of the car park and the distance to this property. A submitted noise assessment also confirms that there will be no significant impact upon this neighbour.

The properties at 66-88 Moss Lane, lie further to the south of the site and the proposed development comes no closer to these dwellings than the existing car park. As such there should be no greater impact upon these properties.

## Lighting

Lighting is proposed to the car park area, and a condition is recommended requiring the submission of the lighting detail to ensure the proposed lighting has an acceptable impact upon neighbouring properties.

## Living conditions conclusions

Subject to the condition relating to lighting above, the proposal will not have a significant impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring properties. The development therefore complies with policy SE12 of the CELPS, and policies DC3 and DC13 of the MBLP.

## **Ecology**

Policy SE3 of the CELPS and policy NE11 of the MBLP seek to protect and enhance areas of biodiversity and geodiversity. A number of ecological surveys and reports have been submitted with the application, and the following matters are relevant to the proposal. It should also be noted that on and off site mitigation proposals are put forward. The offsite mitigation relates to an area of airport owned land to the south of the application site, to the west of Wilkins Lane, between Holly Lane and Moss Lane, and includes proposals for hedgerow and tree planting, wildflower meadow, earth mounds, and ponds and habitats for newts.

## **Bats**

A bat roost was recorded at one of the existing dwellings on site (Hollytree Cottage, 52 Moss Lane) during the bat activity surveys. An internal inspection of the building has also now been completed; however this was constrained by health and safety issues.

Evidence of bat activity in the form of a minor roost of a relatively common bat species has been recorded within the building proposed for demolition. The usage of the building by bats is likely to be limited to single-small numbers of animals using the buildings for relatively short periods of time during the year and there is no evidence to suggest a significant maternity roost is present. The loss of the roosts associated with the buildings on this site, in the absence of mitigation, is likely to have a low impact upon bats at the local level and a low impact upon the conservation status of the species as a whole.

Article 12 (1) of the EC Habitats Directive requires Member states to take requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection of certain animal species prohibiting the deterioration or destruction of breeding sites and resting places.

In the UK, the Habitats Directive is transposed as The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. This requires the local planning authority to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive so far as they may be affected by the exercise of those functions.

It should be noted that since a European Protected Species has been recorded on site and is likely to be adversely affected by the proposed development, the planning authority must consider the three tests in respect of the Habitats Directive, i.e. (i) that there is no satisfactory alternative, (ii) that the development is of overriding public interest, and (iii) the favourable conservation status of the species will be maintained. Evidence of how the LPA has considered these issues will be required by Natural England prior to them issuing a protected species license.

## **Alternatives**

Due to the necessity for the car parking to be relatively proximate to the airport, and the planning constraints of surrounding land, there are no known alternatives.

### *Overriding public interest*

The proposed development will meet an identified need for car parking serving the airport within the operational area of the airport. The provision of car parking within the operational area is linked to broader objectives of promoting sustainable methods of transport to the site. The actual or perceived lack of capacity within the operational area is a material consideration often put forward by unauthorised operators. Increasing this capacity will be in the wider public interest by helping to undermine this argument.

### *Mitigation*

The submitted report recommends the installation of bat boxes on the nearby trees as a means of compensating for the loss of the roost and also recommends the supervision of the works to reduce the risk posed to any bats that may be present when the works are completed. The nature conservation officer advises that if planning consent is granted the proposed mitigation/compensation is acceptable and is likely to maintain the favourable conservation status of the species of bat concerned, and a condition is recommended to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted bat mitigation and compensation measures. The requirements of the Habitats Regulations are therefore met.

Light spill resulting from the lighting of the car park is likely to reduce the suitability of the application site and the proposed landscape ecological buffer for foraging and commuting bats. This effect is unlikely to be significant enough to result in an offence under the habitat regulations. This effect would be compensated for through the creation of the proposed offsite habitat creation area.

### Lighting

The lighting of the proposed car park has the potential to have a significant adverse impact on protected species, such as bats, badger and great crested newts and biodiversity in general around the site. The revised lux plan shows a general reduction in the light spill onto the adjacent landscape/ecological mitigation buffer area, however light levels are still high enough over part of the buffer to reduce its suitability for wildlife. Effects on the retained badger sett and biodiversity in general are discussed further below.

### Great Crested Newts

A medium population sized of great crested newts has been identified breeding at a pond located approximately 60m from the boundary of the proposed development. In the absence of mitigation and compensation the proposed development would have a Low - Medium scale adverse impact on this species as a result of the loss of suitable terrestrial habitat and the risk of newts being killed or injured during the construction process.

Once again, given that a European Protected Species has been recorded on site and is likely to be adversely affected by the proposed development, the planning authority must consider the three tests in respect of the Habitats Directive, i.e. (i) that there is no satisfactory alternative, (ii) that the development is of overriding public interest, and (iii) the favourable conservation status of the species will be maintained.

### *Alternatives*

Due to the necessity for the car parking to be relatively proximate to the airport, and the planning constraints of surrounding land, there are no known alternatives.



### *Overriding public interest*

The proposed development will meet an identified need for car parking serving the airport within the operational area of the airport. The provision of car parking within the operational area is linked to broader objectives of promoting sustainable methods of transport to the site. The actual or perceived lack of capacity within the operational area is a material consideration often put forward by unauthorised operators. Increasing this capacity will be in the wider public interest by helping to undermine this argument.

### *Mitigation*

The submitted ecological assessment provides only limited details of the impacts of the proposed development in terms of the extent of higher and lower quality great crested newt terrestrial habitat lost as a result of the proposed development and the extent and nature of compensatory habitat provided. Much of the proposed on site ecological mitigation area consists of existing habitats and so would not deliver an overall net gain in habitat for great crested newts. The submitted mitigation strategy for on site habitats therefore appears more to retain existing habitats with the addition of features such as additional hibernacula rather than deliver the creation of additional compensatory great crested newt terrestrial habitat.

The submitted layout plan shows a 'proposed pond' within the mitigation area. The submitted ecological assessment however states that one of the existing ponds on site would be retained and enhanced as part of the proposed development. This pond is located immediately adjacent to a proposed footpath and so would be subject to an increased risk of non-native invasive species and fish being introduced to the pond which would be to the detriment of great crested newts.

In order to provide sufficient compensation for great crested newts the applicant has now submitted proposals for the creation of habitat at an offsite location on land within control of the airport. The nature conservation officer advises that the delivery of the on and offsite mitigation and compensation would be sufficient to maintain the favourable conservation status of great crested newts. The requirements of the Habitats Regulations are therefore met.

### Ponds

Higher quality ponds are a national and local priority habitat and hence a material consideration. Two ponds are present on site, which will be lost as a result of the development. One of these was dry during the submitted surveys and has remained dry during follow up surveys and the second is an artificial, lined pond.

The submitted ecological assessment states that the ponds on site are not of priority habitat quality, however insufficient survey effort has been undertaken to justify this conclusion. The conclusion of the ecological assessment also conflicts with the preliminary ecological appraisal which states that the ponds are of Local BAP priority habitat quality. Notwithstanding this issue, a new pond is proposed on site and two new ponds proposed at the off site habitat creation location, which is an adequate level of compensation for that lost.

### Badgers

A number of badger setts are present on site. Based on the current layout it appears feasible for the existing main sett to be retained as part of the proposed development. This sett may

however potentially be affected by the lighting of the proposed car park. In order to reduce light spill onto the land in the vicinity of the sett, it is recommended that a tall close boarded fence be erected around the boundary of the car park in the vicinity of the retained sett.

It is likely that the other badgers setts present on site would be lost as a result of the proposed development. The applicant is proposing that these setts would be closed under the terms of a Natural England license. The submitted badger survey does however advise that 2.9ha of foraging habitat would be lost as a result of the proposed development. The nature conservation officer advises that this loss of foraging habitat is not considered to be significant, but some compensation should be provided through the provision of fruit trees around the periphery of the site. However, due to the proximity of the runway, fruit trees cannot be included as they may serve to attract birds, which would raise safeguarding issues for aircraft.

The precise nature of the impacts of the proposed development on badgers will depend on the levels of badger activity on site when works commence. A condition is therefore recommended requiring the submission of an updated badger survey prior to the commencement of development.

#### Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a priority habitat and hence a material consideration. The submitted ecological assessment states that lengths of hedgerow would be lost as a result of the proposed development and states that losses will be compensated for on a 2:1 basis. No information has been provided in the ecological assessment on the extent of hedgerows, however, extensive hedgerow creation is proposed at the offsite location and the applicant has confirmed that this is on the required 2:1 replacement ratio.

#### Semi-improved grassland

An area of semi-improved grassland was recorded in the south western corner of the site. Habitats of this type can have significant nature conservation value. This habitat was not however surveyed in detail due to safety concerns. Despite the lack of a detailed survey of this habitat, paragraph 5.2 of the ecological assessment states that this habitat is of moderate value and should be retained or replaced as part of the proposed development. This area of grassland would be lost as a result of the proposed development.

#### Hedgehog and common toad

No surveys have been completed for these two priority species. It is possible that these species could occur on site on at least an occasional basis. The development of a suitable great crested newt compensation strategy and the provision of replacement ponds on site would significantly reduce the severity of the impacts of the proposed development on toads, if present. The provision of features suitable for hedgehogs such as brash piles and replacement hedgerows would provide some compensation for the potential loss of habitat for hedgehog.

The ecological assessment also proposes that areas are hand searched for common toad and hedgehog prior to vegetation removal. This measure would reduce the risk of common toad and hedgehog being harmed during site clearance works. It is recommended that this is secured by condition.

### Breeding Birds

A number of bird species were recorded on site during the ecological surveys that have been undertaken to date. This included a small number of species which are regarded as priority species which are a material consideration for planning. Breeding bird activity on site was mostly associated with the existing hedgerows and boundary trees. Therefore, in order to avoid a loss of habitat for these species an adequate level of new hedgerow and scrub planting must be provided on or off site, which is now the case with the off site mitigation area. A condition is also recommended to safeguard nesting birds.

### Biodiversity Net Gain

CELPS policy SE3 (5) requires all development proposals to aim to deliver an overall benefit for biodiversity. In this case, given that the proposed development will result in the loss of the existing semi-improved grassland on site and areas of recent tree planting, in the absence of compensation it is likely that the proposed development would result in an overall loss of biodiversity.

In order to assess the residual ecological impacts of the proposed development the applicant has undertaken and submitted an assessment using the Defra biodiversity offsetting 'metric' methodology. This assessment shows that the proposed development, including on and offsite habitat creation proposals would deliver an overall gain for biodiversity.

### Management Plan

If planning consent is granted a condition is recommended which requires the submission of a 25 year habitat management plan. The management plan should include detailed proposals for the management of non-native invasive plant species and cover both on and off site habitat creation areas.

### Conclusion on ecological matters

The proposal will have an acceptable impact upon protected species, and through a combination of on and off site mitigation measures, the proposal will lead to an overall enhancement for biodiversity. It is therefore considered that the proposal is in accordance with policy SE3 of the CELPS and NE11 of the MBLP.

### **Trees**

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted with the application, which identifies 103 tree features within the site, 4 of which are High (A) category mature Oak which are proposed for retention. The extent of tree cover does make a significant contribution to the amenity and landscape character of the area.

Six individual trees and one group of trees assessed as Moderate (B) category, and 10 individual trees, 17 groups of trees, two hedges and part of one hedge categorised as Low (C) category all require removal to accommodate the proposed extension to the car park. The majority of the trees to be removed are located in the central and western sections of the site. The trees along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries are largely retained and will provide the green buffer to the site.

One individual tree (T23) and a group of trees (G22) will potentially be affected by the removal of hard surfacing and a dwelling which are situated within the Root Protection Areas

(RPA) of these features. The Assessment provides measures as part of a submitted Tree Protection Scheme on how this will be carried out without damage to root protection areas, which is broadly in compliance with BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations.

Policy SE5 of the CELPS states that the loss of trees that make a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character or historic character of the surrounding will not normally be permitted, except where there are clear overriding reasons for allowing the development and there are no suitable alternatives. In this case there is not considered to be any suitable alternatives either outside of the Green Belt or within the operational area of the airport, as is explained further below.

Where such impacts are unavoidable, policy SE5 maintains that development proposals must satisfactorily demonstrate a net environmental gain by appropriate mitigation, compensation or offsetting.

The Assessment indicates that tree removals will be mitigated with a high quality scheme of new planting as part of a detailed landscaping scheme although as part of the Civil Aviation design principles this excludes block planting, trees with potential to exceed 20 metres in height, the reduction of certain berry producing trees and Oak, Elm and Hawthorn species. A Landscape Proposal Plan is included with the AIA which shows planting of 15 standard trees (2.5-3 metres in height) and a woodland mix (comprising of transplants) to the north west of the site. This replacement planting on its own is considered to be insufficient to result in a net environmental as required by policy SE5. However, as part of the offsite ecological mitigation proposals a significant amount of Oak tree and native hedgerow planting is proposed, which is considered to result in an overall net gain, including a net gain in tree cover.

The arboricultural officer has confirmed the drainage / services layout is acceptable in terms of their relationship to retained trees. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policy SE5 of the CELPS.

## **Highways**

The proposed development will form an extension to the existing Jet Parks 3 car park, which serves Manchester Airport. It is proposed to extend the current car park from 5,200 spaces to 6,000 spaces. The application site is located immediately adjacent to the existing Jet Parks 3 car park and the access to the existing and proposed car park is from Hollin Lane. No access will be taken from Moss Lane.

The impact of the additional car parking spaces has been modelled by the applicant using a Vissim model of the local road network. The result of the modelling is that whilst the network is congested at peak times the proposed increase in car parking spaces has little impact to journey times and delay. The main reason for this minor impact is that the car park provides long term parking, and as such trips associated with it are spread out, resulting in a much lower impact during the peak hours.

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure has confirmed that the proposed car park extension does not have a material impact on the road network. Accordingly no further highways issues are raised.

### **Public Right of Way**

The application site is adjacent to public footpath Wilmslow No. 6, which runs from Moss Lane in a northerly direction to the south west of the application site, and then continues on between two existing car parks until it terminates at the northern boundary of the Borough immediately adjacent to the airfield. As such it appears that this route does not connect onto other footpath routes to the north. It is understood that the footpath may be used by plane enthusiasts as it provides good views of the runway. The PROW officer initially reported that the proposal did not appear to affect the public footpath, but it has since been confirmed that the applicant is seeking to divert the footpath along the route shown by the purple dashed line on the Outline Design plan, through the landscaped buffer to the south and east of the site. Given the lack of any connectivity to the north, in planning terms the diversion is considered to be acceptable. Confirmation is awaited from the PROW officer on whether they have any objection to the proposed diversion. Further details will be provided as an update.

### **Flood Risk**

Policy SE13 of the CELPS states that developments must integrate measures for sustainable water management to reduce flood risk, and avoid an adverse impact on water quality and quantity within the Borough.

Drainage of the site will be to controlled waters via the Manchester Airport drainage system at a rate equivalent to the greenfield run off rate. The car park surface will be constructed to slope towards the existing drains, and water will pass through a hydrobrake and then existing oil interceptors. Further information was requested by the LLFA, which has now been received and further comments will be reported as an update.

### **Contaminated land**

Policy SE12 seeks to ensure that all development is located and designed so as not to result in a harmful or cumulative impact upon air quality, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, soil contamination, light pollution or any other pollution which would unacceptably affect the natural and built environment, or detrimentally affect amenity or cause harm.

The application site has a history of agricultural use and therefore the land may be contaminated. No pre-commencement work is required relating to contaminated land, however conditions are recommended to required actions in the event of any unidentified contamination being found, and the testing of imported soil. Subject to these conditions the proposal will comply with policy SE12 of the CELPS.

### **Considerations in favour of the development**

The proposal has been identified as an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 144 of the Framework advises that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will

not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

In this case, whilst the site lies within the Green Belt, the site is also located within the Airport Operational Area. Policy T23 of the MBLP refers to the Airport Operational Area, and this states that:

*“development and uses which will be permitted within this area are those which can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the local planning authority to be necessary for the operational efficiency and amenity of the airport. These shall include airfield operational facilities, airport ancillary facilities, transportation infrastructure and landscaping.”*

At the time of the appeal in 2006, the Inspector and the Secretary of State (SoS) considered that such a policy could amount to a very special circumstance in its own right. However satisfaction of the criteria of the policy is not necessarily conclusive as to the acceptability of the development. The harm to other policies of the development also has to be taken into the balance.

The planning statement accompanying the application identifies a hierarchy of transport modes for passengers travelling to the airport, which are:

1. Public and sustainable transport modes
2. Parking on site
3. Kiss & fly (drop off) / taxi

Kiss and fly / taxi trips generate twice the number of road trips than parking on site, and a key focus of the Airport is to reduce the number of Kiss & fly / taxi trips. Their target is to reduce these from the current 52% of overall trips to the airport to 30% by the time they reach their planned growth to 45 million passengers per annum (mppa) (currently 29 million). This strategy requires improvements in public transport and improvements to the on site parking offer to make it as convenient and competitive as taxis.

In terms of public transport, the Airport is reliant on third parties to provide services, and they continue to work closely to secure improvements. Currently, train services run between the airport and Manchester city centre and the Metrolink is really only a viable option for those travelling from the north. Potential public transport users are therefore reliant on connecting services, and operation of services 24 hours a day, where it is currently limited. The applicant reports that these third party transport providers are constrained by funding and have a shared exasperation with the airport at some of the centrally made decisions. For example, train operating companies bidding for franchises have sought to improve services to the airport through extended operating hours and/or extending their reach into other franchise areas only to have those aspects of their bids ruled out by the Treasury. Notwithstanding this, major capital investment is committed to improving surface access including £60m on the Metrolink and the Ground Transport Interchange. Consequently, given that there are deficiencies in the public transport options available for passengers, in terms of operating hours and availability of services; car parking on site is the next best option.

Within their planning statement, the applicant has pointed to a range of factors to demonstrate that there is a need for the proposed car park extension. These include:

- During the summer months the site is operating at capacity in terms of parking numbers.

- The off-site, third party operated sites have declined significantly over recent years as a result of sites being redeveloped for other uses, operators failing, and successful enforcement of unauthorised activity by Local Planning Authorities.
- Provision of on-site parking is one string of the Airport's Surface Access Strategy aimed at reducing the most inefficient means of access (kiss-and-fly / taxi) in terms of impact on the road network.

In sustainability terms, the use of public transport would clearly be the preferred option for passengers travelling to the airport, however, as noted above there are deficiencies in this service. Whilst, public transport is a genuine option for some passengers it is not universally available or convenient. There are also no other known alternative sites for the proposed car park. Taken together with the factors referred to above, this lends support for the provision of on site car parking, as proposed, as an alternative to the least sustainable option of kiss & fly / taxi in terms of it being necessary for the operational efficiency and amenity of the airport, as required by policy T23 of the MBLP.

### Very special circumstances

The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Substantial weight is attributed to this harm. In addition, the proposal will result in a loss of openness (both spatially and visually) and encroaches into the countryside. Substantial weight is attributed to this harm. No additional harm has been identified beyond the harm to the Green Belt. Impacts on amenity, ecology, landscape, environmental health, highways and PROW are considered to be neutral in the planning balance. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm identified is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The availability of other transport options has been considered above, and there are no known alternative sites for the proposed car park. It is therefore concluded that, on balance, the proposed car park extension is necessary for the operational efficiency and amenity of the airport, in accordance with policy T23 of the MBLP.

All of the Operational Area of the Airport identified in the MBLP lies within the Green Belt, and the application site is the last remaining part of the defined Operational Area within the MBLP that does not comprise airport related development.

Overall, it is considered that compliance with policy T23 of the MBLP does amount to the required very special circumstances to clearly outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, loss of openness, encroachment into the countryside, and contributing to the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policy PG 3 of the CELPS and paragraph 146 of the Framework.

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

The proposal is considered to be an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, which reduce openness, encroaches into the countryside, and contributes to the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

The considerations in favour of the proposal, including the applicant's strategy to reduce the amount of kiss and fly / taxi journeys to the airport, the limitations of the existing public transport services, the operation of existing on site car parking facilities at capacity during the summer months, and the reduction of third party off site car parking options over recent years are considered to demonstrate that the car park is necessary for the operational efficiency and amenity of the airport in accordance with policy T23 of the MBLP. Compliance with this policy is considered to amount to the required very special circumstances to outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt.

The visual amenity of the Green Belt will be adequately maintained, and the proposal will not result in any significant injury to the amenity of nearby residential properties. The impacts on ecology have been satisfactorily addressed, and in some cases enhanced. The proposal is not considered to generate any adverse traffic or highway safety issues. The visual and landscape impacts of the development are acceptable. No significant environmental effects have been identified.

The proposal is therefore considered to be a sustainable form of development under the definition of The Framework.

Consequently, for the reasons outlined above, there are not considered to be any significant adverse impacts that would outweigh the presumption in favour of sustainable development in this case. Therefore, the application is recommended for approval subject to the satisfactory receipt of outstanding consultee responses, consultation with the Secretary of State (due to the scale of the proposal in the Green Belt), and conditions.

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

Application for Full Planning

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to following conditions

1. Commencement of development (3 years)
2. Development in accord with approved plans
3. Materials as application
4. Landscaping - submission of details
5. Landscaping (implementation)
6. Submission of landscape management plan



7. Landscaping to include details of boundary treatment
8. Bird hazard management plan to be submitted
9. Lighting details to be submitted
10. Glint and glare assessment to be submitted
11. Development to be carried out in accordance with submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment
12. Imported soil to be tested for contamination
13. Measures in the event of any unidentified contamination being found
14. Development to be carried out in accordance with bat mitigation and compensation measures detailed in the submitted Ecological Appraisal Report. Details of the proposed bat boxes to be submitted.
15. Updated badger survey to be submitted
16. Implementation of mitigation measures for common toad and hedgehog as described in the submitted ecological assessment
17. Nesting bird survey to be submitted
18. Detailed design and habitat creation method statement to be submitted for on and off site habitat mitigation areas. Approved details to be implemented, and habitat management plan to be submitted

