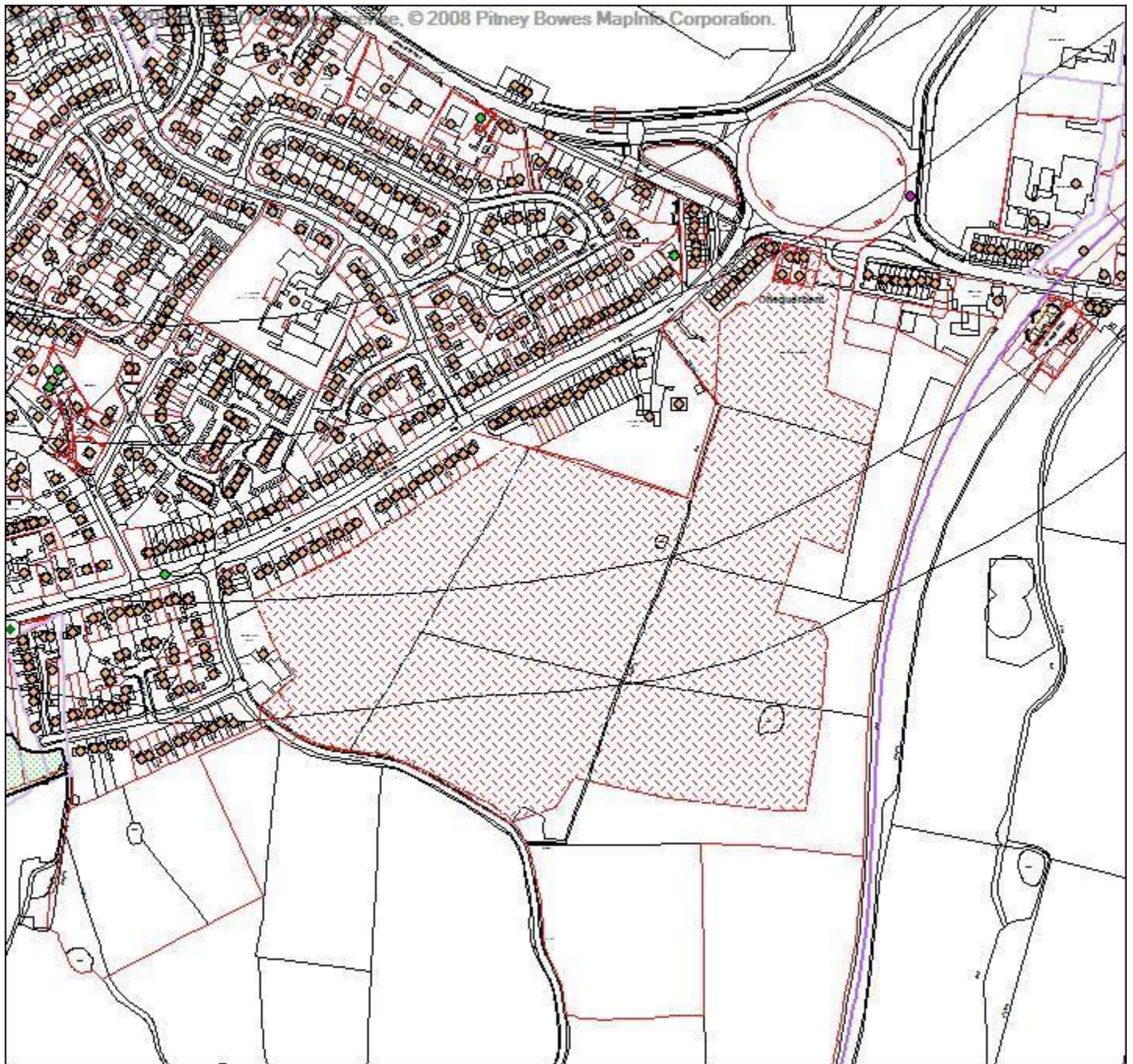


**Application number
94696/15**



**Development & Regeneration Dept
Development Management Section**

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**Bolton
Council**

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Date of Meeting: 22/10/2015

Application Reference: 94696/15

Type of Application: Full Planning Application

Registration Date: 30/07/2015

Decision Due By: 28/10/2015

Responsible Officer: Alex Allen

Location: LAND NORTH OF PLATT LANE, EAST OF PARK ROAD & SOUTH OF CHEQUERBENT ROUNDABOUT, WESTHOUGHTON, BOLTON

Proposal: ERECTION OF 300 NO. DWELLINGS INCLUDING PUBLIC OPEN SPACES, LANDSCAPING & PLAY AREAS, TOGETHER WITH CREATION OF NEW INTERNAL ACCESS ROAD WHICH CONNECTS INTO THE EXISTING ROAD NETWORK AT CHEQUERBENT ROUNDABOUT IN THE NORTH AND PLATT LANE IN THE SOUTH

Ward: Westhoughton North

Applicant: Persimmon Homes, Harcourt Developments, Peel Investments (Intermediate) Ltd

Agent : Mosaic Town Planning

Officers Report

Recommendation: Refuse

Proposal

The applicant proposes the erection of 300 dwellings in a number of development parcels including culs de sac and avenues along main thoroughfares. The dwellings are a mix of 2 and 2.5 storey detached, semi detached, mews and bungalow properties ranging in size from 1 to 5 bedroom units.

The applicant proposes that a total of 105 dwelling are affordable. Integral to the scheme as a whole is the provision of 6.05 hectares of open space (37% of the gross site area). The proposal would create a new formal play area with associated car parking within the northern part of the site. Informal open spaces are situated in three locations on the eastern portion of the site with landscaping, planting, footpaths and a pond.

Two areas of open space feature a play area (Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play [NEAP] with informal kick about area and a Locally Equipped Area of Play [LEAP]). A pond with associated landscaping, footpaths and planting is located in the centre of the site. The applicant has sought to retain traditional field boundary planting wherever possible to respect the local landscape.

Vehicular access to the site would be from two new roads, the first would be from Platt Lane to the south and the second by the creation of a new/enhanced spur off the Chequerbent roundabout.

Site Characteristics

The site is located on the eastern edge of the settlement of Westhoughton. The site is approximately 15.275 hectares in area and is predominantly comprised of pastoral agricultural land

with regular field patterns with two ponds present within the site. The northern part of the site is non-agricultural open land. A public right of way runs through the middle of the site in a north south axis and then a north west to south east axis to Park Road. The public right of way links Park Road with Platt Lane.

Properties on A58 Park Road bound the site to the north west, the southern boundary of the site is defined partially by Platt Lane and field boundaries to agricultural fields. To the east the site boundary is located between 50-90 metres from the existing tree belt with the northern part of the site reaching up to the properties fronting the Chequerbent roundabout.

The A58 links junction 5 of the M61 motorway with the A6.

Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance

Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan

Core Strategy Policies: H1.2 Health Contributions; A1.4 Education Contributions; P4 Minerals; P5 Accessibility and Transport; S1 Safe Bolton; CG1 Cleaner and Greener Bolton; CG2 Sustainable Design and Construction; CG3 The Built Environment; CG4 Compatible Uses; SC1 Housing; OA1 Horwich and Blackrod; IPC1 Infrastructure and Planning Contributions.

Allocations Plan Policies: P8AP - Public Rights of Way and CG6AP Other Protected Open Land.

SPD Accessibility, Transport and Safety; SPD Affordable Housing; SPD General Design Principles
PCPN1 Health and Well Being; PCPN8 The Provision for Children's Play Within New Residential Developments; PCPN22 Provision of Public Art; PCPN30 Education.

Bolton's Authority Monitoring Report 2013/2014

A Landscape Appraisal of Bolton (2001).

Analysis

Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be determined in accordance with policies in the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Applications which are not in accordance with Development Plan policies should be refused unless material considerations justify granting permission.

Similarly, proposals which accord with Development Plan policies should be approved unless there are material considerations which would justify a refusal of permission.

It is therefore necessary to decide whether this proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and then take account of other material considerations.

The main impacts of the proposal are:-

- * impact on Other Protected Open Land
- * other material considerations: Bolton's supply of housing

- * impact on Mineral Safeguarding Areas
- * impact on the highway
- * impact on public rights of way
- * impact on biodiversity
- * impact of loss of agricultural land
- * impact on flooding
- * impact on local infrastructure
- * impact on the character and appearance of the area
- * impact on the overall design of the proposed development
- * impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents

Impact on Other Protected Open Land

The application site is allocated within Bolton's Allocation Plan as 'Other Protected Open Land'.

Policy OA3 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will ensure Protected Open Land around Westhoughton remains undeveloped.

Allocations Plan Policy CG6AP states that the Council will permit development proposals within the defined areas of Protected Open Land shown on the Proposals Map provided that they fall within one or more of the following categories:

1. The development represents limited infilling within an established housing or industrial area, is in scale with it and would not adversely affect its character or surroundings; or
2. It forms part of, and is required for, the maintenance of an existing source of employment; or
3. The development requires a location outside the urban area, but is inappropriate within the Green Belt, and providing it maintains the character and appearance of the countryside; or
4. The development would be appropriate within the Green Belt.

The reasoned justification for the policy within the Allocations Plan states that the Core Strategy's overall approach is to concentrate development in the existing urban area and to constrain most forms of development on Protected Open Land. It explains that the urban area is defined as that which is not Protected Open Land or Green Belt.

The Allocations Plan continues at paragraph 5.12 that it is a general principle of national policy that the character and appearance of Protected Open Land should be protected from inappropriate development. This also supports the Council's efforts to achieve urban regeneration. It is explained that some of this land could be appropriate for development in the future, but not during the plan period up to 2026 and not without a further review of the Core Strategy.

The applicant is proposing to erect 300 dwellings on the application site. It is not considered that the proposed residential development of this site would represent limited infilling within an established housing area, would form part of (or is required) for the maintenance of existing employment, nor would require a location outside the urban area. The residential development of a greenfield site would also not be appropriate development within the Green Belt, also failing to meet category 4 of Allocations Plan Policy CG6AP.

It is therefore considered that the proposed residential development of this 'Other Protected Open Land' site would be contrary to Core Strategy Policy OA1.6 and Allocations Plan Policy CG6AP.

Other Material Considerations: Bolton's Supply of Housing

Strategic Objective 15 of the Core Strategy is, "To focus new housing in the existing urban area, especially in Bolton town centre, council-owned housing areas and in mixed-use developments on

existing older industrial sites".

Policy SC1 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will identify a range of housing sites for additional provision of 694 dwellings per annum between 2008 and 2026, with at least 80% of housing development to be on previously developed land. Policy SC1.2 states that the 20% of housing on greenfield land will be provided through the Transforming Estates programme.

Bolton's Allocations Plan (2013) states that since 2008 a total of 1,754 net new dwellings have been completed leaving the Allocations Plan to make provision for 10,738 new dwellings for the period 2012-2026. Specific sites over 0.4 hectares in size have been identified for housing on the Proposals Map sufficient to accommodate 5,912 new dwellings. This is in addition to the (up to) 1,700 dwellings allocated through the Core Strategy at Horwich Loco Works. With the exception of Westbrook (the former Manchester Road college site) the Proposals Map does not identify any other specific sites within Bolton town centre, however it is anticipated that around 1,831 dwellings can be delivered within Bolton town centre on sites of 0.4 hectares and above. Housing development will also continue to come forward on sites less than 0.4 hectares that are not identified within the Proposals Map. Evidence from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) suggests that a small site allowance of 90 dwellings is appropriate which would yield 1,260 units over the years from 2012 to 2026. In addition Bolton has a legacy of windfall sites becoming available through the redevelopment of former built uses. It is anticipated that this will continue in line with the Core Strategy's approach to regeneration. It should also be noted that the Allocations Plan also does not identify areas for comprehensive mixed use development (housing is a key component in driving the regeneration of these areas and will provide additional housing opportunities).

As discussed above, it is considered that the proposed residential development of the application site is contrary to Policy OA3.6 of Bolton's Core Strategy and Allocations Plan Policy CG6AP, as the site is allocated as 'Other Protected Open Land' and as the proposal would constitute inappropriate development on that land.

Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be determined in accordance with policies in the Development Plan (that is the Core Strategy and the Allocations Plan) *unless material considerations indicate otherwise*. The applicant is arguing in this case that there are material considerations that indicate that the residential development of application site would be appropriate and planning permission should be forthcoming; that is, they are contending that the Council has a shortage of deliverable housing land.

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

Updated 2014/15 monitoring of the housing land supply position in Bolton demonstrates that there is a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites in the borough. This takes into account both the Allocations Plan Inspector's comments and national policy regarding the meeting of backlog (where completions have been below Core Strategy requirements) within the five-year period (2015-2019/20) rather than over the remaining life of the plan, the need for a 5% buffer (as required within paragraph 47 of the NPPF) and also the more realistic clearance allowance of 40 dwellings per annum. These factors taken together increase the underlying five-year requirement above that in previous reports to 5,288 dwellings (2015-2019/20). The projected supply for 2015-2019/20 is 5,417 dwellings, which equates to a 5.1 year supply. The Council's policies for the supply of housing are therefore considered to remain up-to-date as a five-year supply of deliverable

housing sites can be demonstrated.

The Council's policies for the supply of housing are therefore considered to remain up-to-date as a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites can be demonstrated.

It is therefore subsequently considered that the benefits of providing more houses on this previously undeveloped site outside the existing urban area would not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the Council's objective of focusing new housing within the existing urban area, contrary to Strategic Objective 15 and Policy OA1.6 of the Core Strategy and Allocation Plan Policy CG6AP.

Impact on Mineral Safeguarding Areas

The application site forms part of a Mineral Safeguarding Area for sandstone, surface coal, brick and clay.

Policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan states that all non-mineral development proposals within the Mineral Safeguarding Area should extract any viable mineral resources present in advance of construction. Proposals for non-mineral development within the Mineral Safeguarding Areas that do not allow for the prior extraction of minerals will only be permitted where:

1. The need for the development outweighs the need to extract the mineral; or;
2. It can be clearly demonstrated that it is not environmentally acceptable or economically viable to extract the mineral prior to non-mineral development taking place; or
3. It can be clearly demonstrated that the mineral is either not present or of no economic value or too deep to extract in relation to the proposed development; or;
4. The development is limited or temporary and would not prevent minerals extraction taking place in the future.

Policy P4.3 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will safeguard known resources of minerals, and existing and planned infrastructure that supports mineral exploitation including facilities for manufacturing and the handling, processing and distribution of substitute recycled and secondary aggregate materials.

The applicant has submitted a desk based study of the site's potential for mineral extraction. They state that due to the proximity of residential properties this limits the safe working area with a required standoff distance of at least 200 metres. Officers from the Minerals Waste Planning Unit have concluded that the site is too small to be economically viable.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would comply with Policy 8 of the GM Joint Minerals Plan.

Impact on the Highway

Policy P5 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will ensure that developments take into account [amongst other things] accessibility by different types of transport, servicing arrangements, parking (in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix 3), and the requirement for a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan with major trip generating developments. Policy S1.2 states that the Council will promote road safety in the design of new development.

The applicant proposes two vehicular access points to the residential scheme, the first a new access would be created off Platt Lane in the southern part. The second access point would involve the creation of an enhanced spur onto/off the existing Chequerbent roundabout in close proximity to two existing major access/egress points.

The applicant has submitted a Transport Assessment (TA) in order to substantiate development from a transport/highways perspective. This document along with the additional transport note that has been submitted has been reviewed by the Highways Authority and independently reviewed by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). Acting on this the following comments/observations have been made in relation to transport highways issues associated with the site.

The detailed comments are as follows:

- There is a concern that the modelling that forms part of the TA does not adequately demonstrate the congestion and queuing issues associated with the highway network surrounding the site within the base-line traffic scenario. There is an issue with vehicles queuing within the circulating carriageway of Chequerbent Roundabout within the AM/PM peak periods of traffic flow. This has not been demonstrated within the Arcady analysis of the roundabout in terms of exit restriction parameters that could demonstrate the transfer of queuing to the upstream entries of the junction. This would create a more robust traffic model of the current highway situation associated with the Chequerbent Roundabout and the surrounding network.
- There are concerns that the proposed access onto Chequerbent Roundabout will pose road safety implications to users of the public highway at that location. Although there is an existing access point onto the highway network at that location it only serves a limited number of business premises and residential dwellings. The applicant is proposing to upgrade the access to accommodate the level of vehicle movement associated with the new residential development and also re-routed traffic flows from Platt Lane. Although the applicant appears to have demonstrated that the highway improvements proposed for the existing access appear to comply with the DMRB design standards for the 'Geometric Design of Roundabouts' the Highways Authority has additional concerns. The existing access will be upgraded to a 5th arm onto the roundabout and will create an unusually tight layout at that location considering the level of observed queues blocking back from Park Road past the arm of Manchester Road East entry. The Highways Authority has concerns that the close proximity of the existing entries on the roundabout, inadequate weaving for egressing vehicles through the circulating carriageway between the Park Road arm and sub-standard visibility for vehicles across the roundabout will exacerbate the potential for road safety implications to occur associated with the increase in traffic volumes. The applicant has submitted a Type 1 Road Safety Audit in order to demonstrate potential highway issues. Scrutiny of this document raised concerns about weaving lengths and compliance with design standards, the applicant has been asked to analyse the weaving lengths but has not done so.
- The junction at Platt Lane/Park Road suffers from capacity issues during the peak periods of traffic flow. The applicant is proposing a highway link between Platt Lane and Chequerbent Roundabout. Owing to congestion issues at this location traffic will inevitably re-route through the development as an alternative route. There is a contradiction within the TA that appears to show that the applicant is reliant on traffic re-routing on Platt Lane in order to improve capacity at the junction and reduce traffic entering Chequerbent from the Park Road arm. However, the applicant is also proposing to make this route onerous to traffic flow by the alignment of the carriageway, the introduction of traffic-calming and traffic management restrictions in the form of a weight limit. This appears to be a contradiction in terms of the rationale behind the traffic re-allocation on the highway network surrounding the site. The Highways Authority has concerns relating to potential road safety implications associated with the traffic volumes passing through the site on what would actually be classed as a residential road.
- Analysis of the accident data over the last 5 year period (30/06/10-30/06/15) for both the

Chequerbent Roundabout and the Park Lane/Platt Road revealed an high accident record over that time period both involving multiple KSI's (Killed and Seriously Injured). A blackspot analysis of both junctions revealed that Chequerbent is the 9th worst accident black-spot junction in the Bolton conurbation and that the Park Road/Platt Lane junction is ranked 25th in the borough. The increase in traffic volumes associated with the development and the re-allocation of traffic surrounding the site has the potential to exacerbate these road safety issues at both junctions.

- Highways also have concerns that this development may impede the ability to deliver a Westhoughton bypass at some point in the future. Whilst not currently allocated in any Council document the development site is located in the area where there has been previous consideration for a Westhoughton Bypass. It is also acknowledged that significant infrastructure improvements are required in Westhoughton to accommodate existing traffic issues and enable any future development. The applicant has left a strip of land to the east of the site as a corridor for a future bypass. In the absence of a design for a potential future bypass it is unclear at this point whether there is sufficient land reserved for a bypass, especially to the south of Chequerbent Roundabout.

The Council's Highways Engineers have raised objections to both the principle of providing a new major access point onto the Chequerbent roundabout and also the detrimental impact that the proposal would have on the existing highway network in terms of the operation capacity of the highway network and the potential impact on road safety. The current proposal is considered to be fundamentally flawed and contrary to Core Strategy policies P5 and S1.2 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on Public Rights of Way

Allocations Plan policy P8AP states that the Council will permit development proposals affecting public rights of way provided that the integrity of the right of way is retained.

The existing right of way runs from Park Road to the north through the proposed development site to Platt Lane. The main line of the footpath will be retained with a minimum width of 3 metres. The surface treatment of the new footpath would be improved to enable it to withstand the increased use which would result if the proposed development is approved. A small diversion would be necessary in the location where it currently meets Park Road. The actual line of this section is overgrown and as a result of the proposed development it is logical to rationalize the line of the footpath. This would also provide the benefits of reducing pedestrian potential conflict with the cars from the adjoining houses by providing enhanced visibility.

It is considered that the proposed development would maintain the integrity of the existing footpath network thus complying with Allocations plan policy P8AP.

Impact on Biodiversity

Policy CG1.1 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will safeguard and enhance the rural areas of the borough from development that would adversely affect its biodiversity including trees, woodland and hedgerows, geodiversity, landscape character, recreational or agricultural value.

The applicant has submitted an Environmental Statement, which includes an assessment of the Ecology Survey and Assessment, and a Tree Survey Report with the application.

Both the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) and the Council's Wildlife Liaison Office has confirmed that the applicant has provided a comprehensive and thorough ecological assessment of the site with not significant ecological constraints in terms of any high value ecological features. GMEU officers do state that due to the scale of the proposed development the area is significant

and represents a negative impact in a local context.

It is concluded that the proposal would retain the majority of local features of ecological value e.g. existing hedgerows, trees and ponds together with significant levels of on-site mitigation.

In terms of the impact on protected species GMEU officers conclude the following:

Great Crested Newts - no evidence of GCNs;

Bats -at the time of the survey there were a small number of Pipistrelle bats using the existing hedgerows. They conclude that the proposal would potentially disrupt the continuity of existing hedgerows and some concerns over disruption of bats by lighting from the proposed residential development. It is considered that through the provision of a sensitively designed lighting scheme that the impact of lighting would be minimised/mitigated against;

Reptiles - rare occurrence within Greater Manchester - no further assessment required;

Badgers - no evidence of badgers found within the site. It is recommended that precautionary measures are taken prior to earthworks within the site a survey of the site including land within 30 metres of the development boundaries will be submitted to the LPA with findings and any mitigation required;

Barn owls - no discussion of the foraging potential of barn owls was discussed. However, as the majority of hedgerows are to be retained the impact of the proposal is considered to be neutral;

Nesting birds - significant areas of potential bird nesting habitat will be lost through the loss of hedgerows and scrub. No short term mitigation is proposed. In the longer term replacement hedgerow planting with additional trees and gardens will more than compensate for the loss of habitat. It is recommended that no clearance of trees, hedgerows or shrubs shall occur within the bird breeding season;

Invasive species - Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, rhododendron and Cotoneaster are present on site. It is recommended that a method statement be provided by the applicant prior to earthwork's being undertaken for the eradication of these invasive species.

Without mitigation or compensation the development would result in a net loss of biodiversity contrary to guidance contained within NPPF. Significant tree planting and hedge planting as proposed would more than mitigate for the losses. The mitigation also involves the creation of an additional pond and the enhancement of the two retained ponds. Mitigation for the loss of over 10 hectares of grassland is through the creation of around 1.5 hectares of species rich grassland.

Officers from GMEU and the Council's Greenspace Management team remain satisfied that the proposal provides sufficient mitigation to offset the loss of the site from an ecological perspective. This conclusion is on the basis of the deliverability of a high quality product which is maintained. This would be controlled through the provision and implementation of an acceptable management regime for the site.

The Council's Tree Officers (TWO) have confirmed that the trees to be removed as part of the proposal are not excessive and would be replaced by new tree planting. The TWO has recommended that a number of trees be retained which would assist in providing some initial screening to adjoining properties and also the replacement of a number of trees which were considered to be unsuitable. The applicant has amended the proposed plans to comply with the TWO's requirements.

It is therefore considered, subject to the retention of the pond and the hedgerows and the proposed mitigation as outlined above that the proposed development would safeguard the biodiversity of the site, compliant with Policy CG1.1 of the Core Strategy.

Impact of Loss of Agricultural Land

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.

An extract from Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification Map North West Region submitted by the applicant shows that around 92% of the application site is of Grade 3a agricultural land, which is of a moderate quality, with 6.4% of the site being of poor quality agricultural land with the remainder of the land not being agricultural use.

It is therefore considered that the site does not fall within the category of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Impact on Flooding

Policy CG1.5 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will reduce the risk of flooding in Bolton and other areas downstream by minimising water run-off from new development and ensuring a sequential approach is followed, concentrating new development in areas of lowest flood risk. Policy CG2.2c states that all proposals for five or more residential units should demonstrate the sustainable management of surface water run-off from developments. On greenfield sites the rate of run-off should be no worse than the original conditions before development.

The Council's Drainage and Flood Risk team have no objections to the proposed development subject to the provision of a sustainable urban drainage system within the site which seeks to ensure that surface water run-off from the site is no greater than under the existing site conditions. They also confirm that there is a culvert which runs through the site which would need diverting.

The Environment Agency has also confirmed that they have no objections to the proposed development subject to satisfactory remediation of the site as necessary.

It is considered that subject to the provision of appropriate conditions the proposal would comply with both Core Strategy policy CG1 and CG2.

Impact on Local Infrastructure

Policy IPC1 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will seek to ensure that developers make reasonable provision or contribution towards the cost of appropriate physical, social and green infrastructure required by the proposed development and/or to mitigate the impact of that development. In doing so, the Council will ensure that a scheme is made acceptable in planning terms and achieves the objectives of sustainable development. In determining planning applications the Council will apply a threshold of 15 dwellings in assessing whether planning contributions will be required from proposed housing developments.

The proposal for 300 dwellings in this location generates the following Section 106 requirements:

- * Affordable housing: 105 affordable units on site, with 79 (75%) being for social/affordable rent at 60% discount off open market value and 26 (25%) being for intermediate housing at 30% discount off open market value.
- * Education: £371,333.98 to be used at the local primary schools in Westhoughton to assist with pupil place provision.
- * Public open space: on site provision which would be maintained by the developer.

- * Health: £67,200
- * Public art: 1% of total development costs - the applicant has commented that they would wish to make this provision on site.

The applicant has stated within their submissions that they are committed to providing s.106 contributions as long as they comply with Core Strategy policy IPC1 and also the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations.

It is considered that the above requirements would meet both the requirements of Core Strategy IPC1 and CIL regulations and if Members are minded to approved the proposal that the Council enters into a s.106 agreement with the applicant / developer to ensure the on / off contributions are provided.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy CG3 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will conserve and enhance local distinctiveness, ensuring development has regard to the overall built character and landscape quality of the area, will require development to be compatible with the surrounding area in terms of scale, massing, grain, form, architecture, street enclosure, local materials and landscape treatment, and will maintain and respect the landscape character of the surrounding countryside and its distinctiveness.

Policy OA3.7 refers specifically to developments in Westhoughton and states that the Council will conserve and enhance the character of the existing landscape and physical environment whilst Policy OA3.8 states that the Council will ensure that regard is had to the character of farm complexes, folds, vernacular cottages and the wider open landscape.

The application site falls within the Agricultural Coal Measures Landscape Character type which is characterised by a landform which is gently rolling, characterised by poor grade agricultural farmland/ fields separated by hedgerows. The applicant maintains that the character of the site/area would experience temporary to medium term moderate to slight adverse impacts as landscape elements are removed. Mitigation in the form of the proposed planting and landscape treatments will ensure would assist in strengthening the landscape character of the area.

The comments of the Council's Landscape Architects will be reported by way of the Supplementary Information List/Note.

Impact of the Overall Design of the Proposed Development

Core Strategy policy CG3 states that the Council will expect proposals to display innovative, sustainable designs that contribute to good urban design whilst conserving and enhancing local distinctiveness.

Notwithstanding the potential loss of open land per se, it is considered that the proposed residential development has been well designed to provide a high quality residential environment which from a landscape perspective has sought to retain key features of the existing landscape setting e.g. the existing hedgerows and provide distinct development parcels which are bisected by retained / improved areas of open space, amenity areas and play facilities.

It is noted that the Council's Landscape architects consider that the proposal is well designed. Officers from Greater Manchester Police / Design for Security comment that the layout has been positively designed to ensure houses front public space. They require clarity over the proposed boundary treatment, strong definition of public and private space and to ensure all car parking is overlooked by the properties to which they relate.

The applicant has provided clearer plans which identify that properties do overlook the parking which they own and makes provision for strong definition of public/private space. Where rear parking areas are used the side access is gated to promote security.

It is considered that the proposed development complies with Core Strategy policy CG3.

Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Residents

Policy CG4 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will ensure that new development is compatible with surrounding land uses and occupiers, protecting amenity, privacy, safety and security. SPD General Design Principles sets out the Council's minimum interface distance requirements between new dwellings and neighbouring dwellings.

The proposed site layout illustrates that the Council's recommended minimum interface distance of 21 metres between fronts of dwellings can be achieved both within the development and between the proposed and neighbouring dwellings. Whilst it is noted that a number of local residents have raised concerns regarding disruption which may be caused during the construction process it is considered that these issues would be dealt with by other control regimes e.g. environmental health.

The proposal complies with policy.

Conclusion

For the reasons discussed above it is considered that the proposed residential development of the site would represent inappropriate development of 'Other Protected Open Land' and the benefits associated with developing the site for housing would not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the Council's strategic objective of focusing new housing development within the existing urban area. It is also considered that the proposed development by virtue of the proposed vehicular access points would be detrimental to highway safety and the existing highway network does not have the capacity to accommodate further development without further improvements to the existing highway network. The applicant has provided insufficient information to enable the LPA to assess whether the proposal would prejudice a proposed Westhoughton bypass if required. The proposed development would also increase traffic flow at already congested junctions to the detriment of highway safety and the free flow of traffic.

Members are therefore recommended to refuse this application for the reasons listed above.

Representation and Consultation Annex

Representations

Letters:- a total of 149 representations (2 comment letters and 147 objections). As a result of the Drop In Session which took place on 10/09/15 a total of 25 comment sheets were completed, 20 of which were fully complete i.e. name and address filled in. All comments were objections. The following issues were raised:

- Highways – existing roads are heavily congested - the road network cannot cope with further development / vehicles, Platt Lane is heavily congested and the Chequerbent roundabout is dangerous.
- Westhoughton doesn't require any further housing;
- Construction noise and disturbance if approved;
- Loss of wildlife and countryside/greenspace;
- Need for social housing not private housing;
- Inadequate infrastructure in Westhoughton e.g. schools, doctors etc;
- Impact on drainage / water table;
- The site is not allocated for housing;
- Will devalue properties;
- Part of a larger plan for 1600 dwellings - if approved the precedent will be set;
- Light and noise pollution;
- Loss of Green Belt land,
- Result in urban sprawl;
- Should use existing vacant/empty homes;
- Poor condition of local roads will be made worse;
- There is a need for a bypass of Westhoughton to improve the quality of life;
- Over provision of car parking within the proposal;
- Contravenes right to respect family and private life as set out in the Human Rights Act;
- Requirement for an archaeological survey;
- Impact on farmers who currently rent the land;
- Platt Lane is a bottleneck;
- Impact on existing drainage into the site;
- Footpath at junction with Park Road needs amending to enhance safety;
- Will result in a loss of privacy;
- Will compromise the construction of the Westhoughton by pass.

Petitions:- one petition has been received with a total of 1643 names contained within it stating that the proposed development is unnecessary and will have a considerable impact on the already congested roads of Westhoughton.

Town Council:- raise objection to the proposal.

Elected Members:- Councillor Graham has requested that the application be the subject to an advanced site visit.

Consultations

Advice was sought from the following consultees: Westhoughton Town Council, the Ramblers Association, Open Spaces Society, Peak and Northern Footpath Society, Coal Authority, Trees and Woodland Officer, Highways Engineers, Economic Strategy, Pollution Control, Landscape Architects, Greenspace Management, Strategic Development Unit, Housing Strategy, Primary Care Trust, Design for Security (Greater Manchester Police), United Utilities, Environment Agency, Greater

Manchester Ecology Unit and Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service.

Planning History

Planning application for the development of the land for residential purposes was withdrawn in June 1984 (Ref: 11942/79).

An outline planning application for the erection mixed use development was withdrawn in June 1999. Outline planning permission was refused in 1999 for business use (B1, B2 and B8) of the land. The proposal was dismissed on appeal in November 1999.

Recommendation: Refuse

Recommended Conditions and/or Reasons

1. The proposed residential development of the site would represent inappropriate development of 'Other Protected Open Land' in that it would not fall within any of the categories listed within Bolton's Allocations Plan Policy CG6AP. The benefits associated with developing the site for housing would not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the Council's strategic objective of focusing new housing in the existing urban area, contrary to Strategic Objective 15 and Policy OA3.6 of Bolton's Core Strategy and Bolton's Allocations Plan Policy CG6AP.
2. The proposed enhanced vehicular access point onto Chequerbent roundabout would by virtue of an increased traffic volume at this location and the proposed layout and design of the proposal have a detrimental impact on the operational capacity of the highway network exacerbating existing congestion and likely to be detrimental to highway safety contrary to Core Strategy policy P5 and S1.
3. The proposed residential spine road through the development is likely to result in increased traffic using the proposed new residential road through the site to the detriment of road safety contrary to Core Strategy policy P5 and S1.
4. The application would represent piecemeal development of site which form part of a larger area of safeguarded land that has potential to be considered for housing in the longer term through Local Plan review. The applicant has submitted insufficient information to ensure that the proposed development would not preclude the development of land to the south contrary to Core Strategy policy P5, S1, SC1 and CG6AP by insufficient land being given over to a future link road.