

**Land south of Thorley Drive, Cheadle, Staffordshire**

**Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**

**Planning and Sustainability Statement**

**Applicant: Providence Land Ltd**

**February 2016**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application by Providence Land Ltd seeks outline planning permission on land on the eastern edge of the built up area of the town on Cheadle, Staffordshire. The proposal is to develop 2.23ha of land for up to 60 dwellings with associated open space and sustainable drainage. All matters are reserved for future consideration, other than access.
- 1.2 The main drawings are as follows:

**Table 1. List of main submitted drawings**

NAME	REFERENCE	SCALE	NOTES
LOCATION PLAN	0180/001	1:1250 @A3	Shows the Site in its surrounding context. Prepared by Niche Architects.
SITE PLAN	X/PLCheadle.1/05	1:500 @A1	Shows the Site accesses with visibility splays on the Topographical Survey base. Prepared by Mayer Brown.
SITE LAYOUT PLAN	B5580 SK 03 Rev G	1:500@A1	Indicative. Prepared by nicol thomas.

1.3 The reports accompanying the planning application are as follows:

**Table 2. List of submitted reports**

DOCUMENT	CONSULTANT	NOTES
Planning and Sustainability Statement	Howard Sharp & Partners	Local requirement. Contains Affordable Housing Statement, Open Space Assessment and Planning Obligation Statement.
Design and Access Statement	Howard Sharp & Partners	National requirement.
Tree Survey (Arboricultural Survey Report)	RGS	Local requirement. Incorporates Tree Assessment.
Biodiversity Survey & Report (Updated Ecological Appraisal and original Phase 1 Habitat Survey)	Ecolocation and Mayer Brown	Local requirement.
Transport Assessment	Mayer Brown	National requirement.
Travel Plan	Mayer Brown	Local requirement.
Flood Risk Assessment	Mayer Brown	National requirement. Contains drainage strategy for surface and foul.
Air Quality Assessment	Mayer Brown	Local requirement. Addresses impact on Tape street and the route into Cheadle.
Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal	Mayer Brown	Local requirement. Addresses para. 109 of the NPPF.
Ground Conditions Report	Mayer Brown	Local requirement. Contains Land Contamination Assessment
Utilities Statement	Mayer Brown	Local requirement.

## 2. THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application relates to a parcel of land on the eastern edge of Cheadle, measuring 2.23 hectares in total. It comprises one field and part of another, both currently used for horse and donkey grazing. A post and wire fence separates the fields; there is no hedgerow or trees between them. The southern field contains an animal shelter.
- 2.2 The Site lies to the west of Ashbourne Road (B5032) and south of Thorley Drive. The properties on Thorley Drive back onto the Site and are visible from Ashbourne Road, one of the main routes into Cheadle. The surrounding landscape is hilly and wooded in places.
- 2.3 There is an existing access spur road from Thorley Drive, which ends at a field access gate into the northern field. This provides good integration into the existing built up area. There are also two field accesses into the Site from Ashbourne Road.
- 2.4 The Site is only a short distance from existing facilities and services within the town centre.

### *Cheadle*

- 2.5 Cheadle is a market town with a population of more than 12,000 residents. It is one of the three towns within the Districts, together with Biddulph and Leek. It acts as a significant service centre for the local population and those in its rural hinterland. Its major employers include JCB.
- 2.6 Cheadle is less than 2km from the Alton Towers Resort and 18km from Stoke-on-Trent. The recently upgraded A50 [T] Stoke to Derby road that links the M1 and M6 motorways is only 6km away.
- 2.7 The District Council has identified Cheadle as a sustainable location for housing development. The recently adopted Core Strategy identified it as a focus for new development and investment, including jobs and services such as major retail.

***Planning History***

- 2.8 One recent refusal:

REFERENCE - SMD/2014/0227

PROPOSAL - PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF UP TO 190 DWELLINGS ALONG WITH NEW ACCESS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS, LAND SOUTH OF THORLEY DRIVE, CHEADLE

APPLICANT - KIER GROUP

DECISION – REFUSED 30/01/2015

- 2.9 Officers had recommended approval for the scheme, but the Council determined that the scale of the proposal would result in unacceptable highway and landscape impacts. The decision was not appealed and the current proposal (for less than one third the amount of dwellings) has had full regard to the reasons for refusal.

***Ownership***

- 2.10 The Site owners have entered into a binding legal agreement to bring the Site to market upon grant of planning permission. Therefore the Site is available now.

***Accessibility***

- 2.11 The Site is very sustainable and has access to higher order services and facilities commensurate with its urban edge location.
- 2.12 South Moorlands Leisure Centre is located approximately 500m west of the Site. This includes a swimming pool, sports hall, gymnasium, fitness studios and squash courts, grass and all-weather playing pitches and soft-play facility for small children.

- 2.13 A post office, newsagent and a pharmacy are located within approximately 800m along Ashbourne Road.
- 2.14 Beyond Thorley Drive, Ashbourne Road continues towards Cheadle town centre, with its supermarkets, main library, community hospital. The No.123 Cheadle town bus service passes along Ashbourne Road and Thorley Drive immediately to the north of the Site.
- 2.15 Secondary schools, primary schools, community hospital, healthcare centres and dentists all lie within walking/cycling distance of the Site.

***Public Rights of Way***

- 2.16 A Public Right of Way (Cheadle 3 Parish Footpath) runs just outside the south eastern boundary of the Site, from Ashbourne Road through an adjacent field.

***Topography***

- 2.17 A topographical survey of the Site and surrounding highways underpins the technical reports. The Site lies between the 165m and 180m contours, sloping down west to east.

***Landscape Context***

- 2.18 The Site does not fall within the Green Belt or any landscape designation.
- 2.19 Whilst part of the Site is identified in the Council's Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment as part of a much wide tract of land relevant to the setting of the settlement, the Council officers recognised for the previous application that the landscape character of the Site itself and the views into, over and from the Site are not of notably high sensitivity or quality.
- 2.20 The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment provides further details.

### ***Heritage***

- 2.21 There are no designated heritage assets on the Site, nor are there any listed buildings or conservation areas that could be affected. For the previous scheme, Staffordshire County Council Environmental Advice Team advised that there are no issues in terms of archaeology subject to a pre commencement condition for archaeological investigation.

### ***Minerals***

- 2.22 Mapping indicates that the Site is not located within a mineral consultation area and there are no relevant mineral operations that would be constrained by the proposed development.
- 2.23 There are no mineral safeguarding issues with regard to current saved planning policies. The area is situated within a proposed mineral safeguarding area for fireclays coincident with coal resources. For the previous scheme, given the proximity of the Site to an existing residential area, the planning officers considered it unlikely that any coal/fireclay resources could be extracted in an environmentally acceptable scheme.
- 2.24 The Coal Authority has previously advised that as the Site falls within the defined 'Development High Risk Area', conditions will need to be imposed to ensure consideration of potential coal mining features.

### ***Flood risk and drainage***

- 2.25 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment confirms the Site is within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) and there is no evidence of risk from other sources of flooding.

### ***Trees***

- 2.26 All the trees and hedgerows in and around the Site are detailed in the Arboricultural Report. The report sets out how to protect these during the development of the Site. Other than for arboricultural reasons, no trees are proposed to be removed and only a very small section of hedgerow need to be removed to accommodate the main vehicle



access. The indicative layout has respected the root protection areas of the trees to be retained.

***Ecology***

- 2.27 The submitted Ecological Appraisal updates the results of the previously submitted Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, which was previously accepted by the Council and the relevant statutory authorities.
- 2.28 The Site is comprised of semi-improved grassland with boundary hedgerows containing a few scattered trees. It is considered to be species-poor and hold low ecological value other than the hedgerow, which may support foraging bats and nesting birds as well as other wildlife. There is also a pond nearby, which has been assessed as having average suitability to support newts but a recent survey found no evidence of their presence.
- 2.29 Neither the Site nor any adjacent land has any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation. Land drains connect a nature conservation site (Cecilly Brook) with the Site but it is too distant to be affected by the development.

### 3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1 This is an outline application seeking permission for residential development and associated infrastructure, with all matters reserved for subsequent consideration other than access.

3.2 The proposal has benefitted from a pre-application meeting with the District Council and correspondence with various technical consultees, which has informed the all aspects of the application.

#### *Housing provision*

3.3 Up to 60 dwellings are proposed, comprising a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties. At 60 dwellings, the development achieves a gross density of 27 dwellings per hectare and a net density of 32 dwellings per hectare, making efficient use of the land but in keeping with the surrounding built character.

3.4 The precise number of dwellings is to be agreed at the Reserved Matters stage; 60 dwellings is considered to be the upper limit.

3.5 A minimum of 33% of the dwellings (i.e. up to 20) are proposed to be affordable units with the remaining provided as open market homes. Based on current planning policy it is anticipated that 70% (i.e. up to 14) of these affordable homes will be RSL rented and 30% (i.e. up to 6) will be intermediate housing.

3.6 It is proposed that dwellings will be a mix of detached, semi detached and small terraces and be predominantly two storeys in height with the potential for a few focal buildings to be 2.5 storeys in height. There would be no three storey buildings or higher.

3.7 Currently, Central Government is undertaking a consultation exercise on changes to affordable housing policy. The emphasis appears to be to encourage the provision of more starter homes. The outline application is purposely flexible enough to accommodate the evolving policy emphasis.

- 3.8 The assumed mix for the indicative layout is as follows, based on the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014) and the pre-application advice on affordable provision:

**Table 3. Indicative dwelling mix**

%

	Market	Affordable	Total
<b>2 Bed</b>	6%	20%	26%
<b>3 Bed</b>	50%	12%	62%
<b>4 Bed</b>	10%	2%	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	66%	34%	100%

For 60 dwellings

	Market	Affordable	Total
<b>2 Bed</b>	4	12	16
<b>3 Bed</b>	30	7	37
<b>4 Bed</b>	6	1	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	40	20	60

- 3.9 The proposed mix is aimed at families and also recognises the role of family homes in releasing supply of smaller properties for other households. Therefore a selection of family homes of 3 and 4 bedrooms are proposed as the majority of the provision. However, a proportion of 2 bedroom households are also proposed in the scheme, to address the needs of newly forming households and also older households downsizing and looking to release equity in existing homes, but still retaining flexibility for friends and family to come and stay.
- 3.10 Most of the affordable dwellings are proposed to be 2-bed houses as the District Council's Housing Strategy team has advised that the introduction of DWP size criteria to social housing has increased demand for 2 beds and decreased demand for 3 beds. The HCA Design Quality Standards (2007) would apply to the provision, having regard to the new size standards in the Housing Standards Review.

- 3.11 1 bedroom properties are not proposed as our experience is that Housing Associations prefer 2 bedroom properties for single households. Single bedroom properties have less flexibility to changing household circumstances which feed through into higher turnover and management issues.

***Access and Highway infrastructure***

- 3.12 The submitted Site Access plan X/PLCheadle.1/05 shows the proposal connecting to the surrounding land uses and routes. The scheme proposes a main vehicular and footpath link to Ashbourne Road and a pedestrian/cycle/emergency vehicle access link to Thorley Drive.
- 3.13 The main vehicular access onto Ashbourne Road is the same as was proposed for the previous scheme and was found to be acceptable by the County Highway Authority, subject to various agreed measures. A 2.4m x 59m visibility splay is to be provided to the left of the Site access and a 2.4m x 120m visibility splay to the right. The additional length of visibility splay to the east recognises the measured speeds of vehicles approaching from this direction.
- 3.14 It is proposed that the 30mph speed limit along Ashbourne Road to the north-west of the Site is extended circa 70m south-eastwards to encompass the Site access junction. This would be accompanied by an extension of the existing street lighting along the north-east side of the road and new gateway / traffic calming features.
- 3.15 The submitted Transport Assessment explains the proposed financial contributions to enable off-site junction improvements to be delivered, with this additional capacity also addressing the effects of background traffic growth and so benefiting all road users. The County Highway Authority is already proposing to reconfigure the town centre roundabouts to provide an alternative junction form to address the forecast background traffic growth. Capacity assessments undertaken for the Ashbourne Road / Tape Street mini-roundabout and Tape Street / Chapel Street / Well Street roundabout indicate that these junctions are approaching capacity. Therefore a contribution to these projects, commensurate with the amount of traffic from the development the subject of this application, is the obvious solution and one that is accepted in principle by the applicants.

3.16 Junction capacity assessments undertaken for the proposed Site access and adjacent junctions along Ashbourne Road with Thorley Drive indicate that all junctions are forecast to operate well within the normal design threshold for capacity, with minimal queuing or delays incurred. The proposal is forecast to generate less than two cars a minute at the busiest parts of the day.

3.17 The applicants are willing to provide an appropriate Travel Plan monitoring contribution.

***Green Infrastructure-and open space***

3.18 High quality on-site public space is an integral part of the proposal. The proposal will follow a green infrastructure-led approach where multi-functional green space is provided for a range of benefits including informal recreation, play, visual amenity, ecological protection/enhancement and potential space for sustainable drainage.

3.19 Some of the proposed open space will be semi-natural green space and the remainder will be amenity green space incorporating an equipped play area (LEAP). The open space will be focused on the eastern side of the Site where it can reduce the impacts of the new housing as viewed from Ashbourne Road. As shown on the indicative layout, the play area will connect well to footways through the Site and properties fronting onto the play area will be able to provide good, casual supervision and visibility. The play area is proposed at 400m<sup>2</sup> with no less than 10m buffer to the nearest dwelling.

3.20 Having regard to the minimum standards in the 2004 Public Open Space SPD, whilst no 'Major Open Space' would be appropriate, 0.6ha of 'Children's Play Areas' and 0.6ha of 'Incidental Open Space' (i.e. amenity grassland) would be required for every 1,000 people. So, for the maximum 60 dwellings, the proposed 144 people (60 dwellings x 2.4 per household) would result in an on-site requirement for 0.17ha. The proposed 0.35ha is well in excess of these standards to allow sufficient space along the Ashbourne Road frontage for landscaping buffer/green link to address the transition into the open countryside. This indicates how the scheme is a Green Infrastructure-led proposal that has not been designed down to the minimum policy standards.

- 3.21 It is proposed that a contribution will be made for off-site enhancement or new provision of playing pitches and facilities. This has regard to the Council's Public Green Space and Countryside Strategy 2010-2015. The current deficiency of facilities for young people and outdoor sports facilities in the Cheadle area is summarised in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2015. It is suggested that the £106 contributions would fund an extension to Thorley Drive playing fields and possibly Tean Road recreation area. The off-site sum would be equivalent to approximately 1.6ha of Playing Pitches for 1,000 people, which would amount to an extra 0.23ha of provision. The precise amount would be calculated by formula using number of bedrooms as set out in the SPG, and this would be determined by the Reserved Matters.
- 3.22 The submitted indicative layout shows how the trees and hedgerows, around and within the Site, could be retained largely intact. The proposed and retained hedge and tree planting along the Site's boundaries will provide mitigation and soften the proposed development within these views, providing a stronger landscape edge than the one currently provided. It is proposed that the on-site hedgerows to be retained will be subject to a long term maintenance strategy/management plan of benefit to both landscape and ecology.
- 3.23 The indicative layout allows for an attenuation pond to the west of the Site (the lowest point). This will be an informal shape with landscaping around it. The attenuation will discharge into a new swale connected to the existing drainage ditch, which then runs to the Cheadle Mill Brook tributary located to the south. This will enable the surface water run-off from the Site to be restricted to the Greenfield runoff rate.
- 3.24 A minimum 15m-wide landscape buffer is proposed to the south east of the Site, on land in the same control as the applicant. This is intended to form a permanent new edge to the settlement, which follows the line of the field boundary to the east. This will also bring ecological as well as landscape benefits.
- 3.25 The LVIA for the previous scheme had been accepted by officers. Nevertheless, following Committee discussion, the Council determined that the scale of the scheme would have impacts upon the setting of the town. The applicants have had full regard to this decision and have proposed several important changes from the previous scheme:

- significantly reduced site size and dwelling number
- strong landscaped buffer to south of the Site
- public open space to east of the Site along Ashbourne Road, to reduce visual impact

3.26 In accordance with the Ecology Officer advice on the previous application, it is proposed that conditions are attached in order to ensure that appropriate ecological information informs the reserved matters stage. These relate to:

- Additional detailed hedgerow survey information
- Species surveys including water voles, great crested newts, and bat activity.
- A strategy to minimise light spillage from public and private lighting on the Site that may adversely affect bat habitat

## 4. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

### *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

#### *Presumption in favour of sustainable development*

- 4.1 The most up to date national policy is set out in the NPPF published in March 2012, which sets out the Government's planning policies to secure sustainable development. At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 4.2 In the context of this application paragraphs 14 and 47 are of prime importance. The presumption in favour of sustainable development in decision-taking is explained at paragraph 14 of the NPPF. It means, unless material considerations indicate otherwise:
- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
  - where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
    - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or
    - specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. There are no such restrictions on this Site and the Plan is evidently out-of-date.
- 4.3 Example of specific policies in this Framework which indicate development should be restricted are those policies relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park (or the Broads Authority); designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.



- 4.4 The NPPF states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. They are not to be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. The planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions.

*Core planning principles*

- 4.5 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out the core planning principles which should underpin decision taking. In summary, these state that planning should:

- be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area;
- be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;
- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes, business and infrastructure and that every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth, take account of market signals and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development;
- seek a high quality design and a good standard of amenity;
- take account of the different roles and character of different areas, including recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;
- support the transition to a low carbon future;

- contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution, allocating land for development based on a preference for land of lesser environmental value;
- encourage effective use of previously developed land;
- promote mixed use developments and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land;
- conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance;
- actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and
- take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

*Transport policy*

- 4.6 The promotion of sustainable transport is a core principle of the NPPF and patterns of growth should be actively managed to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and to focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.
- 4.7 The NPPF sets out that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development and in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives and that encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.
- 4.8 Paragraph 32 of the NPPF explains that decisions should take account of whether:

- the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the Site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;
- safe and suitable access to the Site can be achieved for all people; and
- improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

*Housing policy*

4.9 In relation to housing development, the following policies are of particular relevance to the proposal:

- Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing needs of an area (paragraph 17);
- Local planning authorities should boost significantly the supply of housing by using their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area (paragraph 47);
- Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 49); and
- 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 (paragraph 49).

4.10 As the Inspector on the Development Plan observed the current objectively assessed need has not been assessed. The NPPF recognises the particular needs of rural communities and acknowledges that villages should have the freedom to plan for necessary and appropriate development:

- Plan housing to meet local needs in rural areas particularly affordable housing (paragraph 54)
- Location of housing in rural areas so as to enhance or maintain the viability of rural communities (paragraph 55)

*Pro-active and positive planning*

- 4.11 The NPPF expects local planning authorities to work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Local planning authorities should now approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development (paragraph 186) with decision-takers at every level seeking to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (paragraph 187).

***National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)***

- 4.12 On 6 March 2014 the Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) suite was published online to replace and update a number of previous planning practice guidance documents, which were consequently cancelled. The NPPG is therefore also of relevance when assessing the scheme.

## 5. THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### *The Adopted Local Plan*

- 5.1 The starting point for decision making is the development plan. S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. However, policies of the development plan need to be considered and applied in terms of their degree of consistency with the NPPF. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given.
- 5.2 The current Development Plan is the Core Strategy adopted March 2014. The Core Strategy does not identify any housing sites in Cheadle as it was anticipated that this would be in the Sites Allocations DPD, which has not progressed.

### *Housing Policies in the Adopted Development Plan*

- 5.3 A five year supply of housing land cannot be demonstrated within the District, as set out in this Statement.
- 5.4 As there is no up-to-date development plan setting out a housing requirement for the District, nor any proposed allocations, little weight should be attributed solely to the Site being located in the countryside. Instead, the application falls to be considered in terms of the presumption in favour of sustainable development as per paragraph 14 of the NPPF. This means consideration must be given to whether the adverse impact of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.
- 5.5 The spatial strategy of the Core Strategy, and its evidence base, demonstrates that Cheadle is a highly sustainable location for housing development. Figure 8 of the Core Strategy shows how the proposed development approach is to increase the growth of Cheadle so as to expand its role and improve its infrastructure. In comparison, the aim is to maintain the growth of Leek and only accommodate limited growth in Biddulph because of its constraints and proximity to the North Staffordshire Major Urban Area, a focus of strategic regeneration.

- 5.6 SS1 – ‘Development Principles’ states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the District.
- 5.7 SS1a - establishes a 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' as contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 5.8 SS2 – ‘Future Provision of Development’ requires 6000 additional dwellings (net of demolitions) to be completed during the period 2006 to 2026.
- 5.9 Policy SS3 - ‘Distribution of Development’ proposes 22% of housing in District within Cheadle and Figure 9 shows that this would amount to 1320 dwellings, of which the net residual requirement is more than 1,000. The annualised rate of housing growth sought in Cheadle is consequently more than 50 dwellings per year.
- 5.10 SS4 – ‘Managing the Release of Development’ states that the release of land for housing across the District will be managed in order to deliver the level and distribution of development within the Core Strategy.
- 5.11 Policy SS5 ‘Towns’ identifies Cheadle as one of the three towns within the District which will accommodate “..the bulk of the District’s housing, employment and retail needs”. It proposes by 2026:
- Housing 1320 net completions
  - Employment 4.8 hectares
  - Retail 2,500m2 convenience floorspace and 6,000 m2 comparison floorspace
- 5.12 Policy SS5c ‘Cheadle Area Strategy’ allows for small urban extensions to the town. This policy seeks to expand the housing market in Cheadle, increasing the range of available and affordable house types and higher market housing, especially for first time buyers and families.
- 5.13 Figure 12 shows that 250 dwellings are expected to be delivered from this source. Discussions with officers have indicated that it would involve sites of less than 100

dwellings. The previous scheme was well in excess of this threshold, whilst the current scheme is well within it.

- 5.14 H1 – ‘New Housing Development’ requires a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures and to meet various quality and amenity standards.
- 5.15 H2 ‘Affordable and Local Needs Housing’ sets out the requirements for affordable housing and how this should be secured. A target is provided of 33% affordable housing on-site from all sources. 70% of all affordable dwellings provided on each site should be social rented housing with the remainder being intermediate housing.

*Other Policies in the Core Strategy*

- 5.16 A number of saved policies of the Core Strategy are considered to be broadly consistent with the NPPF and have been taken account of in the preparation of this application:

SD1 – ‘Sustainable Use of Resources’ states that development will be located and designed to minimise energy needs.

SD4 – ‘Pollution and Flood Risk’ addresses the potential effects of pollution (air, land, noise, water, light) and flood risk.

DC1 – ‘Design Considerations’ requires all development to be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness.

DC3 – ‘Landscape and Settlement Setting’ states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements.

C1 - Creating Sustainable Communities. This states the Council will 'only permit new development where the utility, transport and community infrastructure necessary to serve it is either available, or will be made available by the time the development needs it.

C2 – ‘Sport, Recreation and Open Space Policy’ states that the Council will promote the provision of high quality recreational open space.

C3 – ‘Green Infrastructure’ states that the Council will, develop an integrated network of high quality and multi-functional green infrastructure.

NE1 – ‘Biodiversity and Geological Resources’ seeks to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas.

T1 – ‘Development and Sustainable Transport’ states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally.

T2 - Other Sustainable Transport Measures’ state that the Council will encourage and support measures which promote better accessibility, create safer roads, reduce the impact of traffic, or facilitate highway improvements.

### ***Emerging Plans***

- 5.17 The adopted Core Strategy states that in order to take account of the longer term requirements of the District, the Council will undertake an early and comprehensive review. This will incorporate initial work already underway on the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and will result in a single comprehensive Local Plan up to 2031. The Council consulted over options for site allocations and development boundaries between 6th July and 14th September 2015. The application Site was one of the options put forward by the Council. These representations are still being considered and the Council have stated their intention to consult on preferred options in Spring 2016. Adoption is expected towards the end of 2017.
  
- 5.18 Cheadle Parish have stated that they will be preparing a Neighbourhood Plan at a future unspecified date, which is likely to be after the District Council publish their draft policies within which any Neighbourhood Plan will need to conform. No application to define a Neighbourhood Plan boundary has been submitted; therefore even if it were to proceed, adoption is likely to be at least a year away.
  
- 5.19 The NPPG (Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 21b-014-20140306) sets out the circumstances where it might be justifiable to refuse planning permission on the grounds of prematurity.



It states that in the context of the NPPF and in particular the presumption in favour of sustainable development – arguments that an application is premature are unlikely to justify a refusal of planning permission other than where it is clear that the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, taking the policies in the NPPF and any other material considerations into account. Such circumstances are likely, but not exclusively, to be limited to situations where both:

a) the development proposed is so substantial, or its cumulative effect would be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to an emerging Local Plan or Neighbourhood Planning; and

b) the emerging plan is at an advanced stage but is not yet formally part of the development plan for the area.

5.20 Refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft Local Plan has yet to be submitted for examination. Where planning permission is refused on grounds of prematurity, the local planning authority will need to indicate clearly how the grant of permission for the development concerned would prejudice the outcome of the plan-making process.

## 6. HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

### *Housing land supply calculation*

- 6.1 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with a buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition for land, or 20% where there is not a record of persistent under-delivery. To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable.
  
- 6.2 The Staffordshire Moorlands five year housing land supply position is set out in the Council's latest Housing Delivery Schedule, which calculates until 21<sup>st</sup> March 2015. This shows a 1.84 year land supply, based on an annual requirement of 300dpa plus growing shortfall and 20% buffer for persistent under-delivery. Of the 1,081 of total deliverable supply identified, only 112 are within Cheadle.
  
- 6.3 The Council should be building 588 dwellings per year, yet average delivery rates have been 172 per year. The Core Strategy Policy SS2 (Future Provision of Development) incorporates a steeped housing trajectory which anticipates an average annual development rate of 360 from 2016 onwards.
  
- 6.4 The situation is particularly problematic in Cheadle, where only 175 dwellings have been built in total since 2006.
  
- 6.5 The annual average requirement of 300dpa is likely to be increased in the emerging Local Plan, based on the evidence base to date. A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Housing Needs Study were produced in June 2014 and updated in July 2015 with the implications of the Government's 2012-based Sub-National Household Projections (SNHP). The original SHMA suggested a District dwelling requirement of up to 440dpa and the update point to a revised housing range of between up to 460dpa.

- 6.6 It is clear that there is a serious shortfall in housing land supply assessed against need, supporting the immediate release and development of the application Site.

*SHLAA assessments*

- 6.7 The application Site is included in the Strategic Housing Lane Availability Assessment (SHLAA). It is currently classed as at Category 'B', i.e. a site that could be developable for housing.

- 6.8 The SHLAA assessments for the sites (plus additional land to the south east) can be summarised as follows:

Capacity of 110 dwellings in total. Both available, viable, developable.

CH075a (Thorley Drive) – 50 dwellings capacity on 1.6ha.

Suitability Assessment – “Logical extension to existing housing. Although adjoins area identified as of landscape importance, this particular site is not of any significant landscape quality”.

CH075b (Ashbourne Road) – 60 dwellings capacity on 2ha.

Suitability Assessment – “Possible extension to existing housing in combination with site CH075a”.

## 7. SECTION 106 OBLIGATION

### *Legal and policy context*

- 7.1 The applicants propose a planning obligation under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 7.2 The CIL Regulations 2010 places into law (Regulation 122) the Government's policy tests on the use of planning obligations. It is now unlawful for a planning obligation to be taken into account as a reason for granting planning permission for a development of this nature if the obligation does not meet all of the following tests; necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 7.3 The Council's adopted Policy C1 - Creating Sustainable Communities - states the Council will 'only permit new development where the utility, transport and community infrastructure necessary to serve it is either available, or will be made available by the time the development needs it.

### *Reasons for the proposed obligation*

- 7.4 The proposed s106 agreement will help to ensure any adverse impacts of the development can be satisfactorily addressed through appropriate mitigation. This includes on and off site provision of infrastructure and facilities to provide for the needs of the residents as well as providing for any site specific mitigation. This will satisfactorily address any impacts on the infrastructure, local services and community.
- 7.5 The proposed contributions are considered to be necessary and proportionate obligations that comply with the tests set by Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010, for which there is a clear policy basis either in the form of development plan policy or supplementary planning guidance, and for which are directly, fairly and reasonably related to the scale and kind of development.

- 7.6 It is anticipated that specific projects will be identified by the Council for the financial contributions to ensure compliance with the latest Government Guidance, in consultation with the Parish Council and County Council.

***Proposed Heads of Terms***

- 7.7 It is acknowledged that this proposal meets or exceeds the thresholds for a range of community infrastructure to be secured by way of a Section 106 agreement. The precise range and quantum of requirements will be established through the formal consultation process. The applicants have confirmed their intention to agree the Heads of Terms of a Section 106 agreement within the statutory 13-week determination period in order to secure such matters.
- 7.8 Provided that the community infrastructure requested by the council is relevant to planning; necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the proposed development; fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development; and reasonable in all other respects, the applicants are willing for the s106 to include:

Affordable Housing

Having regard to the policies and pre-application advice with the District Council, a minimum of 33% on-site affordable housing is proposed of a type, tenure, size and position to be agreed.

Public Open Space

Cheadle has a deficiency of open space and the following elements are proposed based on the pre-application advice:

- On-site public open space minimum 0.17ha containing a LEAP minimum 400m<sup>2</sup>
- Off site contribution towards outdoor sports facilities/playing pitches

All amounts to be calculated on a per dwelling type basis in accordance with the SPG. A maintenance sum for the on-site provision will depend on whether the Council will adopt.

Buffer Landscaping

The applicant is willing to provide a minimum 15m wide buffer planting scheme directly to the south of the eastern part of the Site, in land under the main landowner's control.

### Education

The School Organisation Team at Staffordshire County Council has advised at pre-application stage that the development falls within the catchments of Cheadle Academy and Cheadle Primary School. They have provided a calculated contribution using the building cost multipliers and the number of dwellings proposed. This provides an initial estimate and may be amended prior to determination of the planning application. With regard to the maximum number of 60 dwellings, excluding the 14 RSL dwellings from secondary only, the development could add up to 13 Primary School aged pupils, 7 High School aged pupils and 1 Sixth Form aged pupil.

There is capacity at Cheadle Academy, but as Cheadle Primary School is projected to be full for the foreseeable future. The County has stated that they will consequently be requesting a contribution towards Primary School provision. As an indication only, the education contribution would be £11,031 per primary school place, so the maximum 13 spaces would result in a contribution of £143,403. The above contribution is based on the 2008/09 cost multipliers, which are subject to change. Also, if the County wish to fund a new school rather than expanded capacity at an existing school, the contributions may be higher.

### Transport

The Highway Authority at Staffordshire County Council have advised at pre-application stage that they would be seeking the following

- Contribution to off-site improvements - town centre junctions
- Potential speed reduction measures along Ashbourne Road, subject to a TRO
- Travel plan monitoring costs

- 7.9 The Applicant confirms agreement to pay the reasonable legal fees of the Council in preparing the s106 Agreement.

## 8. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

8.1 The Government's view of what "sustainable development" means in practice is to be found in paragraphs 18 to 219 of the NPPF, taken as a whole (paragraph 6). The following sections of the NPPF are considered to be of particular relevant to the consideration the proposal:

- Building a strong competitive economy
- Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
- Promoting sustainable transport
- Requiring good design
- Promoting healthy communities
- Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

8.2 This section consequently provides an assessment of the benefits and impacts in relation to each of the above headings and how these should be weighed in the overall planning balance.

### ***Building a strong, competitive economy***

8.3 The Government is committed to securing and supporting sustainable economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. The development will support the aims of securing economic growth in a sustainable way. There will be economic benefits in terms of the construction of the development itself and the resultant housing choice and population growth contributing to the local economy.

### ***Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes***

8.4 The scheme will make a significant contribution towards the supply of deliverable housing land and meeting the area's affordable housing needs, in accordance with policies H1, H2 and SS5c.

- 8.5 The housing elements of the Site will be delivered within the next five year period, making a significant contribution to housing supply which would be a benefit to which considerable weight should be given, in accordance with paragraphs 47 and 49 of the NPPF and having regard to the Councils current housing land supply position as set out in Section 6 of the this Statement.
- 8.6 A variety of dwelling sizes and types are proposed to meet the range of community needs and market demand in the local area and to ensure a mixed community. The final mix can be secured at Reserved Matters stage.
- 8.7 At least 33% of the total number of dwellings is proposed as affordable. Given the failure to meet current affordable housing needs this is a considerable public benefit to the scheme that should add significant weight to the planning balance.

***Promoting sustainable transport***

- 8.8 The proposed development will be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. The Site directly adjoins a main settlement in the District, which is identified in the adopted Core Strategy as a sustainable location for new development. There are bus stops and key facilities located within walking/cycling distance of the Site as set out in the Transport Assessment.
- 8.9 It has been demonstrated in the Transport Assessment that safe and suitable access to the Site can be achieved for all people in accordance with Policies T1 and T2 and that there will not be a severe network impact.
- 8.10 The submitted Design and Access Statement shows how the indicative layout has followed the principles within Policy T1 and the NPPF, including encouragement of non-car travel.
- 8.11 Taking account of the above, there is consequently no basis to object to the application on highways grounds and that the evidence supplied demonstrates that the proposal would not conflict with the aims of the NPPF.



***Requiring good design***

- 8.12 The NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
- 8.13 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the proposal will function well, add to the overall quality of the area, establish a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the Site to accommodate development, provide for an appropriate mix of uses, respond to local character and history, and create safe and accessible environments which are visually attractive. The resulting indicative layout shows a cohesive design approach the deals with the above issues satisfactorily.
- 8.14 The proposal will accord with Policy DC1 as it will respect and complement the physical characteristics of the Site and its surroundings and the historical scale and context of the setting. The indicative layout and accompanying Design & Access Statement show how these aspects can be satisfactorily addressed in the Reserved Matters.
- 8.15 The indicative layout is based on the principle of perimeter blocks allowing for frontages to face outwards onto streets and for the rear gardens to be enclosed. Owing to the perimeter block arrangement, the dwellings also face towards the public open space on Site, providing a frontage to these areas and offering surveillance. Particular attention is to be paid to the massing and architectural style of these buildings so that they contribute positively to the quality and character of the development.
- 8.16 The Design and Access Statement advises that the proposed development should be predominantly two-storeys across the Site. However, there will be occasional 2.5 storey dwellings in key locations to provide distinctiveness in the street scene, which is considered appropriate in this location and reflective of the scale of surrounding development. The careful use of the 2.5 storey dwellings will act as positive architectural focal points within the layout, but the countryside edge will be no more than two-storeys to minimise the landscape impacts.
- 8.17 The indicative layout also indicates how the proposal will avoid harming residential amenities in terms of the distances between existing dwellings and the new dwellings.

***Promoting healthy communities***

- 8.18 The Site is located in good proximity to community facilities and amenities and s106 contributions are proposed to address the impacts on social infrastructure, including education provision. It will accord with Policy SD1, which states that development is located and designed to minimise energy needs.
  
- 8.19 The proposal will accord with Policy C2, which seek to provide sufficient public open space and opportunities for play. This will take the form of on-site provision of open space incorporating a LEAP and s106 contributions to off-site outdoor sports facilities.
  
- 8.20 Although current pupil demographics indicate that secondary schools should be able to accommodate the likely demand from pupils generated by the development, it is anticipated that financial contributions will be requested for a new or expanded primary school currently planned by the education authority.
  
- 8.21 The proposal will assist in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. It aims to provide active streets and a safe and accessible environment. It can be sustainably accommodated without any adverse impact upon the existing community.
  
- 8.22 Conditions will be able to control any environmental health impact from construction e.g. noise and dust, in accordance with policy SD4.
  
- 8.23 Conditions will be able to manage any risks from contamination or former mining features, for example requiring agreement of a scheme of intrusive site investigations and, if necessary a scheme for remedial works.

***Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding***

- 8.24 The proposal demonstrates resilience to climate change and supports the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy, which is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
  
- 8.25 The sustainability of the proposal encompasses the design, construction and locational factors in accordance with policy SD1.
  
- 8.26 The proposed dwellings would be constructed to modern standards of design and sustainability to accord with current building regulations.
  
- 8.27 The Site is located away from areas vulnerable to aspects such as flood risk, whilst ensuring that it adequately and appropriately deals with any impacts arising. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment confirms the Site is within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding). It confirms that the proposed development will not be affected by current or future flooding from any source, nor will it will not increase flood risk elsewhere. It concludes that there will be no increase in risk of flooding from rivers, land, groundwater or sewers as a result of this development.
  
- 8.28 The drainage strategy broadly follows that of the previous application, which was accepted by the Council and the relevant statutory authorities. It is anticipated that a condition will require drainage plans for the disposal of surface water and foul sewage submitted to and approved by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of development and for these approved plans to be implemented.

***Conserving and enhancing the natural environment***

- 8.29 The proposal will contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment through protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, minimising impacts on biodiversity (and providing net gains) and preventing any adverse effects of pollution.

*Landscape and visual effects*

- 8.30 The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment puts the area in its wider landscape context and analyses the local context in detail. It demonstrates that the scheme will be of an appropriate nature that contributes well to the overall setting of Cheadle, in accordance with policy DC3.
- 8.31 By its very nature, extending a settlement will result in development in the open countryside. However, the proposal minimises the intrusion due to the existing landscaping and the buffer open space proposed on the edge of the Site. Therefore the individual setting and character of Cheadle will not be adversely affected by the proposed outward expansion. The proposal uses land efficiently and creates a well-defined boundary between the settlement and countryside and the development will not impair the character or identity of the settlement or the adjoining rural area.

*Trees and biodiversity*

- 8.32 The natural features of the Site will be conserved and enhanced. The Design and Access Statement demonstrates how existing natural features can be incorporated into areas of public open space. The majority of the existing trees, hedgerows and shrubs bounding the Site will be retained and protected throughout the development as set out in the Arboricultural Report, and overall, with the proposed new planting there will be a net gain.
- 8.33 It is proposed that conditions will required to:
- minimise and control tree and hedgerow removal
  - ensure control over any removal of trees in connection with the protection of any bat roosting opportunities
  - ensure the erection of protective fencing for the retained trees during site construction
- 8.34 It is, therefore, considered that, with appropriate mitigation/enhancement, the proposal would not have any adverse impact on biodiversity and would accord with Policies NE1 and C3 as well as the relevant NPPF advice in Section 11.

***Conserving and enhancing the historic environment***

- 8.35 There is no evidence that archaeology would be an impediment to development. Any issues that may arise can be attached as a condition to any future planning permission that may be granted. It is, therefore, considered that the proposal would accord with policy DC2 as well as the relevant NPPF advice in Section 12.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

### *Material considerations*

- 9.1 It is considered that the planning balance for the determination of this application should encompass the following material considerations:
- The planning policy position
  - Whether the proposal would constitute a sustainable form of development
  - The impact on residential amenities
  - The proposed developer contributions
  - Any other material considerations
- 9.2 Each will be summarised in turn and then the conclusions on the planning balance outlined.

### *The planning policy position*

- 9.3 Sections 4 and 5 of this Statement set out the planning policy position. This requires that the application should be evaluated against the extant development plan and the NPPF, in particular the core planning principles of the NPPF and whether the proposal delivers sustainable development.
- 9.4 The proposal accords with all the relevant up-to-date policies of the Development Plan. There are no up-to-date policies that govern the amount and location of major housing growth.
- 9.5 The application should be considered in the context of paragraph 14 of the NPPF which sets out a presumption in favour of granting planning permission unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 9.6 Having regard to footnote 9 of the NPPF, there are no specific policies that indicate development should be restricted on the application Site. For example, the Site is not protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; it is not land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of

Outstanding Natural Beauty, or within a National Park. Nor does it significantly affect a designated heritage asset or fall within a location at risk of flooding.

***Sustainability of the proposal***

- 9.7 Section 8 of this statement (Sustainability Appraisal) demonstrates that the proposal will contribute to:
- building a strong competitive economy
  - delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
  - promoting sustainable transport
  - ensuring good design
  - promoting healthy communities
  - meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding
  - conserving and enhancing the natural environment
  - conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- 9.8 As the proposal will meet all three of the mutually dependent dimensions identified in the NPPF - economic, social and environmental - it constitutes sustainable development.
- 9.9 The main issues are considered to be the proposal's location on the edge of a main settlement (which ensures accessibility to services and public transport), the valuable contribution the proposal would make to increasing the supply of market/affordable housing and the provision of high quality open spaces and landscaping which will benefit the wider community.

***The impact on residential amenities***

- 9.10 The indicative layout demonstrates that the proposal will have an acceptable impact on the localised Site and surroundings and conditions can be imposed to control and particular aspects.

***The proposed developer contributions***

- 9.11** The proposed developer contributions are able to satisfactorily address any impacts on the infrastructure, local services and community.

***Any other material considerations***

- 9.12 There are not considered to be any other material consideration that should be weighed against the proposal.

***The planning balance***

- 9.13 Providing up to 60 dwellings will significantly bolster the supply of housing in an accessible location. In the context of the Council currently being unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, this is a material benefit to be attributed considerable weight in the planning balance.
- 9.14 In addition, the proposal would make a significant contribution to affordable housing provision in the locality, which should also be attributed considerable weight in favour. There would also be economic benefits in terms of the construction of the development itself, those associated with the resultant increase in population. Benefits may also be secured through the provision of a net enhancement to biodiversity.
- 9.15 Compliance with some of the other core planning principles of the NPPF have been demonstrated in terms of promoting sustainable transport, avoiding a severe impact on the highway network, preserving residential amenities, promoting healthy communities and meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding.
- 9.16 The proposal would not have a significant impact on the natural environment, but it would inevitably have some adverse impact in terms of the visual and landscape character of the Site and immediate surroundings. However, overall, the new housing can be delivered in way that will be sensitive to its location and able to respond positively to the distinctive character of the town. Overall, the planning impacts are not significant and can be mitigated with section 106 contributions, highway improvements and landscaped buffers.



- 9.17 Weighing all the relevant factors into the planning balance, and having regard to the NPPF as a whole, it is considered that the limited adverse impacts would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the housing and economic benefits of the proposal. Therefore the proposal should be granted planning permission.