

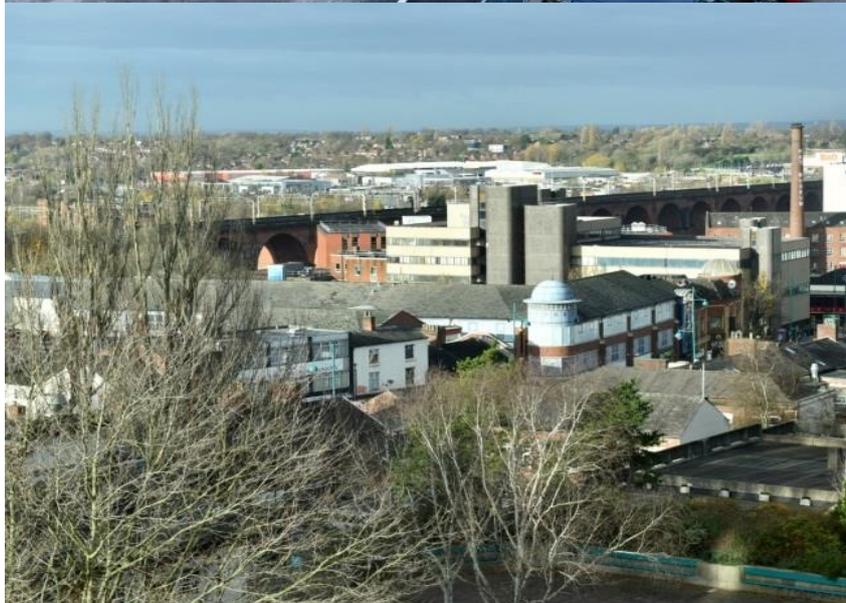
TOWN CENTRE ACCESS PLAN

phase 2

Travis Brow to A6 Link Road –
Planning Statement
(incorporating the
Design and Access
Statement)

0527/0801/16/01

May 2016



REVISION SCHEDULE

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1	13 April 2016	Working draft for client review	Sam Rosillo <i>Senior Planner</i> Matthew Stopforth <i>Planner</i>	Alan Houghton <i>Head of Planning North</i>	Alan Houghton <i>Head of Planning North</i>
2	04 May 2016	Final draft for client review	Sam Rosillo <i>Senior Planner</i>	Alan Houghton <i>Head of Planning North</i>	Alan Houghton <i>Head of Planning North</i>
3	16 May 2016	Final version for planning submission	Sam Rosillo <i>Senior Planner</i>	Alan Houghton <i>Head of Planning North</i>	Alan Houghton <i>Head of Planning North</i>

AECOM
Bridgewater House
4th Floor
Whitworth Street
Manchester
M1 6LT

Tel: +44 (0) 161 907 3500

Fax: +44 (0) 161 907 3501

www.AECOM.com

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement (which incorporates a Design and Access Statement) has been prepared to support the application for planning permission and listed building consent (herein referred to as the '*application*') for construction of a new link road connecting Travis Brow with the A6 (Wellington Road North) and associated highway improvement works along Travis Brow, the A6 and George's Road in Stockport (herein referred to as the '*proposed Development*'). The proposed Development is one of the schemes that Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) is aiming to bring forward as part of the Stockport Town Centre Access Plan (STCAP). The overall aim of the STCAP is for "*An integrated transport investment strategy to tackle congestion and barriers to movement in Stockport town centre to support and enhance the local economy, provide access to jobs, improve community wellbeing and create a vibrant town centre.*"
- 1.1.2 The application is being submitted to SMBC, which is the determining authority in respect of the proposed Development. The proposed development site (referred to as the '*Site*' in this Planning Statement) is located in Stockport, to the north of junction 1 of the M60 (see Location Plan, drawing number Task4957_1a).
- 1.1.3 This Planning Statement is an important tool in explaining the context of the proposed Development, and providing an appraisal of how it will accord with the adopted SMBC development plan policy and provide benefits in terms of improving access within and around Stockport town centre. This Planning Statement also includes a section covering the requirements for a Design and Access Statement (**Chapter 4**), providing details relating to the design evolution, how the proposed Development relates to the site setting and its surroundings and key access matters.
- 1.1.4 A section is also incorporated within this Planning Statement that explains the pre-submission public consultation that the applicant has undertaken (see **Chapter 5**). Comments received in relation to the proposed Development are set out within this chapter, including an indication of how they have been considered in designing the proposed Development.
- 1.1.5 In addition to the requirement to secure full planning permission, listed building consent is required for the proposed Development due to its proximity to the Grade II* Listed Railway Viaduct. This requirement was discussed and agreed in discussion with the SMBC conservation department. This Planning Statement provides an indication of how the proposed Development has been designed to ensure that it respects the context of the railway viaduct. (see **Chapter 4**)

1.2 The applicant and AECOM

- 1.2.1 The applicant is SMBC. Therefore this application falls under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations (1992)¹ as the Council is applying to itself for planning permission and listed building consent. As set out above, SMBC is bringing forward a series of schemes (including the proposed Development) through the STCAP.

¹ UK Government (1992) Town and Country Planning General Regulations. Available from: https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/compliance/C2011-60_UK/Communication/Statutory_provisions/Town_CountryPlanGeneralRegs1992.pdf [Accessed 25/04/2016]

1.2.2 AECOM is the planning agent acting on behalf of the applicant in facilitating the submission of the application. AECOM is a multi-disciplinary consultancy with offices in a number of countries across the world. AECOM has a global network of experts that work with clients, communities and colleagues to develop and implement innovative solutions to complex challenges.

1.3 The contents of the application for planning permission and listed building consent

1.3.1 The following documents are submitted as part of the application for planning permission and listed building consent.

Table 1.1: Application documents

Drawing/Document Name	Drawing/Document Number
N/A	Cover Letter
N/A	Completed application form and ownership certificate
<u>Plans and drawings</u>	
Task4957_1a	Site Location Plan
0527-801-F-24 (DF5)	General Arrangement [Proposed Site Layout]
294-329-S-FS-001 P2	Proposed plan and elevations to DF5
294-329-S-FS-002 P2	Elevation A-A to DF5
294-329-S-FS-003 P2	Sections at CH 220 & 26 and wall construction details to DF5
294-329-S-FS-004 P3	Sections at 80 & 300 to DF5
294-329-S-FS-005 P3	Sections at 307 elevation B-B to DF5
294-329-S-FS-006 P1	Proposed cross sections to DF5 chainage 20 to 160
294-329-S-FS-007 P1	Proposed cross sections to DF5 chainage 180 to 280
294-329-S-FS-008 P1	Proposed cross sections to DF5 chainage 300 to 360
0527-1001-801-001 Rev E	Proposed advanced direction signs
0527-DF5-TCAP-COL-801	Proposed street lighting and illuminated signs
N/A	Impact of proposed lighting on Travis Brow existing and proposed highway
N/A	Impact of proposed lighting on Georges Road and Wellington Road North
0527-801-PH2-501-P2	Existing Drainage Layout General Arrangement

Drawing/Document Name	Drawing/Document Number
0527-801-PH2-502-P4	Proposed Drainage Layout General Arrangement
0527-801-L-3000-001A (DF5)	Landscape Design
0527-801-F-29 DF5	Swept Path Analysis
<u>Supporting documents</u>	
0527-0801-16-001	Planning Statement (incorporating the Design and Access Statement)
0527-0801-04-002	Geoenvironmental Investigation Report
0527-0801-21-003	Ecology Report
0527-0801-16-004	Sustainability Checklist
0527-0801-04-005	Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy
0527-0801-16-006	Heritage Statement
0527-0801-07-007	Road Safety Audit Stage 1
0527-0801-21-008	Tree Survey Report
0527-0801-25-009	Transport Assessment
0527-0801-07-010	Crime Impact Statement
0527-0801-04-012	Structure Feasibility Report
0527-0801-21-013	Air Quality Assessment
0527-0800-21-014	Noise Impact Assessment

1.4 Structure of this planning statement

1.4.1 This planning statement incorporates the following Chapters.

1. *Introduction* (this Chapter).
2. *Background to the proposed Development*, setting out the main drivers for the proposed Development.
3. *The Site and its surroundings*, providing an explanation of the Site, its characteristics and surrounding uses and statutory designations.

4. *The proposed Development (incorporating the Design and Access Statement)*, providing a full explanation of the proposed Development and the evolution of the design.
5. *Summary of pre-application consultation*, which provides detail on the public consultation that the applicant has undertaken prior to submission of the application along with other discussions that have taken place with stakeholders.
6. *Planning policy context*, which explains the national and local planning policy context that the proposed Development will be determined against.
7. *Planning appraisal*, incorporating an appraisal of the proposed Development's conformity with planning policy.
8. *Summary*.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Overview of the Stockport Town Centre Access Plan

2.1.1 SMBC has ambitious plans for the town centre, which are informed by market analysis. The town centre is a key component of Stockport's economy and is well positioned to act as the main centre in south Greater Manchester by complementing Manchester city centre, combining commercial property opportunities with the town's distinctive history and character.

2.1.2 The second edition of the Town Centre Development Prospectus (July 2014)² outlines the latest evidence and future development proposals for Stockport town centre. The Town Centre Development Prospectus has a clear vision, which is:

"To realise Stockport's potential as the pre-eminent town centre in south Greater Manchester – the location of choice for business, living, leisure and retail."

2.1.3 To support this vision the Town Centre Access Plan has the following headline objective:

"An integrated transport investment strategy to tackle congestion and barriers to movement in Stockport town centre to support and enhance the local economy, provide access to jobs, improve community wellbeing and create a vibrant town centre."

2.1.4 Stockport is one of the most successful local economies in Greater Manchester, with 125,000 people working in 11,000 businesses and more than two million people living within a 30-minute drive time. The town centre forms an important part of Stockport's economy, providing a key location for professional services, education, health services and administrative functions, with plans for further office and commercial development. Plans are also in place to revitalise the retail and leisure offer in the town centre to drive footfall and bring new customers, visitors and investment.

2.1.5 Stockport's connectivity to international, national and local transport networks is a major asset for the town centre area. Manchester Airport is situated 15 minutes' drive time from the town centre and the West Coast Main Line gives it direct train routes to cities such as London and Birmingham, as well as Manchester. By road, its position on the M60 and A6 provides strong links for car, bus, coach and HGVs. The Trans Pennine Trail also goes through the town centre, providing a traffic-free focus for the pedestrian and cycle network. Ensuring this level of connectivity remains in place and is improved in the long term is vital in supporting the ongoing development and success of Stockport town centre.

2.1.6 However, investment in transport is needed to tackle some problems in the town centre, in particular, congestion and barriers to movement between town centre areas, particularly caused by the A6 and M60. A transformational transport investment plan is therefore needed to tackle these problems and not constrain the significant development proposals for Stockport town centre.

2.1.7 The STCAP is a masterplan for transport in Stockport that will tackle these issues by investing in supporting all modes of transport by improving access:

² Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2014) Stockport Town Centre Development Prospectus. 2nd Edition. Available from <http://www.stockport.gov.uk/2013/2978/8803/12246/tcguidance/stcdevprospectus>. [Accessed 25/04/2016]

- to/from and within the town centre;
- to/from the M60 motorway junctions; and
- to new key developments – including Stockport Exchange, Redrock and Aurora.

2.1.8 As part of its long-term economic plan, the government has agreed a series of Growth Deals with businesses and local authorities across England. The Greater Manchester Growth Deal is part of a £12 billion long-term programme to revitalise local economies.

2.1.9 On 7 July 2014, the 39 Growth Deals for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) were announced, marking the culmination of months of negotiations between LEPs and central government, to allocate money available through the Local Growth Fund. The STCAP has been identified as a priority in the Greater Manchester Growth and Reform Plan 2014 and will be introduced in phases over a five-year period from 2015.

2.1.10 The STCAP is a comprehensive strategy that will transform travel in and around Stockport town centre by all modes of transport including walking, cycling, bus and by car to meet the current and future transport challenges. The scheme is vital to support the Council's ambitious plans for the town centre, and economic growth in Stockport, and is a priority in the Greater Manchester Growth and Reform Plan. Full details on the STCAP are provided in the "*Stockport Town Centre Access Plan - Major Scheme Business Case – Final Report*"³ published in January 2015.

2.2 Purpose of the Stockport Town Centre Access Plan and Key Impacts

2.2.1 Stockport is identified as one of the areas with particularly strong demand for the release of employment land, contributing to driving forward the regional economy. The town centre is proposed to be the principal focus for development in the borough. There are six key objectives which the STCAP will set out to achieve:

- **Increase employment and generate economic growth** by improving access to and around the town, to the M60, the bus interchange and rail station, and to key regeneration and development sites;
- **Promote fairness through job creation and the regeneration of local communities** by reducing severance and improve accessibility to and from the town centre and surrounding residential areas;
- **Reduce the impact of traffic congestion** on local businesses and communities;
- **Boost business integration and productivity** by improving the efficiency and reliability of the highway network by rationalising traffic movements throughout the area by providing additional capacity on some routes to allow traffic to be reduced on others, and by providing a more resilient highway network better able to respond to incidents and accidents in general and reducing the risk of rail bridge strikes on George's Road in particular;

³ Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2015) Stockport Town Centre Access Plan Major Scheme Business Case. Available from: http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/communitypeopleliving/newapproach/investingingrowth/towncentreaccess/background_docs/. [Accessed 25/04/2016]

- **Support lower carbon travel and improve wellbeing** by providing improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, and improved linkage between the rail station and town centre;
- **Improve road safety** through a reallocation of road space in the town centre, better traffic management and improved pedestrian/cycle links with surrounding residential areas.

2.2.2 The STCAP has been developed to bring forward the following transport benefits:

- Improve access to key regeneration and development sites in the town centre.
- Improve access to/ from the M60 motorway through congestion relief to key routes such as St Marys Way/ Hempshaw Lane and around the M60 Junction 1.
- Reduce the volume of traffic on the A6 through the town centre, with improved accessibility to town centre destinations.
- Enhance the environment along the A6 through the town centre to assist in creating a positive sense of arrival for this linear gateway.
- Improve links between the town centre and the bus and train stations.
- Lessen the impact of the A6 as a barrier between the east and west of the town centre for pedestrians, and similarly the M60 as a barrier between the north and south of the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Build on the existing cycle routes into the town centre from the east and west, and south-east.

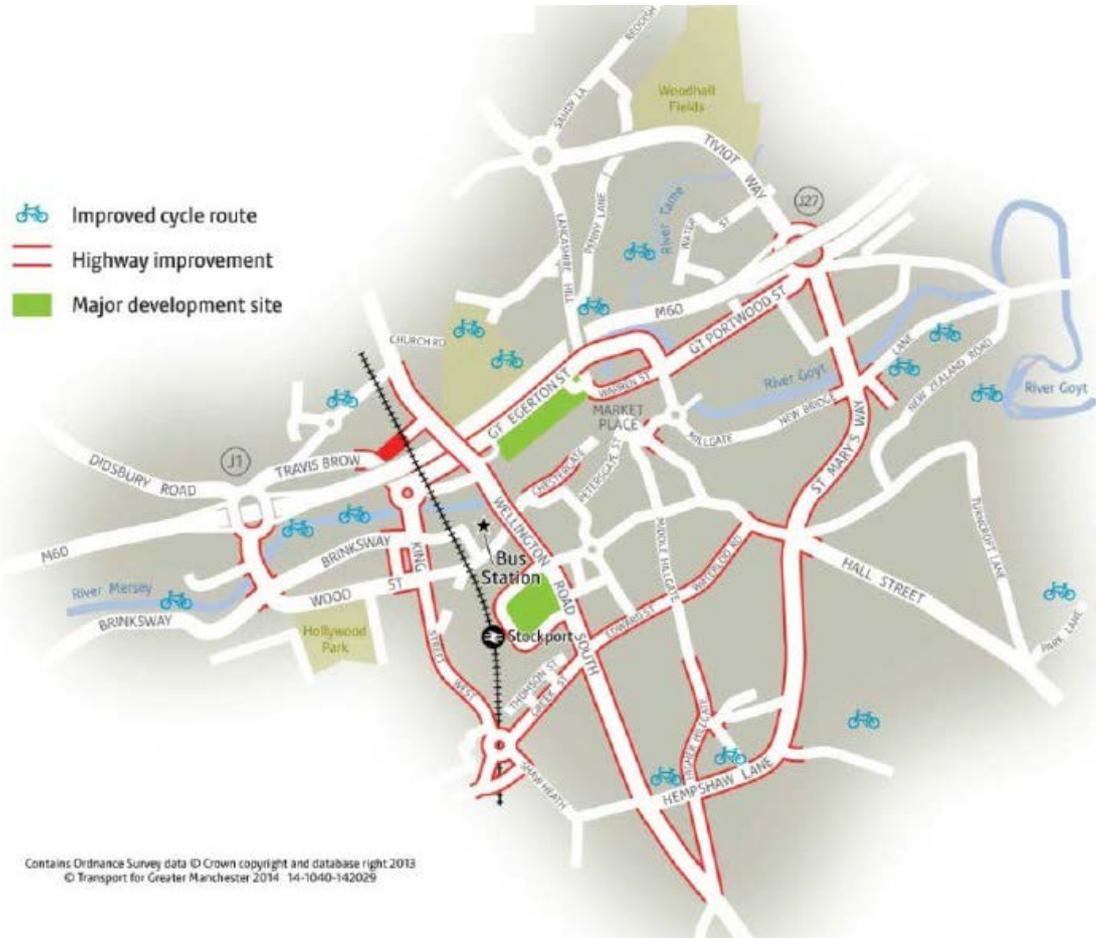
2.3 The Stockport Town Centre Access Plan Proposals

2.3.1 An overview of the Stockport Town Centre Access Plan is shown in **Figure 2.1**. In short, the plan is a comprehensive strategy that will transform travel in and around Stockport town centre by all modes of transport including walking, cycling, bus and by car to meet the current and future transport challenges.

2.3.2 The key features of STCAP are:

- High quality access to key development sites, notably Stockport Exchange, Redrock, Knightsbridge, and Aurora, as well as longer term development aspirations in the town centre.
- Transport corridor improvements to the east of the town centre between the A6 and M60 Junction 27, including widening parts of St Mary's Way.
- Targeted transport corridor improvements to the west of the town centre, including road safety improvements on King Street West, and a new one-way system on King Street West, Wood Street and Kingston Street.
- Improvements to the approaches to M60 Junction 1.

Figure 2.1: Stockport Town Centre Access Plan Measures (taken from the “Stockport Town Centre Access Plan - Major Scheme Business Case – Final Report” – see footnote 3 for link.



- A6 corridor enhancements between Bramhall Lane and Heaton Lane central shopping area, including new right turn lane facilities and improved pedestrian facilities.
- Improved access to Stockport rail and bus stations.
- New link road between the A6 and Travis Brow, along with complementary traffic restrictions on George’s Road (the proposed Development that is the subject of this application).
- New and improved pedestrian and cycle routes between the town centre and surrounding areas, including replacement pedestrian/cycle bridge over St Mary’s Way, new bridleway along the Mersey Valley, new Woodbank Park cycle/foot path, new pedestrian/cycle crossing over of the River Goyt, and improved pedestrian/cycle path through Heaton Norris path to M60 motorway footbridge.
- Improved signage for pedestrians and traffic in order to make navigation of the town centre as easy as possible for all users.

2.3.3 In order to address the fact that the STCAP scheme comprises a wide range of coherent, discrete interventions which, in the interests of minimising impacts on the town centre highway network, will need to be implemented over an extended period of time; a delivery strategy has been formulated which adopts a two phase approach to the implementation of the scheme.

2.3.4 Phase 1 focuses on the delivery of interventions with three broad characteristics:

- Interventions which either do not require any powers or consents or for which planning applications have already been submitted;
- Interventions which, in broad terms, will bring about some relief of traffic congestion of the A6 prior to substantive works in this location being undertaken; and
- Interventions which support improved access to key developments in the town centre and gateway area.

2.3.5 At the time of writing, construction of a number of the Phase 1 schemes has commenced with the remainder due to commence in Summer 2016 and complete in Winter 2017. Phase 2 schemes therefore have the broad characteristics of:

- Interventions for which powers and consents still need to be obtained (including the proposed Development);
- Interventions which, in the interests of minimising impacts on the town centre highway network, should logically be delivered later in the programme once the congestion relief benefits of earlier interventions have been brought on stream.

2.3.6 The proposed Development is one of the Phase 2 schemes which will commence in spring 2017 and complete by spring 2020.

2.4 Why is the proposed Development required?

2.4.1 The proposed Development is required to fulfil the aims of STCAP, improving access to and around the town, reducing traffic congestion, increasing the reliability of the highway network and improving linkages. The proposed Development is considered to be a key element of the overall STCAP, as it will also lead to a more resilient highway network that is better able to respond to incidents and accidents in general and reduce the risk of rail bridge strikes on George's Road in particular. George's Road is currently the direct link between the A6 north of the town centre to the M60 Junction 1.

2.4.2 The proposed Development includes an arched railway bridge carrying the West Coast Main Line (WCML), and despite height restrictions, the bridge is struck three to four times a year on average. This leads to major disruption on both the highway network and WCML, with full closures of both, while Network Rail bridge inspectors check the bridge for damage. This will be reinforced with complementary traffic restrictions on George's Road. The new link road will also remove traffic from Heaton Lane which will facilitate the changed bus movements in the town centre when the Interchange and its bridge are built.

2.4.3 A key objective of the STCAP is to support lower carbon travel and improve wellbeing by providing improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, and improved linkage between the rail station and town centre. In line with this overarching objective, the new link road

scheme and associated changes to the highway network accommodate new facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

3. THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

3.1 Description of the Site and its surroundings

- 3.1.1 The Site is centered on National Grid Reference (NGR) SJ889904. The Site, as shown in the Location Plan (drawing number Task4957_1a), represents the maximum extent of development and includes land-take required for construction areas and laydown. The Site is 6.497 hectares in area.
- 3.1.2 The Site is located in Stockport, adjacent to the north east of junction 1 of the M60. The surrounding area predominantly comprises of large commercial developments. The Site is broadly bounded to the north and west by a number of commercial premises (including a DIY superstore and a car dealership), to the east by office blocks, to the south by the M60 motorway. The nearest residential properties are approximately 25 m to the east of the Site on Parsonage Street. The first floors of two public houses on Wellington Road North are used as dwellings. A large commercial premises is located between George's Road and Travis Brow. The Manchester – Stockport railway line passes through the eastern part of the Site, parallel to the A6.
- 3.1.3 The area of the Site within which the new link road will be constructed lies adjacent to the north of the M60 and to the south of commercial premises. This area currently comprises the existing Travis Brow road, a former petrol station, an unused car park and an area of trees.
- 3.1.4 Images of the Site are shown in **Figure 3.1** below.

3.2 Statutory designations and protected features

- 3.2.1 There are no statutory environmental designations (sites or features) within the Site. The Site is not located within 30 km of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated for bats; nor is it hydrologically connected to an SAC, Special Protection Area (SPA) or Ramsar located within 5 km of the Site.
- 3.2.2 The Site lies within two Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones, namely Hollinwood Branch Canal SSSI (located approximately 8.9 km north east of the Site) and Huddersfield Narrow canal SSSI (located approximately 9 km north east of the Site). However, it is anticipated that the proposed Development will not have a direct or indirect impact on these SSSIs.
- 3.2.3 There are no areas of woodland within the Site; however, there are a number of woodland areas within 2 km of the site. The nearest is a deciduous woodland area, which is located adjacent to the south west of the Site boundary.
- 3.2.4 The Grade II* Listed Railway Viaduct runs through the Site. Two Grade II listed buildings are located adjacent to the Site: No. 52 Wellington Road North; and Wycliffe Congregational Chapel. There are also a number of Grade I, II and II* listed buildings within 2 km of the Site.

Figure 3.1: Images of the Site



View across the A6 Wellington Road North into the former Thrifty Car Rental site.



George's Road with the railway bridge.



The Grade II* listed railway viaduct.



View north bound along the A6 Wellington Road North.

- 3.2.5 Published mapping indicates that the Site is approximately 40 m above ordnance datum (mAOD) and there are no surface water courses within the Site. The River Mersey flows in a westerly direction adjacent to the southern-most part of the Site (the existing Travis Brow / A560 roundabout). The River Tame flows in a southerly direction through Reddish Vale, draining into the River Mersey.
- 3.2.6 The Site is all located within an Environment Agency (EA) Flood Zone 1. An area designated as Flood Zone 2, which is considered to be at medium risk of flooding from fluvial sources, lies between Heaton Lane and the River Mersey, which is adjacent to the Site.
- 3.2.7 The EA website indicates that the Site does not lie within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone or Groundwater Source Protection Zone; however, it is located within a Secondary 'A' Aquifer.
- 3.2.8 The Site is located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared by Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Further details relating to the air quality impacts of the proposed Development are provided in the Air Quality Assessment (document number 0527-0801-21-013) submitted with this application.
- 3.2.9 Aside from the footpaths and cycleways associated with the existing highways, there are no public rights of way within the Site. The Trans-Pennine Trail and National Cycle Route 62 are located to the south of the Site.

3.3 Land Ownership

- 3.3.1 Some of the land within the Site (see Location Plan, drawing number Task4957_1a) is owned by the applicant. Where the land ownership is known for parcels of land within the Site owned by others, the appropriate notice has been served (further details are provided in section 29 of the completed application forms).
- 3.3.2 Some of the land to which the application relates is currently unregistered. Therefore, the appropriate process has been undertaken prior to submission of this application to meet the requirements of ownership certificate C of the application form.

3.4 Site Planning History

- 3.4.1 Full planning permission was approved by SMBC on 5th March 2015 for the redevelopment of the former Kwik Save site (located entirely within the red line boundary of the Site and referred to as the 'Thrifty Car Rental site' from herein on), including partial demolition of existing buildings, change of use from retail to vehicle rental use (sui generis) and erection of a new sales building (90sqm), wash bay (77sqm) and storage unit (20sqm) with ancillary vehicle storage (Full Planning Permission Number DC/056609).
- 3.4.2 The decision notice includes an informative, which states that

"The applicant's / developer's attention is drawn to the fact that the Stockport Council has proposals to construct a new link road between Travis Brow and A6 as part of its Stockport Town Centre Access Plan proposals. A plan of the road can be obtained from the Council's web-site (www.stockport.gov.uk). The new link road will pass through the site of the proposed development and to enable construction of the road the Council will need to purchase the site. The applicant / developer is therefore advised to liaise with the Council's Traffic Services Team with respect to this matter".

- 3.4.3 Discussions have taken place between the applicant and the landowner in relation to the proposed Development, which has resulted in the acquisition of the whole parcel of land. Negotiations were successful and timely thereby avoiding the site becoming operational. The potential for the site to then later being acquired compulsorily would likely have a greater effect on the business.
- 3.4.4 Other applications that have previously been submitted on land within the Site and granted have been developed (including the commercial premises surrounding the site).

4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT (INCORPORATING THE DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT)

4.1 The proposed Development

Overview

- 4.1.1 The proposed Development (see General Arrangement (Proposed Site Layout), drawing number 0527-801-F-24 (DF5)) comprises a new link road which connects Travis Brow to the A6 Wellington Road North and a series of highway improvement works along Travis Brow, George's Road and Wellington Road North including associated segregated cycleways and footways. The proposed new link road will run parallel to the M60 towards the north, and will offer an alternative route for vehicles travelling along the A6 Wellington Road to access the M60 Junction 1 from Wellington Road North.
- 4.1.2 The new link road incorporates approximately 200 metres of new highway. The new link road comprises a single carriageway broadly running north east to south west incorporating four lanes, three retaining walls, a series of Puffin and Toucan crossings, landscaping works and the addition of a new cycle lane and footpath (approximately 300m in length). Wellington Road North will be subject to numerous interventions including the introduction of 2 Toucan crossings, the removal of a Pelican crossing, relocation of a bus stop and the demolition of a Public House, a former office building on Railway Street, a brick boundary wall and a canopy on the Thrifty Car Rental site. Three new Toucan crossings are proposed on the south-west end of George's Road, along with a shared and a segregated cycle way (approximately 175m), and a reduction in the width of the road by 2.1m.

Travis Brow to A6 Wellington Road North Link Road

- 4.1.3 The new link road between Travis Brow and the A6 Wellington Road North is approximately 200 metres in length and, passes beneath the Railway Viaduct and parallel to the M60. The new link road incorporates four lanes of traffic, two lanes in each direction, which connects with the existing Travis Brow road in the west and with the A6 in the east. The new link road will include a new junction at the A6 Wellington Road North.
- 4.1.4 A segregated cycleway and footway approximately 300m long is proposed north of the new link road linking Wellington Road North with Travis Brow. A part shared and part segregated footway and cycleway is also proposed from George's Road to north of the Heaton Lane roundabout, with a toucan crossing to allow for safe crossing over the roads.
- 4.1.5 Three retaining walls are proposed adjacent to the new link road. Two are proposed along the site of the new link road, which wrap around the existing piers of the Railway Viaduct. A further retaining wall is proposed adjacent to the new cycleway and footway.
- 4.1.6 A Toucan Crossing and a Puffin Crossing will be constructed at the junction where the link road meets the A6. Suitable lighting will be installed along the new link road and the cycleway and footway.
- 4.1.7 Verges will be constructed on each side of the proposed new link road, which will be planted with a series of trees and grass.

A6 Wellington Road North

- 4.1.8 At the point where the new link road meets the A6 Wellington Road North, the existing right turn filter will be removed. Emergency access to Wellesley House will still be retained. A toucan crossing over the A6 will allow for pedestrians and cyclists to traverse onto the footways which lay on either side of the new link road. The bus stop on the east side of the junction will be relocated further north. A further toucan crossing will be introduced across the A6 at the point where it meets with George's Road.
- 4.1.9 The Public House ('The Midland') and the canopy on the Thrifty Car Rental site will be demolished in order to enable the safe operation of the proposed highway improvements. Existing walls on the site of the Thrifty Car Rental site and the former office building on Railway Street will be demolished as part of the proposed Development to facilitate construction of the new link road. Andrew Street, which currently runs one way between the A6 and George's Street, will be remodelled into a two way route.

George's Road

- 4.1.10 The width of George's Road will be reduced by 2.1m. The toucan crossing located to the east of the George's Road roundabout will be retained.
- 4.1.11 A segregated cycleway and footway will run between the junction of Wycliffe Street and the vehicular entrance to the car park at Portway House. A Shared Footway/ Cycle way runs between Travis Brow and the Portway House car park, and between Wycliffe Street and the A6.
- 4.1.12 At the point where George's Street meets Travis Brow, the junction will be realigned to accommodate three new Toucan Crossings. A right turn filter lane on Travis Brow will be removed. The shared footpath/cycleway and separated footway and cycleway which currently exist at the junction will be maintained.
- 4.1.13 The left turn filter lane from Travis Brow onto George's Road will be removed and the two right turns from George's Road onto Travis Brow will be reduced to a single right turn. This will provide additional space for the controlled crossing points for the benefit of cyclists and pedestrians. This will also discourage use of George's Road as a route to the A6 and therefore encourage use of the new link road.

4.2 Design and Access Statement

- 4.2.1 The requirements of a Design and Access Statement are stipulated within The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015⁴, Part 3(9) (Applications). Paragraph 3 of this part of the GDPO is set out in full below:

“(3) A design and access statement must—

(a) Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;

(b) Demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;

⁴ UK Government (2015) The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Available from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents/made> [Accessed on 12/03/2016].

(c) Explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;

(d) State what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; and

(e) Explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.”

4.2.2 Each point from Paragraph 3 of the order is considered below.

4.2.3 In addition, Paragraph: 032 (Reference ID: 14-032-20140306) of the National Planning Practice Guidance⁵ highlights that Design and Access Statements accompanying applications for listed building consent must include an explanation of the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed works, and how they have taken account of:

“(a) the special architectural or historic importance of the building;

(b) the particular physical features of the building that justify its designation as a listed building; and

(c) the building’s setting.”

4.2.4 This requirement has been considered below and in preparing the Heritage Statement (document number 0527-0801-16-006) submitted with this application.

Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development and demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account

4.2.5 The proposed Development has been designed to ensure that it is in accordance with guidance set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) and to the standards required by the SMBC highways authority. Given that the proposed Development is located outside of the town centre, the specific design standards required for highways schemes in the town centre do not apply. Therefore a standard road and footway/cycleway finish is proposed (a bitumuous finish).

The new link road and highway improvements

4.2.6 The highway geometry of the new link road and the new junctions have been determined by the traffic modelling requirements to ensure operational capacity of the junction is provided. The vertical geometry has been dictated by the vertical level of Wellington Road North circa 53mAOD and Travis Brow some 11m lower at circa 42mAOD. The vertical alignment has been designed in order to minimise the impact on the viaduct and also reduce the retaining wall heights whilst conforming to DMRB standards for geometry.

4.2.7 In liaison with the traffic modelling team and Transport for Greater Manchester, the junctions of George’s Road with Wellington Road North and Travis Brow have both been modified to induce

⁵ Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance. Available from <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/> [Accessed on 12/03/2016].

traffic movements towards the new link road. Controlled crossing facilities have also been improved with the same refinements to the junctions for the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists. A new Toucan Crossing is also proposed across Travis Brow at a location deemed to be the desire line to and from the town centre. The online highway improvements on Wellington Road North, George's Road and Travis Brow have sought to provide better non-motorised users (NMU) provision by widening footways and utilising the existing available adopted highway extents.

- 4.2.8 The scheme abuts other STCAP schemes namely the A6 Right Turn into Leyland Street (Scheme 706) and the Heaton Lane / Travis Brow Roundabout improvements (Scheme 304A). The development has taken cognisance of the scheme designs in order to provide continuity of design for all domestic and commercial road users such as the bus companies.
- 4.2.9 A series of highway improvements are also proposed on the Site, which will encourage the use of the new link road in order to access Junction 1 of the M60 as opposed to the existing route taken along with George's Road. This includes a reduction in the width of George's Road and appropriate signage (see Proposed advanced direction signs, drawing number 0527-1001-801-001).

The Grade II* Listed Railway Viaduct and the retaining walls

- 4.2.10 A key influence in terms of the site setting is the Grade II* Listed Railway Viaduct (see **Figure 4.1** below) that runs through the site and spans over the proposed new link road. The Stockport railway viaduct and its foundations is owned and maintained by Network Rail. The large difference in vertical level between the link road sites existing ground levels and the proposed link road carriageway levels and cycle way levels necessitate the construction of three earth retaining structures. Specific consideration has been given to the aesthetic design of the retaining structures with regards minimising their visual impact on the listed viaduct structure and the surrounding environment. Two of the three earth retaining structures are located immediately north and south of the new road and will form a short corridor within which the new road will utilise. The third earth retaining structure will be located north west of the link road corridor and its function will be to facilitate the construction of a proposed cycleway/ footway that runs parallel to the link road.
- 4.2.11 The design of the link road earth retaining structures takes account of the existing ground conditions, Stockport railway viaduct and its foundations and also the presence of an existing disused, and partially infilled, historic railway tunnel that is situated below the line of the proposed link road. The east end of the link road corridor retaining walls will wrap around the existing railway viaduct piers but will be structurally independent of the piers.
- 4.2.12 Site investigation works have been undertaken to inform the preliminary design of the retaining structures, these include the determination of depth to the rock head, determining the foundation detail to the railway viaduct piers and topographic and condition surveys of the disused historic railway tunnel (see **Figure 4.2**).
- 4.2.13 In order to construct the retaining walls, and allow the bulk earthworks required to provide the vertical alignment of the new link road, the existing tunnel will need to be partially infilled. The infill is required to enable the safe removal of the existing tunnel roof structure and also to facilitate the phased removal of the tunnel abutments whilst maintaining abutment stability and also to stabilise the adjacent railway viaduct pier foundations. It is proposed to use lightweight, or 'foam', concrete for the tunnel infill material.

Figure 4.1: Further image of the Grade II* Listed Railway Viaduct

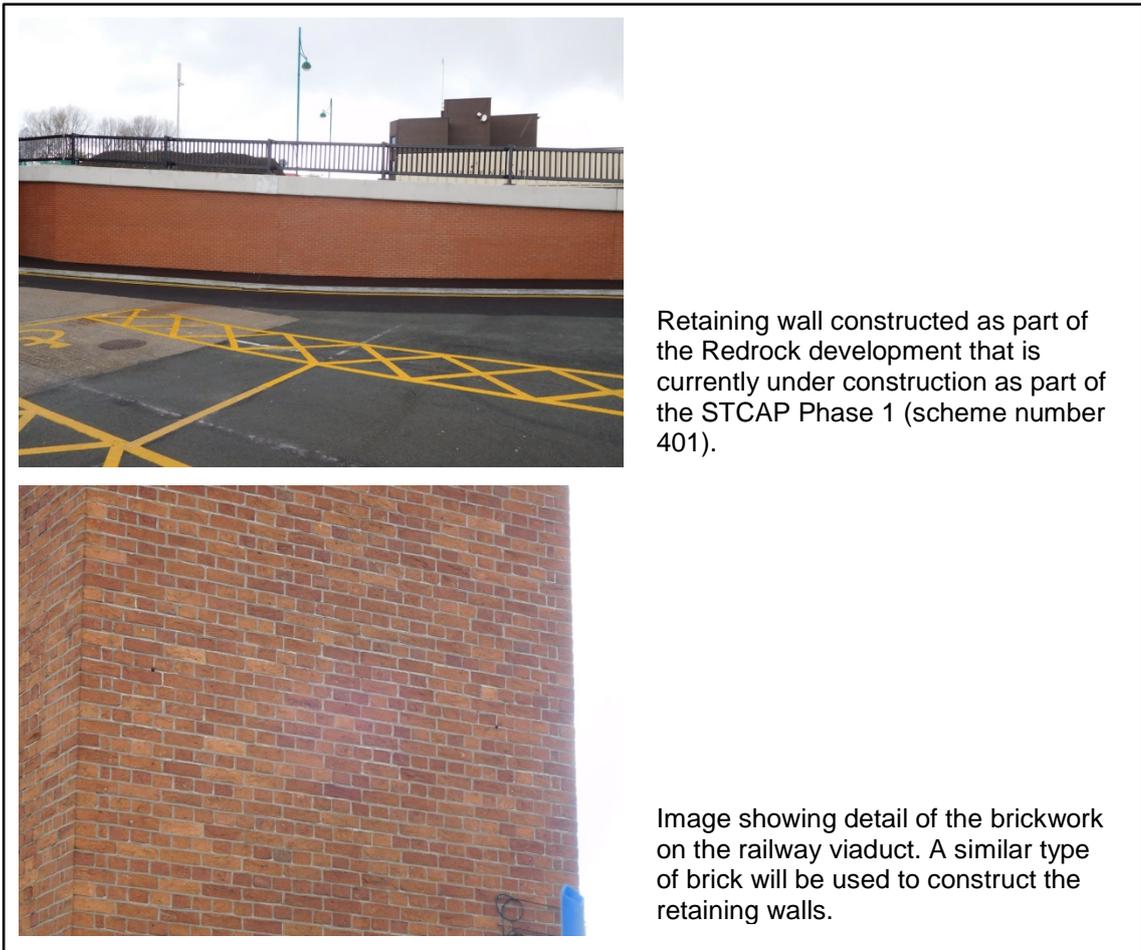


Figure 4.2: Disused railway tunnel



4.2.14 Due to the shallow depth of the rock head and restrictive working areas, it is proposed that the retaining walls are formed using contiguous reinforced concrete piles. It is proposed to clad the piled walls using brickwork that visually complements the existing red brickwork used in the construction of the railway viaduct. The retaining walls will be topped with a reinforced concrete capping beam with a pedestrian parapet to match the walls on the STCAP Phase 1 schemes (see **Figure 4.3** for an example of the finish to be applied to the retaining walls).

Figure 4.3: Materials to be applied to the retaining walls



Retaining wall constructed as part of the Redrock development that is currently under construction as part of the STCAP Phase 1 (scheme number 401).

Image showing detail of the brickwork on the railway viaduct. A similar type of brick will be used to construct the retaining walls.

4.2.15 The proposed vertical alignment of the link road is such that more of the railway viaduct piers will be exposed upon completion of the works, i.e. the ground levels are lowered from the existing condition.

4.2.16 The site investigation has determined the depth of foundation to the piers and confirms that to the north of the proposed link road the rock upon which the viaduct is founded will be exposed. It is proposed to face the rock to ensure its long term durability is not compromised. The facing will comprise a brick clad reinforced concrete wall which will be tied back using rock anchors/soil nails. The brick cladding will also be visually sympathetic to the viaduct brickwork.

Landscaping

- 4.2.17 A landscaping scheme is set out in drawing number 0527-801-200-1300/001. This incorporates landscaping on the embankments located either side of the new link road. An appropriate landscaping mix (including trees and grass) is proposed. Further urban tree planting is proposed on Wellington Road North in order to enhance the A6.

Explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account

- 4.2.18 As highlighted above, guidance outlined in DMRB and standards required by the SMBC highways authority have influence the design of the proposed Development. A full account of the current development plan for SMBC is provided in **Chapter 6**. The current development plan includes the Stockport Core Strategy DPD (adopted March 2011) and saved policies in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (May 2006).

- 4.2.19 **Core Strategy Policy CS10 (An effective and sustainable transport network)** identifies a series of measures that have been identified by the Council and will be pursued in order to mitigate the impacts of development in the town centre. These measures include the Town centre Access Package. The proposed Development represents a measure identified the STCAP and is fundamental to improving access to Stockport town centre.

- 4.2.20 **Policy TCG1.4 (Sustainable Access in the Town Centre/M60 Gateway)** states the Council will promote schemes to provide sustainable transport links within the M60 Gateway, to minimise the need for traffic to enter and cross the town centre. The proposed Development will help to address this policy aim in terms of providing sustainable access to the town centre.

State what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation

- 4.2.21 The consultation undertaken prior to submission of this application is set out in full in **Chapter 5** of this statement. In summary, the applicant undertook a four week period of public and stakeholder consultation in order to gather feedback on the STCAP schemes, including the proposed Development. A number of respondents support the proposed Development as it will lead to improvements in terms of traffic congestion and will also provide improved provision for cycling (some respondents were opposed to the cycling provisions proposed). Some respondents raised concerns relating to the proposed Development, primarily relating to the proposed demolition of the Midland Public House.

- 4.2.22 In addition, the applicant has engaged with Highways England, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Historic England, Network Rail, Historic Railways Estates and the North West Ambulance Service prior to submission (see **Chapter 5** for a summary of responses). In general, these stakeholders were positive about the proposed Development in terms of the improvements to access that it aims to provide.

Explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed

- 4.2.23 The proposed Development and the land required for the development has considered future access for affected land owners and also the general public. As noted above the whole of the Thrifty Car Rental site has been acquired and therefore access is not required in future. Network Rail have been advised of the proposals and content with the access arrangement for span that

the road travels through and the adjacent spans. Arrangements have been made with regard to the occupier of the arch where the shared cycleway/footway is to travel through.

- 4.2.24 The proposed Development will provide high quality access to key development sites notably Redrock Stockport, a £45 million leisure development aimed at transforming a key area of the Town centre. Complementing the existing retail provision, Redrock Stockport aims to attract more people into the town centre and will encourage them to stay longer. Redrock will provide a 10 screen cinema complex; over 38,000 sq. ft. of retail, restaurants and bars; 340 space multi story car park; new public squares and urban enhancements.

4.3 Construction phasing and requirements

- 4.3.1 Provided planning permission is granted for the proposed Development, construction is planned to commence in May 2017. Details on the programme of construction are yet to be determined. The proposed online highway improvement works planned on the A6 Wellington Road North, Travis Brow and George's Road will be programmed to ensure that there is minimal traffic disruption within and around the Site.

4.4 Maintenance

- 4.4.1 Once the proposed Development has been constructed, SMBC will be responsible for the maintenance of the highway, drainage, structures, public realm and landscaped areas.

5. SUMMARY OF PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

5.1 STCAP Phase 2 Public Consultation

Introduction

- 5.1.1 Consultation on the STCAP Phase 2 (including the proposed Development) and the Stockport Interchange proposals was held over a four week period between Monday 9th November to Monday 7th December 2015 in order to gather public and stakeholder opinions. The objective of the consultation was to inform and engage with those directly affected by the proposals, and to capture comments whilst the plans were still in the formative stage thereby minimising any potential objections the application may receive in the future.

Summary of engagement activities

- 5.1.2 Nine public exhibitions were held over the consultation period at a variety of locations within Stockport town centre. The consultation activities were communicated through a series of online and physical methods, including road signage and posters directing stakeholders to the exhibitions, and updates through both social media and the SMBC website.
- 5.1.3 An informative leaflet with a pre-paid return envelope was distributed to approximately 28,000 properties within the town centre, inviting respondents to comment on the proposals. In addition to the hard-copy response form, a dedicated telephone and email service was active throughout the consultation period, and respondents were able to request for alternative, user friendly interfaces such as an audiotape, CD, large-print or braille versions of the leaflet. Comments were also recorded by project team members at the exhibitions themselves. Stakeholders were invited to respond via email, and various meetings and site visits were held prior to the consultation period. In total, 426 response forms were completed which captured a range of feedback.
- 5.1.4 The hard-copy leaflets proved the most popular form of response, with 379 leaflets being returned. 47 online response forms were returned, along with 23 email and 9 telephone responses. A total of 107 individuals signed their attendance at the organised exhibitions.

Specific comments received on the proposed Development

- 5.1.5 Comments regarding the STCAP Phase 2 were summarised into their appropriate scheme category. A table was then used to summarise the 891 general comments made by respondents, and categorised into subject headings to allow for more efficient analysis.
- 5.1.6 A total of 21 responses were received regarding Scheme 801 - Travis Brow/ A6 Link and George's Road (the proposed Development). Out of the 20 responses, seven were positive, five were neutral and nine were negative. In terms of the nine negative responses, seven related to the proposed demolition of the Midland Public House and two deemed the proposed cycleway to be inappropriate/not needed.
- 5.1.7 The topics referenced within these public respondent comments are summarised in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1: Consultation comments

Comment Subject	Details	Number of Comments
Highways Improvements	All responses are regarding the proposed highway improvements; several object to the demolition of the Midland Public House on economic/ heritage grounds, while others support the improvements because of traffic routing/ congestion. There are suggestions that alternatives may be more cost effective and hope that the improvements will improve traffic routing/ congestion.	20
Heritage		8
Economy		3
Traffic Routing		4
Congestion		3
Cycle route/ facility	Two respondents suggest the proposals will improve cycling while two suggest the cycle facilities are not needed/ inappropriate ('one of which stating it is 'needless expense').	4
Pedestrian route/ facility	One respondent suggests the proposal will provide an improvement for pedestrians while another suggests the pedestrian route is not appropriate.	2

5.1.8 A comment that was raised during the consultation stage related to the loss of the Midland Public House. Retention of the Midland Public House would lead to the provision of sub-standard footway widths on the eastern side of the A6 and outside the Public House itself, increasing the risk to pedestrians given the level of traffic using the A6, and preventing the proposed provision of the relocated bus stop outside the Kingsgate office complex. With retention of the Public House, selected footway widths alongside the A6 and Link Road would be in the region of 2-2.6 metres. Given the level of traffic using the A6, particularly following traffic reassignment associated with the new Link Road, and the role of the A6 as a key north-south pedestrian route linking the town centre with residential areas to the north, the Council consider that footway widths of less than 3 metres at this location would be unacceptable. Scheme proposals involving the retention of the Public House are therefore considered undesirable as they impact on the safety of pedestrian facilities and the ability to provide suitable facilities for bus passengers travelling towards Stockport town centre. The retention of the Public House would also increase requirements for the diversion of Statutory Undertaker’s equipment and plant.

5.1.9 As set out above, two respondents during the consultation indicated that they did not feel as though the proposed cycleway was inappropriate/not needed. The cycleway proposed as part of the proposed Development will help to facilitate access to the town centre and surrounding areas for cyclists and will have the additional benefit of encouraging the use of a sustainable method of transport. Therefore, the cycleway is considered to be a positive element of the proposed Development.

5.2 Pre application Consultee discussions

5.2.1 Prior to submission of the application, the applicant has engaged with a number of consultees. A summary of discussions is provided below in **Table 5.2**.

Table 5.2: Pre application consultee discussions

Consultee	Summary of discussions
<p>SMBC planning, highways and environmental departments</p>	<p>Prior to submission of the application, the applicant has met with the planning department in order to discuss the acceptability of the proposed Development. These discussions also covered the scope of the application and the supporting information required.</p> <p>The applicant has met with the highways development management officer in order to discuss the scope and content of the Transport Assessment (document number 0527-0801-25) submitted with this application.</p> <p>The applicant has also met with the SMBC environment department relating to the Ecology Report (document number 0527-0801-21-003) and the Landscape Design (drawing number 0527/801/L/3000/001A (DF5)).</p>
<p>Historic England and SMBC conservation department</p>	<p>In order to ensure that the proposed Development reflects the site context in terms of the historic environment, the applicant has engaged with Historic England and SMBC’s conservation department. This also helped to establish the requirements for the listed building consent. SMBC conservation department also provided advice in relation to the scope of the Heritage Statement (document number 0527-0801-16-006). The advice provided by Historic England is provided in Appendix A.</p>
<p>Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service.</p>	<p>In order to determine the scope of the Heritage Statement (document number 0527-0801-16-006), discussions were held with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS). Prior to submission of this application, further discussions have taken place with the GMAAS in order to discuss the findings relating to the former railway tunnel located on the Site.</p>
<p>SMBC Environmental Health Department</p>	<p>Discussions have been held with the SMBC environmental health department in order to determine the scope of the Air Quality Assessment (document number 0527-0801-21-013) and the Noise Impact Assessment (document number 0527-0801-21-014).</p>
<p>Highways England</p>	<p>The applicant has met with the asset manager and geotechnical advisor to Highways England (HE) to advise of them of the development proposals. HE were content with the proposals and provided guidance with respect to submitting appropriate Risk Assessments and Method Statement prior to enabling works and the main works.</p>
<p>Historic Railways Estate</p>	<p>Historical Railways Estate (HRE) is a branch of Highways England that manage the portion of the disused, and partially infilled, Wellington Road Tunnel (Structure reference WJP1/78) that carries the A6 Wellington Road North. Discussions have taken place with the HRE with regards to gaining access to the east portal of the tunnel for survey and on the implications for the tunnel as a result of the proposed Development.</p>
<p>Network Rail</p>	<p>Various discussions have taken place to advise Network Rail (NR) of the proposed Development and for NR to set out their requirements for construction and property concerning the railway</p>

Consultee	Summary of discussions
	<p>viaduct.</p> <p>NR's property team has recognised the benefits of the proposed Development including the objective to negate any further bridge strikes on George's Road. Access to the spans has also been discussed with arrangements made regarding future inspection and maintenance.</p> <p>Asset Protection have been advised of the preliminary plans for the filling of the disused tunnel under the viaduct, the retaining wall and the methodology for the works, They have set out their requirements once a contractor is appointed to ensure the safe operation of the West Coast Rail Line over the railway viaduct.</p>
North West Ambulance Service	<p>Discussions between the applicant and North West Ambulance Service have taken place at Stockport Station off Hope Street. The operations manager was made aware of the proposals and the likely construction programme. He was content with the proposals and was keen to see the overall STCAP come forward as well as the other developments within the town centre. He raised no objection to the proposed Development and wanted to stay informed of progress.</p>
Stockport Lead Local Flood Authority	<p>Prior to submission, the applicant has engaged with the Stockport Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and confirmation has been given that EA consultation is not required for the proposals as presented which consists of attenuated discharges of highway drainage to the River Mersey via the existing surface water sewer to King St West bridge. The LLFA will be consulted as part of the formal planning process but no objection in principle is expected to the proposals as presented.</p>
Greater Manchester Police	<p>In preparing the application, the applicant has sought advice from the Greater Manchester Police Security for Design Unit. Details of the feedback provided is set out in the Crime Impact Statement (document number 0527-0801-07-010) submitted with this application.</p>

6. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This application falls to be determined by SMBC in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ('PCPA 2004'). SMBC is required to determine the application in accordance with the Development Plan and other material considerations, including national planning policy. This section of the Planning Statement provides a summary of the relevant national and local planning policy for the proposed Development. **Chapter 7** then provides an appraisal on how the proposed Development complies with these policies.

6.2 National Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (Communities and Local Government, 2012)⁶

6.2.1 The NPPF was published on 27th March 2012. It supersedes all previous planning policy statements, planning policy guidance and mineral planning guidance in England. It aims to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, as well as protecting the environment and promoting sustainable growth. National policy guidance is also given in Circulars and White Papers and other Central Government Publications.

6.2.2 The NPPF is supplemented by National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), which provides more detailed guidance for planning. The NPPF is divided into a series of themes relating to delivering sustainable development. The key themes of relevance to the proposed Development are set out below.

Building a strong, competitive economy

6.2.3 The NPPF highlights that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future. Furthermore, the NPPF (paragraph 19) states that:

"The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system."

6.2.4 In order to help achieve economic growth, the NPPF (paragraph 20) highlights the need for LPAs to plan proactively to meet the development needs of businesses and support an economy fit for the 21st Century.

Ensuring the vitality of town centres

6.2.5 The need for planning policies to promote competitive town centre environments and ensure the vitality of town centres is enhanced is set out within the NPPF (paragraph 23). More specifically, this section of the NPPF sets out the need for LPAs to recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality.

⁶ Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf [Accessed 12/03/2016]

Promoting sustainable transport

- 6.2.6 The NPPF (paragraph 29) highlights the important role that transport policies play in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. The NPPF states that *“The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. However, the Government recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.”*

Requiring good design

- 6.2.7 The NPPF (paragraph 56) emphasises the importance of delivering good design as part of new development, which contributes positively to making places better for people. The NPPF goes on to set out the need to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development.

Promoting Healthy Communities

- 6.2.8 The important role that the planning system can play in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities is emphasised within the NPPF. The NPPF (paragraph 69) highlights that planning decisions should aim to achieve places which promote:

- *“opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity;*
- *safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.”*

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 6.2.9 The NPPF highlights that the planning system should conserve and enhance the natural and local environment. More specifically, the NPPF (paragraph 109) highlights that the planning system should contribute and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*
- *recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- *preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and*

- *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

6.2.10 The NPPF emphasises the need for LPAs to set out a positive strategy within their Local Plan for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats (paragraph 126).

6.2.11 In determining planning applications, the NPPF requires LPAs to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise (paragraph 129). LPAs are also required to take account of the following when determining planning applications:

- *“The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 131).”*

6.2.12 The NPPF also highlights that in instances where development would cause substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated asset, consent should be refused unless that harm or loss is *“necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss”* (paragraph 133). In instances where development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including its optimum viable use (paragraph 134).

6.2.13 In addition, the NPPF highlights that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account when an application is determined (paragraph 135).

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)

6.2.14 On 6th March 2014 the department for Communities and Local Government published its Planning Practice Guidance, which consolidated and revised a large number of practice guidance documents. Relevant guidance categories from the Planning Practice Guidance, and where these are addressed in this application are set out in **Table 6.1** below.

Table 6.1: Sections of the National Planning Practice Guidance of relevance to the application

Guidance Category	Relevant part of application
Air quality	Air Quality Assessment (document number 0527-0801-21-013)
Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	Heritage Assessment (document number 0527-0801-16-006)

Guidance Category	Relevant part of application
Flood Risk and Coastal Change	Flood Risk Assessment (document number 0527-0801-04-005)
Land affected by contamination	Geoenvironmental Investigation Report (document number 0527-0801-04-002)
Natural Environment	Ecology Report (document number 0527-0801-21-003)
Noise	Noise Impact Assessment (document number 0527-0801-21-014)
Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements in Decision-taking	Transport Assessment (document number 0527-0801-25-009)

6.3 Local Planning Policy

6.3.1 The development plan for Stockport, for the purposes of determining this application, currently consist of the Stockport Core Strategy Development Plan Document⁷ (DPD) (adopted in March 2011) and the Stockport Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Review⁸ (May 2006) – policies which still apply from 1st April 2011 onwards (post Core Strategy adoption).

Core Strategy DPD (March 2011)

6.3.2 The Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for Stockport. It identifies why change is needed; what should be done; and where, when and how it is going to happen, including the provision of supporting infrastructure. The Core Strategy covers the period from its adoption (2011) to 2026. The overall aim is to make Stockport more sustainable, meaning a physical pattern of development and land use that is good for the people of the Borough and visitors, and that protects the local and global environments - both at the current time and in the future.

6.3.3 The Core Strategy incorporates a series of Core Policies which are supported by Development Management Policies. The policies that are of relevance to the proposed Development are set out below.

6.3.4 **Core Policy CS5 (Access to Services)** indicates that the Core Strategy supports Stockport's network and hierarchy of service centres as accessible hubs of communities situated in distinctive environments. The policy highlights that Stockport town centre, the eight District and twenty five Local Centres will have a predominance of retail use at their core. These service centres will contain a range of main town centre uses, with some public and community uses, appropriate to their character and position within the Stockport service centre hierarchy.

6.3.5 The policy seeks to ensure sustainable shopping patterns and enhance a sustainable, accessible distribution of high quality economic development. The Core Strategy aims to facilitate the

⁷ Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2011) Core Strategy DPD. Available from: <http://www.stockport.gov.uk/2013/2994/developmentcontrol/planningpolicy/LDF/ldfcorestrategydpd> [Accessed 26/04/2016]

⁸ Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2011) Stockport Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Review. Available from: <http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/environment/planningbuilding/planningpolicy/ldf/udp/udp2006review> [Accessed 26/04/2016]

enhancement of Stockport town centre as the principal centre in the borough and as an important place for its community, thereby generating an attractive destination for people in the borough and for visitors.

6.3.6 **Core Policy CS8 (Safeguarding and Improving the Environment)** highlights that development will be expected to make a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of the borough's natural environment, biodiversity and geodiversity. Development proposals will also need to be located and designed in such a way to take account of environmental constraints and hazards, which include:

- Contamination;
- Air, water, noise and vibration, light or other pollution (including air-quality management areas);
- Land stability; and
- Flood risk.

6.3.7 The policy goes on to emphasise that development will be expected to make a positive contribution to the protection and/or enhancement of the borough's heritage assets. The policy states that *"Proposals which seek to sustainably manage or promote the borough's heritage assets as an educational and/or recreational resource will be given positive consideration so long as they are not harmful to the value of the site/area."*

6.3.8 **Development Management Policy SIE-3 (Protecting, Safeguarding and enhancing the Environment)** highlights that development which preserves or enhances the borough's varying urban and rural landscapes, biodiversity and soils and the special architectural, artistic, historic or archaeological significance of heritage assets will be welcomed. The policy also states that *"Where assessment (through preparation of a development brief or similar) indicates that there are specific historic, built or natural environment features of note at a site or within an area, development will be required to take this into account."*

6.3.9 **Core Policy CS9 (Transport and Development)** encourages development that is in locations which are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. The policy highlights that the Council will support development which reduces the need to travel by car. Development will be required to consider the needs of the most vulnerable road users first.

6.3.10 **Core Strategy Policy CS10 (An effective and sustainable transport network)** highlights that the Council and its partners will manage development and seek to implement strategies which ensure that no section of the community suffers unnecessary inequality as a result of their transport needs not being sustainably met. The policy identifies a series of measures that have been identified by the Council and will be pursued in order to mitigate the impacts of development in the town centre, which are:

- An area-wide Travel Plan for Stockport town centre.
- A new public transport interchange in Stockport town centre. This will not only improve interchange between bus and rail journeys, but will also be 'future-proofed' in order to accommodate the future extension of Metrolink into Stockport town centre from East Didsbury.

- The Town Centre Accessibility Package (*the STCAP*) will be implemented to improve road infrastructure in and around the town centre. This will ease congestion for buses and for general road traffic.
- A separate strategy for transport in Stockport town centre strategic location will be set out in the forthcoming Allocations DPD.

6.3.11 The proposed Development represents one of the measures that is being brought forward as part of STCAP and will improve road infrastructure in and around Stockport town centre. In addition, the STCAP is identified as a key infrastructure required to deliver the Core Strategy policy 10 in the first 5 years of the Core Strategy plan period (paragraph 3.511).

6.3.12 **Development Management Policy T-1 (Transport and Development)** sets out the need to consider the layout of new developments and their links to the surrounding walking network in terms of discouraging crime and antisocial behaviour.

6.3.13 **Development Management Policy T-3 (Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network)** identifies the need for developments to be of a safe and practical design, with safe and well-designed access arrangements, internal layouts, parking and servicing facilities.

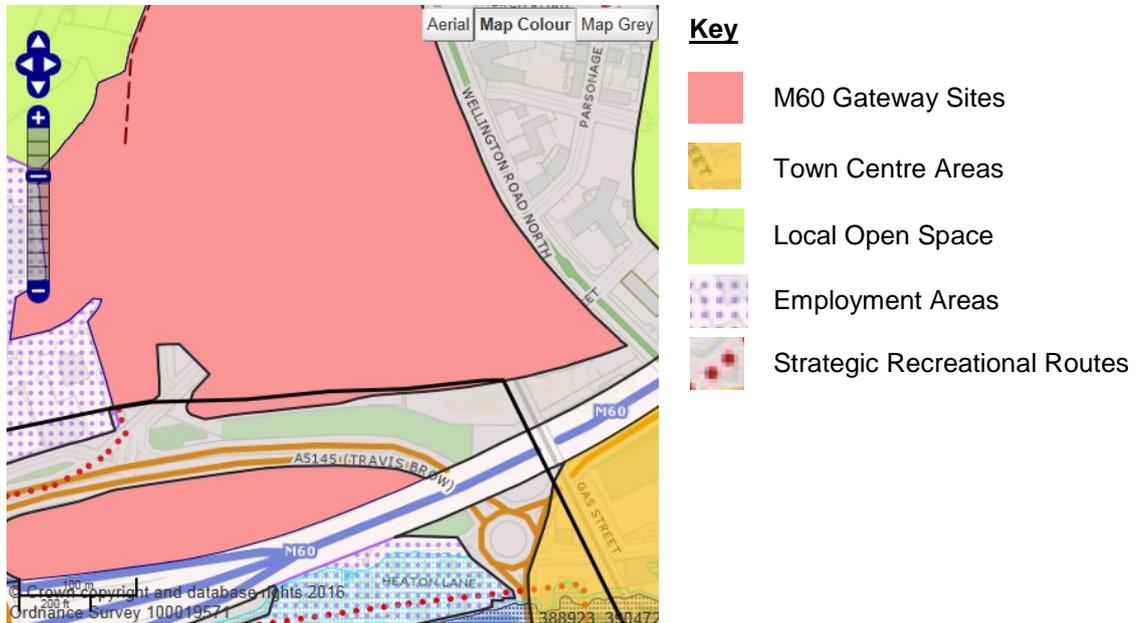
6.3.14 **Development Management Policy T-4 (Protecting Disused Rail Alignments)** states that “*The Council will not permit development which would inhibit future transport use of disused rail alignments unless it can be demonstrated that there is no realistic possibility of such use.*”

6.3.15 **Core Policy CS11 (Stockport Town Centre)** highlights that the council’s objective is for the development of a compact, accessible and pedestrian friendly retail core area, within a wider town centre which accommodates other town centre uses. Furthermore, the policy sets out the need for the heritage of the town centre to be preserved and where possible enhanced through quality design.

Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review (May 2006)

6.3.16 The UDP sets out the Council’s policies and proposals in respect of the development and other use of land in the Borough. The UDP Review was adopted in May 2006 and is still part of Stockport’s Development Framework. It contains policies which are not superseded by the Core Strategy. **Figure 6.1** below is an extract from the UDP proposals map showing allocations within and around the Site.

Figure 6.1: Extract from the UDP Policies Map of the policy allocations of relevance to the Site (see Site Location Plan (drawing number Task4957_1a) for details of the red line boundary).



- 6.3.17 The policies that relate to the allocations shown in **Figure 6.1** are set out below.
- 6.3.18 The UDP incorporates a number of policies relating to the town centre and M60 Gateway. **Figure 6.1** above shows that a large portion of the Site is allocated as an M60 Gateway site, with a town centre area located towards the south east. **Policy TCG1 (Town Centre and M60 Gateway)** highlights that development will be controlled and schemes permitted which promote Stockport town centre as an attractive and prosperous sub-regional retail and commercial centre, and promote the regeneration of the M60 Gateway through high quality, mixed-use development.
- 6.3.19 **Policy TCG1.2 (Town Centre/M60 Gateway Transport Hub)** indicates that the Council will bring forward and support proposals to sustain and enhance sustainable transport links into and through the Town Centre/M60 gateway area, especially to develop routes from the central transport hub. Development which is accessible using such links will be expected to maximise the opportunities for travel to their sites by sustainable modes, rather than by car. Contributions to improving the capacity of the links and/or improving other routes will be required commensurate with the scale of development and traffic impact.
- 6.3.20 **Policy TCG1.4 (Sustainable Access in the Town Centre/M60 Gateway)** highlights that the Council will promote schemes to provide sustainable transport links within the M60 Gateway, to minimise the need for traffic to enter and cross the town centre.
- 6.3.21 In addition to the TCG1 policies set out above, **Policy TCG4 (Stockport’s M60 Gateway)** sets out additional planning policy in relation to the M60 gateway sites. Guidance on the portion of the M60 Gateway site that relates to this application is provided in **Policy TCG4.2 (Travis Brow)**. The policy states *“At Travis Brow, to the east of Junction No.1 of the M60, new business/office premises (B1 use class), a hotel or car showrooms will be permitted. In considering redevelopment schemes, the Council will wish to be satisfied that:*

- (i) *the development takes account of the needs of the existing operational ambulance station should it remain within the area;*
- (ii) *safe pedestrian linkages are provided to the surrounding area and particularly the Town Centre;*
- (iii) *appropriate vehicular access is located, designed and constructed to the satisfaction of the Council;*
- (iv) *satisfactory parking provision is provided, both for vehicular users and cyclists;*
- (v) *opportunities to encourage the use of public transport as a means of access are taken;*
- (vi) *the scheme is of a high standard of design and landscaping, retaining the well-vegetated appearance of the site (including the view from the viaduct), including screen planting with consideration given to the use of green (vegetation) covered roofs;*
- (vii) *a satisfactory landscape scheme is submitted, including boundary treatment; and*
- (viii) *the development satisfies all other relevant UDP policies.”*

6.3.22 A strategic recreation route is shown on **Figure 6.1** towards the south west of the Site. **Policy L1.8 (Strategic Recreation Routes)** states the Council will safeguard and enhance the network of Strategic Recreation Routes shown on the proposals map. Development which would conflict with the strategic recreation value of these routes will not be permitted.

6.3.23 An area of local open space is located towards the north west of the Site. **Policy UOS1 (Urban Open Space)** highlights that the council will safeguard the permanence and integrity of areas of strategic open space within the urban area.

6.3.24 Other policies that are of relevance to the proposed Development are summarised below in **Table 6.2**.

Table 6.2: Other relevant UDP policies

Policy number and name	Summary of policy content taken from the UDP
DCD1 Design and character	The council will require all development to be designed and landscaped to a high standard in order that it makes a positive contribution to the provision of a sustainable, attractive, safe and accessible built environment.
NE1 Biodiversity and nature conservation	The council will safeguard sites and areas of ecological and geological importance and will seek to safeguard and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity of the borough.
HC2 Listed buildings	The council will protect and, where appropriate, seek to enhance, buildings of special architectural or historic interest and buildings of local interest, within their settings.
ST2 Strategic transport corridors	The main corridors in the borough will provide choice for sustainable travel modes, through provision of high quality public transport services on road and rail, the re-allocation of roadspace to public transport, walking and cycling, and adequate provision for freight

Policy number and name	Summary of policy content taken from the UDP
	transport. The existing strategic road infrastructure will be used to best advantage, and new road provision will be limited to that identified as necessary following multi-modal assessments of transport problems and solutions. Any new roads will be carefully planned and designed to minimise their environmental impact.
TD1 Transport and development	Development should be located, designed and laid out to minimise, so far as possible, its impact on traffic levels, and to enable access by non-car modes of transport.

6.4 Emerging Planning Policy

6.4.1 SMBC are working with the nine other local authorities in Greater Manchester to develop a new spatial framework. The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) will support the city-region to make the most of its towns and neighbourhoods and support development to benefit local people. This means supporting our town centres, building new quality homes and attracting businesses. The GMSF will identify the land Greater Manchester needs to meet demand for housing and business development and will help manage the supply of land across the city-region. This will include:

- Determining how many new homes and how much land we need for new jobs over the next 20 years, as well as identify broad locations or areas for development.
- Identifying infrastructure (things like transport links and public services) required to support development.
- Identifying ways to protect the city-region’s green space alongside development so that we develop great places where people want to live, work and visit.

6.4.2 A draft vision and a set of strategic objectives for the GMSF were produced during 2015⁹. In addition, a number of strategic options were also developed, outlining a range of land requirements for housing and business over the next twenty years. A consultation on the GMSF ran from 9th November 2015 to 11th January 2016 so that the views of residents and businesses could be given.

6.4.3 Given that the GMSF is at an early stage of plan preparation, there are no policies that are of specific relevance to the proposed Development. One of the objectives from the GMSF is: *“Better, more integrated transport infrastructure within Greater Manchester is key to ensure residents are able to access the widest range of employment opportunities.”* The proposed Development will help to achieve this objective through improving the transport infrastructure in Stockport.

⁹ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2015) Greater Manchester Spatial Framework: Strategic Options Consultation November 2015. Available from: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/info/20081/vision_and_draft_strategic_options [Accessed 25/04/2016]

7. PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Following the review of the Development Plan and other main planning policy material considerations, the following main themes have been identified.

- Theme 1: Transport enhancements and improving access to the town centre
- Theme 2: Facilitating town centre improvements
- Theme 3: Consistency with UDP site allocation
- Theme 4: Heritage considerations
- Theme 5: Other considerations

7.1.2 This section presents an appraisal of the Proposed Development in accordance with the above themes. Where appropriate, reference is made to the findings of the supporting information submitted with this application (see **Table 1.1** for a list of supporting information). Reference is also made to planning policy set out in **Chapter 6** of this planning statement.

7.2 Theme 1: Transport enhancements and improving access to the town centre

7.2.1 Overall, the STCAP aims to tackle barriers to movement in and around Stockport town centre and the proposed Development is one of the key schemes coming forward as part of the plan. The proposed Development is required in order to provide improved access to the town centre both for vehicular traffic and for pedestrians and cyclists through the development of a new link road and a network of cycleways and footways.

7.2.2 A Transport Assessment (document number 0527-0801-25-009) is submitted with this application, which provides an assessment of the transport impacts of the proposed Development in combination with the other schemes proposed as part of the STCAP. In preparing the Transport Assessment, strategic traffic modelling has been undertaken to assess the wider STCAP proposals including the proposed Development for a 2020 future year scenario. Analysis has demonstrated that the impacts of the STCAP scheme are as follows:

- A graduated reduction in traffic flows on the A6 with the greatest benefits to the central core in the vicinity of Stockport Exchange;
- Reduced traffic in the town's retail core area, Market Place and Underbanks (Stockport's old town), Heaton Lane, George's Road and Lancashire Hill;
- Increased demand on the eastern side of the town centre between the A6 and M60 at junction 27 Portwood using St Marys Way; and
- Some increased demand on the western side of the town centre between the A6 and motorway using King Street West and Wood Street.

7.2.3 In summary, the STCAP scheme (including the proposed Development) will help to reduce traffic in the town centre and on the A6. In addition, the reduction in the width of George's Road at the junction with the A6 Wellington Road North should help to reduce the amount of bridge strikes in this location.

- 7.2.4 A key objective of STCAP is to support lower carbon travel and improve wellbeing by providing improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, and improved linkage between the rail station and town centre. In line with this overarching objective, the proposed Development accommodates new facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and are also complementary to the Stockport Interchange proposals by enabling the closure of Heaton Lane to general traffic (except for access). In addition, the proposed Development has been designed with consideration to the potential future extension of Metrolink services to Stockport.
- 7.2.5 Overall, it is considered that the proposed Development will help to promote sustainable transport in line with paragraph 29 of the NPPF, Core Policy CS9 (Transport and Development) of the Core Strategy and UDP policy TD1 (Transport and development). It will also help to encourage people to use sustainable transport methods (cycling and walking) in accessing the town centre.
- 7.2.6 The STCAP (incorporating the proposed Development) is identified in the Core Strategy (Core Policy CS10 – An effective and sustainable transport network) as being required to mitigate the impacts of development in the town centre. The policy highlights that STCAP will be implemented to improve and ease congestion within and around the town centre. The proposed Development is a key component of the STCAP and is therefore required for the delivery of objectives set out in Core Policy CS10.

7.3 Theme 2: Facilitating town centre improvements

- 7.3.1 The key objectives of the STCAP are set out in detail in section 2.2 of this planning statement and summarised below:
- Increase employment and generate economic growth;
 - Promote fairness through job creation and the regeneration of local communities;
 - Reduce the impact of traffic congestion;
 - Boost business integration and productivity;
 - Support lower carbon travel and improve wellbeing; and
 - Improve road safety.
- 7.3.2 The proposed Development will facilitate the achievement of these objectives by improving access to the town centre both for vehicular traffic and for NMUs. In turn, this should help to increase employment and generate growth in the town centre by enhancing its accessibility and reducing traffic congestion within and around the centre.
- 7.3.3 In terms of consistency with national planning policy, the proposed Development will contribute towards promoting a competitive town centre environment (paragraph 23 of the NPPF) and in building a strong and competitive economy in the town centre (paragraph 19 of the NPPF).

7.4 Theme 3: Consistency with UDP site allocation

- 7.4.1 Part of the Site is allocated in the Stockport UDP as an M60 Gateway site. Policy TCG4.2 (Travis Brow) of the UDP provides detailed guidance in terms of the type of development that should be delivered on the site (see paragraph 6.3.21 for details on this policy). The proposed Development

will contribute towards meeting the criteria outlined in this policy as follows, with the relevant criteria number from Policy TCG4.2 in brackets at start of each bullet point:

- (i) In designing the proposed Development, consideration has been given to the access requirements for the North West Ambulance Service (located towards the south of the Site adjacent to Travis Brow).
- (ii) New and improved footways and cycleways are proposed on the Site, including a new link between Travis Brow and the A6 Wellington Road North for NMUs. This will help facilitate sustainable access to the town centre.
- (iii) The access requirements of neighbouring uses have been considered in the design of the proposed Development.
- (iv) No parking is proposed.
- (v) Access to public transport is encouraged as part of the proposed Development. In particular, access to the railway station will be enhanced for both vehicular traffic and NMUs as part of the proposed Development.
- (vi and vii) A Landscape Design (drawing number 0527-801-200-1300/001A (DF5)) is submitted with this application, which has been discussed and agreed with the maintenance department at SMBC. The scheme incorporates new landscaped areas adjacent to the new link road. Consideration has been given to the setting of the railway viaduct in developing the landscape scheme.
- (vii) It is considered that the proposed Development accords with other relevant UDP policies, with reference to specific policies made in this section where appropriate.

7.5 Theme 4: Heritage considerations

7.5.1 A Heritage Statement (document number 0527-0801-16-006) has been prepared and submitted as part of this application, which presents an assessment: of the heritage significance of assets that could be affected by the proposed Development; and the impact of the proposed Development on the identified significance of those heritage assets. The findings of the Heritage Statement are considered below in terms of the proposed Development's consistency with planning policy.

Designated heritage assets

7.5.2 The Heritage Statement identifies the following designated assets within and around the Site:

- Grade II* Listed Railway Viaduct;
- Grade II Listed Wycliffe Congregational Chapel; and
- Grade II Listed 52 Wellington Road.

7.5.3 The Heritage Statement indicates that the significance of the Stockport Viaduct lies in its technological innovation and the endeavours of the architect and engineers to provide a solution to the topographical complexities of Stockport. It has architectural and historic interest. It also has artistic interest. The proposed Development is to utilise the existing aperture between span 23 of

the viaduct. There will be no alterations to the existing structure other than exposure of the base of the piers with later infill. The proposed retaining walls will be constructed around the base of the piers to ensure that the embankment does not physically affect the structure. The retaining wall will be a minimum of 1 metre away from the existing structure and will therefore allow sufficient space for the piers to retain their presence. The setting of the viaduct will be unaffected by the proposed Development as the urban setting characterised by transportation networks will remain. In addition other spans are already used for the transport routes that pass underneath and between the spans.

- 7.5.4 The proposed Development will introduce some changes to the road immediately adjacent to the Grade II listed Wycliffe Congregational Chapel. However, these alterations are considered minor and not harmful to the identified significance or existing urban setting of the church.
- 7.5.5 The proposed Development will introduce some changes to the road immediately adjacent to the Grade II listed 52 Wellington Road. However, these are minimal and will not physically affect the building or harm the identified significance or setting of the building.
- 7.5.6 In summary, the proposed Development will not lead to the substantial harm or loss of any designated heritage assets. The proposed Development is consistent with policy objectives outlined with policy HC2 (Listed Buildings) of the Stockport UDP in terms of protecting the special architectural or historic interest of listed buildings (and their settings) within and around the Site.

Non designated heritage assets

- 7.5.7 The Heritage Statement highlights that a series of non designated heritage assets including public houses of the Midland Public House, the Magnet Public House and the Railway Public House are located within the Site.
- 7.5.8 The proposed Development is not going to physically harm the non-designated heritage assets of the Railway Public House or the Magnet Public House. These will remain within their existing context. However there will be a loss of group value as the Midland Public House will be demolished as part of the proposed Development. The building has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset due to its age and its association with the development of the area in the 19th century. Its loss will lead to total loss of its historic interest and loss of its contribution to group value as an element of the streetscape.
- 7.5.9 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF highlights the need to consider the significance of a non-designated heritage asset in determining an application. In weighing applications that affect directly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of loss and the significance of the heritage asset. The Midland, The Magnet and The Railway Public Houses lays in the historic interest of the buildings as 19th century public house and inns and the proliferation of pubs in close proximity to residential and industrial areas. Architecturally there is little to distinguish them from other buildings. They have all been heavily altered over the years and have lost the residential context by the demolition in the late 20th century of the once adjoining terrace housing. These have left them in isolation with empty vacant plots flanking them. The main interests of these buildings lie in their historic interest, particularly the social and communal history that they illustrate. They all occupy prominent corner sites and are familiar parts of the street scene. Collectively they have some group value particularly as they are still in use as public houses.

- 7.5.10 The loss of the Midland Public House is considered to be outweighed by the need to deliver a scheme that will be safe for NMUs. Retention of the Midland Public House would lead to the provision of sub-standard footway widths on the eastern side of the A6 and outside the Public House itself, increasing the risk to pedestrians given the level of traffic using the A6, and preventing the proposed provision of the relocated bus stop outside the Kingsgate office complex. With retention of the Public House, selected footway widths alongside the A6 and Link Road would be in the region of 2-2.6 metres. Given the level of traffic using the A6, particularly following traffic reassignment associated with the new Link Road, and the role of the A6 as a key north-south pedestrian route linking the town centre with residential areas to the north, the Council consider that footway widths of less than 3 metres at this location would be unacceptable. Scheme proposals involving the retention of the Public House are therefore considered undesirable as they impact on the safety of pedestrian facilities and the ability to provide suitable facilities for bus passengers travelling towards Stockport town centre. The retention of the Public House would also increase requirements for the diversion of Statutory Undertaker's equipment and plant.
- 7.5.11 In the context of paragraph 135 of the NPPF, it is considered that the decision to demolish the Midland Public House has been taken based on a balanced judgement of the implications of retaining it. However there is clear justification for demolition of the Public House, which has been taken whilst considering the significance of its status as a non-designated heritage asset.

Archaeological remains

- 7.5.12 In terms of archaeological remains, the Heritage Statement highlights that the only identified archaeological feature that will be impacted by the proposed Development will be the Wellington Road tunnel, which is considered to be of low significance. This will be partially filled as part of the proposed Development. Other archaeological remains are unlikely to be impacted as they are deeply buried under made ground (on the north side of Travis Brow) or have been removed by modern construction activities.
- 7.5.13 Core Strategy policy T-4 (Protecting Disused Rail Alignments) highlights that development will not be permitted that would inhibit future transport use of disused railway alignments unless it can be demonstrated that there is no realistic possibility of such use. Given the current status of the tunnel and the surrounding uses, it is considered that there is no realistic possibility that the tunnel could be brought back into use for any future transport use.

Summary

- 7.5.14 Overall, the proposed Development will not harm the significance or setting of the majority of heritage assets located within and around the Site. In accordance with Core Strategy policies CS8 (Safeguarding and Improving the Environment) and SIE-3 (Protecting, Safeguarding and enhancing the Environment), the proposed Development seeks (where possible) to protect the borough's heritage assets and has been designed to ensure that the appearance and setting of the Grade II* Listed Railway Viaduct is protected (see **Chapter 4, section 4.2** for further details relating to the design of the proposed Development).
- 7.5.15 Prior to submission of this application, the applicant engaged with Historic England in relation to the impact of the proposed Development on the Grade II* Listed Railway Viaduct (see **Appendix A**). Historic England were satisfied with the proposed Development and advised that based on the plans provided *"The proposal would further intensify the context of infrastructure around the*

viaduct, however (subject to confirmation through a views analysis) this is unlikely to have a considerable impact on the special interest of the viaduct given the nature of its significance outlined above. Similarly, subject to further detail and great care being taken aesthetically and structurally, the proposed section running underneath the viaduct is acceptable in principle if this achieves notable public benefits (we refer to paragraph 134 of the NPPF)."

7.5.16 The proposed Development will lead to the loss of the Midland Public House and the Wellington Road tunnel. Full consideration has been given to protecting these assets, but their loss is required in order to ensure that the proposed Development is safe once it is operational.

7.5.17 The Heritage Statement recommends that prior to the demolition of the Midland Public House that a Level II Building Recording is carried out. In addition, it is recommended that a Level II Building Recording should be undertaken on the Wellington Road Tunnel prior to demolition.

7.6 Theme 5: Other considerations

7.6.1 As part of this application, a series of other supporting documents have been submitted that set out further considerations relating to the proposed Development. The findings of these documents are set out below.

Ecology

7.6.2 An Ecological Report (document number 0527-0801-21-003) has been prepared and submitted with this application. The report reached the following conclusions:

- *Habitats:* The habitats and plant species present within the Site are widespread and common throughout the UK and northwest England. The loss of these habitats which may occur to facilitate the construction of the proposed Development is therefore not anticipated to result in any significant adverse impacts as far as native flora species are concerned.
- *Bats:* There is no evidence that any of the buildings or structures surveyed are used by roosting bats. In addition, the surrounding habitats are assessed as being of low value to foraging bats and so impacts associated with loss of foraging habitat are anticipated to be minor. As such, providing reasonable avoidance measures are implemented (as set out in the report) no significant adverse impacts are predicted in relation to bats.
- *Breeding Birds:* The site has potential to support nesting birds within the trees, and buildings within the Site. Breeding birds and their (active) nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The removal of scrub and tree habitats could potentially harm or disturb nesting birds/nests if undertaken during the breeding season. Loss of breeding bird habitat is not anticipated however to be a significant impact as there is abundant alternative habitat suitable for nesting birds available in the surrounding area.

Noise quality

7.6.3 The Noise Impact Assessment (document number 0527-0801-21-014) concludes that the proposed Development is not considered to give rise to significant adverse noise impacts.

Air quality

7.6.4 An assessment has been undertaken to consider the potential dust and air quality impacts which may occur during the construction and operation of the proposed Development and is presented in full within the Air Quality Assessment (document number 0527-0801-21-013). The assessment presents the following findings:

- The construction phase of the proposed Development has the potential to generate dust emissions which may have a short term adverse impact at nearby sensitive receptors in the absence of appropriate mitigation. A qualitative assessment of the potential effects from construction activities has been undertaken using the IAQM Dust Guidance methodology. This assessment identified that the Site is considered to be a 'medium' risk site for dust impacts.
- Through good site practice and the implementation of suitable mitigation measures including those that focus on minimising emissions of dust and PM₁₀ associated with earthworks, construction and trackout, the effect of dust and PM₁₀ releases would be sufficiently reduced, such that there would not be any significant residual effects on nearby properties.
- No exceedances of national air quality objectives are modelled to occur as a result of the proposed Development and the impact of the proposed Development on pollutant concentrations at the majority of sensitive receptors can be described as negligible or, if not beneficial. Furthermore, the proposed Development is modelled to result in an overall reduction in exposure to annual mean concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} at affected sensitive receptors in the study area.
- The assessment concluded that the proposed Development would not have a significant effect on local air quality in terms of human health at existing receptors.

Flood risk and drainage

7.6.5 The Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (document number 0527-0801-04-005) submitted with this application indicates that the risk of flooding from all areas is considered low. An appropriate drainage strategy has been developed in preparing this application and is shown in drawing number 0527-801-L-0300-001A (DF5) (Proposed Drainage Layout General Arrangement).

Summary

7.6.6 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the policy aims set out in Core Policy CS8 (Safeguarding and Improving the Environment) in terms of making a positive contribution to the protection of Stockport's natural environment. In accordance with this policy, full consideration has been given to potential environmental constraints (air, noise, flood risk and ecology) in designing the proposed Development.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1.1 This Planning Statement (which incorporates a Design and Access Statement) has been prepared to support the application for planning permission and listed building consent for construction of a new link road connecting Travis Brow with the A6 (Wellington Road North) and associated highway improvement works along Travis Brow (A5145), the A6 and George's Road in Stockport. The proposed Development is one of the schemes that SMBC is aiming to bring forward as part of the STCAP.

8.1.2 This statement has provided details relating to the background to the proposed Development, the site and its surroundings, the proposed Development, the design and access principles relating to the proposed Development, a summary of the pre submission consultation undertaken, the planning policy context and an appraisal of the proposed Development in terms of the planning policy context.

8.1.3 The key points set out within this statement are set out below:

- The proposed Development is required to fulfil the aims of STCAP, improving access to and around the town, reducing traffic congestion, increasing the reliability of the highway network and improving linkages. The proposed Development is considered to be a key element of the overall STCAP, as it will also lead to a more resilient highway network that is better able to respond to incidents and accidents in general and reduce the risk of rail bridge strikes on George's Road in particular. George's Road is currently the direct link between the A6 north of the town centre to M60 Junction 1.
- The proposed Development includes an arched railway bridge carrying the WCML, and despite height restrictions, the bridge is struck three to four times a year on average. This leads to major disruption on both the highway network and WCML, with full closures of both, while Network Rail bridge inspectors check the bridge for damage. This will be reinforced with complementary traffic restrictions on George's Road. The new link road will also remove traffic from Heaton Lane which will facilitate the changed bus movements in the town centre when the Interchange and its bridge are built.
- A key objective of the STCAP is to support lower carbon travel and improve wellbeing by providing improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, and improved linkage between the rail station and town centre. In line with this overarching objective, the new link road scheme and associated changes to the highway network accommodate new facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The STCAP (incorporating the proposed Development) is identified in the Stockport Core Strategy (Core Policy CS10 – An effective and sustainable transport network) as being required to mitigate the impacts of development in the town centre. The policy highlights that STCAP will be implemented to improve and ease congestion within and around the town centre. The proposed Development is a key component of the STCAP and is therefore required for the delivery of objectives set out in Core Policy CS10.
- Overall, the proposed Development will not harm the significant or setting of the majority of heritage assets located within and around the Site. In accordance with Core Strategy policies CS8 (Safeguarding and Improving the Environment) and SIE-3 (Protecting, Safeguarding and enhancing the Environment), the proposed Development seeks (where possible) to

protect the borough's heritage assets and has been designed to ensure that the appearance and setting of the Grade II* Listed Railway Viaduct is protected.

- The proposed Development will lead to the loss of the Midland Public House and the Wellington Road tunnel. Full consideration has been given to protecting these assets, but their loss is required in order to ensure that the proposed Development is safe once it is operational.
- It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the policy aims set out in Core Policy CS8 (Safeguarding and Improving the Environment) in terms of making a positive contribution to the protection of Stockport's natural environment. In accordance with this policy, full consideration has been given to potential environmental constraints (air, noise, flood risk and ecology) in designing the proposed Development.

8.1.4 In conclusion, it is hoped that SMBC will support the proposed Development and approve this application for planning permission and listed building consent.

APPENDIX A – HISTORIC ENGLAND LETTER