APPLICATION No: 16/69281/HYB
APPLICANT: Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)
LOCATION: Site of the former Worsley New Hall, Leigh Road, Salford
PROPOSAL: A part detailed and part outline planning application to establish a new RHS Garden proposing the following: (a) Full planning permission for the use of land and buildings in and around the existing walled garden as a garden centre and ancillary activities, including retail sales of plants and goods, plant displays, horticultural sales and advice, show gardens offering sale of garden and landscape concepts, holding of horticultural events, and facilities for visitors, groups and children, including learning and teaching gardens; renovation works to former potting sheds; conversion of former stable blocks to cafe and office use; creation of demonstration and teaching allotments; development of a car park, coach parking, cycle parking and associated infrastructure; horticultural service yard; compost site and pond and associated access track; development of Welcome Building to include RHS Garden ticket sales and entry, gift shop, indoor and outdoor plant sales, greenhouse, cafe, kitchen, classroom and associated external areas; visitor gardens; formation of new lake; site perimeter boundary treatment; works to the existing Leigh Road western access, including the widening of Leigh Road, formation of a signal controlled junction and new pedestrian footway; the widening and re-alignment of the site access road and associated works; electricity sub-station and gas kiosk; SUDS; hard and soft landscaping; and site infrastructure., (b) Outline planning permission for the creation of an RHS garden including a range of gardens, landscapes, woodland and meadow walks; formation of new watercourses and drainage infrastructure; internal access roads; learning centre; events building; lakeside cafe; renovation of terraces;
Introduction

The applicant, the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), is the UK’s leading gardening charity. All of its activities are funded through membership subscriptions as well as donations, sponsorship and income from their gardens and associated retail and plant sales. The RHS has more than 465,000 members across the UK and further afield. The main activities of the RHS comprise:

Gardens
The RHS has four Gardens at Wisley, in Surrey, its flagship garden, Rosemoor in Devon, Hyde Hall, Essex and Harlow Carr in North Yorkshire, which combined receive 1.9 million visitors each year. The RHS is also affiliated to 200 Partner Gardens across the UK and overseas. Through its Gardens, the RHS aims to provide access to diverse plant collections, examples of innovative and attractive planting design and good horticultural practices. All the Gardens hold regular talks, demonstrations and walks.

Shows
The RHS organises world class flower shows including Chelsea, Hampton Court Palace and Tatton Park, as well as seasonal shows at the RHS Gardens and the Society’s halls in London. Partnership shows include the

glass house; use of existing eastern Leigh Road access for servicing; renovation of former civil defence bunker and its use as an exhibition space; and development of school of horticulture.

WARD: Worsley
RHS Spring Show in Cardiff (in conjunction with Cardiff Council), and the RHS helps to organise the Malvern Spring and Autumn Gardening Shows (organised jointly with the Three Counties Agricultural Society). From 2017 the RHS will deliver a new show at Chatsworth in Derbyshire; 500,000 people attend RHS Shows each year.

Education
The RHS aims to share practical knowledge and inspire people of all ages and abilities with an interest in plants and gardens. The RHS provides horticultural skills and qualifications through courses, traineeships and apprenticeships. For children, the RHS runs the Campaign for School Gardening to encourage as many children as possible to get growing. To date approximately 30,000 primary and secondary schools have joined the campaign.

Communities
The RHS’s outreach work supports communities to transform lives through the power of plants and gardening. It is the national organising body for the annual ‘Britain in Bloom’ campaign, which promotes horticulture in the community for the benefit of local people and the environment. The RHS is also linked to community groups through its ‘Greening Great Britain’ national campaign and the ‘It’s Your Neighbourhood Scheme’, which supports community groups in cleaning up and greening up their immediate local environment.

Science and Advice
The RHS’s Science Team are world leaders in horticultural science, and are experts in plant naming and descriptions, plant pests and diseases and gardening in a changing world. They also conduct research into the benefits of gardening for health, wellbeing, ecology and the environment, and provide a gardening advice service, which in 2015, benefitted almost 16 million people worldwide.

RHS Retailing, Plant & Garden Centres (RHS Enterprises)
The RHS offers shopping opportunities in all four Gardens and at all of its shows. Proceeds from these activities, plus income from various product licenses and events at the Royal Horticultural Halls and Conference Centre, are reinvested so that the RHS can do more to promote gardening and help gardeners.

In 2015, the RHS launched its ‘Vision’ which aims:

“To enrich everyone’s life through plants, and make the UK a greener and more beautiful place.”

This Vision is supported by ten strategic objectives:

1. Be known, loved and trusted as the charity for all gardeners.
2. Safeguard and advance the science, art and practice of horticulture for the benefit of future generations and the environment.
3. Transform communities through gardening.
4. Create world-leading horticulture that inspires people to garden.
5. Nurture and grow membership throughout the UK.
6. Provide a voice for all gardeners, sharing and building expert knowledge.
7. Delight customers with exceptional service and products.
8. Be a great place to work where everyone makes a difference.
9. Have efficient business practices that deliver maximum income for charitable purpose.
10. Make horticulture a career to be proud of.

In 2015 the RHS also announced a ten year, £160 million investment programme, which included a pledge to find and develop a site for a fifth RHS Garden. Subsequently, the RHS announced its intention to create its fifth Garden at the site of the former Worsley New Hall in Salford, to be known as ‘RHS Garden Bridgewater’. The proposed development is a collaboration between the RHS, Salford City Council and Peel Land and Property.

Description of Site and Surrounding Area
The application site comprises 63.6 hectares (157 acres) and comprises the grounds of the former Worsley New Hall, located on the south side of Leigh Road (A572). Immediately to the north of the site, on the northern side of Leigh Road, is a row of large detached residential properties sat within generous plots and set back from Leigh Road. Beyond these properties, to the north are Worsley Park Marriott Hotel and Country Club, Worsley Park Golf Course and the Grade II Listed Worsley Old Hall.
Immediately to the south of the site is the Bridgewater Canal and towpaths. The canal is set within a raised platform edged with belts of trees running along both sides. To the east of the site, is the northbound slip road and roundabout of Junction 13 of the M60 motorway. Further east, beyond the M60 is Worsley Village and surrounding residential area. Immediately to the west is an area of open fields, beyond which is the residential area of Boothstown.

The site is located within the Greater Manchester Green Belt and part of the site is designated as a Site of Biological Importance. The Site is also located within a designated Mineral Safeguard Area under Policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan Document.

The site slopes from north to south with the majority of the fall (approximately 12 metres) occurring within the northern third of the site. The slope tends to flatten through the middle third of the site before levelling off in the southern third. The site is accessed, by both vehicles and pedestrians, from a single access point off Leigh Road in the north-west corner of the site.

There are four Grade II Listed buildings/structures on the site - The Gardener’s Cottage, Worsley Hall Ice House, The Bothy and the entrance gates to the former Worsley New Hall. The site is also included in the City Council’s Local List of Heritage Assets due to its architectural, historical and local interest, its aesthetic and social/communal value and the collective value of the landscape (group value). There are archaeological assets on the site, specifically the foundations of Worsley New Hall.

The site can be divided into four character areas –

Site of the Former Hall and Terraced Gardens
Located towards the north eastern corner of the site are the remnants of the former Worsley New Hall’s foundations and front wall, as well as a terraced staircase and fountain from the terraced garden. This part of the site has remained unoccupied for a long period of time and has become overgrown. The boating lake to the south of the Hall and gardens remains partially intact, however, the eastern half of the lake is now silted over and there remains a small stone grotto folly on what was historically an island in the centre of the lake.

To the west of the former Hall is a concrete civil defence bunker, beyond which to the west is the Grade II Listed 18th Century Ice House. All that is visible of the Ice House externally is a blocked up door in a section of stonework which reflects the shape of the vault inside.

To the north of the former Hall are the Grade II Listed entrance gates, which are visible from Leigh Road. This is not the original location of the gates; the entrance was moved when the road network was developed to the east. To the west of the entrance gates, are the piers of the former bridge that connected Worsley New Hall and Worsley Old Hall to the north.

The Garden Centre Site and Middle Wood Scout Camp
The existing site access from Leigh Road is located in the north western corner of the site and connects into an access road running along the western boundary of the site. Worsley Garden Centre, including the walled garden, the Gardeners Cottage and the Bothy are located at the southern end of the access road. This collection of buildings and the land surrounding them (hereafter referred to as ‘The Garden Centre Site’) are enclosed by the external walls of the original kitchen garden to the south, west and east, with significant tree coverage along the southern boundary and to the north east and south west corners.

To the north, the Garden Centre Site is bound by the existing access road to the Scout Camp. Middle Wood Scout Camp is moving to alternative premises at Hollin Wood prior to the proposed development taking place. Planning permission for the new scout camp was granted by the City Council in July 2016.

Middle Wood
In the centre of the site is Middle Wood, an area of dense woodland that separates the site of the former Hall and terraced gardens from the Gardener’s Cottage and walled garden. Trees and vegetation have overgrown the former Hall and terraced gardens and Middle Wood is now largely indistinguishable from the site of the former hall and terraced gardens.

The Meadow and Agricultural Field
The land along the north western edge of the site, adjacent to the existing access point off Leigh Road and to the north of Middle Wood Scout Camp, comprises an open field that has previously been used for agricultural purposes. The strip of land to the south of the site that sits between the Bridgewater Canal, Middle Wood and the Garden Centre Site and the area of woodland that now covers the site of the former Hall and terraced garden, comprises an open meadow with a small but prominent copse of trees towards the west of the site.

**Site History**

It is understood that the site remained largely undeveloped up until the end of the 18th Century and comprised mostly of woodland. The first structure to be built was the Gardeners Cottage in 1834, housing the head gardener of the estate. Worsley New Hall was built for the 1st Earl of Ellesmere between 1840 and 1845 by the architect Edward Blore. The Gardens were developed and enhanced over a period of 50 years. The Kitchen Gardens were constructed in the early 1840s, and provided vegetables, fruit and flowers to the Hall. By the end of the 19th century the kitchen gardens gained an outer wall, making it one of the largest walled gardens in the UK.

The formal entrance gates were added in 1851 and the sloping grounds to the south of the Hall were organised into a formal terraced garden. By 1857 there were six terraces in total, separated by stone balustrades and accessed by a series of steps and gravel paths. The terraces featured three fountains. Beyond the terraced garden was landscaped parkland, which extended southwards towards a lake. An area of woodland ‘Middle Wood’ separated the formal gardens from the gardener’s cottage and the walled kitchen gardens. The Bothy was built in the late 19th century to house unmarried gardeners. A boiler in the cellar of the Bothy provided heating to the Kitchen Garden glasshouses.

During World War I, John Egerton, 4th Earl of Ellesmere lent the Hall to the British Red Cross, for use as a hospital. The hospital closed in 1919. During World War II the War Office requisitioned parts of the Hall and the grounds. The 2nd and 8th Battalions of the Lancashire Fusiliers occupied the site in 1939 and 1940, using the Hall's basements as air raid shelters, and digging training trenches in the grounds. The Hall suffered from a catastrophic fire in 1943 and was subsequently demolished in 1949.

From the 1940’s the lake and other parts of the grounds have been used by the Middle Wood Scout Camp. In the 1950’s an area of land at the western end of the former Hall building was purchased in 1956 by the War Office for the construction of a civil defence bunker, which remains on site. More recently the site has largely been privately managed woodland and agriculturally tenanted land; and in the past 40 years parts of grounds have been used as a Garden Centre.

**Relevant Planning History**

On 27 February 1997 planning permission was granted for land adjacent to Worsley Old Hall and 163 Hectares either side of Leigh Road to provide two golf courses, the change of use and extension of existing farm buildings to provide a hotel, conference and leisure facilities incorporating golf clubhouse and provision of car parking (ref: 95/33737/FUL. This application relates to land either side of Leigh Road at Worsley New Hall and Worsley Old Hall. The golf course on the north side of Leigh Road at Worsley Old Hall was the only part of the permission implemented.

A planning application was submitted in July 2004 relating to the Worsley New Hall site and land to the south and west of the Bridgewater Canal across the boundary of Salford and Wigan Council. The application proposed the development of a Forest Park comprising a Forest Centre including Eco Village, Timber Initiative and Woodland Wildlife Centres, timber workshop, children's woodland adventure play area and treetop walkway; equestrian centre; all weather and turf track racecourse and equestrian eventing area; cross country eventing course; grandstand and associated buildings; refurbishment of Malkins Wood farmhouse to residential accommodation for equestrian centre manager; refurbishment of Moss House Farmhouse and conversion and extension of two barns to form a hotel (80 guests); golf course and clubhouse and change of use of agricultural building for golf course maintenance; footpath and riding trails and cyclepaths; roads and connection to J13 M60, replacement canal bridge, new canal bridge and bridge over Shaw Brook; car parking; landscaping including ground remodelling creation of water bodies and woodland planting; site infrastructure including fencing, lighting, services and sub stations; and site accommodation works including culverts and watercourse diversions. (ref: 04/48900/HYBEiA)
The plans for the former Worsley New Hall Site included the provision of a golf course and greenspace. An appeal against non-determination of this application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in November 2008. Following a public inquiry the planning application was refused by the Secretary of State on 13th October 2009 (Appeal Ref: APP/U4230/A/08/2089906 and APP/V4250/A/08/2089891).

Description of Proposal

The applicant has submitted a ‘hybrid’ planning application – part outline and part detailed. The detailed part comprises phase one of the development and the outline element (with all matters reserved) seeks to establish the broad parameters for future phases. A masterplan has been developed which illustrates how the site could develop over the next 10 to 15 years. The masterplan is based upon the RHS’s aspirations for the future development of the site and it is intended that the garden would be opened to the public in phases, subject to funding, over the next decade. A copy of the illustrative masterplan is provided in Figure 1 below.

![Figure 1: Proposed Illustrative Masterplan](image-url)

Figure 1: Proposed Illustrative Masterplan

Detailed Planning Application

The detailed part of the planning application comprises the restoration of the walled garden and the continued use of this area and surrounding buildings as a garden centre, the construction of a new Welcome Building with
associated landscaping and a new lake, the car parking, including coach parking, site infrastructure, including site access junction and access road, and a horticultural service yard, composting area and servicing road and initial clearance works in Middle Wood and at the lake. The RHS has advised that this first phase of works is expected to be completed by June 2019 for the opening of the garden to the public, with the new Welcome Building and lake being completed a year later.

Outline Planning Application

The outline element of the planning application comprises the later phases of the development, including the creation of an arboretum, a glasshouse, a lakeside restaurant, renovation of the terraced garden and Civil Defence bunker and creation of a Northern College of Horticulture. These future phases of the development will be subject to future Reserved Matters application(s). Outline details of these future phases is provided below.

- Works to the woodland between the site of the former New Hall and the eastern boundary of the site.
- Expanded external plant sales area of the Welcome Building
- Lakeside restaurant to the east of Middle Wood.
- A learning centre, events building and teaching garden to be developed in the area of the scout camp.
- Creation of a glasshouse on the site of the former New Hall.
- Renovation of the terrace gardens.
- Renovation of the Civil Defence bunker and its use as an exhibition and event space.
- Creation of a Northern College of Horticulture.

Publicity

| Site Notice   | Non HH Article 15                                      | Date Displayed: 17 January 2017 |
|              | Non HH Setting of Listed Building                      | Date Displayed: 20 January 2017 |
| Reason:       | Article 13                                             |                                  |
|              | Affecting Setting of Listed Building                   |                                  |

| Press Advert: Manchester Weekly News Salford Edition | Date Published: 19 January 2017 |
| Reason: Article 15 Standard Press Notice             | Date Published: 26 January 2017 |

Neighbour Notification

Notification letters were sent to 1059 neighbouring properties.

Representations

The City Council has received 59 comments in response to the publicity and neighbor notification, comprising 24 objections and 34 in support. In addition Councilors Clarkson, Compton and R Garrido have advised that they have strong reservations regarding the transport proposals for the development. The objections received from residents are summarised below with an officer response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key: O = Objection, R = Planning Officers Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O Highways Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is insufficient highways/transport infrastructure in place to cope with the demands of the development. Significant improvements to the highway infrastructure are needed as part of these proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The development will increase traffic congestion, Leigh Road is already congested at rush hour, the area cannot cope with any further increase in traffic</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The new traffic lights will slow down traffic on Leigh Road and cause a backlog onto the M60 slip road in the evening rush hour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The increased traffic would increase pollution levels in the area and result in increased poor health</td>
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<tr>
<td>• There is no pedestrian access to the site, no footpath on the south side of Leigh Road and the path on the north side is extremely narrow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The plans should include access for cyclists</td>
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<td>• The site is poorly served by public transport and people will be forced to use their cars. Public</td>
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transport to the site should be improved
- Parking on local roads could be a problem if the car park is full or by people who do not want to pay the parking fee (if there is one). This would inconvenience residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>The proposed development has been assessed by the City Council’s Highways Consultants, TfGM and Highways England who have advised that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the function of the highway network. Further details on this assessment are provided in the ‘Consultations’ section and ‘Highways, Parking and Access’ section of this report below.</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| O | Green Belt, Greenspace & Wildlife
- The development would result in the loss of greenspace. People of Boothstown have less access to free open space per capita than any other area in Salford, more open space is needed.
- Given the impacts on the residents of Boothstown and Worsley, residents should have free access to the Garden.
- The development would disrupt wildlife and their habitats, these should be protected.
- Object to development on Green Belt land
- Object to the loss of trees and hedgerows |
| R | The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) has reviewed the application and consider that it would result in an increase in biodiversity interest on the site. Further details on this assessment are provided in the ‘Ecology and Trees’ section of this report below. |
| O | Concern that the development will result in flooding in the area |
| R | The development would incorporate a sustainable urban drainage strategy (SuDS) that would sustainably manage surface water on the site and reduce the risk of flooding. Further details are provided in the ‘Flood Risk and Surface Water Management’ section of this report below. |

The comments in support of the application are summarised below:
- The development would bring regeneration to the area.
- The development would provide a safe meeting place for our elderly population, help improve mental health for the elderly and help reduce loneliness.
- Health benefits by encouraging increase in physical fitness and therefore reducing obesity, the opportunity to improve mental health providing an area of peaceful relaxation.
- The development would promote the physical, psychological and social benefits of gardens and gardening
- Inspiring and supporting the community and local gardeners to make their own spaces greener.
- The development would provide state-of-the-art education facilities where students can learn the practical aspects of horticulture.
- Benefits to the young people of Salford with opportunities for work, study and access to horticulture.
- Economic benefits through provision of learning, training, apprenticeships, volunteering opportunities, employment and investments.
- Attracting tourism to the area, boosting locals businesses such as hotels, restaurants, pubs and services.
- The development would provide a leisure facility.
- It is encouraging that the RHS sees so much potential in this site.
- The very great prestige that hosting one of the RHS's five major gardens will bring to Salford.
- The Garden will raise the profile of Salford across the country.
- A successful garden will lead to improvements to local transport links.
- Any increase in traffic volumes should be outside peak times.
- Traffic is an issue but this needs a more strategic solution.
- The designs are sympathetic to the local environment and will turn the site into a beautiful garden.
- It will help the local environment and wildlife by increasing diversity and creating more habitats for nature.
- Preserve the heritage of the area by restoring the lake and historic buildings.

**Consultations**

**Senior Engineer Flood Risk Management** - no objection subject to conditions
Comments from the City Council’s Flood Risk Management Consultant are summarised as follows:

The drainage strategy proposed for the site is acceptable in principle. The strategy will need to be refined during the detailed design stages and supported by calculations to demonstrate the existing and proposed runoff rates, that there would be no flooding in a 30 year event and no internal flooding in a 1 in 100 year plus climate change event. A condition is recommended to require a surface water drainage strategy for the site to be submitted to the City Council for approval.

**Canal And River Trust** – no comment

The Canal and River Trust advise that the application falls outside the notified area for its application scale, therefore there is no requirement for the City Council to consult the Trust in their capacity as a Statutory Consultee.

**Environment Agency** - no objection subject to conditions

The Environment Agency advise that they have no objection in principle to the proposed development, their comments are summarised as follows:

**Ecology**

We are generally supportive of RHS development proposals at Worsley, with development outlining the adoption of above ground sustainable urban drainage techniques as part of scheme design, the retention and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement proposals integrated into proposals, enhancement or creation of new wetland habitats, and the adoption of biodiversity management strategy through the course of construction. It is important to ensure that the landscape within the site is managed in such a way as to protect the ecological value of the site including the lake, adjoining local wildlife site, and connecting Shaw Brook waterbody, therefore a condition is recommended to require the submission of a Landscape Management Plan for approval by the City Council.

In addition, a condition is recommended to require the submission of a method statement to put appropriate control measures in place regarding the invasive species Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, Rhododendron, Montbretia present on the site.

**Contaminated Land**

The previous use of the site may have led to the presence of contaminated made ground which presents a medium risk of contamination that could be mobilised during construction to pollute controlled waters. Controlled waters are particularly sensitive in this location because the site is located adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal and upon Secondary A aquifer and Principal aquifer (in the south west corner of the site).

The reports submitted in support of this planning application provide us with confidence that it will be possible to suitably manage the risk posed to controlled waters by this development. Further detailed information will however be required before built development is undertaken, therefore a planning condition is recommended to require the submission of a remediation strategy to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site and a verification report for approval by the City Council.

**Greater Manchester Ecological Unit** - no objection subject to conditions

The Greater Manchester Ecological Unit (GMEU) advise that they have no objection in principle to the proposed development, their comments are summarised as follows:

The ecology surveys that have been undertaken in support of the application have been undertaken by suitably qualified consultants and are generally to appropriate and proportionate standards. I would not consider that any further surveys need to be conducted prior to determining the application.

However, given the very large scale of the development and the long time-scales that may be involved in developing the scheme some surveys may need to be repeated in future years to provide suitably up-to-date information to inform detailed planning and development stages.
In conclusion, I would not raise any overall objections to the development proposals on ecological grounds, but certain precautions are recommended in order to protect nature conservation interests. Overall this major development proposal should lead to an increase in local (and City-wide) biodiversity interest.

**Arboriculture - no objection subject to conditions**

The City Council’s Arboriculture Consultant has provided the following comments.

A BS 5837 Arboriculture Report has been supplied by Christians Environmental to support a planning application for the site; the report gives a fair and accurate appraisal of the trees and groups on site.

It is proposed that several phases undertaken over many years will be employed to restore and improve the landscape of the site. A landscape scheme has been supplied which shows how the proposal has been envisaged. Whilst this covers the entire site, the drawing can be considered as indicative only. An overarching Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been supplied which breaks the site down into 17 distinct areas.

The AIA aims to uphold several core principles to aid in adhering to the management plans and to guide strategies. These include retaining veteran trees, large trees or trees with ecological merit; manage trees for safety through appropriate works or removal; move targets and pedestrian out of harm’s way by moving paths away from trees with significant defects which are still considered worthy of retention, all whilst considering the landscape aesthetics for each area.

Due to the nature and scale of the site, implementing the management in each plot will need to be done on an ad-hoc basis with many decisions being made on the ground and adhering to a strict removal and replanting plan will not always be practicable. Whilst the AIA for each site outlines the strategy, further details such as approximate tree numbers being removed and replaced, details of any proposed construction and the appropriate measures taken to protect trees, etc., are not yet included.

The 17 areas each have an individual AIA written to highlight the specific strategic proposals within these plots and a general construction-based Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) has been supplied which gives details of the type of temporary protective fencing that would be employed to protect retained trees during construction works. A more detailed proposal and site specific AMS would be required for each of the 17 blocks, to include details of new planting.

The loss of trees on the site would normally require mitigation planting however as there is a considerable amount of new trees to be established and general landscape improvements proposed, a formal re-stocking plan is not considered necessary. Conditions are recommended to ensure that appropriate tree protection measures are put in place on site prior to commencement of construction works, to require the planting of replacement trees within the next available planting season following removal and for a combined proposal/AMS/re-planting plan to be submitted for each to the 17 areas identified.

**Highways - no objection subject to conditions**

The City Council’s Highways Consultant advise that they raise no objections to the proposed development subject to conditions to require the submission of a Travel Plan, Event Management Plan, to ensure that the proposed site access works and works to the M60 Junction 13 roundabouts are implemented and to ensure that the car, coach and cycle parking is provided.

**Transport For Greater Manchester (TFGM) - no objection subject to conditions**

Comments received from TFGM are summarised as follows:

- **Highways Impact - TFGM** have undertaken additional assessment work and sensitivity testing of the RHS Bridgewater site access junction to ensure a robust approach in terms of the trip distribution assumptions for traffic accessing and leaving the site. The analysis work demonstrates that the junction will operate satisfactorily in all scenarios tested.

- **Event Management Plan -** a package of mitigation measures will be required on event days. This can be developed through the Event Management Plan which should be required via a condition. This should include details of the management of car parking, mitigation measures such as network monitoring, review of signal timings etc.
• Site Accessibility - a review of the existing public transport provision along Leigh Road has demonstrated that the site is accessible by bus with connections to Wigan, the Trafford Centre, Piccadilly Gardens and Leigh at varying 15 minute to hourly intervals. Information about bus timings should be made available to staff and displayed on the RHS Bridgewater website for visitors to help encourage modal shift to public transport.

• Shuttle Bus - the Travel Plan references provision of shuttle bus connection with Eccles Interchange and Walkden Station on event days and possibly summer weekends. This would be welcomed and it is recommended that this is developed further as part of the Travel Plan.

• Active Travel - in order to maximise the benefits of the site’s location to encourage active travel, it should be ensured that the pedestrian and cycling environment, within and around the site, is designed to be as safe, attractive and convenient as possible, including natural surveillance where possible.

• Cycle parking - it is important to ensure that adequate infrastructure and facilities are provided to encourage staff and guests to travel by sustainable modes. The Framework Travel Plan references the provision of covered cycle parking provided on site close to the main entrance. Cycle parking should be provided in accordance with SCC standards. It is noted that shower and changing facilities will also be provided for staff and volunteers within the horticulture service yard. The development should be future proofed to allow for additional secure cycle parking to be provided at a later date should it be required.

• Travel Plan - it is important to influence travel patterns at the beginning of occupation and therefore a robust Travel Plan should be employed to support the development. The Travel Plan should feature a range of measures promoting a choice of transport mode, and a clear monitoring regime with agreed targets. If the Travel Plan is to be successful, it will be dependent on establishing a culture of sustainable travel behaviour at the outset, rather than on changing already established travel practices.

• It is noted that electric charging bays will be provided within the car park which is welcomed.

Highways England - no objection subject to conditions

The comments made by the Highways Agency are summarised as follows:

• The proposed development is leisure based and not employment or residential; and as such will take time to develop a visitor base and generate significant levels of trips. This is reflected in the one year, five year and ten year visitor estimates provided by the developer (50,000, 340,000, and 700,000 respectively).
• The proposed development predominantly operates outside of the AM peak period, avoiding this period of significant congestion and operational issues.
• In the PM peak period, the nature of traffic flows across the M60 West results in significant congestion in the M60 clockwise direction. In considering the development proposals, the tidality of traffic from the development will be predominately departing traffic from the site during this peak period

Government policy states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. Highways England took a view that the impact of this development on the strategic road network could not be classed as severe.

Should Salford Council grant consent to this application, Highways England would recommend that a Travel Plan and Event Management Plan be conditioned.

Historic England - no comment

Historic England have advised that they do not wish to offer any comments and suggest the City Council seek the views of our specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, as relevant.

Design for Security - no objection subject to conditions

Design for Security advise that the development should be designed and constructed in accordance with the recommendations contained within Section 3.3 of the submitted Crime Impact Statement and a planning condition should be added to reflect the physical security specification listed within section 4 of the appendices within the submitted Crime Impact Statement.

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service - no objection subject to conditions
The Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) advise that they have no objection in principle to the proposed development, their comments are summarised below.

GMAAS have reviewed the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment submitted by the applicant and advise that it meets the aims for such an assessment set-out in the NPPF paragraph 128. GMAAS accepts the recommendations of the report and advises that any further investigation could be undertaken as a condition of planning consent. GMAAS also suggest that, in view of the outline character of much of the proposal, that any Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) should include sufficient flexibility to accommodate archaeological investigations where a potential below ground impact is identified from future detailed proposals.

**Urban Vision Environment (Air and Noise)** – no objection subject to conditions

The City Council’s Air and Noise Consultant has raised no objection to the proposed development, their comments are summarised below.

As the site has both air quality and noise implications to consider, the application is supported by assessments on both aspects.

Air Quality - the assessment was undertaken by Hoare Lea and the report is dated 19th December 2016. The author of the report consulted me prior to undertaking the study. While the report concludes that air quality impacts from both phases of the development are not significant it does suggest that the site operator adopts sustainable transport modes to/from the development, in accordance with the Greater Manchester Air Quality Action Plan. I note that the development of a Travel Plan is discussed in the submitted Transport Assessment Plan. I have considered the air quality assessment report and I am happy with its findings, its conclusions and its recommendations. I would, however, recommend a condition to require the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Noise - the noise assessment report is by Hoare Lea, and it is dated 6th December 2016. The author consulted me prior to undertaking the study when we agreed the scope of the assessment, the methodology for determining existing background and ambient noise levels and design noise targets. I have considered the noise assessment report and I am satisfied with its content, its findings and its conclusions. Therefore if you are minded to give an approval in this case a condition is recommended to ensure that noise from all commercial type activities, including fixed plant and machinery, associated with the development, when operating simultaneously, shall not exceed the background noise level (LA90,T) by more than -5 dB at any time when measured at the boundary of the nearest noise sensitive premises.

**Urban Vision Environment (Land Contamination)** - no objection subject to conditions

The City Council’s Land Contamination Consultant has made the following comments:

The following report has been submitted:

- Phase 1 Desk Based Ground Investigation, ROC Consulting, Ref: JB/AS/p1 3556, November 2016.

The above desk study comprises a review of historical and geological mapping, available environmental data and historic investigation reports carried out at the site. The report reveals various sources of potential contamination across the site and surrounding areas, including the existing made ground, the former boiler house, underlying peat and infilled features. In addition, the potential for shallow worked coal seams has been identified.

In order to investigate the potential pollutant linkages and geotechnical issues further, an intrusive site investigation is recommended. I have considered the submitted report and am satisfied with its conclusions. Conditions are recommended to require the submission of a Site Investigation Report, details of any proposed remedial works and a Verification Report.

**Planning Policy**

**Development Plan Policy**

Unitary Development Plan ST1 - Sustainable Urban Neighbourhoods
This policy states that development will be required to contribute towards the creation and maintenance of sustainable urban neighbourhoods.

**Unitary Development Plan ST4 - Key Tourism Areas**
This policy states that the following areas will be protected and enhanced as tourism destinations and tourism development will be focused primarily within 1. Salford Quays 2. Chapel Street 3. Worsley Village, Barton Swing Aqueduct and the Bridgewater Canal Corridor.

**Unitary Development Plan ST5 - Transport Networks**
This policy states that transport networks will be maintained and improved through a combination of measures including the extension of the network of pedestrian and cycling routes; the expansion and improvement of the public transport system and the enhancement of support facilities; the maintenance and improvement of the highway network; the provision of new road infrastructure where this will support the city's economic regeneration; requiring development proposals, highway improvement schemes and traffic management measures to make adequate provision for the needs of the disabled, pedestrians and cyclists, and, wherever appropriate, maximise the use of public transport; and the protection and enhancement of rail and water-based infrastructure to support the movement of freight and passengers.

**Unitary Development Plan ST10 - Recreation Provision**
This policy states that a comprehensive range of accessible recreation opportunities will be provided through 1) the protection, improvement and reorganisation of existing recreation sites; 2) the development of a regional park; 3) developing a network of Key Recreation Areas; 4) provision of new recreation facilities on sites allocated in the UDP; 5) the development of a series of Local Nature Reserves; 6) improvement of access between urban areas and the Countryside; 7) use of planning obligations to provide new and enhanced recreation facilities.

**Unitary Development Plan ST13 - Natural Environments Assets**
This policy states that development that would result in an unacceptable impact on any of the city's natural environmental assets will not be permitted.

**Unitary Development Plan ST14 - Global Environmental**
This policy states that development will be required to minimise its impact on the global environment. Major development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise greenhouse gas emissions.

**Unitary Development Plan ST15 - Historic Environmental**
This policy states that historic and cultural assets that contribute to the character of the city will be preserved and wherever possible and appropriate, enhanced.

**Unitary Development Plan DES1 - Respecting Context**
This policy states that development will be required to respond to its physical context and respect the positive character of the local area in which it is situated and contribute towards a local identity and distinctiveness.

**Unitary Development Plan DES2 - Circulation and Movement**
This policy states that the design and layout of new development will be required to be fully accessible to all people, maximise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists through and around the site safely, be well related to public transport and local amenities and minimise potential conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.

**Unitary Development Plan DES7 - Amenity of Users and Neighbours**
This policy states that all new development, alterations and extensions to existing buildings will be required to provide potential users with a satisfactory level of amenity in terms of space, sunlight, daylight, privacy, aspect and layout. Development will not be permitted where it would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of occupiers or users of other development.

**Unitary Development Plan DES8 - Alterations and Extensions**
This policy states that planning permission will only be granted for alterations or extensions to existing buildings that respect the general scale, character, rhythm, proportions, details and materials of the original structure and complement the general character of the surrounding area.

**Unitary Development Plan DES9 - Landscaping**
This policy states that hard and soft landscaping should be provided where appropriate that is of a high quality and would enhance the design of the development, not detract from the safety and security of the area and would enhance the attractiveness and character of the built environment.

**Unitary Development Plan DES10 - Design and Crime**
This policy states that developments must be designed to discourage crime, antisocial behaviour, and the fear of crime. Development should i) be clearly delineated ii) allow natural surveillance iii) avoid places of concealment iv) encourage activity within public areas.

**Unitary Development Plan A2 - Cyclists, Pedestrians and the Disabled**
This policy states that development proposals, road improvement schemes and traffic management measures will be required to make adequate provision for safe and convenient access by the disabled, other people with limited or impaired mobility, pedestrians and cyclists.

**Unitary Development Plan A8 - Impact of Development on the Highway Network**
This policy states that development should be designed to discourage crime, antisocial behaviour, and the fear of crime. Development should i) be clearly delineated ii) allow natural surveillance iii) avoid places of concealment iv) encourage activity within public areas.

**Unitary Development Plan A10 - Provision of Car, Cycle, Motorcycle Parking in New Development**
This policy states that there should be adequate provision for disabled drivers, cyclists and motorcyclists, in accordance with the Council's minimum standards; maximum car parking standards should not be exceeded; and parking facilities should be provided consistent with the provision and maintenance of adequate standards of safety and security.

**Unitary Development Plan EN1 - Development Affecting the Green Belt**
This policy states that carrying out engineering and other operations and making material changes to the use of land are inappropriate development unless they maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. Planning permission will not be granted that might be visually detrimental by reason of its siting, materials, or design, even where it would not prejudice the purpose of including land in the Green Belt. Planning permission will be granted for the working of minerals, provided that high environmental standards are maintained, the affected sites are well restored, and the development is consistent with other policies and proposals of the Plan.

**Unitary Development Plan EN8 - Nature Conservation of Local Importance**
This policy states that development that would adversely affect the nature conservation value of a Site of Biological Importance, a Local Nature Reserve, or a priority habitat for Salford as identified in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan, will only be permitted where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the reduction in the nature conservation interest of the site; the detrimental impact has been minimised as far as is practicable; appropriate mitigation measure have been provided. Conditions or planning obligations will be used to ensure the protection, enhancement and management of these sites and habitats.

**Unitary Development Plan EN9 - Wildlife Corridors**
This policy states that development that would affect any land that functions as a wildlife corridor, or that provides an important link or stepping stone between habitats will not be permitted. Conditions and planning obligations may be used to protect, enhance or manage to facilitate the movement of flora and fauna where development is permitted.

**Unitary Development Plan EN12 - Important Landscape Features**
This policy states that development that would have a detrimental impact on, or result in the loss of, any important landscape feature will not be permitted unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that the importance of the development plainly outweighs the nature conservation and amenity value of the landscape feature and the design and layout of the development cannot reasonably make provision for the retention of the landscape feature. If the removal of an important existing landscape feature is permitted as part of a development, a replacement of at least equivalent size and quality, or other appropriate compensation, will be required either within the site, or elsewhere within the area.

**Unitary Development Plan EN17 - Pollution Control**
This policy states that in areas where existing levels of pollution exceed local or national standards, planning permission will only be granted where the development incorporates adequate measures to ensure that there is
no unacceptable risk or nuisance to occupiers, and that they are provided with an appropriate and satisfactory level of amenity.

**Unitary Development Plan EN18 - Protection of Water Courses**
This policy states that development will not be permitted where it would have an unacceptable impact on surface or ground water.

**Unitary Development Plan EN19 - Flood Risk and Surface Water**
This policy states that any application for development that it is considered likely to be at risk of flooding or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere will need to be accompanied by a formal flood risk assessment. It should identify mitigation or other measures to be incorporated into the development or undertaking on other land, which are designed to reduce that risk of flooding to an acceptable level.

**Unitary Development Plan EN23 - Environmental Improvement Corridors**
This policy states that development along any of the city’s major road, rail and water corridors will be required to preserve, or make a positive contribution to the corridor’s environment and appearance.

**Unitary Development Plan CH2 - Development Affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings**
This policy states that development will not be granted that would have an unacceptable impact on the setting of any listed building.

**Unitary Development Plan CH5 - Archaeology and Ancient Monuments**
This policy states that planning permission will not be granted for development that would have an unacceptable impact on an ancient monument, site or feature of archaeological importance, or its setting. Planning conditions will be imposed to record and evaluate, excavate and preserve remains of local archaeological value, prior to the commencement of the development.

**Unitary Development Plan CH8 - Local List of Buildings, Structures and Features of Architectural, Archaeological or Historic Interest**
This policy states that the impact of development on any building, structure or feature that is identified on the council’s local list of buildings, structures and features of architectural, archaeological or historic interest will be a material planning consideration.

**Unitary Development Plan DEV5 - Planning Conditions and Obligations**
This policy states that development that would have an adverse impact on any interests of acknowledged importance, or would result in a material increase in the need or demand for infrastructure, services, facilities and/or maintenance, will only be granted planning permission subject to planning conditions or planning obligations that would ensure adequate mitigation measures are put in place.

This Development Plan Document seeks to ensure that proposed non-mineral development within safeguarded areas do not prevent the ability of minerals on the site to be mined in the future.

**Other Material Planning Considerations**

**National Planning Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework

**Local Planning Policy**

**Supplementary Planning Document - Nature Conservation and Biodiversity**
This policy document expands on the policies of the Unitary Development Plan relating to the issues of nature conservation and biodiversity, and seeks to ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of how those policies should be implemented and their desired outcome.

**Supplementary Planning Document - Trees and Development**
The policy document has been prepared to give information to all those involved in the development process about the standard that the Local Planning Authority requires for new development proposals with specific reference to the retention and protection of trees.
Supplementary Planning Document - Design ‘Shaping Salford’
This document reflects the need to design in a way that allows the city to support its population socially and economically, working with and inviting those affected into an inclusive decision making process. Equally, development must contribute to the creation of an environmentally sustainable city supporting the natural environment minimising the effects of, and being more adaptable to, the potential impact of climate change.

Supplementary Planning Document - Sustainable Design and Construction
This policy document expands on policies in Salford’s Unitary Development Plan to provide additional guidance for planners and developers on the integration of sustainable design and construction measures in new and existing developments.

Supplementary Planning Document - Design and Crime
This policy document contains a number policies used to assess and determine planning applications and is intended as a guide in designing out crime.

Planning Guidance - Flood Risk and Development
The overarching aim of the planning guidance is to ensure that new development in areas at risk of flooding in the city, is adequately protected from flooding and that the risks of flooding are not increased elsewhere as a result of new development.

Appraisal

Following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) it is necessary to consider the weight which can be afforded to the policies of the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan (paragraph 215 NPPF 27th March 2012).

In terms of this application it is considered that the relevant policies of the UDP can be afforded due weight for the purposes of decision making as the relevant criteria within the UDP policies applicable to the proposed development are consistent with the policies contained in the NPPF.

The issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of Development
- Landscape Masterplan, Design and Appearance
- Impact on Heritage Assets
- Ecology and Trees
- Highways, Parking and Access
- Flood Risk and Surface Water Management
- Residential Amenity
- Pollution
- Sustainability
- Mineral Safeguarding

Principle of Development

The site is located within the Greater Manchester Green Belt as identified on the City of Salford UDP Proposals Map. Saved UDP Policy EN1 and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set out the planning policy against which planning applications in the Green Belt should be determined. The NPPF attaches great importance to the Green Belt and identifies its fundamental aim as being ‘to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence’ (paragraph 79).

Paragraph 87 of the NPPF advises that ‘as with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances’. Paragraph 88 continues that ‘local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt’ and that ‘very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations’.
In accordance with Saved UDP Policy EN1 and paragraph 89 of the NPPF, the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate development. However, the NPPF identify exceptions to this approach whereby some types of development are considered not inappropriate in the Green Belt. These exceptions are set out below:

- buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or
- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

In addition, in accordance with paragraph 90 of the NPPF, the following forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt.

- mineral extraction;
- engineering operations;
- local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and
- development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order.

The following elements of the RHS Bridgewater development could be considered to fall under the categories of development listed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF that are deemed to be not inappropriate in the Green Belt.

- The restoration of the walled garden and the continued use of this area and surrounding buildings as a garden centre (3rd & 4th exceptions of paragraph 89 and in part 4th exception of paragraph 90).
- The horticultural service yard (1st exception of paragraph 89).
- Footpaths, lakes and other changes to landform (2nd exception of paragraph 90).

There are, however significant elements of the proposal that do not fall under the exceptions and would not maintain the openness of the Green Belt, including the Welcome Building, car parking and access works, the lakeside restaurant, glasshouse and parts of the perimeter fence (noting that a large extent of the fence may be permitted development under Part 2, Class A of the General Permitted Development Order).

Considering the RHS Bridgewater proposals as a whole, the development is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt which, by definition, is harmful to the Green Belt (NPPF paragraph 87). Therefore, in order for the development to be considered acceptable very special circumstances must be demonstrated. In order to come to a decision as to whether very special circumstances exist, it is necessary to understand the level of harm arising such that it can be weighed against other considerations. Whilst it is noted that Salford’s Draft Local Plan proposes the allocation of the site for the RHS Bridgewater Garden, retaining its Green Belt status, at the current time limited weight can be afforded to the plan and therefore this does not negate the need to demonstrate very special circumstances.

The impacts of the proposal have been assessed against the essential characteristics of the Green Belt, their openness and permanence (NPPF paragraph 79), and the purposes of including land in the Green Belt (NPPF paragraph 80).

**Impact on Openness**
The Greater Manchester Green Belt (GM GB) Assessment (2016) describes ‘openness in a Green Belt sense as lack of built development more than visual openness, although the two often go hand in hand. The key distinction is that where vegetation provides visual enclosure this does not reduce Green Belt openness, even though it might in practice mean that development would have less visual impact.’ (paragraph 3.63).

With specific reference to the part of the Green Belt within which the application site is located the GM GB Assessment describes that within the site there is a ‘strong sense of openness because urbanising features are set within a mixed land use of woodland and small lake to the east and farmland to the west’ (GM GB Assessment, Appendix 4.7, parcel SA23).

Viewed from the site’s periphery, there is a strong visual sense of openness, with existing buildings largely hidden by mature trees, even during winter months. Whilst the proposed development would retain large areas of open land, it would introduce a significant level of new development to the site, particularly so in the site’s south western corner. The different elements of the development and their impact on openness are considered in turn below.

i. Restoration of the Walled Garden and continued use of this area and surrounding buildings as a garden centre

As outlined above, these works could be regarded as ‘not inappropriate’ under exceptions in paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF. Nevertheless, it is considered that these works would be unlikely to have any significantly greater impact on the sense of openness than the current situation.

ii. Welcome Building, car parking, access road and horticultural yard

In the south western corner of the site there would be a significant concentration of development, including a new access road along the western boundary, the Welcome Building, car parking and horticultural services yard. Together, these elements would introduce a significant level of new built development and hard standing. In terms of the visual impact, whilst views across the site from Leigh Road are largely obscured, there are open views into this part of the site immediately west of the existing access road.

There are also clear views from Green Belt land to the west and from the raised towpath along the Bridgewater Canal. These elements of the proposal are likely to be prominent from the tow-path and whilst views are in part obscured by existing trees, the coverage, particularly in the winter months, is not consistent. Impacts further to the south beyond the canal are likely to be limited given the raised canal and existing woodland on either side. There may also be some views from the M60 motorway and slip road but these are again likely to be limited.

In terms of mitigating the visual impact, the Welcome Building has been designed to lessen its impact on the landscape being clad in larch and with a green roof, largely single storey (8.4 metres at its highest point) and set within the slope of the site. The buildings within the horticultural yard, some of which reach 6.5 metres in height, have been designed to have an agricultural appearance, and as described above, these buildings are likely to be regarded as ‘not inappropriate’ under paragraph 89 of the NPPF and therefore the impact can be considered in this context.

In terms of the access road and car parking proposals, the illustrative masterplan shows landscaping, including tree planting, along the route and throughout the car park. The applicant’s Landscape and Visual Assessment also describes that this part of the site “will incorporate a large amount of native tree planting and hedgerow planting” and that this would be in keeping with the characteristics of the local landscape and once established would assist in accommodating the proposed buildings and hardstanding in the landscape and limiting their effects on openness.

Overall, it is considered that the cluster of development in the site’s south western corner would have a significant adverse impact on openness, through the introduction of new buildings and hardstanding. Whilst the horticultural services yard contributes to this impact, as described above, the use could be regarded as not being inappropriate development in the Green Belt. These features are likely to be prominent in views across the site, particularly from the canal tow-path and land to the immediate west, but also in views from Leigh Road to the west of the access road.

Whilst proposed tree and hedgerow planting could mitigate the visual impact to some extent from certain positions around the site, in addition to the use of gravel across the car parking area, any such landscaping
would need to be very considerable if it was to obscure views of the access road, car parking and Welcome Building such that the impacts were significantly diminished all year round.

iii. Restaurant, glass house and school of horticulture

A new restaurant building, glass house and school of horticulture are proposed for the north eastern corner of the site, situated within the Middle Wood Site of Biological Importance. Whilst the design of these elements has not yet been provided, in principle, further development would again have an adverse impact on openness within the site. It would seem likely that these elements could be designed so that their visual impact would be limited, with the encircling mature woodland helping to mitigate the impact further.

iv. Perimeter fence

The perimeter of the site would be defined by two types of fencing, ‘estate-style’ fencing on the western and southern boundaries and Paladin-type weldmesh fencing with a dark green polyester powder coated finish on the north and eastern boundaries, with the exception of visually sensitive areas, such as in the vicinity of the listed gates, where ‘estate-style’ fencing would be used. In addition, the curtilage of West Lodge (which is in private ownership) would be defined using a timber boundary fence accompanied by hedge planting. Lockable gates would also be installed at the access road.

On the north and eastern boundaries, the perimeter fence would be set back from adjacent roads so that it blends into the surroundings and on the western boundary the perimeter fence would be accompanied by native species hedge planting, supplemented by tree planting. On the southern boundary the ‘estate style’ fencing would be erected without hedge planting in response to the parkland/meadow character of much of the southern part of the site and to provide a more transparent vista from the canal tow path.

**Conclusion regarding openness**

The proposal would undoubtedly have an adverse impact on the openness of the site due to the introduction of new built development. This would be particularly significant in the south western corner of the site where the proposed car parking would introduce a considerable area of hardstanding. The parkland nature of the proposal would however ensure that a sense of openness would remain over a considerable part of the site.

It is possible that existing woodland and proposed landscaping could mitigate the visual impacts to some extent and from particular viewpoints. However, the proposals for the south western corner of the site are likely to remain a prominent feature in the landscape as compared with the current open aspects.

**Impacts on the purposes of including land within the Green Belt**

The proposed development has been assessed against the five purposes that Green Belt serves as defined within paragraph 80 of the NPPF.

**Purpose 1 - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas**

The GM GB Assessment identifies that the site currently performs strongly against this purpose. It identifies that there is a “strong sense of openness because urbanising features are set within a mixed land use of woodland and small lake to the east and farmland to the west” and that the “parcel plays a strong role in inhibiting ribbon development to the south and east of the A572 and along the road leading to the Garden Centre and Scout Hall”. (GM GB Assessment, Appendix 4.7, parcel SA23)

In terms of the unrestricted sprawl of the urban area it is important to recognise the parkland nature of the proposed development which would retain large areas of open land, and that it relates specifically to the site and its former historic gardens. The proposal therefore relates to a very specific opportunity. Nevertheless, the proposal would bring new urbanising features to the site, significantly so in the site’s south western corner where a mix of buildings and extensive parking areas would bring a significant change to the site’s existing countryside character. It is considered that the specific nature of the proposed development and its self-containment is unlikely to weaken control of unrestricted sprawl on of built up areas.

**Purpose 2 - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**
The GM GB Assessment identifies that the site currently performs strongly against this purpose, providing a "critical gap between the settlements of Boothstown and Ellenbrook to the west and Worsley to the east" (GM GB Assessment, Appendix 4.7, parcel SA23).

The introduction of urbanising features could be regarded as diluting this separation to some degree, however it would appear that a sense of separation between these two settlements would be preserved through the retention of large areas of open land to the site’s southern and northern boundaries, as well as the mature woodland and original boundary wall along much of Leigh Road to the north. Additional native tree planting to further limit views of the built elements of the proposal could further mitigate any negative impacts in this regard, although this should be balanced against the attractive open views currently available.

Purpose 3 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The GM GB Assessment identifies that the site performs strongly against this purpose describing that “there is limited / no sense of encroachment with the parcel being generally free of urbanised built development” and that “it has an intact and rural in character and displays characteristics of the countryside” (GM GB Assessment, Appendix 4.7, parcel SA23). Despite the retention of large areas of open land the scheme would undoubtedly affect the site’s countryside character through the introduction of new buildings, parking areas, entrance road, perimeter fence and a more formalised landscape character.

Similar to the discussion on openness above, whilst the visual impacts of the encroachment could be mitigated to some extent and from certain aspects by existing and proposed landscaping, the proposals for the south west corner would be expected to have a significant impact on the existing character of the area.

Purpose 4 - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

The GM GB assessment describes that “the parcel plays a role in setting the historic settlement of Worsley, but to a limited degree” (GM GB Assessment, Appendix 4.7, parcel SA23). However, provided that the impacts of the development can be managed such that they are not detrimental to the village of Worsley and approaches to it, the enhancement of the historic significance of the site could be considered to expand and enhance the historical context of the area.

Purpose 5 - to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

The proposal is site specific, relating to the former Worsley New Hall site, and is not therefore considered to weaken the focus on the recycling of derelict and other urban land. The economic benefits of the scheme, adding to the tourism offer of the conurbation, could potentially have a positive role in supporting the development of other urban sites.

Conclusions on the impact on the Green Belt

The proposal is inappropriate development within the Green Belt which by its nature is harmful to the Green Belt. The parkland nature of the proposal and the retention of existing mature woodland should preserve a sense of openness across a considerable part of the site. However, it is considered that the introduction of new buildings and car parking would have a significant impact on openness, particularly so given the concentration of development proposed for the south western corner of the site. Based on current tree cover, this element of the scheme would be a prominent feature along the canal tow path, from land to the immediate west and from certain viewpoints along Leigh Road.

Whilst additional landscaping could obscure the visual impacts of development from certain aspects, the impact on openness would still be expected to be significant. Despite this impact, the parkland nature of the proposal, with extensive areas of open land, does however mean that the proposed development could be accommodated on the site with a relatively limited conflict with, and enable the site to continue to perform, a number of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. The continued separation of Worsley and Boothstown is perhaps most significant in this regard.

The case for special circumstances

The RHS have set out a comprehensive case to demonstrate that very special circumstances exist to justify the proposed development within the Green Belt, this focuses on five key benefits of the development which either
individually or in combination are capable of constituting very special circumstances necessary to justify the granting of inappropriate development in the Green Belt. These five benefits are summarised below.

i. Improvements to the local natural and historic environment

The proposed development would return the historic site of the former Worsley New Hall to active use, creating a world class garden and horticultural centre for the pleasure of local residents. The extensive new planting on the site would encourage new habitats to emerge, which would further enhance the existing biodiversity offer on the site. The planting of new trees, hedgerow, flowers and vegetation would considerably improve the character of the surrounding area, creating a highly attractive landscaped environment.

ii. Improving the tourism offer locally and regionally

RHS Garden Bridgewater would build on the existing visitor offer, continuing to broaden the appeal of Salford as a visitor destination and support longer stays through opportunities for linked trips. The Garden would enhance the clustering of existing tourism attractions in Salford and the North West and help to strengthen Salford's position as a local, regional and UK destination.

RHS Garden Bridgewater would be the fifth RHS Garden, with the RHS having a recognised track record in securing visitors and generating economic value for their localities, which is then further invested in the RHS’s work. The forecast annual visitor numbers to RHS Garden Bridgewater are 327,000 by 2024 and 600,000 to 700,000 by 2029.

iii. Benefits of the proposed development to the local and regional economy

It is expected that RHS Garden Bridgewater would generate £13.8m GVA per annum to the local economy by 2029, creating up to 326 direct and indirect jobs. The programme of works is anticipated to support 290 construction jobs, rising to 410 construction jobs across all phases. In addition, evidence from other RHS Gardens shows that approximately 40% of RHS Garden Bridgewater’s goods and services are purchased in the local area, equating to an estimated £350,000 spend per annum.

iv. Enrichment of the RHS’s education agenda and community involvement

RHS Garden Bridgewater would engage at least 180 volunteers in 2024 and 20 trainees and apprentices per year by 2024. A minimum of 160 Salford residents are expected to benefit from employment, training and volunteering activities. The RHS intend to create partnerships with local schools, colleges and youth groups to provide training and horticultural inspiration to young people and create partnerships with local universities to research horticultural and environmental science, social history and the regenerative benefits of gardening. The Garden would support community gardening projects developed with and for local people and organisations, such as Britain in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood. At least 30 community gardening projects would be developed with local people by 2029, extending across the region to reach tens of thousands of people. The proposals for a Community Allotment would encourage cohesion through residents growing their own food and consider their interactions with the environment and improving diets. The proposed School of Horticulture would provide RHS Garden Bridgewater with the facilities needed to deliver education and training.

v. Improving health and well-being

RHS Garden Bridgewater would deliver a high quality environmental asset for Salford and engage the public in the horticultural agenda more widely to generate health and well-being benefits across a wider area. The Garden would encourage local people to "green" their own environments, and thereby increase the quality of overall green space across the City. The RHS would manage and maintain the garden and woodland to an exceptionally high standard for generations to come.

Conclusion on the case for special circumstances

The City Council considers the proposed development to be of strategic significance not only to Salford but to the North West of England. The development would be only the fifth RHS national garden in the country and would be the largest in the North of England (second largest to Wisley in the country) and is projected to be one of the key visitor destinations in the North West by 2029. On this basis, and in light of the benefits outlined by
the applicant, it is considered that the case for very special circumstances to justify granting planning permission for inappropriate development in the Green Belt has been made.

**Landscape Masterplan, Design and Appearance**

Saved UDP Policy DES1 states that development will be required to respond to its physical context, respect the positive character of the local area in which it is situated, and contribute towards local identity and distinctiveness. The policy advises that in assessing the extent to which any development complies with this policy, regard will be had to a number of factors, including, the impact on, and relationship to existing landscape and any notable landscape or environmental feature or species; the impact on, and quality of, views and vistas; the scale of the proposed development in relationship to its surroundings and the quality and durability of proposed materials and their appropriateness to both the location and the type of development.

This policy states that planning permission will only be granted for alterations or extensions to existing buildings that respect the general scale, character, rhythm, proportions, details and materials of the original structure and complement the general character of the surrounding area.

In addition, Saved UDP Policy DES9 seeks to ensure that landscaping within proposed developments is of high quality in terms of design and materials and reflects and enhances the character of the area and the design of the development.

The Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) ‘Shaping Salford’ seeks to ensure that new development within the City is both distinctive and “fits in”. The SPD advises that design of new development should honor Salford’s past and reflect its ambitions for the future.

The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and stresses that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people (paragraph 56).

The RHS has developed a masterplan for the site which envisages how the Garden would develop over the longer term. This is based upon a series of landscape and horticultural zones as described below

1. **Boundary Planting**
   
   The area of woodland that encloses the site on the north side. This framework of trees is important to the setting the RHS Bridgewater and would be maintained and managed in accordance with good silvicultural practice

2. **Entrance Road**
   
   The existing entrance road would be realigned from the junction on Leigh Road to form a sweeping driveway skirting the western and southern sides of the garden centre site. The road would be aligned to retain as much of the existing beech hedge as possible, and avoid impact on existing woodland. The landscape areas to either side of the road would be planted as a verge with standard trees, incorporating native species hedge planting and a swale to manage surface water runoff.

3. **The Car Park & Horticultural Services Yard**
   
   The car park would be located in the area of low-lying ground to the south of the garden centre site and would be screened by a wide swathe of perimeter planting. The car park would be set out in bays aligned north to south, each separated by a landscape strip which would incorporate swales for drainage with native planting. The car park carriageway and coach parking bays would be surfaced with bitmac, the car parking bays would will be finished in a porous loose-laid gravel over geo-grid.

   The Horticultural Services Yard would provide space for glasshouses, poly tunnels and shade tunnels, cold frames, plant and workshop storage sheds. This is described as the ‘working heart’ of the garden where new planting arrives or is grown before going into the main gardens. The buildings within the Yard would be finished in timber cladding with a lower level brick plinth at the base and a simple metal roof system. The Yard would be enclosed by a perimeter fence.

4. **The Welcome Building and lake**
The Welcome Building would be located to the south east of the garden centre site, offering immediate views of the garden to the north and a newly-formed lake to the east. From this location, the building would act as an orientation space, from where visitors would access the gardens.

The concept for the Welcome Building is to provide a number of visitor functions within one interconnected, flexible and open-plan building, whilst maintaining extensive views into the surrounding landscape. The building has been designed to be a modest intervention in the landscape, with a low lying, single storey horizontal form. The main roof would comprise a greenroof system supported by a series of structural ‘trees’ that would run the length of the building, formed from concrete columns and engineered timber flitch branches. These ‘trees’ would also extend outside the building envelope. The elevations of the building would comprise a continuous line of glazed curtain walling interrupted by a number of larch clad boxes that would house facilities such as a kitchen, WC’s, offices and a learning studio. A glazed slot within the roof would run the length of the building and bring natural light into the centre of the space. Solar shading would be provided to glazed areas with larch timber louvred screens.

The interior of the building would provide generously proportioned spaces that benefit from high levels of natural daylight. The building has been designed predominantly as one open space, the visitor flow between the building’s various uses and functions. From the main entrance space where visitors could purchase tickets and access WC facilities, the visitor could flow along the axis of the building north through to the gardens and Garden Centre. Alternatively the visitor could navigate south through the gift shop, internal plant sales, café, greenhouse and eventually outside to external plant sales.

The Welcome Building would also include a learning studio comprising up to two classrooms designed for visiting school groups. This space would be divided by a moveable partition, allowing flexibility, and would overlook an external play garden for outdoor activities.

5. The Meadow

Beyond the lake to the east is the meadow. The long term objective for this area is that it would be gradually changed into a species diverse meadow with scattered clumps of trees. A new access track would be built from the southern edge of the new lake to the far south eastern corner of the meadow where a composting area would be located. This would be screened by new native planting that would appear to be part of the existing boundary planting of the canal embankment.

6. The Garden Centre Site

The garden centre site comprises a sequence of walled spaces from an outer garden (slip garden) enclosed by a low wall on the outside, through an intermediate garden which has a high wall on three sides, to an inner space which has high walls all around. The intention is that the garden experience becomes gradually more intense and also more colourful as you approach the centre, with the entire area of garden laid out for cultivation. This area would be a garden centre, from the outset which would combine horticultural display with retail through the area,

The stables buildings would be refurbished and converted to provide a new garden centre café. A glass link is proposed in-between the two stables buildings to create a café seating space. The garden spaces to the east of the stables would be restored to create a productive garden. Three greenhouses would be replaced, and existing access routes and footpaths repaved. Low hedges would be planted to provide definition and enclosure.

The Potting Sheds would be refurbished and converted to house a number of retail units for the sale of plants and related goods. The proposed works also include a new glazed infill entrance through the Potting Sheds to create a new entrance to the walled garden

The Curator’s Garden - this garden is located at the western side of the site, in the area surrounding the Gardeners Cottage. This garden would be developed as a “Curator’s Garden” with planting beds that explore innovation in planting and test locally sourced specimens and varieties; initially, the garden would include a series of beds of annual and biennial wildflower species.

7. Middle Wood
Middle Wood occupies a central position in the site. It is dominated by birch, sycamore and oak with some ash, chestnut, yew and occasional ornamental specimens. The understorey is dominated by Rhododendron ponticum but there are also some Victorian rhododendron hybrids. It is envisaged that a programme of thinning and rhododendron removal would be undertaken and a number of key vistas through the wood would be established. In the initial phase of works the path network would be limited to the restoration of the historic network of paths that already exists on site. There are two buildings envisaged in the masterplan for this area which form part of the outline element of this application – a lakeside restaurant and a learning centre.

8. The Arboretum

It is proposed that the field in the north-west corner of the site would be developed as an arboretum. This field is currently enclosed on its north-west side by a hedge and on the west side by a very mature beech hedge along the existing access road. Both these hedges would be removed as a result of the proposed access road works. Further east along Leigh Road there is a belt of mature trees which would be retained. Elsewhere in the field the proposal is gradually to build up a collection of trees suited to the environment of the north-west. The edges of Middlewood would be thinned and new trees introduced to break down the hard edge between the wood and the field.

9. The Old Lake

The lake is approximately half its original extent and the banks are overgrown with trees. It is envisaged that restoration of the lake would be carried out in the first phase of the development. This would involve dredging of silt, removal of trees growing out of the banks and improvement of the lake edge condition. Research is currently being undertaken as to the feasibility of raising the water level to something closer to its original level. Chemical analysis indicates that the silt to be extracted has a low fertility making it an ideal material to spread on the existing meadow. This enables the meadow to be sown with wild flowers which would be much more successfully established in areas of lower fertility.

10. The Formal Garden and Site of Worsley New Hall

At present the terraces are overgrown with trees and scrub, though the central area has recently been cleared. In the first phase it is envisaged that the landform of the terraces would be restored to a mown grass. The full development of the formal garden and the site of the Hall would come forward in subsequent phases of development. The RHS’s long term objective is to restore the terraces as a display garden that reflects the scale and impact of the original scheme and it is also possible that the terraces may be used as a setting for events and shows. There is also a long-term ambition to build a large glasshouse and a horticultural school on the site of the Hall.

11. The Eastern Pleasure Ground

The Eastern Pleasure Ground comprises the area between the formal garden and the motorway slip road to the east. It includes several fine, mature trees and the remnants of a formal lime avenue which would be retained. There are significant numbers of larch which would be thinned to create a more open woodland canopy. The area of woodland would be maintained as an important screen of the formal garden from the motorway slip road.

Other Works

In addition to the works outlined above, footpaths and access tracks would be installed in Phase 1. The footpath network would link the Garden Centre Site with the Welcome Building, the Horticultural Yard in the west of the site with the Garden Centre Site to the north, and the meadow and compost areas to the east of site. The footpaths and access tracks would be surfaced in a variety of materials including bonded gravel, bound gravel, exposed aggregate concrete and bitmac.

Electricity and Gas would be brought to the site via two small buildings to be located at the north of the site, accessible off the access road. These buildings would be integrated into the surroundings through earthmounding, screen planting and hedges, using native plant species.
The RHS have committed to providing new buildings and structures on the site of exceptional design quality. This is reflected in the design of the Welcome Building and the sensitively designed alterations proposed to the existing buildings. It is also considered that the landscape masterplan demonstrates exceptional design quality. The site is currently overgrown and the proposed development would bring significant improvements to the environmental quality of the site. Whilst the design details for the later phases of the development are not known at this stage, the details submitted for Phase 1 provide the City Council with confidence that the quality of the first phase will be reflective of what would be proposed in future reserved matters application(s). It is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with Saved UDP Policies DES1, DES8, DES9, the Design Supplementary Planning Document and the NPPF in respect of its design and landscape quality.

**Design and Crime**

The applicant has submitted a crime impact assessment undertaken by Greater Manchester Police to assess the development in respect of its potential impact on crime and anti-social behaviour. The assessment advises that the development would be a significant attraction for the region, drawing large numbers of visitors. It is considered to be a development that would not generate significant levels of crime. Clearly, with a development of this nature, there needs to be a balance between creating a secure site without detracting from the ambience of the place. In particular, the assessment highlights the following features that would make a positive contribution to the prevention of crime and fear of crime, as follows:

- The buildings (existing and proposed) are largely grouped, in appropriate locations, adjacent to the main car park and around the walled garden. Such grouping facilitates supervision, by both staff and visitors, of the spaces around the buildings themselves as well as the car park and many of the pathways within the site.
- Residential accommodation for the ‘gardener’ is provided on the site, which would ensure that there is some supervision of the site at all times.
- Car parking is provided on the site.
- There would be only one vehicle and pedestrian route into the site, which would focus movement to and from the site. The entrance would be secured with gates.
- A perimeter fence is proposed for the site which, along with the level change and field drains around the Bridgewater Canal, would provide a reasonable degree of security to the boundaries.
- There would be a reasonable level of staffing required to manage entry to the site, to maintain the gardens and attend to customers in the shop and cafés. Uniformed staff would be conspicuous and are likely to challenge inappropriate behaviour by visitors, whilst also their visibility would deter the actions of those who might offend.

The assessment also identifies some points for future consideration, as follows:

- Installation of an arm vehicle barrier to prevent access onto the access road at the mouth of the junction of Leigh Road or relocate the gates to the junction to prevent access when the garden is closed.
- Advise against a pedestrian access to the development from the Bridgewater Canal towpath.
- Cycle parking should be provided in front of the Welcome Building. Cyclists should be encouraged to lock both wheels and the crossbar to a stand rather than just the crossbar and, therefore, a design of cycle stand that enables this method of locking is recommended
- Low intensity lighting should be used to illuminate the main buildings, the car park and the vehicle route through the site.

With regard to the first point, the development includes the provision of gates part way down the access road to prevent access to the site outside of opening hours. This is considered sufficient to prevent unauthorised access and would allow any vehicle accidentally turning into the site from the junction on Leigh Road space to turn around to exit the site without hindering traffic on Leigh Road.

With regard to the second point, discussions are on-going about the provision of a pedestrian/cycle access from the Bridgewater Canal towpath. This is seen as a desirable access to encourage walking and cycling to the site. The safety of pedestrians and cyclists would be considered in the design of any access from the Canal towpath.

With regard to the third and fourth points, cycle parking and lighting would be provided for the development. Conditions are recommended to require the provision of the cycle parking prior to the opening of the Welcome Building and details of a lighting scheme to be provided as part of the landscape masterplan.
Other measures identified relating to traffic calming, waymarking in the car park and security specifications for the buildings, including the installation of CCTV are considered to be technical details beyond the remit of planning. It is recommended that an informative be attached to the planning permission, if granted, to draw the applicant's attention to these points.

Impact on Heritage Assets

As identified in the site description above, the site is included on the City Council's local list of heritage assets. It also includes a number of historic and archaeological features that formed part of the Worsley New Hall estate including; the site and remains of the former New Hall, a walled garden, stables and boiler house, grotto, lake and a concrete war bunker. The site also includes four Grade II Listed buildings/structures - the Gardener's Cottage, the Bothy, the Ice House and the entrance gates to the former Worsley New Hall.

Listed and Locally Listed Assets

The Garden Cottage was built in 1834 for the head gardener of Worsley Hall and is located on the west side of the walled garden. It is of a Gothic Revival style in rock-faced stone with a slate roof and comprises two storeys, with a three-storey octagonal tower on the front elevation.

The Bothy, situated to the north of the walled garden, is a single-storey building built in the 1870s with a cellar beneath it that housed the boiler to heat the hot houses and greenhouses. As the boiler needed to be fuelled around the clock the Bothy also provided accommodation for young unmarried gardeners.

The Ice House was built at the same time as Worsley New Hall, around 1840. This is a “cup and dome” style, characterised by an entrance tunnel and a circular ice chamber with a dome and steep sloping sides leading down to a drain. It comprises a brick barrel-vaulted subterranean structure with a hammer dressed stone arranged in a segmental section with a doorway within it. Its original siting, to the west of the now demolished New Hall was key to its function as it needed to be close to the lake which provided a supply of winter ice but also sufficiently close to the Hall to easily access the store.

The entrance gates date from around 1850 and comprise double wrought and cast iron carriage gates flanked by smaller pedestrian gates with ornate scrollwork at the top and bottom. The gates were originally positioned at the entrance to the New Hall on Leigh Road, opposite the Church of St Mark, however, they were later moved some 100m further west along Leigh Road to form a new east entrance to the property.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting “special regard” will be given to the “desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”. The implication of the choice wording “special regard” is that these factors should be given additional weight in decision making and not simply the same weight as any other material consideration.

One of the core planning principles of the NPPF is to “conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance”. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. It then continues to say that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and that as heritage assets are irreplaceable any harm or loss “should require clear and convincing justification’.

Paragraph 133 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that substantial harm or loss is outweighed by substantial public benefits. Paragraph 134 states that where a proposal leads to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The significance of a heritage asset relates to the value of the asset because of its heritage interest which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. However, significance derives not only from an asset's physical presence but also from its setting.
In the annex to the NPPF the setting of a heritage asset is described as “the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral”.

Overall the proposed development would see a range of environmental and horticultural improvement works across the whole site including vegetation clearance, replanting (including tree screening and ornamental planting), and a woodland management strategy, all of which would enhance the character of the landscape. The proposals would result in a return of the majority of the site to its original garden function and as such the principle of the proposal is very much welcomed in terms of the impact upon the associated heritage assets on site as these works can only serve to improve the setting of these assets. Certainly, these works would complement and be beneficial to the locally listed Worsley Park.

With regards to the Gardener’s Cottage, there are currently a range of modern 20th century buildings to the north east of the gardener’s cottage that house the retail element of the garden centre. As part of the proposed development these would be demolished and works completed to restore the walled garden. The demolition of these modern buildings with the renovation works to the walled garden area and the clearance of vegetation would immediately and significantly improve the setting to the Gardener’s Cottage. It would also enable the relationship between the cottage and the walled garden to be better understood thus increasing the significance of the listed cottage.

With regard to the works of repair and refurbishment proposed to the heritage assets on the site, an indication of intended works has been given within the application submission but very few specific details have been provided. The principle of the improvement works are welcomed, however, as the nature of these works are finalised, it may be that an application for listed building consent will be required for the works. It is recommended that an informative be attached to the planning permission, if granted, to advise the applicant of their obligations in respect of the listed buildings on the site.

As described in the description of the proposals above, the site would be enclosed by ‘estate-style’ and paladin fencing. In the vicinity of the listed entrance gates, ‘estate-style’ fencing is proposed which is considered to be appropriate in terms of its appearance. The relationship of the proposed fencing to the gates and its impact upon the setting of the gates is an important consideration. The applicant has advised that the fencing would be set well away from the listed gates and an indicative plan has been submitted, however no specific details. Therefore, it is recommended that a condition be attached to the planning permission, if granted, to require full details of the location and design details of the boundary fencing to be submitted to the City Council for approval.

In conclusion, the proposal would bring back to life the historic grounds at Worsley New Hall and provide a new RHS fifth garden which would be of benefit to the City and residents alike. The proposal would also safeguard some of the City’s heritage assets which is very much welcomed. It is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with the relevant sections of the NPPF outlined above and Saved UDP Policies CH2 and CH8 which seek to ensure that proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on the setting of any listed building.

Archaeology

In accordance with NPPF paragraph 128, the application is supported by an archaeological desk based assessment. The report draws together a range of published and unpublished documentary sources, index information, imagery and cartography in providing the assessment of the site’s archaeological potential. In this, the report benefits from a series of reports by CFAA (now Salford Archaeology) on archaeological investigations undertaken in recent years.

The Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) has reviewed the information submitted in respect of archaeology. GMAAS advise that in terms of assessing the impact of the proposals upon the archaeological potential and significance of the assets the report offers a clear view regarding the likely impact upon the buildings of the existing walled garden. However, much of what is proposed has only been submitted in outline. Where detailed proposals are yet to be worked-up, such as the creation of gardens, landscapes, new watercourses, drainage, access roads, a learning centre, an events building, and a lakeside café the impact is more difficult to assess. However, GMAAS advise that the report is acceptable and meets the aims for such an assessment set-out in the NPPF paragraph 128.
The report recognises that there is a potential for Prehistoric archaeology to exist below ground in the south and west of the study site along with a low potential for Roman archaeology in the north. In addition the report identifies a high/moderate potential for sub-surface remains to survive associated with ancillary buildings near the New Hall, including the stables and the pump house. The report recommends that further archaeological investigations are undertaken in the areas of undeveloped pasture in the north-west, west and south of the study site along with further investigation of the sub-surface remains of the Hall's ancillary buildings.

The report has not offered any assessment or recommendations regarding the specifics of the garden archaeology. It is assumed that as the formal and kitchen gardens were only established in the mid-nineteenth century the detail of their layout and content may not be held to be of particular significance. The report does acknowledge that the proposals would bring the kitchen garden back into a related use, and that the proposals would enhance the heritage significance and sustainability of the gardens and buildings.

GMAAS accepts the report’s recommendations and suggests that any further investigation could be undertaken as a condition of the planning consent, if granted. GMAAS also suggest that, in view of the outline character of much of the proposal, that any Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by an archaeological contractor should include sufficient flexibility to accommodate archaeological investigations where a potential below ground impact is identified from future detailed proposals.

In light of the assessment and comments made by GMAAS, it is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact upon the archaeological potential of the site and as such the application complies with Saved UDP Policy CH5.

Ecology and Trees

The applicant has submitted an Ecological Assessment Report, including an Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey, a National Vegetation Classification Survey, a Bat Assessment, Badger Survey and Breeding Bird Survey. The report identifies that one locally designated Site of Biological Importance (SBI) lies wholly within the application site boundary; this is Middle Wood which is a Grade B SBI designated on the basis of the habitat (mature plantation woodland) and the breeding bird assemblage it supports. There are also a number of SBI’s located within one kilometer of the site and a designated local nature reserve within 600 metres of the site (Worsley Woods).

Saved UDP Policy EN8 seeks to ensure that development does not have a detrimental impact on the nature conservation value of sites of biological importance. This policy is further supplemented by the City Council's Nature Conservation and Biodiversity SPD.

Impact on the Middle Wood Site of Biological Interest (SBI)

The proposed development would result in the removal of trees within Middle Wood and the provision of public access into the SBI. The SBI comprises mature plantation woodland with a lake and areas of grassland and supports populations of birds. The woodland includes sycamore, oak, birch, lime, and beech. There are also occasional horse chestnut, rowan and ash with the understorey being characterised by rhododendron. Areas are inter-planted with larch to the east of the site. Hawthorn and elder occur frequently with occasional holly and hazel.

The woodland ground flora is sparse in places. Creeping soft-grass is dominant in places with common bent and wavy hair-grass. Nettle is locally abundant with frequent bramble and occasional remote sedge, yellow pimpernel, hedge garlic, red campion, germander speedwell, Dryopterid ferns (male & broad buckler) and tufted hair-grass.

Opposite leaved golden saxifrage occurs rarely in damp areas. Japanese knotweed is invading and is locally frequent in some areas, particularly round the entrance to the scout camp. Areas of grassland occur to the north of the lake. These support abundant Yorkshire fog with sweet vernal grass, false oat grass and greater birdsfoot trefoil. Creeping thistle, rosebay willowherb, bramble and dock are also present. Clearings to the western end of the site are grass with mown Yorkshire fog. These formed camping areas for the former Scout camp.

The lake supports fringing reed sweet-grass, yellow flag, sweet flag, yellow & white water lily and bulrush. Marsh ragwort and lady fern occur as marginal vegetation or in the stone work round the lake. Common reed
forms a small reed swamp within the associated willow carr. The lake is now shallow and is silted-up, succeeding in places to marsh/swamp.

The illustrative masterplan for the site indicates that there would be some potentially harmful impacts on the SBI arising from the development, including tree thinning and opening up the woodland to large numbers of visitors. Mitigating this harm is the potential of the development to enhance the biodiversity value of the wider site through direct intervention (e.g. creation of new water bodies, improving existing water bodies, introduction of a much more diverse flora) and through more indirect measures (e.g. improvements to education and access to nature). It is also noted that the development is very large and would be phased over a number of years. The applicant has advised that tree removal within Middle Wood would be phased to allow removal of low value trees and planting of new specimens to be undertaken without losing the woodland nature of the site. This would also help to mitigate any harmful ecological impacts. The woodland would also benefit from rhododendron thinning and removal of other invasive species.

The provision of the new site access will cause the loss of sections of a beech hedge. To compensate for this loss replacement beech hedgerow would be incorporated into the landscaping of the new access and additional hedgerow planting along the southwest boundary of the site would comprise a native species rich mix to maximise biodiversity value.

The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) has reviewed the report submitted by the applicant and has advised that overall the impact of the proposed development on the SBI are viewed as potentially positive for wildlife, providing sufficient precautions are taken during the development of the site to protect existing wildlife interests. GMEU recommend that:

- large, mature and veteran trees within the established woodland are retained wherever possible and suitably protected during the course of any development works.
- new tree and shrub planting are sought as part of any detailed landscape proposals for the wider site that may be submitted as compensation for tree losses.
- Further surveys of trees for their potential to support bats will need to be carried out as detailed proposals for selected tree removals come forward. Any trees identified as having bat roosting potential should be retained if at all possible.
- Landscaping plans should include proposals for retaining existing areas of diverse woodland ground flora and for enhancing the diversity of woodland ground flora by selected introductions. In particular, native bluebells are found throughout the woodland and this plant should be retained and protected wherever possible.
- Any dredging or de-silting of the lake should be undertaken in a manner sympathetic to aquatic wildlife (e.g. at an appropriate time of year and in a phased and properly supervised manner).

Impact on Protected Species

i. **Bats**

The applicant’s bat assessment has identified five active bat roosts on the site and three inactive roosts. However, for the active bat roosts, activity was found to be very low and no hibernation or maternity roosting identified. The proposed development would include some demolition and refurbishment works and therefore some roosts would be affected, either through roost loss of modification. On this basis the applicant proposes a bat mitigation approach based on ensuring a variety of roosting habitats are available throughout the phased development and seeks to retain at least some bat roosting features in all retained and refurbshed buildings where possible. The following mitigation measures are proposed:

- Works must be completed outside the peak season for bats (May - August).
- Replacement roosting opportunities to be provided prior to the start of works to ensure continuity of roost sites prior to the next active bat season.
- Prior to demolition or refurbishment works of any buildings with confirmed roosts, a toolbox talk would be provided by a suitably qualified ecologist to contractors.
- Temporary works such as refurbishments would ensure that bat roosting features are incorporated into the completed structure and where possible these would replicate the types of features present prior to works.
- If works to other properties with inactive roosts are undertaken between May and August, they must proceed under a Method Statement.
If works have not proceeded by May 2018, repeat nocturnal survey are likely be required to determine current roost status for any bat mitigation licence.

All UK species of bat and their roosts are protected under UK and European legislation and are a material consideration when determining planning applications. Bat roosts have been found on the site and these would be affected by the development proposals. Therefore, under the terms of the Habitats Directive and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), a licence may be required from Natural England to derogate the terms of this legislation before any work can commence that may disturb bats. Before a licence can be granted the following three tests must be satisfied:

i. That the development is “in the interest of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequence of primary importance for the environment”;

ii. That there is “no satisfactory alternative”;

iii. That the derogation is “not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”.

In considering planning applications that may affect European Protected Species, Local Planning Authorities are bound by Regulation 9(1) and 9(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 to have regard to the Habitats Directive when exercising their function. Government Circular 05/06 gives guidance to local authorities on how these issues should be considered. All three tests must be satisfied before planning permission is granted on a site. During the licence application process Natural England will ask the Local Planning Authority for evidence that the above three tests were properly considered during the determination of the planning application.

With regard to the first test, it is considered that the proposed development is of over-riding public interest as it would have clear social and economic benefits for Salford and the wider Greater Manchester area. Bringing the site back in to more active management would also deliver ecological and environmental benefits to the site. With regard to the second test, the proposals have been carefully considered and any loss of bat roosts is only proposed where necessary. Therefore, it is considered that the first and second tests have been satisfied.

With regard to the third test, GMEU have reviewed the application and note that roosting activity has been single or very low numbers of more common bat species. Mitigation for impact on bats has been put forward in section 4.23 of the Ecological Assessment Report submitted in support of the application. GMEU have advised that the measures described are acceptable and that providing the measures described are implemented then the third test can be satisfied and the conservation status of bats can be maintained. GMEU recommend that if demolition/conversion works of the buildings and structures supporting bat roosts have not commenced within one year of the date of the last bat surveys (which were undertaken in September 2016) then updated surveys for bats will need to be conducted. The updated survey information should be used to update the mitigation measures for bats.

Certain trees have also been identified that have at least some bat roosting potential, although it is unclear at this stage which trees will be removed as part of the scheme. Further surveys of trees for their potential to support bats should be undertaken as detailed proposals for tree removals come forward. Any trees identified as having bat roosting potential should be retained.

ii. Badgers

The applicant’s ecological assessment identified evidence of low level use of the site by badgers. Although currently it would appear that badger setts would not be directly harmed by the scheme, there are badger setts nearby and badgers are mobile in their habits. Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

GMEU have recommended that, given the long time-scales involved in implementing this project, the site be re-surveyed for the possible presence of badgers either at annual intervals or before the commencement of each phase of development, whichever is the sooner. If badgers are found to be present by survey and are considered likely to be harmed by the scheme then a Method Statement must be prepared giving details of measures to be taken to avoid any possible harm to badgers. Once agreed, this Method Statement must be
implemented in full. It should be noted that the implementation of a Method Statement may require a separate license to be obtained from Natural England.

iii. Nesting Birds

Habitats within the development site provide suitable nesting habitat for a range of bird species in the area, in particular, the woodland within the site contains a large number of breeding common birds. The applicant anticipates that in the long term the positive management of the woodland and the creation of a wider range of habitats and increased variety of planting would have a positive effect on the bird assemblage of the site. As a precaution, during early construction phases a variety of bird boxes would be installed on trees and buildings to provide additional nesting habitats while new habitats establish.

All nesting birds their eggs and young are protected under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Therefore it is recommended that all vegetation clearance and tree removal should be undertaken outside of bird breeding season. If this is not possible, the areas to be cleared should first be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist. GMEU have advised that they support the proposals for enhancing the potential for nesting birds on the site by erecting a range of suitable bird nesting opportunities across the site, including on retained and new buildings and structures.

iv. Biodiversity Management Strategy

The RHS has submitted a Draft Biodiversity Management Strategy (BMS) which includes

- best practice construction working methods
- habitat creation proposals
- legally required mitigation actions
- requirement for control of invasive species
- strategies for achieving biodiversity gain in newly created habitats
- strategies for managing existing habitats for wildlife
- identification of further surveys and actions that may be required as a result of the ongoing works to the site
- identification of any monitoring or reporting requirements

GMEU advise that they welcome the preparation and submission with the application of an overarching ‘Biodiversity Management Strategy’. This Strategy, and any updates to the Strategy that may be necessary as detailed proposals for the scheme come forward, should be required to be implemented by a Condition placed on any permission granted to the scheme.

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development would lead to an increase in local, and City-wide, biodiversity interest. The development therefore complies with Saved UDP Policy EN8 and the City Council’s Nature Conservation and Biodiversity SPD.

Trees

The RHS have advised that the first and most important policy that the development will uphold in respect of the trees on the site is to retain as many old, historic or veteran trees as possible within the wider landscape. This would involve managing them appropriately and working around them as needed. It would be necessary to remove a significant number of trees from the site however, there is likely be an equally significant amount of tree planting and improved tree management and ultimately greater diversity in terms of species and age range across the entire site over time.

The RHS currently manages a large stock of trees at all four of its gardens. An arborist would be appointed as part of the initial horticultural team at RHS Bridgewater to provide the necessary professional skills to manage the tree stock in an appropriate way and monitor works undertaken. It is envisaged that much of the woodland management would require on site decision making and this would allow the appropriate level of planning in advance and during actual works.

The RHS has submitted an Arboricultural Report in accordance with A British Standard (BS) 5837 and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) in support of the application. The AIA breaks the site down into 17 distinct areas.
Phase 1 of the development, would see the clearing of the majority of trees and vegetation from the walled garden area. The majority of these trees are either self-seeded birch and willow whips that have taken over since the regular maintenance at the site stopped, or old nursery stock that has become overgrown and very densely planted. There is also a row of large Leylandii to be removed and various other trees. Most of the trees to be removed are of very low quality and offer very little in terms of long term amenity to the area. The loss of these trees would be mitigated by new tree planting, which would increase the overall canopy cover on the western part of the site as well as the overall quality of the trees. The species would be chosen from the species that grow along the Bridgewater Canal. This would offer continuity and help to blend the new development into the surrounding landscape.

Phase 1 would also require arboricultural works in the Middle Wood area particularly the lower areas. The first aim would be to address any tree safety issues and remove poor quality stock. Selected removals would also take place to open up the landscape along existing historical paths and to create new landscape vistas to enhance the site. The opportunity to enhance some of the existing woodland glades provides opportunity to improve both the garden experience and to create new planting opportunities for a future generation of trees. The ultimate aim is to actively manage these areas to create a more species and age diverse tree collection through retaining the best trees, removals (particularly of sycamore which currently limits diversity) and planting a new generation of trees.

The latter phases of the development would undergo various amounts of change using a number of different strategies to ensure that high quality trees of significance would remain and become more prominent within their settings.

Whilst there would be a significant number of trees removed from the site, there would likely be an equally significant if not greater amount of tree planting and tree improvement across the entire site. It is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with UDP Policy EN12 which seeks to ensure that development does not have a detrimental impact on important landscape features.

Highways, Parking and Access

The site is well connected to the surrounding highway network situated off Leigh Road offering a direct connection to Junction 13 of the M60, providing links to local neighbourhoods such as Boothstown, the wider Greater Manchester area (M60 orbital network), Yorkshire and Lancashire to the north (M62/M61), Manchester City Centre to the east (M602), Warrington and Merseyside to the west (M62) and Cheshire to the south (M60/M6).

Leigh Road benefits from regular bus services to Leigh and Wigan to the west and The Trafford Centre and Manchester City Centre to the east. From Manchester City Centre, connections can be made by bus and tram to the wider Greater Manchester conurbation as well as local and national rail services. Walkden, Moorside and Patricroft also offer local rail connections to locations across the North West region including Liverpool, Southport, Blackburn, Wigan and Kirkby.

Highways Impact

It is acknowledged that there are already issues of congestion at peak times in the area local to the application site and that this is a key concern for residents. It is not appropriate for this application to seek to address the issues that already exist. This is a matter most appropriately addressed at a wider more strategic level. It is, however, important to consider any impacts that the proposed development could have on local highway conditions, and consider any mitigation measures that may be required.

The applicant has advised that for the other RHS Gardens across the country, peak activity occurs around lunchtime with very little generation of traffic around the morning and evening peak periods. Opening hours for the other RHS Gardens on a weekday is generally 10:00 to 16:30 in the winter months and 10:00 to 18:00 hours in the spring, summer months and early autumn. At the weekends and on bank holidays and event days the Gardens tend to open an hour earlier at 09:00. These are the opening hours also proposed for RHS Garden Bridgewater. In addition, whilst visitor behaviour cannot necessarily be predicted, it is common sense to consider that visitors to the Garden, especially if they are local to the area, are likely to avoid travelling to/from the Garden in the peak traffic hours, instead preferring not to get caught in commuter traffic.
A distinction should also be made between the proposals for RHS Garden Bridgewater being a leisure based development which is likely to take time to develop a visitor base and generate significant levels of traffic, and other forms of development such as employment or residential which are likely to generate a more instant increase in traffic. It is also noted that RHS Garden Bridgwater, as a leisure based development, would have different visitors arrival and departure times when compared to residential or office development that tend to generate more activity during the peak hours.

A distinction should be made between the proposals for RHS Garden Bridgewater being a leisure based development which is likely to take time to develop a visitor base and other forms of development such as employment or residential which are likely to generate a more instant increase in traffic. Furthermore, as leisure based development the Garden would have different visitor arrival and departure times when compared to residential or office developments that tend to generate more activity during the peak hours. Evidence from the RHS Garden Wisley shows that the pattern of arrivals and departures to the Garden is gradual over the day and it is expected that this would also be the case for RHS Garden Bridgwater.

The applicant has submitted a Transport Assessment that has been considered by the City Council’s Highways Consultants, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and Highways England. In assessing the traffic implications of the proposed development, the applicant’s transport consultants have used data from RHS Wisley, which is the RHS’s busiest Garden site and comparable to the proposals for RHS Garden Bridgewater, to simulate a full arrival and departure profile for RHS Garden Bridgewater.

In relation to the impacts on the Junction 13 roundabouts, the testing of the various scenarios found that traffic generated by the proposed development would be minimal during the peak periods and the small amount of traffic generated at these times is unlikely to be discernible given the already congested nature of these roundabouts.

An improvement scheme has been identified in order to mitigate the effects of any additional traffic during the highest departure times, which would provide a widened flared approach for the Leigh Road arm of Junction 13 of the M60. This improvement would also have benefits at other times of the day, including the morning peak when traffic leaving the garden would be low. It is also proposed to improve pedestrian crossing facilities around the northern parts of the two roundabouts of Junction 13 as the current crossing provision is poor.

The RHS have advised that they intend to hold events at RHS Garden Bridgewater, however the exact nature of these events is yet to be established. Events may generate a significant amount of traffic and parking demands which needs to be carefully managed. The RHS has provided information about the type of events that they hold at their other Gardens and the form of traffic and parking management measures they put in place. It is recommended that a condition be attached to the planning permission, if granted, to require the submission of an Event Management Plan for the Garden prior to any events taking place.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the function of the highway network in accordance with UDP Policy A8.

Site Access

The site is currently accessed via a minor 't' style priority junction located in the north west corner of the site providing access via a single lane tarmac road. The RHS aim to attract in the region of 700,000 visitors to the garden, therefore highway works are proposed to improve the Leigh Road junction to improve safety for all road users and visitors.

The improved Leigh Road junction would incorporate a widening of the road with the addition of a right turn lane and a left turn lane to enter the site. Traffic signals would also be provided to allow safe access, egress and pedestrian crossing. Access to driveways along Leigh Road would be maintained by incorporating a service lane to the north of the junction, which would incorporate speed tables to discourage through traffic.

A new footway would be provided on the south side of Leigh Road to the east and alongside the eastern side of the access road itself. This new footway would connect to the existing footway on the north-side of Leigh Road as well as provide access from a re-positioned westbound bus stop. The eastbound bus stop would also be relocated as part of the works.
The signals are expected to be subject to MOVA control. This would optimise the signal control based on demand. During the highway peak periods, particularly the morning peak when traffic turning out of the garden would be low, it is anticipated that the Leigh Road approaches would be 'on green' for the majority of the time.

Testing of the proposed new access junction into the Garden on Leigh Road has demonstrated that the proposed access could sufficiently cope with traffic entering and leaving the Garden.

**Parking**

Car parking for the garden is proposed in the area south of the walled garden. This would be located conveniently for access to the Welcome Building to be situated immediately to the east, and for access to the Garden Centre to the north. The layout of the car park would be based on a simple primary two-way circuit route to provide easy, intuitive access to the car spaces. Bays are orientated north-south, aligned to the garden centre site in the north, and to the canal in the south; footpath routes connecting directly to the Welcome Building would be located at the end of each bay, and along a central spine, where trolley parks would be located. Disabled car park bays would be located in the area of parking closest to the main entrance; step free access and a pedestrian priority crossing link to the entrance area outside the Welcome Building. Car parking would be free and introduced on a phased basis over time as visitor numbers grow. The application proposes a maximum of 867 car parking spaces and electric car charging points would also be provided. In terms of cycle parking, 112 spaces are proposed.

Separate coach and minibus parking would be provided in the south east corner of the car park, outside the circuit road. This would allow coach passengers to alight from their coach and walk to the entrance of the Welcome Building without needing to cross the road. Secure cycle stands would be provided in an area to the north of the car park, close to the entrance to the Welcome Building. The proposed level of car and cycle parking is considered to be acceptable.

**Sustainable Transport**

The RHS have submitted a Framework Travel Plan which sets out how they will promote sustainable travel to and from the proposed RHS Garden Bridgewater. It is anticipated that the number of visitors to the Garden when it first opens would be relatively low (circa 50,000 in the first year) and would grow over time. As part of the Travel Plan for the Garden, travel activity would be monitored and adapted to, with plans for ongoing review as the Garden becomes more established.

The RHS advise that, as with the operation at RHS Wisley, at busier visitor times such as on event days, the demand from visitors to RHS Garden Bridgewater is likely to be sufficient to provide shuttle bus connections. This provision is being considered as part of the Travel Plan for the development to provide bus connections to Eccles interchange.

Located adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal the site benefits from the canal trail which provides good access to both the national and local cycle network. There is an aspiration to enhance the site’s relationship with and accessibility to the Bridgewater Canal in the future, with the potential to introduce a key pedestrian link between the site and the canal towpath. This detail is yet to be agreed, due to the involvement of third parties and land outside of the control of the RHS, however the masterplan for the site makes indicative provision for this connection. The Bridgewater Canal also provides opportunity for boat links back to the Worsley Marina or beyond to the centre of Manchester via the extended canal network.

**Servicing**

Servicing and refuse collection for the Welcome Building would take place from a service yard to the south of the building accessed from a dedicated service road that also passes the horticultural yard. This would allow delivery vehicles to be separated from visitor traffic. The service yard would also provide access to the gravel track servicing the southern boundary of the site and compost area. Details of servicing arrangements for the buildings proposed in future phases of the development would be submitted with future reserved matters application(s).

**Flood Risk and Surface Water Management**
The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore is defined within the NPPF as being at low risk of flooding from river and seas (less than a 1 in 1,000 annual probability). In terms of pluvial flood risk, i.e. flooding resulting from rainfall generated overland flows, the Salford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Environment Agency flood maps identify there being an onsite risk. This is likely to be due to the topography of the site. The site is also located within the Salford North West Critical Drainage Area.

Therefore, in accordance with the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, surface water runoff is to be restricted to green field run off. The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Statement in support of the application.

A description of the site is provided in the site description section of this report above, however of particular relevance to flood risk and surface water, it is noted that the site is predominately occupied by trees and vegetation, with some buildings located around the walled garden area. The other use is as a former Middlewood Scout Camp which occupied the woodland in the middle of the site and includes a number of buildings. The site slopes from north to south with the majority of the fall (approximately 12 metres) occurring within the northern third of the site. The slope tends to level through the middle third of the site before leveling off in the southern third.

With regard to the ground conditions, the applicant’s FRA identifies that the northern and central areas of the site is typically clay imbedded with fine sand and gravels overlain by a significant depth of top soil. To the south the ground is underlain by peat. These ground conditions, owing to the presence of peat and clay soils, precludes the use of soakaways and infiltration methods of drainage. The areas of the site underlain with peat may also be susceptible to ground water flooding, the applicant’s investigations have identified that in the general areas of the peat the ground water level is shown to be as close to the surface as 200mm.

UDP Policy EN19 states that development will not be permitted where it would be subject to an unacceptable risk of flooding, materially increase the risk of flooding elsewhere or result in an unacceptable maintenance liability for the City Council or any other agency in terms of dealing with flooding issues. In addition, UDP Policy EN18 seeks to ensure that development would not have an unacceptable impact on surface or ground water. Salford’s Flood Risk and Development planning guidance expands further on these policies.

Paragraph 103 of the NPPF advises that development must be appropriately flood resilient and resistant, including safe access and escape routes where required, and any residual risk should be safely managed, including by emergency planning. Priority should also be given to the use of sustainable drainage systems.

The drainage strategy for the site would comprise a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) discharging to a watercourse. A holistic drainage strategy for the entire site has been developed as the future phases of the development have inter-dependence on the surface water drainage infrastructure which is to be installed as part of phase 1.

With regard to surface water, this would be collected via a number of swales and pass through a series of SuDS structures which would act to slow the velocity of the surface water, treat any hydrocarbon pollutants and provide attenuation storage. The surface water treatment and attenuation system would include:

- Swales and potential filter strips adjacent to highways
- Porous pavement with 30% void foundation providing attenuation
- Balancing lakes
- Bio-retention basin.

In more detail, the existing lake on the site would be dredged and brought back into use. This lake would capture surface water run-off from the surrounding areas of the site, in particular the former terrace gardens to the north of the lake. Water levels in the lake would be controlled via a weir structure. During heavy rainfall the water from the lake would discharge into a swale which would create a brook type water feature running through the site. The swale would also drain the hard landscaping with the garden area. The swale would discharge into the proposed new lake to be located adjacent to the welcome building. The welcome building would drain directly into this lake. Control of water levels within the lake would also be controlled via a weir structure.

The car park, to be located in the south-western corner of the site, would be constructed using a permeable paving solution comprising reinforced gravel for the car parking spaces with the access road and circulation route to be formed of tarmac. The applicant has advised that the use of tarmac is to provide for longevity and...
robustness in the structural design. The foundations for the car park would comprise 30% void stone and would slow down the passage of surface water through the system and provide the main attenuation feature of the site. The voids within the foundation would also promote the development of bacteria which would specifically target and remove hydro carbons which may result from leaks within the car parking area.

The main access road into the site would drain via a swale which would also connect into the car park substructure. The car park would have a single outfall point with the water being conveyed within trapezoidal channels into a bio-retention pond. The discharge from the new lake would also flow via trapezoidal channels into this bio-retention pond. The bio-retention pond would be designed and planted with the requirement to remove potential hydro-carbon pollutants. Flows from the bio retention pond would be controlled via a vortex control device before discharging into the surface water sewer running though the site, before flowing into Shaw Brook water course.

The applicant has advised that in areas where the development proposals are only to refurbish the existing buildings the drainage strategy is to remain as existing.

The strategy for the removal of foul water from the site will depend on further investigation of the existing combined sewer which runs west to east through the centre of the site. If this investigation identifies that land levels do not allow for a gravity connection to the sewer then the applicant has identified that either a foul water pumping station could be installed and/or an on-site treatment plant. The most appropriate solution will be identified following the site investigations.

The City Council’s Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer has reviewed the information submitted and advised that the drainage strategy is acceptable in principle. The strategy will need to be refined as the detailed design is progressed and supported by calculations to demonstrate the existing and proposed runoff rates, that there would be no flooding in a 30 year event and no internal flooding in a 1 in 100 year plus climate change event. It is recommended that this additional information be secured via a condition attached to the planning permission, if granted, to require the submission of a surface water drainage strategy for the site based on the strategy already submitted.

Residential Amenity

The nearest residential dwellings to the site are located on the north side of Leigh Road. These properties are large detached houses set back from the highway. Saved UDP Policy DES7 states that development will not be permitted where it would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of the occupiers or users of other developments. It is considered that the proposed development would have no impact upon the amenity of these properties in terms of loss of daylight, sunlight or privacy given that the new buildings proposed in both the detailed and outline elements of this application would be located a sufficient distance away from the site boundary. In addition, the new buildings would be heavily screened by existing vegetation along the northern boundary of the site. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would comply with Saved UDP Policy DES7 in relation to amenity impacts on neighbouring properties.

Pollution

Land Contamination

The applicant has submitted a Phase 1 Desk Based Ground Investigation in support of the application. The report reveals various sources of potential contamination across the site and surrounding areas, including the existing made ground, the former boiler house, underlying peat and infilled features. In addition, the potential for shallow worked coal seams has been identified. In order to investigate the potential pollutant linkages and geotechnical issues further, an intrusive site investigation is recommended.

The City Council’s Land Contamination Consultant has reviewed the report and recommendations and is satisfied with its conclusions. It is recommended that a condition be attached to the planning permission, if granted, to require the submission of a Site Investigation Report to address the nature, degree and distribution of land contamination on site and identify and assess the risk to receptors focusing primarily on risks to human health and the wider environment. Following this, details of any proposed remedial works shall be submitted and a verification report to validate that all remedial works undertaken on site were completed in accordance with those agreed by the City Council.
Noise

The RHS has submitted a noise assessment in support of the application. The report considers two likely noise sources that may impact on nearby residents, namely on-site plant and machinery and road traffic. The report also identifies another noise source, an electrical sub-station, which is proposed on the access road.

In respect of plant and machinery the report concludes that expected noise targets are achievable. This is to include the electrical sub-station, which is likely to have tonal aspects to consider. In respect of road traffic noise, the report assesses future scenarios both with and without the development. Predictions are made for the years 2019, 2024 and 2029 and it finds that noise would increase as a consequence of the development by 0.2dB, 0.3dB and 0.5dB for each respective year. In conclusion, the report says that this increase is considered to be negligible when assessed to criteria in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Section 3, Part 7.

The City Council's Air and Noise Consultant has reviewed the submitted report and raises no objections subject to a condition to ensure that all commercial type activities, including fixed plant and machinery, associated with the development, when operating simultaneously, would not exceed the background noise level (LA90,T) by more than -5 dB at any time when measured at the boundary of the nearest noise sensitive premises.

Air Quality

An air quality report has been submitted in support of the application. In terms of the operational phase of the development, the report establishes the existing air quality in respect of the two pollutants of interest, nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and particulates. These two pollutants are predominantly as a consequence of road traffic. The report then assesses existing air quality and it predicts likely future concentrations (with and without the scheme). Pollutant concentrations are then compared to air quality objectives set by the Government to protect human health.

The application site is located outside the City Council's Air Quality Management Area however; it is in proximity to the Area to the east (including the motorway network). Notwithstanding this, the report finds that existing conditions within the study show acceptable air with measured concentrations of the two pollutants NO2 and particulates below the air quality objectives.

The report recognises that additional road traffic generated by the development would affect air quality at existing properties along the local road network. However, the assessment has demonstrated that there would be negligible impact on NO2 and particulate concentrations at relevant locations, both with or without the development. Predicted concentrations of the two pollutants have been shown to remain below the air quality objectives at all receptors and it is concluded that the overall impacts of the operational phase of the development are judged to be insignificant. Therefore no mitigation measures are required for the operational phase of the development.

In terms of the construction phase of the development the report considers there to be a risk of dust emissions (mainly track-out from construction vehicles) unless mitigation measures are deployed. The report in chapter 7 outlines the various recommended mitigation measures.

While the report concludes that air quality impacts from both phases of the development are not significant it does suggest that the site operator adopts sustainable transport modes to/from the development, in accordance with the Greater Manchester Air Quality Action Plan.

The City Council's Air and Noise Consultant has reviewed the submitted report and raises no objections subject to a condition to require the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan. It is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on air quality by reason of noise or vibration, pollution to the air, water or soil and therefore complies with UDP Policy EN17.

Sustainability

The City Council’s Sustainable Design and Construction SPD seeks to ensure that sustainable design and construction measures are integrated into new developments. The Energy Statement submitted as part of this planning application details the sustainable design and construction techniques proposed to improve the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings as part of the detailed application. This includes the use of LED lighting, high quality glazed, underfloor heat pumps and reclaimed rainwater store for green house irrigation. In
particular, the Welcome Building would incorporate a green roof, rain water harvesting, ground source heat pumps, solar shading and cross ventilation.

It is considered that the measures proposed for Phase 1 of the development are acceptable in respect of sustainability and energy efficient and comply with the aims and objectives of the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

**Mineral Safeguarding**

The site is located within a mineral safeguarding area. The Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan, April 2013 seeks to ensure that proposed non-mineral development within safeguarded areas do not prevent the ability of minerals on the site to be mined in the future. It is considered that the scale and nature of the development proposed, and in particular the landscape approach to the development, would not unduly impact on the ability of minerals to be extracted from the site in the future, if found to be viable. Therefore, there is no requirement for the prior extraction of minerals in advance of construction.

**Referal to Secretary of State**

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009: circular 02/2009, if planning panel resolve to grant planning permission, the Local Planning Authority is required to refer the application to the Secretary of State. The application must be referred to the Secretary of State because the development is considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

**Recommendation**

Refer the application to the Secretary of State with a resolution that a hybrid planning permission be granted for the proposed development subject to the conditions set out below.

**Conditions**

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<td>1.</td>
<td>The commencement of the ‘Full’ detailed component of the development, as referenced on drawing No. 101 Rev C, shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission. Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:</td>
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<td>100 Rev B Existing Site Plan</td>
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<td>101 Rev C Proposed Masterplan Outline and Detailed Areas</td>
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<td>102 Rev C Proposed Illustrative Masterplan</td>
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<td>103 Rev C Proposed Illustrative Masterplan Phasing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>483-01-104 Rev C Proposed Walled Garden Centre Area and Welcome Building General Arrangement</td>
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<td>483-01-105 Rev D Proposed Walled Garden Centre Area and Welcome Building Phases 1a, 1b</td>
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<td>483-01-106 Rev D Proposed Walled Garden Centre Area and Welcome Building Final (Phase 4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>107 Rev B Proposed Walled Garden Centre Area Descriptions</td>
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<td>109 Site Location Plan</td>
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<td>002 Rev E Welcome Building Level 00</td>
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<td>003 Rev B Welcome Building Level 01M – Mezzanine Level</td>
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<td>004 Rev E Welcome Building Roof Plan</td>
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<td>200 Rev E Welcome Building Proposed East Elevation</td>
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<td>204 Rev B Welcome Building Proposed South Boundary Elevation</td>
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<td>205 Rev B Welcome Building Elevation Study 1</td>
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<td>206 Rev B Welcome Building Elevation Study 2</td>
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<td>210 Rev D Welcome Building South Section</td>
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Details of the following reserved matters in relation to the ‘Outline’ component of the development, as referenced on drawing No. 101 Rev C, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the relevant phase of the development is implemented. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the reserved matters approved.

a) Access
b) Appearance
c) Layout
d) Landscaping

e) Scale

Reason: To accord with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act (General Development Procedure Order) 1995 as amended and to enable the Local Planning Authority to retain adequate control over the proposed development.

4. Application(s) for the approval of all the reserved matters pertaining to the ‘Outline’ component of the development, as referenced on drawing No. 101 Rev C, and referred to in the preceding condition (Condition 3) must be made not later than the expiration of seven years from the date of this decision notice.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 92(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

5. The commencement of the development of the ‘Outline’ component of the development, as referenced on drawing No. 101 Rev C, must be begun not later than whichever is the later of the following dates:

(i) The expiration of ten years from the date of this decision notice.
(ii) The expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters, or in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 92(2)(b) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

6. Prior to the commencement of each phase of the development, including any works of excavation or demolition and notwithstanding any information submitted with the application, a Site Investigation Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The investigation shall address the nature, degree and distribution of land contamination on the relevant part of the site and shall include an identification and assessment of the risk to receptors focusing primarily on risks to human health and the wider environment.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the future users of the development and to protect the water environment in accordance with Saved Policies EN17 and EN18 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. Details of any remedial works identified as being necessary on the site in the Site Investigation Report for each phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such remedial works shall be incorporated into the development during the course of construction and completed prior to first occupation of the relevant phase of the development and retained thereafter.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the future users of the development and to protect the water environment in accordance with Saved Policies EN17 and EN18 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. Prior to first occupation of each phase of the development, a Verification Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The Verification Report shall validate that all remedial works undertaken on site for the relevant phase of the development were completed in accordance with those agreed by the Local Planning Authority under Condition 7 of this planning permission.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the future users of the development and to protect the water environment in accordance with Saved Policies EN17 and EN18 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Prior to the commencement of each phase of the development, including any works of excavation or demolition, a Construction Method Statement shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The statement shall include:
i. the times of noisy construction activities on site which, unless agreed otherwise as part of the approved Statement, shall be limited to between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and 9am-2pm Saturday only (no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays);

ii. the spaces for and management of the parking of site operatives and visitors vehicles;

iii. the storage and management of plant and materials (including loading and unloading activities);

iv. the erection and maintenance of security hoardings including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate;

v. wheel washing facilities;

vi. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during demolition/construction;

vii. a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition/construction works;

viii. measures to prevent disturbance to any adjacent living accommodation from noise and vibration, including from any piling activity;

ix. measures to prevent the pollution of watercourses;

x. measures to prevent disturbance from light pollution to nearby wildlife, and

xi. a community engagement strategy which explains how local neighbours will be kept updated on the construction process, key milestones, and how they can report instances of unneighbourly behaviour from construction operatives. The statement shall also detail the steps that will be taken when unneighbourly behaviour has been reported.

xii. Construction and demolition methods to be used, including methods of working adjacent to the Metrolink Hazard Zone, including use of cranes

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of neighbours and local wildlife in accordance with Saved Policies EN8, EN9, DES7 and EN17 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. Prior to the commencement of each phase of the development on the parts of the site affected by Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, Rhododendron and Montbretia, including any works of excavation or demolition, a detailed method statement for removing or the long-term management/control of these invasive species on the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The method statement shall include proposed measures that will be used to prevent the spread of Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, Rhododendron and Montbretia during any operations e.g. mowing, strimming or soil movement. It shall also contain measures to ensure that any soils brought to the site are free of the seeds/root/stem of any invasive plant covered under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. The development shall proceed in accordance with the approved method statement.

Reason: To prevent the spread of Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, Rhododendron and Montbretia, which are invasive species, and to conserve and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, in accordance with Saved Policies EN8, EN9, EN10 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan, the Nature Conservation and Biodiversity SPD and paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

11. Prior to the commencement of drainage works for each phase of the development, a strategy of surface water drainage for the relevant phase of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall be based on the strategy submitted with the application (ref: Section 5.0, Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage Assessment, ref: AR/PMCF/3556/NOVEMBER 2016, by RoC Consulting, dated November 2016) The strategy shall employ sustainable drainage methods and include details of how water quality will be improved and how surface water discharge rates shall be restricted to greenfield runoff rates. The approved strategy(s) shall be implemented prior to first occupation or use of the relevant phase of the development unless alternative timescales have been agreed in writing as part of the strategy.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory method of surface water disposal to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere in accordance with Saved Policy EN19 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and to provide betterment in terms of water quality and surface water discharge rates and to meet the requirements in the following documents;

- National Planning Policy Framework
12. Prior to the commencement of each phase of the development, a programme of archaeological works and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the relevant part of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme of archaeological works shall be undertaken in accordance with the WSI which shall cover the following:

1. A phased programme and methodology of investigation and recording to include:
   - archaeological evaluation through trial trenching
   - dependent on the above, a further scheme of targeted archaeological excavation
   - archaeological watching brief
2. A programme for post investigation assessment to include:
   - analysis of the site investigation records and finds
   - a detailed analysis and publication of the significant clay pipe assemblage recovered from previous excavations
   - production of a final report on the significance of the archaeological and historical interest represented.
3. Deposition of the final report with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record and dissemination of the results commensurate with their significance
4. Provision for archive deposition of the report and records of the site investigation.
5. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved WSI.

Reason: to record and advance understanding of heritage assets impacted on by the development and to make information about the archaeological heritage interest publicly accessible in accordance with Saved UDP Policy CH5 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and Section 12, Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

13. Prior to the commencement of any phase of the development all the retained trees within (or overhanging) the relevant part of the development site shall be surrounded by substantial fences which shall extend to the extreme circumference of the spread of the branches of the trees (or such positions as may be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority). Such fences shall be erected in accordance with a specification for the relevant phase of the development to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall remain until all development within the relevant phase is completed and no work, including any form of drainage or storage of materials, earth or topsoil shall take place within the perimeter of such fencing.

Reason: To safeguard existing trees on and/or within the vicinity of the site in accordance with Saved Policies EN12 and DES9 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

14. Prior to commencement of any works within any of the 17 areas identified in Section 3 of the Tree Site Report, Appraisal and Plans Rev A, ref: RHS-BS-001, by Christians Environmental, dated November 2016, a combined proposal / Arboricultural Method Statement / planting plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Unless the work is for:
   a. Essential safety works along public highways, footpaths or adjacent to occupied buildings.
   b. The removal of any non-native trees or shrubs.
   c. Works to be undertaken on any trees (native or non-native) with a stem diameter of less than 40cm at 1.2m from ground level.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details approved.

Reason: To safeguard existing trees on and/or within the vicinity of the site and the amenity of the area in accordance with Saved Policies EN12 and DES9 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

15. Prior to the commencement of the hard and soft landscape works for each phase of the development, and
notwithstanding any details shown on the drawings hereby approved, details of the hard and soft landscape works for the relevant phase of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include long term design objectives, long term landscape management objectives, the overarching approach to planting and maintenance, details of new habitats and above ground SUDs features to be created, details of any proposed landscape buffers around existing or new water bodies, details of external lighting. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details approved.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the area, ensure the protection of wildlife and supporting habitat and secure opportunities for the enhancement of the nature conservation value of the site in accordance with Saved Policies DES9, EN8, EN9 and EN10 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

16. Prior to the commencement of construction of each building within each phase of the development, (excluding demolitions and works below ground), and notwithstanding the details shown on the drawings hereby approved, detailed drawings, samples and a schedule of materials of the following items shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The relevant part of the development shall be constructed using the approved materials.

a) Elevations
b) Windows / glazing
c) Entrances and doors
d) Roof(s)

Reason: To safeguard the amenity, appearance and character of the area in accordance with policy DES1 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

17. Prior to the commencement of construction of any boundary treatments around the perimeter of the site, and notwithstanding the details shown on the drawings hereby approved, detailed drawings and a schedule of materials for the proposed boundary treatments around the perimeter of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submission shall include detailed drawings and supporting information to demonstrate how the proposed boundary treatment will relate to and not adversely affect the setting of the Grade II Listed entrance gates on the northern boundary of the site. The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity, appearance and character of the area and the setting of the Grade II Listed entrance gates in accordance with Saved Policies DES1 and CH2 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

18. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the Biodiversity Management Strategy, ref: Ref 5880.008, by TEP, dated December 2016 and any such updated to the strategy that may be required for each phase of the development (as per drawing ref: 103 Rev C) that shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the protection of wildlife and supporting habitat and secure opportunities for the enhancement of the nature conservation value of the site in accordance with Saved Policies EN8, EN9 and EN10 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

19. The measures to mitigate against the impact on bats shall be implemented on site in accordance with the details set out in Section 4.23 of the Ecological Assessment Report ref: 5880.007, by TEP, dated December 2016.

Reason: To ensure the protection of bats and supporting habitat and secure opportunities for the enhancement of the nature conservation value of the site in accordance with Saved Policies EN8, EN9 and EN10 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

20. The car parking (including disabled parking), coaching parking and cycle parking associated with the development, shall be provided on site prior to the opening of the relevant phase of the development to
21. The site access works and highway improvement works shown on the drawings listed below shall be implemented prior to first opening of the Garden to the public and shall be retained thereafter.

UV007149-0000-DR-0003 Rev 02 General Arrangement Primary Access  
UV007149-0000-DR-0001 Rev 02 M60 John Gilbert RBT Pedestrian Crossing Improvements  
UV007149-0000-DR-0002 Rev 02 M60 Worsley Courthouse RBT Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

Reason: In the interests of the safe and efficient operation of the highway network and to minimise potential conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and other road users in accordance with Policies DES2, A2 and A8 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

22. Prior to first opening of the Garden to the public, an updated Travel Plan for the Garden shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall be designed to raise awareness of opportunities for reducing travel by car for both staff and visitors, and should feature a range of measures and initiatives promoting a choice of transport mode, and a clear monitoring regime with agreed targets. The agreed Travel Plan shall be implemented and reviewed in accordance with the timetable set out within the Travel Plan. An annual monitoring report on the Travel Plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the timetable set out within the Travel Plan. Updating of the Travel Plan shall be undertaken in response to the findings of the monitoring report and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval.

Reason: To ensure that the travel arrangements to the development are appropriate and to limit the effects of the increase in travel movements in accordance with Saved Policy A8 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

23. No planned events shall be held at the site until an Events Transport Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Local Highways Authority, Transport for Greater Manchester and Highways England. The Events Transport Management Plan shall include details of:

- Results of at least 6 months monitoring of visitor numbers, car park usage and visitor transport modes recorded within the 12 months prior to submission, and associated analysis.
- Traffic routing information and directional signage proposals
- On-site car park management
- Off-site shuttle bus service proposals, locations and timetables
- Emergency vehicle provisions
- Pre-event information/communication
- Review periods for the Events Transport Management Plan and details of contributory partners.

The Events Transport Management Plan shall be implemented in full when events are held that have the potential to exceed on-site car parking capacity.

Reason: To ensure the effective operation of the highway network during planning events in accordance with Saved Policies ST5, A2, A8 and A10 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

24. The rating level (LAeq,T) from all commercial type activities, including fixed plant and machinery, associated with the development, when operating simultaneously, shall not exceed the background noise level (LA90,T) by more than -5 dB at any time when measured at the boundary of the nearest noise sensitive premises. Noise measurements and assessments shall be carried out according to BS 4142:2014 "Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound". 'T' refers to any 1 hour period between 07.00hrs and 23.00hrs and any 15 minute period between 23.00hrs and 07.00hrs.
**Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the future occupants of the development in accordance with policy EN17 of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework**

### Notes to Applicant

1. **The following documents were submitted in support of the application:**
   - Air Quality Assessment Rev 3, by Hoare Lea, dated December 2016
   - Design and Access Statement by Hodder & Partners, dated 21 December 2016
   - Ecological Assessment Report, ref: 5880.007, and Biodiversity Management Strategy, ref: Ref 5880.008, by TEP, dated December 2016
   - Heritage and Archaeological Assessment ref: EM/22804/02, by CgMs, dated December 2016
   - Indicative Site Perimeter Fencing dwg ref: SK-075 Rev A
   - Landscape and Visual Assessment, 5880.01.001, by TEP, dated December 2016
   - Phase 1 Desk Based Ground Investigation Rev 2, Ref: JB/AS/p1 3556, by RoC Consulting, dated November 2016
   - Planning Statement, ref: 26639/A5/PS/HW/vr, by Barton Willmore, dated December 2016
   - Service Vehicles General Arrangement Tracking, dwg ref: CIV-006 Rev 1 and Servicing Strategy Note
   - Stage 2 Road Safety Audit ref: RSA 71b-16, by Urban Vision, dated December 2016
   - Statement of Community Engagement by Barton Willmore, dated December 2016
   - Transport Assessment, ref: M16023-02D TA, by TTHC, dated December 2016 and Supplementary Transport Assessment by TTHC dated March 2017
   - RHS Bridgewater Framework Travel Plan Update, ref: M16023-03D FTP, by TTHC, dated March 2017

2. **Although the Environment Agency does not have close proximity groundwater level monitoring data for this site, the low lying areas of the site may experience near surface groundwater levels which may impede attempts at infiltration drainage. In particular, local groundwater level monitoring carried out by the Coal Authority in the Coal Measures strata indicates that groundwater levels are likely to be circa 25.5 m AOD in the vicinity of Worsley Delph to the east side of the site, rising to circa 33 m AOD or even higher in the vicinity of Mosley Common to the west. The groundwater quality in the Coal Measures and the Collyhurst Sandstone may also be poor, being characteristically high in iron.**

3. **The applicant is advised that no removal of or works to any hedgerows, trees or shrubs or works to or demolition of buildings or structures that may be used by breeding birds should take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation and buildings for active birds’ nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and/or buildings demolished and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the local planning authority.**

4. **If, during any works on site, contamination is suspected or found, or contamination is caused, the Local Planning Authority shall be notified immediately. Where required, a suitable risk assessment shall be carried out and/or any remedial action shall be carried out in accordance to an agreed process and within agreed timescales in agreement with the Local Planning Authority.**