

**Cowm Top, Castleton - Design Feedback - received Oct 2023 and May 2024
(13 Aug 2024)**

Recommendations	Applicant Response
Identity and Sense of Place	
The Applicant is encouraged to comprehensively explore how the site presents and addresses the existing environment and clearly demonstrate how the different character and functions of each area are to be proposed in the masterplan.	Please refer to the Design and Access Statement Addendum. This sets out how the overall scheme has been sub-divided into three different character areas, which whilst ensuring a changing experience as one travel through the site complement one another and still ensures an overall delivery of a cohesive development.
Character areas, which can be developed in different ways to relate positively to the topography, landscaping and building entrances, should be more defined and have a clear approach. As the Strategic Objective 3 states - the Applicant will be required to demonstrate how the existing the special character of the area is protected and enhanced as well as how a new identity and character is being created.	The Design and Access Statement Addendum provides a detailed description of the design and visual features which help to define and distinguish the different character areas.
The Applicant will be required to identify, define, and demonstrate the unique design approach within each distinct character areas proposed, and the significance of these in line with objectives of local Policies P2 and P3. Justification required for the location and distribution of the three proposed house type in defining a sense of place and varied character areas for the site.	Landscape character areas follows the 3 character areas for the site so the Barratt Tradition will have its own set of plants, the contemporary will have its own sets of plants and the DWH will have its own. The avenue trees will be consistent as this ties the site together.
Clearer rationale for the distinctive features and functions of the character areas should be sharpened and demonstrated through design choices. Boundaries and visual features can be useful pointers to where different character areas begin and end.	
Could the Applicant clarify if the scheme incorporates the retention of historic field boundaries as highlighted in the Trows Farm Historic Environment Assessment 2020: "to retain the rural character of the site" as set out in Para 11.247 of draft joint PFE Plan?	As set out in the Planning Statement Addendum, due to the extensive levels of cut and fill required to create the development platforms, it is not possible to retain the historic field boundaries. Furthermore, the challenging topograph has dictated the scheme layout and meant that streets need to be laid out in an east-west pattern meaning it isn't possible to reinstate or mirror previous field boundaries. However, the Landscape Visual Appraisal sets out the scheme has responded to the other special features of the Landscape Character Area covering this site.
The Applicant will be required to demonstrate how the evolution of the Masterplan proposals has integrated features of the existing character, topography, archaeological features, green and blue network and other elements of the local natural environment and what measures will be taken to protect and enhance these features, evidenced with a precise infrastructure phasing and delivery plan in line with local Policies P6, G3 and draft Allocation JPA25.	Please refer to the Design and Access Statement Addendum and the Phasing and Delivery Plan (ref: 201100 Rev P00).
Connectivity, Movement and Public Realm	
There appears to be a discrepancy between the proposed pedestrian walking route through the POS to the west as indicated on the Hard Landscaping Layout and Movement Plan. It is advised that the Applicant clarify and demonstrate the final details of the proposed footpath routes.	Proposed footpaths routes are now clearly defined on the Connectivity Plan (ref: 203105).
The Applicant is advised to clarify what safety features are proposed for the walking and cycling routes that have been considered. It would be beneficial to the scheme to consider a second pedestrian/cycle connection to the MUGA from the Linear Park. It is advised that the proposals clearly demonstrate all additional pedestrian east-west links to better integrate with the schools/ infrastructure to the west of the development site through the POS.	Safety Features - the walking and cycling routes have been designed with appropriate widths to safely accommodate predicted demand. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving will be provided at all vehicular crossing points, with good levels of visibility provided to approaching vehicles. The crossing points at the linear park will be provided on raised tables. In addition, the internal road network will be designed with slow speeds (20-mph) which will be controlled through appropriately located traffic calming features / changes in priority. The majority of the routes have been designed in open corridors, benefiting from natural surveillance. MUGA - this has now been relocated and replaced with a NEAP. Accessibility to the NEAP is shown on the Connectivity Plan (ref: 203105). East West Link - the Connectivity Plan shows how the internal footpaths link to the existing PRowS and integrate the scheme with the surrounding network. The Transport Assessment also provides an assessment of the accessibility of the site to local facilities and amenities.
It would be beneficial to the scheme to introduce a route to at least one of the seated areas on the public path within the large POS to the west.	Please see the revised Planning Layout Plan (ref: 203002 Rev 002) which now includes seating areas throughout the POS and linkages between these.
It is recommended to further consider whether the raised pedestrian/cycle ways will be shared by both user groups, or will the width be divided by white paint lines or a material change?	Routes have been designed on a shared use basis, with no delineation.
As required by local Policy T1 and the draft PFE Allocation JPA25, the Applicant should demonstrate evidence of attractive walking and cycling routes from the proposed site into the local centre of Castleton and railway station, as well as within the proposed Masterplan.	A detailed assessment of the accessibility of the site is presented in the Transport Assessment which demonstrates the accessibility of the site in offering safe and convenient routes to the nearby local services and facilities.
Access for Fisheries - need to demonstrate purpose and form of path/link and how it connects to the wider scheme	Exact location now shown on Planning Layout Plan (ref: 203002 Rev 002).
In adherence with local Policy T2, the Applicant will be required to demonstrate that proposed slopes/ gradients meet necessary guidance to support an inclusive walking and wheeling environment, ensuring accessibility for all users.	The adopted roads/emergency access routes will be designed to gradients within the guidelines of Rochdale Council Highways. All private unadopted pathways will be designed to Part M. The trim trail and pedestrian access at the centre of Cripple Gate Lane will be a stepped approach due level difficulties. There will be a level access provided at the site entrance and start of Cripple Gate Lane.
Street Hierarchy and Layout	

Further detail regarding the on-street visitor parking plan is required as there is potential for parking to become dominant to the street scene. Can the Applicant clarify if planting/ landscape features will be integrated to act as a buffer to front elevations? The Applicant should consider a maximum of three parking bays in a row and then landscape screening (tree pits and rain gardens) for any dedicated on-street parking provision. There should also be adequate space around parking bays to allow for an accessible path from parking bay to entrance. Parking plan to be provided - including where landscaping is proposed to minimise car dominant streets.	Please see the Parking Strategy Plan (ref: 225001) and Parking Scenarios Plan (ref: 225002). The majority of the parking provision is either integral garages with double parking, two front parking spaces or four front parking spaces. Landscaping along street frontages is also proposed which will soften the overall feel of the streetscene.
The Applicant should consider further ways in which there could be visible differentiation to the different street typologies, character areas and to create more distinct characters and help navigation across the site through for example changes in street widths or in paving materials. Landscaping can also create distinction between street types.	Please refer to the Design and Access Statement Addendum, which includes a Street Hierarchy Plan and proposed Street Hierarchy Sections. This clearly demonstrate the differentiation between these street typologies and the different environments and sense of play that each creates. The incorporation of 2.5 storey townhouses is useful in signifying the importance of streets and spaces through their scale, for legibility and hierarchy. These are utilised on main streets as vista stops or focal points and around open spaces to provide gateways. The Hard Landscaping Plans (ref: 203200 Rev 002 and 203201 Rev 002) also demonstrate the varying paving and surfacing materials proposed throughout the site, which also assists with creating a different feel to the streets and character areas.
It is understood that the street pattern has been influenced by the site's topography with east-west orientated streets following the contours of the site while maximizing opportunities for solar gain. It would be beneficial to the scheme to integrate focal points along these longer street sections to break up the linear pattern.	See pages 5, 11,13 and 18 of the Design and Access Statement Addendum for Street Hierarchy.
As encouraged by the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, the design of new development needs to make it easier for people to use sustainable modes of travel by improving the quality of our walking, cycling and public transport networks, and designing to encourage active travel. Pedestrian and cycle access to and within site is important to ensure active travel is a viable option for future residents. It would therefore be helpful to understand anticipated travel times within the development and the Applicant is therefore required to demonstrate this through, for example, a radius travel time diagram showing what areas are reachable by different travel modes (driving, cycling, and walking) in for example 5, 10 and 15 minutes.	Please refer to Section 5 'Sustainable Transport Appraisal' of the Transport Assessment. This also includes a radius travel time diagrams showing the range of facilities accessible via the different travel modes.
In line with local Policy G9, the Applicant will be required to identify and demonstrate what the impacts of the proposed acoustic fence would be on the noise levels and environment in the new neighbourhood and what options have been explored to reduce the impacts of noise from the two adjacent motorways affecting the amenity and environment of the area.	Please refer to the Noise Assessment Addendum.
Sustainability/Green and Blue Infrastructure	
The Applicant is required to clarify and illustrate where possible the character, anticipated user groups and activities across the different public open spaces on offer across the Masterplan.	This is demonstrated on the POS plan (ref: 213100) and the landscaping plans along with the DAS will give more detail to the character areas.
The Applicant should ensure there is adequate provision of usable public open spaces such as playparks and not only green buffer space within open space standards for residential schemes. Clarification required on depths of swales - will these be an open feature or usable space?	Please refer to the POS Plan (ref: 213100) - this shows the provision of useable public open space and how these include a variety of different typologies of POS, not just green buffers. The scheme now proposes a NEAP, areas of natural play along the central green corridor and a trim trail through the linear park area. The intention is to turn one, if not all, of the swales into areas of natural play and this will be incorporate into the final design, however, is likely to include features such as log or stone skipping/crossing, nature information points to spot animals etc.
As per local Policy G6, the Applicant will be required to demonstrate how the proposed POS elements integrate with the wider green and blue infrastructure network and how these will support the enhancement and expansion of the sustainable high-quality environment in the area, managing any environmental challenges and risks.	The proposed POS elements are link with footpaths most are accessible to all. In certain areas the elements intergrade with the natural environment for example the trim trail is off a more natural style path and does not encourage to much on the natural environment around it, there are other areas like the path where the swales are that creates natural areas of play but we also have a NEAP that provides equality play on site. Throughout the site there are seating areas in the POS. We have also kept as much of the natural environment as we could with trees on the boundaries of the site, the existing ditch and the areas that cover the POS area on the east over the GAS main and if need we have introduced planting that enhances the biodiversity. The site also has a cycle path that runs North to South and East to West and you can enter the site on foot or cycle as alternatives to vehicular access.
Any buffer spaces should be considered with good landscape and where possible include for example accessible paths, orchards, and bike tracks, where the slope and terracing are a feature of the landscape design.	All buffer areas have been considered to ensure we enhance or create biodiverse and feature areas, paths are available throughout the site and connects onto all POS areas, there is also a specific cycle way available on site
The Applicant is advised to explore the integration of smaller pocket parks/ green spaces across the site. This may help the continuity of the open space experience and to create a 'network' of open spaces, which the Masterplan proposals will be required to demonstrate in line with principles of local Policies P6 and G3.	Please refer to the Design and Access Statement Addendum and revised Planning Layout Plan (ref: 203002 Rev 002) - a network of linear swales has been introduced within the central green corridor which form part of the site's sustainable management of surface water but also provide attractive amenity, natural play and biodiversity features.
The boundary treatments for the Linear Park are indicated as 1200mm Estate Railings; however, the visualisation shows a green buffer. The Applicant is required to clarify and demonstrate all boundary treatments and if any planting is proposed along the railings/fences.	The Linear Park area does include green buffers (hedges) along the boundary. The areas of natural play and Swales do include an element of estate fencing as a safety measures to prevent children from being able to run directly into the road and also to add some differentiation to the different spaces across the site. Please refer to the Boundary Treatment Plan (ref: 203251 Rev 001 and 203250 Rev 001).

The Applicant is encouraged to consider the integration of smaller, linear SuDS features into the scheme instead or in addition to the two larger basins proposed to the south. These can act as both visual and attractive features and would support local biodiversity and clean run-off. As required by local Policy G1 as well as draft PFE Allocation JPA25, the Applicant will be required to demonstrate how the proposed development incorporates good quality blue and green infrastructure, meeting the requirements and criteria for sustainable development.	Introduced Linear SuDS features in the form of swales with check dams through the central focal areas of the site. The runoff is treated by engineered media which conveys treated runoff back to the conveyance system further downstream. Check dams incorporated into the swale design allow water to pool up to a shallow depth and saturate the top layer of the engineered media increasing the volume of water treated. This increases the retention of sediment and associated pollutants. It will improve habitats, native plants, particularly grasses will provide habitat for birds, insects and small mammals increasing biodiversity. Swales are a good example of blue/green infrastructure. Please refer to the Revised Drainage Strategy for further details.
Attenuation basins and amenity features such as informal play areas can be integrated to create multifunctional spaces. The Applicant would be encouraged to consider the addition of these into the proposals and is advised to demonstrate if / why this possibility is viable (or not) for this site.	The attenuation basins are fairly deep depressions within the ground and will potentially fill up at moderate storm events, due to this fences may potentially be erected around the perimeter to stop people from entering. The swales are very shallow water features and will be open to encourage informal play and create multifunctional spaces. Please refer to the Revised Drainage Strategy for further details.
The Applicant is encouraged to explore and demonstrate that other options for SuDS have been considered, for example the option of landscaped open swales as a means of sustainable drainage but also improving the public realm and creating a visual feature through the centre of development.	Swales have been introduced into the central focal areas of the site. They have been incorporated into the drainage design and will improve the public realm. Please refer to the Revised Drainage Strategy for further details.
The current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) recognises the importance of tree-lined streets and their invaluable environmental benefits. Street trees are a key feature of the urban environment and play a vital role in defining the character of towns and cities. Can the Applicant clarify which residential streets are proposed to be tree-lined? Also provide clarification on which proposed trees sit within curtilage of properties and which are within the management company area.	There is a tree line avenue that runs west to east and north to south. This is within a 1m planted strip that is in front of the plot boundaries and will be managed by the management company for the site
In addition to wayfinding elements, has the Applicant considered suitable locations for other street furniture elements (e.g., benches, cycle racks, drinking fountains) across the site?	The Planning layout shows the locations of the benches and cycle paths. Benches are located generally along pedestrian routes and where possible have nice views of the area.
The Applicant is advised to demonstrate how the topography of the site with existing green corridors and archaeological features has influenced design decisions and the evolution of the Masterplan to reflect special qualities in the area.	As set out previously, given the site's challenging topography, east-west orientated streets lend themselves to longer rows of townhouses in contrast to streets on a north-south axis where detached houses stepping down the slope would be more suitable. Green corridors/buffers around existing water courses in the southern part of the site will be retained and form part of the central green spine provided through the site.
A stronger sense of connection can be drawn out between the existing landscape and environment and the integration with the proposed development, the Applicant will need to demonstrate this in the spirit of local Policy P2 and Strategic Objective 4 as well as draft PFE Allocation JPA25.	Please refer to pages 13 and 19 of the Design and Access Statement Addendum.
Housing (Design, Mix and Typologies)	
There is variety of building form at master plan scale. However, there appears to be too much variation along the street, which can result in a lack of visual structure that harms the overall appearance. This might be to create a more 'rural' character, but a better structure to the street scene would be formed by repeating architectural features (bay windows or forward gables), building spacing, proportions and scale.	The site is designed with 3 distinct areas and house type variations. This makes it easier to read and where the parcels come together there is minimal overlap to preserve continuity.
The Applicant should demonstrate the rationale for the placement of house types taking materials, heights, and typology into consideration.	Please refer to the Design and Access Statement Addendum - pages 7,8,9 and 17.
It would be helpful to see street elevations cut through a variety of streets to better understand the balance between variation and uniformity proposed within architectural details and building materials.	Please refer to the Design and Access Statement Addendum - pages 5,7,8,9 and 17.
The proposed house design could benefit from some tweaks to improve visual appearance and living environment: - Large windows - at least 15% window to wall ratio as stated in the National Design Code; - Recessed windows to create depth/shadow line; - Better width to height proportion of building elevations; - Symmetry within elevations and between neighbouring properties; - Brick detailing and other visual features to enrich the design through articulation.	Please refer to the Design and Access Statement Addendum - pages 5,7,8,9 and 17.
Due to the 'FULL' nature of the application and given the scale of the site, the Applicant should clearly articulate and evidence their approach on how the volume and density of housing proposed is meeting the existing need in this location. The proposed Masterplan and design code should clearly demonstrate this as required by local Policies C3 and P3 and supported by the draft PFE Allocation JPA25.	The Planning Statement initially submitted with the application set out that there is a qualitative need for larger family housing across Rochdale, as a number of the housing currently being delivered are smaller, higher density schemes. The Castleton Station Area Supplementary Planning Document (which also covers this site), also noted there is a need for larger family housing within the Castleton area. This site and the typologies of housing proposed, provides an opportunity to Castleton to diversify its housing choice. Please refer to the initial Planning Statement (Section 5) for further details.
The Applicant should clearly demonstrate how the housing typologies proposed on the site are integrated/ interrelated with the context of the local setting and area, including the evidence base for the housing size mix and density. Additional information and further consideration of the details of the housing typologies would be recommended. As the local Policy C3, the Applicant will be required to demonstrate how the range of housing proposed would widen the choice in the borough and reflect local character.	Furthermore, a meeting was held with the Council's Strategic Housing Team (December 2023) and it was agreed that the proposed mix of housing was acceptable and would assist in meeting local housing needs. The range of dwelling sizes proposed also accords with the requirements set out in the PFE Trows Farm Allocation (JPA23).
The proposals should demonstrate explain how affordable housing will be integrated in the development. As per local Policy C4 and draft PFE Allocation JPA25, the Applicant will be required to demonstrate an appropriate level of Affordable Housing provision across the Masterplan. The Design Code would need to ensure that the affordable housing typologies are appropriately designed and are imperceptible.	A Viability Assessment has been submitted and discussions are on-going to determine the level of planning obligations the scheme is able to deliver.
Garage setbacks should ideally be behind the principal building line of a house and ensure wide access pathway between front parking and front entrance of houses.	Please refer to the Design and Access Statement Addendum and revised Planning Layout Plan (ref: 203002 Rev 002) which show that all garages have now been set behind principal building lines.
Demonstrate there is adequate space for storing bins, bikes and other utilities	Garden sizes are of a sufficient size to facilitate storage facilities, please refer to the Garden Size Plan (ref: 203106).

Some corner plots don't take advantage of their location - need to create sense of arrival. Is there a unifying element across all corner plots?	Please refer to the Design and Access Statement Addendum - pages 7 and 17.
Further evidence is needed on overshadowing and impacts from retaining walls	Please refer to the Design and Access Statement Addendum, this includes a Sunlight Assessment and demonstrates that the rear gardens to properties will receive acceptable levels of daylight throughout the year.
All the houses (and all habitable rooms) will be required to meet the National Space Standards and the Applicant will be required to demonstrate this via a schedule of all rooms and dwellings within the Masterplan.	All dwellings are NDSS compliant. A full Schedule of Accommodation is provided on the Planning Layout Plan (ref: 203002 Rev 002).
Play/Child Friendly Streets and Spaces	
It would be beneficial to the scheme to design in flexible spaces that encourage social activities, informal play, and interactions within residential spaces, enabling a passive overlooking across the development. These spaces should be well integrated within the Masterplan and should be safe, accessible, vibrant in order to meet the requirements of local Policy P1.	Please refer to the POS Plan (ref: 213100). This shows the variety of open spaces proposed across the site. It is worth noting that the MUGA has been relocated to a more central location so that it now better integrates with the residential development and has improved natural surveillance. As part of discussions with Officers at Rochdale, it was agreed that this facility would be replaced with a NEAP to better suit local needs.
Can the Applicant clarify what type of informal play is envisaged to take place in the Linear Park?	A trim trail is proposed throughout the linear park area that will provide opportunities for informal play/recreation.
Can the Applicant demonstrate the rationale for the proposed location of the MUGA and whether other viable locations have been considered?	Please refer to the POS Plan (ref: 213100) and the response above - the MUGA has been relocated and replaced with a NEAP.
The Applicant will be required to clearly demonstrate how many access points are proposed from the development to the trim trail?	Please refer to the Connectivity Plan (ref: 203105). This shows three access points from the development area into the linear park / trim trail area.
The Applicant will be required to clarify which pedestrian routes into the POS to the West are accessible? The slope and terracing should be a feature of the landscape design and not a barrier.	Please see connectivity plan. Slopes are shown on planning layout but will be planted in such a way to enhance biodiversity on site.
Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable development is a requirement set out in more detail in Policies within Strategic Objective 05 (of the Local Plan: Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, 2016). The Applicant will be required to demonstrate that all the objectives of these policies are being fully met.	The sustainability of the site and access to local services and facilities via a means of transport options is included in the Transport Assessment. Furthermore, measures to promote sustainable travel to and from the site are included in the submitted Travel Plan.
Materials	
Can the Applicant clarify the rationale for street sections with indicated red chippings in the carriageway?	This is to add to identification and variation of roads and character areas.
The Hard Landscaping Layout plan suggests raised tables in block paving around entrances to the Linear Park – could the extent of the raised street section align with the extent of the Linear Park to increase permeability through the park?	It is not possible to use materials other than Tarmac on adoptable roads, as the Highways Department will not adopt roads with materials such as paving stones, it has to be Tarmac to be adopted.
The Applicant is encouraged to consider celebrating entrances/access points to play areas and POS for example through raised street sections or a change in paving material to help with wayfinding and navigation.	Key intersections and focal squares within the development are highlighted with a change in surface material. Entrances to the central green corridor are celebrated through the introduction of seating areas.
Can the Applicant clarify the rationale for block paving across certain street intersections? Although these 'squares' are stated in key areas of the Masterplan, there is little further detail to explain how the building enclosure will define the space and create an interesting corner point to aid wayfinding.	Block paving is only used in Private drives as Rochdale Council's Highways Department only accepts tarmac for adoptable roads.
As required by local policies P3 and G3, and in the interests of reducing the impact on the environment, the Applicant will be required to demonstrate how all the materials chosen are sustainable (amongst other design principles) through the Masterplan proposals.	All our Materials are chosen from reputable and reliable suppliers and the products can be traced back to suppliers.
Evening and Night-Time	
The Applicant is encouraged to consider how different architectural and landscape materials might appear after dark and under certain lights and consider where lighter surfaces could help make spaces feel naturally brighter, where appropriate.	Please refer to the Design and Access Statement Addendum - page 18. Street Lighting Plan to be provide at a later stage and can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition.
The Applicant is encouraged to consider sensitively lit walking and cycling routes within streets and open spaces to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport. As set out in local Policy P3, the applicant will be required to demonstrate how the relevant criteria and design principles have been met and ensure a well-designed, accessible and safe environment.	Street Lighting Plan to be provide at a later stage and can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition.
It is key to the pedestrian experience to maintain good sightlines along streets and towards key features through de-cluttering, balancing light and dark, and avoiding glare.	The Planning Layout (ref: 203002 Rev 002) shows the locations of the benches and cycle paths . Benches are located generally allow pedestrian routes and where possible have nice views of the area
The Applicant should consider clustering street features such as benches, drinking fountains, cycle racks, and ensure they are accessible with good natural surveillance, as widely set out in local Policy P3.	The Planning Layout (ref: 203002) shows the locations of the benches and cycle paths . Benches are located generally allow pedestrian routes and where possible have nice views of the area