

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

4th December 2013

Schedule 1 - Planning applications for determination by Planning Committee

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TWC/2013/0774

Land off, Teece Drive, Priorslee, Telford, Shropshire
Erection of a new secondary school and sixth form buildings with associated hard play areas, car parking, landscaping and engineering works

APPLICANT

Telford & Wrekin Council

RECEIVED

19/09/2013

PARISH

St. Georges and Priorslee

WARD

Priorslee

OFFICER

Rob Price

OBJECTIONS RECEIVED: YES

MAIN ISSUES: Principle of Development, Green Network, Design, Access, Highway Safety, Parking, Character and Residential Amenity, Open Space, Ecology, Drainage

PROPOSAL:

This is a full detailed application for permission for the construction of school buildings and associated facilities, providing 750 secondary school places for 11 to 16 year olds and 150 places for post 16 year olds. The school will serve the existing communities of Priorslee, Redhill and St Georges in the east of Telford, providing much needed education places for existing communities and planned new residential developments.

The 8.64ha application site includes previously developed land associated with the former Celestica employment site at Castle Farm Way and Council owned open space. The proposed school buildings will be constructed on the previously developed land and the open space will continue to be used and enhanced as playing fields for shared use between the local community and school.

The school and sixth form will have a new sports hall, multi-use games area (MUGA), hard play area, amphitheatre, a senior football pitch and a junior football pitch (no sports pitch lighting is proposed). A wildlife garden and soft play area and incorporates important connectivity features such as two pedestrian accesses to the proposed residential scheme on the adjacent site should it come forward.

The existing open space is proposed to be enhanced through cut and fill earthworks to create more useable sports pitches including two senior football pitches, a cricket pitch and a 400m running track to be used during the appropriate seasons. The existing play area will remain and the ball court will be relocated to the northern part of the site. It is important to note will still be accessible to all and will not be fenced

off and sports pitch lighting does not form part of this proposal.

Rights of Way through the existing open space are to be temporarily diverted around the construction works and then new links through the open space will be reinstated, illuminated and provide improved links to footpaths and the national cycle network.

Construction access is proposed to be taken from Castle Farm Way and the school is proposed to be served from Teece Drive off Priorslee Avenue.

The full extent of the former Celestica employment land site is owned by Castle Farm Telford LLP and is being promoted for residential use via a separate application for outline planning permission to the Council.

BACKGROUND:

Building Schools for the Future (BSF) was initiated in 2003 and comprised a new approach to secondary education provision and capital funding for Local Education Authorities and their partners.

The Council has explored a number of site options for a new secondary school in Priorslee during the BSF Programme.

An original site option for the sample BSF school was proposed on land owned by and adjacent to the existing Ricoh factory in Priorslee. Further to this site being abandoned due to commercial reasons the Abraham Darby Sports and Learning Community became the sample scheme in the BSF programme.

The October 2010 spending review saw the BSF budget cut by a third and the Council have chosen to continue with a programme of educational transformation for the whole of the Borough rather than focus on a few schools.

A potential second site for a secondary school in Priorslee was proposed at the end of Salisbury Avenue. This site was not only outside of the built up urban area on greenfield land it was on the other side of an arterial road and consequently less accessible to the local population and less sustainable. Issues around deliverability were also recognised and an alternative site was sought.

The current proposal has been chosen as a more sustainable and deliverable choice than that of the Salisbury Avenue site chosen for a secondary school and sixth form college in Priorslee.

The Council's BSF Programme has sought to deliver regeneration benefits through the transformation of education and community facilities in Telford. Phase 1 is nearing completion and has included projects at Abraham Darby Sports and Learning Community, Madeley Academy, Newport Girls High School, Mount Gilbert

School and Phoenix School.

The Council's Phase 2 BSF proposals represent a series of integrated developments that include the provision of:

- New community facilities in Stirchley, to include a new nursery, primary and secondary school with virtual teacher centre.
- A 1,200 place 11-16 school on land adjacent to the existing Oakengates Leisure Centre, to serve the communities of Donnington, Oakengates, Trench and Wrockwardine Wood.
- A 900 place school and sixth form for ages 11-18 at a new site in Priorslee.
- A 1,200 place 11-16 school in Wellington.

All of the Council's BSF proposals have been subject to formal public consultation beginning in November and December 2011 and including meetings for student councils, staff members and governors and open meetings for parents and the local community at each school.

The results of the Council's consultation are set out in a report to Cabinet dated 26th April 2012 and document the decision to pursue a 900 place school at Priorslee, rather than the 1,050 place school proposed originally.

Shepherd Construction and the Council have carried out further public consultation in connection with the emerging proposals at Teece Drive. The consultation revealed general support for the principle of a new school in the Priorslee area but concerns were expressed regarding the proposed access arrangements.

Further details of the consultation activities are set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) prepared by Alliance Planning and the Design and Access Statement (DAS) prepared by FaulknerBrowns.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

A formal request for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion was submitted to Telford and Wrekin Council on 19th August 2013. The Council's formal Screening Opinion has confirmed that EIA is not necessary in this case and that an Environmental Statement is not required to accompany planning the application.

This planning application presents the final scheme for approval and comprises the following:

- Completed Application Forms and Certificates (Alliance Planning)
- Architectural Plans and Drawings (FaulknerBrowns)
- Air Quality Screening Assessment Report (RSK)

- Arboricultural Assessment (HSP Consulting)
- Biodiversity Report (Atkins)
- Design and Access Statement (FaulknerBrowns)
- Foul Sewerage and Utilities Plans
- Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy (HSP Consulting)
- Ground Investigations Reports (Phase I and II) (HSP Consulting)
- Landscape Proposals (Colour Urban Design)
- Noise Assessment (Pace Consult)
- Planning Statement (this Document) (Alliance Planning)
- Statement of Community Involvement (Alliance Planning)
- Topographical Survey (HSP Consulting)
- Transport Assessment (Atkins)

SITE & SURROUNDINGS:

The 8.64ha application site is located approximately 2.5km to the east of Telford Town Centre and within the administrative boundary of Telford and Wrekin Council. The site falls within the Telford settlement boundary and includes derelict previously developed land associated with the former Celestica employment site and adjacent open space and playing pitch.

The former Celestica employment land is owned by Castle Farm Telford LLP and accessed from Castle Farm Way. The buildings associated with this use have been demolished and substantial earthworks carried out in preparation for a previous mixed use (residential and commercial) development. The earthworks involved the creation of a basement level and have resulted in the storage of material in stockpiles in the south western corner of the site.

The open space or 'community land' as referenced on the drawings, is owned by Telford and Wrekin Council and forms part of the Wrekin Local Plan Green Network designation. It is accessed off a track leading from Teece Drive and other local footpaths and contains a car park, single sports pitch, children's playground, small multi-use games area (MUGA) and managed grassland.

The proposal is to locate the school buildings in the south western part of the former Celestica Employment Site, with the remainder of the former employment land being promoted for residential use by Castle Farm Telford LLP under a separate outline planning application.

In terms of the wider surroundings, there is existing residential development to the north and west, with Castle Farm Way and open countryside beyond. Priorslee lake (a balancing lake and designated County Wildlife Site) is located approximately 0.15km to the south east and Junction 4 of the M54 Motorway beyond. Immediately to the south, there is an existing woodland belt and then commercial premises operated by Ricoh, the M54 Motorway and the Stafford Park employment area. The

University of Wolverhampton - Telford Campus is also to the west.

It is proposed the new school will be accessed off Teece Drive. Six dwellings front onto the northern side of the road. Approximately 50 dwellings are also located off the Pitchford Drive cul-de-sac and served by Teece Drive. The road is 6m wide at its western end but narrows to 3m at its eastern end where it turns into a vehicular access track with a segregated footway / cycleway serving the community land and Priorslee lake.

There is currently no pedestrian access to the former Celestica Employment Site, but there are a number of linkages through the 'community land' including Public Rights of Way along the eastern and western boundaries. There is public footpath along Teece Drive and immediately to the south of Teece Drive there is a pedestrian underpass providing a link to the residential area on the northern side of Priorslee Avenue. Route 81 of the National Cycle Network is also nearby and runs close to the northern boundary of the site. The closest railway station is the Telford Central Station located off Euston Way, approximately 2km to the southwest. The nearest bus stops are located on Priorslee Avenue, where an hourly service operates to Telford Town Centre (weekdays and Saturdays).

Relatively few trees are present on the former employment land, whilst the community land includes individual trees and unmanaged woodland, as well as areas of mature planting. The mature oak tree that is located within the open space is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order and will be retained as part of the proposals.

The site levels vary from between approximately 135m AOD along the north-west boundary and 125m AOD along the south east boundary. There are significant changes in levels across the site as terracing and plateaus have been created to accommodate previous and current land uses (i.e. the existing sports pitch).

The Environment Agency Flood Maps indicate that the site is entirely within Flood Zone 1, where there is a low probability (less than 1 in 1000 chance) of fluvial flooding. The closest surface water feature is the Wesley Brook to the south. To the south east, the brook flows into Priorslee lake balancing pond/reservoir. The lake is managed by Severn Trent Water and discharges via a weir to continue as the Wesley Brook further east.

A public foul sewer runs north to south within the former employment land and was partly diverted in 2009. A public storm sewer runs north to south within the site and discharges to Priorslee lake. There are no private sewers within the site.

No ecological designations affect the site and there are no internationally or nationally designated sites within 2km. The Priorslee lake balancing pond is

designated as a county wildlife site, but otherwise there are no other statutory or non-statutory designations within 1km.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

The former Celestica employment land has been the subject of a number of planning applications to secure its redevelopment.

Planning application reference W2006/0966 was submitted in 2006 and sought outline planning permission for 51,095sqm employment floorspace (Use Class B1/B2), 550 residential dwellings, a 6,503sqm hotel and associated access roads and other infrastructure. The Council resolved to grant planning permission in 2007 and then again in 2010 but did not issue a decision notice as the developers did not sign and complete the necessary Section 106 Agreement.

Notwithstanding the above, planning application reference W2008/0457 sought planning permission for 'Earthworks in preparation for commercial and residential space'. Planning permission was granted by the Council on 3rd July 2008, and the earthworks were carried out between 2009 and 2010.

Most recently, planning application reference TWC/2013/0423 sought planning permission for 'Earthworks in preparation for a school and residential development' and planning permission granted on 19th August 2013. This permission grants approval for the earthworks only and does not relate to the principle of the site's redevelopment for education or residential uses.

This current planning application seeks permission for the construction of new school buildings and associated infrastructure only. A separate standalone outline planning application has been submitted by Castle Farm Telford LLP for the construction of up to 600 residential dwellings on the remainder of the former Celestica employment land.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY:

National Planning Policy Framework

LDF Core Strategy

CS3 Telford

CS9 Accessibility and social inclusion

CS10 Community facilities

CS11 Open space

CS15 Urban design

Saved Wrekin Local Plan Policies:

UD2 Design criteria

UD3 Urban design assessments

UD4 Landscape design
T4 Development principles
T22 Planning obligations
OL3 Green network
OL4 Development in the green network
OL5 Extensions and redevelopment in the green network
OL6 Open land
OL11 Woodland and trees
LR1 Provision of community facilities
LR4 Outdoor recreational open space

CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

For all consultations received by the Development Management Team the following text below represents a summary of the salient points made in relation to the application. Full versions of all consultation responses can be viewed by Members of the Planning Committee via the Council's e-planning system.

Standard Consultee Responses:

Cllr Veronica Fletcher: Object due to extra traffic generated by the proposal and the effect this will have on the area and local residents, as well as loss of green space and amenity for local residents.

St. Georges and Priorslee Parish Council: Object due to extreme concerns regarding the access to the school, impact on residents and the loss of green space.

Environment and Planning Policy: No objection. In principle the proposal is supported as the site is considered to be in a sustainable location on developable (white land) and previously used land (brownfield). The use of the site for education use will bring significant community benefits to the eastern part of Telford, in line with Core Strategy Policy CS10. It is noted that a travel plan will accompany the development of the school in order to promote more sustainable transport movements. The Environment and Planning Policy Team are satisfied the existing green network land to the west of the school site will remain in sport and recreation use, in line with Policy OL6 of the Wrekin Local Plan.

Highways: No objections subject to conditions in relation to highway improvements in the Priorslee area including construction and drainage details, specifications, signage details, access to the school car park, a site construction management plan and a travel plan. A S278 agreement will look to secure off-site highway infrastructure in terms of the signalisation of Castle Farm Way and Priorslee Avenue, a TOUCAN crossing across Castle Farm Way in the vicinity of Salisbury Avenue and a pedestrian refuge and associated accommodation works to the surrounding

footways in the vicinity of Cadman Drive and Brookvale Road. Highway mitigation in terms of traffic regulation orders, maintenance costs and public transport enhancement are also requested and will be secured via a memorandum.

Road Safety & Sustainable Transport: Comment. No details on anticipated bus service. Barriers to walking or cycling need to be identified. A Travel Plan Working Group should be set up by the school to promote walking and cycling to school. Road safety is a key message for pupils. Car share should be encouraged.

Local Access Forum: Supports subject to conditions and notes public footpaths run through and adjacent to the site. Access to and the line of these footpaths should be retained unless the developer has undertaken the statutory legal requirements for a diversion or extinguishment.

Parks and Open Spaces: Support subject to conditions regarding detail of NEAP, programme of works for open space, maintenance of open space, footpath construction detail and restriction of motor vehicles to the open space. The officer notes that an upgraded Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) is to be provided in the area of open space (to the north) should the proposed adjacent residential scheme come forward. The officer has also expressed concern regarding the proximity of the proposed adjacent dwellings to the relocated games court, queried access to the play facilities during construction, maintenance responsibility and suggests removal of hedge adjacent to new footpath running down the eastern perimeter of the open space.

Sports & Leisure: No comments received.

Aboriginal: Support subject to conditions regarding tree protection, services and drainage.

Ecology: Comment that there are no priority habitats on-site, which comprises; woodland shelter belt, amenity and species poor grassland, 1 pool and 1 ditch section, scattered trees and scrub. There are a number of significant trees on-site that have bat roosting capability which are to be retained. There will be loss of ponds and some woodland but this is off-set with mitigation including replacement trees as well as bat and bird boxes through condition. In addition external lighting detail is requested to be conditioned.

Drainage: Support subject to a condition and informative regarding a scheme for surface water drainage and attenuation for the development.

Environmental Health (Pollution Control): No objection subject to a restrictive condition regarding mechanical plant noise.

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land): Support the land is suitable for the intended use, no condition required.

Urban Design: Whilst the proposal for a new school is welcomed and there is no objection in principle given that the issues of highways and topography can be resolved satisfactorily, the scheme does not seem to have taken account some of the key points on design raised in pre application discussions including issues around:

- Scale and massing – hard and uncompromising
- Materials – use of render
- Management – including wayfinding issues
- Pedestrian access (main entrance)

Whilst it is acknowledged that the practical aspects of the internal activities and the various educational requirements of this project are significant as well as working within an overall budget, the resulting scheme could have been better in an exceptional location.

External Consultee Responses:

Highways Agency: No objections.

Sport England: No objection subject to conditions regarding playing pitch construction, use of pitches for sport, community use agreement, management and maintenance scheme, design of sports hall and changing accommodation.

Natural England: No comments received.

Shropshire Ornithological Society: No comments received.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust: No comments received.

Friends of Priorslee Lake: No comments received.

English Heritage: No comment.

Environment Agency: No comments received.

Severn Trent Water: No objections subject to condition regarding foul and surface water as well as advising of a public sewer on site.

Shropshire Fire Service: Comment suggested informative that should be attached to any consent issued.

West Mercia Constabulary: Support subject to condition. There are opportunities to design out crime and /or the fear of crime and to promote community safety. The applicant should aim to achieve the Secured by Design (SBD) award status for this development.

Local Representations:

RICOH: Support subject to conditions and note that relationships with their neighbours are considered very important to the company and look forward to welcoming and working with the school. The proposal removes future potential for improvement of HGV access to the site and increases the residual risk of potential accidents. Suitable mitigation is required to counter this risk. Concern regarding use and capacity of the foul and surface water sewers and sustainable methods of drainage. Access to gate and water meters is needed during construction and thereafter. Residual risk of noise and air pollution remain. No objection to the proposal subject to these issues being addressed.

At the time of writing the Council had received 89 objections including those from residents groups such as the Priorslee Protection Association and Priorslee Community Association. Seven comments and two supporting representation on the proposal have also been received. The issues/concerns raised in relation to the application are summarised below in no particular order:

- Against the use of Teece Drive as access to the proposed school
- Access should be from Castle Farm Way or via Severn Trent land
- Increase in traffic and congestion
- Highway safety will worsen
- Traffic Assessment is flawed and unrealistic
- Signalisation of Castle Farm Way/Priorslee Avenue Junction required
- Lack of bus and car spaces on the school site
- Highway mitigation will be necessary
- Teece Drive should be used as a cycle route and footway for the pupils
- Lack of assessment of cumulative effects of all development
- Proposal will reduce traffic locally as pupils will be able to walk/cycle to school
- Loss of residential amenity
- Increased air and noise pollution
- Drainage issues
- Culvert under Teece Drive is redundant
- Increase surface water run-off due to impermeable areas created
- Support the principle of the school
- No objection to the location of the school
- Lack of earthworks detail
- The proposal would create unsafe embankments

- Access to open space, pitches and footpaths must remain
- Community use agreement required
- Loss of open space/fenced off
- Loss of park space
- Loss of woodland
- Loss of public footpaths
- Too many football pitches
- Effect on natural feeding habitat for bat population when trees removed
- Retention of disabled access for the open space
- Lack of pre-application consultation by the applicant
- Lack of community gain

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

This proposal was the result of an extensive pre-application process with key internal planning consultees and an Environmental Impact screening opinion request was submitted and answered in advance of the planning application being submitted.

The application is in detail so all matters are to be considered now unless to be secured by condition or under a memorandum of understanding in terms of payments from one Council department to another e.g. if highways works are required as mitigation to allow the development to go ahead.

Principle of Development

The principle of development is supported in this location as it is within the built up area of Telford as defined by the Proposals Map of the Wrekin Local Plan, accordingly the principle of development is considered acceptable. Furthermore the site is well located near to Telford Town and Priorslee Local Centres, on the edge of an existing residential area and is easily accessible for cyclists and pedestrians.

The site has three designations in the local plan, it is shown to be partly white (developable), partly allocated employment site and partly green network land on the Wrekin Local Plan Proposals Map. More recently the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that applications for alternative uses of land or buildings on previously used land including employment sites should be treated on their merits.

In 2010, the Borough had 227.2 hectares of employment land (including committed sites and those for which planning permission has been granted for new employment uses). In the light of the substantial supply, it is not considered that this small element of the application site is required in the Borough's portfolio of employment

land. It is considered that there are better employment sites available in the portfolio that would be more suitable for employment use than the application site and that development of the application site for a school and sixth form would not undermine the Council's strategy of maintaining a portfolio of employment sites that are attractive to market needs.

It is proposed that the new school buildings will only be located on the brownfield (previously used land) part of the site. The small area of allocated employment land is proposed to have the school's wildlife area and junior sports pitch located on it. The development on white developable land makes good use of previously used brownfield land. The rationalisation and enhancement of the open space through a cut and fill exercise to make the land more efficient and useable is considered to be appropriate as the open space will continue to be accessible community land for all.

The golden thread running through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is one of a presumption in favour of sustainable development and notes that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

The NPPF also notes that the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth and that Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth.

The NPPF refers to how the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Planning decisions should aim to achieve places which promote

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

Significantly the NPPF notes the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education and should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key

planning issues before applications are submitted.

The NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- The loss resulting from the proposed developments would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss

The proposal does not seek to build on the existing open space, only to rationalise, enhance and make more efficient use of land.

The NPPF also looks to Local Authorities to provide better rights of way links to existing networks including National Trails such as the National Cycle Route Network in this case.

The following planning policies from the Core Strategy are relevant to this proposal:

Policy CS3 relates to development in Telford. This states that Telford will accommodate the majority of new services and that all development will support Telford's role as a sub-regional focus for balanced growth. The development is located within the existing urban area of Telford adjacent to the urban fabric of Priorslee and so accords with policy CS3.

Policy CS9 aims to ensure that everyone is afforded reasonable opportunity to access schools, recreation and open space, sports facilities and other key services. As part of this, development is required to promote sustainable forms of transport, locate in centres to minimise the distance people have to travel, increase the safety of travel, and include measures that minimise the negative environmental impacts of travel. Whilst the proposal is not within a District of Local Centres the development proposal is located on the fringe of an established urban community which has good provision of services and facilities, including local shops on Priorslee Avenue, public transport via the number 24 bus service that runs between Telford Town Centre and Oakengates, and primary walking and cycling links including via the Hutchinson Way and National Cycle Route Network Route Number 81 and other nearby routes. Improvements to existing pedestrian and cycle accessibility in and out of the site are also proposed. The proposed development would therefore accord with this policy.

Policy CS10 relates to community facilities, which include schools. The loss of such facilities is resisted but new provision is supported. Any new facilities should be

located in existing centres or have good accessibility by foot, cycle and public transport. If located on open space (e.g. Green Network) then they must demonstrate environmental and social benefits to the local community.

As highlighted above, whilst the development proposal is not located within an existing centre but does, however, benefit from good pedestrian, cycle and public transport links, as described under policy CS9 above. As a new school building it would provide significant benefits to the local community through enhanced education and leisure provision. It is proposed the school will have 32 cycle spaces and improved pedestrian and cycle links and therefore strongly accords with this policy.

Policy CS11 seeks to protect and enhance open space. Development on open space is only permitted where there will be significant community and environmental benefits and where the open space does not contribute towards local open space standards.

As described under the policies above, the proposal would deliver significant community benefit as it would provide high quality educational and leisure facilities. The existing open space will be re-modelled through a cut and fill exercise to maximise the playing pitch area available on the land. Rights of way will remain but will be improved and diverted around playing pitches. The development proposal is therefore in accordance with this policy.

The following planning policies from the Wrekin Local Plan are relevant to this proposal:

Policies OL3, OL4 and OL5 seek to protect the Green Network and only permit development within it where there are exceptional circumstances, the proposal contributes or is complementary to the aims of the Green Network, where environmental and community benefits are an integral part of the proposal and where redevelopment proposals are not of a scale which would be incompatible with the long term aims of the Green Network in the locality.

This proposal seeks to provide a new secondary school, sixth form and associated facilities to the area of Priorslee and is considered an exceptional circumstance. The proposal is for new and enhanced educational and leisure facilities that will be accessible to the community and includes landscaping and ecological mitigation required under policies OL4 and OL5.

The Green Network part of the site is valued in terms of the open space, linkages, woodland and ecology values it holds all of which meet the original aims and objectives of the green network policy. The Green Network policy allows for development as long as it does not significantly affect the function or aims of the

green network. The proposal seeks to provide new buildings on the brownfield element of the sites and only rationalise the existing open space through a cut and fill operation. This will create more useable playing pitch area, the ball court will be re-located and improved and the footpaths will be diverted and upgraded, therefore it is considered that the proposal accords with the green network policy.

Policy OL6 seeks to protect open land adjacent to built up areas where that land contributes to the character and amenity of the area, has value as a recreational open space or importance as natural habitat. It is considered this proposal accords with this policy as the open space will remain open for recreational use by all further to the temporary works to provide more playing fields on the same area of land.

OL11 seeks to retain and enhance trees and woodland of significant amenity value and that make a valuable contribution the character of the landscape, a settlement, its setting or have significant ecological value. In noting the loss of a number of trees through the proposal to re-level the existing open space it is considered this proposal keeps the important trees and enhances with replacements and will result in a more manageable woodland buffer.

Policy LR1 states that community facilities, including educational establishments will be permitted where the proposed development is located in a District or Local Centre. Where the development cannot be located in an existing centre it should:

- (a) be located on a public transport route;
- (b) demonstrate suitable access arrangements and adequate provision for car parking;
- (c) occupy land allocated for development, or derelict land. Exceptionally, such proposals may be permissible within the Green Network, subject to the provisions of policy OL4;
- (d) not have an adverse impact on the character and amenity of the local area;
- (e) not be located on a site required to meet essential employment growth;
- (f) satisfy the environmental health, urban design and other appropriate policies in this Plan.

In regard to points (a) and (b), it is considered the site location has access to public transport and access arrangements and car parking can be accommodated with appropriate mitigation. In regards to points (c) and (e) these have been addressed above but to summarise the site includes a small element of employment land that is considered surplus to requirement and the open space is within the Green Network however the proposal will not affect the long term aims of this policy. In regard to point (d) this matter is discussed later in this report but to note the character of the area is sub-urban and a school is considered to fit well in this context. Finally, in regard to point (f), the proposal is in general conformity with the other relevant planning policies identified above, however the views of other specialist officers are discussed addressed later in this report in order to determine any urban design,

highways, drainage and environmental health implications of the proposed development.

Policy LR4 states that the council will refuse applications for development that will result in the loss of existing recreational open space which is not replaced in a suitable alternative location to an equal or improved specification. The development seeks to improve the level of recreational open space available, as such the proposed development is in general conformity with this policy.

Design

The NPPF refers to the Government attaching great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.

The NPPF also notes that visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy notes that the design of development will assist in creating and sustaining safe places, strengthening local identity and projecting a positive local image through influencing the appearance and use of the local environment. It is considered the proposal that the proposal will create a much needed secondary school and sixth form in the local area which will have facilities available for community use including more useable area of playing fields.

In principle, this proposal is supported in order to facilitate the redevelopment of land which has been derelict for a number of years, the main reason is one of sustainability, which includes, the recycling of brownfield land, its location, adjacent to a residential area and a major employer in the town. Despite being partly a brownfield site, it is an attractive area with an almost rural feel to it. Generally, it is well screened site so that its visual impact of the new school buildings will be fairly limited outside of the adjacent open space and immediate local area.

In noting that there is opportunity to create a strong visual arrival point and improvements to the buildings appearance it is considered that the proposal delivers a scheme that will offer education opportunities for 11-18 year olds and sporting

opportunities for all. The site sits adjacent to the existing urban fabric and built form of Telford and is well connected through footpaths and cycleways to the local community, local centre and surroundings and via public transport beyond the site.

The applicant has stated there are no existing buildings in the immediate vicinity of the school site that influence the layout or design approach although the constraints at the site dictate that the development make efficient use of space. The design approach and materials have been selected so that the building appears as an integrated feature within the redeveloped site. The building has been set back within the site to ensure that it is not dominant in appearance from Teece Drive. The design response does not seek to create an iconic building, rather an appearance that is appropriate to its setting.

The Design and Access Statement notes throughout the process of continuous assessment and involvement, a number of key principles have emerged which have informed the design proposals:

- Maximising the educational benefit of the development through the creation of high quality, aspirational environments that support learning, promote good behaviour and engender pride in the students, staff and wider community;
- Maximising the available site area for the provision of sporting and learning facilities;
- Maximising the accessibility of facilities to the wider community;

The applicant states the key drivers which have informed the location and concept of the building are as follows:

- The existing access and contrasting uses of each half of the site,
- The existing changes in level across each side of the site;
- The location of existing diverted sewers in the ground which constrain the eastern site;
- The constrained development zone requires an efficient building form to maximise the available external space for outdoor learning, social activity and play, and to allow access for servicing;
- The access route to the south of the site suggests a building which can address this route and allow parking in front of it;
- The use of the building necessitates a form which is easy to navigate and reflects the organisational structure of the school.

In terms of overall design and layout it is concluded that the three storey building and associated facilities would sit comfortably within its surroundings at the end of Teece Drive. The site is in an enclosed location where existing vegetation and open space restrict views and will provide a buffer to adjoining residential and employment uses. Accordingly from a visual viewpoint the new building is considered to have an

acceptable impact upon local amenity.

Whilst some of the misgivings in relation to detailed design (as expressed in the comments of the Urban Design officer) are noted, these are not considered sufficient to warrant a reason for refusal especially given the key drivers behind the location, concept and therefore the design of the building.

In noting the West Mercia Constabulary officers comments it is considered that schools through Ofsted requirements are required to provide a safe and secure learning environment, as such it is considered that a secured by design condition is not necessary.

Accordingly, on balance it is considered the proposal meets the objectives of adopted design criteria as set out in policy UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan and Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy. This being subject to the imposition of planning conditions relating to the samples of materials proposed as well as allowing for consideration of some of the finer design detailing, especially around landscaping and street furniture.

Highway Related Matters:

The proposal has been accompanied by a full Transport Assessment that assesses the cumulative effects of both this proposal and the application reference TWC/2013/0769 for residential development (outline) on land adjacent to this application. The TA submitted suggests the proposal can work with limited mitigation.

The school will be accessed off Teece Drive and the TA predicts that with the proposed junction works in place, the Priorslee Avenue / Teece Drive junction is capable of accommodating the school traffic with minimal delays and queues. Delay levels would increase during 'exceptionally busy' periods, but would remain within manageable levels (up to 19 seconds per vehicle during the morning peak).

The Priorslee Avenue / Castle Farm Way junction is predicted to only experience minimal queues and delays in 2015 with the school and residential traffic. Queues in 2030 are also expected to remain minimal, but average delay levels are expected to increase to 50 seconds with development flows. In any case, the expected delays would be 28 seconds without the proposed development traffic and the TA concludes that overall, the Junction will operate with 24% spare capacity in the 2030 future design year (with development), and with minimal queue lengths.

The A5 / Redhill Way roundabout is predicted to operate within capacity for all assessed flow scenarios. The queue lengths with traffic from the proposed developments are predicted to be minimal and average delays are not expected to rise above 6 seconds per vehicle at 2015 and 13 seconds per vehicle in 2030.

Finally, the Priorslee Avenue / A5 / Holyhead Road Junction is also expected to continue to operate within capacity post development. Average delays are not expected to rise to above 6 seconds per vehicle at 2015 and 17 seconds per vehicle at 2030. Overall, the anticipated increase in delay levels and queue lengths generated are deemed to have a minimal impact on the operation of the junction.

The TA concludes that both the school and residential developments will have minimal impact on the highway network, with all junctions assessed predicted to continue to operate within capacity following the addition of all development traffic and committed development traffic in the 2030 future design year.

It is important to note that whilst it is useful for studies to consider the cumulative impacts beyond their own boundaries each planning application should be considered on its own merits and standalone with its own set of mitigation if required. This is important as any proposal can fail for a myriad of reasons and as such this application should be considered on its own merits. It has its own defined planning unit and access and does not rely on any other scheme coming forward.

The Highway Agency had originally objected to the proposal on the basis there was a lack of detail regarding modelling data to ascertain whether the proposal would adversely affect the functioning of the M54. This information was provided to the HA who have reviewed it with their consultants JMP and now offer no objections to the proposal.

The concerns raised by St. Georges and Priorslee Parish Council as well as local residents are noted. These concerns primarily focus on the negative effects of the proposal in regard to the vehicular access point for the school via Teece Drive off Priorslee Avenue, increase in traffic and congestion, highway safety issues and lack of bus and car parking.

It was apparent at the Priorslee Parish meeting to consider this application that most interested parties that attended were supportive of the new school in principle but primarily objected to the proposed access via Teece Drive.

The Priorslee Protection Association residents group have commissioned their own transport consultants (Corun) who have produced a report that queries the data used in the Transport Assessment submitted with the application, objects to the proposal on the grounds of highway safety and capacity and advocates the proposed new school be accessed from Castle Farm Way.

This report has been rebutted by Atkins who produced the original Transport Assessment as well as Alliance planning who provide further clarification that their data is robust and sound and suggest mitigation works where necessary.

Although alternative access points are not being considered as the proposal submitted is for access via Teece Drive it should be noted if the Corun reports findings were followed through to conclusion that people tend to utilise the most convenient way of dropping children off and picking them up from school. Should access have been considered from Castle Farm Way that would still not preclude the use of Priorslee Avenue and Teece Drive for drop off/pick up without significant mitigation to prevent this occurring. As it is the current proposal is its own standalone planning unit with its own access and cannot rely on other schemes coming forward.

The existing Rights of Way through the site crossing the open space will be diverted both on a temporary basis during the construction works and on a more permanent basis for the final scheme as shown in the deposited plans. The temporary diversion will still allow the open space to be crossed from east to west at the northern part of the open space. On a more permanent basis the proposal looks to recreate a more central east to west link and re-define the existing north to south route on the eastern boundary of the open space to be more akin to the definitive Right of Way which ran parallel to the boundary. This ensures accessibility remains and will be subject to costs to be paid by the applicant and secured through condition. Subject to these improvements the open space would remain accessible and the proposed school and sports facilities would be well connected to the surrounding area with regard to pedestrian and cycle access.

The proposed facilities are expected to employ 115 staff, taking this into account in conjunction with the student base, the proposal provides 140 standard spaces and 8 disabled spaces and is supported by bike stands and the sustainable location close to public transport. This is considered reasonable and accordingly sufficient parking spaces are provided and in accordance with local policies T4, LR1 CS9 and CS10.

Policy T22 states that the transport needs generated by the development will be provided by transport improvement to be funded by the developer. The response from the Highway Authority has set out the contributions that need to be sought for transport improvements.

Whilst the concerns raised regarding the use of Teece Drive are noted, it is considered that this is a standalone application and cannot be dependent on other schemes coming forward to provide access. As such the improvement of the existing access off Priorslee Avenue onto Teece Drive along with improvement works to Teece Drive and the local Rights of Way network (together with offsite infrastructure works to be secured through a S278 agreement) are considered by the Highway Authority to be acceptable and the proposal will not prejudice the safety and free flow of highway users.

The proposal is accessible for the local catchment area via local footpaths, is located in close proximity to a bus route, and has sufficient car parking.

Accordingly the proposals are considered acceptable given this advice and in respect of Policies T4 and T22 of the Wrekin Local Plan providing the inclusion of the conditions and contributions are attached to any permission granted.

There are no objections in principle to the proposal from the Highway Agency or from the Highway Authority subject to conditions and planning mitigation specified. It is considered then that sufficient information has been provided in order to come to a decision and that through appropriate mitigation and planning conditions the proposal is considered acceptable.

Character and Residential Amenity:

The character of the area is considered to be residential suburban in the main, although the close proximity of RICOH as one of Telford's primary employers should be noted along with the University of Wolverhampton's Telford Campus. It is felt that secondary school, sixth form and sports hall sits well in this locality, where it is required and potentially where links can be forged with RICOH and the University of Wolverhampton as neighbours.

As noted above apart from the obvious effects of an increase in traffic related to the proposal, the open space and woodland will provide a significant buffer to the proposed school buildings so any associated air quality and noise concern will be minimal and is considered acceptable when weighed in the balance at looking at the bigger picture of the gain of the new school, sixth form and sports facilities that will be available to the public. The construction phase of the proposal may sometimes cause temporary effects to residential amenity but it is important to note in this case all construction traffic will be directly from Castle Farm Way and works will be controlled through a Site Environmental Management Plan secured through a condition. Consequently it is considered that the proposal overall will not have an adverse impact on the residential amenities or the character of the surrounding area.

Open Space:

The open space is currently made up of a single football pitch to the south and area of open land to the north that accommodates a children's play area and ball court. Trees and hedges bound the site and is accessible from two points on Teece Drive to the south, Cadman Drive to the north-west and Kew Gardens to the north with footpaths crossing the open space approximately at the centre. It is noted the open space is a valued local facility used for recreational purposes.

The proposal seeks through an earthworks programme to create an enhanced and more useable area of open space including a sports pitch area that will contain two football pitches, a cricket pitch and a running track to the south while retaining the

open land to the north. A number of trees are to be removed on the eastern and southern boundaries as well as in the central part of the site due to the earthworks, however suitable replacements will be secured through condition. In addition the existing hedge between the proposed school and re-configured open space will be lost to the south of the site due to the earthworks. The hedge has some merit in terms of its linkage of green spaces and being a natural barrier that will soften the school buildings when viewed from the open space. As such it is appropriate to retain the hedge where possible but replace toward the southern end of the open space. The access points and footpaths will remain approximately the same with a central footpath running east to west.

The existing NEAP facility is to remain and if the adjacent residential proposal under a spate outline planning application comes forward this will be upgraded as this proposal does not create the demand for planning obligations of this type. Due to the earthworks proposal the ball court is to be re-located to the north and is considered to be in an appropriate and accessible location for existing and proposed residential dwellings should they come forward. As the residential scheme is for outline only and approval of layout is not sought the scheme will have to take into account the 30m standoff required if it comes forward. Access to the existing NEAP will be maintained during construction works through a programme of works to be conditioned. In addition the restriction of access of motorised vehicles to the open space will also be secured by way of condition.

Sport England has recommended approval subject to conditions regarding pitch drainage and a community use agreement and these will be conditioned.

Ecology

The proposal was accompanied by an Ecology surveys that identified no priority habitats on-site but did identify a number of significant trees and a woodland shelter belt, a pool and a ditch. There will be loss of some of the woodland but recommendations coming out of the surveys include retention of hedgerows and trees where possible and mitigation through replacement trees and new bat and bird boxes. It is considered that the proposal is acceptable and the ecology mitigation and design of external lighting should be secured through condition to protect bats.

Drainage

Due to ongoing discussions with Severn Trent Water regarding the use of Priorslee Balancing Reservoir for surface water flows TWC Drainage Engineers have suggested a surface water drainage condition that would allow for attenuation on-site should the use of Priorslee Reservoir not be considered appropriate. This approach is considered to be acceptable and as such a condition will be attached to any permission.

Environmental Health

The applicants have submitted ground investigation reports that have surveyed the site and conclude that the site can be suitably developed. Having reviewed these reports, Environmental Health has raised no objections in principle to this proposal.

In addition it is considered that any potential contamination or stability issues encountered on-site can be dealt with by way of standard conditions and through Paragraph 120 of the NPPF which clearly notes the responsibility for securing safe developments rests with the developer and/or landowner.

In relation to Pollution Control have no objections to the proposal subject to a condition regarding mechanical plant noise between the hours of 23:00 and 07:00 hours daily.

Conclusions:

The key benefit of the proposal is that in line with the Telford and Wrekin Building Schools for the Future programme, it would deliver a modern school, sixth form and associated sporting facilities. The proposals focus is very much with the community in mind with the ability for facilities within the school complex to be available for wider community use out of school hours.

Locating the proposed school, within an existing suburban area will provide for social inclusion and a wider community benefit which accords with policies CS3, CS9 and CS10 of the Core Strategy.

The site is shown to be partly white (developable), partly on an allocated employment site and partly green network land on the Wrekin Local Plan Proposals Map. More recently the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that applications for alternative uses of land or buildings on previously used land should be treated on their merits.

The development on white developable land makes good use of previously used brownfield land. The rationalisation of the open space through a cut and fill exercise to make the land more efficient and useable is considered to be appropriate as the open space will continue to be accessible community land for all.

The open space (community land) part of the application site is within the Green Network as identified in the Proposals Map of the Wrekin Local Plan. Policies OL3, OL4 and OL5 of the Wrekin Local Plan seek to protect the Green Network and only permit development within it where there are exceptional circumstances, where the development contributes or is complementary to the aims of the Green Network, or where environmental or community benefits are an integral part of the proposal. The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of

school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Accordingly proposal is for new and enhanced educational and leisure facilities and so it would deliver the significant community benefits required under policy OL4.

In terms of overall design and layout it is concluded that the three storey building and associated facilities would sit comfortably within its surroundings at the end of Teece Drive. The site is in an enclosed location where existing vegetation and open space restrict views and will provide a buffer to adjoining residential and employment uses. Accordingly from a visual viewpoint the new building is considered to have an acceptable impact upon local amenity.

Accordingly, on balance it is considered the proposal meets the objectives of adopted design criteria as set out in policy UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan and Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy. This being subject to the imposition of planning conditions relating to the samples of materials proposed as well as allowing for consideration of some of the finer design detailing, especially around landscaping and street furniture.

The proposal is accessible for the local catchment area via local footpaths, is located in close proximity to a bus route, and has sufficient car parking.

There is no objection in principle to the proposal from the Highway Agency or from the Highway Authority subject to conditions and planning mitigation specified the proposal is considered acceptable.

This is a standalone proposal and the proposed access is considered to be acceptable and will not affect highway safety or unduly affect the free flow of traffic subject to conditions and mitigation works. These include the upgrading of Teece Drive, Priorlsee Avenue, local Rights of Way and other highway infrastructure works to be secured under a S278 agreement and a memorandum.

Site drainage is understood to be resolvable either on-site or with surface water discharge to Priorlsee lake. Drainage will be secured by condition to ensure development proceeds in an acceptable manner.

In relation to Pollution Control no objections have been raised subject to a condition identifying noise limitations.

In summary, the proposal satisfies policy at the national through to local level and will result in significant benefit to the local community in this part of Telford. The local community are gaining a new secondary school, sixth form, access to a sports hall, multi-use games area, additional sports pitches, improved accessibility and connectivity with surrounding residential area. Community use of the new facilities will be secured through a community use agreement to be conditioned should

permission be granted.

Overall, on balance it is considered then that this proposal is acceptable in principal as the new school and facilities are located on previously used land in an accessible location on the fringe of the existing urban fabric of this part of Telford. The application represents sustainable development for which schemes are looked upon favourably in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusions above, the recommendation to the Planning Committee is that DELEGATED AUTHORITY be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:

A). The Council as landowner agreeing to provide a Memorandum signed by the Assistant Director Development, Business and Employment agreeing that the Council will provide the following sums at timescales to be agreed with TWC Highways:

- Traffic Regulation Order to encompass Teece Drive and Ricoh entrance junctions off Priorslee Avenue;
- £5,000 in connection with Traffic Regulation Order works elsewhere in Priorslee if required;
- Up to £24,000 commuted maintenance sum in respect of the signalisation works for the Castle Farm Way and Priorslee Avenue junction;
- Up to £12,000 commuted maintenance sum in respect of TOUCAN crossing in the vicinity of Salisbury Avenue where NCN81 crosses Castle Farm Way;
- Up to £10,000 toward the upgrade of bus stops in the vicinity of the proposal.

B). The following conditions (with authority to finalise conditions and reasons for approval to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager):

- | | | |
|-----|-----------|--|
| 1. | A04 | Time limit (full application) |
| 2. | B11 | Sample of materials |
| 3. | B120 | Details of enclosure |
| 4. | B121 | Landscaping design |
| 5. | B126 | Landscape management plan |
| 6. | B128 | Landscape maintenance |
| 7. | B150 | Site environmental management plan |
| 8. | BCustom | Foul and surface water drainage |
| 9. | B/CCustom | Ecology |
| 10. | BCustom | Highways |
| 11. | BCustom | Programme of works and protection of open space |
| 12. | BCustom | Sport England requirements including community use |

- 13. C39 Development in accordance with submitted plans
- 14. CCustom Retention and protection of trees and hedges as shown
- 15. DCustom Hours of use as per application form
- 16. DCustom Environmental Health noise levels

Informatives

- I32 Shropshire Fire Service
- I40 Conditions
- I44 Reasons for approval
- I106 Permission subject to memorandum agreement
- ICustom Ecology
- ICustom Surface water
- ICustom Bats
- ICustom Nesting wild birds
- ICustom Trenches
- ICustom Storage of materials

TWC/2013/0777

Aston Grove, Moorfield Lane, Church Aston, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 9EH
Outline application for residential development with associated access following
demolition of Aston Grove with all other matters reserved

APPLICANT

D & J Handley

RECEIVED

23/09/2013

PARISH

Church Aston, Newport

WARD

Church Aston and Lilleshall, Newport
West

OFFICER

Tim Williams

OBJECTIONS RECEIVED: Yes.

MAIN ISSUES: principle of housing development in this location, highway and traffic issues, ecology and Habitats Regulation considerations, other matters as discussed in report.

THE PROPOSAL:

This is an outline application with all matters other than the means of access (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) being “reserved matters” for consideration at a later stage via a separate application(s). The application is accompanied by an Illustrative Masterplan showing the approximate location of buildings, routes and open spaces.

The application is applying for permission for residential development following the demolition of an existing residential property called Aston Grove including improvements to the existing vehicular access off Wellington Road.

The Illustrative Plan indicates a total of 10 units with the application form stating 7 would be Open Market housing (5 three bed and 2 four bed) and 3 would be Social Rented Housing (2 two bed and 1 three bed).

The application site extends to an area of 0.77 hectares. The existing vehicular access from Wellington Road would be modified to improve visibility in a position so that no works would need to be undertaken to the boundary wall on the north side of the access or within the Root Protection Area of a large Sycamore tree on the northern corner of the existing access. However, the hedgerow to the south of the access road would be removed in its entirety to facilitate the widened access road. In addition, the application states the Highways Authority also requested the facility of passing bays along the access road. These have been positioned, where

available, between the Root Protection Areas (RPA) of existing cherry trees along the access route.

The access road would remain private and therefore bin collections would be made via Moorfield Lane as is seen at present. In accordance with the advice given by the Highways Authority, 2no bin stores would be placed on the site a minimum of 25metres from the highway and 30m from the dwellings. A pedestrian access would be created from Moorfield Lane as is demonstrated on the Illustrative Plan.

The application has been submitted with the following documents in support of the proposals:

- Design Access and Planning Statement;
- A number of plans and illustrative elevations;
- Ecological Assessment;
- Bat Survey;
- Tree Survey; and
- S106 Draft Heads of Terms

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

The site is located to the south of Newport and to the west of Church Aston. The proposed development site covers a site of 0.77 hectares and is located between Wellington Road and Moorfield Lane. Wellington Road is a primary road into Newport from the direction of Telford whilst Moorfield Lane is a single lane carriageway of a rural character.

The site comprises of a residential dwelling (Aston Grove) together with associated gardens that is accessed off an east to west linear driveway off Wellington Road. The property in question is not a Listed Building.

There are a number of hedgerow and mature trees on site, two of which are covered by Tree Preservation Orders. There are no ecological designations within or adjacent to the proposal site.

The main body of the site lies where the residential units are proposed is to the east of Moorfield Lane. To the north, east and south east are currently agricultural fields that form a parcel of land of some 10.86 hectares which was granted outline consent for housing development of up to 285 dwellings on approximately 8 hectares of that land (planning ref: TWC/2011/0821). To the west is Grove Farm with associated agricultural buildings.

PLANNING HISTORY:

The site itself does not have any relevant planning history.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT:

National Planning Policy Framework

Saved Wrekin Local Plan policies

Policy NR6 – Waste Disposal and Recycling facilities

Policy UD2 – Design Criteria

Policy UD3 - Urban Design Assessments

Policy UD4 – Landscape Design

Policy H9 – Location of new housing

Policy H10 – Scale of new development

Policy H22 - Community Facilities

Policy H23 – Affordable Housing

Policy T22 – Planning Obligations

Policy OL6 – Open Land

Policy OL12 – Open Land and Landscape – contributions from new development

Policy OL13 – Maintenance of Open Space

Policy LR4 - Outdoor recreational Open Space

Policy LR6 – Developer contributions to outdoor recreation open space provision within new residential developments

LDF Core Strategy policies

Policy CS1 – Homes

Policy CS6 – Newport

Policy CS7 – Rural Area

Policy CS9 – Accessibility and Social Inclusion

Policy CS10 – Community Facilities

Policy CS 11 – Open Space

Policy CS12 – Natural Environment

Policy CS13 – Environmental Resources

Policy CS15 – Urban Design

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

For all consultations received by the Development Management Team the following text below represents a summary of the salient points made in relation to the application. Full versions of all consultation responses can be viewed by Members of the Plans Committee via the Council's eplanning system.

Highways - Comment

Confirm that in principle there is no objection to the proposal. However, do ask for a number of conditions covering:

- Implementation of revised junction details to access on Wellington Road;
- Completion of passing bays along access route; and
- Details of parking for vehicles.

Drainage – Support subject to conditions.

Parks and Open Spaces – Comment.

Essential that all new developments make full provision for the infrastructure/amenities and services which they create. New residents to the area will increase demand upon the existing recreational resource. There are some nearby recreational facilities in need of upgrading for children and young people in order to maximise the capacity and meet the need arising out of this development.

Suggest that should development (if successful) provide 2 or more bedroom properties; that they meet this need through conditioning of WLP Policies LR4 and LR6. This could be provided by providing a contribution towards the upgrading of the nearest community use recreation facilities (which would serve the development area). Would suggest an appropriate sum to request would be £600 per 2 bed property (or above) in relation to this policy.

There appears to be open space in the form of a hedgerow and general POS which is separated by the access road. Who is to maintain this open space and if not conveyed to a property(s) to maintain whether the developer wishes the council to adopt with an appropriate commuted sum for maintenance? Should the applicant wish for the council to adopt this POS a commuted sum for maintenance will be required and this should be agreed within a S106 alongside the other capital sums. A long term management plan is required to determine the specific maintenance and this should also highlight who is to maintain this POS land and if not the Council, to include how this maintenance is to be financed in the long term.

Affordable Housing – No response received.

Education – No objection.

We would not seek education contribution on this site due to the size of the development.

Arboriculture (Trees) - Support subject to conditions.

Within the grounds of Aston Grove there are over 60 trees. To facilitate the proposal a large number of these trees are proposed to be removed. To mitigate there loss the landscaping scheme should take replacement trees into account.

Although the layout is only indicative it does appear that T32 & T33 may have to be removed to so that access can be gained into one of the proposed plots.

The reserved matters app should contain a final draft of a Tree Removal & Protection Plan.

The current access into Aston Grove has a number of Cherries growing on the northern boundary. Cherries are synonymous with shallow surface roots. The application proposes to construct over 90 metres of 'no dig' road into the new development. It would be beneficial to the trees if this was used in the proposed passing places but it may be easier and cheaper to re-surface the access road with tarmac rather than cell web as proposed.

Ecology - Comment.

The habitats present on the site include an area of 30 year old broadleaved plantation woodland, a pond, hedgerows, a large house with outbuildings and a garden with vegetable patch.

The area of 30 year old broadleaved plantation woodland which would be lost in order to accommodate the 10 proposed houses on the site has some local biodiversity value but its loss within the landscape is not significant and the hedgerow connections around the site and throughout the wider environment will not be lost or impacted. Satisfied that this loss is not significant provided that the suite of mitigation measures for species outlined in response are out in place and that a landscape scheme is provided at reserved matters and includes the provision of a range of standard native species trees. Recommendation: Include the conditions and informatives on the decision notice.

Planning Officer to complete tests 1 and 2 on the European Protected Species 3 tests matrix and include the finished matrix within their site report. This is because the house has historic evidence of an occasional bat roost of low numbers (max count 1) Common Pipistrelle bat and a possible maternity roost of Brown Long-eared Bats (200 droppings in one loft and 100 droppings in a second loft) within the loft spaces according to the Dusk Bat Emergence and Dawn Bat Re-entry Survey by Star Ecology (September 2013). The emergence and re-entry surveys did not record any Brown Long-eared bats but their presence has been confirmed by DNA analysis of droppings recovered from the loft spaces – none of the droppings were from 2013 (they were from 2012 and older). Star Ecology (September 2013) concludes that none of the trees on the site have bat roosting potential.

Star Ecology (September 2013) concludes that the demolition of the house will need to occur under a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence from Natural England, following precautionary methods of working and including a scheme of mitigation.

Reasonable avoidance measures to be followed on the site will include: working when bats are least likely to be present and demolishing the house in the winter months, ecological supervision of the roof strip and demolition. Mitigation will include: at least 1 bat loft to be in place on the site prior to the commencement of demolition of the existing roost and a total of 3 bat lofts (1.2m high and 5.2m x 10m)

in the new dwellings on the site with letter box and ridge tile bat access points, 3 x 2F and 3 x 1FR Schwegler bat boxes to be erected on the site and a low level of lighting which does not illuminate the bat roost provision. The proposed mitigation scheme will, according to Star Ecology, be sufficient to maintain the populations of bats on the site. The mitigation provision is shown on the Wildlife Mitigation Plan by Les Stephan Planning reference 07.

This site is within 5km of the European Designated Site at Aqualate Mere Midland Meres & Mosses Phase 2 site. A Habitat Regulation Assessment screening matrix has been completed for the proposal and has been provided to the planning officer for inclusion within their site report. This site has been screened out of the Habitat Regulation Assessment process and it can be concluded that there will be no likely significant effect or likely effect on the integrity of any European Site as a result of planning permission being granted.

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land) – No comment.

Urban Design Officer – Comment.

Whilst this application refers to the precedent set by the adjacent residential outline application approved in 2011, it is subject to different opportunities and constraints, which have not been fully explored or illustrated as such. Although there is a tree survey, it only makes reference to one tree, but there are many others on the site which are not shown or detailed here.

All the existing walls should be retained; especially the walls situated either side of the site access which should not be modified to accommodate the proposed increase in vehicle movements. Unfortunately it is not clear whether the existing access, tree and walls will be maintained in their existing location or not, but if it the latter is proposed it demonstrates that the site and its access aren't really suitable for the increase in vehicles or the numbers of units shown.

Whilst the accompanying plans demonstrate an approach to laying out and designing the site for residential, it should be recorded that this layout is considered to be unacceptable in principle particularly given that there is information on the trees that seemingly hasn't been submitted.

Whilst there is no real objection to the principle of residential development, the numbers should be determined on a more contextual response; thus any Reserved Matters application should undergo the same rigors as the adjacent approved residential site in terms of looking at the site context and its local character which should be added as a condition at outline stage.

Shropshire Fire Service – Comment with Informative.

Local consultation and representations

Newport Town Council – Object with reasons summarised below:

Newport Town Council deliberated this outline application in the context of the access and accessibility. Concern are raised on this proposed development which is on a single track, for the construction of 10 houses that could potentially be used by a perceived bare minimum of 20 cars and other vehicular usage associated with the occupancy of a home. Wellington Road is a main tributary route of the Town. This existing private access and egress is situated within the 40 mph zone and abuts the 30 mph mandatory speed restrictions. It is close to both the Moorfield Infants & Junior School and Girls High schools. Members considered that the scale of this development is excessive in terms of traffic movement for the site. They are unsure that the splay of visibility on the egress from the site is adequate, especially when taken in context with the other proposed development, TWC/2011/0821 for approximately 285 houses which are also creating another two road junctions for very significant traffic movement along the Wellington Road, thereby, considerable increase in vehicle activity at daily peak periods.

Church Aston Parish Council – No comment.

Local residents – 1 letter of objection, raising the following points

- Another unnecessary development on a green field site. Other housing applications already submitted in and around Newport should be resolved before further applications are considered. Building on a green field site cannot be justified in this case.
- The Bat Surveys undertaken state that bats do use Aston Grove house, albeit on a sporadic basis. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 state that it is illegal to damage or destroy bat roosts. The demolition of Aston Grove would do this. Providing bat boxes and /or access to loft space in the proposed new builds does not negate this responsibility to observe the law.
- Further to the large scale development already approved along the Wellington Road with several access points, the driveway to the scheme will provide yet another access point onto the Wellington Road for a number of additional households. The traffic volume is already a problem and accompanying noise getting steadily worse for residents facing the Wellington Road in the Moorfield Lane vicinity (speed restriction 40mph).
- The application proposes to remove the boundary hedge to the south. Ecological surveys deem the hedge to be of low ecological value. It would seem that 'green' and aesthetic importance hold no value.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

Principle of housing development in this particular location.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Telford &

Wrekin Council must identify and update annually a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of housing against its housing requirements set out in the adopted development plan, the Core Strategy (2006-2016). Evidence has now come to light demonstrating only a 2.5 year supply exists, meaning that where the Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a 5 year land supply then relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date. For Telford & Wrekin Council this means policies CS1 (Homes) which identifies dwelling requirements for Telford, Newport and the rural area and CS6 (Newport) and CS7 (Rural Area) which seek to direct housing into certain locations in line with the strategy. This means that applications cannot be refused on the grounds of housing supply alone and there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

As the development abuts areas to the north and south that have recently been given planning permission (TWC/2011/0821) it would not represent an isolated development in the Rural Area. In respect of the site's physical location, the site is some 1,000 metres south of Newport town centre and therefore many new residents would be reasonable able to walk to the town centre in around 15/20 minutes. In terms of public transport there are bus stops located north and south of the site along Wellington Road where it is possible to access buses to Newport and Telford/Stafford. Wellington Road has direct access into and out of Newport by car. To the north east of the site is Moorfield Primary School and next door to that Newport High Girls School. A little further northwards along Wellington Road is a doctor's surgery.

In this respect as a greenfield site on the edge of Newport the application site is considered to represent a sustainable location given its proximity to the town centre, the vehicular access in and out of Newport, the location of bus stops along Wellington Road and the accessibility to schools and a doctors surgery accordingly the proposal is considered sustainable within the realms of the NPPF.

Highway and traffic issues.

Concerns raised are noted. However, following pre application discussions the modified access arrangements onto Wellington Road has resulted in no objection to the proposal from TWC Highways subject to conditions. It should also be noted that as part of permission TWC/2011/0821 adjacent to this site that the current speed limit outside the access to Aston Grove on Wellington Road will be reduced from 40mph to 30mph. Therefore, subject to inclusion of suggested conditions the proposals are acceptable in highways terms.

Ecology and Habitats Regulation considerations

Appropriate ecology surveys have been undertaken and reviewed by the Council's Ecologist. With regard to the existing habitats present on site they report that they are satisfied that this loss is not significant provided that the suite of mitigation measures proposed for species are in place.

However, with regards to the potential for Bats the ecology reports conclude that the demolition of the existing Aston Grove house would need to occur under a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence from Natural England, following precautionary methods of working and including a scheme of mitigation given the house has historic evidence of an occasional bat roost of low numbers.

Reasonable avoidance measures to be followed on the site could include: working when bats are least likely to be present and demolishing the house in the winter months, ecological supervision of the roof strip and demolition. Mitigation could include: at least 1 bat loft to be in place on the site prior to the commencement of demolition of the existing roost and a total of 3 bat lofts (1.2m high and 5.2m x 10m) in the new dwellings on the site with letter box and ridge tile bat access points, 3 x 2F and 3 x 1FR Schwegler bat boxes to be erected on the site and a low level of lighting which does not illuminate the bat roost provision. The proposed mitigation scheme would, according to Star Ecology, be sufficient to maintain the populations of bats on the site.

Given that Bats are a European Protected Species and may be affected then the '3 tests matrix' needs to be conducted by the Local Planning Authority in consideration of this matter. The LPA needs to complete sections 1 and 2, 'over riding public interest' and 'no satisfactory alternative.' The Council's Ecologist has considered and commented on the third test. A record of the consideration of the three tests is legally required and this completed form is included for reference at the end of this report.

With regard sections 1 and 2 it is concluded that given evidence has now come to light demonstrating only a 2.5 year housing supply exists for new residential development to meet housing need, then this scheme would be in the overriding public interest. Given this there is no satisfactory alternative that can be considered because the supply of deliverable sites is not currently available in the Borough.

Accordingly the proposed development is considered to satisfy the European Protected Species '3 tests matrix'.

Using a Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Matrix the proposed development would not have any significant direct or indirect impacts on the Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar site to the east of Newport as assessed by the Council's Ecologist. A full Appropriate Assessment is not required and a statement to that effect has been prepared. This concludes that there is no legal barrier under the Habitat Regulation Assessment process to planning permission being granted in this case.

In conclusion, the relevant Matrix testing for Protected Species and Habitats Regulations have been satisfied and therefore this and other ecology related issues are considered acceptable provided the relevant conditions and informatives as put forward by the Council's Ecologist are attached to any permission granted.

Other matters

To facilitate the proposal a large number of existing trees are proposed to be removed. Two trees on site covered by Tree Preservation Orders and other notable trees are proposed to be retained, especially along the access route to Wellington Road. To mitigate the loss the landscaping scheme should allow for replacement trees to be taken into account along with other conditions as specified by the Council's Tree Officer.

The financial contributions required by Parks and Open Space Officer have been accepted and therefore can be secured by a Section 106 Legal Agreement. The applicant has stated that for the purposes of this application, the area in the south west not within residential curtilages would be informal open space maintained by the future developer. A condition can be imposed to secure details of how this area would be managed and maintained.

The comments of the Urban Design officer are noted. Since those comments a full Tree Survey has been produced and considered by the Council's Tree Officer. The need to widen the access route to the proposed dwellings would require the removal of wall/fencing and hedge on the southern side of access. To mitigate this, a condition on boundary treatment can specifically require details on how this boundary would be treated after the access is widened.

The comments made that this layout is not considered to be acceptable in principle is noted as is the comment that as this is an outline application there is no real objection to the principle of residential development. Any Reserved Matters application would be expected that the number of units should be determined on a more contextual response; thus any Reserved Matters application should undergo the same rigors as the adjacent approved residential site in terms of looking at the site context and its local character. However, given the limited size of the site it is not accepted that there should be a condition regarding the latter as suggested as this can be considered in Reserved Matters detail anyway.

The proposal seeks to provide 35% affordable housing supply with the mix of tenure to be subject to further negotiation but is compliant with Policy CS2 of the core strategy and meets the high demand for affordable units within Newport.

Conclusions

Evidence has now come to light demonstrating only that there is only a 2.5 year supply of deliverable housing sites which exist in the Borough, meaning that where

the Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a 5 year land supply then relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date. This means that in accordance with the NPPF applications cannot be refused on the grounds of housing supply alone and there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

As the development abuts areas to the north and south that have recently been given planning permission (TWC/2011/0821) it would not represent an isolated development in the Rural Area. In respect of the site's physical location, the site is some 1,000 metres south of Newport town centre and therefore many new residents would be reasonable able to walk to the town centre in around 15/20 minutes. In terms of public transport there are bus stops located north and south of the site along Wellington Road where it is possible to access buses to Newport and Telford/Stafford. Wellington Road has direct access into and out of Newport by car. To the north east of the site is Moorfield Primary School and next door to that Newport High Girls School. A little further northwards along Wellington Road is a doctor's surgery.

In this respect as a greenfield site on the edge of Newport the application site is considered to represent a sustainable location given its proximity to the town centre, the vehicular access in and out of Newport, the location of bus stops along Wellington Road and the accessibility to schools and a doctors surgery accordingly the proposal is considered sustainable within the realms of the NPPF especially as it would be compliant with the requirement to provide 35% affordable housing as per Core Strategy CS6 (Newport).

The relevant Matrix testing for Protected Species (in this instance Bats which may be present in the building to be demolished) and Habitats Regulations have been satisfied and therefore this and other ecology related issues are considered acceptable provided the relevant conditions and informatives as put forward by the Council's Ecologist are attached to any permission granted.

Similarly, with regards to other on site matters concerned highways, trees, open space contributions and management/maintenance; as well as the comments made in respect of the layout, it is considered that these matters have been sufficiently considered to allow outline permission to be granted subject to the imposition of relevant planning conditions and planning contributions via the signing of a Section 106 legal agreement.

Overall, it is considered that the development proposed in the application represents sustainable development and there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development in National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with policies with the Core Strategy and Wrekin Local Plan as detailed above.

Recommendation to Plans Board

Based on the conclusions above, the recommendation to Plans Board on this application is that DELEGATED AUTHORITY be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the following:

- A.) The applicant/landowners entering into a Section 106 agreement with the Local Planning Authority (terms to be agreed by the Development Management Service Delivery Manager) relating to:
- (i) Provisions ensuring that 35% of the dwellings to be built shall be affordable housing (in this case as social rented) in number, with any fraction of this 35% not being sufficient to construct a full unit then the remainder shall be calculated and given to the Council as an off-site contribution; and
 - (ii) An open space contribution as required by Policy LR4 and LR6 of the Wrekin Local Plan equating to £600.00 per 2-bedroom property (or above) to be provided upon commencement of the development.
- B.) The following conditions (with authority to finalise conditions and reasons for approval to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager):
1. A01 Time limit - Outline.
 2. A03 Time limit – Submission of Reserved Matters.
 3. B02 Standard outline some matters reserved.
 4. BCustom Details to be submitted of affordable housing
 5. B010 Details of materials
 6. BCustom Highways road access details including visibility splays
 7. BCustom Highways details relating to car parking provision
 8. B75 Greenfield run off rates
 9. BCustom European protected species licence
 10. BCustom External lighting scheme details
 11. B120 Details of enclosure including to south of access road
 12. BCustom Open space management and maintenance
 13. B121 Landscaping Design
 14. B130 Tree Protective Fencing
 15. B132 Trees No Dig Method
 16. B150 Site Environmental Management Plan for construction works.
 17. CCustom Tree Works in line with Tree Study submitted
 18. CCustom Highways details passing bay construction details
 19. CCustom Works in accordance with Dusk Bat Emergence Survey
 20. CCustom Bird boxes

21. CCustom Relocated barn owl box
22. CCustom Site Clearance in accordance with ecology report
23. C038 Development in accordance with deposited plans
24. DCustom Maximum number of dwellings permitted to be 10 units.

Informatives:

I106 – Section 106 agreements

I32 – Fire Authority

ICustom – Wild Birds

ICustom – Great Crested Newts and common Amphibians

ICustom – Highways

I40 – Conditions

I41 – Reason for grant of permission

RANPPF - Approval – National Planning Policy Framework

EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES – The ‘three tests’

Application reference number, site name and description:

TWC/2013/0777

Aston Grove, Moorfield Lane, Church Aston, Newport

Outline application for residential development with associated access following demolition of Aston Grove with all other matters reserved

Date:

16 October 2013

Officer:

Fran Lancaster/Tim Williams

Planning Ecologist (01952 384221)

Fran.Lancaster@Telford.gov.uk

Test 1

Is the development ‘in the interests 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 consequences of primary importance for the environment’?

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Telford & Wrekin Council must identify and update annually a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years’ worth of housing against its housing requirements set

out in the adopted development plan, the Core Strategy (2006-2016). Evidence has now come to light demonstrating only a 2.5 year supply exists. Given this the need for new residential development to meet housing need is in the overriding public interest.

Test 2

Is there '**no satisfactory alternative?**'

Given the above there is no satisfactory alternative that can be considered because the supply of deliverable sites is not available in the Borough.

Test 3

Is the proposed activity '**not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status** in their natural range'?

The house has historic evidence of an occasional bat roost of low numbers (max count 1) Common Pipistrelle bat and a possible maternity roost of Brown Long-eared Bats (200 droppings in one loft and 100 droppings in a second loft) within the loft spaces according to the Dusk Bat Emergence and Dawn Bat Re-entry Survey by Star Ecology (September 2013). The emergence and re-entry surveys did not record any Brown Long-eared bats but their presence has been confirmed by DNA analysis of droppings recovered from the loft spaces – none of the droppings were from 2013 (they were from 2012 and older). Star Ecology (September 2013) concludes that none of the trees on the site have bat roosting potential.

Star Ecology (September 2013) concludes that the demolition of the house will need to occur under a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence from Natural England, following precautionary methods of working and including a scheme of mitigation.

Reasonable avoidance measures to be followed on the site will include: working when bats are least likely to be present and demolishing the house in the winter months, ecological supervision of the roof strip and demolition. Mitigation will include: at least 1 bat loft to be in place on the site prior to the commencement of demolition of the existing roost and a total of 3 bat lofts (1.2m high and 5.2m x 10m) in the new dwellings on the site with letter box and ridge tile bat access points, 3 x 2F and 3 x 1FR Schwegler bat boxes to be erected on the site and a low level of lighting which does not illuminate the bat roost provision. The proposed mitigation scheme will, according to Star Ecology, be sufficient to maintain the populations of bats on the site. The mitigation provision is shown on the Wildlife Mitigation Plan by Les Stephan Planning reference 07.

The proposed development will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of Common Pipistrelle bats and Brown Long-eared bats at a favourable conservation status within their natural range provided that the following conditions detailed in the response from Fran Lancaster to Tim Williams dated 16 October 2013

are on the decision notice and are appropriately enforced:

The following conditions should be on the decision notice:

1. No development, demolition or site clearance procedures shall commence until a European Protected Species (EPS) Mitigation Licence with respect to bats has been obtained and submitted to the local planning authority for the proposed work prior to the commencement of works on the site. Work shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the granted EPS Mitigation Licence.

Reason: To ensure the protection of bats, a European Protected Species

2. Work shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the Dusk Bat Emergence and Dawn Bat Re-entry Survey by Star Ecology (September 2013) and as shown on the Wildlife Mitigation Plan by Les Stephan Planning reference 07 attached as an appendix to this planning permission.

Reason: To ensure the protection of bats, a European Protected Species

3. Prior to the erection of any external lighting on the site a lighting plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter retained for the lifetime of the development. The submitted scheme shall be designed to take into account the advice on lighting set out in the Bat Conservation Trust booklet *Bats and Lighting in the UK*

Reason: To minimise disturbance to bats, a European Protected Species.

Informative

All species of bats found in the UK are European Protected Species under the Habitats Directive 1992, the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2010 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

If a bat should be discovered on site at any point during the development then work must halt and Natural England should be contacted for advice.

TWC/2013/0821

Land adjacent to Kiyokuni Europe Ltd, Holyhead Road, Snedshill, Telford, Shropshire

Change of use of vacant employment land to a two year temporary gypsy and traveller caravan site with the provision of 15 pitches and portable toilet facilities

APPLICANT

Telford & Wrekin Council

RECEIVED

11/10/2013

PARISH

Oakengates

WARD

Ketley and Oakengates

OFFICER

Emma Green

OBJECTIONS RECEIVED: Yes

MAIN ISSUES: Principle of Development, Design, Impacts on adjoining properties

PROPOSAL

Change of use from vacant employment land to gypsy and traveller caravan site with the provision of 15 pitches and portable toilet facilities for a temporary two year period. There are 14 'double' pitches (which have 2 caravans and 2 cars on) and 1 'single' pitch (with one caravan and one car). Therefore a total provision for 29 caravans and 29 cars on the whole site.

The councils aim with this application is to:

- To create a new temporary transit site
- To reduce the number of unauthorised sites in the borough by providing alternative accommodation for the families on these sites
- To ease the pressure of illegal encampments and lack of space for travelling families temporarily until the extended permanent site in Donnington is completed
- To reduce legal and domestic refuge clearing costs associated with moving travellers off unauthorised sites

The proposal is for a transit site, with any pitch being occupied by a family for no more than a maximum of 28 days, at any one time. There will also be a charge for utilising the pitch.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

The application site is vacant land which is designated for employment purposes at the end of Holyhead Road, adjacent to the Kiyokuni Europe Ltd building. Access is off the existing road which serves Kiyokuni. The land is set down in relation to

Priorslee roundabout, Holyhead Road to the north and the A5 to the east of the site. The application site is immediately bounded by dense vegetation in all directions.

The area is predominantly commercial in character but there are some residential properties to the north. The nearest built form to the site is the Kiyokuni Europe Ltd building to the north which is located 116m from the main pitch area of the site. The nearest residential properties are 341m to the north along Priorslee Road and 373m to the east along Shifnal Road. There are other commercial properties 159m to the east on the opposite side of the A5 and 97m to the south separated by the M54.

The site is currently vacant but was previously occupied as a builder's yard. There are no structures on the site, but there are some areas of hard standing remaining from the previous use.

BACKGROUND:

Telford and Wrekin Council currently own and manage two Gypsy and Traveller Sites:

- Lodge Road Caravan Site, Donnington, Telford TF2 7QD
(Comprising of 13 plots, all of which are fully occupied)
- Ketley Brook Caravan Site, Lawley, Telford TF1 2JX
(Comprising of 20 plots, all of which are fully occupied)

Lodge Road Caravan Site was formerly a transit site but due to a lack of permanent site provision, became a residential site in 1978. In April 1980 planning permission was granted at this site to create 16 plots and associated amenity units. In consequence the facilities, including size of plot and accompanying living accommodation is very limited and falls short of current government guidelines. The site has been subject to a number of refurbishment programmes over the past 20 years, the most recent being during 2011/2012 which is now complete. To cater for fire risk assessment findings the site was reduced from 16 to 13 plots.

Ketley Brook Caravan Site gained planning consent in March 1994, with an amended application approved in July 1995 and was a purpose built site which opened in 1997 and has adequate facilities for 20 plots. It is a very popular location amongst Gypsies and Travellers and is constantly the subject of enquiries from prospective tenants. This site has also been subject of a refurbishment programme during 2011/2012 which is now complete.

Unlawful gypsy and traveller sites within the Borough are monitored and dealt with by the Environmental Enforcement Team. All efforts to house the remainder have proved unsuccessful as they wish to adhere to their cultural traditions and live in their caravans. This has resulted in the establishment of unlawful encampments, for example on Stafford Park, to the detriment of the local business community.

Snedshill offers a short term solution to unlawful encampment prior to the development of additional, permanent provision at Lodge Road. In the medium/long

term Snedshill will come forward for commercial development. A proactive and joined up approach to managing unlawful encampments moving forward will be essential and will require involvement from officers across the Council as well as the police.

CONSULTATIONS:

Consultations have been undertaken in accordance with the Development Management Procedure Order 2010, in the form of direct letter notification of adjacent land owners and display of site and press notices.

Summarised standard consultation responses

Oakengates Town Council: Object to proposal the site/land is industrial and we need this land for future industrial usage. The land under the Borough's own CTAAP report is stating that this land is dedicated for use and not for use as traveller site.

Highways: I refer to the above application and would confirm that in principle I have no objection to the proposal. Comments are based on the assumption that the site has an extant use as a builders merchant or employment land with associated traffic movements and parking. The speed limit along Holyhead Road in this area is 30mph and visibility exceeds that required. No recorded personal injury traffic accidents associated with this junction within the last 5 years.

Shropshire Council Archaeology: No comments

Police: No objection

Arboricultural: No objections

Shropshire Fire Service: No objection subject to fire safety informative

Ecology: No objection subject to conditions and informatives. Nesting Wild Birds - The site has potential for nesting wild birds to be present, therefore recommend an informative. Bats - The woodland habitats surrounding the site have potential for foraging bats to be present which could be adversely impacted by new sources of lighting on the proposed site. Therefore recommend a condition to control lighting.

The Coal Authority: I confirm that the application site falls within the defined Development High Risk area; therefore within the application site and surrounding area there are coal mining features and hazards which need to be considered in relation to the determination of this planning application.

The Coal Authority records indicate that there are 4 recorded mine entries on the site, although there are no details as to whether they have been filled or capped.

It is noted that a Ground Investigation was previously carried out and the AEG Ground Investigation report (September 2001) is submitted in support of the planning application. This report has not been prepared specifically in support of the proposed development and in this regard it does not identify the risks posed by mine entries on the site.

In this instance it is noted that the application seeks permission for a change of use for caravans on a temporary basis and that caravans will be sited upon existing hard standing areas with the ancillary facilities such as the toilet block also being portable structures. Accordingly, it is understood that no below ground level works will be necessary as a result of the proposed development and on this proviso The Coal Authority has no objection to the proposed development subject to an informative on the decision notice.

Drainage: No objection to the scheme as the proposal is a temporary consent and no further hard surfacing is required.

Planning Policy: The proposal is located on land allocated for employment use within the adopted Central Telford Area Action Plan (CTAAP), under Policy SA7 (Central Park) and Policy CT3 (Employment). The use of the site for residential purposes is, therefore, contrary to adopted policy. However, there are mitigating circumstances that also need to be considered as part of the determination of the proposal.

Firstly, the proposed use for the site is time-limited (2 years). Secondly, the site is currently vacant with no immediate plans or proposals to bring the site forward for employment use. Therefore, should an employment proposal emerge for the site during the occupation of the site then the temporary nature of the permission would mean that such proposals would not be compromised in the future. In addition, by using a brownfield site for such purposes is an effective use of land which reduces the pressure for occupation, potentially illegally, on greenfield sites elsewhere in the town or borough. And thirdly, location of the proposal within the site means the pitches are not in close proximity to existing residential properties.

For these reasons, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable, provided it remains as a temporary use.

Investment Strategy & Partnerships Officer: The most recent source of information on the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers locally comes from the Joint Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), 2008. The study takes account of the family increases, need from long term unauthorised sites & encampments and movement between sites and housing. It identified that, in

Telford & Wrekin, there was a need for an additional 24 residential pitches in the period 2007-2012, with a further 10 pitches needed between 2012-17.

There was also a need for a Transit Site. Some Gypsies and Travellers are still highly mobile without a permanent base, and others travel for significant parts of the year from a winter base. Transient unauthorised encampments were considered as one element in the calculation of need for residential sites. The GTAA estimates that in Telford & Wrekin some 81 families per annum need to be accommodated (but the same pitch can accommodate several families in the course of a year).

While some additional permanent provision has recently been approved, with more in the development pipeline (subject to planning consent), the Council is still some way from meeting identified local need. No transit site has been provided.

Government guidance states that local authorities should make their own assessment of need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and plan to meet this need over a reasonable timescale. Authorities should also ensure that sites are sustainable – economically, socially and environmentally. National policy is clear that there should be local provision for Gypsies and Travellers who travel to enable them to do so without resorting to stopping illegally or inappropriately.

One way of providing transient accommodation is through formal, managed sites with services provided including hard standings, water, electricity, drainage, rubbish storage/collection and communal or individual WCs and showers. They may also be capable of accommodating business use on site.

Telford Access Forum: The T+W Local Access Forum have a statutory duty to advise on the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation. Whilst the forum cannot directly oppose the development the following comments should be taken into consideration. The site is on a brown-field part of Central Park. Central Park, whilst not a formal area for recreation is a remarkable and much enjoyed wild green space right in the heart of central Telford. The rough ground is wooded and has a large number of informal paths as well as interesting features such as the small ponds. Most importantly the bridge and underpass to the west of the site by the lakes are a vital link over the Queensway and railway and under the motorway. Telford – designed around the car – badly lacks non-motorised routes crossing these major transport links. The link out of the proposed development (and whole site) has, in anticipation (pre-empting) the successful planning approval, been fenced and totally blocked, removing one of the vital non-motorised northern links onto Holyhead road. If the development is to go ahead, which no doubt it will, I suggest the following is strongly considered: Improvement is made to the general area of Central Park to allow permanent enjoyment of the green space by the general public with the provision of a number of definitive non-

motorised routes throughout the site. This will be in the area to the west of the proposed development. Pedestrian access out onto the Holyhead road is provided to allow north-south movement through the park at the entrance to the site next to Kiyokuni Europe. No development is to take place until planning is successful on the Donnington/Granville site otherwise this could become a more permanent site by default. The site will not be occupied for more than two years from initial occupation I understand that it may be difficult to put conditions on an application that is by TWC and does not go to Plans Board but there is a chance here to give something back to all those who informally enjoy the wilderness beauty that Central Park has to offer.

Neighbour consultation responses

Following consultation 162 letters of objection have been received these can be summarised as follows:

- The proposal will devalue our premises
- The proposal will result in the loss of business and affect trading
- The council should be doing more to support small business
- The space is not suitable for this proposal
- This prime employment site is unsuitable for this use
- This main road location is unsuitable for such a use
- Site is unsuitable and needs to have access to shops and schools
- This prime location is not suitable and will detract from Telford - alternative sites for gypsies and travellers should be considered
- There will be traffic impacts
- The area is already too built up and will result in the loss of green space
- There should be adequate fencing to screen the proposal
- Proposal will adversely affect housing property prices
- The proposed use will have a negative impact on the existing community
- Funds for this proposal should be spent on youth provision
- Adverse impact due to noise, disturbance, smells and fumes
- Lack of consultation
- Issues of increases in crime
- A waste of council funding
- Proposal will overwhelm existing facilities such as shops and doctors
- Proposal undermines the existing investment in Telford
- Will encourage illegal encampments elsewhere in the area
- Site is too close to the premier housing area of Priorslee
- This is positive discrimination
- The proposal is contrary to policy in CTAAP
- Object on road safety issues
- Pedestrian safety issues
- Donnington has a temporary site and that is still there 10 years on
- There is no community benefit to the public
- What is the need to provide toilet facilities on site

- Adversely impact on insurance premiums
- Disrupt local wildlife such as nesting birds, bats and nocturnal mammals
- There is confusion over the number of caravans to be accommodated which appears to be 29 on the 15 pitches proposed.
- The submitted information is inaccurate as works have commenced on site
- The development will be visible from the A5 and Holyhead Road
- There is no control to prevent this becoming a permanent traveller site
- Should utilise the Park and ride facility as this is remote from other properties
- Council is out of touch with their residents
- If granted residents should withhold paying council tax
- Council has not consulted in accordance with Development Management Procedure Order
- Council need to hold a public meeting for residents to air their views fully
- Council should just extend the existing facility rather than create a new site
- There needs to be consideration given to alternative site
- Lack of suitable facilities to deal with waste
- There are no time limits to stays in the site
- There will be enforcement issues if time limits are imposed on the consent
- A site with easier access to the M54 would be preferable
- Application falls within Policy SA7 of CTAAP and is 'gateway' in the Wrekin Local Plan, the proposal completely fails to comply with these policies
- Application has a detrimental impact on the adjacent character area SA8 in CTAAP.
- With more weight now being given to NPPF it's still difficult to give presumption for this development in this location
- The weight and strength of the CTAAP currently outweighs the NPPF
- The use of land as a gypsy and traveller site goes against the principles of CTAAP and does not conform to policies within it or the Wrekin Local Plan, and there is no demonstration in application of any exception to these policies.
- Due to the nature, sensitivity and the interest shown it will be reasonable for the
- application to be determined at planning committee so that TWC can demonstrate its honesty, openness, fairness and transparency in dealing with its own application
- With the lack of an up to date 5 year supply of deliverable sites in TWC and no such local policies this application should not be seen as a significant material consideration as outlined in the Communities and Local Government document 'Planning policy for traveller sites'. As detailed above strong weight is still given to CTAAP and as such it needs to be adhered to.
- Should TWC disregard the views of its residents and its own policies and be mindful to grant planning permission then it must ensure that temporary consent is conditioned for a maximum period of 2 years, that no more than 15 pitches are allowed at any one time, the site is properly maintained and after permission has expired the land is cleared and returned to its former use and state.
- Proposal is stopping up a right of way from the bridge over the A442 to the Holyhead road.

- Works to erect fencing and clearance of site has occurred without planning permission.
- Traffic issues as drivers exceed the 30mph speed limit what safety measures will be in place.
- The new fencing has created an impregnable fortress
- Whilst I appreciate the legal requirement in the Housing Act 2004 requires Local Authorities to identify sufficient land to meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities so as to prevent the number of unauthorised developments, the proposed location of site is not at all suitable.
- Highway traffic implications, particularly with the forthcoming Priorslee Academy

One letter of comment asking following questions:

- If temporary consent is granted will you look to change this to a permanent site?
- How will the site be controlled and what happens if site is at capacity?

2 letters of support

About time too gypsies have been treated as 2nd class citizens for too long and I fully support this application well done T &W Council, I shall look forward to the proposal becoming reality.

As of 18th November 2013, the consultation period is still underway and any further representations received will be addressed in the update report.

RELEVANT HISTORY:

There are numerous historical planning applications on this site, but none of relevance to this proposal.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning policy for traveller sites

Designing Gypsy and Travellers site: good practice guide

Core Strategy:

CS4 Central Telford

CS12 Natural Environment

CS15 Urban Design

Wrekin Local Plan:

UD2 Design Criteria

OL11 Woodlands and Trees

CTAAP

SA7 – Central Park

CT4 – Residential Development

CT15 – Design

CT23 – Developer contributions for delivering infrastructure

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

Principle of development:

This application is for the creation of a temporary gypsy and traveller site. Within the development plan (Wrekin Local Plan, Core Strategy and Central Telford Area Action Plan) there are no policies which relate specifically to gypsies and travellers, therefore members need to consider national guidance in the NPPF and Planning policy for traveller sites.

NPPF states that planning law requires applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan CTAAP designates this site for mixed use employment in policy SA7. In the supportive text it is clear that at the time of drafting the policy the option of a wider mixed use and introduction of residential use would be appropriate, however due to ground issue constraints the residential element of the designation was discounted in the final plan.

Telford and Wrekin Council has a significant level of land designated for employment use, well in excess of the necessary 5 year land supply. NPPF in paragraph 22 states that planning policies should avoid the long term protection for employment use and applications for alternative uses of land should be treated on their merits and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.

The Government's aim in Planning Policy for Travellers is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, enabling travellers to maintain their traditional way of life whilst respecting the interests of the settled community this guidance states that planning is to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply. They also have a duty to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities and enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education health, welfare and employment infrastructure and to have due regard to protection of local amenity and environment.

Local Planning Authorities should set pitch targets which address likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs. When producing plans Local Planning Authorities also need to identify a 5 years supply of sites. A robust evidence base must be used to assess need and to inform planning policy and decisions. The council is currently evidence gathering to produce a new local plan 'Shaping Places' and the existing evidence for gypsies and traveller site is from 2008, The *Shropshire Telford & Wrekin, Herefordshire and Powys Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment* (2008) identified a shortfall of provision in Telford & Wrekin and proposed the following local targets to 2017:

- 34 residential pitches,
- a transit site (this could take various forms but could be approx. 10 pitches in size)
- 5 travelling show peoples' plots

Seeking provision of new residential pitches was recommended by the study in order to respond to locally arising need.

Para 22 of the planning policy for traveller sites advises considering the following issues when determining applications:

- the existing level of local provision and need for sites
- the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants
- other personal circumstances of the applicant
- that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites
- that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections

Officers note that there is a national and local shortage of traveller sites; and there is an obligation on the Local Authorities to make adequate provision for travellers in the absence of suitable alternatives. It is noted that without any specific local planning policies, officers must consider the application with regard to national policy documents and material considerations.

At the heart of all decision making is the issue of creating a mixed and sustainable community. Officers consider that as this site is designated for employment, its close proximity to Telford Centre and amenities and facilities along Holyhead road that this is a sustainable site. The issue members need to weigh up is the designation of the land for employment in CTAAP and the need for traveller pitches given the under supply and lack of land allocation. Officers consider that NPPF which came into force after the adoption of CTAAP is clear that if there is an oversupply of

employment land then other uses should be considered. In this instance greater weight should be given to the need for gypsy and traveller pitches due to the under supply and lack of provision. It is your officer view that, greater weight should be given as the proposal is for a temporary 2 year period only and will not prevent the long term aspirations of CTAAP being realised. Furthermore, the proposal will create living accommodation (homes) in a highly accessible location to the town centre in accordance with policy CS4 of the core strategy.

Officers therefore consider that on balance the two year temporary consent and need of this community outweighs the employment designation in CTAAP and it is considered that the proposal complies with policy CS4 of the Core Strategy and guidance in NPPF and Planning Policy for traveller sites. The use for a two year period is to be controlled through the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Design:

Core strategy policy CS15 relates to urban design. Policy CT15 of CTAAP requires development within the Central Telford area to demonstrate high design standards. Furthermore, UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan relates to design criteria and development proposals and the need to be of an appropriate design quality and relate positively to the context. Given the specialist nature of gypsy and traveller sites officers consider it is appropriate to judge the design against national guidance “Designing Gypsy Traveller Sites - A Good Practice Guide”, rather than the urban design principles as contained within the Wrekin Local plan, which are tailored to traditional housing developments. Consequently officer have given more weight is given to the national guidance which is specific to this type of development than the guidance in the Core strategy, CTAAP and Wrekin Local Plan.

Designing Gypsy Traveller Sites -A Good Practice Guide makes it clear that there is no single, appropriate design for sites, any more than there is for general housing development. It is recognised that it will not be possible to meet all aspects of this guidance in every respect on every site. Local authorities will need to take decisions on design on a case by case basis, taking into account local circumstances such as the size, geographical and other characteristics of the site or prospective site and the particular needs of the prospective residents and their families. The guidance covers a range of different uses, permanent, transit and temporary stopping places.

Given the temporary short term nature of this proposal is it considered appropriate to judge the design against the guidance for transit sites. The first consideration should be given to the location of the site. Given that it is creating new homes they should not be located adjacent to hazardous uses or refuse sites which would be detrimental to health and safety of residents. Whilst this site is adjacent to other

industrial and commercial uses, not of these are hazardous or inappropriate to be adjacent to residential uses.

The guidance states that the number of pitches should not normally exceed 15 and each pitch should accommodate two touring caravans, two car parking spaces and amenity space. Amenities should include toilet wash basin and shower facilities. These could be of a portable nature to ensure no issues of vandalism As well as being easy to remove as necessary once pitches are vacated. For this proposal there are 15 pitches proposed which conforms with this national guidance, of these 14 are double pitched for two caravans and two cars, with only one being for one caravan and one car. The proposal also includes the provision of portable amenities. It is therefore considered by officers that the number and design of the pitches is in accordance with the national guidance.

The site is served by water, electric, surface water and foul drainage, which is appropriate for this use and accords with guidance. Waste disposal should be by communal arrangements for the whole site; this proposal complies with this guidance.

The site boundary must provide clear demarcation of the perimeter of the site, so as to prevent nuisance for existing residents created by others seeking to move on to the site without permission. Boundaries should take into account adjoining land uses, and be designed with the safety and protection of children in mind. Where an existing site may be located near an industrial area, or a main road, fencing and planting may be used to screen out unpleasant characteristics. The aim should be to achieve a boundary that is sympathetic to, and in keeping with, the surrounding area.

For this proposal secure fencing has been erected to demark the site and is gated at the access. This fencing is characteristic of the predominantly industrial and commercial nature of the surrounding development. The proposal fencing is considered appropriate to meet the design criteria for this use. Furthermore, the wider land adjoin the site is densely planted with trees which affords a significant level of screening for the future occupants from the motorway, main roads and adjacent industrial and commercial uses.

It is noted that the fencing has been completed prior to planning permission being considered. However, members should note that there has not been a breach of planning legislation as the height and siting of this fencing does conform with permitted development rights relating to erection of boundary treatments and therefore this fencing did not require planning permission to be installed.

Highways:

As this site is designated for employment use and has previously been used as builder's merchants, there is a level of traffic movements that this site is expected to generate which will utilise the existing access. This development does not exceed this level of movements and is considered acceptable by the Councils Highways Engineers. Residents have raised concerns with regards to highway safety, speed limits and pedestrian crossings. The Holyhead road at this junction has a speed limit of 30mph, and there is no evidence of traffic incidents to justify the refusal of this scheme on traffic and highway safety implications

Ground conditions:

There are a number of mineshafts on this site and the application is accompanied by a ground investigation report. Given the temporary nature of the proposal and the lack of construction and erection of permanent structures on the site, it is considered that the ground conditions do not offer a constraint to the proposal, however in accordance with guidance from the coal authority, officer recommend that an informative on ground conditions is incorporated on the decision document to highlight the issue and responsibilities to the applicant.

The Councils Drainage Engineers have raised no drainage objections to the proposed development.

Impacts on adjacent land uses:

Residents and business owners alike have raised concerns relating to the perception of increase crime and anti-social behaviour that such a use will create, but there is no evidence to support this and the police have raised no objections to the scheme. There is sufficient separation from existing uses to ensure that there are no adverse implications in terms of noise or loss of amenity for existing occupiers of adjacent sites or future residents of this site.

Landscaping and Ecology:

This is a brownfield site, with large areas of hard standing; there are no trees or features of note within the application site boundary. The site is bounded by large areas of green land and trees which will remain unaffected by this development. It is therefore considered by officers that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on trees or wildlife in the area, and is therefore in accordance with policy OL11 of the Wrekin Local Plan and CS12 of the Core Strategy as well as guidance in NPPF.

Planning Gain:

CTAAP in policy CT23 requires new development to contribute to the delivery of new infrastructure such as highway network improvements, public realm and leisure uses. Any request for planning gain must be proportionate to the proposal and necessary to offset the impacts that development has. As discussed in the highways section, this development will not generate any additional traffic movements than the designated employment use for there is no requirement to contribute to highways improvements. With regards to other contributions, this development seeks to make provision for gypsies and travellers who already reside within the borough in illegal encampments so there is no greater pressure or impact generated by this development, particularly given the transit nature of the site. Therefore no developer contributions are considered to be necessary.

Other issues raised through the consultation process:

The issue of property devaluation has been raised; this is not a material planning consideration and has had no bearing on the consideration by officers in reaching the recommendation for this scheme.

Turning to the issue of loss of business or trade, this creation of the transit site is as a direct response to deal with the issue of several illegal encampments throughout the borough due to the lack of adequate provision in the borough, the creation of this site will enable the better management of gypsies and travellers to improve industrial sites across the borough and will result in reducing the burden on the Council to clear sites following eviction.

In conclusion, it is considered that the need to provide a transit site for gypsies and travellers, given the lack of pitches on existing site and lack of allocated sites within the development plan, is sufficient to outweigh the employment designation of CTAAP for a temporary two year period. This is considered to be a sufficient timescale for the Local Planning Authority to finalise the collation of evidence and to allocate a site as part of the new Local Plan 'Shaping Places' to provide a suitable long term transit site location as well as allocate further land as necessary for the purposes of the gypsy and traveller community. The proposed scheme, in terms of design, is in conformity with the national guidance contained with the design guidance for traveller's sites. The site, due to its siting near to the motorway and given the dense vegetation, will be well screened and will therefore not detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area and is therefore in accordance with broad design principles in the NPPF, CTAAP and the Core Strategy. The development is located in a sustainable location with facilities available to future occupants of the site. The traffic movement associated with the proposal can be accommodated by the existing access, and will not have a detrimental impact on the existing highway network.

RECOMMENDATION

To GRANT TWO YEAR TEMPORARY PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

1. Time limit – two year temporary
2. Site shall be occupied by gypsies and travellers
3. The site shall accommodate a maximum of 29 caravans at any one time
4. Each pitch shall be occupied for a maximum of 28 days by any one family.
5. Details of materials for amenity blocks
6. Development in accordance with plan Nos.
7. Bat Lighting scheme
8. No commercial vehicles
9. No commercial or industrial activities

Informatives

Coal Authority

Ecology Birds

Fire Safety

Conditions

TWC/2013/0823

Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College, Whitchurch Road, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 3DY

Demolition of existing school buildings and the erection of a 1200 place secondary school with associated parking and hard and soft landscaping

APPLICANT

Telford & Wrekin Council

RECEIVED

10/10/2013

PARISH

Wellington

WARD

Dothill

OFFICER

Rob Price

OBJECTIONS RECEIVED: NO

MAIN ISSUES: Principle of Development, Green Network, Design, Highways, Open Space, Ecology

PROPOSAL:

This is a full application for the demolition of existing school buildings and erection of new 1200 place secondary school building, with amended parking and associated hard and soft landscaping at the existing Blessed Robert Johnson School in Wellington, Telford. As such the application provides detail of location, layout, scale, detailed design, and access. The proposal creates new-build accommodation for the relocation of Charlton School to meet the educational needs of the community, as identified by the Telford and Wrekin Building Schools for the Future programme. As the site currently accommodates a secondary school no change of use is sought as part of the planning application.

The new accommodation includes general and specialist teaching spaces, informal and independent learning spaces, performance spaces, staff and administration facilities and ancillary accommodation. The organisational structure of the school is based around the provision of three main learning 'schools'; STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths), Business and Enterprise, and Expressive Arts. Externally, the proposals involve the creation of hard and soft play areas, teaching and social spaces and hard and soft sports facilities for school and community use. This is supplemented by an arrival space at the main building entrances, parking and drop-off facilities and a separate, secure service area with an independent access.

The proposal creates approximately 8300 square metres gross internal floor area of new-build accommodation in a single three-storey building. A covered external secure compound will also be provided for refuse storage, materials storage and a

sprinkler tank, located discretely under the overhang of the first floor of the main building.

The existing sports centre building will be retained. Some internal refurbishment works are planned to be carried out at the sports centre, although these works do not form part of this planning application. The existing caretakers building at the southern corner of the site will also be retained and converted into an ICT Data Centre, serving this and other Local Authority sites. Externally, the existing site will be reconfigured to provide hard and soft play/social space, habitat areas and hard games courts; grass pitches will also be provided to meet the curriculum requirements of the school. There will be no reduction in area or flexibility of sports pitches as a result of the proposals.

The new building is located towards the south of the site, and is comprised of two linked elements; a three-storey teaching block and a two-three storey hall block. The teaching block is positioned parallel to the line of the existing sewer, changing direction part way along the block to follow the line of the existing central access road leading to the retained sports building. This avoids the key construction constraints, and creates a cranked axis between the entrance and the sports block, dividing the site into 'public' arrival space to the south-west, where all the main access routes onto site converge, and a more 'private' site area behind the block to the north east. New parking and drop-off facilities are located at the 'public' side of the site, opposite the arrival space. The hall block sits perpendicular to the teaching block, and intersects it to create a main entrance for students and visitors directly off the new arrival space. The hall block lies between two of the most significant mature oak trees on site and separates the 'private' area of the site into a secure service yard, accessed via a new junction from Apley Avenue.

The application has been submitted with the following documents in support of the proposals:

- Planning policy statement;
- Design and access statement;
- Various plans and drawings;
- Transport statement;
- Travel Plan
- Site Waste Management Plan;
- Geo-technical reports and Coal Mining Risk Assessment;
- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Phase I Habitat survey with Bat survey and Great Crested Newt report;
- Tree Survey report;
- Air quality assessment
- Ventilation and extract statement;
- Noise and external lighting reports; and
- Statement of Community Involvement.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

The site is bound to the south-east by Apley Avenue, leading to Whitchurch Drive. To the north-east is a parcel of undeveloped land owned by the Homes and Communities Agency, beyond which lies Whitchurch Drive and the Princess Royal Hospital. The site is bound to the west by Whitchurch Road, a secondary road leading to residential development. The northern site boundary is shared with residential gardens.

The site perimeter is currently unsecured, with a broken line of low-level fencing and hedging providing demarcation to the edge of the site. Access is via a vehicular and pedestrian gated route from Apley Avenue, and two further gated pedestrian access points from Whitchurch Road.

The existing buildings on site are a mixture of single-storey and two-storey, and the surrounding development is generally two-storey residential. The existing sports block has a curved roof which rises to approximately two-storey in the centre.

The proposals retain the sports block and single storey caretakers building, and create a new building consisting of two main articulated elements; a three storey teaching block and a tapered two-three storey hall block. The multi-storey arrangement minimises the footprint of the building, maximising the site area available for external use and minimising the tree losses on site.

The existing Charlton School site lies approximately half a mile to the north-west in accessed via a residential area.

BACKGROUND:

The existing Charlton School is a secondary school, currently located at Severn Drive, Wellington. As part of Telford and Wrekin Council's Building Schools for the Future programme, a new location for Charlton School has been identified on this site. This proposed new site currently accommodates the Blessed Robert Catholic College.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

W2002/0946 – Erection of a sports hall comprising of a fitness suite and classroom and construction of a new vehicular/pedestrian access – Full Granted 24/10/02

A number of other permission have been granted at this site over the years, these are primarily extensions and relate to the current school and so are not relevant to this application.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY:

National Planning Policy Framework

LDF Core Strategy

CS3 Telford

CS5 District and local centres in Telford

CS8 Regeneration

CS9 Accessibility and social inclusion

CS10 Community facilities

CS11 Open space

CS15 Urban design

Saved Wrekin Local Plan Policies:

UD2 Design criteria

UD3 Urban design assessments

UD4 Landscape design

T4 Development principles

T22 Planning obligations

OL3 Green network

OL4 Development in the green network

OL5 Extensions and redevelopment in the green network

OL6 Open land

LR1 Provision of community facilities

LR4 Outdoor recreational open space

CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

For all consultations received by the Development Management Team the following text below represents a summary of the salient points made in relation to the application. Full versions of all consultation responses can be viewed by Members of the Plans Committee via the Council's e-planning system.

Standard Consultee Responses:

Wellington Town Council: No objection in principle to the proposed scheme and the Council further welcomed the principles of the controlled left turn exit only from the school site onto the main road.

Environment and Planning Policy: No objection. The key policy consideration is the potential impact of the redevelopment on the green network in relation to policies OL4 and OL6 of the Wrekin Local Plan. The applicant acknowledges the importance of the green network and the need to maintain its integrity. The scheme seeks to protect and, where necessary, replace existing open space areas with new provision to mitigate any losses. This is evident on the southern boundary where most of the

redevelopment will take place. The continuing use of the green network areas for education purposes is therefore considered in line with Policy OL6 (a). The redevelopment for education use will bring additional community benefits to Wellington and adjacent areas and so is also considered to be in accordance with Policy OL4. Consequently, the proposal accords with the Council's development plan policies.

Highways: Support subject to conditions. To secure off-site highway improvements such as a new puffin crossing on Whitchurch Road by way of legal memorandum, condition works in accordance with the deposited plans for car parking details, service yard use, site construction management plan and travel plan as well as an informative related to S278 works.

Road Safety & Sustainable Transport: No comments received.

Parks and Open Spaces: No comment.

Sports & Leisure: No comments received.

Arboricultural Officer: Support subject to conditions regarding landscaping design, protective fencing, method statement, soil levels and material store.

Ecology: Comment. Notes the retention and enhancement of hedges in the supporting documentation, this will be secured by way of condition. Further to additional survey work being carried out recently, advise to include conditions and informatives in respect of wildlife enhancement, protection of bats and badgers as well as birds.

Drainage: Support subject to conditions regarding a revised scheme for surface water drainage with supporting detail and specification.

Environmental Health (Pollution Control): No comments received.

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land): Support subject to standard condition.

Urban Design: No objection.

External consultation responses:

Sport England: No objection.

Natural England: No objection.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust: No comments received.

Environment Agency: No comment.

Severn Trent: No objections subject to condition regarding foul and surface water as well as advising of a public sewer on site.

Shropshire Fire Service: Comment with informative.

West Mercia Constabulary: No objection.

Local representations:

At the time this report was written one letter of support had been received from a local resident but requesting the retention of trees on the Whitchurch Road boundary.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

This proposal was the result of an extensive pre-application process with key internal planning consultees and an Environmental Impact screening opinion request was submitted and answered in advance of the planning application being submitted.

The application is in detail so all matters are to be considered now unless to be secured by condition or under a memorandum of understanding in terms of payments from one Council department to another e.g. if highways works are required as mitigation to allow the development to go ahead.

Principle of Development

The proposal in this location is within the built up area of Telford as defined by the proposals map of the Wrekin Local Plan. Furthermore the site is well located near Wellington town centre, on the edge of an existing residential area and is easily accessible for cyclists and pedestrians. The proposal is to replace an existing with another school, accordingly the principle of development is considered acceptable.

The Wrekin Local Plan identifies the existing school on white (developable land) with the rest of the site including the existing hard surfaced play area and sports pitches forming part of Telford's Green Network as a leisure facility and also containing a number of mature and significant trees. Policies OL3, OL4 and OL5 seek to protect the Green Network and only permit development within it where there are exceptional circumstances, the proposal contributes or is complementary to the aims of the Green Network, where environmental and community benefits are an integral part of the proposal and where redevelopment proposals are not of a scale which would be incompatible with the long term aims of the Green Network in the locality.

The Green Network part of the site is valued in terms of the open space, linkages, woodland and ecology values it holds all of which meet the original aims and objectives of the green network policy. The policy allows for development as long as it does not significantly affect the function or aims of the green network. The proposal seeks to demolish the existing buildings save the sports hall, provide new buildings on the green network and create more useable playing pitch and hard surfaced sports area, therefore it is considered that the proposal accords with the green network policy.

Policy OL6 seeks to protect open land adjacent to built up areas where that land contributes to the character and amenity of the area, has value as a recreational open space or importance as natural habitat. It is considered this proposal accords with this policy as the open space will remain accessible for recreational use by all.

Design

The application states that the key drivers which have informed the location and orientation of the current layout under consideration include:

- The majority of the existing buildings are unsuitable for remodelling, but need to be kept in operation and fully accessible during construction of the new facilities.
- The existing sports centre to the north of the site is suitable for retention, and needs to be integrated into the site strategy.
- The development needs to respond to the location of the significant mature trees identified across the site, minimising any losses as far as possible.
- New facilities need to address the existing access points from the southern end of the site.
- Teaching accommodation should be configured to minimise noise break-in from the main road to the south-east.
- The site facilities and built accommodation should be welcoming, easy to navigate, and support the organisational strategy and ethos of the school.
- Sports provision on site should be maximised and kept as accessible and flexible as possible.
- On-site parking and drop-off should be provided and configured to minimise disruption to the adjacent highways.

The buildings would create a new three storey secondary school scheme. The height and prominence of the school buildings announce the community facilities whilst the location approximately 150m from the nearest housing ensures the impact of scale on neighbouring users is to an acceptable level. The provision of a new landmark building and its associated components provide for a contemporary urban

design at this gateway entrance to Wellington and contributes to the improvement of the overall quality of the environment in this location and wider area.

The proposal incorporates the retention/enhancement of existing of sporting/ Recreational facilities as well as the provision of new areas - both grassed and hardsurfaced. The layout of the school complex provides the legibility and visual links between buildings so that the various elements are easily distinguishable as anticipated by officers further to pre-application meetings.

Whilst the teaching block is higher than the existing buildings, it is located further from the adjacent residential areas to the west, and will be partially screened by new tree planting around the arrival space and parking areas. The existing landscaped buffer to the far side of Apley Avenue will minimise the visual impact of the building from residences to the south east. On approach along Apley Avenue itself, the building will be visible, particularly the gable end of the teaching block which addresses the road and provides an opportunity for signage to express the school identity.

In consideration of the current layout it is concluded that it relates positively to its context, creating a strong public frontage with secure and safe area for learning, socialising and play behind it. With regard to the building, its scale is considered acceptable, its form and massing is simple, compact and efficient enabling multi use and shared use of facilities. In terms of overall design and layout it is concluded that the buildings would sit well within their surroundings, be visually attractive as landmark buildings and have an acceptable impact upon local amenity.

Accordingly, the proposal meets the objectives of adopted design criteria as set out in policy UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan. This being subject to the imposition of planning conditions relating to the samples of materials proposed as well as allowing for consideration of some of the finer design detailing, especially around landscaping and street furniture.

Highways

The proposal has been accompanied by a Transport Statement and the Local Highway Authority supports the proposal subject to planning conditions and off-site mitigation works. The mitigation works seek to ensure the site is accessible and safe by providing a Puffin Crossing across Whitchurch Road and access works to the existing vehicular access and proposed service access off Apley Avenue. The proposed access and parking levels are considered acceptable and as such it is considered that subject to these works which will be secured through a legal memorandum and highway conditions the proposal will be acceptable in terms of accessibility and highway safety.

Open Space

The plans submitted with the application shown land designated as public and private space. This definition refers only to the secure line of the school in terms of security. It is important to note that this land is not considered to be open space in terms of unfettered access and will be only be accessible outside of term time and outside of school hours during terms time. It is also noted that Sport England has raised no objections to this proposal; accordingly the proposal is considered acceptable and details of access and facilities available will be secured through the conditioning of a community use agreement.

Ecology and Arboriculture

There have been a number of ecology reports and amendments provided on this scheme in relation to bats, badgers and wild birds in close proximity to the site. The Council's Ecologist is satisfied that protected species will not be affected subject to appropriate mitigation works and conditions to protect and enhance the local habitat, therefore the scheme is considered acceptable.

There are number of significant trees on the site that contribute to the character and setting of the school. The principal trees on-site and along the boundary are being retained with only a few specimens being removed, the loss of which will be off-set with a landscaping scheme. The Council's Arboricultural Officer is content with the scheme subject to appropriate protection conditions and as such the proposal is considered acceptable.

Other issues

As existing the site provides accommodation for a school; as such there are no concerns with regard to pollution through air or ground contamination; there are no concerns with regard to the stability of the site and the site can be adequately drained compliant with local policy.

Conclusions

The key benefit of the proposal is that in line with the Telford and Wrekin Building Schools for the Future programme, it would deliver a modern school, and associated sporting facilities. The proposals focus is very much with the community in mind with the ability for facilities within the school complex to be available for wider community use out of school hours.

The proposal for the Charlton school would enable the phased construction of a new landmark educational and community facility on the current Blessed Robert Johnson

site. The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.

The proposal in this location is within the built up area of Telford as defined by the proposals map of the Wrekin Local Plan. Furthermore the site is well located near Wellington town centre, on the edge of an existing residential area and is easily accessible for cyclists and pedestrians. The provision of new education and community facilities constitutes exceptional circumstances to justify development within the parts of the site designated as being within the Green Network, particularly with respect to benefits. The environmental benefits through landscaping and habitat enhancement the proposal is entirely consistent with the aims of the Green Network.

It is concluded that the layout relates positively to its context creating a strong lineated public frontage with secure and safe area for learning, socialising and play behind it. Its form and massing is simple, compact and efficient enabling both multi use and shared use of facilities. The provision of a new landmark building and its associated components provide for a contemporary urban design at this gateway entrance to Wellington and contributes to the improvement of the overall quality of the environment in this location and wider area. In terms of overall design and layout it is concluded that the buildings would sit well within their surroundings, be visually attractive as landmark buildings to support the regeneration in Wellington and have an acceptable impact upon local amenity.

The proposed development can also be satisfactorily accessed and sufficient parking provided to ensure the safety and freeflow of highway users subject to mitigation works and conditions. There are no concerns with regard to drainage, land contamination or pollution. Issues relating to ecology and arboriculture can be adequately addressed through conditions.

In summary the proposal satisfies policy at the national through to local level and will result in significant benefit to the local community. It is therefore concluded that as the proposals accord with the policies of the Development Plan and National Policy considerations, and that there are no site-specific material considerations that cannot be remedied by the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, as such the proposals are considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the conclusions above, the recommendation to Planning Committee is that DELEGATED AUTHORITY be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:

A). The Council as landowner agreeing to provide a Memorandum signed by the Assistant Director Development, Business and Employment agreeing that the Council will provide the following works at timescales to be agreed with TWC Highways:

- New Puffin crossing located on Whitchurch Road including associated modifications to the existing bus layby on Whitchurch Road.
- New service access off Apley Avenue.
- Modifications to the existing site vehicular access off Apley Avenue to allow left turn only to exiting traffic.
- The above shall be carried out in full prior to the new buildings being occupied.

B.) The following conditions (with authority to finalise conditions and reasons for approval to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager):

- | | | |
|-----|------------|---|
| 1. | A04 | Time limit (full application) |
| 2. | B11 | Sample of materials |
| 3. | B57 | Land contamination |
| 4. | B120 | Details of enclosure |
| 5. | B121 | Landscaping design |
| 6. | B126 | Landscape management plan |
| 7. | B128 | Landscape maintenance |
| 8. | B150 | Site environmental management plan |
| 9. | BCustom | Foul and surface water drainage |
| 10. | B/C Custom | Ecology |
| 11. | BCustom | Highways |
| 12. | BCustom | Community use agreement |
| 13. | C39 | Development to be in accordance with submitted plans |
| 14. | CCustom | Retention and protection of trees and hedges as shown |
| 15. | DCustom | Hours of use as per application form |

Informatives

- | | |
|---------|--|
| I32 | Shropshire Fire Service |
| I40 | Conditions |
| I44 | Reasons for approval |
| I106 | Permission subject to memorandum agreement |
| ICustom | Ecology |
| ICustom | Bats |
| ICustom | Nesting wild birds |