

TWC/2021/0871

Holy Trinity Academy, Teece Drive, Priorslee, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9SQ  
Erection of a standalone three storey teaching block with changing block, 3G Pitch with 6no 15m floodlights, two single storey in-fill extensions to the existing school, fencing to grass pitches outside school boundary, a new 5v5 mini soccer pitch, and associated landscape works \*\*Amended red line boundary, amended plans and supporting information\*\*

**APPLICANT**

Telford and Wrekin Council

**RECEIVED**

07/10/2021

**PARISH**

St. Georges and Priorslee

**WARD**

Priorslee

**AS THE APPLICATION INVOLVES TELFORD AND WREKIN COUNCIL AS THE APPLICANT THIS APPLICATION IS TO BE DETERMINED BY MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**FURTHERMORE CLLR. VERONICA FLETCHER HAS REQUESTED THAT THIS APPLICATION IS DETERMINED BY MEMBERS OF PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**THE APPLICATION IS SUBJECT TO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS POTENTIAL TRAFFIC RESTRICTION ORDERS IN THE VICINITY OF THE SCHOOL**

<https://secure.telford.gov.uk/planning/pa-applicationssummary.aspx?applicationnumber=TWC/2021/0871>

**1.0 SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 It is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to Condition(s), Informative(s) and a signed Memo of Understanding (MoU).

**2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

2.1 Holy Trinity Academy is a 900 place secondary school which includes a 150 Place 6<sup>th</sup> Form located off Teece Drive in the area of Priorslee. The site is approximately 2km north east from Telford Town Centre. The school opened in 2015 following the grant of planning consent TWC/2013/0774 in December 2013.

2.2 To the east of the application site is a housing development under construction (Redrow) which is accessed off Castle Farm Way. To the east is Priorslee Lake (Designated Wildlife Site) with access to Telford Sailing Club beyond the end of Teece Drive. To the north of the site is an existing residential area with pedestrian access towards the school from Kew Gardens (along with connecting road Cadman Drive). To the south, beyond a dense woodland belt and Wesley Brook is the manufacturing building and main hub

for Ricoh UK products Ltd. This has accesses off Priorslee Avenue to the west and Shifnal Road further to the South. Beyond this is The University of Wolverhampton – Telford Campus and the M54 Motorway.

- 2.3 To the west of the application site, off Teece Drive, is a further residential area including Pitchford Drive and Gough Close. Teece Drive connects to Priorslee Avenue which connects Castle Farm Drive and the A5 towards Telford Town Centre. There are bus stops located on Priorslee Avenue.
- 2.4 The red line boundary of the site encompasses two main areas. Firstly, to the east of the overall site is the main school itself, along with grass football pitches to the north and east of the main building, and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and car parking to the front of the site to the south. The car park has 148 spaces incl. 7 disabled spaces and drop off points for buses. There are two access/exit points onto Teece Drive from the car park with the eastern most access leading onto a mini roundabout.
- 2.5 The western part of the application is separated by a public right of way which connects Teece Drive with Kew Gardens to the north. This area of open space and sports pitches is owned and maintained by Telford and Wrekin Council. It includes a level grassed area for two 106 x 70 metres football pitches (including 3 metre run off), a 400 metre running track and a cricket pitch. There is an embankment up to a pathway surrounds these pitches to the west and north, and there is a drop to the south towards Teece Drive where there are existing pull in parking spaces for vehicles.
- 2.6 A separate red lined area of the application is located to the north of the main playing pitch field and slightly to the west of a small play area and MUGA. This is where the 5v5 mini soccer pitch is proposed. There are footpaths leading to Kew Gardens and Cadman Drive to the north.
- 2.7 The school has existing access to the external playing pitches which is controlled through a Community Use Agreement.
- 2.8 The area incorporating the open space areas including the playing pitches is allocated as Green Network within the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan. This part of the site also falls under the Council's Green Guarantee.

### **3.0 APPLICATION DETAILS**

- 3.1 This application comprises 5 main elements which can be summarised as follows:
  - i. A proposed standalone teaching block with changing room facility;
  - ii. Two single storey infill extensions to the existing dining hall area;
  - iii. The conversion of an existing grass pitch into a 3G pitch with associated fencing and floodlighting;
  - iv. The enclosure of the existing football pitches, running track and cricket pitch to the west with 2.4m high metal mesh fencing and gates;

- v. The creation of a 5v5 mini soccer pitch with associated, marking and drainage.

### **3.2 Proposed Teaching Block and Changing Rooms**

The new teaching block would be located to the north of the existing school building and immediately adjacent to an existing grass pitch which requires to be moved slightly westward to ensure satisfactory separation. The block is proposed to accommodate an additional 300 pupils and 24 staff.

- 3.2.1 The block would be 3-storey's in height and built with modular construction methods. External materials would include red brick to match the existing school with white, non-combustible cladding. The building includes large areas of glazing to support lighting and ventilation. This includes a louvred window system connected to an automated hybrid heating/ventilation system.
- 3.2.2 Ball stop fencing would be located between the building and the relocated pitch.

### **3.3 Dining Hall Infill Extension**

The dining hall extensions would increase capacity of this facility by 60 spaces. The extensions to the east and west would be single storey and flat roofed and they would utilise existing hard standing areas. An existing fire exit would be relocated in the existing building to cater for the extension. The extensions would be constructed with aluminum walling and white non-combustible cladding.

### **3.4 Proposed 3G Pitch**

It is proposed to remove the existing grass pitch to the east of the site with a 106 x 70 metres (incl. 3 metre runoff) 3G pitch with floodlights. It is proposed that the pitch will conform to Football Association design guidance and principles. In accordance with this guidance, the pitch will include multiple pitch markings to allow for differing levels of use.

- 3.4.1 The proposed pitch and associated hardstanding area would be enclosed by a 4.5 metre high open steel mesh ball stop fencing including entrance gates. A lower 1.2 – 2 metre ball stop fence and gate would be located internally separating the hardstanding area from the pitch.
- 3.4.2 The proposed floodlight system comprises of six 15 metre high masts, each mounted with two LED luminaries which are dimmable, and have zero upward light ratios and spill limiting technology with internal louvres.
- 3.4.3 An equipment store at 2.6 metres above ground level is also proposed in connection with the 3G pitch. This will be finished in dark green steel.
- 3.4.4 A new drainage system would be provided to include a hydro-break manhole with restricted outfall rate of 2 litres per second before connecting to an existing surface water manhole. The 3G pitch has a porous construction.

3.4.5 A 1.8 metre high acoustic fence is proposed along the northern and eastern edge of the pitch area.

3.4.6 It is proposed that the 3G pitch is used only within the hours of 0800-2200 Monday to Saturday and 0800-2000 on Sundays and Public Holidays.

### 3.5 Enclosure of External Pitches

The existing grass pitches is proposed to be enclosed with a green 2.4 metre steel mesh fencing with gated access, including a pair of main accesses, ball retrieval gates and a vehicle access gate.

3.5.1 It is proposed that along with the existing school sports facilities and the proposed 3G pitch, access to the external pitches would be made available through a Community Use Agreement.

### 3.6 Proposed 5v5 Mini Soccer Pitch

The planning application was amended to provide the mini pitch following initial comments received from Sports England (SE). This is to take account of the loss of an area within the school that could be used as sports pitch but would be lost as a result of the proposed extension. This revision included a new red line site plan to incorporate the area for this pitch.

3.6.1 The proposed area for the pitch would be re-graded, drained, re-turfed and marked out to ensure compliance with SE requirements and FA Pitch Quality Performance Standards.

3.7 The Application is supported with the following:

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Transport Assessment and Beat Survey
- Travel Plan
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Preliminary Ecology Assessment
- Geo-Environmental Reports
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Drainage Strategy
- Floodlighting Report (incl. Light Spillage Assessment)
- Community Use Agreement Summary and Plans showing areas under CUA
- 3G Pitch Justification and Sport England Response
- Sports Pitch Maintenance Plan

3.8 The Council's Highways Officer has requested a sum of £10,000 towards TRO's/Traffic Management in the vicinity of the site. It is acknowledged that obligations would usually be the subject of a s.106 Agreement, however, as

the Council cannot enter into such a legal agreement with itself, a Memorandum is required in order to secure any obligations.

#### **4.0 BACKGROUND TO PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 As a result of the projected increase in the number of school aged children in the Borough, and following a feasibility study by Faulkner Browns of the potential expansion of secondary school sites within Telford and Wrekin, Holy Trinity Academy was determined as a preferred option for a new 300 place teaching block. Members may recall a recent application determined in the planning committee of July 2020 for a 300 place extension to Telford Langley School which was also part of the same study.
- 4.2 The Planning Statement submitted with the application reports that in order to comply with the Department for Education's current guidance found within BB103, 48,000 sq. metres of soft outdoor PE area is recommended, compared to the schools existing provision of 17,000 sq. metres which includes the external pitches. However, whilst the school has access to these council owned grass playing pitches to the west of the site, due to safeguarding issues, the School has been unable to use these areas with any regularity. Therefore, it is proposed to erect the fencing around the pitches in order to provide a safe, secure environment for students. Use by the school and the local community of the formalised provision will be secured through a Community Use Agreement. The School intends to enter into a lease agreement with the Council and propose to manage and maintain this facility.
- 4.3 In addition, the existing grass pitch to the east and within the existing school site would be replaced with the proposed 3G pitch and floodlights. This will provide an all-weather pitch which will allow greater flexibility and intensification of use. The 3G pitch will also form part of the community use agreement. In order to comply with requirements set out by Sport England, the applicant has provided evidence of need for the 3G pitch including a draft timetable of use following engagement with local clubs. The creation of a 3G pitch in this location also falls within the updated Playing Pitch Strategy (pending adoption by the Council) which outlines the need for an additional full size 3G pitch in this area of Telford.
- 4.4 Finally Sports England commented in response to the original submission that the proposed extension would result in the loss of playing field within the school and as such objected to the original submission. This resulted in the provision of the proposed off-site 5v5 grass pitch to mitigate against this loss. Without this, Sports England would retain their objection under Exception E4 of their Playing Fields Policy.

#### **5.0 RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS**

##### **5.1 National Guidance:**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.2 Local Development Plan:

Telford & Wrekin Local Plan

**6.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

The following summary of consultation responses covers both responses received during the initial consultation period and further consultation carried out following the amendment to the red line plan and inclusion of the 5v5 pitch. Full copies of consultation responses are available on the Council's Planning website.

**MP, Local Member and Town/Parish Council Responses:**

6.1 Lucy Allen MP: Objection:

- Loss of public green space used and valued by the local community;
- Request that members of planning committee give full consideration to the impact of the loss of this amenity

6.2 St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council: Objection:

- Objects to the installation of fencing around the grass pitches on grounds the area was gifted to the community by Baron Stafford in 1991 for recreational use by local residents and would no longer be freely available;
- Light pollution from flood lights;
- Noise from evening use of 3G pitch;
- Increase in traffic from school extension;
- Loss of green space due to 5v5 pitch that would leave little land available for general leisure purposes.

6.3 Cllr. Veronica Fletcher: Call in Request, noting the following concerns:

- Highway issues that impede safety;
- Removal of access to open space;
- Loss of light, overshadowing and loss of privacy to houses east of the site.

**Standard Consultation Responses:**

6.4 Highways: **Support subject to Condition(s)** in respect of (i); the submission of the details for the school travel plan (ii); Construction Management Plan and (iii); details of the management of the on-site car park arrangements.

6.5 Drainage: **Support subject to Condition(s)** in respect of a Scheme for Foul and Surface Water Drainage.

- 6.6 Ecology: **Support subject to Condition(s)** in respect of working in accordance with the Preliminary Ecological Survey by Middlemarch Environmental (August 2021).
- 6.7 Healthy Spaces: **No comments received** as the Council's Officer was involved in supporting the Council as Applicant in response to Sports England comments.
- 6.8 Environmental Health: **Support subject to Condition(s)** in respect of (i); a glare assessment of the floodlights following insulation with further mitigation added if necessary, (ii); that the acoustic barrier surrounding the 3G pitch is installed at a height no less than 1.8 metre and to a density of no less than 10kg/m<sup>2</sup> with no gaps and set into ground and (iii); that a post construction noise assessment is carried out to ensure that plant on the proposed teaching block is running as expected, and if not, that suitable mitigation is provided in order to meet the required levels.
- 6.9 The Coal Authority: **Comment** that the site does not fall within the defined Development High Risk Area and is located in the Low Risk Area. The Coal Authorities Standing Advice should be included within the Decision Notice as an informative note.
- 6.10 Sport England: **Support Subject to Conditions** in respect of; (i) a detailed assessment of the ground conditions for 5v5 pitch and detailed scheme of construction pursuant to that assessment in consultation with SE; (ii) that the natural grass pitch works are carried out in accordance with submitted details and demonstrated to pass a Performance Quality Standard (PQS) assessment to a 'good' standard; (iii) that the proposed ball stop fencing is implemented in full prior to first use of the teaching block; (iv) that the proposed 3G pitched is not used outside the house of 8am to 10pm Monday to Saturday and 8am to 8pm on Sundays and public holidays; (v) that the 3G pitch is certified to meet FIFA Quality or equivalent International Artificial Turf Standard (IMS) and is registered on the Football Association's Register of Football Turf Pitches; (vi) that prior to enclosure of the existing grass pitches or first use of the development, whichever is the sooner, a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted and approved; and (vii) that the natural turf pitches are maintained in accordance with the approved schedule of field maintenance.
- 6.11 Sport England confirm that previous objections raised have been removed.
- 6.12 West Mercia Police: **No Comment**.
- 6.13 Shropshire Fire Service: **Comment** that consideration should be given to Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's 'Fire Safety Guidance for Commercial and Domestic Planning Applications.

## 7.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC RESPONSE

7.1 Consultation has been carried out in accordance with Article 15 of the Development Management Procedure Order (as amended). The public consultation process has resulted in circa 500 comments and objections. These can be summarised as following:

7.2 Enclosure of External Pitches

- fields used by all of the local community;
- the fields have been publically accessible for over 20 years;
- loss of only green space near to homes;
- the open space provides an area to relax, meet and play for residents of all ages;
- the school does not make full use of existing sports fields;
- there has been a greater use and need for this space due to covid;
- it will see a rise in anti-social behaviour as children will be unable to play here;
- Telford does not have sufficient parkland;
- the fencing will make the field look unsightly;
- there will be nowhere to exercise dog/loss of green space for dog walkers;
- much of Priorslee being built on without provision for recreational space;
- fields were handed over to TWC by Baron Stafford for recreational use of the community/not use as a private field;
- there is space within school that could be adapted;
- it will reduce the amount of informal and spontaneous sport that can be provided;
- it will limit access to those who cannot afford fees;
- the application is purely for money
- will affect physical and mental health for local residents;
- to take away public space when there is so much development is wrong;
- field is used by kids to let off steam;
- field is used for cricket, riding bikes and other sports, not just football;
- will cause increased obesity;
- the Council does not appreciate the value of the field to residents;
- fence would destroy natural environment;
- development is a departure from the local plan;
- contrary to policy NE6 (Green Network) – proposal does not protect, maintain, enhance or extend Green Network;
- the site is allocated as Green Guarantee;
- contrary to policy NE3 (Existing Public Open Space);
- contrary to policy COM 1 (Community Facilities);
- fields would be underused in comparison to current use by residents;
- original application for school indicated that pitches would not be fenced;
- there is no alternative provision of public open space contrary to policy COM1;
- contrary to section 8 of the NPPF (promoting healthy and safe communities) (para's. 98 and 99);
- proposals are contrary to Local Government and Open Spaces Act;
- there are no safeguarding issues for existing groups using the site and no dog mess issues.

### 7.3 School Extension

- will exacerbate existing parking and traffic issues;
- regular issues with parking over drives and parking on double yellows;
- will create more litter;
- impact upon visual amenity;
- look of an industrial building;
- lack of proper transport assessment;
- Teece Drive has yellow lines and cannot be parked on;
- more vehicles will increase pollution.

### 7.4 3G Pitch and flood Lights

- will lead to increased levels of noise in evenings and weekends;
- light pollution from flood lights;
- loss of amenity and impact upon nearby residents.

### 7.5 5v5 Pitch

- takes away further open green space from area;
- there is no need or want for this pitch;
- more open space will be lost as a result of this proposal.

## **8.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 In accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance, applications that accord with an up to date development should be supported without delay unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

8.2 Having regard to the Development Plan Policy and other Material Considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the planning application raises the following main issues:

- Enclosure of Existing Pitches
- 5v5 Mini pitch
- Green Network and Green Guarantee
- Principle of New Teaching Block and Dining Room Extensions
- Scale and Design of new Teaching Block and Dining Room Extensions
- Highways
- Drainage
- Biodiversity
- Impact Upon Neighbouring Amenity
- Community Use Agreement
- Other Matters
- Planning Obligations

### 8.3 **Enclosure of Existing Pitches**

The LPA note that the vast majority of objections received on this application relate to the enclosure of the existing playing pitches which sit outside the existing grounds of the school. This area is laid out as two football pitches, a cricket wicket and running track for which both the school and public have existing access through a Community Use Agreement.

- 8.4 Within the Natural Environment section of the Local Plan, it is recognised that Public Open Space is an important and integral part of the quality and function of places and have always formed an integral part of the planning of Telford. Policy NE3 relates specifically to existing public open space and within this, the provision of formal and informal sports and recreation facilities. It states that the Council will protect, maintain and enhance this provision throughout the borough.
- 8.5 Policy NE3 clearly states that the Council will only support development which involves the loss or harm of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the following circumstances:
- i. Where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will provide a replacement facility to an equal or improved standard in a suitable alternative location; or
  - ii. Where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will provide appropriate areas of public open space to replace that being lost; or
  - iii. Where the proposal can secure other wider benefits which outweigh the disadvantages of the loss of such open space; or
  - iv. Where appropriate mitigation measures are provided to compensate for the impact upon existing provision.
- 8.6 Officers note that within a number of the objections received, Policies COM1 and COM2 are also referenced in respect of the enclosure, however, para. 7.02 of the Local Plan advises that other community uses such as 'playing fields' are covered in the 'Natural Environment' section of the Plan.
- 8.7 Para. 98 of the NPPF recognises the importance of Open Space and opportunities for sport and physical activity whilst para. 92 seeks to ensure planning decisions aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places.
- 8.8 The proposal will involve the loss of the free access to the existing pitches, however, the grassed area along with the pitches will remain as part of this proposal. Whilst it was anticipated when the school was originally built that the grassed pitches would remain open and shared with the public, it is evident there is conflict between the user groups, and the school are no longer able to use these pitches on a regular basis. Issues raised include conflicts with some dog walkers, dog fouling and issues of anti-social behaviour. Enclosure of the pitches will ensure the school can use this grass pitch facility on a regular basis free from any conflict and ensure better safeguarding of students during PE lessons.
- 8.9 The LPA also understand that these pitches require maintenance to ensure they are at the appropriate standard for use (whether this is football, cricket,

running or other sports that could be carried out). This management is currently carried out by the Council. The enclosure of the sports pitches is highly likely to secure benefits in the management of the facility which will be carried out by the school as part of their current school grounds management. Details of this management have been provided with the application and Conditions recommended by Sports England will be attached to ensure this maintenance regime is carried out in full. This will also benefit other users of the pitches through the Community Use Agreement.

- 8.10 The LPA recognises the significant level of objection to the enclosure of this well used space, however, it is considered that the planning merits of the proposal outweigh the disadvantages of the enclosure of this space. First and foremost it would ensure that the school can meet its requirements for the provision of outside sports space, whilst also allowing the better safeguarding of children within the school. Access to the pitches, which will have an improved scheme of maintenance, and reduced risk of damage through misuse, will also be made available to residents and sports groups through a strict Community Use Agreement (CUA). The final details of the CUA, will need to be agreed with the LPA and Sports England, with a completed agreement submitted to the LPA prior to the enclosure of the grass pitches. Details of how residents and groups can access the facilities will be required as part of this submission. Overall, this element of the application will provide an enhanced sports pitch facility, adjoined with which is access to changing room facilities within the school. The proposal to enclose the existing pitches is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policy.
- 8.11 The remainder of the open space within the land adjacent to the school would remain freely accessible including use of the existing pathways around the site. This includes the area proposed for the 5v5 pitch which will remain openly accessible land. In terms of other locally assessable areas, routes between the site to the area and walkways surrounding Hangman's Pool are available within 1 mile (approx. 14min walk) ensuring adequate areas for recreation, dog walking and exercise remain.
- 8.12 In regard to the type of fencing to be used, the LPA is satisfied that a 2.4 metre high open mesh fencing would not be visually intrusive or cause significant harm upon the landscape setting to the remainder of the open space area.
- 8.13 **5v5 mini pitch**
- The inclusion of the 5v5 mini pitch on the northern parcel of the open space has come about following initial objections from Sports England under Exception E4 of their Playing Fields Policy. Their objection was on grounds that the location of the proposed teaching block resulted in the loss of playing field which was not replaced.
- 8.14 This pitch will be available for public use and Condition(s) will be attached as requested by Sport England in consultation with the Football Foundation to ensure the pitch passes a PQS Assessment to a 'Good' standard.

8.15 The creation of this pitch therefore only changes the status and management of this area of open space. It does not involve the loss or harm of open space and as such would be fully compliant with Policy NE3 of the Local Plan.

#### **8.16 Green Network and Green Guarantee**

The open space areas to the west of the main school are allocated as Green Network within the Local Plan. Policy NE6 of the plan indicates that the Council will protect, maintain, enhance and where possible extend the Green Network.

8.17 Land within the Green Network has been assessed as forming part of an interconnected network which performs the following functions across the urban area:

1. To provide significant visual amenity value in the form of extensive views over green open areas, water bodies or woodland;
2. To provide separation between built up areas by significant open green areas, water bodies or woodland which help to retain and enhance the individual identity of local communities;
3. To provide an appropriate supply of open land to meet the diverse recreational needs of an expanding population, combining the more formal parkland and recreation areas with wider landscaped areas valuable for informal recreation;
4. To maintain, protect and enhance the borough's ecological value in terms of natural habitats and species by providing ecological networks, corridors and stepping stones by which wildlife can move through, and thrive within, urban environments;
5. To maintain, protect and enhance the unique geological and archaeological features within the borough as a legacy of its early place in the Industrial Revolution;
6. To provide open space linkages through which footpath, cycleways and ecological corridors can connect different parts of Telford or Newport forming accessible 'green ways' through urban areas.

8.18 It is not considered that the enclosure of the external pitches would be contrary to any of the listed functions of the Green Network. Function 3 in particular continues to be met as the formal recreation area created by the proposal combines with the wider landscaped areas, valuable for informal recreation. By doing so this site will continue to meet the needs of an expanding population. Furthermore, the existing linkages connecting the site to other parts of Telford are maintained around the site in respect of Function 6. In addition, by the use of open mesh fencing, no harsh barrier would be created and views through the site would be maintained in accordance with Function 1.

8.19 It is also recognised that the site is designated as a Green Guarantee Site. This is a Council wide strategy to protect circa 200 Green Guarantee Spaces

within Council ownership from development. However, whilst this is referred to in para. 6.0.7 of the Local Plan, there are no planning policies that restrict the types of use, or enclosure of spaces within these sites and as such, the LPA cannot determine the application based upon the impact the fencing has upon the Green Guarantee site.

## **8.20 Principal of New Teaching Block and Dining Room Extensions**

Policy COM 1 (Community Facilities) of the Local Plan outlines that development will be expected to preserve existing community facilities and sustain, enhance and provide new social infrastructure to meet demand arising from new development. Equally, it recognises that development which detrimentally affects existing social infrastructure such as its removal or reduction will not be supported unless a lack of need is demonstrated or acceptable alternative provision exists or is proposed concurrently.

8.21 Para. 95 of the NPPF states that it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities and that LPA's should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.

8.22 The Council recognise that based upon growth forecasts within the Borough, there will be a shortfall in pupil spaces. This resulted in the feasibility study mentioned earlier in this report and the decision to provide the additional accommodation for 300 pupils at HTA. Officers are therefore satisfied that the principal of the new teaching block with the necessary dining room additions accords with the relevant local and national policies.

## **8.23 Scale and Design of New Teaching Block and Dining Room Extensions**

Policy BE 1 (Design Criteria) of the Local Plan sets out that the Council will support development which respects and responds positively to its context and enhances the quality of the local built and natural environment and demonstrates an integrated design approach from the outset combining layout, building form and design, landscape, green infrastructure, surface water management, access and parking.

8.24 The NPPF also places significant importance on the design of new development seeking to ensure they are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping.

8.25 The LPA consider that the 3-storey design of the main teaching block respects the character and appearance of the existing school without being visually intrusive. The materials as indicated in the submitted details match those used on the existing school and appropriate conditions are attached to approve the final materials to be used prior to the commencement of these elements of the application.

8.26 Overall, the development appears to respect the context of the site and is therefore in accordance with Policy BE1.

### **8.27 Highway Implications**

Following discussions with the applicant and their highways consultants an updated travel plan was submitted to the LPA in order to consider a plan that was reflective of the new scheme and student numbers. This plan has been considered by the Council's Highways Officer who raises no objections to the development subject to Condition(s) and the recommended Financial Contribution.

8.28 A School Travel Plan sets out ways that students, staff and visitors to the school can reduce the number of vehicles being used in association with the use. The Travel Plan document contains a set of recommendations for the aims, objectives, targets and measures that are needed to reduce the number of car trips generated by the school and will result in an increase in the number of pedestrian, cycle and public transport trips. It also includes proposed methods for monitoring travel patterns and updating the Travel Plan.

8.29 At present, the plan recognises there are existing issues relating to traffic and parking during drop off and pick up times. HTA has a situation whereby Teece Drive is not a through road and as such, any traffic wishing to go to the car park, or park near to the school has to then turn around (either in the school car park, or roundabout at the end of the road) and exit from the same junction onto Priorslee Avenue. What this means is that drivers who wish to use Teece Drive, do so not know if there will be an available space on the road. This also means that drivers park further away from the school, in places where it may be more convenient.

8.30 The Travel Plan provides a number of options to try and reduce the amount of vehicles on the road including, but not inclusive to monitoring the use of the schools free buses, changing/increasing stops where necessary and promote this use further in the school. It will monitor if there is scope to increase the number of routes if required.

8.31 One important matter for consideration is access into the existing school car park; the original planning approval for the school conditioned the car park so it must be made available for parents/carers to use the car park for drop-offs and pick-ups, however this has not been complied with, and has a knock on effect on the wider highway network. Subsequently the LPA is clear this condition must be complied with and details of this car park plan are contained within the revised submitted Travel Plan; this is also supported by written confirmation from the Headmaster of the school that they will abide by this requirement. The LPA recognise that the provision of 29 additional spaces that can be used during drop off and pick up times within the car will greatly assist in improving the existing situation on Teece Drive and may assist in reducing the amount of parking on double yellows in the locality.

- 8.32 The Highways Officer, whilst in support of this, recognises that there is likely to be a wider impact beyond Teece Drive and as such a sum of £10,000 is requested to be secured against future TRO's or Traffic Management measures.
- 8.33 Finally, it is recognised that the development of the site will require a Construction Management Plan (CMP). The Highways Officer has recommended the following requirements be included within the plan:
- a. The interim measures to manage the use of the car park between staff, student pick up/drop off and construction related traffic for the duration of the works;
  - b. No construction related or delivery parking on Teece Drive at any time;
  - c. No deliveries to occur during school peak periods;
  - d. No obstruction or closure of any footway or PROW.
- 8.34 These will be included in addition to the usual requirements, including hours of operation including deliveries, details in relation to avoiding mud on the highway and location of any site compound, storage and parking for construction staff.
- 8.35 An additional 26 cycle parking stands are also included as part of the proposals.
- 8.36 In respect of use of the pitches, sports hall and 3G pitch outside of school hours, the use of the car park would be available as part of the Community Use Agreement.
- 8.37 Based upon the above it is considered that the impacts of the new development can be mitigated and as such complies with Policies C1, C4 and C5 of the Local Plan.

### **8.38 Drainage**

The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 and therefore is considered to be at low risk from flooding.

- 8.39 The submitted Drainage Strategy confirms that a suitable surface and foul water drainage design can be achieved for the Scheme and that this has been agreed with the LLFA. It is also noted that the LLFA has previously advised that applicant that SuDS will not be required on site as the dining hall extensions will take place on existing hardstanding and it has been agreed that the proposed teaching block can discharge into the local sewer at a rate of 2l/s with an attenuation tank restricting flow rates.
- 8.40 The Council's Drainage Officer raises no objections to the proposed development subject to Condition(s) requiring further details of foul and surface water drainage for the development. The LPA are therefore satisfied that a scheme can be provided that ensures that there would be no risk of flooding, therefore according with Policies ER11 and ER12 of the Local Plan.

## **8.41 Biodiversity**

The site is not located within any statutory or non-statutory designated site for nature conservation. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (August 2021) has been produced by Middlemarch Environmental and has been submitted to support the planning application. The PEA has been informed by an ecological desk study and a walkover survey to identify potential impacts from the scheme on nature conservation sites, habitats and protected species.

8.42 This Appraisal includes a number of recommendations which are agreed to be the Council's Biodiversity Officer. The Officer has recommended a Condition to ensure works are carried out in accordance with these details.

8.43 The LPA note there would be the loss of a small 5 metre hedge of low biodiversity value within the school grounds to facilitate the proposed teaching block. Young sapling trees within the school site will also require to be removed and carefully replanted. It is noted that the proposal includes a semi-improved ecology area to the north of the new teaching block which will provide mitigation for the low impact the proposals have in this respect.

8.44 The development therefore complies with Policies NE1, NE2 of the Local Plan.

## **8.45 Impact Upon Neighbouring Amenity**

### Teaching Block

8.46 It is noted that concerns have been raised regarding the impact of the new teaching block on loss of light and loss of privacy to nearby residents. Policy BE1 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure there are no significant adverse impacts on nearby properties by noise, dust, odour or light pollution and that development does not prejudice existing surrounding uses.

8.47 Numerical guidance contained on the Council Website requires a distance of 15 metres between proposed 3<sup>rd</sup> storey windows and neighbouring private amenity space. In this instance, a distance of approximately 70 metres is achieved between the nearest corner of the development to the front elevations of 25 and 27 Alfred Nock Drive, located within the under construction Redrow Housing Development. Officers are satisfied that that the distance between the proposed building and these properties is more than satisfactory and that there would be no resulting loss of light or loss of privacy to these dwellings.

8.48 In terms of noise from the teaching block, it is not likely that any plant on the roof of the building will cause any significant noise related issues, however, a Condition is attached to ensure that the plant is operated as per its specifications.

8.49 The LPA are therefore satisfied that Policy BE1 is complied with in this respect.

#### 8.50 3G Pitch and Associated Lighting

There are two main considerations in respect of the proposed pitch, the impact upon neighbouring residential dwellings in respect of both noise and light pollution.

- 8.51 The existing grass pitch is subject to an existing Community Use Agreement and can be used up until 2200. Officers recognise that this is only feasible during summer months due to light levels, however, this is an existing situation that requires consideration.
- 8.52 The replacement of the pitch with a 3G pitch and introduction of floodlighting ensures that the pitch can be used throughout the winter, providing a greatly enhanced sports facility that can be used for both training and matches. This will have the additional impact of the pitch being used more frequently, especially later into the evening and particularly during winter months where currently this is not possible.
- 8.53 A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) submitted with the application calculated that the noise level at the nearest residential receptors would be 4db above the recommended levels and as such mitigation is required. This mitigation is via the provision of a 1.8 metre high noise barrier along the north and east of the pitch. Based upon the calculations provided this would reduce the noise level to 48dB, 2dB below the desirable level of 50 dB.
- 8.54 The LPA is therefore satisfied that the mitigation reduces the potential for adverse impacts, and therefore complies with Local Plan requirements.
- 8.55 The proposed lighting and its impact is set out in a Floodlighting Performance Report and Floodlighting Scheme which provides the proposed floodlighting strategy for the new 3G pitch. In addition, the 'Technical Information to Support Planning' document dated 04 August 2021, contains a Lighting Impact Assessment (LIA) which demonstrates compliance with the recommendations contained within the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note *01/20 Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive lighting*.
- 8.56 As described in the 'Application Details' section of this report, the proposed floodlight system comprises of six 15 metre high masts, each mounted with two LED luminaries which are dimmable, have zero upward light ratios and spill limiting technology with internal louvres.
- 8.57 The submitted LIA Report concludes that light levels at the nearest residential property would be below identified thresholds and as such the floodlighting will not have any adverse impact upon the amenities of residential occupiers. This is also demonstrated on overspill plans.

- 8.58 Furthermore, the lights will operate with control switches and time clocks to ensure they remain on, only until the permitted curfew. Hours of permitted use of the 3G pitch will be conditioned to between 8am and 10pm Monday to Saturday and between 8am and 8pm on Sundays and Public Holidays.
- 8.59 The suggested Condition by Environmental Health for a glare assessment of the floodlights following insulation will be attached as this will allow for further mitigation added if necessary.
- 8.60 As a result, the LPA are satisfied adequate information has been provided in this respect and subject to the recommended condition, the proposed lighting is fully compliant with Local Plan Policy contained within BE1.

### **8.61 Community Use Agreement**

Whilst there is an existing Community Use Agreement relating to the use of the existing grass pitches and facilities within the school, a revised agreement will need to be prepared and agreed to take into consideration the changes as a result of this application, including the enclosed grass pitches, changing room facilities and the 3G pitch.

- 8.62 In support of the application, a summary of the proposed Agreement has been provided. This indicates access to the facilities will be during the following times:

Term Time:            1800 – 2200 (weekdays)  
                              0900 – 2000 (weekends)

School Holidays:    0900 – 2200 (weekdays)  
                              0900 – 2200 (weekends)

- 8.63 The summary also recognises that the school will have the right to impose and retain charges for the use of the facilities including that any charges will have a policy of affordable pricing, including Telford Loyalty Card and adopting similar charges as those charged by the Council for similar facilities in the borough. Furthermore, it grants access to the Council at a preferential rate (subject to agreement) for the delivery of activities for the community.
- 8.64 The LPA are satisfied that the CUA summary is satisfactory, and will ensure, along with any other requirements by Sport England as requested in their condition, that the actual Agreement complies these terms. These details will include management responsibilities and a mechanism for review, along with details of marketing and booking arrangements.

### **8.65 Other Matters**

Officers are aware that the lease (disposal) of the land requires consideration under the Local Government and Open Spaces Acts. This is separate legislation and relates to the requirements of the Council as landowner. As

such this is not a planning consideration that can or should be considered in determining this application.

- 8.66 Covenants and legal documents relating to the use of land are not planning considerations and are also a matter for the land owner. Equally matters raised in respect of impact upon house prices are also not a planning matter that can be considered.
- 8.67 The application has been submitted with a Ground Conditions Statement. As with the existing school, no risk in contaminated land or risks in terms of groundwater are expected and as such, no mitigation is necessary. The LPA is satisfied in this respect.

### **8.68 Planning Obligations**

As the proposal results in an impact upon the existing highway network in the vicinity of the school, as requested by the Highways Officer, a sum of £10,000 is required to be secured against future TRO's or Traffic Management Measures. How this will be used will be dependent upon the level of impact within the surrounding area caused by the proposed development. This could be, but not exclusive to roads to the north of the site or bus stop pull in areas on Priorslee Avenue.

- 8.69 As outlined in the Application Details within this report, a Memorandum of Understanding is required to confirm that the obligations will be conformed with. This memo will be required prior to the release of a decision and a copy will be attached to the application and viewable online. Including within this is a monitoring fee of £200 (2%).
- 8.70 In determining the required Planning Obligations on this specific application the following three tests as set out in the CIL Regulations (2010), in particular Regulation 122, have been applied to ensure that the application is treated on its own merits:
- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - b) directly related to the development;
  - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The Local Planning Authority have taken all matters into account in order to determine whether the proposed application is acceptable in planning terms and in doing so has worked with the Applicants to resolve issues that have arisen. The LPA recognise that there is a significant number of objections to the enclosure of the currently open pitches, and these have been considered in full in the determination of this application. However, the LPA must consider the main planning grounds, including relevant local and national policy which in this instance, on balance, determine that there are no sustainable reasons

to warrant a refusal of the application to enclose existing sports pitches to which the public will retain access. A suitably worded community use agreement will ensure this. Whilst the LPA acknowledge that this results in removing the ability of the public to spontaneously access the sports pitches when not in use by the school, the overall result will be better managed pitches that will safeguard the school children using them as part of their curriculum, whilst also providing an enhanced facility for the groups that wish to use this space.

- 9.2 The 5v5 pitch on the northern part of the space is simply an enhancement to the management of this area of land to provide that facility in line with the requirements of Sports England. It will not be fenced or enclosed in anyway, allowing the free enjoyment of it. There are no planning grounds to warrant refusal of this part of the application.
- 9.3 It is noted that there is likely to be some highways impact resulting from this application, both through the construction phase and when the site is occupied. In terms of the construction, this operation will need to be agreed with the LPA prior to commencement of works. In terms of the impact of additional students, this will be mitigated through the use of a travel plan that will be required prior to commencement of works. It should be noted that the impact of this development will not be immediate, in the first year after construction it is suggested that there will be an increase of 60 students. It may take some time for the school to reach the permitted capacity in which time, the travel plan will have greater impact.
- 9.4 Concerns raised in regards to noise and light impact from the proposed 3G pitch have been addressed. The LPA are satisfied that the noise mitigation fencing to be put in place, along with the type of lighting proposed (which will be tested through condition), there would be no adverse impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residents. Equally, the proposed teaching block is a satisfactory distance from residential property not to cause any loss of privacy or loss of light.
- 9.5 Outstanding Drainage, Highways and Ecology matters can be sufficiently dealt with through appropriate Condition(s) as recommended by the individual officers.
- 9.6 The proposals therefore comply with the relevant Policies contained within the Local Plan and National Planning Policy Guidance.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 10.1 Based on the conclusions above, it is recommended that **Delegated Authority** be granted to the Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION** (with the authority to finalise any matter including conditions, legal agreement terms, or any later variations) subject to:

1. The applicants/landowner entering into a memorandum agreement with the Local Planning Authority in order to secure a sum of £10,000

towards traffic restriction orders (TRO's) or Traffic Management Measures where appropriate.

2. A Memorandum Monitoring Fee of £200

3. The following Condition(s):

Time Limit - Full

Samples of Materials

Landscape Design

Landscape Management

Highway Condition(s) Outlined in para. 6.4

Drainage Condition(s) Outlined in para. 6.5

Ecology Condition(s) Outlined in para. 6.6

Sports England Condition(s) Outlined in para. 6.10

Environmental Health Condition(s) Outlined in para. 6.8

Development in Accordance with Approved Plans