

Planning and Regulatory Committee
19 May 2015

7. PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A 3 CLASSROOM EXTENSION TO EXISTING FIRST SCHOOL TO ACCOMMODATE 1 FORM ENTRY, TOGETHER WITH CONSTRUCTION OF EXTERNAL TIMBER STORE, HARD PLAY SPACE AND CAR PARKING AREA AND RELOCATION OF EXISTING TEMPORARY CLASSROOMS AT BLACKWELL FIRST SCHOOL, ST CATHERINE'S ROAD, BLACKWELL, BROMSGROVE, WORCESTERSHIRE.

Applicant	Worcestershire County Council
Local Councillor	Mr C B Taylor
Purpose of Report	<p>1. To consider an application under Regulation 3 of the Town and County Planning General Regulations 1992 for planning permission for the proposed construction of a 3 classroom extension to existing first school to accommodate 1 form entry, together with construction of external timber store, hard play space and car parking area and relocation of existing temporary classrooms at Blackwell First School, St. Catherine's Road, Blackwell, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.</p>
Background	<p>2. Blackwell First School currently accommodates 5 year groups from Reception to Year 4 with 20 pupils in each year. The overall current capacity at the school is 100 pupils. Due to the increased demand for places, Worcestershire County Council wish to increase the capacity of the school from a PAN (Pupil Admission Number) of 20 to a PAN of 30 which equates to a 1 Form Entry First School, increasing the capacity of the school to 150 pupils.</p>
The Proposal	<p>3. Worcestershire County Council is seeking planning permission for the proposed construction of a 3 classroom extension to an existing first school to accommodate 1 form entry, together with construction of external timber store, hard play space and car parking area and relocation of existing temporary classrooms at Blackwell First School, St. Catherine's Road, Blackwell, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.</p> <p>Proposed 3 classroom extension</p> <p>4. The 3 classroom extension would increase the capacity to a</p>

1 form entry First School which would accommodate 150 pupils. There would be an increase in staff numbers from 11 to 12, full time equivalent staff.

5. The proposed extension would be single-storey and would measure approximately 350 square metres in area. The dimensions of the proposed building would be approximately 32 metres in length, by approximately 14 metres in width, by approximately 7 metres in height.

6. The proposed extension would be physically linked to the existing building via an extension to the existing boiler room.

7. The proposed extension would comprise of 3 new classrooms, pupil toilets, cloak areas, stores, main entrance lobby with school office, head teacher's office, disabled/staff toilet and medical inspection room.

8. The applicant states that the proposed extension has been designed to complement the existing school building. The main roof of the proposed extension would be a 40 degree pitched roof to match the pitch of the existing building. The proposed extension would also comprise of flat roof and canopy elements.

9. The proposed extension would be constructed from red facing brickwork with blue facing brick plinth up to finished floor level; clay roof tiles; grey aluminium windows, doors and rain water goods; grey single ply membrane flat roof coverings.

10. The proposal comprises of the demolition of an existing free standing brick building, currently used for the storage of play equipment to accommodate the proposed extension.

11. There would also be the creation of a new hard play area to the north of the school site, to compensate for area lost as a result of the extension.

12. During the construction of the proposed extension, the temporary classroom would be relocated to the north-eastern corner of the school site and once the proposed extension is completed, it is the applicant's intention to remove the temporary classroom from the site as the accommodation would no longer be required.

Proposed construction of car park

13. It is also proposed to construct a small car park as part of the proposal, which would comprise of 12 car parking spaces, including one disabled space.

14. The proposed car park would be sited in the south-eastern corner of the school playing field, which is sited across the road from the main school building. The proposed car park originally comprised of two rows of 6 car parking spaces and would be constructed from a porous

tarmacadam surface.

15. However, following consultation, Sport England objected to the proposed location of the car park on the basis that that will result in the loss of a playing field, until a suitable Section 106 agreement, or other legal mechanism is delivered to compensate that loss, or arrangements are confirmed on replacement provision; they stated that alternatively, the car park could be located on non-playing field land or on an area of the playing field which is incapable of accommodating a playing pitch.

16. In response to Sport England's objection, the applicant submitted an amended plan showing a revised layout of the proposed car park. The amended layout comprise of one row of 12 car parking spaces, including 1 disabled car parking space. The original surfacing of the car park has been revised to reduce the area of tarmacadam with gravel used in lieu of tarmacadam except for the parking bays and the adoptable entrance.

17. The proposed car park would measure approximately 440 square metres. The dimensions would be approximately 40 metres in length by 11 metres in width. The applicant states that there is sufficient space to accommodate the proposed car park without affecting the existing playing pitch layout. The proposed car park is within the Green Belt.

18. The existing gates would be replaced with a new vehicular entrance, and separate pedestrian entrance sited approximately 5 metres further north, along St. Catherine's Road, with the gates recessed from the highway together with a visibility splay of 2.4 metres by 43 metres in each direction. A section of existing hedgerow would be removed to accommodate the new access and new hedgerow would be planted to infill the gap where the existing entrance into the playing field would be removed and along the line of the proposed visibility splay.

Internal works

19. There would also be internal works as part of the proposed development which include the enlargement of one existing classroom by incorporating an existing storage area and staff toilet. The staff toilet would be relocated into an existing store room and cleaners store, with these being provided in the new extension. There would also be the creation of a new corridor within the staff room to link with the new extension. The staff room kitchen area would be relocated; the existing school office would become a group room and the Head Teacher's office would become a staff work room.

20. Furthermore, 3 new trees and a section of hedgerow would be planted along the northern boundary of the school site, immediately adjacent to the new hard play games court.

21. A pre-planning consultation event was held at Blackwell

The Site

First School on Thursday 16 October 2014. The applicant states that the event was publicised through notification letters to local residents and to the staff, parents and governors of Blackwell First School. Drawings were displayed to allow people to comment on the scheme. The Architect, LEA representative and senior staff were present to answer any questions. A number of positive comments were received with some expressing concerns about existing traffic issues that could be exacerbated by increasing the capacity of the school while also acknowledging that the new car park may help.

22. During the construction phase, construction vehicles would enter the site through the school entrance gate off St Catherine's Road and the site offices would be sited within the hard surfacing at the front of the site.

23. The existing school site measures 2.93 Hectares and is located within a residential area in the village of Blackwell.

24. The site is bound by St. Catherine's Road to the west; a private driveway to a single dwelling to the north; the residential curtilage of 10a to the east and a private driveway to the south which leads to 4 detached dwellings, including 10a, sited at the rear of the school site.

25. The existing boundary treatments at the site consists of wire mesh fence together with shrubbery to the north; wire mesh and concrete pillar, together with hedgerow to the east and bow top fencing to the southern boundaries.

26. The original school building was constructed in 1875 with a classroom extension in 1905. Additional extensions were constructed in 1994, 2004 and 2009.

27. The main building is constructed from pitched clay tiled roofs, flat mastic asphalt and felt roofs, loadbearing brick walls, brick and metal chimneys, plastic rainwater goods and aluminium windows and doors.

28. The building currently comprises of a small hall, two classrooms, staff room, offices, kitchen, toilets and store rooms. Two further classrooms, toilet cloaks and a Library space are accommodated within a temporary building.

29. The school buildings and hard play areas are located at the front of the site. The rear of the site is primarily grass and used for informal play.

30. There is one existing vehicular access into the school site, located at the west of the site off St. Catherine's Road. There is one existing pedestrian access into the school site which is located along the western boundary. The existing pedestrian access and vehicular accesses into the site would remain unchanged.

31. The existing boundary treatments of the school playing field include, approximately 2 metre high hedgerow to the east; wire and post fence together with trees and shrubbery to the north, west and south.

32. The nearest residential properties to the proposed development are 12 and 12a St. Catherine's Road which are sited approximately 40 metres north of the proposed extension; 10a; 10b; 10c and 10 St. Catherine's Coppice to the rear of the application site which are sited 20 metres; 45 metres; 55 metres and 60 metres, respectively, from the proposed extension and 8 St. Catherine's Road which is sited approximately 20 metres south of the proposed extension.

33. The nearest residential properties to the proposed car park are 14, 14a, 14b and 18 St. Catherine's Road, which are sited approximately 25 metres; 25 metres; 35 metres and 40 metres from the proposed car park development.

34. The proposed development is sited approximately 1 kilometre south-east of Shepley Marsh; approximately 850 metres south-west of Linthurst Wood; approximately 1.5 kilometres south-west of Cock's Croft Wood; approximately 1.4 metres north-east of Burcot Lane Meadow and approximately 1.8 kilometres east of Cooper's Hill Wood, local wildlife sites.

35. Public Right of Way (502 (B)) runs diagonally through the wooded area adjacent to and south of the field, in which the proposed car park would be sited.

36. There is no on-site parking at the school site and, therefore, staff and parents currently park along St. Catherine's Road.

37. The main issues in the determination of this application are the impact of the proposal on:

- Green Belt
- Landscape Character and Appearance of the Area
- Residential Amenity
- Water Environment
- Traffic and Highways Safety, and
- Ecology.

Summary of Issues

Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

38. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published and came into effect on 27 March 2012. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision takers and is a material planning consideration in determining planning applications. Annex 3 of the NPPF lists the documents revoked and replaced by the NPPF. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through plan-making and decision-taking.

39. Sustainable Development is defined by five principles set out in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy:

- "living within the planet's environmental limits;
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
- achieving a sustainable economy;
- promoting good governance; and
- using sound science responsibly".

40. The Government believes that sustainable development can play three critical roles in England:

- an economic role, contributing to a strong, responsive, competitive economy;
- a social role, supporting vibrant and healthy communities; and
- an environmental role, protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

41. The following guidance contained in the NPPF, is considered to be of specific relevance to the determination of this planning application:

- Section 7: Requiring good design
- Section 8: Promoting healthy communities
- Section 10: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The Development Plan

42. The Development Plan is the strategic framework that guides land use planning for the area. In this respect the current Development Plan consists of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan.

43. Planning applications should be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

44. Annex 1 of the NPPF states that for the purposes of decision-taking, the policies in the Local Plan should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted prior to the publication of the NPPF. However, the policies contained within the NPPF are material considerations. For 12 months from the day of publication, decision-takers may continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a limited degree of conflict with the NPPF. In other cases and following this 12-month period, due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Draft Planning Policy

Bromsgrove District Local Plan

Policy DS13 Sustainable Development
Policy S31 Development at Educational Establishments
Policy S32 Loss of Private Playing Fields
Policy S33 Mobile Classrooms
Policy C17 Retention of Existing Trees
Policy BG3 Improvements to Car Parking Provision
Policy BG4 Retention of Character of Area

Lickey and Blackwell Village Design Statement

Draft Bromsgrove District Plan

45. The Bromsgrove District Plan will outline the strategic planning policy framework for guiding development in Bromsgrove District up to 2030. It will contain a long-term vision and strategic objectives, a development strategy, key policies, strategic site allocations and a monitoring and implementation statement. The Plan will also include a copy of the Redditch Cross Boundary Development Policy (Policy RCBD1), which appears in the Draft Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4.

46. On 12 March 2014 Bromsgrove District Council submitted the Bromsgrove District Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The Secretary of State has appointed an independent Inspector (Mr Michael J Hetherington) to undertake an independent examination into the soundness of the Bromsgrove District Plan. The Bromsgrove District Plan and the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 examinations are being held concurrently and have included several joint hearing sessions as well as separate hearing sessions relating to each Local Plan. Hearing sessions commenced in June 2014 and the Inspector published his Interim conclusions on 17 July 2014 in respect of the Duty to Co-operate, the objective assessment of housing needs and consideration of additional housing needs arising from the West Midlands conurbation. On 1 September 2014 Bromsgrove District Council submitted their response to Inspector's Interim Conclusions. Further hearings were held in December 2014; and a further hearing session regarding cross boundary development is scheduled for 17 June 2015.

47. The Bromsgrove District Plan has not, therefore, been tested at examination or adopted by Bromsgrove District Council. Having regard to the advice in the NPPF, Annex 1, it is the view of the Head of Economic Development and Planning, that little weight will be attached to the Bromsgrove District Plan in the determination of this application. The Bromsgrove District Plan policies that are relevant to this planning application are listed below:-

Policy BDP 1 Sustainable Development Principles
Policy BDP 12: Sustainable Communities
Policy BDP 19 High Quality Design
Policy BDP 21 Natural Environment

Consultations

48. Bromsgrove District Council - Awaiting comments

49. Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council have no concerns about the proposed extension element of the proposed development; however, they do have concerns about losing part of the field opposite the school for staff parking. They recognise that the proposed car park is necessary for staff, however, they request that other options are explored.

50. In light of the amended plans, Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council feel that the revised layout is an improvement on the original submission. They still believe that it is sad to lose an area which was gifted, under covenant, as a space for children, to car parking but acknowledge that there is a need for this facility.

51. They are concerned that there is no boundary separating the car park from the field and would prefer that a hedge is planted.

52. They also suggest that the proposed disabled space is relocated to the eastern side of the car park to be closest to the school.

53. The County Archaeologist has no comments to make on the proposal with regard to the historic environment.

54. The County Ecologist has no objections to the proposal, but recommends the imposition of conditions relating to breeding birds; the protection of trees and hedgerows; protection of protected species; lighting; installation of bat and bird boxes and a planting scheme including the replacement hedgerow.

55. Severn Trent Water has no objection to the proposal subject to the imposition of a condition relating to drainage plans.

56. Sport England have withdrawn their initial objection to the application following the submission of amended plans which reduce the impact of the proposed car park on the playing field and subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the agreement of a Community Use Agreement (CUA).

57. Worcestershire Regulatory Services has no comments to make regarding noise in relation to the proposal but advises that due to the close proximity of residents, the applicant should be directed to Worcestershire Regulatory Services "Code of Best Practice for Demolition and Construction Sites".

58. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust does not wish to object

to the proposals. They are content to defer to the opinions of the County Ecologist for all on-site biodiversity considerations.

59. North Worcestershire Water Management states that the Environment Agency maps indicate that the application site is located within flood zone 1, indicating that there is little risk to the site of fluvial flooding. Whilst they also show that there is little risk of surface water flooding on site, there is some within the area, and it will, therefore, be important to ensure that this development does not cause or exacerbate flood risk on site or in the surrounding area.

60. The proposed extension would increase the overall hard-standing area. The applicant has states that surface water will be retained on site or attenuated prior to discharging to the surface water sewer, and as such North Worcestershire Water Management has requested the imposition of a condition relating to a surface water drainage plan, indicating SuDS techniques on surface water disposal of the site. They remind the applicant that any connection to the foul or surface water system may require consent from STW Ltd.

61. As this development is on a school site, a useful SuDS technique to consider, could be a rainwater garden, as these can provide educational purposes (as well as drainage purposes), especially to those of a primary age. Other SuDS techniques that could be considered include further permeable/porous paving, rainwater harvesting/butts and/or soakaways should ground conditions allow.

62. In relation to the proposed car park location, they note that as this is currently a Greenfield site, it is important that run off rates are returned to that of pre-development state. They do not consider the car park to be overly large and the surface is to be of a porous material which does, therefore, not cause too much concern.

63. The County Landscape Officer considers the proposal acceptable from a landscape perspective and, therefore, has no landscape issues of concern.

64. The County Highways Officer initially recommended that permission be deferred until further information was provided in relation to visibility, detail of access, and provision of a pedestrian crossing. Following submission of further information by the applicant the County Highways Officer has no objections to the proposal subject to the imposition of conditions relating to the provision of the new access and visibility splay required for the proposed car park, approval of access construction details and provision of a pedestrian crossing point on St Catherine's road.

Other Representations

65. In accordance with the Development Management Procedure Order 2010, the application has been advertised on site and through neighbour notification letters. Seven letters of

representation have been received from local residents objecting to the proposal and two letters of representation in support of the planning application. The letters of representation are available in the Members Support Unit. The letters in support consider that the expansion of the school would create a more stable long term future and the proposed development to be in the best interests of the school and the wider community, particularly the provision of off-road parking. The concerns raised by local residents include;

Proposed extension

- Increased traffic generation and requests that a full traffic survey is undertaken
- Requests conditions on any planning permission granted relating to; a full noise survey with regards to the construction phase and decibel limits constrained; prohibition of vehicles and operatives from entering St. Catherine's Coppice; provision of off-site parking for operatives during the construction phase and for parents and staff once the works are completed; prohibition of parking or "waiting" of construction vehicles during the construction phase; limited construction hours.

Proposed car park

- Loss of privacy as people using the car park can have sight into the residential properties opposite
- Vehicle headlights may shine into the residential properties opposite
- Dangerous proposed location as St. Catherine's Road is busy with parked cars which would obstruct visibility when exiting the car park
- The grassed area would be replaced by unpalatable non-grassed material
- The car park may cause surface water run-off and flood the road
- Noise impact as a result of traffic movement and the car park gates opening and closing
- Loss of green amenity space
- There is already sufficient parking places around the village for staff to use
- Impact on house values
- This land has a covenant (imposed by Cadbury when gifting the land), strictly outlining that land cannot be developed and must be used for the children of Linthurst First School

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy's comments

- The application site is sited on Green Belt land which is limited to development
- Propose an alternative solution such as the renting the Scout Hut from Birmingham City Council, or, St. Catherine's Church on St. Catherine's Road/ Linthurst Newtown
- Small increase in staffing numbers does not justify a new car park
- The cars currently sited along St. Catherine's Road act as a traffic calming measure
- The removal of staff cars along St. Catherine's Road would not remove the possibility of inconsiderate parking by parents
- The proposed car park should be mitigated by additional appropriate planting
- Noise, dust and mess arising from the proposed gravel surfacing.

66. As with any planning application, this application should be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant policies and key issues have been set out earlier.

67. Worcestershire County Council is seeking planning permission for the proposed construction of a 3 classroom extension to existing first school to accommodate 1 form entry, together with construction of external timber store, hard play space and car parking area and relocation of existing temporary classrooms at Blackwell First School, St. Catherine's Road, Blackwell, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.

Green Belt

68. The proposed car park element of the proposal is located within the Green Belt.

69. The introduction to Section 9 of the NPPF states that "*the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The NPPF states that Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from*

encroachment;

- *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land".*

70. As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

71. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

72. The car park proposal is a laying of hard-standing which is considered to be an engineering operation and preserves the openness of the Green Belt and is, therefore, considered not to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy, therefore, considers the proposal is acceptable in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and there is no need to refer this development to the National Planning Casework Unit under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 .

73. As the proposal is not considered to be inappropriate development, there is no need to refer the application to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009.

Landscape Character and Appearance of the Area

74. The proposed extension would be set back from the public highway to the rear of the school site but would still be visible from public view.

75. The proposed extension would be constructed from red facing brickwork with blue facing brick plinth up to finished floor level; clay roof tiles; grey aluminium windows, doors and rain water goods; grey single ply membrane flat roof coverings.

76. The applicant states that the proposed extension has been designed to complement the existing school building. The main roof of the proposed extension would be a 40 degree pitched roof to match the pitch of the existing building. The proposed extension would also comprise of flat roof and canopy elements.

77. In view of the above, subject to the imposition of a condition relating to facing materials of the proposed extension, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposed development is sympathetic to and

would have no adverse impact on the landscape character of the area.

78. The car park would be visible from public view and would be constructed from tarmac. Concerns have been raised by local residents in relation to landscape character, including, a loss of green amenity space replaced by 'unpalatable' non-grassed material.

79. In response to these concerns, the applicant submitted a revised drawing to show an amended layout and reduced use of tarmac, to be more sympathetic to the surrounding area.

80. In response to the revised drawing submitted, a local resident has requested that the surfacing of the proposed car park is readdressed as they consider that the proposed gravel surfacing would be noisy and messy.

81. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy has considered these concerns and a condition would be imposed in relation to surfacing materials to be approved by the County Planning Authority at a later date.

82. The local resident of no. 12 St. Catherine's Road has requested appropriate planting to screen the car park from their property. The applicant is happy to provide additional planting and a condition has been imposed in relation to a planting scheme and the replacement of the hedgerow to be removed to accommodate the new access and visibility splay.

83. Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council and a local resident have requested that a hedge should be planted to separate the proposed car park from the existing field. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Planning has considered the concerns raised and a condition would be imposed in relation to boundary treatments.

84. Policy BG4 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan refers to any proposals for development would need to accord with relevant policies of this plan with due regard paid to the Lickey and Blackwell Village Design Statement.

85. In the Settlement Guidelines of the Lickey and Blackwell Village Design Statement the character of the roads within the Lickey and Blackwell Parish are described as narrow, winding and tree or hedge lined and there is an expectation to preserve the "green-ness" and the "*Country feel to the parish*".

86. Part of the hedgerow would need to be removed to accommodate the new vehicular and pedestrian gateway including the visibility splay into the proposed car park. However, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy has recommended a condition requiring the hedgerow to be reinstated.

68. The Landscape Officer considers that the proposal is

acceptable from a landscape perspective and, therefore, has no landscape issues of concern.

87. In light of the amended plans, showing a revised layout and surfacing of the proposed car park and subject to the imposition of a condition in relation to the surfacing materials of the proposed car park, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposed development is sympathetic to and would have no adverse impact on the landscape character of the area.

Residential Amenity

88. The nearest residential properties to the proposed development are 12 and 12a St. Catherine's Road which are sited approximately 40 metres north of the proposed extension; 10a; 10b; 10c and 10 St. Catherine's Coppice to the rear of the application site which are sited 20 metres; 45 metres; 55 metres and 60 metres, respectively, from the proposed extension and 8 St. Catherine's Road which is sited approximately 20 metres south of the proposed extension.

89. The nearest residential properties to the proposed car park are 14, 14a, 14b and 18 St. Catherine's Road, which are sited approximately 25 metres; 25 metres; 35 metres and 40 metres from the proposed car park development.

90. Severn letters of representation have been received from local residents objecting to the proposal on residential amenity grounds, including:

- Loss of privacy as people using the car park can have sight into the residential properties opposite
- Vehicle headlights may shine into the residential properties opposite
- Grassed area replace by unpalatable non-grassed material
- Noise impact as a result of traffic movement and the car park gates opening and closing.

91. Two letters of representation have been received by local residents in support of the planning application who consider that the expansion of the school would create a more stable long term future and the proposed development to be in the best interests of the school and the wider community, particularly the provision of off-road parking.

92. The local resident at The Bay Trees, St. Catherine's Coppice, sited adjacent to the school site, has requested that conditions are imposed on any planning permission granted, relating to restricting vehicles and operatives from entering St. Catherine's Coppice; provision of off-site car parking for operatives and for parents and staff once the works are complete; prohibition of construction vehicles parking or waiting during the construction period along St. Catherine's Road and restriction of the construction hours.

93. Worcestershire Regulatory Services have no comments to make regarding noise in relation to the proposal; however, they advise that due to the close proximity of residents, the applicant should be directed to Worcestershire Regulatory Services "Code of Best Practice for Demolition and Construction Sites".

94. In view of these comments and subject to conditions relating to materials and construction hours, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy considers that the proposed development is acceptable on residential amenity grounds.

Water Environment

95. The application site is not located in an area at risk of flooding.

96. The applicant states that the preferred approach is to retain surface water on site using recognised sustainable urban drainage (SuDs) strategies subject to the suitability of ground conditions. Where this is not possible, on site attenuation prior to discharge into the public sewer would be adopted. All new foul water would be discharged by gravity or pumped and connected to an existing site wide drainage system which connects to a mains sewer.

97. The applicant states that the proposed car park would be constructed from a porous surfacing to ensure that the surface water is not discharged off site.

98. The County Ecologist supports the inclusion of on-site SuDs, subject to suitable ground conditions, so as to address water management within both the school campus and car-park areas. This is especially welcomed in the car park area so as to ensure no adverse hydrological impacts to trees within the wooded belt (located adjacent to the sports pitch and to the east of Hunters Hill Technology College). The Ecologist would anticipate that further investigations as to the practicality and detailed SuDs specifications proposed are submitted for prior approval by the County Planning Authority.

99. Severn Trent Water Ltd has no objections to the proposal subject to the imposition of a condition relating to the submission of drainage plans prior to the commencement of the development.

100. Subject to the imposition of a condition relating to drainage, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on the water environment.

Traffic and Highways Safety

101. Local residents have raised concerns about the proposed extension to the school on the grounds that there would be an increase in traffic as a result of an increase in pupils attending the school. They have requested that a full traffic survey is undertaken.

102. Other concerns have been raised in relation to highways safety with regards to the location of the proposed car park, these include, the proposed small increase in staffing numbers does not justify a new car park; the proposed location is dangerous as St. Catherine's Road is busy with parked cars which would obstruct visibility when cars are exiting the car park; currently the cars sited along St. Catherine's Road act as a traffic calming measure; the removal of staff cars along St. Catherine's Road would not remove the possibility of inconsiderate parking by parents and there is already sufficient parking places around the village for staff to use.

103. One letter of representation has been received by a local resident in support of the planning application who considers that the provision of off-road parking as part of the proposed development is in the best interests of the school and the wider community.

104. Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council have raised concerns about the proposed location of the disabled car parking space which is currently proposed to be sited furthest away from the school; they have requested that the proposed disabled car parking space is reallocated to one of the spaces closest to the school.

105. The County Highways Officer initially recommended that permission be deferred until further information is provided in relation to visibility, detail of access, installation of a pedestrian crossing and intention of car park use. Following submission of further information it is considered that these matters can be dealt with by imposition of appropriate conditions.

106. In view of this the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on highways safety.

Ecology

107. The area where the proposed extension would be sited currently comprises of a tarmac hard place space; informal grassed amenity play space and the current location of the temporary classrooms building.

108. The area where the proposed car parking area would be sited currently comprises of a well maintained grassed area.

109. Given that there is a number of local wildlife sites located within 2 kilometres of the application site, the Wildlife Trust has been consulted, however, they do not wish to object to the proposals and they are content to defer to the opinions of the County Ecologist for all on-site biodiversity considerations.

110. The County Ecologist has no objections to the proposal subject to the imposition of conditions relating to: breeding birds; the protection of trees and hedgerows; protection of

protected species; lighting; installation of bat and bird boxes and a planting scheme.

111. In view of the above and subject to the imposition of conditions relating to, breeding birds; the protection of trees and hedgerows; protection of protected species; lighting; installation of bat and bird boxes and a planting scheme, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy does not consider that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on ecology and biodiversity at the site or on the surrounding area.

Other Matters

Playing field

112. The proposed car park would be sited within the south-eastern corner of the school playing field. There is a playing pitch marked out to the north-western corner of the field and an area with children's playing equipment in the north-east corner of the field. The applicant states that there is sufficient space to accommodate the car park without affecting the existing playing pitch layout.

113. In response to Sport England's initial objection to the proposed development, the applicant submitted amended plans to show a revised location for the car park.

114. Sport England has withdrawn their objection to the application following the submission of the amended plans which reduce the impact of the proposed car park on the playing field and subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the agreement of a Community Use Agreement (CUA). The School have agreed to enter into a Community Use Agreement to formalise the use of the car park and playing field during non-school hours.

115. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy recognises the importance of preserving open play space and is satisfied that the proposed car parking area would not lead to unacceptable loss of open space and is, therefore, acceptable and accords with Policy S32 of the Bromsgrove District Plan.

Conclusion

116. The car park proposal is considered to be an engineering operation and preserves the openness of the Green Belt, therefore, is not inappropriate development within the Green Belt and, therefore, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy considers the proposal acceptable in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

117. Subject to the imposition of conditions in relation to the surfacing materials of the proposed car park, provision of replacement hedgerows and facing materials of the proposed extension, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on the landscape character of the area.

118. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy recognises the importance of preserving open play space and is not satisfied that the proposed car parking area is acceptable.

119. Subject to the imposition of conditions relating to materials and hours of construction, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposed development is acceptable on residential amenity grounds.

120. Subject to the imposition of a condition relating to drainage, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on the water environment.

121. Subject to the imposition of conditions the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on highways safety.

122. Subject to the imposition of conditions relating to, breeding birds; the protection of trees and hedgerows; protection of protected species; lighting; installation of bat and bird boxes and a planting scheme, the Head of Economic Development and Planning does not consider that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on ecology and biodiversity at the site or on the surrounding area.

123. On balance, taking into account the comments received from statutory consultees; members of the public and the provisions of the development plan in particular, Policy DS13; Policy S31; Policy S32; Policy S33; Policy C17; Policy BG3; Policy BG4 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan, it is considered that the proposal would not cause demonstrable harm to the interests intended to be protected by these policies or highway safety.

Recommendation

124. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy recommends that planning permission be granted for the proposed construction of a 3 classroom extension to existing first school to accommodate 1 form entry, together with construction of external timber store, hard play space and car parking area and relocation of existing temporary classrooms at Blackwell First School, St. Catherine's Road, Blackwell, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, subject to the following conditions:

CONDITIONS TO FOLLOW

Contacts

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List of Background Papers

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In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of strategic Infrastructure and Economy) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this item:

The application, plans and consultation replies in file reference 15/000001/REG3.