

PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE
11 JULY 2017**PROPOSED EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING SCHOOL INCLUDING A SIX CLASSROOM TWO-STOREY EXTENSION, TO ACCOMMODATE EXPANSION FROM A ONE FORM ENTRY SCHOOL TO A TWO FORM ENTRY SCHOOL, AND EXTERNAL WORKS WHICH INCLUDE ADDITIONAL PARKING AND HARD PLAY AREAS AT RED HILL C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL, MIDHURST CLOSE, WORCESTER, WORCESTERSHIRE**

Applicant

Worcestershire County Council

Local Member

Mr S M Mackay

Purpose of Report

1. To consider an application under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 1992 for proposed extensions and alterations to the existing School including a six classroom two-storey extension, to accommodate expansion from a one form entry school to a two form entry school, and external works which include additional parking and hard play areas at Red Hill C of E Primary School, Midhurst Close, Worcester, Worcestershire.

Background

2. In March 2005, the Planning and Regulatory Committee granted planning permission for the demolition of Red Hill CE Primary School, Worcester, the construction of a replacement new primary school on the same site and the siting of a temporary school on the playing fields, whilst the replacement school was under construction (Ref: 603295, Minute 392 refers). Subsequently in July 2006 planning permission was granted by the Planning and Regulatory and Regulatory Committee for the permanent retention of a temporary access to the playing field primarily as maintenance access (Ref: 603396, Minute 480 refers).
3. Red Hill CE Primary School is now ten years old, having opened in 2007. It was well received at the time of its construction, winning a national Green Apple Award (Gold Award in the School Category) - an annual international campaign to recognise, reward and promote environmental best practice around the world; and the City of Worcester Award for new buildings and refurbishments which made a special contribution to the City.

The Proposal

4. Worcestershire County Council is seeking planning permission for proposed extensions and alterations to the existing School including a six classroom two-storey extension, to accommodate expansion from a one form entry school to a two form entry school, and external works which include additional parking and hard play areas at Red Hill C of E Primary School, Worcester.

5. The proposal would enable the school's intake to incrementally expand over a 7 year period (with an additional annual intake of 30 pupils each year) from a 1 Form Entry (about 210 pupils, 30 pupils per year group) to a 2 Form Entry School (420 pupils, 60 pupils per year group) from September 2017 onwards. The applicant states that the school has sufficient space to start to admit additional pupils in the reception class without constructing new accommodation. However, it will need more space to accommodate the pupils as they progress through the school in the next few years.

6. In order to accommodate the additional pupils, the applicant is proposing to expand and develop the school, the proposed works include:-

- A six-classroom two-storey extension to the rear of the school.
- An extension to the front of the school to provide a Community Room with associated internal alterations.
- Internal alterations to enlarge the school hall.
- Replacement hard play area to replace the upper hard play area, which would be lost due to the two-storey school building extension. This is proposed to be constructed from permeable tarmac and would be created by cut-and-fill to create a level area between the proposed new extension and the school playing field. During the construction phase, before this area is surfaced it is proposed to be used as the contractors' compound area, accessed via the field gate to the school playing field on Arundel Drive.
- Extension to the lower hard play area into an area of car parking. This area is currently paved in tessellated block paving, and is proposed to be changed to permeable tarmac.
- Additional and replacement staff parking in the area of the former caretaker bungalow and garden. The former caretaker's bungalow is to be demolished (approved by the County Planning Authority under prior notification of proposed demolition in May 2017, Ref: 17/0000014/DEM) and 21 car parking spaces are to be provided, this would be an increase of 11 car parking spaces as 10 would be lost due to the extension of the lower hard play area.

7. The school caters for children aged between 4 to 11 years old. The proposal would also result in 14.5 additional members of staff (full-time equivalent), increasing staff numbers from 24 to 38.5 members of staff (full-time equivalent) (from 12 to 22 full-time and from 24 to 33 part-time).

8. The Community Room extension at the front of the school, which would adjoin the northern elevation of the existing main school building, would be single storey, with a zinc roof to match the existing and would extend the curved sweep of the building. The Community Room extension would measure a maximum height of approximately 4.9 metres, and would be constructed from red brick to match the existing school.
9. The classroom block extension would be two-storeys and would be situated to the south-east of the main school building, connecting to the existing school main building by a proposed small flat roofed link building which would contain the entrance lobby and plant room. The proposed classroom block would measure a maximum height of approximately 8.3 metres, and would be constructed from red bricks to match the existing school, with western red cedar cladding to the upper external walls.
10. Windows would be wooden (factory finished and coated pine with hardwood sills) and would be finished in a Pale Green colour to match existing; and doors would be aluminium powder coated Opal Green to match existing. A zinc standing seam roof is proposed for the two main extensions, with a single ply membrane for the flat roofed link building.
11. Photovoltaic (PV) panels are proposed to be installed on either the southern roof of the main classroom block extension or to extend the solar PV array on the existing building.
12. There are currently 24 car parking spaces at the school site, of which 2 car parking spaces are for disabled users. The applicant is proposing to construct an additional 21 car parking spaces, however, 10 existing car parking spaces would be lost as a result of the proposal, resulting in an overall increase of 11 additional spaces, equating to a total of 35 car parking spaces.
13. With regards to surface water drainage, the applicant is proposing to extend the principles of the original school drainage system, with surface water being controlled on site using channels, swales, and above and below ground storage to attenuate flows before it is discharged at slow rates (greenfield run-off rate) to the mains sewer.
14. Should planning permission be granted, it is proposed that construction works would commence on site at the end of August 2017, with the work phased to commence with the proposed new car parking, then the lower hard play area, the extension to the community room, classroom block extension and new hard play area. And finally internal alterations with the aim to complete the works by the end of August 2018 for the new school year.

The Site

15. Red Hill CE Primary School is located on the eastern side of Worcester, approximately 1 kilometre south-east from the city centre and to the south of London Road (A44) and east of the Worcester to London railway line, which is in a cutting at this point. Residential properties located on Arundel Drive, Midhurst Close and Sebright Avenue back onto the southern and western site boundaries. Vehicular

access to the site is off Midhurst Close, with pedestrian access off both London Road (A44) and Midhurst Close.

16. The application site measures approximately 0.6 hectares in area and covers the majority of the school site. The school buildings, former caretaker's bungalow and associated car parking and hard play area occupy the northern part of the school site with playing fields in the southern part of the school site. Mature trees surround the northern part of the site and also run parallel with the railway line.

17. The Lark Hill Conservation Area is located approximately 20 metres north-east of the school site. The Battenhall Villas Conservation Area is situated about 100 metres south of the proposal. The Grade II Listed Building of the Church of St Martin and the Grade II Listed Structure of the War Memorial with its Churchyard are situated about 160 Metres north-west of the proposal. The Grade II Listed Building of 163 London Road is situated about 195 metres south-east of the school site. A further Grade II Listed Building of Heron Lodge is located about 185 metres north of the proposal with further Grade II Listed Buildings located immediately beyond.

18. Perry Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and Nunnery Wood LWS are located about 275 metres and 1 kilometre north-east of the application site, respectively. Worcester and Birmingham Canal LWS is situated about 910 metres west of the proposal, beyond which is the River Severn LWS, located approximately 1.1 kilometres west of the school site.

19. A Public Right of Way (Footpath WR-922) is located along the eastern boundary of the school site and runs parallel with the railway line.

20. The nearest residential properties to the application site are located along Sebright Avenue, which back onto the western side of the school site; properties situated along Midhurst Close line the main school entrance, and the properties of 6 and 9 Midhurst Close adjoin the southern boundary of the school site; and the residential properties located on the northern side of Arundel Drive, which back onto the southern side of the school site and the area of the proposed building extension. Further residential properties are located off London Road situated about 52 metres north-west and 40 metres north-east of the school site.

Summary of Issues

21. The main issues in the determination of this application are the impacts of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the local area; residential amenity; loss of playing field; the water environment; ecology and biodiversity; and that of traffic and highway safety.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

22. 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.

23. 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".

24. 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.

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

- Section 4: Promoting sustainable transport
- 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
- Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The Development Plan

26. The Development Plan is the strategic framework that guides land use planning for the area. In this respect, the current Development Plan relevant to this proposal consists of the Adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan.

27. 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.

28. 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).

South Worcestershire Development Plan

29. The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) covers the administrative areas of Worcester City Council, Wychavon District Council and Malvern Hills District Council. The SWDP is a Development Plan Document which sets out strategic planning policies and detailed development management policies. The SWDP also allocates sites for particular types of development and sets out policies on site specific requirements. It covers the period 2006-2030. The SWDP was adopted on 25 February 2016. The SWDP policies that are of relevance to the proposal are set out below:-

Policy SWDP 1 Overarching Sustainable Development Principles
Policy SWDP 2 Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy
Policy SWDP 4 Moving Around South Worcestershire
Policy SWDP 5 Green Infrastructure
Policy SWDP 6 Historic Environment
Policy SWDP 21 Design
Policy SWDP 22 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy SWDP 24 Management of the Historic Environment
Policy SWDP 25 Landscape Character
Policy SWDP 27 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
Policy SWDP 28 Management of Flood Risk
Policy SWDP 29 Sustainable Drainage Systems
Policy SWDP 30 Water Resources, Efficiency and Treatment
Policy SWDP 31 Pollution and Land Instability
Policy SWDP 37 Indoor Leisure and Community Facilities

Consultations

30. **Worcester City Council** has no objections, subject to the proposal making adequate provision for staff and visitors and the County Council being satisfied that there would be no adverse impacts upon the highway network or the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.

31. They comment that the proposed new tarmac hard play area would appear to be close to the boundaries shared with the properties on Arundel Drive. The City Council would encourage this play area to be pulled away further from the boundary and additional appropriate landscaping incorporated to mitigate against any noise disturbance to the properties that border this part of the site. The County Council should also be satisfied that this proposal would not give rise to potential for overlooking of these properties and the associated amenity space.

32. The City Council acknowledge the requirement to provide additional forms of entry across Worcester and consider that Red Hill CE Primary School would appear to be an appropriate location and sized site to accommodate this additional identified provision; and in this respect welcome the application.

33. **Worcestershire Regulatory Services** raise no objections, subject to the recommendation in the submitted Planning Noise Assessment relating to the noise limit for Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) plant should be adhered to. They also refer the application to the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Code of Best Practice for Demolition and Construction Sites. With regards to the installation of external lighting they raise no concerns, but recommend that the applicant should ensure

that there is no line of sight from any nearby residential properties to the underside of any of the column mounted lamp units.

34. **The County Ecologist** has no objections, subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the submission of a method statement address installation of bird / bat boxes, protection of retained trees, planting scheme; timing of vegetation clearance; and the development being carried out in accordance with the submitted lighting scheme.

35. **Worcestershire Wildlife Trust** wishes to defer to the County Ecologist for all on-site detailed ecological considerations.

36. **The County Landscape Officer** has no objections, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring a Landscape Management Plan, which shall make provision for visual screen planting.

37. They raise no concerns from a landscape perspective, welcoming the choice of materials to match the existing school buildings and noting the scale of the development is within tolerances compatible with the context of the site, existing development and wider townscape setting.

38. **The County Highways Officer** has no objections, subject to the imposition of conditions regarding a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP); surfacing details for the turning areas and car park; an updated travel plan; scooter storage provision; and off-site highway works (pedestrian crossing facilities at the junction of Midhurst Close and Arundel Drive, at the junction of Sebright Avenue and Camp Hill Road, and at the junction of Sebright Avenue and Arundel Drive, together with the provision of Kassel kerbs on the 2 nearest bus stops on London Road).

39. They comment that overall it is considered that this is a sustainable location with high potential to encourage additional walking trips. There is inevitable increases in vehicle trips at certain locations, however, it is accepted that these trips are predominately already on the network and for the short duration of increase that there is not a severe impact. The NPPF indicates that applications should only be refused if there is a severe impact after mitigation, in this instance there is a suitable package of mitigation given the location of the site and the residual impact is not considered to be severe.

40. **The County Footpath Officer** has no objections, noting that the Footpath WR-922 is situated adjacent to the application site, and they consider the proposal would not have a detrimental impact upon the Public Right of Way, subject to the applicant adhering to their obligations towards the Public Right of Way.

41. **The Ramblers Association** has no objections to the proposal, noting that the proposed extension is located some distance away from the Public Right of Way (Footpath WR-922) and would have no impact upon the integrity of the footpath. They also note that the footpath is well screened by dense vegetation, with only glimpsed views of the school and proposed extension being visible.

42. **The Open Space Society** has made no comments.

43. **The City Archaeologist** has no objections subject to the imposition of a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief. The City Archaeologist states that the site does have potential for archaeological remains associated with the Battle of Worcester, and a medieval coin hoard has also been found in the vicinity.

44. **The South Worcestershire Land Drainage Partnership** has no objections to the proposal.

45. **The Lead Local Flood Authority** has no objections, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring a Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) management plan.

46. **Severn Trent Water Limited** has no objections to the proposal.

47. **Sport England** has raised no objections, stating that they have considered this proposal in light of the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy, which is presented within its Planning Policy Statement titled 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England'. Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all / part of a playing field, unless one or more of the five exceptions stated in its policy apply.

48. The proposal relates to the construction of a new hard play area on the existing playing field. The hard play area will be marked out for games court use to meet Sport England's specifications and represents a qualitative improvement on existing hard court provision at this site. In addition, the facility does not impact on any existing sports pitches or the potential to site additional sports pitches in the future. Consequently, Sport England are of the view that the proposal meets exception E5 of their playing fields policy, in that it constitutes the provision of a facility where the benefits to the development of sport outweigh any detriment caused by the loss of part of the playing field.

49. **Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service** has made no comments.

50. **West Mercia Police** has no objections to the proposal.

51. **Network Rail** has no objections, subject to the imposition of the following conditions / informative notes to ensure the safe operation of the railway and the protection of Network Rail's adjoining land:-

- Fencing - If not already in place, the applicant must provide suitable trespass proof fence of at least 1.8 metres in height adjacent to Network Rail's boundary.
- Drainage - Additional or increased flows of surface water should not be discharged onto Network Rail land or into Network Rail's culvert or drains. It is recommended that soakaways / attenuation tanks should not be constructed within 20 metres of Network Rail's boundary.
- Safety - Any demolition of buildings or other structures must be carried out in accordance with an agreed method statement with Network Rail.

- Site Layout - It is recommended that all buildings be situated at least 2 metres from the boundary fence, to allow construction and future maintenance work.
- Piling - Where vibro-compaction / displacement piling plant is to be used during construction, details of the use of such machinery and a method statement should be submitted to Network Rail.
- Excavations / Earthworks - All excavations / earthworks carried out in the vicinity of Network Rail's property must not interfere with the integrity of that property / structure. If temporary compounds are to be located adjacent to the operational railway, these should be included in a method statement for approval by Network Rail.
- Signalling - The proposal must not interfere with or obscure any signals that may be in the area.
- Environmental Issues - The design and siting of buildings should take into account the possible effects of noise and vibration and the generation of airborne dust resulting from the operation of the railway.
- Landscaping - It is recommended no trees are planted closer than 1.5 times their mature height from Network Rail's boundary fence.
- Scaffolding - Any scaffold which is to be constructed adjacent to the railway must be erected in such a manner that, at no time will any poles or cranes over-sail or fall onto the railway.
- Safety Barrier - Where new roads, turning spaces or parking areas are to be situated adjacent to the railway, suitable crash barriers or high kerbs should be provided to prevent vehicles accidentally driving or rolling onto the railway or damaging the lineside fencing.

Other Representations

52. The applicant held a pre-application public consultation event at the school on 3 March 2017. Local residents, parents, school staff, pupils and governors of the school were invited to the event. Approximately 42 people attended the event. The design of the proposal and its siting was generally well received, however, there was some concern regarding the size of the hall as a dining hall. Consequently, the applicant has addressed this by including a moveable internal wall as well as a move to two dinner sittings.

53. In addition, there was some concern about the loss of outdoor space and the availability of outdoor play space during the build, especially the provision of a netball court during this period. The applicant is proposing to address this by phasing the works to extend the lower hard play area first, including netball court markings on this area (this court would be approximately 80% full size). On completion of the works, the upper hard play area would accommodate a full size netball court.

54. Queries were received regarding the quality of the environment and noise from the works during the construction phase disrupting the progress of pupils. The applicant has confirmed that they would work with the school and the contractor to ensure disruption is minimised and the contractor would avoid noisy operations at the time of key events (e.g. SATS exams), and would liaise regularly with the school. The applicant would also work with the contractor and the school to make use of the learning opportunities available from the building works.

55. Respondents would also like the pedestrian and vehicular entrances to the site to be separated on Midhurst Close. The applicant has considered this, but considers it is difficult to see how this would be possible under the current scheme given the constraints of the site.

56. Other comments concerned the noise impact on residents of Arundel Drive in terms of the new hard play spaces and pupil numbers, and asked if the fencing between the school's property and these bungalows could be upgraded to acoustic grade to mitigate this. Though this work is not included in the current proposals, the school may look in time improving this fencing as part of its safeguarding strategy.

57. The greatest number of concerns centred on the increase in pupil numbers, increased traffic and parking issues. The applicant states that these matters are considered in the accompanying Transport Assessment and will be further addressed through the School Travel Plan.

58. A resident of Arundel Drive commented via email to the applicant with concerns about the size and scale of the extensions, overlooking of neighbouring bungalows, and potential impact on light and skylines. They were also concerned about the increased traffic associated with the increased pupil and teacher numbers at the school and the limited amount of new parking for staff. They were also concerned about the noise impact of increased pupil numbers, increased coaches to the school, and disruption from additional evening classes.

59. The application has been advertised in the press, on site and by neighbour notification. To date 2 letters of representation have been received, 1 commenting on the application and 1 objecting to the proposal. The letters of representation are available in the Members' Support Unit. The main comments are summarised below:-

Letter of Representation Objecting to the Proposal

Traffic

- The area is already heavily congested with school traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times. The only access is via Arundel Drive, which is not very wide with a number of blind bends, which has resulted in a number near misses.
- Increase in traffic during the construction phase.

Environment

- Similar applications have previously been rejected due to the school's eco commitments.
- It is understood that the construction of the development would take 7 years to complete, which would result in 7 years of disruption for residents, in terms of increased traffic and noise.

Noise

- Increase in noise levels due to proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Privacy

- Overlooking of residents' gardens.

Letter of Representation Commenting on the Proposal

Traffic and Parking

- Request a condition that construction traffic may not travel along Battenhall Avenue between Goodwood Avenue and Arundel Drive. This section of Battenhall Avenue is an unadopted road, maintained by residents who should not bear the costs of any repair necessary due to construction traffic for this development.
- Should the former St Mary's school on Battenhall Avenue be developed at the same time as this proposal, a construction traffic plan should be developed to avoid any contention between the two developments.
- Measures should be implemented to minimise disruptive parking along Arundel Drive, Midhurst Closer and Goodwood Avenue at school drop-off and pick-up times; sufficient on-site parking for parents; prevention of parking on the double bend in Arundel Drive and the junctions of Arundel Drive with Midhurst Close and Goodwood Avenue.

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy's Comments

Visual Impact, Residential Amenity and Historic Environment

60. The existing main school building follows the curve of an existing avenue of mature trees, so that classrooms have shady outdoor terraces. A top-lit central corridor forms the spine of the school leading to the classrooms which have been arranged in pairs, sharing group rooms and practical areas to encourage collaborative teaching. The front of the building houses the school hall and music studio that are also used by the local community. The site slopes up from the school, with steps and ramp leading to a hard play area and then further steps up to the playing fields at the south-eastern end of the site.

61. In changing from 1 form entry to 2 form entry school the classrooms would be reorganised into pairs by year group across the existing school, so that ultimately the two-storey extension would be used for years 4, 5 and 6; with three classrooms per floor. This extension would also contain break out spaces (practical areas), toilets, nurture room, office and storage space.

62. The nearest residential properties to the application site are located along Sebright Avenue, which back onto the western side of the school site; properties situated along Midhurst Close line the main school entrance, the properties of 6 and 9 Midhurst Close adjoin the southern boundary of the school site and the residential properties located on the northern side of Arundel Drive, which back onto the southern side of the school site and the area of the proposed building extension. Two letters of representation have been received, one commenting on the proposal and a second objecting to the proposal. They raise concerns regarding noise impacts, and overlooking of residential properties.

63. The proposed two-storey classroom block extension follows the shallow curved form of the existing main school building, located at the rear of the school, adjoining the eastern elevation of the existing main school building. It would be set back approximately 28 metres from the dwellings situated along Arundel Drive and approximately 22 metres from rear gardens, and partly screened by mature trees and the change in levels. The ridge height of the residential properties situated along Arundel Drive are approximately 44.56 metres above ordnance datum, with the proposed extension measuring a maximum of approximately 8.3 metres high (ridge height about 44.60 metres above ordnance datum) and, therefore, due to the level changes would not appear overbearing or result in overshadowing or overlooking implications that detracts from residential amenity. Furthermore, the proposal would be seen in the context of the existing school, with the height of the school hall ridge measuring about 44.32 metres above ordnance datum. The classroom block extension is two-storey in order to fit on to the school site. In order to help this extension sit architecturally alongside the single storey school, the applicant is proposing a small flat roofed link between the existing school and the extension, which contains the entrance lobby and plant room. In addition, the applicant is proposing to emphasise the lower floor on the main façade of the extension through the use of brick piers to match the existing school building, visually tying in with the existing school. The upper storey would be recessed and finished in cedar boarding, which links it which features elsewhere on the existing school, and helps to break up the mass of the building.

64. The proposed community room extension is located to the front of the school, adjoining the northern elevation of the existing main school building. The community room would be single storey and also follows the curve of the existing building and zinc roof, giving a new emphasis to the existing prominent entrance façade. This front extension would serve mainly as a community room out of hours, and a flexible space for the school, used for meetings, before / after school club and lettings. The applicant is also proposing internal alterations to the school hall in order to increase its capacity by introducing a moveable wall between it and the adjacent space. This is currently the library which would move into the former studio space. The space opening onto the hall would be used as a studio for dance, drama and music when not open to the hall.

65. The County Landscape Officer has no objections, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the provision for visual screen planting, and welcomes the choice of materials to match the existing school buildings and noting the scale of the development is within tolerances compatible with the context of the site, existing development and wider townscape setting.

66. Worcester City Council raise no objections, but encourage the hardplay area to be relocated further away from the boundary and additional appropriate landscaping incorporated to mitigate against any noise disturbance to the properties that border this part of the site, along Arundel Drive.

67. In response to the City Council's comments the applicant has confirmed that if the hard play area was to be moved further back it would encroach into the root protection zone of the mature trees; and the hard play area cannot be reduced in size due to the need to accommodate a netball pitch. It is noted that the level of the hard play area is lower than the rear gardens of the residential properties along

Arundel Drive that back onto the school; and that the applicant is proposing screen planting along this boundary, which would include a mixture of low level evergreen shrub planting and five new trees. A condition is recommended to this effect.

68. Furthermore, the application is accompanied by a Noise Assessment, which assessed the impact of proposal on residential properties and concludes that the increase in pupil numbers attending the school can be expected to marginally increase noise contribution to local residential properties external amenity spaces. However when averaged over the 18 hour assessment period, these increases are very small and not considered material or adverse.

69. The Assessment also recommends that a noise limit for Mechanical and Electrical plant. The applicant has confirmed that no external plant is proposed and achieving the identified noise limit is not considered problematic or difficult. Worcestershire Regulatory Services has been consulted and has raised no objections, subject to the noise limit for Mechanical and Electrical plant being adhered to; and refer to their Code of Best Practice for Demolition and Construction Sites. In view of this, an appropriate noise condition is recommended in relation to Mechanical and Electrical plant and a condition is recommended regarding restricting the construction hours in accordance with those outlined within this Best Practice Guidance, namely between the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 hours on Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and 08:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturdays.

70. With regards to lighting, whilst Worcestershire Regulatory Services have no objections to the lighting scheme, they request that the applicant ensures that there is no line of sight from any nearby residential properties to the underside of any of the column mounted lamp units. The applicant has confirmed that they are able to comply with this requirement.

71. The Lark Hill Conservation Area is located approximately 20 metres north-east of the school site. The Grade II Listed Building of the Church of St Martin and the Grade II Listed Structure of the War Memorial with its Churchyard are situated about 160 Metres north-west of the proposal. Due to the distance, scale of the proposal and intervening road, vegetation and level differences it is considered that the proposal would not have any significant or harmful impact on the setting of these Conservation Area or Listed Buildings. It is also noted that Worcester City Council has raised no objections to the proposal, and make no adverse comments in respect of the impact upon these Listed Buildings. A condition is recommended in respect of an archaeological watching brief, as recommended by the City Archaeologist.

72. In view of the above matters, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy considers that subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions, that the scale, massing and design of the proposed development would not detract from the existing main school building and would not have an adverse or detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the local area. Furthermore, it is considered that the development would not cause any unacceptable overbearing, overshadowing or overlooking implications that detracts from residential amenity due its design, size and location.

Sports Provision

73. Paragraph 74 of the NPPF states that existing playing fields should not be built on unless: an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the land to

be surplus to requirements; or the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

74. The proposal includes the construction of a new hard play area on the existing playing field. Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, unless one or more of the five exceptions stated in its policy apply. Sport England has been consulted and has raised no objections as they are satisfied that the proposed development meets the following Sport England Policy exception:-

- *E5 - The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.*

75. The proposed new hard play area would be marked out for games court use and would be an improvement on existing hard court provision at the school. Furthermore, the proposal would not impact on any existing sports pitches or the potential to locate additional sports pitches in the future.

76. Based on the advice of Sport England, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy considers that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the functional playing field and would result in the overall improvement of sports provision at the school.

Water Environment

77. The proposed development is within the Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), as identified on the Environment Agency's Indicative Flood Risk Map. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) identifies that all uses of land are appropriate within this zone.

78. The applicant is proposing to extend the principles of the original school Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), with surface water being controlled on site using channels, swales, and above and below ground storage to attenuate flows before it is discharged at slow rates (greenfield run-off rate) to the mains sewer located in the north-east corner of the site. The proposed new hard surfaced areas, and the resurfaced existing car park are proposed to be constructed from permeable tarmac, with new paving also be permeable.

79. Severn Trent Water Limited and South Worcestershire Land Drainage Partnership have both raised no objections. The Lead Local Flood Authority has also raised no objections, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring a SuDS management plan.

80. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy considers that, subject to the imposition of an appropriate condition as recommended by the Lead Local Flood Authority, that there would be no adverse effects on the water environment, and welcomes the proposed extensions of the original SuDS scheme.

Ecology and Biodiversity

81. The applicant has submitted an Updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal with the application. The Ecological Appraisal found that there were no obvious issues with any protected species or notable species at the site with the possible exception of nesting birds. A small area of bramble would be removed in order to create a path to the new hard play area and this could disturb nesting birds. Therefore, it recommends that the removal of vegetation is outside the bird breeding season (i.e. outside late February to late August) or under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist.

82. It also outlined a numbers of other recommendations, including retention and protection of existing trees; installation of bird and bat boxes; and including the planting of native species in the landscaping scheme.

83. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust has been consulted due to the proximity of the application site to Perry Wood LWS and has no objections deferring to the opinion of the County Ecologist. The County Ecologist has no objections, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions reflecting the recommendations of the submitted Ecological Appraisal and confirms that the submitted lighting scheme is acceptable.

84. An objection has been made by a local resident regarding previous planning applications being refused due to the schools environmental commitments. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy has examined the planning register at both the City and County Councils and can confirm that this is not the case.

85. In view if the above, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy considers that subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions that the proposed development would have no adverse impacts on the ecology and biodiversity at the site or in the surrounding area.

Traffic and Highway Safety

86. Two letters of representation have been received, one raising concerns and the other objecting to the proposal on the grounds of traffic impacts both during operation and construction particularly during school drop-off and pick-up times; risk of accidents; should planning permission be granted it is requested that conditions are imposed to restrict construction vehicles travelling along long Battenhall Avenue between Goodwood Avenue and Arundel Drive, as this section of Battenhall Avenue is an unadopted road; development of a construction traffic plan; and measures to avoid indiscriminate parking.

87. The proposal would increase the capacity of the school from a 1 Form Entry school with capacity for about 210 pupils, to a 2 Form Entry school with a capacity for about 420 pupils. It is anticipated that the school would take approximately 7 years to reach this capacity. As a result of the proposal the staff numbers would also increase from 24 to 38.5 full-time equivalent (an increase of 14.5 full-time equivalent).

88. Vehicular access to the school is via a single point of access from Midhurst Close. This is a shared pedestrian access with an additional gated pedestrian access on London Road (A44).

89. The proposed development involves the construction of a new car park on the area of the former caretaker's bungalow. There are currently 24 car parking spaces at the school site, of which 2 car parking spaces are for disabled users. The applicant is proposing to construct an additional 21 car parking spaces, however, 10 existing car parking spaces would be lost as a result the community room extension and lower hard play area extension, resulting in an overall increase of 11 additional spaces, equating to a total of 35 car parking spaces.

90. It is proposed that the construction site access for the main construction works, including the two-storey extension would be from Arundel Drive using the maintenance access onto the school playing field, a corner of which would need to be temporarily used for a haul road. The applicant states that *"the contractors would be advised that approach to the school for deliveries would be via Goodwood Avenue. It is noted that Battenhall Avenue from approximately 20 metres east of Goodwood Avenue to its end is unadopted and as such, is in a very fragile condition and must not be used for construction traffic"*. For the smaller scale works to the front of the school, namely the additional parking, lower hard play and community room extension, the access via Midhurst Close would need to be used.

91. The applicant has confirmed that contractors' delivery times would be restricted to avoid the busy pick up / drop off times at the school. As raised by a local resident, the applicant is aware of the proposed development at Mount Battenhall, formerly St Mary's School (*proposed demolition of modern structures, conversion, change of use and new build to create a care community with communal areas and facilities* - City Council Planning Application and Listed Building Consent application Refs: P16B0575 and L16B0065, which have a resolution to grant planning permission and listed building consent and are awaiting the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Agreement). It is understood that major works are planned to take place over the next two years so access by Battenhall Avenue would be severely limited and residents may on occasion be redirected via Arundel Drive, Goodwood Avenue and Sebright Avenue. In this respect, the applicant notes that it would be very beneficial for the contractor at the school to coordinate with the developer at Mount Battenhall to avoid clashes of major deliveries of materials etc.

92. The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment, which states that 113 pupils out of 210 pupils commute to and from school by sustainable modes of transport (including walking, cycling, scooting and public transport), with 46% of pupils walking to school (about 97 pupils). The applicant anticipates that should planning permission be granted for the extension and the school is expanded then about 195 pupils would walk to school.

93. The Transport Assessment recommends a number of mitigation measures this includes an updated School Travel Plan, the provision of scooter stands for 12 – 15 scooters, road safety awareness for parents via leaflets and via assemblies for pupils, educating parents regarding the need to avoid illegally and inconsiderately parking via newsletters, liaison with Police Community Support Officer to visit the site occasionally to discourage illegal parking, and encouraging the provision of park-and-stride designated locations.

94. The County Highways Officer has been consulted and has raised no objections, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions regarding a

Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP); surfacing details for the turning areas and car park; an updated travel plan; scooter storage provision; and off-site highway works.

95. In respect of an objection raised by a local resident regarding the construction traffic having an adverse impact on local residents for a 7 year period. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy can confirm that the construction period would last for approximately 12 months, and the 7 year period refers to the length of time for the school to reach its maximum capacity of 420 pupils (an additional 30 pupils per year for 7 years).

96. A Public Right of Way (Footpath WR-922) runs along the eastern boundary of the school site, parallel with the railway line. The proposed extension would be set back from the footpath and would be well screened to users of the footpath due to the established vegetation. The County Footpath Officer and Ramblers Association both raise no objections to the proposal.

97. In view of the above matters, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact upon adjacent Public Right of Way, traffic or highway safety, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Sustainable Development

98. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. Paragraphs 18 to 219 of the NPPF, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.

99. In terms of sustainability the proposed development has been designed using a 'fabric first' approach minimising the space heating requirements for the lifetime of the school, by using increased insulation and airtightness standards well above building regulations standard. Secure natural ventilation is proposed, utilising natural cooling of the building with secure night-time purging of heat using louvres at low and high level. A timber frame infill would be used throughout most of the extensions within a steel frame. The timber infill has low embodied energy, uses renewable materials and improves building fabric airtightness, improves continuity of insulation and reduces the construction time required. The steel frame is easily recycled at the end of the life of the building. The proposal incorporates SuDS, which would control surface water on-site, before discharging to the main sewer at green field run-off rates and would also provide biodiversity enhancement and curriculum opportunities. The building would also be subject to a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Assessment with a target grading of 'Very Good'. BREEAM is an assessment process, which evaluates the procurement, design, construction and operation of a development against targets that are based on performance benchmarks. Assessments are carried out by independent, licensed assessors, and developments rated and certified on a scale of Pass, Good, Very Good, Excellent and Outstanding.

100. Policy SWDP 27 of the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan requires all new developments over 100 square metres gross to incorporate the generation of energy from renewable or low carbon sources equivalent to at least

10% of predicted energy requirements, unless it has been demonstrated that this would make the development unviable. The applicant is proposing that the development would include the installation of solar panels generating about 2,460kwh, which would be the equivalent of the electricity used by the lighting fittings in six classrooms for 28 weeks, which would comply with this policy. It is also noted that the existing school building has two solar panel systems producing an estimated 3,190kwh and 13,820kwh respectively.

101. In view of this, and the preceding sections of this report, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy, therefore, considers that the proposal is a sustainable development, in accordance with the NPPF in relation to its presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Conclusion

102. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy considers that subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions, that the scale, massing and design of the proposed development would not have an adverse or detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the local area. Furthermore, it is considered that the development would not cause any unacceptable overbearing, overshadowing or overlooking implications that detracts from residential amenity due its design, size and location. It is noted a Noise Assessment accompanied the application, which concluded that the noise impact from the increase in pupils numbers would be very small and not considered material or adverse.

103. Based on the advice of Sport England, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy considers that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the functional playing field and would result in the overall improvement of sports provision at the school.

104. Subject to the imposition of an appropriate requiring a SuDS management plan, it is considered that there would be no adverse effects on the water environment, and welcomes the proposed extensions of the original SuDS scheme. Based on the advice of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and the County Ecologist it is considered that subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions that the proposed development would have no adverse impacts on the ecology and biodiversity at the site or in the surrounding area, and would enhance the application site's value for habitats, species and biodiversity.

105. Based on the advice of the County Highways Officer, County Footpath Officer and Ramblers Association, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposal would not have any adverse impacts upon the adjacent Public Right of Way, traffic or highway safety, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

106. The proposal includes a number of sustainable measures such as high insulation levels, and airtightness, installation of solar PV panels, natural ventilation, a SuDS scheme and the proposal will be subject to a BREEAM Assessment with a target grading of 'very good'. In view of this, and the preceding sections of this report, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy, therefore, considers that the proposal is a sustainable development, in accordance with the NPPF in relation to its presumption in favour of sustainable development.

107. Taking into account the provisions of the Development Plan and in particular Policies SWDP 1, SWDP 2, SWDP 4, SWDP 5, SWDP 6, SWDP 21, SWDP 22, SWDP 24, SWDP 25, SWDP 27, SWDP 28, SWDP 29, SWDP 30, SWDP 31, and SWDP 37 of the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan, it is considered the proposal would not cause demonstrable harm to the interests intended to be protected by these policies or highway safety.

Recommendation

108. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy recommends that planning permission be granted for proposed extensions and alterations to the existing School including a six classroom two-storey extension, to accommodate expansion from a one form entry school to a two form entry school, and external works which include additional parking and hard play areas at Red Hill C of E Primary School, Midhurst Close, Worcester, Worcestershire, subject to the following conditions:-

- a) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission;**
- b) Planning permission enures for the benefit of Worcestershire County Council only;**
- c) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on submitted Drawings Numbered: BW30005L-A-DG-0008 Rev A; BW30005L-A-DG-0009 Rev A; BW30005L-A-DG-0010 Rev B; BW30005L-A-DG-0011 Rev B; BW30005L-A-DG-0012 Rev A; BW30005L-A-DG-0100 Rev D; BW30005L-A-DG-0101 Rev D; BW30005L-A-DG-0102 Rev D; BW30005L-A-DG-0103 Rev A; BW30005L-A-DG-0104 Rev A; BW30005L-A-DG-0105 Rev A; BW30005L-A-DG-0106 Rev A; and BW30005L-A-DG-0110 Rev A, except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission;**
- d) Construction works shall only be carried out on the site between 08:00 to 18:00 hours on Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and 08:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturdays, with no construction work on Sundays, or Bank Holidays;**
- e) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the "External Facing Materials" details outlined within the Design and Access Statement – Worcester, Red Hill CE Primary School – Expansion, dated 21 March 2017;**
- f) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations outlined in Sections 3.2 Plant Noise Impacting Residential Property' of the 'Red Hill CE Primary School, Worcester Planning Noise Assessment, dated 27 March 2017;**
- g) Within 6 months of the commencement of the development hereby approved, details of all fences, walls and other means of enclosure shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority.**

Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;

- h) Within 6 months of the commencement of the development hereby approved, a planting scheme to include native species, sizes, numbers, spacing, densities; locations; and a planting specification for the development hereby approved, including appropriate planting of the extended Sustainable Drainage System, (SuDS) and visual screen planting, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority, and implemented within the first available planting season (the period between 31 October in any one year and 31 March in the following year) on completion of the development. Any new trees or shrubs, which within a period of five years from the completion of the planting die, are removed, or become damaged or diseased, shall be replaced on an annual basis, in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species;**
- i) Within 6 months of the commencement of the development hereby approved, a Landscape Management Plan, including long-term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;**
- j) All existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows indicated to be retained shall be protected by suitable fencing in accordance with BS5837:2012 No materials shall be stored, no rubbish dumped, no fires lit and no buildings erected inside the fence. In the event of any trees, shrub or hedgerows being damaged or removed by the development, it shall be replaced in the next planting season;**
- k) Notwithstanding the submitted details, within 6 months of the commencement of the development hereby approved, details of the provision to be made for at least one bird and one bat box on the site shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority. The works shall be completed in accordance with the agreed details within 6 months of the completion of the development;**
- l) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the Lighting Scheme outlined in the document titled: 'RELUX Light Simulation Tools, Installation: Lighting', dated 21 April 2017; and the email from Mr Robert Lewin-Jones, titled: 'FW: Worcester, Red Hill Primary School – External Lighting Levels', dated 30 May 2017 (16:20);**
- m) Notwithstanding the submitted details, prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, the location of the solar photovoltaic (PV) panels shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The approved solar PV panels shall be provided prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved;**
- n) No development shall take place until a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological watching brief has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. For land that is**

included within the WSI, no development shall take place other than in accordance with the approved WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives, and:

- i. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works; and
 - ii. The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication, dissemination and deposition of resulting material. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI;
- o) Should vibro-compaction or displacement piling plant be used in the construction of the development hereby approved, a Method Statement detailing how the structural integrity of the railway shall be maintained, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority in consultation with Network Rail prior to vibro-compaction or displacement piling plant being used on site. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;
- p) Any scaffold which is to be constructed adjacent to the railway must be erected in such a manner that at no time will any poles or cranes over-sail or fall onto the railway. All plant and scaffolding must be positioned that in the event of a failure it will not fall onto Network Rail's land;
- q) Within 6 months of the commencement of the development hereby approved, a SuDS management plan which shall include details of future management responsibilities, together with maintenance schedules for all SuDS features and associated pipework shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. This plan shall detail the strategy that shall be followed to facilitate the optimal functionality and performance of the SuDS scheme throughout its lifetime. The approved SuDS management plan shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details;
- r) The education building hereby approved shall not be brought into use until the following highway works have been completed:-
- i. Pedestrian crossing facility at the junction of Midhurst Close and Arundel Drive as shown on drawing numbered: BW3005L-JAC-00-XX-DR-D-100-003, Rev P01
 - ii. Pedestrian crossing facility at the junction of Sebright Avenue and Camp Hill Road as shown on drawing numbered: BW3005L-JAC-00-XX-DR-D-100-001, Rev P01
 - iii. Pedestrian crossing facility at the junction of Sebright Avenue and Arundel Drive as shown on drawing number: BW3005L-JAC-00-XX-DR-D-100-002, Rev P01
 - iv. The provision of Kassel kerbs on the 2 nearest bus stops on London Road.
- s) Prior to the first use of the education buildings hereby approved the access, turning area and parking facilities as shown on Drawing Numbered:

BW30005L-A-DG_0010, Rev B shall be properly consolidated, surfaced, drained and otherwise constructed in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing to the County Planning Authority and these areas shall thereafter be retained and kept available for those users at all times;

- t) Prior to the first use of the education buildings hereby approved, a travel plan that promotes sustainable forms of access to the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. This plan thereafter will be implemented and updated in agreement with Worcestershire County Councils Travel plan co-ordinator;**
- u) Prior to the first use of the education buildings hereby approved details of scooter parking provision to include the location, design and number of spaces to be provided shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details; and**
- v) A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority prior to commencement of development. The approved CEMP shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The CEMP shall include the following:-**
 - i. Measures to ensure that vehicles leaving the site do not deposit mud or other detritus on the public highway;**
 - ii. Details of site operative parking areas, material storage areas and the location of site operatives facilities (offices, toilets etc);**
 - iii. The hours that delivery vehicles will be permitted to arrive and depart, and arrangements for unloading and manoeuvring; and**
 - iv. Details of any temporary construction accesses and their reinstatement.**

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Background Papers

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 report:

The application, plans and consultation replies in file reference 17/000013/REG3.