

**PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE  
20 SEPTEMBER 2016****PROPOSED NEW TWO-FORM ENTRY FIRST SCHOOL WITH  
ASSOCIATED EXTERNAL AREAS INCLUDING ACCESS  
ROAD, HARD PLAY, GRASS PITCHES, FOREST SCHOOLS  
AREA, AND PARKING ON LAND AT BROCKHILL EAST,  
ADJACENT TO LOWAN'S HILL FARM, REDDITCH,  
WORCESTERSHIRE**

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**Applicant**

Worcestershire County Council

**Local Member(s)**

Mr G J Vickery and Mr R C Lunn (Shared)

**Purpose of Report**

1. To consider an application under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 1992 for a new two-form entry First School with associated external areas including access road, hard play, grass pitches, forest schools area, and parking on land at Brockhill East, adjacent to Lowan's Hill Farm, Redditch, Worcestershire.

**Background**

2. The existing Holyoakes Field First School located off Bridge Street in Redditch suffers multiple issues and has a very limited site area, which is unsuitable for expansion as logged in Worcestershire County Council's own Suitability Assessment (2015) and Condition Survey (2012/2013), making it a candidate for replacement on a new site, which is the applicant's preferred option. Suitability issues recorded include an undersized school hall (which is also used as a thoroughfare), undersized classrooms, poor ventilation, location of the toilets, lack of Physical Education (PE) storage, low ceilings, rainwater getting in through windows, and problems with parking and drop-off. Condition issues include the need to repair / replace softwood windows, spalling brickwork, and dampness to walls in the dining hall.
3. The assessed capacity of the current Holyoakes Field First School building is 195 pupils plus a nursery class. The applicant states that the school has been creative and flexible in the use of its practical and support spaces and has stretched this capacity to 240, but this is the absolute maximum number of pupils that could be accommodated within the current building. The current number of pupils on roll (excluding the nursery) is 228. This is expected to increase to about 237 by 2019 without the impact of housing growth being taken into account.

4. The average pupil yield in Worcestershire is calculated from 2011 Census data as 2.8 children per year group per 100 dwellings. Phase 2 of the Persimmon Homes mixed-use development at Brockhill (District Ref: 2014/256/OUT) is for up to 296 dwellings, therefore, this housing development would likely result in 40 additional pupils that would fall within Holyoakes Fields First School's catchment area. Subsequent phases, if granted planning permission would result in further growth in pupil numbers in the school's catchment area.

5. Consequently, the applicant is applying for planning permission for a new two-form entry first school (nursery, reception classes, plus years 1 to 4), giving a total of 300 pupil places excluding the nursery. The applicant has confirmed that the project is being funded through developer contributions, sale of the existing school site, and a capital contribution from Worcestershire County Council.

## The Proposal

6. Worcestershire County Council is seeking planning permission for a proposed new two-form entry First School with associated external areas including access road, hard play, grass pitches, forest schools area, and parking on land at Brockhill East, adjacent to Lowan's Hill Farm, Redditch. The proposed new school will replace and provide a new home for Holyoakes Field First School, as well as providing additional pupil capacity for the developing Brockhill East housing estate.

7. The proposed school building would measure approximately 1,990 square metres gross internal floorspace. The buildings would include the following:

- Nursery and associated external covered play area, two Reception classrooms, four Key Stage 1 classrooms, four Key Stage 2 classrooms, all with associated cloak areas, classroom stores, practical areas, and toilets
- Learning Resource area / Library, Food Technology / Science/ Design Technology room, and studio spaces in a central location
- Small group rooms
- Multi-purpose main school hall, with associated stores (including community store)
- Catering kitchen and stores
- Administration area, with main office, Head Teacher's office, senior manager's office, business manager's office, staff room and staff work room
- Basement plant space, including central boilers and sprinkler tank space, and
- A central courtyard.

8. The proposed school building would be a backwards L-Shape with the longest stem of the building measuring about 100 metres long by about 20 metres wide, with the shorter stem of the building measuring about 43 metres long by 20 metres wide. The school building would predominately measure about 6 metres high, with the school hall measuring about 10 metres high, albeit due to the topography of the site the school hall would appear as a similar height to that of the school building. The proposed school building layout would consist of a main block of linked 'pavilions' containing the classrooms which would run along a contour line, which would reduce the need for cut and fill groundworks. The hall space and associated kitchen and stores are at a lower level. A central, glazed linking block with a sedum green roof,

at the upper level containing the school's main entrance, offices and platform lift and steps down to the lower level containing the school hall. The applicant states that the new school hall would be situated so that it is easily zoned in the building for community hire out of hours use.

9. With regard to access for disabled users, access to the main school building entrance from the car park area would be via ramped paths of 1 in 20 slope or less. This entrance would have motorised doors and level access, and a reception hatch to the school office within a secure lobby. Once inside the building, access between the two main levels within the school building (hall/entrance and the classroom block) would be via platform lift or stairs. Two accessible toilets are proposed within school, which also includes a Bathroom Management Area (BMA) for use by pupils who require assisted toileting.

10. Other parts of the site (hard play areas, grass pitch) will also be accessed via ramped paths of 1 in 20 slopes or less, as well as separate stepped access.

11. The main facades of the building would be clad in a brick rainscreen cladding (colour to be agreed through a planning condition). Other areas of the building, in particular the northern section of the building (which is identified for possible future building extensions), part of the school hall and the nursery to be located in the south-east corner of the building would be clad in western red cedar cladding, which would weather to a silver grey colour. The windows and doors would be aluminium powder coated (colour to be imposed as a condition). The main school building roof would be zinc standing seam roofing, or similar standing seam roofing. The link block roof would be a green roof planted with sedum.

12. The proposal includes the provision of 34 car parking spaces for staff and visitors, which includes 2 spaces for disabled users. The proposal also includes the storage of about 30 cycles (1 per 10 pupils) and 2 motorcycle space and 1 minibus parking space. The sloping nature of the site requires that the areas of parking are created by cut and fill groundworks linked by ramped areas between differing levels. Vehicular access to the site would be from Cookridge Close, which would be extended northwards from its existing turning head. It is understood that these works would be carried out by Persimmon Homes Ltd. Provision would also be made at the end of this road extension for a coach to be able to turn, until such time as the road is extended further into the later phases of the Brockhill East housing estate (should planning permission be granted by the District Council). The road extension from Cookridge Close would also be used to provide construction access to the proposal, and the applicant envisages that the contractor's compound would be situated on the area designated for the school's car park. Separate access for pedestrians would also be provided from the south off Cookridge Close.

13. The proposed new school development also includes the laying out of two new playing pitches, together with the provision of two new hard play areas for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2; and outside play areas for the Nursery and Reception classes. A Forest Schools area is proposed in the northern part of the site, with an extensive Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), particularly focused around the western boundary of the site. A turfed amphitheatre that would be used for outdoor gatherings would be located in the centre of the site behind the school hall.

14. The applicant anticipates the new school would employ about 34 full-time equivalent number of full-time staff (about 29 full-time and 10 part-time). The proposed school would be able to accommodate about 300 pupils, plus a 26 place nursery.

15. Whilst not included in this application, the applicant has also considered options for future expansion of the school. The northern end of the school building has been identified for possible expansion into a proposed grassed amenity area. Car parking could also be extended further northwards off the main school site road, with a further 9 spaces identified.

## **The Site**

16. The application site, which measure approximately 2.4 hectares in area is located on the north-western edge of Redditch, immediately to the north of the recently constructed residential development of Brockhill East Phase 1 (District Ref: 2011/177/OUT), adjacent to the northern and western boundaries of Lowan's Hill Farm, an historic courtyard farmstead. The existing Holyoakes Field First is located about 950 metres south-east of the application site.

17. The application site encompasses agricultural fields, which are bound to the north, east and west by further agricultural fields and to the south by Lowan's Hill Farm and the recently constructed Brockhill East Phase 1 residential development (mixed-use development of 171 dwellings, public open space and outline application for 4,738 square metres of Class B1 (Business) floorspace and access, District Ref: 2011/177/OUT), beyond which is a small brook known as Red Ditch, which also skirts around the western side of the site. A further application for Phase 2 of Brockhill East for an outline planning application. No matters are reserved for the residential element. In terms of the B1 element, all matters, except for access, are reserved for later consideration. Mixed use development of 296 dwellings, play area, Community House and public open space and outline application for up to 3,100 square metres of Class B1 (Business) floorspace and access (District Ref: 2014/256/OUT) is pending consideration, awaiting the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Planning Obligation. The site slopes approximately 10 metres from the north-east to the south-west.

18. The majority of the application site is currently located within the West Midlands Green Belt, with Lowan's Hill Farm located outside of the Green Belt, forming the southern boundary of the Green Belt.

19. Dagnell End Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located about 1.7 kilometres east of the application site. Brockhill Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and Butler's Hill Wood LWS are situated approximately 425 metres west and 850 metres north-west of the proposal, respectively. The River Arrow LWS and Abbey Forge and Mill Pond LWS are located about 840 metres and 1 kilometre east of the application site, respectively. The historic park and garden of Hewell Grange is located about 1.5 kilometres west of the proposed development.

20. National Grid's high pressure gas pipeline is located about 115 metres north of the application site and Health and Safety Executive's Major Accident Hazard Pipeline zone that buffers this pipeline is located about 65 metres north of the

application site. Western Power Distribution's overhead powerlines are located approximately 30 metres east of the proposed development.

21. The nearest existing residential properties to the proposed development are those situated along Cookridge Close located about 100 metres south of the proposal and about 20 metres from the application site (red line boundary). Further residential properties are located beyond Cookridge Close, situated along Fairweather Close, Gretton Close, Dovecote Close and Elrington Close. Lowan's Hill Farm situated immediately to the south of the proposal has planning permission from Redditch Borough Council for the reconstruction of the farmhouse and conversion into two dwellings, together with the conversion of the existing adjacent barns to create five dwellings and erection of a garage and stores (District Ref: 2014/210/FUL). Further residential properties are situated along Plumstead Close, Robins Lane, and Wheelers Lane, about 110 metres south-west of the application site.

## Summary of Issues

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

## Planning Policy

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

23. 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.

24. 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".

25. 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.

26. 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 9: Protecting Green Belt land
- 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**

27. 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 Adopted Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 3.

28. 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.

29. 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).

### **Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 3**

Policy CS.1 Prudent Use of Natural Resources

Policy CS.2 Care for the Environment

Policy CS.7 The Sustainable Location of Development

Policy CS.8 Landscape Character

Policy S.1 Designing Out Crime

Policy B(BE).13 Qualities of Good Design

Policy B(BE).19 Green Architecture

Policy B(NE).1 Overarching Policy of Intent

Policy B(NE).1a Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Policy B(NE).3 Wildlife Corridors

Policy B(NE).10b Sites of Regional or Local Wildlife Importance

Policy L.1 Children's Day Nurseries

Policy B(RA).1 Detailed Extent of and Control of Development in the Green Belt

Policy C(CF).1 Community Facilities

Policy C(T).12 Parking Standards

Policy R.1 Primarily Open Space

Policy R.5 Playing Pitch Provision

#### **Draft Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4**

30. The Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 (BORLP4) will outline the strategic planning policy framework for guiding development in the Borough of Redditch up to 2030. It will set a long-term spatial vision and will include strategic objectives, a spatial strategy, core policies, strategic and non-strategic site allocations, and a monitoring and implementation framework. The Plan includes the Redditch Cross Boundary Development Policy (Policy RCBD1), which also appears in the Draft Bromsgrove District Plan.

31. Redditch Borough Council submitted the Draft BORLP4 to the Secretary of State for independent examination in March 2014. The Secretary of State has appointed an independent Inspector (Mr Michael J Hetherington) to undertake an independent examination into the soundness of the plan. BORLP4 and the Draft Bromsgrove District Plan 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 June 2014 and ran until March 2016.

32. The Inspector has now published a list of proposed Main Modifications to the submitted BORLP4 which he considers are required to make the plan sound. The Inspector's proposed Main Modifications are published for an eight week consultation from 27 July to 21 September 2016. The Inspector is inviting comments on the proposed Main Modifications as part of the examination into the Draft Bromsgrove District Plan and BORLP4. The Inspector will take account of all representations relating to the Modifications before publishing his final report to the Councils.

33. The Examination formally remains open until the Inspector issues his binding report and it is possible that further hearings could be held if the Inspector chooses to do so. In the circumstances the BORLP4 cannot yet be declared sound and cannot be adopted. It is not yet, therefore, part of the development plan. However, having regard to the advice in the NPPF, Annex 1, it is the view of the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy, that whilst full weight cannot be attached to the BORLP4, significant weight should be attached to the BORLP4 in the determination of this application. The draft BORLP4 policies that are relevant to the proposal are listed below:-

Policy 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 2 Settlement Hierarchy

Policy 3 Development Strategy

Policy 5 Effective and Efficient Use of Land

Policy 8 Green Belt

Policy 11 Green Infrastructure

Policy 13 Primarily Open Space

Policy 15 Climate Change

Policy 16 Natural Environment

Policy 17 Flood Risk Management

Policy 18 Sustainable water Management

Policy 19 Sustainable Travel and Accessibility

Policy 20 Transport Requirements for New Development

Policy 36 Historic Environment

Policy 37 Historic Buildings and Structures

Policy 39 Built Environment  
Policy 40 High Quality Design and Safer Communities  
Policy 46 Brockhill East

## Consultations

34. **Redditch Borough Council** is generally supportive of the proposal stating that the design layout and appearance is supported given the proposal's location on a slope and related views; they require adequate parking for staff and visitors to reduce the impact on local roads; and would like to see drop-off and collection points for the school, as reality is that people would arrive in cars despite the provision of pedestrian routes and cycle facilities.

35. **Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Air Quality)** has no objections subject to the imposition of conditions requiring the installation of an Ultra-Low Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) boiler and implementation of the School Travel Plan.

36. In response to the applicant confirming that they have concerns that the boilers with the lower rate emissions at 40 mg/kWh do not have the longevity desirable for schools, Worcestershire Regulatory Services commented that they understood that sometimes there are difficulties in meeting the requirements of a recommendation or even trying to enforce certain conditions, therefore, they do not object if the requirements in this case for low NOx boilers was removed as the application is not in or adjacent to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

37. **Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Contaminated Land)** has no objections, subject to conditions requiring a tiered contaminated land investigation. They state that site investigations to date suggest that contamination may potentially be a significant issue. As a result, in order to ensure that the site is suitable for its proposed use and in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework, the above conditions are recommended.

38. **Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Noise and Lighting)** has no objections, stating that the applicant should be directed to the Worcestershire Regulatory Services' Code of Best Practice for Demolition and Construction Sites.

39. **Natural England** has no objections, stating that this application is not likely to result in significant impacts on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes.

40. **The County Ecologist** has no objections, subject to the imposition of conditions regarding protection of retained trees; a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for biodiversity; an Ecological Management Plan (EMP); implementation of Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SuDS); and installation of the lighting as proposed.

41. **Worcestershire Wildlife Trust** has no objections and wishes to defer to the County Ecologist for all on-site detailed ecological considerations.

42. **The County Landscape Officer** has no objections, and welcomes the proposed hedgerow planting in terms of providing the capacity for Green Infrastructure (GI) connectivity across the site that should link with those proposed



for the wider residential development. Buffering the adjacent Lowan's Hill Farm is important in terms of maintaining the farmstead's visual presence within the evolving landscape. The Farm's prominent position makes it a landmark that should continue to be a focal point as the urban extension develops. Screening should not, in this case, be overly dense with filtered views connecting the school, farmstead and rural land to the south.

43. **The County Highways Officer** has no objections, subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the access, turning areas and parking and a travel plan.

44. They note concerns from local residents regarding potential future congestion issues associated with parents driving to the school and the request to include a specific vehicle drop off facility within the proposals to alleviate these issues. They also note that Redditch Borough Council also support the inclusion of drop off and collection points. This issue is also discussed within the submitted Transport Assessment. Provision of such a facility is not supported by the County Highway Authority, as it sends a clear message that driving is encouraged. It is important that walking links to the school are suitable and follow desire lines to make it more attractive to walk.

45. In order to improve sustainable access to the site from the residential areas to the south a suitable pedestrian crossing point should be provided on Hewell Road. The type of crossing facility should be agreed with the County Highway Authority. The introduction of dropped kerbs to facilitate ease of crossing should also be provided in line with the recommendations within the Transport Assessment.

46. They comment that the new school is proposed within an area identified within the emerging Redditch Local Plan No.4 for 1,000 dwellings. At present only 185 dwellings are on site with permission for a further 299 dwellings approved earlier this year.

47. **The County Travel Plan Co-Ordinator** raises concerns due to the proposal to build a school in a cul-de-sac location, stating that the area for turning around is not feasible. Worcestershire County Council's policy within the Local Transport Plan 3 states that there must not be drop-off zones at schools as this facilitates and encourages car use. The proposed bays are effectively a drop-off zone and should be refused. Should planning permission be granted they recommend the imposition of a condition requiring a Travel Plan; and the installation of a minimum of 12 scooter parking spaces. They also state that pedestrian routes must link to existing residential sites; and that the pedestrian crossing is essential on Hewell Road.

48. **The County Archaeologist** has no objections, subject to the imposition of conditions requiring a programme of archaeological works. The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) has recorded heritage assets within the vicinity of the proposed development including an Iron Age settlement uncovered during the Brockhill East Phase 1 residential development to the south. Given the scale of the proposal and the anticipated archaeological potential the likely impact on the historic environment may be offset by the implementation of a conditional programme of archaeological works.

49. **North Worcestershire Water Management** has no objections and considers that the submitted drainage scheme is comprehensive, therefore, no conditions are

recommended. Notwithstanding this, they make the following minor suggestions for the applicant to consider:

- It may be favourable from a water quality perspective to direct the discharge from the subbase of paving area 12 into basin M rather than directly into basin W to allow an extra treatment stage for run-off coming from this area of the car park
- From a visual amenity point of view, a swale rather than a ditchline may be more appealing method to provide an outlet for the sites run-off to the nearby water course
- Where the drainage outlet from the site joins the existing ditchline the connection should be made at an acute angle to reduce the potential for scour to occur
- The description of the maintenance is noted, but it is recommended that some specific details around maintenance intervals are provided to the future site operators so that this can be kept as future guidance.

50. **The Lead Local Flood Authority** has no objections and wishes to defer to the opinion of North Worcestershire Water Management for all detailed comments regarding surface water drainage.

51. **Severn Trent Water Limited** has no objections to the proposal, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water.

52. **Sport England** wishes to make no comments on this application, stating that the proposed development is not considered to fall either within their statutory remit (Statutory Instrument 2015/595), or non-statutory remit (National Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph Ref. ID: 37-003-20140306) upon which they would wish to comment, therefore, Sport England does not wish to provide a detailed response to this application.

53. They refer the County Planning Authority to their website for general guidance and advice and state that if the proposal involves the provision of a new sports facility then consideration should be given to the recommendations and priorities set out in any approved Redditch Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy. In addition, such facilities, to ensure they are fit for purpose, should be designed in accordance with Sport England, or the relevant National Governing Body design guidance notes.

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

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

56. **National Grid** comments that Distribution High Pressure Pipeline Ref: WM1213 is located to the north of the proposal. This pipeline is part of National Grid's transportation system and operates at a Pressure of 14 bar. The Institute of Gas Engineers Standards (IGE/TD/1), states that no habitable buildings be constructed within 14 metres of the pipeline and recommends easement width of

about 12.2 metres. National Grid strongly advises that the County Planning Authority seek the advice of the Health and Safety Executive and the land use planning document (PADHI).

57. The applicant should contact National Grid before any works are carried out to ensure our apparatus is not affected by any of the proposed works.

58. **Western Power Distribution** has made no comments.

59. **County Public Health (Health Improvement Practitioner)** has no objections, and welcomes the submission of a Health Impact Assessment, which accompanied the planning application and considered the positive, negative and neutral impacts of the proposal. They are pleased to note the proposal would create healthy diet opportunities through the provision of a production kitchen serving healthy meals and providing healthy eating education for the pupils through the development of vegetable gardens outside the classrooms. Additionally, the school would support physical activity objectives by encouraging walking and cycling to school through the connectivity of traffic free routes within the Brockhill East residential development, and by having the access point into the school site for cyclists and pedestrians separated from the vehicle entrance. They are also pleased that the school grounds and spaces within the school buildings would be offered for hire to the wider community which could provide additional means for supporting social cohesion.

60. **The County Sustainability Officer** has made no comments.

## Other Representations

61. The applicant held a public consultation event at the Holyoakes Field First School on 13 April 2016. Local residents, school staff, pupils and governors of the school were invited to the event. Approximately 44 residents, 13 staff, 2 local councillors and 15 parents / governors attended the event. Comments forms were available at the meeting and 15 were submitted. The comments were generally supportive of a new school, but raised concerns regarding additional traffic on Cookridge Close and the surrounding roads, the school drop-off and pick-up times, the width of or lack pavements locally, parking issues on roads, access for emergency vehicles where roads are narrowed by parking, drop-off parking blocking home owners' spaces, and noise from the building works and the school.

62. The application has been advertised in the press, on site, and by neighbour notification. To date 5 letters of representation objecting to the proposal have been received, together with 1 letter of representation not objecting to this proposal, but objecting to any future development on the existing Holyoakes Field First School site and raising concerns about not being invited to the applicant's public consultation event. The letters of representation are available in the Members' Support Unit. The main comments are summarised below:-

- Traffic and highway safety
  - The submitted Transport Statement raises concerns regarding the current size of the existing road and its suitability for the volume of traffic the school would generate. The road can already become congested due to residents parking on the road (Cookridge Close) due to restricted off road parking. Visibility is

- restricted due to the winding nature of the road when cars are parked along it, therefore, increasing the risk of accidents
- If coaches are to travel up Cookridge Close, this would likely result in cars parking partly on the pavement in order to protect their cars. This would result in the already narrow pavements being obstructed
  - The majority of dwellings along Cookridge Close have four bedrooms and so the likelihood of children growing up here and then possessing vehicles would result in significant parking issues along Cookridge Close and, therefore, it would not be sustainable to have this road acting as a link between what would become a sprawling estate and leading to a large first school. They note it would not be possible to increase the size of the road due to the extensive engineering works that would be required
  - Suggest that the only access road to the school for larger vehicles (Coaches, Delivery Vehicles) is from the Weights Lane. A weight restriction should be imposed on Cookridge Close to enforce this principle
  - The narrow pavement (of which there is only one footway along Cookridge Close), crossing driveways and small roads junctions together with the steep hill would put parents and pupils off from walking to school
  - The suggestion that a formal footpath be introduced to enable people to make use of the footpath from Oversley Close across the public open space should be taken up and made a formal planning requirement.
  - Suggest that a turning circle and parent drop-off area as recommended in the Transport Statement is made a formal planning requirement. A turning circle / parent drop-off area was illustrated in the emerging Redditch Local Plan 4 which a local resident consulted prior to purchasing their home
  - Signage should be installed to discourage parents from blocking local residents' driveways through inconsiderate parking
  - It should be a planning requirements that the parking restriction zig-zag lines extend past the current turning head, so as to make crossing the junction safe for pupils
  - Agree with all the recommendation of the submitted Transport Statement and consider they should be implemented
  - The area of block paving outside 22 to 26 Cookridge Close is a private drive for which residents are individually responsible for maintaining. Signage should be installed to highlight this and prevent inconsiderate parking
  - Consider that the vehicle movements to and from the school would be far higher than is predicted in the Transport Statement
  - There are no traffic calming measures on the main part of Cookridge Close apart from a ten mile per hour sign which cars ignore. A speed bump would help reduce speed as 'traffic speed' increases risk accidents to pupils. Double yellow marking lines would also help prevent vehicles parking indiscriminately
  - The application submission suggests that the form start times be staggered to minimise congestion which appears to be expected, although in practice it is unclear if this is at all feasible for the school
  - Cookridge Close will be the main access point, as other road connections are not planned for a few years. There is no explanation within the application as to why these are not being implemented at the same time
  - Staff at the school commented that the school would not only be busy in the daytime but also on an evening and in the holidays as it will be "a busy and active" school with extra-curricular activities. The proposals will have a significant impact on traffic flow and residents will be inconvenienced if cars

take up residents' parking spaces outside their homes on Cookridge Close or the surrounding streets

- Concerns regarding construction traffic and how this would be managed
- The suggested solutions to overcome safety concerns outside of the immediate school; such as zig zag lines would only displace this indiscriminate parking to further across the estate, such as further along Cookridge Close, Fairweather Close and Gretton Close
- Gretton Close has soft verges and operates a shared space policy. The communal soft verges have a management fee attached for which each household must pay yearly. The maintenance fee covers all green space and soft verges on the estate. Are residents expected to pay for the maintenance of verges that non-residents will park on?
- Suggest a solution to the traffic and parking issues would be to extend the access road past the entrance to the school car park to further follow the perimeter of the school plot

#### Noise

- No information has been submitted in respect to noise impacts from the school
- Concerns regarding construction noise and how this would be managed

#### Litter

- Concerns regarding litter from pupils walking to and from school as there are no bins situated along Cookridge Close

#### Health and safety

- The adjacent farm ruins present a health and safety risk
- There is reference in the application submission to the stream along the Red Ditch, which fluctuates with rainfall although at the time of the Flood Risk Assessment the ditch was dry. A local resident has witnessed a deluge of water following heavy spells of rainfall which potentially could present a risk to pupils who may explore this area

#### Design

- One local resident comments that the design of the school is 'stunning' and has all the features that a modern school should have. They are sure that the new school would become a huge asset to the area; however, it is important that a new school in this location does not affect their quality of life and enjoyment of their home.

## **The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy's Comments**

### **Green Belt**

63. The NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through decision-taking, which means approving proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or
- specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

64. In this case the proposal is wholly located within the West Midlands Green Belt; footnote 9 to the NPPF indicates that policies related to this designation restrict development; and therefore, by virtue of footnote 9, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply within Green Belt areas.

65. 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".*

66. The NPPF considers that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. However, there are a number of exceptions in paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, which are considered to be appropriate forms of development in the Green Belt, provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt.

67. The proposal would reduce the openness of the Green Belt in as much as development would be present where it did not exist before. It would substantially encroach into the countryside, and therefore, would conflict with one of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

68. The proposal does not fall within the categories of development set out in Paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, and Policy B(RA).1 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 3. Consequently, the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

69. The NPPF goes on to state that "*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*". As a result, a balancing exercise needs to be undertaken weighing the harm of the proposal with other circumstances in order to ascertain whether very special circumstances exist which justify granting planning permission.

70. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy acknowledges that the Draft Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4, Policy 46 'Brockhill East' identifies Brockhill East, which encompasses the application site as a Strategic Site. Strategic Sites are those sites, which are considered central to the achievement of the Draft Local Plan's Vision and Objectives. The supporting text to Draft Policy 46 states that this site *"is ideally located to support a significant amount of Redditch's housing, employment and associated community facilities alongside adjacent development across the Redditch Borough boundary in Bromsgrove District"*.

71. *"The Brockhill East Strategic Site was previously designated as a combination of Area of Development Restraint (ADR), Green Belt and an employment site (IN67). Redditch's housing requirements and the limited locations for development within Redditch's urban area necessitate that exceptional circumstances exist to remove land from the Green Belt to form part of this Strategic Site for development. Furthermore, release of the land for housing development enables the former IN67 employment site to be delivered for employment development concurrently, as this is more feasible than delivery of employment development alone. A mixed use approach, including the delivery of live/work units in this location is required to create a more vibrant place. Live/ work units are suitable here due to the sustainable location"*.

72. Draft Policy 46 states that *"a Strategic Site at Brockhill East is appropriate for a high quality mixed use development comprising around 1,025 dwellings, employment (8.45ha) and relevant community facilities and services including, a District Centre (including convenience retail store) , a first school and a sustainable public transport network"*. The Draft Policy goes on to list a number of principles that the development of the Brockhill East Strategic Site should include. This includes to *"deliver a school capable of use as a community facility, including playing pitches"*.

73. The supporting text to Draft Policy 46 goes onto state that *"the delivery of a first school is required in the north Redditch area, this need must be met in an appropriate location (the most appropriate location may be cross-boundary in Bromsgrove District). The school should also be capable to use as a community facility"*.

74. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy notes that the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 is not yet adopted, and therefore, is not part of the development plan. However, it is at an advanced stage and having regard to the advice in the NPPF, Annex 1, it is considered that substantial weight can be attached to the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 in the determination of this application.

75. The applicant considers that in this instance Very Special Circumstances exist, stating that *"a search for suitable sites has looked sequentially for a new school. The school's catchment area lies within a built-up area where the only available sites for a two to three form entry first school within the catchment that it serves are those on the edge of the current development and within the Green Belt. All other space within the catchment is predominantly used for housing, other schools, industry, allotments or public open space. The proposed site is, however, the most suitable location for a new school forming a hub for a planned new community at Brockhill East. The site for the new school has been established for some time in the masterplan designs by Persimmon Homes for the later phases of the Brockhill East"*

*housing development. This concept places the new school physically at the heart of that emerging community, and the development of new family housing in the first two phases is already creating demand for pupil places beyond the capacity of the existing school.*

76. *The capacity and suitability of the existing site and buildings mean that it is not possible for the school to continue on its present site. The buildings are over 100 years old, of heavy masonry construction, and do not lend themselves to adaptation. Many classrooms are undersized, the school hall is too small and is used as part of the circulation, and for instance, the very high window sills in the classrooms mean that children cannot see out. The current site on Bridge Street is itself very restricted, so there is no space to extend or redevelop. This means that for both the current pupils and for the expanded capacity required for the school, a new site suitably situated within the new housing area of Brockhill East is felt to be the best solution".*

77. The Head of Economy and Infrastructure considers that due to the need to replace the existing Holyoakes Field First School, as a result of the anticipated growth in pupil numbers and the condition of the existing school and lack of space to develop on the existing school site, together with the limited number of sites available within the School Catchment Area, it is considered that Very Special Circumstances have been demonstrated in the provision of a new school that would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

78. Under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, the County Council is required to consult the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on new buildings in the Green Belt it intends to approve that would be inappropriate development and exceed 1,000 square metres; or any other development which, by reason of its scale or nature or location, would have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt. As the proposed new school would create about 1,990 square metres of floorspace if this Committee is minded to approve the application, this Council must consult the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The Council may not grant planning permission until the Secretary of State has notified the Council that he does not intend to call in the application for his own determination.

### **Visual Impact and Residential Amenity**

79. The nearest existing residential properties to the proposed school are those situated along Cookridge Close located about 100 metres south of the proposal, with further residential properties beyond. Lowan's Hill Farm situated immediately to the south of the proposal has planning permission from Redditch Borough Council for the reconstruction of the farmhouse and conversion into two dwellings, together with the conversion of the existing adjacent barns to create five dwellings and erection of a garage and stores (District Ref: 2014/210/FUL). Further residential properties are situated along Plumstead Close, Robins Lane, and Wheelers Lane, about 110 metres south-west of the application site.

80. The proposed school building would be a backwards L-Shape with the longest stem of the building measuring about 100 metres long by about 20 metres wide, with the shorter stem of the building measuring about 43 metres long by 20 metres wide. The school building would predominately measure about 6 metres high, with the



school hall measuring about 10 metres high, albeit due to the topography of the site the school hall would appear as a similar height to that of the main school building.

81. The main facades of the building would be clad in a brick rainscreen cladding (colour to be agreed through a planning condition). Other areas of the building, in particular the northern section of the building (which is identified for possible future building extensions), part of the school hall and the nursery to be located in the south-east corner of the building would be clad in western red cedar cladding, which would weather to a silver grey colour. The windows and doors would be aluminium powder coated (colour to be imposed as a condition). The main school building roof would be zinc standing seam roofing, or similar standing seam roofing. The link block roof would be a green roof planted with sedum.

82. The applicant states that the design rationale behind the appearance of the building is to ensure it fits well on its sloping site with an awareness that it would be seen from a distance across the valley as well as close up. The building volumes are expressed as extruded forms, with the classroom block and school hall expressed as separate volumes linked by the entrance block. Changes in direction of the classroom block, as it follows the contour of the hill, are marked by drum-shaped circulation nodes internally and as glazed and louvred turrets externally, which articulate the building profile and let light and ventilation into the heart of the building. Consequently, the school would have its own crisp architectural identity as an important community building at the heart of the future development, rather than mimic the style of the farm or adjacent residential development.

83. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy notes that Policy 46 of the Draft Borough of Redditch No.4, which should be given substantial weight in the determination of this application, states that *"the whole Strategic Site must be designed to successfully integrate with the existing Brockhill area. Its design must be appropriate to allow a natural extension to the urban area, and use the sites features to improve the character and quality of the area and the way it functions"*; and *"development must respect and be sympathetic to the topography of the site, in particular design consideration should be given to the steeper slopes with no development on prominent ridge lines and any excessive remodelling of land avoided"*. In respect to development on prominent ridgelines, such as the northern part of the application site. The applicant proposes the siting of the grassed playing pitches to be located on the upper parts of the site, with the higher parts of the development, such as the school hall located on the lower parts of the site.

84. The classroom block closest to the Lowan's Hill Farm would be single storey at the eaves with a duo pitch roof rising over the central corridor, and so of similar height to the barns and two-storey elements of the farm at its apex. The hall block, which needs to be taller, is set at the lower level, so would be seen as a similar height to the classroom block.

85. The proposed landscaping scheme is closely associated with the SuDS scheme and includes a turfed amphitheatre behind the proposed school hall, which can be used for outdoor gatherings and would be sheltered from the prevailing winds by the new buildings themselves. A new 'Forest Schools' area would be created in the northern part of the site, which would be developed as a small woodland area for outdoor learning for pupils; boundary tree planting; and the screen tree planting along the south-east boundary of the site.

86. The County Landscape Officer has been consulted and has raised no objections, and welcomes the proposed hedgerow planting in terms of providing the capacity for Green Infrastructure (GI) connectivity across the site.

87. A letter of representation has been received that comments that the design of the school is stunning and has all the features that a modern school should have. They are sure that the new school would become a huge asset to the area; however, it is important that a new school in this location does not affect their quality of life and enjoyment of their home. Objections have been received from local residents raising concerns relating to noise impacts and litter impacts.

88. In response to initial comments from Worcestershire Regulatory Services and local residents the applicant submitted a Noise Assessment. The Assessment examined predicted noise generated by pupils using the external areas of the school; predicted noise generated by the mechanical and electrical plant; predicted noise generated by vehicle movements within the school grounds; and external noise impacting the internal teaching spaces within the school. The Assessment concluded that all noise impact assessment acceptance criteria are achieved and the proposed development achieves the NPPF objective of ensuring noise impacts are maintained at acceptable levels.

89. Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Noise and Lighting Officer) has been consulted and has raised no objections referring to their Code of Best Practice for Demolition and Construction Sites. In view of this, a condition is recommended 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. Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Air Quality) has also raised no objections, subject to the imposition of condition requiring a School Travel Plan. A condition is recommended to this effect. With regard to concerns relating to litter, it is considered that this is a management issue.

90. In view of the above, 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, providing an attentively designed local landmark and focal point. 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**

91. The proposed new school development includes the laying out of two new playing pitches, together with the provision of two new hard play areas for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2; with the Key Stage 2 hard play area including the marking out of sports court lines. The playing fields would measure approximately 80 metres long by 55 metres wide (with a playing pitch measuring about 73 metres long by 46 metres wide) and 43 metres long by 33 metres wide (with a playing pitch of about 37 metres long by 27 metres wide) and would be situated in the northern part of the proposed school site.

92. It is noted that Sport England wishes to make no comments on this application, stating that the proposed development is not considered to fall either within their statutory remit (Statutory Instrument 2015/595), or non-statutory remit (National Planning Policy Guidance Paragraph. 003 Ref. ID: 37-003-20140306) upon which we would wish to comment, therefore, Sport England has not provided a detailed response.

93. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy notes that the Government's PPG at paragraph Ref. ID: 37-003-20140306 goes on to state that "*where there is no statutory requirement to consult Sport England, local planning authorities are advised to consult Sport England in cases where development might lead to the creation of a major sports facility or creation of a site for one or more playing pitches*", which is the case for this application. Notwithstanding this, it is noted that Sport England's comments refer the County Planning Authority to the recommendations and priorities set out in the relevant District adopted Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy and to Sport England or the National Governing Body design guidance notes. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy notes there is no adopted District Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy and that the playing fields would be in accordance with the Football Association's guidance (Football pitch for under 11's/12's to measure 73 metres long by 46 metres wide and a Football: Mini Soccer pitch for under 7's/8's to measure about 37 metres long by 27 metres wide). Consequently, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposed playing pitches are fit for purpose.

#### **Water Environment**

94. The proposed development is within the Flood Zone 1 (low probability), 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. However, as the application site is over 1 hectare in area a Flood Risk Assessment has accompanied the planning application.

95. The Flood Risk Assessment concludes that the Sequential Test is passed as the application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and "*that the site has a very low probability of significant surface water flooding. The development of the site is not expected to impact the existing surface water flood risk. Suitable management of the surface water flood risk as part of the development should ensure that the overall flood risk posed by surface water is low*". Consequently, a Surface Water Drainage Statement accompanied the application. The drainage scheme outlines a number of drainage basins and swales draining the site with permeable surfacing for the playground; a green roof is proposed to link between the proposed school pitch roofs, with the installation of rain gardens; and the car parking area and associated hardstanding would also have a permeable surface connecting to a drainage basin before discharging to the Red Ditch watercourse.

96. North Worcestershire Water Management has been consulted and has raised no objections and considers that the submitted drainage scheme is comprehensive. The Lead Local Flood Authority has no objections, deferring to the opinion of North Worcestershire Water Management. Severn Trent Water Limited has also raised no objections to the proposal, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water. In view of North Worcestershire Water Management's comments it is considered that the submitted surface water

drainage scheme is acceptable, therefore, the condition recommended by Severn Trent Water Limited is not required. However, as the below ground foul water drainage for the new school is proposed to be connect to a new network of below ground sewers within the site boundary, and no details have been submitted as part of the application, a condition requiring a scheme for the disposal of foul water is recommended should planning permission be granted.

97. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy considers that, subject to the imposition of an appropriate condition that there would be no adverse effects on the water environment.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

98. The applicant has submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal with the application. It found that the application site is dominated by species-poor agriculturally improved grassland, which is considered to be of negligible intrinsic nature conservation value and very low ecological value. No protected species were found during the survey and it is considered that there is negligible risk of protected species being present. A small number of features were identified as having nature conservation value at the immediate site scale, including: the northern hedgerow and its associated trees and stumps, and an oak tree. The development footprint is currently located so as to cause the minimum impact on these features, and to give the maximum possible chance that these can be retained.

99. It outlined a numbers of recommendations, including vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive); retention and protection of existing trees and hedgerows; an ecological sensitive lighting scheme, production of an Ecological Management Plan and biodiversity enhancements should be provided, including native species planting, tree or hedgerow planting along the southern boundary of the site and the installation of bird and bat boxes; and the construction of log, rock and leave piles for Invertebrates.

100. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust has been consulted due to the proximity of the application site to Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), in particular Brockhill Wood and Butler's Hill Wood and the Battlefield Brook LWSs, and has no objections, deferring to the opinion of the County Ecologist for all detailed matters relating to ecology and biodiversity for this planning application. The County Ecologist has no objections, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions reflecting the recommendations of the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Natural England has also been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposal.

101. 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 and would enhance the application site's value for habitats, species, biodiversity and wildlife corridors, in accordance with Section 11 of the NPPF and Policies Policy B(NE).1a, Policy B(NE).3 and Policy B(NE).10b of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan.

### **Traffic and Highway Safety**

102. The proposal is for a new First School that would accommodate about 326 pupils and about 34 members of staff (full-time equivalent). Access to the proposed

school site would be from the residential estate road of Cookridge Close, which has a road width of about 6.1 metres with a footway on the eastern side only, and a service strip consisting of a grass verge on the western side. Cookridge Close connects to Pointers Way to the south by means of a priority junction.

103. The proposal includes the provision of 34 car parking spaces for staff and visitors, which includes 2 spaces for disabled users. This equates to 1 car park space per full-time equivalent member of staff. The proposal also includes the storage of about 30 cycles (1 per 10 pupils) and 2 motorcycle spaces and a parking space for a minibus. A turning head is proposed to be installed at the end of the extended Cookridge Close, until such time as the road is extended further into the later phases of the Brockhill East housing estate (subject to planning approval from Redditch Borough Council). Holyoakes Field First School uses a coach weekly to take pupils to swimming lessons and on other occasions for school trips.

104. At the current time bus services do not serve the new residential area of Brockhill East (Phase 1). Should Phase 2 Brockhill East be granted planning permission (currently pending the completion of a Section 106 Agreement), it is proposed that during the occupation of new houses within Phase 2 buses would be introduced through the Phases 1 and 2 development areas, off the Hewell Road corridor. It is envisaged that bus service 53 would be diverted into the site from the existing route along Hewell Road.

105. A number of objections and concerns have been received from local residents regarding traffic and highway safety, in particular requesting a drop-off area; indiscriminate parking; lack of a footway on the western side of Cookridge Close; and requesting that the recommendations of the submitted Transport Statement are implemented.

106. Paragraph 32 of NPPF states that *"all developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment"*, and it goes on to state that *"development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe"*.

107. The application was accompanied by a Transport Statement, which estimates that the proposal would generate 90 arrivals in the morning peak hour consisting of 30 arrivals by staff and 60 arrivals by parents, and it considers that this volume of traffic would not have a material impact on the operation of the road network when considering the transfer of trips from the existing school site. It considers that the road network surrounding the proposed school has an excellent safety record and the road alignment and traffic calming reduces average speeds such that there is a minimal safety risk for users visiting the proposed new school. The Transport Statement makes a number of recommendations this includes: footways measuring at least two metres wide to be installed on both sides of Cookridge Close; provision of a parking lay-by on the eastern side of Cookridge Close to accommodate about 11 vehicles; a drop-off area to be installed at the school site; staggering the start times for each school forms; and the production of a Travel Plan.

108. In response to requests from local residents and Redditch Borough Council regarding the provision of parent parking and a drop off facility, the County Highway Officer confirmed that provision of such a facility is not supported by the County

Highway Authority, as it sends a clear message that driving is encouraged. It is important that walking links to the school are suitable and follow desire lines to make it more attractive to walk. Consequently, the County Highways Officer has raised no objections to the proposal, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions, including a Travel Plan, scooter parking provision and an appropriate pedestrian crossing.

109. In view of the above, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposal would not have any adverse impacts upon traffic or highway safety, subject to the imposition of conditions recommended by the County Highway Officer.

### **Sustainable Development**

110. 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.

111. In terms of sustainability the proposed development has been designed to minimise the space heating requirements for the lifetime of the school, by using increased insulation and airtightness standards well above building regulations standard. The building would also include secure natural ventilation, with natural cooling of the building with secure night-time purging of heat using louvres at low and high level. The use of a prefabricated timber frame, which has a low embodied energy, which uses renewable materials, would improve the buildings fabric airtightness. Photovoltaic (PV) panels would be installed on the roof of the proposed school. The applicant states that two options are being considered, with the minimum being to install a PV system 6 kilowatt peak (kWp) comprising of 24 PV panels generating about 4,920 kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity. This is equivalent to the electricity that would be used by the lighting fittings in the eight classrooms proposed for 38 weeks. The other option (funding permitting) is to install a PV system 12 kWp comprising of 48 PV panels generating about 9,840 kWh of electricity. This is equivalent to the electricity used by the light fittings in the proposed eight classrooms for 76 weeks. The proposal would also include a Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SuDS) to control surface water and provide biodiversity enhancements.

112. The proposed development would be subject to a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) assessment with a target grading of 'very good'. The assessment is wide-ranging and covers areas such as materials, building management, transport, energy use, pollution and health impacts.

113. 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.

## Other matters

### Crime

114. The applicant undertook pre-application consultation with the Crime Prevention Design Advisor for West Mercia Police. The applicant states that *"it was noted that, as the site of the school is currently undeveloped and the first phase of the housing estate is still very new, there are no crime patterns on which to assess risk and to base security design decisions on. Nonetheless the main elements of security were agreed"*. This includes:

- Installation of weldmesh fencing around the boundary of the site, measuring about 1.8 metres high for parts of the site that would abut future road frontages, with a 2.4 metre high weldmesh fence for other unsupervised areas of the site, adjacent to the playing fields
- Any low points of the roof are designed to deter unauthorised access through the use of roof overhangs, avoiding 'step-up' possibilities like retaining walls, bins etc., and / or recessed downpipes, or downpipes with anti-climb covers, or square downpipes closely fitted to the wall
- To reduce the threat of arson/ fire setting: the recycling / bin store has been located in a separate fenced compound away from the building
- Intruder alarm, and
- External lights will be light sensor and time clock controlled, with lighting columns to light the car park and main entrance with other areas lit by building-mounted lights to light the remainder of the perimeter of the school.

115. Consequently, West Mercia Police has raised no objections to the proposal.

### Historic environment

116. The proposed site of the school is adjacent to the late 18th / 19th century historic farmstead of Lowan's Hill Farm, which comprises a series of buildings arranged around a courtyard. The school building is set back from the historic farm, with intervening landscape tree buffer and hard play areas and playing fields. The proposed school's front elevation, consisting of two gables (the school hall and the classroom block) linked by a duo-pitch, echoes a similar configuration of 'bookend' gables and a linking block on the historic farm. Redditch Borough Council has been consulted and has raised no objections, making no adverse comments in respect to the historic environment.

117. The County Archaeologist has been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposal, subject to the imposition of conditions requiring a programme of archaeological works. The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) has recorded heritage assets within the vicinity of the proposed development including an Iron Age settlement uncovered during the Brockhill East Phase 1 residential development to the south. Given the scale of the proposal and the anticipated archaeological potential the likely impact on the historic environment may be offset by the implementation of a conditional programme of archaeological works.

### Contaminated land

118. The application site and immediate surroundings have been used historically for agriculture with various sand pits that have been excavated and infilled. On the site itself a pond thought to have been a sand pit previously is marked in the southern corner of the site, this is shown as infilled from 1971. The nearest recorded historical landfill is situated about 360 metres to the south-east of the proposal.

119. Worcestershire Regulatory Services advice the County Planning Authority in respect of contaminated land issues and has raised no objections, subject to the imposition of conditions requiring a tiered contaminated land investigation.

### Consultation

120. One letter of representation has been received from a local resident who lives adjacent to the existing Holyoakes Field First School, raising concerns about not being consulted on the proposed new school.

121. The applicant states that the public consultation event was purely about the new school at Brockhill East, and that appropriate public consultation would take place when proposals for the old school site come forward. The current timetable would not result in the existing Holyoakes Field First School being vacated until spring 2018.

122. Members are advised that all application should be determined on their own merits.

## **Conclusion**

123. The proposal is wholly located within the West Midlands Green Belt. The Head of Economy and Infrastructure considers that due to the need to replace the existing Holyoakes Field First School due to the anticipated growth in pupil numbers and the condition of the existing school and lack of space to develop on the existing school site, together with the limited number of sites available within the School Catchment Area, it is considered that Very Special Circumstances have been demonstrated that would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

124. Under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, the County Council is required to consult the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on new buildings in the Green Belt it intends to approve that would be inappropriate development and exceed 1,000 square metres; or any other development which, by reason of its scale or nature or location, would have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt. As the proposed new school would create about 1,990 square metres of floorspace if this Committee is minded to approve the application, this Council must consult the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The Council may not grant planning permission until the Secretary of State has notified the Council that he does not intend to call in the application for his own determination.

125. 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, providing a local landmark and focal point. 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.

126. The proposed playing pitches would be in accordance with the Football Association's guidance (Football pitch for under 11's/12's to measure 73 metres long by 46 metres wide and a Football: Mini Soccer pitch for under 7's/8's to measure about 37 metres long by 27 metres wide). Consequently, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposed playing pitches are fit for purpose.

127. Based on the advice of North Worcestershire Water Management, the lead Local Authority and Severn Trent Water Limited, it is considered that subject to the imposition of a condition requiring a foul drainage scheme that there would be no adverse effects on the water environment.

128. Based on the advice of Natural England, 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, biodiversity and wildlife corridors.

129. Based on the advice of the County Highways Officer, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy is satisfied that the proposal would not have any adverse impacts upon traffic or highway safety, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

130. The proposal includes a number of sustainable measures such as high insulation levels, installation of PV panels and a green roof, natural ventilation and a SuDS scheme. 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.

131. Taking into account the provisions of the Development Plan and in particular Policies CS.1, CS.2, CS.7, CS.8, S.1, B(BE).13, B(BE).19, B(NE).1, B(NE).1a, B(NE).3, B(NE).10b, L.1, B(RA).1, C(CF).1, C(T).12, R.1 and R.5 of the adopted Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3, and Policies 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 36, 37, 39, 40 and 46 of the Draft Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4, it is considered the proposal would not cause demonstrable harm to the interests intended to be protected by these policies or highway safety.

## Recommendation

**127. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy recommends that the Committee resolves that they are minded to grant planning permission for a new two-form entry First School with associated external areas including access road, hard play, grass pitches, forest schools area, and parking on land at Brockhill East, adjacent to Lowan's Hill Farm, Redditch, Worcestershire, and recommends that the application be referred to the National Planning Case Work Unit in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, as the proposal is a departure from Green Belt Policy and if the**

**Secretary of State does not wish to intervene planning permission be granted, 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: BW10099L A DG-P01, BW10099L A DG-P02, BW10099L A DG-P03, BW10099L A DG-P04, BW10099L A DG-P05, BW10099L A DG-P06, BW10099L A DG-P07 and BW10099L A DG-P08, except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission;**
- d) Prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved, details of the Photovoltaic Panels to be installed as part of the approved development 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;**
- e) 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;**
- f) Notwithstanding any indication of the materials, which may have been given in the application, within 3 months of the commencement of the development hereby approved, a schedule and/or samples of the materials and finishes for the school building 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;**
- g) Notwithstanding the submitted details; a scheme for any external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority within 6 months of the commencement of the development hereby approved. Such details shall include their design, size, colour finish and location. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;**
- h) 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;**
- i) No development shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for Biodiversity has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The approved CEMP**

shall be implemented for the duration of the construction phase. The CEMP shall include the following:

- i. Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities;
  - ii. Identification of “biodiversity protection zones”;
  - iii. Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements);
  - iv. The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features;
  - v. The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works;
  - vi. Responsible persons and lines of communication;
  - vii. The role and responsibilities on site of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) or similarly competent person;
  - viii. Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs;
- j) Within 6 months of the commencement of the development hereby approved, an Ecological Management Plan (EMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The EMP shall include the following:-
- i. Details of hedgerow gap planting or new hedgerow creation (native species selection, planting density and establishment care);
  - ii. Location and specification of ten bird boxes (fitted to appropriate soft landscape features and onto and within the fabric of the new building);
  - iii. Location and specification of five general purpose bat boxes (fitted both to the retained oak tree and within the fabric of the new building);
  - iv. Location and specification of two hedgehog houses and hedgehog access within boundary fencing;
  - v. Specification and location of 'habitat piles' (such as insect refuges);
- k) Detailed planting scheme and specification shall include locations, seed mixes, species, sizes, spacing, ratios and planting densities with associated establishment and aftercare provision. The approved planting scheme shall be 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;
- Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;
- l) Once installed all features (including wildlife boxes) as specified within the EMP (Condition J above) shall be maintained and if required replaced for a period of no less than five years following completion of the development hereby approved;

- m) **Within 3 months of the commencement of the development hereby approved, a scheme for foul drainage shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details before the development is first brought into use;**
- n) **The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted Holyoakes School Surface Water Drainage Statement and accompanying drawings numbered: RBA-HOS-006, RBA-HOS-007, RBA-HOS-008 and RBA-HOS-009;**
- o) **Notwithstanding the submitted details, the development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until a School Travel Plan that promotes sustainable forms of access to the school site, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Thereafter the Travel Plan shall be implemented and updated in agreement with Worcestershire County Councils Travel Plan Co-ordinator;**
- p) **Notwithstanding the submitted details, the development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until details for secure parking for at least 30 scooters has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;**
- q) **The development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until the access, turning area and parking facilities shown on the approved plan have been provided and clearly delineated on the ground as indicated on the approved plan;**
- r) **The development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until details of the provision of dropped kerbs and a pedestrian crossing point to cross Hewell Road have been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority, and the works have been completed in accordance with the approved scheme;**
- s) **No development shall commence until a programme of archaeological work, including a Written Scheme of Investigation, has been submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions and:**
- i. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording;**
  - ii. The programme for post investigation assessment;**
  - iii. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording;**
  - iv. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation;**
  - v. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation;**
  - vi. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation;**

- t) **The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Condition s) above and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured;**
- u) **No development shall commence other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of remediation, until parts 1 to 4 have been complied with:**
1. **Previous reports submitted to the County Authority in support of the application have identified unacceptable risk(s) exist on the site as represented in the Conceptual Site Model. A scheme for detailed site investigation must be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority prior to being undertaken to address those unacceptable risks identified. The scheme must be designed to assess the nature and extent of any contamination and must be led by the findings of the preliminary risk assessment. The investigation and risk assessment scheme must be compiled by competent persons and must be designed in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's "Model Procedures for the Management of Contaminated Land, CLR11";**
  2. **Detailed site investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and a written report of the findings produced. This report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority prior to any development taking place. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's "Model Procedures for the Management of Contaminated Land, CLR11";**
  3. **Where identified as necessary a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to identified receptors, shall be submitted to and approved in the County Planning Authority. The remediation scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as Contaminated Land under Part 2A Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation;**
  4. **The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development, other than that required to carry out remediation;**
  5. **Following the completion of the measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a validation report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved; and**

6. **In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the County Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and where necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared and shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Following the completion of any measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a validation report must be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved.**

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Email: [worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### Specific Contact Points for this report

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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 16/000007/REG3.