



29 June 2021

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR – PLACE

RUSHCLIFFE DISTRICT REF. NO.: 8/21/01046/CMA

PROPOSAL: CONSTRUCTION OF NEW 315 (1.5FE) PLACE PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH 26 PLACE NURSERY OVER TWO PHASES (1ST PHASE 1FE 210 PLACE WITH 26 PLACE NURSERY) ASSOCIATED PLAYING FIELDS, CAR PARKING (INCLUDING LIGHTING COLUMNS 4M HIGH), LIT SERVICE AREAS AND SPRINKLER TANK, HARD SURFACED OUTDOOR PLAY AND FOOTPATHS. ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND COVERED AREAS TO NURSERY/RECEPTION CLASSES, SUN CANOPIES, FENCED SPRINKLER TANK AND BIN STORE, 2.4M HIGH SECURITY FENCING AND GATES TO BOUNDARY, INCLUDING LIT PATH BETWEEN WIDNALL DRIVE AND DUNSMORE AVENUE, ASSOCIATED HIGHWAY WORKS AND SAFE PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT.

LOCATION: LAND OFF WIDNALL DRIVE, BINGHAM, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, NG13 7AE

APPLICANT: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a planning application for the erection of a 315 place Primary School in two phases with a 26 place nursery on land between Widnall Drive and Dunsmore Avenue, Bingham. The key issues relate to access to the site and traffic impacts, and potential noise issues that may arise from the use of outdoor spaces. The recommendation is to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1.

The Site and Surroundings

2. The proposed development site is of 1.5ha lying between Widnall Drive and Dunsmore Road, part of a residential estate development under construction between Chapel Lane and Fosse Way, Bingham. The site lies approximately 850m to the north-north-west of Bingham town centre (Plan 1).
3. The wider residential estate comprises a planned development of up to 1,050 houses with employment development, a retail centre and supporting

community infrastructure including a new primary school. Occupied houses are accessed from Fosse Way to the west of the residential estate. A roundabout has been constructed on Chapel Lane and is being used for construction access for housing. In the longer term Dunsmore Avenue will be the principal estate road linking Chapel Lane and Fosse Way through the residential estate.

4. The proposed 1.5ha school site has a frontage of approximately 100m to Dunsmore Avenue and at closest lies within 50m of the roundabout on Chapel Lane. A bus-stop lay-by has been constructed on Dunsmore Avenue at the south-eastern end of the school frontage but is not operational. Dunsmore Avenue is not yet open to through traffic.
5. The school site is generally flat. A mature area of woodland lies parallel to the 125m northern school boundary, separated by an area approximately 11.5m in width to be developed as a pedestrian route between Dunsmore Avenue and Widnall Drive. A surface water balancing pond and amenity area lies to the north of the woodland. The southward extension of Widnall Drive that will run past the proposed western boundary of the school site is presently under construction (Plan 2). As part of the development by the adjacent housebuilder an open ditch running south from the balancing pond past the proposed school frontage to Widnall Drive is being realigned and in part culverted. The southern boundary is approximately 175m in length with the rear gardens of approved residential development (except Plots 99 and 113 which are side-on) adjoining the proposed school boundary. Ground raising is currently taking place to the south such that the houses will be erected at an approved level 1.0m above the school site with levels in gardens reducing to meet the site boundary
6. The proposed school site, pedestrian route parallel to the school northern boundary and the highway network to allow vehicular access to the new school site from the public highway are included in the red line defining the planning application site.

Planning history

7. Rushcliffe Borough Council permission (RBC) 10/01962/OUT – Granted December 2013 – Up to 1,050 residential dwellings (C3); 15.6 hectares of employment development; local centre comprising up to 300m² of retail floor space; primary school; and community centre; a 1.6 hectare mixed use site (B1, B2, B8 and car parking); allotments and open space (including play areas and community park); flood management and drainage works; transport and access works; and ancillary works.
8. RBC 17/01170/VAR – Granted December 2017 – Variation of conditions attached to 10/01962/OUT (revised permission issued).
9. RBC 18/01468/REM – Granted February 2019 – (Barratt Homes) Reserved matters submission for 733 residential dwellings (Phase 2 of the wider approved development as originally approved under application 10/01962/OUT) including details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of development.

The approved site layout includes *'Indicative school entrance. 5.5m road with 2.0m footpath taken to school boundary'* at the northern end of the school site frontage to the extended Widnall Drive. The approved landscaping plans include the planting of a hedge along the northern boundary with the school site with grass to either side of a path between Dunsmore Avenue and Widnall Drive. It should be noted that the row of trees shown along the southern boundary of the school site have not been included in an approved landscape scheme in the subsequent re-planning of plots to the south (20/03212/REM).

10. RBC 20/03212/REM – Granted March 2021 – (Taylor Wimpey) Reserved matters application for the re-plan of 254 plots (Parcels 4 and 5) approved under Reserved Matters application 18/01468/REM (originally approved under 17/01170/VAR) including details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of development. The approved level of houses immediately adjacent is approximately 1m above the level at the site southern boundary.
11. The indicative phasing of the estate residential development is shown on Plan 3.
12. Land Drainage Consent granted January 2021 to re-align the drainage ditch along the western school site boundary, including culverting to accommodate school site vehicular access.

Proposed Development

Phase 1

13. Planning permission is sought to construct a 315 place Primary school in two phases with 210 places being provided in the first phase. A 26-place nursery would be provided as part of the Phase 1 development. The proposed Phase 1 school building would be sited on an east-west axis on the northern part of the site varying at closest 8.5m and up to 35m from the northern boundary. The proposed development is shown in context on Plan 4 with the Phase 1 site layout shown on Plan 5. The finished floor level of the building would be approximately 0.5m above existing site level.
14. Classrooms would be provided either side of a central corridor extending eastwards from the school entrance, administration and staff facilities. A school hall, kitchen and plant room would be provided towards the western end of the building. The overall length of the Phase 1 development would be 80m. The span of the classroom element of the building would be 19.4m with a ridge height of 4.5m (3.4m to eaves). An external canopy 17.5m x 4.9m would be erected adjacent to the north elevation 3.3m in height reducing to 2.8m (Plan 6).
15. The school hall would have a building footprint 22m x 10.6m with a mono-pitch roof varying between 6.0m and 5.4m in height. The kitchen and plant room area would also have a mono-pitch roof reducing from 4.6m to 3.4m.
16. The building elevations would be principally an off-white coloured silicone render finish above a red brick plinth with all-brick panels identifying building

entry points, the west and the majority of south facing elevations of the hall, kitchens and plant area. The roof, aluminium window frames and doors would be coloured dark grey (RAL 7016) (Plan 7).

17. Sustainable features would be incorporated in the building design including: high efficiency electrical and lighting; air source heat pumps; high levels of thermal insulation and air tightness; mechanical ventilation with zoned air quality management and natural ventilation.
18. The canopy to the north of the building would provide weather protection to an enclosed area of Early Years outdoor play. A trim trail and boundary tree planting would take place to the north and east of the building.
19. The playing field (with drainage incorporated in the pitch make-up) would be formed to the south and south-east of the school building adjacent to the southern boundary. A porous surfaced area of outdoor hard play would be provided in the south-west corner of the site . Sun canopies would be provided on the western edge of the hard play area.
20. The pedestrian entrance to the school would be in the northern school boundary, taking access from the path to link Dunsmore Avenue and Widnall Drive. No detailed plans of the alignment, construction, width or illumination of the path, which would be part on land outside of the control of the school and part of the public realm, have been provided in support of the application. A note on the submitted Construction drawing indicates that the path will be provided by Barratt Homes. Landscape details approved by application 18/01468/REM include the provision of a hedge outside the proposed northern hedge-line. No information is provided about use of the path by cyclists as a means to travel to school.
21. Vehicular access to the school would be from a southern extension to Widnall Drive which is currently being constructed by Barratt Homes. The vehicular access, at the northern end of the school frontage, is being constructed as part of the culverting and re-alignment of the watercourse on the western school boundary. 22 car parking spaces (including 2 disability spaces) would be provided to the west the kitchen and plant room. Two electric vehicle (EV) charging points would be provided. The car park would accommodate on-site turning by a refuse vehicle.
22. There would be no direct pedestrian route to the school building entrance through the car park. Staff and disability visitors using the car park would gain access to the main entrance through a controlled access gate.
23. A sprinkler tank with pump housing would sited on the southern side of the car park and enclosed by vertical hit-and-miss boarding up to 3.5m in height. A bin store to the south of the school kitchen would be enclosed by 2.0m high timber fencing.
24. Covered cycle parking for 40 cycles would be provided within the pedestrian entrance gate overlooked from the school entrance and adjacent offices.

25. The school perimeter would be enclosed by 2.4m high Heras security fencing coloured Moss Green (RAL 6005). Taking account of levels relative to the houses being erected to the south, a 3.0m high timber fence would be erected on the boundary at the southern end of the area of outdoor hard play (Plot 99), and the Heras fence would be increased to 3.0m in height at the eastern end of the southern boundary adjacent to Plot 113. The effective height of the enclosures would be 2.4m when viewed from the housing plots.
26. An indicative landscaping scheme proposes hedge planting on the eastern and western school boundaries, with a hedge being provided along the northern boundary as part of planning permission 18/01468/REM. Tree planting is proposed to the north of the school building, within the site to the frontage to Dunsmore Avenue and to the west of the area of outdoor hard play.
27. Surface water would drain to the east of the site discharging into storm drains serving the wider residential estate development.
28. The application is supported by a Transport Assessment which, without a known school operator, assumes a staff roll of 33 made up of 18 teaching staff, 8 office administration/caretaker/kitchen staff and 7 lunchtime supervisors operating standard school opening times.
29. An industry standard database of traffic counts has been used to calculate vehicle trip generation. In considering the availability of two points for drop-off and pickup it is estimated that for the initial 1-form entry school there would be 26 vehicles dropping-off on Dunsmore Avenue and 17 dropping-off on the extension to Widnall Drive in the morning peak.
30. In the Phase 2 expansion to 1.5-form entry it is anticipated that there would be 37 vehicles dropping-off on Dunsmore Avenue and 24 dropping-off on the extension to Widnall Drive in the morning peak. The extension to Widnall Drive is being constructed at 6.0m in width. The applicant states that both roads are of sufficient width to enable traffic to safely pass any parked vehicles.
31. The application is also supported by the framework of a School Travel Plan which sets out initiatives and measures which can be adopted to reduce reliance on the car as a mode of travel to school.

Phase 2

32. In Phase 2 the school corridor would be extended at its eastern end into an area of informal grass play to provide three additional classrooms and a practical space, meeting rooms, group room and toilets (Plan 8). The extension would be 20.4m in length and of the same span, height and external finishes as the Phase 1 building.
33. No additional car parking would be provided in Phase 2 (Plan 9).

Construction

34. Construction would take place using a single point of access the site frontage to Dunsmore Avenue, north of the bus lay-by.
35. Following the completion of Phase 1 the construction access would be closed and perimeter security fencing erected. Landscaping would be provided in locations that would facilitate the re-use of the access for the Phase 2 development. There would be no vehicular or pedestrian access to the site directly from Dunsmore Avenue.

Consultations

36. **Rushcliffe Borough Council** – No objection subject to conditions to require the submission of: type, texture and colour of facing materials; a Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to the commencement of development; reports and mitigation measures recommended in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal; existing and proposed site levels and floor level of the building [details are provided in the submitted application]; landscaping scheme including measures to protect retained landscape features; arboricultural method statement to safeguard retained trees [note - there are no trees on the site]; remediation and validation of unexpected contamination encountered; assessment for contamination of imported soils; construction management plan addressing environmental impacts of construction; provision for electric vehicle charging; lighting scheme; an assessment of potential ball strike from all the outside playing areas/sports pitches on any neighbouring building; noise impact assessment from use of all outside playing areas/sports pitches on any neighbouring building; an up-dated ecological survey if works have not commenced before the end of February 2023; and a survey for protected species should be carried out immediately prior to site clearance works.
37. *Members expressed concerns regarding the levels of parking provided for staff/visitors and also the potential for traffic issues around the school at pick-up and drop-off times.*
38. *Rushcliffe Borough Council advises that:*
 - a) *The technical input of the Highway Authority, the Lead Local Flood Authority and Archaeological Team are recommended to be sought and consideration be given to the environmental credentials of the building through the use of solar panels, grey water harvesting, EV charging points etc.*
 - b) *The Borough Council also advises the County Council to consider the implications of the Traffic Regulation Orders in the event that such controls are not secured through the democratic process.*
 - c) *Further consideration should be given to the impact of the construction of the development upon the biodiversity habitat of the surrounding area as well as an ecological enhancement scheme being secured as part of the development.*

- d) *Consideration should be given to a dedicated vehicular drop-off/pick-up zone outside of the school, including for buses/coaches.*
- e) *Additional staff parking should be considered in the detailed design which could be achieved by extending the car parking shown on the plans.*
- f) *Consideration should be given to the provision of a dedicated gathering area for parents/guardians etc. so as not to block the public footpath/ pavements/ cycle paths for other users at school start and end times.*
- g) *Measures to ensure that the roof liners of any building do not pose a risk to roosting bats in the future should be taken.*
- h) *Permanent artificial bat boxes/bricks and wild bird nests (e.g. swallow, swift and house sparrow) should be installed within buildings. Hedgehog corridors and features should be provided. Reptile and amphibian habitats, enhancement features and hibernacula should be considered.*
- i) *New wildlife habitats should be created where appropriate, including wildflower rich neutral grassland, hedgerows, trees and woodland, wetlands and ponds.*
- j) *Sustainable Urban Drainage schemes (SUDs) where required should be designed to provide ecological benefit.*
- k) *Good practise construction methods should be adopted including:*
 - i) *Advising all workers of the potential for protected species. If protected species are found during works, work should cease until a suitable qualified ecologist has been consulted.*
 - ii) *No works, fires or storage of materials or vehicle movements should be carried out in or immediately adjacent to ecological mitigation areas or sensitive areas.*
 - iii) *All work impacting on vegetation or buildings used by nesting birds should avoid the active bird nesting season, if this is not possible a search of the impacted areas should be carried out by a suitably competent person for nests immediately prior to the commencement of works. If any nests are found work should not commence until a suitably qualified ecologist has been consulted.*
 - iv) *Best practice should be followed during building work to ensure trenches dug during works activities that are left open overnight should be left with a sloping end or ramp to allow animal that may fall in to escape. Also, any pipes over 200mm in diameter should be capped off at night to prevent animals entering. Materials such as netting and cutting tools should not be left in the works area where they might entangle or injure animals. No stockpiles of vegetation, soil or rubble*

should be left overnight and if they are left then they should be dismantled by hand prior to removal. Night working should be avoided.

v) Root protection zones should be established around retained trees / hedgerows and sensitive ecological sites so that storage of materials and vehicles, the movement of vehicles and works are not carried out within these zones.

vi) Pollution prevention measures should be adopted

l) Consideration should be given to climate change impacts, energy efficiency, alternative energy generation, sustainable transport (including electric vehicle and bike charging points and cycle storage), water efficiency, management of waste during and post construction and the use of recycled materials and sustainable building methods.

39. **Bingham Town Council** – No objection, but *raises concern that the school development may increase flood risk for neighbouring properties. Appropriate traffic management must be considered to ensure road safety around the school.*
40. **NCC Highways Development Control** – No objection subject to conditions to secure: suitable surfacing, guard railing and lighting to the footpath adjacent to the school site; a School Safety Zone, to be agreed and implemented prior to first occupation; surveys to evaluate the impact of parking post-opening and determine the need for measures to protect against errant parking with implementation of such measures should they be required; access to and from the school site as well as temporary turning measures should the adjacent roads not be completed before the school is brought into use; and details of construction lorry routeing, access and measures to prevent mud and other deleterious material being deposited on the public highway.
41. *Comments regarding this application are limited to the specifics of local access, highway safety, and sustainable travel implications rather than traffic generation and congestion on the wider highway network.*
42. *The primary vehicular access to the school is to be provided from Widnall Drive. It is proposed that this access will be used only for staff and visitors. The proposed access will take the form of a 5.5m wide bellmouth junction. Its location affords adequate visibility in both directions and it is therefore considered suitable for purpose.*
43. *Access for pupils and parents is to be provided via a pedestrian access on a new footpath which links Widnall Drive and Dunsmore Avenue. This seems a sensible idea as it should allow parents to pick-up / drop off children away from the highway and also encourage walking / cycling as a mode of travel to school.*
44. *It is unclear from the information provided what form the construction of the path will take, for the avoidance of doubt we would expect the path to be constructed with a bound surface to an adoptable standard equivalent to the adjacent*

footways on the site. Consideration should also be given to its lighting, in order to ensure it can be safely used at all times of the year.

45. *The installation of pedestrian guard rails at either end of the path to prevent children running out into the highway is recommended. Additionally, School Keep Clear markings at either end of the path would be beneficial in providing a clear unobstructed view of the areas of highway which are likely to receive the highest amount of footfall. It is recommended that these measures are secured through a condition requiring a scheme for a 'School Safety Zone', to be agreed and implemented prior to first occupation.*
46. *The construction access is currently proposed from Dunsmore Avenue. This seems sensible as the road is the main through road on the development and has been designed to accommodate larger vehicles. It also allows easy access to both Chapel Lane and Fosse Way, which should ensure construction and delivery vehicles are kept to routes which are considered appropriate to cater for them.*
47. *It is proposed that 40 cycle parking spaces are to be provided for use by children and staff. This should serve to encourage sustainable travel to the school site and is welcomed.*
48. *The proposed parking is lower than that which has previously been provided on other new schools elsewhere in the County. Nonetheless the provision is sufficient to cater for 70% of the total estimated number of staff (32) on site. Whilst ideally 100% provision would be considered appropriate, we are mindful of the fact that many of the staff such as teaching assistants, kitchen staff and lunch time supervisors are unlikely to travel to work by car or require a parking space. Equally, given current circumstances with regard to Covid and the future impacts this is likely to have on working patterns it is unlikely that full parking provision for all four office / administration staff will be required. There is also sufficient space on-street to cater for a small degree of overspill parking should it be required, without creating a highway safety issue. Bearing the preceding factors in mind it is considered the proposed staff parking provision to be adequate.*
49. *In addition to staff parking, there also is a need to cater for parents picking up / off children at the start and end of the school day. The location of the school site to the south of a proposed area of open space and balancing pond means that there are lengthy areas of highway immediately adjacent to the school on both Dunsmore Avenue and Widnall Drive which have no residential frontage. These areas should in theory allow for pick-up and drop-off to occur on the highway with minimal disruption to local residents.*
50. *Our previous experience with new school sites shows it is often difficult to predict how parents will park until the facility is fully operational and travel patterns are fully established. This applies even more so on this site as the surrounding housing and roads on the wider development are yet to be fully completed. In view of this it is considered prudent to require on-street parking to be monitored after the school opens and a suitable scheme to be introduced to*

remedy errant parking should it be required. For clarity the applicant should be aware that the scheme may not be solely limited to lining but may also require the introduction of bollards, due the presence of a grassed verge [which may be susceptible to damage] between the carriageway and footway on Dunsmore Avenue.

51. *Once the housing and associated roads on the wider development are completed, both Dunsmore Avenue and Widnall Drive will form through routes. Consequently, it is considered that permanent turning areas are not required adjacent to the school on either road. However, as highlighted above these roads are yet to be fully completed hence depending on the timescales for completion there may be an interim period where temporary turning provision may be required. This is something that we would wish to see secured via an appropriately worded condition.*
52. *In response to matters raised by Councillor Clarke (Paragraph 78): Widnall Drive is not intended to be a dead-end but is proposed as a through-road. There should not be a need for turning, other than potentially in the interim should the school open before the road is complete but this scenario can be dealt with by a suitable planning condition.*
53. *The proposed width of the road is also 6.0m, which is wider than we would normally require on an standard estate in recognition of the fact it is serving a school.*
54. *There is a long-standing policy not to provide specific parental parking areas for new primary schools as it serves to encourage more people to travel by car. That said it is recognised that some parents will inevitably look to drop off their children by car. In view of this NCC Highways Development Control has sought to influence the layout of the wider housing development to ensure the school access points are located close to open spaces where there is no residential frontage. Not only should this reduce background parking levels but also minimise disruption to local residents as parents should theoretically be able to drop off children without the need to park directly outside properties.*
55. **Sport England** – No objection. *The revised proposals address initial concerns raised and create a single playing field area which is supported. It remains disappointing that the community centre does not have a more direct relationship with the school to support the creation of a walkable and connected community.*
56. **NCC Archaeology** – No objection subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological control and supervision.
57. **NCC Nature Conservation** – No objection subject to conditions to follow the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in relation to: protected species; birds; reptiles; external lighting; and a landscaping scheme.
58. *Path luminaires should be positioned on the north side (facing away from the adjacent mature trees) and should be at low level. Integrated bird and bat boxes*

should be incorporated in the building structure (target species swift, house sparrow and starling). A wildlife corridor is not needed along the southern boundary. Landscape biodiversity is encouraged and should include a wildflower mix in amenity grassland with a relaxed summer mowing regime to allow seed to set.

59. **Via Landscape** – No objection subject to condition to require; native species hedgerow along site boundaries; planting of species appropriate to the South Nottinghamshire Farmlands landscape character area; and a landscaping scheme including longer term management.
60. *It is recommended that a hedge is continued along the north eastern boundary to Dunsmore Avenue to reduce visual impact and provide a wildlife corridor linking to the trees to the north and habitat areas to be created within the school site. Hedgerow along the boundary with the retail/community centre to the east will help screen adjacent car parking etc.*
61. *A native species hedgerow does not extend along edge of the car park. The applicant has explained that this is due to the shallow depth of the sheet pile cap at the edge of the re-aligned watercourse.*
62. *Residents to the south will have clear views into the school through the security fence across the playing field from gardens and first floor windows. In addition to visual impact there are privacy and potentially a safeguarding issue. A native species hedgerow should be planted along the southern boundary to reduce visual impact for residents.*
63. *The proposed hedgerow along the northern boundary should help reduce visual impact from users of the footpath.*
64. *Some areas should be sown with a wildflower grass mix to encourage biodiversity and should have a sub-soil rather than a nutrient-rich top soil finish.*
65. **Police Force Architectural Liaison Officer** – *Draws attention to the aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places so that crime and disorder, and fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion when making planning decisions. Landscaping should be used to channel pedestrian flows through car parks. Recommendations are made for building design, secure cycle storage, lighting and CCTV.*
66. **Via Project Engineer (Noise)** – No objection subject to conditions to requiring; an environment management plan to control the impacts of construction; construction details of the wire mesh and acoustic fencing (southern boundary) to mitigate the impact of ball strikes; review of noise complaints received within one year of the occupation of the school or houses (whichever is later); and the limiting of noise from installed mechanical plant.
67. *Natural ventilation is proposed for the new school and while there is potential for noise breakout from the classrooms to occur when windows are opened during warmer periods for ventilation which may be audible at some*

neighbouring dwellings, it is unlikely to be at a level that would give rise to adverse reaction from neighbours.

68. *In commenting on the revived site layout: Rushcliffe Borough Council has identified the risk of ball strikes to neighbouring buildings and suggests an assessment should be undertaken. It is considered that the risk in the grassed areas of proposed football pitches will be relatively low and infrequent due to their sporadic use, and that children using the smaller pitches (where they would be kicking towards the mesh boundary fence) would be the younger children and therefore less able to generate the power of older children. Nonetheless, it would be prudent to incorporate measures in the fixings of the fencing to minimise the noise impact of any such strikes, such as using rubber washers to dampen any impact noise. With regard to the acoustic fencing at the western end of the southern boundary, there is the potential for ball strikes to occur which could lead to noise complaints. The site layout plan suggests that there is opportunity to install measures along this boundary such as planting a hedgerow to minimise the risk of ball strikes against the fence. However, it would be necessary for the school to ensure that they effectively manage activities in this area as any landscaping measures fully establish. It is understood that the hard-surfaced ball games area is intended to be used for ball games such as basketball/netball and not football which should also reduce the risk. It is recommended that a condition is included to confirm measures to minimise the risk/impact of ball strikes to fencing.*
69. *Rushcliffe Borough Council has also suggested that a noise impact assessment is undertaken to assess the impact from external activity noise. External activity noise from schools can be very difficult to assess accurately, given the mobile and unpredictable nature of the noise source (children playing). In our experience it is very rare for noise complaints to occur in relation to schools as people are generally less annoyed by the noise from children playing in a school setting, especially given the noise is for restricted periods during the school day and occurs only on weekdays and during term time. Therefore, are considerable periods of respite for neighbours during the evenings, weekends, and school holidays.*
70. *Unlike some new school developments which take place in close proximity to pre-existing residential receptors, this development is part of a wider housing development site, where those looking to buy/rent a neighbouring property will do so in the knowledge of a neighbouring school and therefore usually with some expectation of noise during the school day. It is also noted that the school land will not be open to wider community use. Therefore, taking all factors into account in my view it is unlikely that noise complaints will arise in relation to the proposed school. Nonetheless the design of any new school development should seek to minimise the risk of noise impacts through standard mitigation where possible. In addition, a condition to review 1 year after opening any noise complaints received by the school one year after opening should be considered, with a requirement to implement mitigation measures as agreed with CPA to address ongoing noise issues/complaints from neighbours.*

71. **Via Land Reclamation** – *No objection subject to conditions for a Phase 2 (intrusive) site investigation, remediation strategy if required and validation; and a watching brief for unexpected contamination.*
72. **Environment Agency** – *No objection. The site lies fully within Flood Zone 1. It should be noted that the site appears to have small sections located within flood zones 2 and 3 respectively according to the flood map for planning. An update to the flood map for planning is scheduled for May 2021 which will remove these small areas of FZ2 and FZ3 in line with the submitted hydraulic modelling for the wider site.*
73. **NCC Flood Risk Management** – No objection.
74. **Western Power** – *No objection. Western Power draws attention to electricity network within the application site.*
75. **Severn Trent Water Limited, Cadent (Gas)** – No response received. Any response received shall be orally reported.

Publicity

76. The application has been publicised by means of site notices and press notice in accordance with the County Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.
77. No representations have been received.
78. Cllr Neil Clarke fully supports the provision of the school. However, the following matters are raised:
 - a) Off-site parking is only mentioned briefly and obliquely in measures set out in the School Travel Plan.
 - b) Parent drop-off and pick-up will be a problem. A large proportion of pupils will be travelling some distance, or from across main roads, and will be likely to travel by car.
 - c) How wide will Widnall Drive be? Congestion outside the school gates and parking on pavements/verges should be avoided. This is a new site and the opportunity exists to prevent this by proper planning of on-street off-site parking.
 - d) Traffic issues will be compounded by Widnall Drive being a dead-end, and conflict is bound to occur as parents try to turn, creating a problem for future residents. Positive action needs to be taken to prevent problems before they occur.
79. The issues raised are considered in the Observations section of the report.

Observations

80. The principle of building a school as part of residential development to the north of Bingham has been established through the grant of outline planning permission (10/01962/OUT) in 2013 by Rushcliffe Borough Council and subsequent revisions to the permission. A development of 1,050 houses generates demand for 220 primary age places which equates approximately to a single form entry school. There is additional demand for school places in the Bingham Pupil Place Planning area which can be accommodated in the proposed 1.5 form entry school, to be constructed in two phases. The proposed siting, in close proximity to a commercial development to the east of the school site, in a central location on an arterial route running east-west through the residential estate is considered to be in an appropriate sustainable location. The school would be accessible by non car-based travel with a bus stop to be provided adjacent to the eastern school boundary on Dunsmore Avenue.

Traffic and Travel

81. Pedestrian access to the school site from a path linking Dunsmore Avenue and Widnall Drive would exclude vehicular traffic from the area immediately outside the entrance gate, which is welcomed. The path running along the northern boundary of the school is to be provided as part of the wider housing development. However, the path will need to be constructed to a standard suitable for pedestrians accessing the school. In winter months children and parents of both the school and nursery are likely to use the path in hours of poor daylight. A lack of lighting on the path may give rise to a perception of insecurity. NPPF Paragraph 8 advises that in delivering sustainable development the social objective can be achieved by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment.
82. Design details of the path providing pedestrian access to the school have not been submitted in support of this application and in order to be suitable as an access to the school will need to be a minimum of 3m in width, constructed with a bound surface so as to be suitable for use by both pedestrians and cyclists, provided with a parent assembly area outside the gate and, as a minimum lit in hours of darkness when access to the school is required. It is recommended that a Grampian condition is imposed specifying that the school is not to open in advance of being provided with satisfactory safe access. NCC Highways Development Control has recommended in the consultation response that the path should be constructed to an adoptable standard to be fit for purpose and details of future maintenance will be required (Condition 21).
83. NPPF Paragraph 111 states that *all developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.* Traffic impacts associated with parent drop-off and pick-up near to schools are often raised as matters of concern. On-street parking in itself is not a problem where it does not give rise to highway safety issues or cause significant detriment to

residential amenity. Making provision for off-street parking for parents for relatively short periods of the day where traffic can be accommodated on the highway is not an economic use of land, and facilitating travel by car does not encourage more sustainable travel modes.

84. The location of the pedestrian access gate is anticipated to split where parents who choose to travel to school by car will park. Dunsmore Avenue may be more accessible being located on a main road through the development and may be more convenient as part of a daily commute, whereas Widnall Drive would be closer to the school entrance gate. Commercial development is planned to the east of the school and whilst the commercial operators would be under no obligation to do so it may provide an opportunity for parent parking.
85. It is considered that the impact of parked vehicles would be diluted by the option of alternative points for drop-off and pick-up. Having regard to the matter raised by Councillor Clarke regarding parent on-street parking and potential for congestion around the school, there are extensive lengths of highway to the north of the school adjacent to the balancing pond that would be available without giving rise to significant impact on future residents (Plan 10). NCC Highways Development Control has commented that the location of the school has been factored in to the highway design of Widnall Drive, which is being constructed at an increased width of 6m. Properties in proximity to the school are not yet being built and future occupiers will likely factor the location of the school and likely traffic impacts into their decision to live there. The morning and afternoon term-time amenity impacts of parked vehicles are likely to be short lived and the development is considered to be compliant with Rushcliffe Part 2 Local Plan Policy 1 *Development Requirements*.
86. Rushcliffe Borough Council has advised that consideration is given to the provision of a dedicated vehicular drop-off/pick-up zone outside of the school, including provision for buses/coaches. The 6.0m road width is considered to be appropriate outside a school so as to allow for the passage of vehicles. School buses and coaches are likely to visit the school infrequently and outside of peak travel times.
87. Whilst in the long-term the extension to Widnall Drive will be a through route for traffic when the school first opens Widnall Drive may be in effect a cul-de-sac. In order to be able to open the school will need to be properly and safely accessed and various requirements that will need to be met are set out in recommended Condition 22.
88. Condition 11 of planning permission 17/01170 requires that the school shall not be occupied until 'controlled pedestrian cycle crossing arrangements and a school safety zone are in place, including appropriate signage, lining, traffic calming and parking restrictions have been implemented in accordance with details which shall be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Borough Council'. A school zone will be required on both Dunsmore Avenue and Widnall Drive and is the subject of recommended Condition 18 and Condition 22 g) with the need for additional highway works taking account of the school in operation 1-2 years after opening (Condition 32). The scheme required by Condition 18

may require a Traffic Regulation Order to be made which would be the subject of a separate process and public consultation. With reference to the advice note from Rushcliffe Borough Council (Paragraph 38b)), objections received will be considered when making a Traffic Regulation Order with regard to impact on safety and amenity. Having regard to the wider site planning history which has identified the location of a school site, it is considered that there is a reasonable prospect of a Traffic Regulation Order to regulate errant parking being successful.

89. The school will need to take responsibility in managing the traffic impacts of the school and are in a strong position to influence parent and child behaviour through travel initiatives. This can be best achieved through a School Travel Plan, which needs to be reviewed regularly in liaison with the local community and civil enforcement officers, evidence consultation with NCC Road Safety Team in the promotion of sustainable travel and road safety education, and propose revised initiatives and measures where the Primary School Travel Plan targets are not being met. The submitted School Travel Plan framework includes initiatives to encourage sustainable travel and will need to be developed and completed by the school once the school is in operation (Conditions 28-30).
90. The wider area is relatively flat which should encourage cycling as a convenient sustainable mode of school travel. The location of 40 covered cycle parking spaces within a secure area within the site and benefitting from passive surveillance is considered to be suitable. The need for additional cycle spaces is a matter that can be considered in the regular review of a School Travel Plan (Condition 29 I).
91. Although the school is to be delivered in two phases the proposed car park is suitably sized to accommodate staff and visitor demands for the enlarged Phase 2 expansion. Fencing segregating the staff car park from the school entrance will direct pedestrians to the main school entrance gate, rather than attempting to cross the car park to gain access. Suitable provision will need to be made in the design to allow convenient access for mobility impaired visitors to the school from the car park via an intercom or similar system. The proposed provision of two EV charging points is considered to be appropriate. In addition, all spaces should be provided with ducting to facilitate future EV vehicle charging and would be accordance with NPPF Paragraph 110 e) (Condition 23).

Outdoor Areas, Design and Ecology

92. The proposed site layout makes suitable provision for outdoor hard play, grass playing pitch and informal soft play for the Phase 2 expanded school. The proposed porous tarmac construction on the area of hard play will allow a surface with a consistent gradient to be laid without risk of ponding/icing in frosty weather. Details of the hard play construction and finished levels need to be submitted (Condition 20).

93. Taking account of minimum pitch sizes and run-off areas there is little scope to accommodate additional development, such as play equipment, or planting. Although Via Landscape recommend that a hedge is planted along the southern school boundary to create a wildlife corridor NCC Ecology has confirmed that this is not required for the benefit of ecology. Whilst the planting of a hedge would be desirable it is considered that the mature woodland to the north of the school site provides a suitable habitat for transient mammals and foraging. Furthermore, the provision of a hedge would compromise the run-off margins required for playing pitches. Notwithstanding the impact on pitches, approved housing development to the south includes the planting of 24 trees within plots along the school boundary and would provide a suitable foraging route. Future residents of the properties to be built to the south of the school are likely to erect their own boundary treatments if fencing or similar is not provided as part of the housing development. With reference to the consultation response from Via Landscape regarding safeguarding, the school will be responsible for measures required to safeguard children on the site.
94. Use of the outdoor hard play area is likely to give rise to relatively short periods of noise during the school day focussed on one area of the site. The proposed houses to the south will be set at a level approximately 1m above the school boundary level, and potential noise impact would be suitably mitigated by the proposed 3m high boundary fence adjacent to housing Plot 99. A condition is recommended to require submission of the acoustic qualities of the fence design (Condition 16a)). Having regard to the change in level between the southern boundary and proposed houses to the south the increase in the perimeter fence height to 3m adjacent to Plots 99 and 113 (Plan 11) will be appropriate to maintain the effective height of the security fencing.
95. There is the potential that balls striking fencing can become a source of annoyance. From experience elsewhere in the Nottinghamshire this can in part be reduced through design (for example using rubber washers when joining metal fence panels). Details of fencing to be installed on the southern boundary, designed to minimise noise impact is the subject of recommended Condition 16b).
96. The proposed playing pitches would be laid out in the case of football, other than by the youngest age groups, with play taking place east-west which is likely to result in lower incidence of balls travelling into adjoining gardens. It is recommended that the effectiveness of the 2.4m high boundary fence in preventing nuisance, including the recording of complaints received, is reviewed after the playing field has been in use for a complete academic year (Condition 33). The applicant has advised that the proposed transfer of the site to the County Council would not allow the use of the site other than as a school which would preclude extended hours of use by the community, and the need to consider better connectivity with the community centre to the east identified in the consultation response received from Sport England (Paragraph 55).
97. Higher fencing (3m) is proposed on the boundary adjacent to approved houses closest to the playing field and is considered to be satisfactory in addressing the issue identified by Rushcliffe Borough Council of balls striking buildings.

98. Elsewhere, the proposed boundary hedge along the western boundary and eastern boundary adjacent to the future commercial development is considered appropriate. Trees set within the site adjacent to Dunsmore Avenue will allow glimpsed views into the school site beyond.
99. Suitable sustainable features are incorporated in the building design. The single storey school building will have a relatively low profile in the landscape and will be viewed from the south against the mature woodland to the north. The proposed scale, massing and choice of proposed facing materials is considered to be acceptable with the final details reserved by recommended Condition 15. The building has been designed to accommodate an extension in a complementary design without significant impact on the drainage layout proposed in Phase 1. An appropriate condition will be required to limit noise from installed fixed plant (Condition 31).
100. The provision of integrated bat and bird boxes into the structure of a building, whilst not proposed as part of the application, offers effective permanent ecological enhancement and also an educational benefit for the school. Although target bird species of swift, house sparrow and starling have been identified, the height of the single storey school does not offer the opportunity to accommodate swift. Bird and bat droppings can create a problem of streaking on brickwork or render. However, the boxes can be installed to stand proud whilst still being integrated into the building structure. A suitable location for bat and bird boxes has been identified on the west facing elevation of the hall, although alternative locations may be appropriate, and would be in close proximity to the foraging habitat offered by the mature trees to the north of the site. Notwithstanding submitted plans it is recommended that details of bat and bird boxes integrated into the building structure with target bird species of house sparrow and starling are submitted prior to the commencement of development (Condition 14).
101. Whilst a requirement for development to meet biodiversity net gain targets has not yet been introduced as a planning requirement, achieving biodiversity net gain is a sustainable objective. With reference to the recommended condition by Rushcliffe Borough Council for a Biodiversity Gain Plan, ecological impacts of the development can be mitigated in the design to be submitted in the reserved matters application to safeguard retained habitats, create new habitat and achieve ecological enhancement of the wider site (Condition 14b)). A landscape scheme will be required for the development (Condition 19).
102. eDNA testing of nearby ponds has demonstrated an absence of great crested newt. Development is to proceed in accordance with recommendations in the updated Ecological Appraisal supporting the application (preamble to Condition 3).
103. The submitted scheme of surface water drainage and supporting Flood Risk Assessment has been reviewed and no additional drainage information is required. With reference to the concern raised by Bingham Town Council (Paragraph 39) a satisfactory drainage scheme has been designed which will not increase flood risk to others. The applicant is advised that connection to the

public sewerage system will require a consent from Severn Trent Water Ltd (Note 3).

104. It is recommended that lighting to be installed should be designed to be sensitive to the presence of bats (Condition 17). It should be noted that lighting of the area of outdoor hard play is not proposed, extended hours of use by the community are not proposed and that additional lighting would require the benefit of a separate grant of planning permission.
105. The results of an intrusive site investigation including any mitigation to deal with contaminants identified will need to be submitted (Condition 10) along with a methodology to deal with unexpected contamination which may be encountered (Condition 11).

Deliverable Development and Construction

106. Delivery of the school to an anticipated opening date of September 2022 will rely on several factors. The southward extension of Widnall Drive and construction of a vehicular access as part of the culverting of the re-aligned watercourse will need to have been completed. There is a risk that on an unadopted new residential estate road, traffic associated with the operation of the school could lead to conflict with housebuilder construction traffic. The applicant will need to ensure that service traffic, staff, visitors and parents travelling by car will have unencumbered access to the school on the extended Widnall Drive in order to satisfy Condition 22. In addition, the footpath along the northern boundary of the school between Dunsmore Avenue and Widnall Drive will need to have been constructed to a suitable standard and be safe for use by both pedestrians and cyclists. Details of how proposed site levels along the northern and western boundaries would relate to land immediately adjoining outside the school perimeter will be required (Condition 8a)viii).
107. The use of a construction access from Dunsmore Road will allow construction to progress without conflicting with housebuilding taking place to the west. Having regard to a current lack of built development adjacent to the school site and location on a wider construction site, other than controlling the routing of construction traffic it is considered that the specific exclusion of construction work on Saturday afternoon does not need to be imposed. However, it is likely that properties to the south of the school and to the north of Dunsmore Avenue may be occupied by the time Phase 2 is constructed (Condition 7). Construction deliveries can be satisfactorily directed to and from the A46 (Margidunum) via Chapel Lane to the east of site without impacting on the amenity of residents (Condition 8).

Other Options Considered

108. The report relates to the determination of a planning application. The County Council is under a duty to consider the planning application as submitted. Accordingly, no other options have been considered.

Statutory and Policy Implications

109. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, and sustainability and the environment, and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Crime and Disorder Implications

110. The school site will be enclosed by perimeter security fencing. A lit path from the highway would provide safer access to the school entrance gate.

Data Protection and Information Governance

111. Given that no representations have been received from the public, it is considered that no data protection issues have been raised.

Financial Implications

112. The proposed development will require off-site works on the future adopted highway. The applicant would be expected to cover all reasonable legal costs incurred by the County, although these costs may also be met by housebuilders under their obligations under planning permissions granted by Rushcliffe Borough Council.

Human Rights Implications

113. Relevant issues arising out of consideration of the Human Rights Act have been assessed. Rights under Article 8 (Right to Respect for Private and Family Life), Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) and Article 6.1 (Right to a Fair Trial) are those to be considered. The proposal has the potential to introduce noise and disturbance generated by outdoor play impacting on neighbouring residents. However, this potential impact needs to be balanced against the wider benefit of the proposal through the provision of school places and the mitigation arising from timber fencing to be provided on the southern boundary adjacent to the area of outdoor hard play. Members need to consider whether the benefits outweigh the potential impacts and reference should be made to the Observations section above in this consideration.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

Safeguarding responsibilities would fall to the school. However, the proposed perimeter security fence and segregation of areas within the school site would provide appropriate physical measures to safeguard children.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

114. These have been considered in the Observations section above.
115. There are no Human Resources, Public Sector Equality Duty implications or implications for Service Users.

Statement of Positive and Proactive Engagement

116. In determining this application, the County Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant by entering into pre-application discussions; scoping of the application; assessing the proposals against relevant Development Plan policies; the National Planning Policy Framework, including the accompanying technical guidance. The County Planning Authority has identified all material considerations; forwarding consultation responses that may have been received in a timely manner; considering any valid representations received; liaising with consultees to resolve issues and progressing towards a timely determination of the application. Issues of concern have been raised with the applicant, such as impacts of noise, access, levels and co-ordination with adjacent approved development and have been addressed through negotiation and acceptable amendments to the proposals. The applicant has been given advance sight of the draft planning conditions. This approach has been in accordance with the requirement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

117. It is RECOMMENDED that planning permission be granted for the purposes of Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1. Members need to consider the issues set out in the report and resolve accordingly.

ADRIAN SMITH

Corporate Director – Place

Constitutional Comments

Planning & Rights of Way Committee is the appropriate body to consider the contents of this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

[RHC 16/06/2021]

Financial Comments

The financial implications are set out in Paragraph 112 of the report.

The proposed development will require off-site works on the future adopted highway. The applicant would be expected to cover all reasonable legal costs incurred by the County, although these costs may also be met by housebuilders under their obligations under planning permissions granted by Rushcliffe Borough Council.

[SES 16/06/21]

Background Papers Available for Inspection

The application file is available for public inspection by virtue of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

Electoral Division and Member Affected

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