

<b>Planning Reference No:</b>	10/4626C
<b>Application Address:</b>	Land off Hind Heath Road, Sandbach
<b>Proposal:</b>	Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 09/2058C – Amendment to approved drawings.
<b>Applicant:</b>	Cheshire East Council
<b>Application Type:</b>	Full
<b>Grid Reference:</b>	374395 360180
<b>Ward:</b>	Sandbach
<b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> January 2011
<b>Date for determination:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2011

## **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE** subject to conditions

### **MAIN ISSUES**

**Principle**  
**Design**  
**Landscaping**  
**Amenity**  
**Highways and Access**  
**Drainage and Flooding**  
**Ecology**  
**Other Matters**

## **REFERRAL**

The application has been referred to committee because it is a major development and Cheshire East Council is the applicant.

### **1. SITE DESCRIPTION**

The site lies between Elworth and Sandbach and is to be accessed off Hind Heath Road. The land is currently divided into four parcels three of which are used for the growing of crops and the fourth is used for the grazing and stabling of horses.

All of the fields are bounded by native hedging which varies in height from approximately 2.0m to 4.0m. Additional hedging divides the fields with a few access points for agricultural vehicles to enter and pass between each area.

These hedges along with the boundary hedges are interspersed with trees including some Oaks. The hedges are also supported by either post and rail or post and wire fencing.

On the eastern side of the site a small area of land shows signs of a water feature existing adjacent to one of the field boundaries with Bulrushes growing adjacent to the dividing field hedgerow.

## **2. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

Planning permission was granted in November 2009 for the development of 10 new football pitches, changing room accommodation, a car park, new access off Hind Heath Road and floodlighting. The proposed layout of the site is such that the car park will be situated to the south of the Wheelock Rail Trail whilst the pitches and changing room will be situated to the north.

Although the Council is acting as applicant in this instance, the site is to be operated by Sandbach FC. The scale and form of development including the need for the changing rooms and the multi use pitches is not based on a simple desire of Sandbach FC but on an analysis of existing provision in the local area and the need for the club to meet the Football Association's requirements. The proposal has gone through the FA scrutiny process and the facility is the minimum that is required to attract funding.

Condition 2 of the previous approved scheme (09/2058C) required the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. However, the developer now wishes to make a number of amendments to the plans and therefore an application to vary condition 2 has been submitted (10/4626C).

## **2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

09/2058C      Proposed new Football Pitches, Changing Accommodation, Car Parking, Access and Floodlighting – Approved November 2009

## **3. PLANNING POLICIES**

### **National Planning Guidance**

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development  
PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas  
PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation  
PPG13 Transport  
PPG17 Sport and Recreation  
PPS23 Planning and Pollution Control  
PPG24 Noise  
PPS25 Flood Risk

### **Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)**

DP1 Spatial Principles  
RDF2 Rural Areas  
L1 Heath, Sport, Recreation, Culture and Education Services Provision

### **Local Plan Policies: Congleton Local Plan First Review**

PS3: Settlement Hierarchy  
PS6: Settlements in the Open Countryside and the Greenbelt  
PS8: Open Countryside.  
GR1 New Development  
GR2-3 Design

GR4-5 Landscape  
GR6-7 Amenity and Health  
GR9-10 Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision: New Development  
GR13 Public Transport Measures  
GR14 Cycling Measures  
GR15 Pedestrian Measures  
GR16 Footpath, Bridleway and Cycleway Networks  
GR17 Car Parking  
GR18 Traffic Generation  
GR19 Infrastructure: General  
GR21 Flood Prevention  
GR24 Wider Environmental Considerations  
NR1 Trees and Woodland  
NR3 Habitats  
NR4 Non-Statutory Sites in the Congleton Local Plan  
NR5 Improve and Enhance Nature Conservation  
RC1 Recreation and Community Facilities: General  
RC3 Nuisance Sports  
RC10 Outdoor Formal Recreational and Amenity Open Space Facilities

#### **4. OBSERVATIONS OF CONSULTEES**

##### **Environment Agency**

- No objection

##### **Natural England**

- The application does not affect nationally designated landscapes or any statutorily designated areas of nature conservation importance
- A protected species survey is not required for this type of application
- The proposed cycle barriers to the rail trail are unnecessary and could be hazardous to users. They should be omitted.

#### **5. VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL**

None received at the time of report preparation.

#### **6. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

Letters of representation have been received from 10 Abbeyfields, 68 Oldfield Road, 177 Crewe Road, 174 Middlewich Road, 55, 71, 90, 103, 105, 123 125 Abbey Road 10 Angelina Close, Sandbach making the following points:

- removal of all perimeter fencing, will allow trespassing onto surrounding land and potential for damage to properties
- removal of internal storage areas will encourage the use of temporary external storage buildings that may be unsightly
- There will be additional litter
- The reduction in the size of the kitchen is welcome but the removal of the bin store is short sighted

- Removal of internal storage could result in additional temporary buildings.
- Temporary buildings will be a target for vandals and increase maintenance costs.
- The barriers / gates across the rail trail would be a hazard to users and should be omitted.
- There should be gates to the football fields.
- The Wheelock Rail Trail already has very restrictive 'A' shaped and bollard style barriers a short distance either side of the new access road. A car driver simply would not drive along the Wheelock Rail Trail from the new access road and a motorcyclist would not be stopped by them any more than by the existing barriers further away. Single bollards are not recommended either in this unlit location since cyclists would crash into them.
- Sandbach United seems to take precedence over the rail trail
- Sandbach United has not informed residents of the proposed revisions.
- Removal of the fencing could lead to anti-social behaviour
- As the pitches have been reduced could the club house be reduced?
- Any alterations should be approved by a competent lighting engineer to ascertain that the lighting does not intrude onto surrounding residential property
- Originally it was stated that the site would be surrounded by high banking covered with trees.

## **7. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**

None submitted

## **8. OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle**

The previous approval established the acceptability in principle of football pitches on this site. As a result, this application does not present an opportunity to re-examine those matters. The main issues in the consideration of this application are the acceptability of the proposed amendments, which are as follows.

1. Reduction in size of the Changing Block from 750sq.m to 669sq.m with associated minor elevation changes
2. Roof lights omitted from the Changing Block and eaves overhang reduced to 750mm
3. Reduction in the total number of pitches from 10 to 9 with the line of the south east site boundary amended to suit. The pitch sequence has been re-numbered reflect the omission of one pitch
4. The overall size of the MUGA pitch has been reduced due to the pitch borders being amended to 3m
5. The external storage compound for mowers etc. has been relocated adjacent to the access road turning head
6. The area of hard standing around the changing block has been reduced and changed from tarmac to Marshall Saxon paving
7. An external storage compound for LP gas has been added adjacent to the access road turning head
8. The disabled car parking spaces have been relocated along the access road and all the car park branch roads have been shown as stone
9. The height of the MUGA pitch fencing has been reduced from 4.5m to 3.0m with supplementary netting behind the goals provided to an overall height of 4.5m

10. Cycle barriers have been added to the Wheelock Trail at its junction with the access road
11. The access track gates have been relocated adjacent to the Wheelock Trail and the previously noted Kissing Gates have been amended to double swing pedestrian gates
12. The SUDS drainage layout has changed to reflect the revised site amendments and pitch drainage proposals
13. Pitch 2 floodlighting is to be a future provision
14. The footpath link with the Cricket Club has been shown.

## **Design**

The reduction in the size of the changing block will reduce its overall visual impact on the openness of the countryside and the surrounding area. Similarly, the reduction in the eaves overhang will also reduce the bulk and massing of the building. The omission of the large roof-lantern will reduce the overall height and remove the opportunity for light pollution. The overall form and style of the building will be very similar to the approved scheme and it is not considered that the other minor amendments to the fenestration will have any material impact on its overall appearance. The proposed building therefore remains acceptable in design terms.

The reduction in the number of pitches, height of fencing and size of the MUGA will also reduce the impact on the open countryside and is therefore welcomed. The reduction in the area of hardstanding and change in surfacing materials from tarmac to stone and block paving will also improve the overall appearance of the site and ensure that it appears more in keeping with the rural area. The relocation of the disabled parking spaces will result in a slight increase in hardstanding on the southern side of the access road. However it is not considered that this will have an significant visual impact, particularly given the change in surfacing materials referred to above.

The proposed location of the equipment and LPG storage areas close to the Wheelock Rail Trail would be more prominent when viewed from the rail trail than the approved storage location to the north of the building. However, any adverse impact could be mitigated with appropriate landscaping. Indicative screen planting is shown to the LPG store but not the equipment store, although further landscaping could be conditioned.

## **Landscaping**

The reduced site area and pitch layout amendment would allow for the retention of a section of hedgerow with hedgerow trees bounding a paddock to the south east of the site. These features would have been removed for the original proposals and their retention is welcomed.

In accordance with the terms of the previous approval, it is recommended that conditions be imposed requiring the provision of additional landscaping to mitigate the impacts of the development. In addition measures would be required for the protection and management of retained trees and hedgerows and for the maintenance of any additional planting.

## **Amenity**

The reduction in the size of the changing block and the reduction in the number of pitches will result in a slight reduction in the potential intensity of use of the site, which will be of benefit to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. As stated above, the proposed

amendments will also reduce the visual impact of the development. The omission of the floodlighting from pitch two will also benefit neighbour amenity.

Whilst the revised location of the LPG and storage compound will be closer to the properties in Hind Heath Road than on the approved plans, a separation distance of approximately 100m will still be maintained. Therefore, it is not considered that there will be any significant adverse impact on amenity as a result. Concerns have been expressed the omission of the internal refuse store, which was to be located adjacent to the kitchen and its incorporation into the external storage compound will result in staff and users having to transport rubbish further and will therefore result in an increase in litter. However, the revised location of the external compound is closer to the club house than the approved location. Furthermore, the size of the kitchen has been reduced, which will, in turn, reduce the potential for waste generation. The applicant has also agreed to the imposition of a condition requiring the provision of litter bins on site.

Concerns have also been raised in respect of the omission of the ball-proof boundary fencing to the site, which residents consider will result in an increase in trespassing on adjacent property. The site is bounded, for the most part, by agricultural land. At the north western corner, it abuts the industrial units in Lodge Road and to the south west it bounds the rail trail. The industrial units benefit from existing security fencing, whilst the rail trail is already open to public access. The site does not share any boundaries with residential properties, and therefore the omission of the perimeter fencing will not create any security risks in respect of domestic properties. The boundaries to the agricultural land would be formed by post and rail fencing supplemented by native hedge planting. Whilst it is acknowledged that this may increase potential for trespass on adjoining agricultural land, which may contain crops, similar boundary treatments enclose the majority of agricultural land in the Borough, and surround the land at present. Consequently, the proposed post and rail fence / hedging, is not considered to be an unreasonable solution, and it is not considered that a refusal on these grounds could be substantiated.

Given the distance to neighbouring properties which is over 100m at the closest point, it is not considered that the reduction in height of the MUGA fencing will result in detriment to neighbour amenity as a result of footballs being kicked into gardens. Furthermore, an increase in the height of the fencing to 4.5m behind the goal mouths, will provide added protection in the most vulnerable area.

## **Highways and Access**

The relocation of the parking spaces will not result in a significant increase in walking distances to the buildings / pitches. The change to stone surfacing for the carpark will result in the loss of the demarcation for the parking spaces. However, in the absence of any objection from the Strategic Highways Manager, it is not considered that this will result in any displaced parking on the public highway. Furthermore, the reduction in the number of pitches will reduce the demand for parking at the site. It will also reduce potential traffic generation from the site and will therefore reduce the impact on the surrounding highway network and access point. This will result in a marginal improvement in highway safety terms.

## **Drainage and Flooding**

The reduction in the area of hardstanding and change from tarmac to stone surfacing will improve the permeability of the site and reduce run-off. A revised SUDS Drainage Drawing to reflect the site amendments is currently being prepared. It is anticipated that this will also satisfy the requirements of the drainage conditions attached to the previous planning permissions. The drawing was awaited at the time of report preparation and will be subject to consultation with the Environment Agency and United Utilities. An update on this matter will be provided to Members at the Board meeting.

## **Ecology**

Given the reduced scale of the scheme, it is not considered that the revised proposals raise any ecological implications, which were not considered at the time of the original proposals. Furthermore, it is noted that Natural England have raised no objections on ecological grounds and it is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the relevant development plan policies in this respect.

## **Other Matters**

A number of local residents have expressed concerns about the proposed cycle barriers across the Rail Trail. The Council's Public Rights of Way Unit and Natural England also objected to this element of the proposals. Consequently, these have now been omitted from the plans and there will be no barrier across the trail. Gates will be positioned across the access road to the site, at either side of the trail, which will only be opened to allow the movement of vehicles across (for the purpose of maintaining services, deliveries and emergency vehicles only) at all other times they will remain locked and the 2 pedestrian gates will be used in normal operation.

## **9. CONCLUSIONS**

Planning permission for the development of football pitches on this site was granted in 2009 and therefore this application does not present an opportunity to re-examine matters of principle. The proposed amendments to the scheme will result in an overall reduction in the scale of the development, which will lessen its impact on the character and appearance of the area and the open countryside. The proposed amendments are considered to be acceptable in terms of landscaping, amenity, highways and access, drainage and flooding and ecology and amended plans have been secured to address the concerns of residents and other consultees about obstruction of the rail trail. Consequently the proposal complies with the relevant development plan policies, as set out above, and accordingly is recommended for approval, subject to similar conditions as previously.

## **10. RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE subject to the following conditions:-**

- 1. Development to commence within 3 years.**
- 2. Development to be in accordance with approved drawings.**
- 3. Samples and detail of materials on external elevations to be submitted prior to development.**
- 4. Supplementary tree planting scheme to be submitted providing details for fruit trees.**

- 5. Implementation and maintenance of landscaping.**
- 6. Review of lighting when operational.**
- 7. Floodlighting to be restricted to 14:00 to 22:30 hours Monday to Saturday and 14:00 to 20:30 Sundays.**
- 8. Prior to commencement of development, the applicant will submit a Construction management plan with a method statement, to demonstrate appropriate safe management of construction traffic taking access to and from the site.**
- 9. Hours of construction to be restricted to 08:00 to 18:00 hours on Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturday, with no work at any other time including Sundays and Public Holidays.**
- 10. Details of pile driving method, timing and operation to be provided before work commences.**
- 11. Wheel washing facilities to be provided.**
- 12. Measures to control dust during construction to be submitted and approved prior to development.**
- 13. Sustainable urban drainage scheme (SUDS) to be submitted to and approved by the LPA.**
- 14. Drainage works to be implemented in accordance with submitted details.**
- 15. Prior to first use, a formal Travel Plan based on the Travel Plan Framework to be submitted for the approval of the LPA.**
- 16. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer to submit plans of construction specification and geometry for the proposed junction with the B5079 Hind Heath Road. Details to include for the provision of a pedestrian link between the proposed access and the cricket club.**
- 17. Prior to commencement of development, the proposed junction with the**
  - 1. B5079 Hind Heath Road, will be substantially constructed, to exclude carriageway wearing course only.**
- 18. Prior to first use the proposed junction with the B5079 Hind Heath Road will be constructed to completion.**
- 19. Car parking to be constructed and marked out prior to first use.**
- 20. Details of covered and secure cycle parking to be submitted and implemented.**
- 21. Development to be in accordance with submitted Travel Plan.**
- 22. Prior to first use, all proposed improvements to sustainable links, specifically for safe access to and lighting for the Wheelock Rail Trail, will be completed to the satisfaction of the LPA.**
- 23. Provision of litter bins**



