

Application No: 13/5091N

Location: REASEHEATH COLLEGE, MAIN ROAD, WORLESTON, NANTWICH, CHESHIRE, CW5 6DF

Proposal: Outline application for new sports hall, 3G and MUGA pitch

Applicant: Mr S Kennish, Reaseheath College

Expiry Date: 19-Mar-2014

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

## **REFFERAL**

This application is included on the agenda of the Southern Committee as the proposed cumulative floor area of the development exceeds 1000m<sup>2</sup> and therefore constitutes a major proposal.

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

Reaseheath College is located approximately two miles north of Nantwich town centre and is accessed off the A51 ring road. The application site is located on the periphery of the college campus in a prominent position adjacent to Located immediately to the north of application site is the main college campus. The application site is located primarily on an existing 9 hole golf course and incorporates a number of trees, with more significant specimens located around the periphery. The application site is located just outside the Reaseheath Conservation Area and is wholly within the open countryside.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

The current proposal is an outline application (with all matters reserved) for works to construct a 6 court sports hall, a floodlit MUGA pitch & floodlight 3G pitch for use by the college and community, located on part of the college's existing golf course located within the college grounds, involving the re-location of 2 existing grass pitches, 1 existing football pitch and 1 existing rugby pitch at Reaseheath College, Nantwich.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

P06/0507 - Demolition of Shed and Erection of Construction Workshop. Approved 4<sup>th</sup> July 2006

P06/0512 - Change of Use from Manufacturing Building to IT Centre including Demolition of Oil Store and Erection of New Entrance. Approved 4<sup>th</sup> July 2006

P06/0991 - 96 Bed Two Storey Student Accommodation Building With Associated Car Parking And Landscaping. Approved 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006

P07/0024 – Erection of Electricity Generation Facility. Approved 26th February 2007

P07/0380 – Erection of Milking Parlour. Approved 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007

P07/0412 – 4 Isolation Pens. Approved 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007

P07/0517 – Replacement Animal Care Centre. Approved 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007

P07/0508 – Extension to Existing Calf House. Approved 31<sup>st</sup> May 2007

P07/0541 – Demolition of Store and Maintenance Buildings and Construction of Learning Resource Centre and Alterations to Parking. Approved 4<sup>th</sup> June 2007

P07/0638 – Demolition of Temporary Classroom Block and Construction of a New Estates Maintenance Workshop to Replace Facilities Demolished to make way for the New Learning Resource Centre. Refused 25<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

P07/0761 – New Engineering Academy Building Approved on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2007.

P08/1142 - Construction of Barn for Teaching, Barn for Staff/Student Services, Tractor/Tool Store, Landscape Workshop and Teaching Area, 3 Commercial /Teaching Glasshouses, 3 Polytunnels and Associated Works (Development to be Constructed over 2 Phases) – Approved – 11<sup>th</sup> December 2008

09/1155N - Demolition of the Cross College Building including Student Union Office to make way for the New Student Hub approved under application P08/1126 (Crewe & Nantwich) Conservation Area Consent – Approved – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2009

09/2160N - Refurbishment and Extension of the Existing Food Processing Department to Accommodate a New Student Training Facility – Approved – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009

10/0279N - Demolition of Single Storey Teaching/Amenity Block and Erection of New Two Storey Food Centre of Excellence for Business and Research Use – Approved – 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010

10/1345N - Removal of the Existing Flue (1m Diameter by Approx 10m High) and the Addition of Three Smaller Flues (1 x 514mm Diameter by Approx 10m High, 2 x 378mm Diameter by Approx 10m High) – Approved – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010

10/3339N - Proposed Extension and Alterations to Provide Extended Catering Facilities, including an Enlarged Kitchen and additional Dining for Students and Staff - Approved

11/2450N - Construction of a New 2 Bay Silage Clamp Extension on Hall Farm within the College Grounds – Approved – 15<sup>th</sup> August 2011

11/2449N - The Construction of a New Calf House on Hall Farm within the College Grounds – Approved – 26<sup>th</sup> August 2011

12/1175N – Proposed 3 Storey 150 Bed Residential Student Accommodation Building – Refused – 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012

12/3548N – Proposed 3 Storey, 150 Bed Residential Student Accommodation Building and Associated Landscape Works – Approved – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2012

13/1688N - Variation of condition No 2 of permission 12/3548N – Approved – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2013

## **POLICIES**

### **National Policy**

The application should be determined in accordance with national guidance set out in:

National Planning Policy Framework

## **Local Policy**

The principle issue surrounding the determination of this application is whether the development is in accordance with the following policies within the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011:

BE.1	(Amenity)
BE.2	(Design Standards)
BE.3	(Access and Parking)
BE.4	(Drainage, Utilities and Resources)
BE.5	(Infrastructure)
BE.7	(Conservation Areas)
BE.9	(Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions)
BE.16	(Development and Archaeology)
NE.2	(Open Countryside)
NE.5	(Nature Conservation and Habitats)
NE.9	(Protected Species)
CF.2	(Community Facilities)
RT.9	(Footpaths and Bridleways)
TRAN.5	(Provision for Cyclists)
TRAN.6	(Cycle Routes)
TRAN.9	(Car Parking Standards)

## **CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)**

**Environment Agency:** No objections

**United Utilities:** No objection subject to condition regarding drainage

**Sports England:** No objection subject to conditions relating to pitches to be laid out in accordance with the submitted plans, design and construction of the pitches and sports hall in accordance with Sports England guidance documents, use of the playing pitches and lighting, details of community agreement, details of management and maintenance of the development to be submitted and agreed in writing and restrict use of the pitches.

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

No comments received at the time of writing this report

## **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

1 letter of objection received from the occupiers of Church Cottage. The objector raises the following points:

- There is already planning permission given for 1000 dwellings in the Nantwich area, which has caused considerable local disquiet. The Reaseheath application to build accommodation for some 300 students would add the equivalent of some 50 or more

houses to this total apart from adding to the already considerable traffic congestion in the area; and

- If however, planning permission is given to Reaseheath College it should not be on the proposed site which includes the golf course. This would involve the wanton destruction of some lovely mature parkland (apparently subject anyway to a restrictive building covenant) and it would also remove a valuable facility for some 300 local Nantwich men and women who play golf. The college already has an alternative plan on land to the north of existing college buildings. This should be the preferred option.

## **APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Design and Access Statement  
Tree Survey  
Sports Statement

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Policy**

The principle issues surrounding the determination of this application is whether the development is in accordance with Policies BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.3 (Car Parking and Access), NE.2 (Open Countryside), NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats), NE.9 (Protected Species), TRAN.9 (Car Parking) and CF.2 (Community Facilities) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011. These policies seek to ensure that the proposed development respects the scale, form and design of the existing buildings and the general character of the area.

In summary, these policies seek to protect the character and appearance of the open countryside whilst allowing for appropriate development. Policies also protect residential amenity and ensure safe vehicular access and adequate parking. A new building will not be permitted unless it harmonises with its setting and is sympathetic in scale, form and materials to the character of the built form and the area particularly adjacent buildings and spaces.

### **Loss of Golf Course**

As part of the application the applicant has submitted a Sports Planning Statement which concludes that the Green Space Strategy makes no reference to golf provision, but recognises the need for additional pitch facilities in Nantwich. Nantwich does not benefit from a central wet/dry facility. Nantwich Pool provides swimming opportunities but there is no large public sports hall for community use. The current proposal will provide this opportunity for the community, and will be conditioned accordingly, in the event that planning permission is approved.

The applicant goes on to enunciate that the original purpose of the golf course was for student training is no longer relevant as course numbers have dwindled and work place training has taken over. Membership of the golf course has also declined steadily to a current low of approximately 300.

Furthermore, there has never been a pro or coaching structure at the golf course. Membership has been in decline and the course has an elderly membership profile.

However, against this backdrop provision in the Reaseheath area for golf is high, and even the loss of the Reaseheath course would leave the area well supplied compared with the average. The applicant acknowledges that participation is difficult to estimate in detail. Nevertheless, according to current statistics national and regional participation is on a downward trend, and regional participation is lower than the national average.

Overall, it is considered that the loss of a nine hole course, which may have a niche role in catering for those with less time for a full round or learning opportunities. It is not considered to be crucial in view of the presence of 2 alternative nine hole courses in the immediate area, and others within a 20 minute catchment area. It is therefore considered likely that the loss of the Reaseheath course would not have a detrimental effect on local golf course provision. Colleagues in Sports England have been consulted regarding the application and acknowledge that the Sports Planning Statement is robust and raise no objection in principle to the loss of the golf course given the factors cited above.

### **Playing Fields and Sports Hall**

The site forms part of, or constitutes a playing field as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (Statutory Instrument 2010 No. 2184), in that it is on land that has been used as a playing field within the last five years, and the field encompasses at least one playing pitch of 0.2 ha or more, or that it is on land that is allocated for the use as a playing field in a development plan or in proposals for such a plan or its alteration or replacement.

Colleagues in Sport England have been consulted and they considered the application in the light of its playing fields policy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of quality pitches to satisfy the current and estimated future demand for pitch sports within the area. The policy seeks to protect all parts of the playing field from development and not just those which, for the time being, are laid out as pitches. The policy states that:

“Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, or land last used as a playing field or allocated for use as a playing field in an adopted or draft deposit local plan, unless, in the judgement of Sport England, one of the specific circumstances applies.”

Reason: Development which would lead to the loss of all or part of a playing field, or which would prejudice its use, should not normally be permitted because it would permanently reduce the opportunities for participation in sporting activities.

Sports England state that ‘the proposals could not be considered as ancillary to the principal use of the playing field as the land is currently part of the playing pitches’. However, the creation of the new rugby pitch and smaller football pitch do help in part compensate for some of the loss. It is considered that the proposed 3G and MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) will add significant playing capacity to the college sports facilities. The 3G pitch is rugby compliant and will be of great benefit to the local community due to the current lack of adequate provision in

the locality and should get greater use than natural turf pitches. The MUGA, can be used to promote netball, and because it is floodlit will help promote opportunities for women who are not so keen on rugby and football. It is considered that the proposed AGP and MUGA are of sufficient benefit to sport to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of playing field. This view is also shared by colleagues in Sports England.

## **The Sports Hall**

The proposed sports hall is to replace the existing gym, which is tired and not really fit for purpose. It is also larger which we welcome. This gives greater opportunities for a wider range of sports, including futsal, archery, indoor cricket and volleyball. The new sports hall is located on part of the golf course. It is considered that the new sports hall and the pitches retain sports use. Nevertheless, the bulk of the sport land will be lost to the new teaching facility etc. (application 13/5093N). Therefore, in order to mitigate for the loss of sports provisions a community use agreement for the sports facilities will compensate for these losses. This view is also shared by colleagues in Sport England.

## **Design Standards and Impact on the Conservation Area**

This application has been subject to extensive negotiations between officers and the applicant and his agent.

Guidance advocated within NPPF supports well designed buildings. Policy BE.2 (Design Standards) is broadly in accordance with this guidance but places greater emphasis on the impact to the streetscene and encouraging development which respects the character, pattern and form of development within the area.

As a matter of fact, the NPPF states *'Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'* (paragraph 64)

However, the NPPF clearly states that *'Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness'* (paragraph 60).

The design of new development should be of a high standard and wherever possible the built environment and surroundings should be enhanced. It is important that the relationship with the existing street scene is considered and improved, and not harmed by new development.

Whilst the proposed construction of the two replacement pitches will introduce uses which are potentially open in nature as they are located adjacent to the boundary of the conservation area it will be important that when viewed from afar that their visual impact is minimal, in order to preserve the setting of the conservation area. Like the existing pitches on part of this site.

As previously stated this application is in outline form with all matters reserved, it is noted that the current proposals do not appear to indicate whether the pitches will have perimeter netting. In order to mitigate any negative externalities regarding the possible erection of the

perimeter netting, a condition will be attached to the decision notice in order to visually protect the setting of the adjacent conservation area.

Furthermore, the current proposals indicate that the pitches will be floodlight there do not appear to be any details of the appearance or the height of the proposed units or their level of illumination, and so any decision notice permitting such development will be conditioned also require the submission of such details.

In order to help assimilate the proposal into the local environ and so that they do not appear stark the pitches should be green in colour. Therefore, to protect the setting of the adjacent conservation area and the character and appearance of the locality a condition will be attached requesting full details of the construction of the pitches and including their colour.

According to the submitted plans the location of the proposed new sports hall is located further away from the conservation area and adjacent to existing buildings lying outside the conservation area and as such helps to consolidate the built form. As this is in outline format the sports hall will measure approximately 51m by 27m and the footprint of the building is rectangular in form. A condition will be attached to the decision notice regarding materials, surfacing materials and landscaping to help minimise its impact on the locality. Overall, it is considered that the proposal complies with policies BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.7 (Conservation Areas) and BE.9 (Listed Building: Alterations and Extensions).

### **Amenity Considerations**

Policy BE.1 (Amenity) states that development will be permitted provided that the development is compatible with surrounding land uses, does not prejudice the amenity of future or neighbouring occupiers, does not prejudice the safe movement of traffic and does not cause an increase in air, noise, water pollution which might have an adverse impact on the use of land for other purposes.

The development of the site for pitches and sports hall within an existing college campus area is considered to be compatible with the surrounding land uses. The proposals are also unlikely to result in noise, air or water pollution. A principle consideration in determining this application is its effect upon the amenity of adjacent occupants. This primarily includes the residents of cottages located to the south east of the application site. The general thrust of Policy BE.1 requires that development does not have a prejudicial impact on the amenity of occupiers in an adjacent property.

It is considered that the proposal will have a marginal impact on the residential amenities of the occupiers of these cottages. According to GIS there is a distance of approximately 130m separating these dwellings from the application site. Therefore, considering the separation distances and the intervening boundary treatment will help to mitigate any negative externalities. It is considered that the proposal complies with policy BE.1 (Amenity).

### **Drainage**

Development on sites such as this generally reduces the permeability of at least part of the site and changes the site's response to rainfall.

The NPPF states that in order to satisfactorily manage flood risk in new development, appropriate surface water drainage arrangements are required. The guidance also states that surface water arising from a developed site should, as far as possible, be managed in a sustainable manner to mimic the surface water flows arising from the site prior to the proposed development.

It is possible to condition the submission of a satisfactory drainage scheme in order to ensure that any surface water runoff generated by the development is sufficiently discharged. This will probably require the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) which include source control measures, infiltration devices as well as filter strips and swales which mimic natural drainage patterns. Concerns have been raised that if the proposal was to be approved, it will exacerbate flooding in the immediate area and it is considered prudent to attach a condition relating to drainage, if planning permission is to be approved. Furthermore, colleagues in United Utilities have been consulted and raised no objection subject to the imposition of a drainage condition. Overall, it is considered that the application is in accordance with policy BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources).

### **Sustainability of the site**

The NPPF identifies that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that significant weight should be attached to proposals which enable economic growth and the delivery of sustainable development. With regard to the urban economy, the Framework advises that developments should be located and designed where practical to:-

- Accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;
- Give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities;
- Create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians;
- Consider the needs people with disabilities by all modes of transport

The document goes on to enunciate that

*'Plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised'. (paragraph 34).*

The site would be sited in a sustainable location alongside the existing buildings on the campus. The site would have easy access to the college, a shop and food outlets. Furthermore, the college is within walking distance of Sainsburys supermarket and Nantwich town centre. A condition relating to secured, covered cycle provision should be attached to any approval. Furthermore, it is considered that, in order to encourage some sustainable forms of transport, a condition relating to a travel plan should be attached to any permission. The NPPF advocates the use of Travel Plan stating:

*'All developments which generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan' (Para 36).*



Overall, it is considered that the site is in a sustainable location and the proposal is in accordance with Policy BE.3 (Access and Parking) and advice advocated within the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **Landscape**

The development subject of this application (in conjunction with wider development proposals) would result in the closure and loss of the existing 9 hole golf course and alter the existing parkland setting of this area of the college. It is appreciated that the college seeks to meet present and future needs. Nevertheless, the Conservation Area, the landscape setting of the college and its position in the wider landscape all need to be considered.

The proposed development would be outside the Reaseheath Conservation Area although the sports pitches would be close to its eastern boundary. To protect the landscape setting of the Conservation Area, it is essential that any development is sensitive to the location.

The MUGA and proposed pitches would be closest to the Conservation Area, separated by trees on the eastern boundary of the existing drive. Whilst no details are provided at this stage, there is the potential for the hard surfaced pitches and any ancillary fencing and lighting to be viewed as unsympathetic and should the location be deemed acceptable. There would be direct conflict between the proposed 3G pitch and a mature Oak tree which is identified for removal.

The location of the proposed sports hall would be adjacent to existing buildings to the north although it appears the building would be of far greater scale. Existing vegetation could soften views of the building from the road to the east. Any reduction in tree cover could impact on screening and the prominence of the building.

Overall it is considered subject to landscaping conditions (which will be conditioned) the proposal would not detract from the character and appearance of the setting and as such the proposal is in accordance with policies BE.2 (Design Standards) and NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats).

## **Forestry**

A tree survey report dated 14 September 2013 has been provided. The survey covers trees on the eastern side of the college campus. The survey is supported by a topographic survey plan which appears to show tree positions, crown spread and root protection areas although the plan has no title, key or scale. The submission provides no other arboricultural information and does not meet the guidelines contained within BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations.

The British Standard identifies at para 5.2 *Constraints posed by Trees* that all relevant constraints including Root Protection Areas (RPAs) should be plotted around all trees for retention and shown on the relevant drawings, including proposed site layout plans. Above ground constraints should also be taken into account as part of the layout design.

The submitted plans and particulars illustrate which trees are suggested for retention but are not cross referenced with their Root Protection Areas and respective tree protection details

onto the proposed site plan and no evidence of Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been provided. As a consequence it is not possible to determine with confidence the direct or indirect impact of the proposed layout on retained trees.

Nevertheless, the Landscape Officer concludes that the following likely impacts have been identified:

- The location of the proposed sports hall would require the removal of part of a group of semi-mature trees on the existing golf course afforded Grade C in the tree report.
- The repositioned rugby league pitch would result in losses of semi-mature trees on the existing golf course afforded Grade C in the tree report.
- The proposed 3G pitch would be in direct conflict with a significant mature Grade A Oak tree which is shown with a dotted outline on plan A-01-002 suggesting removal is intended.

The tree losses need to be weighed in the wider planning balance. It is considered that the loss of Grade C trees is acceptable. However, the mature Oak tree is a significant specimen worthy of retention and it is recommended the siting of the 3G pitch is amended to make provision for the retention of this tree. The applicants agent has been requested to submit an amended plan relocating the 3G pitch and Members will be advised accordingly.

## **Highways**

No comments have been received at the time of writing this report from the Highways Officer. Members will be updated in the update report once these comments have been received.

## **Ecology**

No comments have been received at the time of writing this report from the Council Ecologist. Members will be updated in the update report once these comments have been received.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION**

Having regard to the pattern of existing development in the area and other material considerations, it is concluded that the proposed development would be in accordance with Policies BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.3 (Access and Parking), BE.4 (Drainage Utilities and Resources), BE.5 (Infrastructure), NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats), CF.2 (Community Facilities), TRAN.5 (Provision for Cyclists), TRAN.6 (Cycle Routes), TRAN.9 (Car Parking) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011, and that it would not materially harm the character or appearance of the area or the privacy and living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and would be acceptable in terms of highway safety.

**Approve subject to conditions:**

- 1. Standard**
- 2. Plans**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. Details of Surfacing Materials to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 5. Details of External Lighting to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 6. Details of Drainage to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 7. Restrict hours of use for the pitches and lighting**
- 8. Dust Control**
- 9. Contaminated Land Survey**
- 10. Landscaping submitted and agreed in writing**
- 11. Landscaping Implemented**
- 12. Details of any netting including its colour to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 13. Details of the floodlighting to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 14. Details of the pitches including their construction to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 15. Details of covered cycle shelters to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 16. Travel plan to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 17. Tree Protection Measures**
- 18. Within 12 months of the date of this planning permission a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement has been provided to the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply to [describe facilities forming part of the development] and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-[educational establishment] users [/non-members], management responsibilities and a mechanism for review, and anything else which the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England considers necessary in order to secure the effective community use of the facilities. The development shall not be used at any time other than in strict compliance with the approved agreement."**
- 19. Details of Management and Maintenance Scheme to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 20. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the area shown on Drawing No. 30104/A-01-001 has been cleared and laid out in accordance with Drawing No. 30104/A-01-002 so**

**that it is available for use as a playing field and sports facility, and notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) (or any order amending, revoking or re-enacting that order) that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than as a playing field and sports facility.**

- 21. The Artificial Grass Pitch, The Multi Use Games Area and Sports Hall, hereby permitted shall be constructed in accordance with Sport England/National Governing Body Technical Design Guidance Notes**

## **INFORMATIVES:**

The applicant is advised that they have a duty to adhere to the regulations of Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and the current Building Control Regulations with regards to contaminated land. If any unforeseen contamination is encountered during the development, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) should be informed immediately. Any investigation / remedial / protective works carried out in relation to this application shall be carried out to agreed timescales and approved by the LPA in writing. The responsibility to ensure the safe development of land affected by contamination rests primarily with the developer.

Guidance on preparing Community Use Agreements is available from Sport England [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org).

