

Application No: 20/2640M

Location: WILMSLOW HIGH SCHOOL, HOLLY ROAD NORTH, WILMSLOW,  
CHESHIRE, SK9 1LZ

Proposal: Extensions and alterations to school and associated landscaping and  
highway improvement works

Applicant: Nick Cook, Cheshire East Council Asset Management Service

Expiry Date: 06-Nov-2020

## **SUMMARY**

The application site is located on an area of Existing Open Space in the MBLP, and it has not been demonstrated that the open space is surplus to requirements, it is not replaced by equivalent or better provision, and the development is not for alternative sports and recreational provision, as required by paragraph 97 of the NPPF. As such, there is some conflict with this policy document as well as policy RT1 of the MBLP and SE 6 of the CELPS, which weighs against the proposal.

However, the proposals do include improvements to the existing sports and recreation facilities within the site which will be a benefit, not only to the school, but also to the wider community through a Community Use Agreement, to enable the local community to also benefit from the improved facilities. These benefits include the provision of a new community sports entrance and reception, new changing facilities, a fitness suite, a new movement studio, a new cover to the existing MUGA pitches to allow increased usage by the school and the community. Sport England also raises no objections with regards to impact on playing pitches.

In addition, the extent of the development that does not represent improvements to the existing sport and recreation offer is relatively limited, and relates to the need for additional educational space, and ancillary facilities, to enable increased pupil numbers, and consequently staff numbers. As with many schools within the Borough, the entire site is allocated as Existing Open Space and such policy conflict is commonplace when considering extensions to schools. In this case, the specific areas of open space lost to development are very limited, and do not adversely affect the existing or potential recreational needs of the local population or the integrity of the open space given their position within the site and their minor scale. This view is shared by the Open Space Officer from ANSA. It is therefore considered that there are sufficient benefits in this case to outweigh the policy conflict, arising from the historic allocation of the site as protected open space.

The proposals would be of an acceptable design, that would not create any issues in relation to; Green Belt, playing pitch provision, amenity, landscape, trees, flood risk and drainage, ecology or public rights of way, subject to conditions where deemed necessary.

The comments received in representation are acknowledged, however, matters in relation to Highways are also deemed acceptable, but subject to the receipt of a £8,000 contribution towards parking (waiting) restrictions being introduced on Broadway. Given that the Council cannot enter into a legal agreement with itself, it is recommended that permission be delegated back to the Head of Planning, in conjunction with the Chair of Northern Planning Committee (or in their absence the Vice Chair), to approve, subject to this payment being made prior to the issuing of a decision notice, and conditions.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That authority be DELEGATED to the Acting Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman of Northern Planning Committee (or in their absence the Vice Chair), to APPROVE the application for the reasons set out in the report, subject to;

- The receipt of a contribution of £8,000, prior to the issuing of the decision notice, to provide parking (waiting) restrictions on Broadway
- Conditions

## REASON FOR REFERRAL

The application has been referred to Cheshire East Council's Northern Planning Committee, in accordance with the Council's Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee, as it represents a '*Significant application by the Council either as the applicant or land owner*'.

## DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

This application relates to Wilmslow High School, a secondary school located to the east of Broadway, north and south of Holly Road North and west of the railway line and A34, Wilmslow, Cheshire.

Land to the north of Holly Road North is where the school buildings are located. This land is classed as 'existing open space'. Land to the south of Holly Road north is where most of the existing car parking provision is located, along with some playing fields beyond. This land is Green Belt land as well as 'existing open space in the Green Belt'.

## DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for extensions and alterations to the school and its associated grounds. More specifically, the following developments are proposed;

### New buildings / extensions & alterations

- Part demolition of design & technology block (south-west corner of site) to allow for;
- A single-storey extension to main building incorporating two-storey school entrance section and two-storey stairwell extension to link to existing building. This extension would provide a new main pupil and visitor entrance, new admin spaces, student services, reprographics and new DT spaces.
- Two-storey infill extension between sports buildings (Sports Hall and Olympic Hall). This extension would provide a new community sports entrance and reception, new changing facilities, a fitness suite, 3 classrooms, a new movement studio and a viewing gallery.
- New cover to the existing MUGA pitches, with the proposals being referred to as the 'Sports barn'. The cover will be a 'roof and wall system'. This is sought to allow increased usage by the school and improve the community offering
- New doors and windows and internal alterations associated with the re-purposing of existing accommodation.

In total, the amount of new built form proposed, minus demolition would equate to 2431m<sup>2</sup> (Gross external area)

The new development, in conjunction with the internal re-configuration would amount to 29 additional teaching areas.

#### Landscaping / Highway works

- Creation of a new pupil drop-off area (16 car capacity) and a staff parking area (30 spaces) to the western boundary. X2 of the spaces would include electric vehicle charging points. The intention is that this creates a new drop off area not previously provided away from the public highway and should remove some drop-off traffic from Broadway. Access to new drop-off road will be restricted by automatic gates to the beginning and end of the school day only.
- Creation of a new landscaped main entrance plaza to improve visitor and student pedestrian access into the building located on Holly Road North. The new extension is to be arranged around a new landscaped external courtyard area.
- Existing main car parking area (to south of Holly Road North) to be altered to form a segregated visitor parking area (16 spaces including 4 disabled), to account for that lost as a result of the proposed works, and creation of new, additional access point onto Holly Road North.
- Amendments to main vehicular entrance at Broadway to provide a roundabout. Existing loop road to be barriered with removable bollards to restrict access and only allow for coach pick up and drop off for school trips, so not available for everyday use. The main pedestrian access at this point is also proposed to be amended (changes to pavements and crossing points for safety reasons) in order to bring pupils in through the main entrance gates and towards the main entrance of the school.
- New immediate cycle parking in a dedicated cycle parking area (140 cycles) accessed off Holly Road North with a brick-built, refuse storage area and access provided adjacent. A separate lockable staff cycle parking facility is to be provided adjacent to the new sports facilities (10 cycles). A location for a future cycle store area is also proposed adjacent to the footpath extending to the north of the built form on site through to Broadway Meadows car park (60 cycles).
- Creation of a new footpath/cycle link (constructed from permeable asphalt) linking the site to and beyond the Broadway Meadows car park to the north. The link would extend from the main site campus northwards to the left of the existing sports pitches, then along the northern edge of the site before passing into and skirting the edge of the Broadway Meadows car park, through an existing strip of landscaping/scrubland. This later section would be constructed from tarmac. This would connect into a new cycle path and wider cycle network beyond. A lockable access gate will be included to the boundary, only being

opened at the beginning and end of the school day. Outside of these times, access will be by fob only.

- Improvements to existing cycle and pedestrian access into the site to link to existing and proposed cycle networks.
- Creation of an improved drop-off area, emergency access route and footway link (with relocated post and rail fence) on A34 side of site (east).

Revised plans were received during the application process moving the position of the proposed northern footpath link within the site from extending between the playing pitches, to along the west hand side of the pitches. In addition, the position of a bike store in association with this has been re-located.

A proposed external lighting plan has been removed from consideration at this time and is now intended that this detail be conditioned instead in the event of approval.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

**20/2495M** - Temporary modular classroom buildings – Approved 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020

**17/3319M** - External fabric canopy with steel uprights to the exterior of the dining hall. Two glass canopies over existing doorways. 2.4m high polycarbonate fencing and metal gates to enclose space. New metal access gate and green PPC weldmesh fencing at 1.8m to skirt around the west side of the building – Approved 29<sup>th</sup> August 2017

**13/3008M** - Non material Amendment to approved planning application 12/2997M (2 storey extension to existing 6th form teaching block) for approval to amend external cladding – Approved 7<sup>th</sup> October 2013

**13/0726M** - Two-storey extension to existing sixth-form teaching block to provide learning support centre and associated soft and hard landscaping works (Non-material amendment) – Approved 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013

**12/2997M** - Two Storey Extension to Existing Sixth Form Teaching Block to Provide Learning Support Centre and Associated Soft and Hard Landscaping Works – Approved 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012

**09/4170W** - Construction Of Sports Hall And Associated Facilities – Approved 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010

**07/1050P** - Removal Of Condition No.2 On Approval 97/1950p To Allow Permanent Siting Of Modular Building For Use As Creche – Approved 15<sup>th</sup> August 2007

**06/1607P** - Construction of 2no. Car Parking Areas Providing 76 & 42 Car Parking Spaces Respectively – Approved 20<sup>th</sup> December 2006

**06/0213P** - Creation Of New Access With Pedestrian Gate To The Northern Boundary Of The School And Associated Footpaths (Cheshire County Council) – Not objected to – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2006

**CY/5/P04/2143** - Section 73 application to defer condition 21 of permission 5/03/0543P (new two storey building) requiring a new access on the northern boundary of the school site via a new pedestrian path and cycle way through the adjacent Macclesfield Borough Car Park for a period of 12 months – Approved 4<sup>th</sup> November 2004

**03/0543P** - New Two Storey Building Accommodating 11no. Classrooms, Dance And Fitness Studios, Changing Rooms & Sixth Form Common Room. Three Classroom Extension To Existing School. Classroom Link And New Office Extension. Extension To Existing Hard Play Area. Proposed Pedestrian Access And Emergency Vehicles Access. Temporary Site Access For Construction Traffic – Approved 29<sup>th</sup> May 2003

**02/0896P** - Single-Storey Modular Building with Link To Provide Additional Facilities To Existing Creche – Approved 19<sup>th</sup> June 2002

**00/0595P** - New Free-Standing Two-Storey Classroom Block Incorporating Ten General Classrooms And Ancillary Space, Plus Bridge Link To Existing Building – Not objected to – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2000

**P98/0303P** - Floodlighting For Existing Sports Pitch, Comprising 12 No. 15 Metre High Columns – Approved 29<sup>th</sup> April 1998

**97/1950P** - Modular Building For Use As Creche – Approved 13<sup>th</sup> November 1997

**74878P** - Creation Of School Playing Field – Approved 7<sup>th</sup> October 1993

**67084P** - Extensions Alterations And New Playing Fields Including Floodlit Synthetic Playing Pitch – Approved 19<sup>th</sup> July 1991

**66197P** - Extension And Alterations To Existing High School – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1991

**61166P** - Playing Fields Temporary Classroom Accommodation Car Parking Hard Play Area And Three Pitches – Approved 10<sup>th</sup> January 1990

**48156P** - Wilmslow And Handforth By Passes And Airport Eastern Link (Part Of) – Approved 14<sup>th</sup> May 1987

**40545P** - Erection Of New Teaching Block And Changing/Drama Block With Open Air Link – Approved 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1985

**14586P** - New Twin Class Mobile Unit – Approve 9<sup>th</sup> June 1978

## **POLICY**

### **Development Plan**

The aspects of the Cheshire East Council Development Plan relevant to the application are; the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan (WNP), the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS) and the Macclesfield Local Plan (MLP).

The relevant policies within these plans are:

#### Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) (October 2019)

LSP1 – Sustainable construction, LSP2 – Sustainable Spaces, LSP3 – Sustainable Transport, NE3 – Green Links, NE4 – Countryside Access, NE5 – Biodiversity Conservation, TA2 – Congestion and Traffic Flow, TA4 – Access to Schools, TA5 – Cycling in Wilmslow, CR1 – Community Facilities, CR2 – Indoor Leisure Facilities, CR4 – Public Open Space and PR3 – Pedestrian movement in the Town Centre

#### Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS) (July 2017)

PG1 - Overall Development Strategy, Policy PG2 - Settlement Hierarchy, PG3 – Green Belt, SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East, SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles, SE1 - Design, SE2 - Efficient Use of Land, SE3 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity, SE4 - The Landscape, SE5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland, SE6 – Green Infrastructure, SE9 - Energy Efficient Development, SE12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability, SE13 – Flood Risk Management, SC1 – Leisure and Recreation, SC3 – Health and Wellbeing, IN1 - Infrastructure, IN2 - Developer Contributions, CO1 – Sustainable Travel and Transport, CO2 – Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure, LPS55 – Wilmslow Business Park

#### Cheshire East Design Guide SPD

#### Macclesfield Local Plan (MLP)

NE11 – Nature Conservation, NE15 – Habitat Enhancement, GC1 – Green Belt (new buildings), GC6 – Areas Outside of Green Belt, ASCV or JBO, RT1 – Protection of Open Spaces, RT7 – Cycleways, Bridleways and Footpaths, DC2 – Design – Extensions & Alterations, DC3 - Protection of the amenities of nearby residential properties, DC6 – Design - (Circulation and Access), DC8 - Design - (Landscaping), DC9 – Design (Tree Protection), DC17 – Design – (Water Resources) and T1 -General Transportation Policy

#### Other Material planning policy considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)  
Cheshire East Design Guide SPD

### **CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)**

**Wilmslow Town Council** – *‘Recommend refusal of this application on the grounds of additional traffic congestion at both the Holly Road and A34 entrances and the proposed solutions still being inadequate to resolve these issues. In addition, the proposal to create an entrance off Broadway Meadow does not appear to take into consideration the likelihood of a multi-storey car park being constructed on this site’*

**Network Rail** – No objections, subject to a number of advisories

**ANSA Greenspace** - No objections, subject to a condition requiring the submission/approval of a Community Use Agreement

**Sport England** - No objections

**Head of Strategic Infrastructure (Highways)** – No objections, subject to the provision of a £8,000 contribution to pay for parking (waiting) restrictions on Broadway

**Environmental Protection** – No objections, subject to a number of conditions including; implementation of noise mitigation measures, submission/approval of external lighting details (including lux levels), submission/approval of a dust mitigation scheme, the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, the provision of low emission gas boilers, works to stop if land contamination is identified and the submission/approval of a soil verification report should any soil or soil forming materials be brought onto site. Informatives regarding hours of construction and contaminated land are also proposed.

**Flood Risk Manager** – No objections, subject to a number of conditions including; Submission/approval of a overall detailed surface water drainage strategy and associated management and maintenance plan and implementation of the details contained within the Flood Risk Assessment. An informative is also proposed providing guidance for filtration testing

**United Utilities** - No objections, subject to the following conditions; submission/approval of a surface water drainage scheme, that foul and surface water be drained on separate systems and the submission/approval of a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development

**Public Rights of Way Officer** – Recommend that an advisory note be added to the decision notice in the event of approval that no change to the surfacing of a PROW is permitted without the agreement of the PROW unit. Also a note advising the applicant of their responsibilities in relation to a PROW

**Cadet Gas** – Recommend informatives in the event of approval relating to operational gas apparatus within the site

## **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:**

Neighbour notification letters were issued to the occupiers of the adjacent properties, an advert was placed in the local newspaper and a site notice was erected. At the time of writing the report, letters of representation had been received from 8 interested



households, a community group (Residents of Wilmslow) and a limited company (Broadway Verge Ltd), all in relation to the original submission proposals. The main concerns raised include;

### Highways

- Do not consider that the access solutions proposed go far enough to resolve existing congestion problems and pedestrian safety concerns, let alone accounting for increased numbers
- Traffic congestion and drop-off and pick-up times
- Confusion of 3-metre-wide cycle path across Holly Road North, seems to take cyclists from one side to the other for no apparent purpose
- How can it be assured that the pick-up/drop-off at Broadway will not continue as per existing or get worse?
- What happens if access to the north is not built out? Previously had permission, but not implemented

### Amenity

- Proposed use of 6m tall lighting towers impacting nearby residents
- Air pollution concerns from additional pick-up and drop-offs

### Trees

- Loss of trees on boundary with Broadway is regrettable

### Other matters

- Ownership dispute – Broadway verge

Of the above representations, support has been received from 1 household.

In response to the re-consultation which was undertaken as a result of the proposed re-routed footpath and associated re-siting of an associated bike store, at the time of drafting this report, no further comments had been received. This short re-consultation expired on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020. A further written update will be provided to committee in the event that further comments are received after that date.

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of development**

There are deemed to be 3 elements to consider in establishing the principle acceptability of the development proposed. These are; the principle of works to extend and alter school buildings and associated grounds; the principle of works within an area of protected open space and the principle of works which fall within the Green Belt. These matters are considered in turn below;

### Extensions and alterations to schools

Works are proposed within and adjacent to the school grounds in order to deal with an increased capacity of pupils from 10 form entries (plus sixth form) to 12 form entries (plus sixth form). The proposed development would allow an increased capacity for an intake of 360 pupils per year instead of current 300 per year. Over the 5 year groups, an additional 60 pupils per year would eventually equate to an additional 300 pupils (60 x5). The proposed works to allow for this increase and its knock-on effects include extensions and alterations to the existing school and changes the surrounding land to accommodate more parking provision and better access to the school.

There are three different local plans that include their own planning policies, which are all relevant to this application. These comprise of; the 'made' Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan (WNP), the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS) and saved policies within the Macclesfield Local Plan (MLP).

Policy CR1 (Community Facilities) of the WNP, supports proposals that seek to deliver additional community facilities or increase capacity, including education facilities.

Policy SD1 (Sustainable Development in Cheshire East) of the CELPS states that development should provide appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community.

Policy SC3 (Health and Well-being) of the CELPS states that the Council will create and safeguard opportunities for safe, healthy, fulfilling and active lifestyles by; improving education and skills training and encouraging life-long learning.

As such, the over-arching principle of improving the capacity and facilities at the school is supported.

### Protected Open Space and sports facilities

The Wilmslow High School site is bisected by Holly Road North. To the north of this are the school buildings and outdoor sports provision. To the south of the road is parking for the school with playing pitches beyond. All parts are designated as 'Existing Open Space' by Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (MBLP).

Within the Cheshire East Council Development Plan are numerous policies that refer to the protection open space and sports facilities including policies; CR4 (Public Open Space) of the WNP, SE6 (Green Infrastructure), SC1 (Leisure and Recreation) and SC2 (Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities) of the CELPS and Policy RT1 (Open Space) of the MBLP.

#### *Protection of open space*

Policy RT1 (Open Space) of the MBLP states that existing open space will be protected from development. The policy goes on to state that *'redevelopment of a building footprint which does not harm the integrity of the open space will normally be permitted. Open space uses will be enhanced as appropriate. Additional or replacement educational buildings may be permitted provided that the integrity of the open spaces is not harmed.'*

Policy SE6 (Green Infrastructure) of the CELPS states that all development should; protect and enhance existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities; encourage multiple use and improvements to their quality and provide adequate open space.

Paragraph 97 of the NPPF (2019), which is a more up to date policy document than the CELPS and the MBLP, states that *'existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built upon unless:*

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current former use.'*

Policy CR4 of the WNP, also relates to Public Open Space, but this policy is focused more on the protection of playing fields as opposed to the protection of open space in its wider context.

Whilst there are improvements being made to the existing sports facilities within the site, which are discussed further below, those elements which are not related to open space or sports and recreational facilities, such as the new car park and some extensions to the school building, do not strictly protect the open space. Therefore, given that the proposed development will be constructed on an area of Existing Open Space as identified in the MBLP, and it has not been demonstrated that the open space is surplus to requirements; it is not all being replaced by equivalent or better provision, and the entire development is not for alternative sports and recreational provision, the proposal does not fully comply with the requirements of the development plan. Accordingly, whilst there is no direct conflict with policy CR4 of the PNP, the proposal does conflict with the requirements of policy RT1 of the MBLP, SE 6 of the CELPS and paragraph 97 of the Framework.

#### *Protection of sports facilities*

Policy CR4 (Public Open Space) of the WNP states that proposals which result in the loss of public, private or school playing fields will not be supported unless the applicant can demonstrate;

- that there is surplus of similar facilities in the area;
- the loss would not adversely affect the existing or potential recreational needs of the local population or educational requirements;
- a replacement facility is provided.

Policy SC1 (Leisure and Recreation) of the CELPS seeks to protect and enhance existing leisure and recreation facilities and support and promote the provision of better leisure, community and recreation facilities.

Policy SC2 (Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities) of the CELPS seeks to; protect existing indoor and sports facilities; support new indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

The proposed development in the round seeks to enhance the provision of leisure and recreation facilities at the site through the provision of a new community sports entrance and reception, new changing facilities, a fitness suite, a new movement studio, a new cover to the existing MUGA pitches to allow increased usage by the school and improve the community offering.

As such, it is deemed that the proposals adhere with policies SC1 and SC2 of the CELPS.

Policy CR4 of the WNP states that proposals to enable community use agreements with schools will be supported where it can be fully demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse implications for the local community adjacent to the site. Policy SE6 of the CELPS also supports community use.

In response, the Council's ANSA Greenspace Officer has advised that in the event of approval, a condition should be imposed requiring the submission/approval of a Community Use Agreement (CUA). The ANSA Greenspace Officer advises that a CUA would give some comfort that the retained and improved outdoor and indoor sports facilities had a good and consistent level of community access and ensure current users were not displaced.

For the above reasons, the proposals are deemed to adhere with the requirements of Policy CR4 of the WNP and Policy SC1 and SC2 of the CELPS.

#### Playing Pitch Impact

As the proposed development possibly prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last 5 years, as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No.595), consultation with Sport England (SE) is a Statutory requirement.

As part of the original proposals, Sport England raised no objections to the new sports hall link and the MUGA cover as they would meet an identified need and it is likely to increase participation in sport and physical activity. However, objections were raised in relation to the footpath extending through the playing pitch to the Broadway Meadow's Car Park. The footpath (as originally proposed extending through the middle of the playing pitches (albeit between them)) would limit the opportunities to mark out different winter pitches and summer sports of different types and sizes to meet changes in the PE curriculum and any community use over time. In addition, it represented a safety hazard for the users of the pitches given its proximity to them.

As such, the applicant has sought to re-route this along the western edge of the playing pitches instead. This amendment has overcome Sport England's objections and it can now be concluded that the development would have no impact upon Playing Pitches.

### Green Belt

The land south of Holly Road North, currently occupied by the main car park for the school and playing pitches, is designated as Green Belt land.

In this location, works are proposed to create a small additional access point from Holly Road North to the existing car park, create pavements to the south and west of the round-about and re-configure the existing car park layout.

Policy PG3 of the CELPS states that within the Green Belt, permission will not be granted for inappropriate development, except in very special circumstances, in accordance with national policy. However, exceptions to inappropriate development include '*engineering operations*' so long as the works preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

In response, given the minor scale of the works proposed and their position adjacent or in-between existing hardstanding, it is deemed that such works would indeed preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

The proposed elements of the works within the Green Belt are therefore deemed to represent appropriate development.

### **Design**

Policy H2 of the WNP seeks to ensure new development in Wilmslow is of high quality design. Policy SE1 of the CELPS sets out the design criteria for new development Cheshire East wide, which is underpinned by achieving high quality design in development. Policy SD2 of the CELPS further details the design matters that should be considered including; height, scale, form and grouping of development, choice of materials, external design features, massing of development and impact upon the streetscene.

It is advised within the Design and Access Statement that the overall design seeks to provide a new, clear main entrance for the school and new sports facilities whilst providing new accommodation internally. It is advised that due to the wide range of building types and forms on site already, the overall aesthetics for the new build areas are to relate to and rationalise the character of the buildings adjacent whilst forming a contemporary interpretation.

It is deemed that the overall layout, scale and massing of the built form proposed would be acceptable and commensurate with the existing school buildings. Although the link extension between the existing sports hall and the two-storey entrance area would be taller than their existing adjoining built form (includes taller sections), this

height is not considered to have a significant detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the site, given that there are taller existing buildings on the campus, because they will comprise of flat roofs, also found on site already, reducing their bulk and because they would be mostly translucent by design, further alleviating their mass.

In consideration of appearance, it has been advised within the Design and Access Statement that the existing building materials and colour palette and building forms vary across the site. It is advised that the appearance of each of the proposed works (extensions or alterations), would work with the existing buildings directly adjacent, but in a contemporary way.

The proposed new built main entrance would be constructed from red multi-brick walls with dark colour brick with feature pattern detail to recessed panels, glazing and grey window frames. A blue glazed brick is proposed to the internal façade of the projecting wall and canopy and is intended to highlight the entry point. This blue colour is used throughout the existing buildings and façade along Holly Road North.

The proposed sports hall is surrounded by buff brick buildings with grey cladding. The proposed link would comprise of buff brick walls to match. Again, dark brick is proposed to areas that are set-back and the windows will be grey aluminium. Once again, the glazed blue brick will be used to the recessed entrance areas and wall cheeks, to carry the theme throughout. The upper floor, flat-roofed dance studio will be finished in translucent panels.

It is advised that the new windows and doors to the existing buildings would be grey in colour to match the new development and any minor brickwork infilling required would be constructed from brickwork to match.

It is considered that the proposed materials palette would be acceptable.

For the above reasons, the design of the development proposed is deemed to respect the character and appearance of the site, whilst introducing contemporary finishes which enhance the overall appearance. The development is therefore deemed to adhere with the relevant design policies of the development plan.

## **Amenity**

Policy DC3 of the MBLP states that development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential properties or sensitive uses due to (amongst other considerations); loss of privacy, sunlight and daylight, an overbearing impact and environmental considerations. Separation standards are referred to in Policy DC38. Policy SE1 of the CELPS states that development should ensure an appropriate level of privacy for new and existing residential properties.

The closest of the new buildings to surrounding neighbouring dwellings would be the extension proposed in association with the new entrance area. The closest neighbouring dwellings to this part of the proposals would be No.36 Broadway which would be approximately 50 metres away from this built form. As a result of this large distance, it is not deemed that the occupiers of this property would be detrimentally

impacted by the proposed development with regards to loss of privacy, light or an overbearing impact.

The additional drop-off zone and staff parking area along the western boundary of the site would be opposite and parallel the occupiers of No's; 24, 26, 28, 30, 32 and 34 Broadway. However, at its closest point to these properties, it would be over 35 metres away. Given this distance and the nature of a car park development, again, no concerns with regards to privacy, light or an overbearing impact would be created.

In consideration of environmental matters (noise, air and light pollution), the Council's Environmental Protection Officer has advised that they have no objections to the development, subject to a number of conditions including; implementation of noise mitigation measures, submission/approval of a dust mitigation scheme, the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, the provision of low emission gas boilers, works to stop if land contamination is identified and the submission / approval of a soil verification report should any soil or soil forming materials be brought onto site.

A number of residents have raised concerns about the impact of light pollution as a result of the proposed external lighting sought as part of the development. A lighting plan was submitted with the application, but this has subsequently been requested to be removed from consideration at this time, so its impact upon trees, ecology and amenity can be carefully be considered at discharge of condition stage.

As such, subject to the above conditions, including a prior submission/approval of external lighting details condition, the proposal is deemed to adhere with the relevant requirements of policy DC3 of the MBLP and Policy SE1 of the CELPS.

## **Highways**

The application seeks various works to access and parking arrangements.

### Current Access Arrangements

There are currently two vehicular access points to the school, the western access is from Holly Road North or Broadway and the other, from a roundabout on the A34. There is no through route for vehicles along Holly Road North from the A34 to Broadway or vice versa, although there is provision for pedestrian access along this route.

### Proposed Access Improvements

The western access will have a single access via a mini roundabout and a new larger drop off facility is to be provided adjacent to the western side of the school and this will be accessed from Holly Road North. A new staff car park for 30 cars is provided immediately north of the drop off area and access is controlled by a barrier.

The eastern roundabout has an improved drop off zone to allow more cars to drop off whilst not blocking the roundabout. More specifically, it is proposed that the fencing around the drop-off roundabout is relocated further away from the carriageway and a

footway provided to increase the length of the drop-off zone and improve the flow of vehicles entering the school. These works will increase drop-off capacity at this entrance from 2 to 9 cars.

To the north of the site a new 3m footway/cycleway is proposed that runs along the boundary of Broadway meadows car park and connects to Broadway. This link would allow access to the leisure centre and railway station and also the town centre.

### Parking

The redevelopment proposals will create a new car park for staff at the northern end providing 30 spaces, the visitor car park will be integrated into the main staff car park providing 16 spaces and this would result in a total of 253 car parking spaces for the school. The submitted Transport Statement assessed that the total school parking demand after the morning drop-off and before afternoon pick-up is around 200 vehicles.

A new cycle parking area providing 140 secure parking spaces is provided at the front of the school and also there is a separate cycle parking for staff consisting of 10 spaces.

### Development Impact

Wilmslow High School is a large school that already has a large number of pupils (2,045) and 260 staff, as with many other schools there are impacts during the school opening and closing times. The main existing highway concerns are the high numbers of parents that drop off children by car either on Broadway/Holly Road North or from the east affecting the A538 Pendleton Way.

The Council's Head of Strategic Infrastructure (Highways Officer), advises that whilst the proposed drop-off facilities are considered to be substantial, it is important that these facilities are actually used. As such, the Council's Highways Officer has advised that the applicant should fund a TRO for waiting restrictions to be introduced around the school especially on Broadway. These would be subject of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and secured by S106, a sum of 8k would be required to promote the Order.

It is important that the proposals improve access to the site and also do not result in a materially worse highway impact affecting the operation of the local highway network.

The applicant has undertaken a number of capacity assessments on the following local junctions;

- Holly Road north/Broadway
- A34/Prestbury Road Roundabout
- A34/A538 Birrell Way Roundabout
- A34/B5359 Alderley Road Roundabout



The Council's Head of Strategic Infrastructure advises that the new mini roundabout at the junction of Holly Rd North and Broadway will operate well within capacity and with very little or no queueing occurring.

The results of the assessment of the A34/Prestbury Rd roundabout indicate there are capacity problems on the Holly Road North arm of the junction and this is to be expected as there are existing queues with the school traffic. The Council's Head of Strategic Infrastructure has advised that the proposed improvements to drop off on the school's western roundabout should improve the congestion of this arm of the roundabout.

The Council's Highways Officer advises that both the A34/A538 and A34/B5359 Alderley Road roundabout does experience some queueing, although in terms of this application, as the additional traffic added to these junctions is only minor, there would be little increase in the length of queues and also the congestion and will not result in a material deterioration in capacity.

#### Response to neighbouring highway concerns

The vast majority of the objections received related to highways matters. As such, in order to attempt to address those concerns/points/questions that have arisen most numerous, the Council's Head of Strategic Infrastructure has sought to respond to these in turn below;

*That the proposed improvements do not go far enough to resolve existing congestion/access issues, let alone accounting for more pupils*

Highways response: There are substantial changes to parking and drop off especially at the Broadway access that will allow parents to enter the site rather than stopping on Broadway to drop children, the improvements at the Holly Rd western roundabout are not as extensive but will provide larger area to aid drop off and this will also reduce congestion.

*What is the point/thinking behind the provision of the footpath link/cycle path proposed across Holly Road North linking the A34 to Broadway?*

Highways response: Providing sustainable linkages to improve travel by non-car modes is an important part of the Travel Plan and the Holly Road North path allows a link between the A34 and Broadway and thereby provides access to the town centre and railway station by pedestrians and cyclists.

*There is no way to control the fact that the pick-up/drop-off issues will not remain as existing or get worse as a result of development (e.g. cannot enforce parents to utilise new arrangements)*

Highways response: It is not possible to force the use of the new drop off facilities, although if they are convenient and provide better access then they are likely to be used. Furthermore, the implementation of parking restrictions on Broadway have been

discussed with the applicant and it has been agreed that these also be progressed. To fund this, the applicant has agreed to pay a sum of £8,000.

Given that the Council cannot enter into a legal agreement with itself, it has been agreed that in the event that the Council resolves to grant planning permission it is proposed that permission be granted subject to this payment being made and that the payment be made prior to the issuing of a decision notice.

#### Highways summary and conclusions

The main point to consider is the scale of extension in regard to the increase in pupil numbers and staff. There are currently some 2045 existing pupils at the school and it is proposed to increase pupil numbers by 60 per year, over 5-year groups which would eventually equate to 300 additional pupils (60x5) which is not a significant increase overall and staff numbers are only increasing by 15.

As with all schools, there are peak time congestion issues with drop off and collection. The Council's Head of Strategic Infrastructure advises that the improvements that are being proposed to improve drop off and collection are considered to be beneficial and also the Travel Plan also should improve sustainable travel to the site.

Although there is congestion at some of the local junctions, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure advises that the actual traffic impact arising from the development is only small and could not be considered to constitute a severe impact that would warrant an objection.

Overall therefore, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure advises that the off-site and on-site infrastructure improvements are sufficient to mitigate the effects of this application and no objections are raised, subject to a financial contribution of £8,000 to pay for possible parking restrictions on Broadway.

For the above reasons, the application is deemed to be acceptable from a highway perspective, adhering with highway policies; CO1 of the CELPS, DC6 – Design - (Circulation and Access) of the MBLP and TA2 and TA4 of the WNP.

#### **Landscape**

The Council's Landscape Officer has reviewed the scheme and advised that he does not consider that the proposals would result in any significant landscape or visual impacts and the proposed landscape proposals as shown on the submitted plans are acceptable. As such, subject to the implementation of these drawings, no Landscape objections are raised and the application is deemed to adhere with the Landscape policies of the development plan.

#### **Trees**

The application is supported by an arboricultural method statement. None of the potentially impacted trees are subject to TPOs or fall within Conservation Areas.

As part of the development it has been identified that 23 individual trees, 3 groups of trees and part of an additional group of trees need to be felled.

The Council's Tree Officer has reviewed the submission and advised that the majority of the trees proposed for removal are considered to be of lesser importance, and necessary to implement the proposal.

The removal of trees and vegetation to accommodate the footway/cycleway around Broadway Meadows car park will result in a loss of screening between the existing car park and properties on Covington Close, however, the Council's Tree Officer advises that none of the trees individually or collectively are of sufficient arboricultural importance or amenity value to warrant formal protection, and subsequently, there are no objections to this element of the proposal.

Revised proposals to re-route the footpath extending to the Broadway Meadows car park, away from the middle of the playing pitches to along to eastern edge of the pitches, has brought the footpath closer to a number of trees. However, the alignment of this footpath has been further tweaked to overcome conflict with trees of amenity value and subject to a condition requiring the prior submission/approval of a construction method statement for this part the path to ensure the trees are protected; no tree objections are raised in relation to this change.

Given that lighting bollards along this footpath could impact upon the nearby trees if not carefully considered, details of external lighting are to be sought by condition.

One of the trees (ref: T74) has been considered in terms of the veteran features referenced within the schedule. The root protection area of the tree remains unaffected with the nearest disturbance indicated no closer than 15 metres from the stem base and accords with Natural England and Forestry Commission standing advice for Veteran trees. Should the tree be verified as a veteran tree, the Council's Tree Officer advises that it is considered that the proposed relationship with new parking should not result in any conflict.

To conclude, no tree objections are raised, subject to a number of conditions including; tree retention, tree protection, method statement for construction of footpath, service/drainage layout details, and no-dig construction. Subject to these conditions, the proposals are deemed to adhere with policies; SE5 of the CELPS, DC9 of the MBLP and LPS2 of the WNP.

## **Flood Risk and Drainage**

The application site falls within a Flood Zone 1, an area deemed to be of low flood risk. The Council's Flood Risk Officer has been consulted on the proposals and has raised no objections, subject to a number of conditions including; Submission/approval of a overall detailed surface water drainage strategy and associated management and maintenance plan and implementation of the details contained within the Flood Risk Assessment.

In consideration of drainage, United Utilities have raised no objections subject to a number of conditions including; the submission/approval of a surface water drainage

scheme, that foul and surface water be drained on separate systems and the submission/approval of a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development.

As such, subject to the above conditions, amalgamated where necessary to avoid duplication, the proposals are deemed to adhere with the relevant flood risk and drainage conditions of the development plan, namely; SE13 of the CELPS and the drainage elements of LPS2 of the WNP.

## **Ecology**

The application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment. In addition, further points of clarification have been provided by the applicant's ecologist in response to questions raised by the Council's Nature Conservation Officer. The below breaks down the relevant ecology considerations in turn;

### Bats

A daytime inspection was carried out and while no evidence of bats was recorded during the survey, due to suitability of the western end of the kitchen block for roosting bats, the ecologist who undertook the survey recommended that a bat activity survey is undertaken. A subsequent survey was undertaken and no evidence of a legally protected roost was identified. As such, the Council's Nature Conservation Officer advises that no further bat surveys are required in support of this application.

### Great Crested Newts

The submitted Impact Assessment details the negative results of eDNA surveys carried out on the onsite ponds. Environmental DNA (eDNA) is nuclear or mitochondrial DNA that is released from an organism into the environment. Sources of eDNA include secreted faeces, mucous, gametes, shed skin, hair and carcasses. Recent research has shown that the DNA of a range of aquatic organisms can be detected in water samples at very low concentrations using qPCR (quantitative Polymerase Chain Reaction) methods.

As such, the Council's Nature Conservation Officer advises that no further surveys for GCN are required to support this application.

### Breeding Birds

The Council's Nature Conservation Officer advises that in the event of approval, a condition to protect nesting/breeding birds is recommended.

### Wildlife sensitive lighting

In accordance with the BCT Guidance Note 08/18 (*Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK*), in the event of approval, the Council's Nature Conservation Officer recommends that a condition be imposed requiring the prior submission/approval of an external lighting scheme. The Officer advises that the scheme should consider both illuminance (lux) and luminance (candelas/m<sup>2</sup>). It should include dark areas and avoid light spill

upon bat roost features, bat commuting and foraging habitat (boundary hedgerows, trees, watercourses etc.) aiming for a maximum of 1lux light spill on those features.

### Ecological enhancement

CELPS Policy SE 3(5) requires all developments to aim to positively contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. This planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate features to increase the biodiversity value of the final development in accordance with this policy. The Council's Nature Conservation Officer therefore recommends that if planning permission is granted a condition should be included to provide details of features for nesting birds (including swifts), roosting bats, deadwood piles, a wildlife pond and native species planting.

Subject to the imposition of the above suggested conditions, the application is deemed to adhere with the relevant ecological policies of the development plan, namely; SE5 of the CELPS, NE5 of the WNP and NE11 of the MBLP.

### **Public Rights of Way (PROW)**

The development has the potential to affect Public Footpath Wilmslow No. 63. The Council's PROW Officer has reviewed the proposals and advised that they have no objection, subject to the inclusion of an advisory in the event of approval.

### **Network Rail**

To the west of the application site is the railway. Network Rail has reviewed the application and raises no objections, subject to a number of requirements as the proposal includes works within 10 metres of the railway boundary. These take the form of a series of advisories which will be added as an informative to the decision notice in the event of approval.

### **Other matters**

The possible ownership dispute regarding the strip of land separating the school from the Broadway, referred to as the 'Broadway Verge' is not a material planning consideration. It is a matter to be resolved outside of the planning process as a civil matter.

### **Planning balance / Conclusions**

The application site is located on an area of Existing Open Space in the MBLP, and it has not been demonstrated that the open space is surplus to requirements, it is not replaced by equivalent or better provision, and the development is not for alternative sports and recreational provision, as required by paragraph 97 of the NPPF. As such, there is some conflict with this policy document as well as policy RT1 of the MBLP and SE 6 of the CELPS, which weighs against the proposal.

However, the proposals do include improvements to the existing sports and recreation facilities within the site which will be a benefit, not only to the school, but also to the

wider community through a Community Use Agreement, to enable the local community to also benefit from the improved facilities. These benefits include the provision of a new community sports entrance and reception, new changing facilities, a fitness suite, a new movement studio, a new cover to the existing MUGA pitches to allow increased usage by the school and the community. Sport England also raises no objections with regards to impact on playing pitches.

In addition, the extent of the development that does not represent improvements to the existing sport and recreation offer is relatively limited, and relates to the need for additional educational space, and ancillary facilities, to enable increased pupil numbers, and consequently staff numbers. As with many schools within the Borough, the entire site is allocated as Existing Open space and such policy conflict is commonplace when considering extensions to schools. In this case, the specific areas of open space lost to development are very limited, and do not adversely affect the existing or potential recreational needs of the local population or the integrity of the open space given their position within the site and their minor scale. This view is shared by the Open Space Officer from ANSA. It is therefore considered that there are sufficient benefits in this case to outweigh the policy conflict, arising from the historic allocation of the site as protected open space.

The proposals would be of an acceptable design, that would not create any issues in relation to; Green Belt, playing pitch provision, amenity, landscape, trees, flood risk and drainage, ecology or public rights of way, subject to conditions where deemed necessary.

The comments received in representation are acknowledged, however, matters in relation to Highways are also deemed acceptable, but subject to the receipt of a £8,000 contribution towards parking (waiting) restrictions being introduced on Broadway. Given that the Council cannot enter into a legal agreement with itself, it is recommended that permission be delegated back to the Head of Planning, in conjunction with the Chair of Northern Planning Committee (or in their absence the Vice Chair), to approve, subject to this payment being made prior to the issuing of a decision notice, and conditions.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That authority be DELEGATED to the Acting Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman of Northern Planning Committee (or in their absence the Vice Chair), to APPROVE the application for the reasons set out in the report, subject to;**

- The receipt of a contribution of £8,000, prior to the issuing of the decision notice, to provide parking (waiting) restrictions on Broadway**

**And following conditions;**

- 1. Time limit (3 years)**
- 2. In accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Submission/approval of a Community Use Agreement**

- 4. Materials as per application**
- 5. Implementation of noise mitigation measures**
- 6. Submission/approval of a dust mitigation scheme**
- 7. Provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure**
- 8. Provision of low emission gas boilers**
- 9. Works to stop if land contamination is identified**
- 10. Submission/approval of a soil verification report should any soil or soil forming materials be brought onto site**
- 11. Submission/approval of external lighting details**
- 12. Submission/approval of a post compliance lighting assessment**
- 13. Landscaping – Implementation**
- 14. Retention of trees/shrubs and hedgerows as shown**
- 15. Tree protection measures – Implementation**
- 16. Submission/approval of an Engineer designed no dig hard surface construction specification for any area of hard surfacing within the root protection area of retained trees**
- 17. Submission/approval of a overall detailed; service & surface water drainage strategy and associated management and maintenance plan**
- 18. Implementation of the details contained within the Flood Risk Assessment**
- 19. Foul and surface water be drained on separate systems**
- 20. Nesting birds**
- 21. Submission/approval of an ecological enhancement plan including; features for nesting birds (including swifts), roosting bats, deadwood piles, a wildlife pond and native species planting**

*In order to give proper effect to the Northern Committee`s intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Acting Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) to correct any technical slip or omission in the resolution, before issue of the decision notice.*



