

Application No: 22/0761C

Location: Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School, SELKIRK DRIVE, HOLMES CHAPEL, CHESHIRE, CW4 7DX

Proposal: Erection of new stand-alone teaching block with classrooms, ancillary spaces and associated external works including new ramped access.

Applicant: Tony Halsall

Expiry Date: 20-Apr-2022

SUMMARY:

This is an existing educational facility within the settlement zone line of Holmes Chapel, where there is a presumption in favour of development.

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure (highways), considers the development would not lead to material highways impacts on the surrounding local road network.

The development would have a neutral impact upon design, living conditions, trees, landscape, highways, ecology, air quality and contaminated land.

RECOMMENDATION: Delegate to the Head of Planning and the Chair/Vice Chair of Southern Planning Committee when Sport England issues are addressed.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is an established comprehensive school situated within a predominantly residential area in Holmes Chapel.

The site is designated as being within the settlement zone line of Holmes Chapel,

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a new, stand-alone teaching block with classrooms, ancillary spaces and associated external works including new ramped access.

CALL IN

The application has been called in by Cllr Les Gilbert on the following grounds:

To consider the highways implications in the absence of any proposals to mitigate the impact of additional journeys to school by car.

There is frequent conflict between local residents and parents who drop off or pick up their children. Despite the best efforts of the School to encourage considerate parking, residents' drives are regularly blocked making it impossible to get into or out of them. When challenged, parents are often abusive. The problem is particularly bad in Grasmere Drive and the cul de sacs off it where parents park to gain access to the pedestrian entrance to the School site. The local Police often attend to try and moderate driver behaviour but a Police presence should really not be necessary.

Traffic conditions in this location are chaotic at the start and end of the school day and members of staff are deployed to assist with traffic management. The congestion could severely impede access to Portree Drive, often referred to as the longest cul de sac in England, and Selkirk Drive and the cul de sacs off them. This could have potentially serious implications for emergency vehicles as well as commuters and other residents.

RELEVANT HISTORY

The site has an extensive planning history relating to the use of the site as a school.

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

SD2 – Sustainable Development Principles
SE1 – Design
SE6 – Green Infrastructure
SC2 – Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities
CO1 – Sustainable Travel and Transport

It should be noted that the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was formally adopted on 27th July 2017. There are however policies within the legacy local plans that still apply and have not yet been replaced. These policies are set out below.

Local Plan Policy

Congleton Borough Local Plan (CBLP)

GR6 – Amenity and Health
GR7 - Pollution
GR9 - Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision
RC2 - Protected Areas of Open Space

Holmes Chapel Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)

CE5 - Character and Design
CW2 – Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School and 6th Form College

Other Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework
Cheshire East Design Guide

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways:

No objection.

Environmental Health:

Recommend informatives relating to noise and land contamination.

Sport England:

Objects to the application because insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposal can accord with any of the exceptions to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy or with Paragraph 99 of the NPPF.

United Utilities:

Request drainage conditions.

Flood Risk:

No objection.

Holmes Chapel Parish Council:

The Parish Council are supportive of the provision of the additional classrooms, however we have the following strong concerns:

1. There is a need to provide additional on-site parking, in the school grounds, as part of this proposed expansion. The additional facilities will undoubtedly increase the number of staff as well as pupils. The existing car park is already at capacity, with Selkirk Drive regularly being used for additional on street parking.
2. The access and parking arrangements for school coaches needs to be improved. There is no room for additional coaches to wait for children at the end of the school day. The Parish Council would like to see improved arrangements to the entranceway to the school as part of the proposed expansion works.
3. Drop off and collection of children from private vehicles also needs to be improved. There are existing difficulties of access to private dwellings in the vicinity of the school at either end of the school day due to the large number of vehicles gathering in the area of the school. The proposed expansion will exacerbate this problem.
4. The Parish Council would like to see a satisfactory transport assessment and travel plan, which are presently in draft form, which addresses these problems (1 – 3 above) to the benefit of the whole community.
5. The Parish Council would request conditions on any approval relating to the environmental impact of the proposed expansion specifically with regard to:
 - i. Responsible energy usage
 - ii. Drainage design - should not put more pressure on the existing sewerage systems

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Seven representations have been received at the time of report writing, expressing the following views:

- Would like use of lighting limited in the same way as the 3G pitch
- Drainage needs addressing
- School is at full capacity and this will be beneficial for current and future students
- Needed due to all the new housing developments
- Good use of space
- Should be spending more money on staff

All the representations can be viewed in full on the Council website.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The principle of an extension to this school is considered to be acceptable. Policy PG2 of the CELPS states that within local service centres 'small scale development to meet needs and priorities will be supported where they contribute to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities'.

Policy SD1 of the CELPS states that development shall provide appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community including education.

Policy CW2 of the HCNP states that sustainable developments which provide for any required extension of the school will be supported provided adequate provision is made for increased traffic flow and parking.

Loss of Sports Play Space

Policy SE6(4), States the following:

Strengthening the contribution that sport and playing fields, open space and recreation facilities make to Cheshire East's green infrastructure network by requiring all development to:

- i. Protect and enhance existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities;
- ii. Encourage multiple use and improvements to their quality;
- iii. Provide adequate open space;
- iv. Contribute to the provision of outdoor sports facilities in line with Policy SC 2;
- v. Create or add to the networks of multi-functional Green Infrastructure;
- vi. Secure new provision to help address identified shortages in existing open space provision, both in quantity, quality and accessibility;
- vii. Locate open space facilities in appropriate locations, preferably within developments;
and
- viii. Promote linkages between new development and surrounding recreational networks, communities and facilities.

An objection was received from Sport England, as they do not consider that there is sufficient justification for the loss of sports play space.

The school has submitted a response, which seeks to clarify the situation and in essence advises that the area where the extension will be located is not capable of being used for playing field due to flooding issues. A revised site plan has also been provided which shows a new 5x5 sports pitch would be created immediately to the east to compensate for any loss of playing field. Sport England are now largely satisfied with the proposal. This is subject to the submission of an agronomy report to understand how the area would need to be improved and established as consistently usable playing field land able to accommodate a mini 5v5 pitch.

The school are now aware of this requirement, and it is recommended that, should Members be minded to approve the application, that the decision should be delegated to the Head of Planning and Chair/Vice Chair when this is received.

Design

The proposal would create a two-storey building with a central hub. It will be predominantly constructed of brick work, with differing coursing style and protruding brickwork to provide relief.

There would be a canopy to the north elevation, with twisting timber slats to the underside of the soffit. Part of the roof would incorporate the use of sedum.

The design is considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the school complex and the surrounding area.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies SD2 and SE1 of the CELPS.

Highways

A new teaching block is proposed to be constructed to the south of the site that would cater for an additional 150 pupils. The building has two storeys and will have 1031 Sqm floorspace.

There are no changes proposed to the current car parking provision within the site which has 155 spaces and also the access to the building/school will remain unchanged from Selkirk Drive.

The provision of the additional building is not considered to lead to material highways impacts on the surrounding local road network and no objections are raised by the Head of Strategic Infrastructure.

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School has an existing large car park consisting of some 151 spaces which is used for staff and visitors, it is indicated that there would be no increase in staff employed for the increase in pupil numbers. Therefore, it is not considered that further staff car parking is required as part of this application.

The school has an existing bus/coach parking area within the site immediately north of the main access, this facility operates reasonably well and there is no evidence that there is on-street coach parking occurring on Selkirk Avenue. The provision of an on-site drop off facility will require a large land take from the school grounds, any school drop facility needs to be large enough to allow significant short term parking to occur whilst ensuring that the carriageway width is wide enough not to be blocked. There are problems with some drop off facilities as they can become blocked with cars and therefore parents choose not to use them anyway.

It is not expected that 150 pupils will result in the same number of car trips, there are a significant number of pupils that will arrive by bus/coach, some local pupils will walk and some will cycle. Additionally, no car trips will have single occupancy and a number of pupils may arrive at school using one vehicle.

Taking these factors into account it is not considered that the additional 150 pupils will have an adverse impact on the local highway network, it is recognised that there will be some increase in on-street parking but it will not lead to severe difficulties.

A Travel Plan has been submitted, explaining all the methods of transport to and from the school. It states that a travel plan co-ordinator will be appointed to develop and implement the travel plan prior to occupation of the new building.

The Parish Council requested the submission of a Transport Assessment. However the Head of Strategic Infrastructure does not consider that this is necessary.

As such the proposal is considered to be in compliance with Policy GR9 of the CBLP and Policy CO 1 of the CELPS.

Amenity

Policy GR6 of the CBLPFR requires that development proposals should not have an unduly detrimental effect on neighbouring amenity through loss of privacy, loss of sunlight/daylight, visual intrusion, noise and disturbance and traffic generation.

The properties in closest proximity to the site are those on Dunoon Close. There is significant vegetative screening on the boundary with the school, therefore there would be no adverse impact on outlooks from these properties.

The new building would be in excess of 85m away from the nearest properties and as such there would be no issues relating to light loss or privacy.

Mention has been made about external lighting and a condition should be imposed requiring submission of details of any external lighting.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policy GR6 of the CBLP.

Other Matters

The representations received relating to this application are largely supportive of the proposal, however questions have been raised over drainage and external lighting. Both of these matters can be controlled by condition.

The Parish Council has expressed concerns about parking and travel. This is addressed in the Highways section of this report.

CONCLUSIONS

This is an existing educational facility within the settlement zone line of Holmes Chapel, where there is a presumption in favour of development.

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure (highways), considers the development would not lead to material highways impacts on the surrounding local road network.

The development would have a neutral impact upon design, living conditions, trees, landscape, highways, ecology, air quality and contaminated land.

The proposal is therefore recommended for approval subject to there not being a further objection from Sport England.

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to the Head of Planning and the Chair/Vice Chair of Southern Planning Committee when Sport England issues are addressed. If the issues are addressed, the following conditions should be imposed.

- 1. Time limit**
- 2. Approved plans**
- 3. Materials as detailed in the application**
- 4. Details of any external lighting to be provided prior to installation**
- 5. Foul and surface water drainage**

Informatives:

The Local Planning Authority (LPA), in reaching this decision, has followed the guidance in paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Framework advises that the LPA should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

Community Infrastructure Levy

Under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, Environmental Health recommend that the hours of noise generative* demolition / groundworks / construction works taking place during the development (and associated deliveries to and from the site) are restricted to:

Monday – Friday	08:00 to 18:00 hrs
Saturday	09:00 to 14:00 hrs

Sundays and Public Holidays Nil

Noise generative* works outside of these hours may result in action by the Environmental Protection Team to serve a legal notice on the property or construction site under the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

***"Noise Generative" is defined as any works of a construction / demolition nature (including ancillary works such as deliveries) which are likely to generate noise beyond the boundary of the site.**

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 2021 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. Furthermore, any soil or soil forming materials to be brought to site for use in soft landscaping should be tested for contamination and suitability for use prior to importation to site. The responsibility to ensure the safe development of land affected by contamination rests primarily with the developer.

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) of Southern Planning Committee, to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

