



REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

8 December 2016

REPORT

Subject Heading:

P1528.16 - Crownfield Infants School, White Hart Lane, Romford - Proposed school expansion which will consist of the following: a new stand alone building to expand the Infants School consisting of 4 no. classrooms, toilets and a hall, widening of an existing footpath, repositioning of an existing fence, repositioning of pitch markings, the demolition of existing brick stores, breaking out a large concrete slab and the formation of a new playground (received 28/10/16).

Lead Officer:

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Ward

Mawneys

Policy context:

Local Development Framework
The London Plan
National Planning Policy Framework

Financial summary:

None

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Havering will be clean and its environment will be cared for
People will be safe, in their homes and in the community
Residents will be proud to live in Havering

[x]
[x]
[x]

SUMMARY

This matter is brought before committee as the application site is Council owned and the proposal is contrary to Green Belt policy. The fact that the site is Council owned does not have any material bearing on the consideration of this planning application.

The application seeks planning permission for a proposed school expansion which will consist of the following: a new stand alone building to expand the Infants School consisting of 4 no. classrooms, toilets and a hall, widening of an existing footpath, repositioning of an existing fence, re-positioning of pitch markings, the demolition of existing brick stores, breaking out a large concrete slab and the formation of a new playground. Staff consider the application to be acceptable and recommend approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Time Limit - The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Materials - The proposed development hereby approved shall be constructed in accordance with the materials detailed under Section 10 of the application form unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed development will harmonise with the character of the surrounding area and comply with Policy DC61 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans (as set out on page one of this decision notice).

Reason: The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from

the details submitted. Also, in order that the development accords with Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

4. Vehicle Cleansing - Before the development hereby permitted is first commenced, vehicle cleansing facilities to prevent mud being deposited onto the public highway during construction works shall be provided on site in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved facilities shall be retained thereafter and used at relevant entrances to the site throughout the duration of construction works. If mud or other debris originating from the site is deposited in the public highway, all on-site operations shall cease until it has been removed. The submission will provide;
 - a) A plan showing where vehicles will be parked within the site to be inspected for mud and debris and cleaned if required. The plan should show where construction traffic will access and exit the site from the public highway.
 - b) A description of how the parking area will be surfaced, drained and cleaned to prevent mud, debris and muddy water being tracked onto the public highway;
 - c) A description of how vehicles will be checked before leaving the site – this applies to the vehicle wheels, the underside of vehicles, mud flaps and wheel arches.
 - d) A description of how vehicles will be cleaned.
 - e) A description of how dirty/ muddy water be dealt with after being washing off the vehicles.
 - f) A description of any contingency plan to be used in the event of a breakdown of the wheel washing arrangements.

Reason: In order to prevent materials from the site being deposited on the adjoining public highway, in the interests of highway safety and the amenity of the surrounding area, and in order that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies DC61 and DC32.

5. Hours of construction - All building operations in connection with the construction of external walls, roof, and foundations; site excavation or other external site works; works involving the use of plant or machinery; the erection of scaffolding; the delivery of materials; the removal of materials and spoil from the site, and the playing of amplified music shall only take place between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, and between 8.00am and 1.00pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays/Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect residential amenity, and in order that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

6. Archaeology - No demolition or development shall take place until a stage 1 written scheme of investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no demolition or development shall take place other than in accordance

with the agreed WSI, and the programme and methodology of site evaluation and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works. If heritage assets of archaeological interest are identified by stage 1 then for those parts of the site which have archaeological interest a stage 2 WSI shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the stage 2 WSI, no demolition/development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed stage 2 WSI which shall include:

A. The statement of significance and research objectives, the programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works.

B. The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material. this part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the stage 2 WSI.

Reason: To preserve a site of archaeological interest, and in order that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC70.

7. Review of parking restrictions - Within 18 months of the development being brought into use a review of parking restrictions in the area around the school shall be carried out and submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The review shall be aimed at reducing the impact of parent parking in the area to ensure that pedestrian desire lines across junctions and at other desire line locations are not unduly impeded.

Reason: To ensure the interests of highway safety and amenity and to accord with Policy DC32. To ensure the interests of pedestrians and address desire lines and to accord with Policy DC34. To manage the impact of parent parking in the streets surrounding the site and to accord with Policy DC33.

8. School Travel Plan - Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, a School Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The School Travel Plan shall consider measures to reduce vehicular trips and proposals for monitoring and reporting progress to the Local Planning Authority and include a timetable for its implementation and review. The approved Travel Plan as revised shall remain in force permanently and implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To help bring about a reduction in private car journeys, to minimise the potential for increased on street parking in the area, to mitigate the impact of increased private car journeys at peak times and to accord with Policy DC32.

9. Parking provision - Before the building(s) hereby permitted is first occupied, the area set aside for car parking shall be laid out and surfaced to the

satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and retained permanently thereafter for the accommodation of vehicles visiting the site and shall not be used for any other purpose.

Reason: To ensure that car parking accommodation is made permanently available to the standards adopted by the Local Planning Authority in the interest of highway safety, and that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC33.

INFORMATIVES

1. Statement Required by Article 35 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015: No significant problems were identified during the consideration of the application, and therefore it has been determined in accordance with paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
2. Written schemes of investigation will need to be prepared and implemented by a suitably qualified professionally accredited archaeological practice in accordance with Historic England's Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Greater London. This condition is exempt from deemed discharge under schedule 6 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

REPORT DETAIL

1. **Site Description:**

- 1.1 Crownfield Infants School is located on the western side of White Hart Lane in Collier Row. The school site is located in the edge of suburban Collier Row, with allotment gardens and the Educational Nature Reserve to the north and the River Rom and farm land to the west. The nearest residential properties to the schools are those located on White Hart Lane. The site is located within Metropolitan Green Belt.

2. **Description of development:**

- 2.1 The application seeks permission for 4 no. classrooms, toilets and a hall, widening of an existing footpath, repositioning of an existing fence, repositioning of pitch markings, the demolition of existing brick stores, breaking out a large concrete slab and the formation of a new playground.
- 2.2 The building would have a maximum width of approximately 29 metres, a depth of 17.5 metres and a height of between 3.2 and 5.2 metres. The proposed materials include brickwork, coloured render, a flat felted roof, powder coated steel roof covering and powder coated aluminium windows and doors. The building would comprise of four classrooms, toilets, store rooms and a multi-use hall.

- 2.3 Crownfield Infant and Junior School currently operates as a 3 form entry school, providing educational requirements for approximately 630 children aged from 5 to 11 years old from the surrounding local areas. The proposal seeks to expand the Infant school to a 4 form of entry raising the schools' total intake from 630 to 840 pupils. This will be done on a phased increase starting with the implementation at Crownfield Infant School by September 2017 and by 2020 for Crownfield Junior School.
- 2.4 The existing access walkway would be increased to a width of 3 metres and the existing fence would be relocated. The football pitch would be repositioned and a playground would be located adjacent to the proposed classrooms.
- 2.3 It is noted that there is a separate planning application, P1532.16, at Crownfield Junior School for a new modular building to the junior school, consisting of 4 no. classrooms and toilets and a new netball court with a canopy over, which is to be determined. This application is reported separately within the agenda.

4. **Relevant History:**

- 4.1 P0148.09 - Removal of dilapidated demountable classroom at rear of infant school building and change of use of the existing caretaker's bungalow to accommodate a pre-school playgroup, side extension and associated external works – Approved.

4.2 Crownfield Junior School

P1532.16 - A new modular building to the junior school, consisting of 4 no. classrooms and toilets and a new netball court with a canopy over - to be determined.

5. **Consultations/Representations:**

- 5.1 The occupiers of 36 neighbouring properties were notified of this proposal. No letters of representation have been received.
- 5.2 Historic England - The planning application lies in an area of archaeological interest. Appraisal of this application using the Greater London Historic Environment Record and information submitted with the application indicates the need for field evaluation to determine appropriate mitigation. However, although the NPPF envisages evaluation being undertaken prior to determination, in this case consideration of the nature of the development, the archaeological interest and/or practical constraints are such that it is considered that a condition could provide an acceptable safeguard. A condition is therefore recommended to require a two-stage process of archaeological investigation comprising: first, evaluation to clarify the nature and extent of surviving remains, followed, if necessary, by a full investigation. The archaeological interest should therefore be conserved by a condition and an informative if minded to grant planning permission.

5.3 Environmental Health - No objections or comments regarding contaminated land, air quality or noise.

5.4 The Highway Authority has provided the following comments. The proposal has been submitted without a transport assessment. Moving from a 3 form of entry to a 4 form of entry is a significant increase in pupil numbers and while it will take some time for numbers to fully increase across this and the parallel application for the infant school, there is some concern about the impact on travel in the local area. The site has a PTAL of 1b (very poor) and so it is certain that a proportion of new trips will be generated by car which could impact on the local network. The Highway Authority suggests that Members should consider the impact on travel in the local area in the balance of the requirements for new school places. It is noted that 9 new parking spaces are to be shared between both schools which is acceptable. Recommend three conditions and informatives if minded to grant planning permission.

6. **Relevant policies:**

6.1 Policies CP8 (Community Facilities), CP14 (Green Belt), CP17 (Design), DC29 (Educational Premises), DC32 (The Road Network), DC33 (Car parking), DC34 (Walking), DC35 (Cycling), DC45 (Green Belt), DC55 (Noise) and DC61 (Urban Design) of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents are material planning considerations. In addition, Policies 3.18 (Educational facilities), 6.13 (Parking), 7.16 (Green Belt) and 7.4 (Local character) of the London Plan and Chapters 7 (Requiring good design), 8 (Promoting healthy communities) and 9 (Protecting Green Belt Land) of the National Planning Policy Framework are relevant.

7. **Staff Comments**

7.1 This proposal is put before the Committee owing to the land being Council owned and the application is contrary to Green Belt policy. The issues arising in respect of this application will be addressed under the headings principle of development, impact on the streetscene, amenity issues and parking and highways implications.

7.2 **Principle of Development**

7.2.1 The site is currently in educational use with schools and associated hard surfaced areas and green open space including playing fields. The proposal would not change the use of the land - it would remain in educational use. Retaining community facilities (which includes education) is supported by Core Policy CP8 of the LDF. Furthermore, policy in the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools (para 72). Policy 3.18 of the London Plan states that Development proposals which enhance education and skills provision will be supported; proposals for new schools should be given positive consideration; multiple use of educational facilities for community or recreational use should be encouraged and proposals that encourage co-location of services

between schools and colleges and other provision should be encouraged in order to maximise land use, reduce costs and develop the extended school or college's offer. Staff therefore consider that the proposed development of the site for educational purposes would be acceptable in land use terms.

7.2.2 The main consideration in terms of the principle of the development relates to the Green Belt allocation of the site. National policy contained in the NPPF, reflected in LDF Policy DC45, states that the construction of new buildings inside the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for specified purposes. The proposed educational buildings are not within one of the specified purposes within the NPPF. Therefore the proposed development is inappropriate development, harmful to the Green Belt and is considered to be a departure from the development plan.

7.2.3 The NPPF states that inappropriate development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted.

7.2.4 The following very special circumstances are considered to clearly outweigh the in principle harm to the Green Belt through inappropriateness:

- Demand for places across this area has been high with a projected deficit. Almost all the schools in this school planning area have already been expanded. However, due to the sustained and increasing demand, a further permanent expansion in this area is required. Both Crownfield Infants and Junior Schools are popular and good schools, thus they have been agreed as an appropriate location for additional numbers to be accommodated. The governing body of the Infant and Junior schools agrees with the proposal in-principle and supports a permanent solution with enhanced facilities suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. The permanent expansion of both schools from three to four forms of entry is necessary in order to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory duty of securing sufficient school places to meet the needs of children and families in Havering.
- The proposal would not change the use of the land - it would remain in educational use
- The new building has been carefully designed and has been positioned close to the existing buildings to minimise the impact on the Green Belt and preserve the open aspect of the site.

7.2.5 Staff consider that the policy position (with a favourable consideration for new educational facilities) and the very special circumstances apply such that the in principle harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed in this particular case.

7.3 Impact upon the Metropolitan Green Belt

7.3.1 It is considered that siting the classroom building close to the existing school buildings assists in maintaining openness as the building would be viewed in

the context of the existing development on site, although it is noted that the new building would extend beyond the existing envelope of buildings, rather than infilling it in any way. Staff consider that the playground, widening the footpath, repositioning the existing fence and re-siting the football pitch would not result in material harm to the openness of the green belt over and above existing conditions. In light of the Very Special Circumstances forwarded by the applicant and, in particular, the need in the Borough for primary and secondary school places, it is considered that the harm to the openness of the Green Belt is clearly outweighed in this case.

7.4 Impact on the streetscene

7.4.1 There is no objection to demolishing the brick stores or removing the concrete slab. It is considered that the classroom building would not adversely affect the streetscene, as its front façade would be set back approximately 83 metres from White Hart Lane, which would help to mitigate its impact. It is considered that the building has been designed in sympathy with the existing school buildings. The classrooms at the front of the building have a flat roof with a height of approximately 3.2 metres, which minimises its bulk. The pitched roof over the multi-use hall is located towards the rear of the building, which minimises its prominence.

7.4.2 Staff consider that the playground as well as re-positioning the football pitch and the fence would not adversely affect the streetscene. Both the football pitch and the playground would be located a minimum distance of approximately 50 metres from White Hart Lane.

7.5 Impact on amenity

7.5.1 It is considered that the proposed classroom building would not be harmful to residential amenity, as there would be a separation distance of approximately 55 metres between the northern flank of the building and the nearest residential properties at No.'s 1-5 Rutland House, which would help to mitigate its impact. The classrooms at the front of the building have a flat roof with a height of approximately 3.2 metres, which minimises its bulk. The pitched roof over the multi-use hall is located towards the rear of the building, which minimises its prominence. Staff consider that repositioning the football pitch and fence would not result in any impact on residential amenity over and above existing conditions. It is considered that the playground would not result in a significant loss of amenity to neighbouring properties in terms of noise and disturbance, as this parcel of land is currently used as an existing playing field. It is recognised that an additional two hundred and ten pupils across both school sites would increase noise and disturbance, although this would be balanced against pupils utilising the whole of the school site. Given the existing use of the site as a school it is not considered the increase in pupil numbers would result in a material change in the character or use of the site sufficient to justify refusal on grounds of noise and disturbance.

7.6 Highway/parking issues

- 7.6.1 The parking and highway issues have been collectively assessed for both Crownfield Junior and Infant Schools, as they have both submitted planning applications for new classroom buildings and share a car park on the application site. Crownfield Junior and Infant Schools presently have 630 full time education pupils and 35 staff (of which a proportion has part-time hours). Collectively, the proposals seek to provide a total of eight new classrooms (four each) for both Crownfield Junior and Infant Schools and expand the schools to 4 form entry. Therefore, there would be 210 additional pupils and 14 additional staff. There are 51 car parking bays on the site. When considering the merits of this application, it was noted the area of hardstanding on the site is rather limited and a few vehicles are being parked on grassed areas in an ad hoc fashion. The proposal involves the creation of 9 additional car parking spaces for both schools with an enlarged area of hardstanding and the parking bays will be marked out, which Staff consider would greatly improve the existing car parking arrangements. Furthermore, a car parking management policy will be introduced for both Crownfield Junior and Infant Schools.
- 7.6.2 The application site has a PTAL Rating of 1b. Annex 5 of the Development Plan Document sets a maximum staff car parking standard of 1 space per member of teaching staff. The proposal involves the creation of 9 additional car parking spaces, bringing the total to 60 car parking spaces for both schools with 49 staff (35 existing staff with an additional 14 staff post expansion). The provision of 60 car parking spaces would exceed the maximum requirement of 49 spaces, which is sufficient. The Highway Authority considers the staff parking element to be acceptable.
- 7.6.3 It is noted that the proposal has been submitted without a transport assessment. Moving from a 3 form of entry to a 4 form of entry is a significant increase in pupil numbers and while it will take some time for numbers to fully increase across both the Junior and Infant School sites, the Highways Authority have raised some concern about the impact on travel in the local area. The site has a PTAL of 1b (very poor) and so it is certain in their view that a proportion of new trips will be generated by car which could impact on the local network.
- 7.6.4 Parking and road safety impacts have been identified and require mitigation. Two mitigation measures have been suggested by Highways, namely a review of parking restrictions in the area around the school and the submission of a school travel plan to consider measures to reduce vehicular trips. Staff are satisfied that the measures proposed, which can be secured by planning condition, would be sufficient to mitigate against any adverse highways issues likely to arise from the development and that the proposal would be acceptable in this respect. It is recognised this is a matter of judgement and Members are invited to balance the statutory need to provide for school places against the likely increase in vehicle trips to and from the school and the impact this could have upon the local highway network.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 Staff are of the view that 4 no. classrooms, toilets, a hall, the widening of an existing footpath, repositioning an existing fence, re-positioning of pitch markings, the demolition of existing brick stores, breaking out a large concrete slab and the formation of a new playground to Crownfield Infant School are acceptable, would not adversely impact on the streetscene or result in a significant loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers. As a matter of judgement, it is considered that the proposal would not create any highway or parking issues. The very special circumstances case put forward is considered to clearly overcome the identified harm to the Green Belt. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all other respects and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None.

Legal implications and risks:

This application is considered on its own merits and independently from the Council's interest as owner of the site. The fact that the site is Council owned does not have any material bearing on the consideration of this planning application.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None.

Equalities implications and risks:

The Council's planning policies are implemented with regard to Equalities and Diversity.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Application forms and plans received 28/10/2016.