



# REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

4 December 2014

# REPORT

**Subject Heading:**

P1293.14 – Harold Wood Primary School, Recreation Avenue, Romford - Demolition of the existing outbuildings. Re-surfacing to provide a new 29 spaces car park, new footpaths and drop-off area (received 18/09/14, revised drawings received 08/10/14)

**Ward:**

Emerson Park

**Report Author and contact details:**

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**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**

Clean, safe and green borough	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

## SUMMARY

This application is put before Members as the premises relates to a Council owned school. The planning application is for permission to demolish the existing outbuildings situated in the south-western corner of the Harold Wood Park and re-surfacing to provide a new 29 spaces carpark, new footpaths and drop-off area. The planning issues are set out in the report below and cover the impact on streetscene, surrounding area and residential amenity. Staff consider the proposal to be acceptable.

## REPORT DETAIL

That the 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 Act 1990.

2. Accordance with plans: The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans listed on page 1 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.

3. External Lighting: The development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until external lighting has been provided in accordance with details which shall previously have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing.

**Reason:** In the interests of residential amenity in accordance with Policy DC61 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD.

4. Hours of Construction: No construction works or construction related deliveries into the site shall take place other than between the hours of 08.00 to 18.00 on Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 hours on Saturdays unless agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. No construction

works or construction related deliveries shall take place on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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

5. Landscaping: No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and shrubs on the site, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for the protection in the course of development. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised within the scheme shall be carried out in the first planting season following completion of the development and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In accordance with Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to enhance the visual amenities of the development.

6. Vehicle Access: The necessary agreement, notice or licence to enable the proposed alterations to the Public Highway shall be entered into prior to the commencement of development.

**Reason:** In the interests of ensuring good design and ensuring public safety and to comply with policies of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD, namely CP10, CP17, and DC61

## INFORMATIVES

1. Fee Informative:

A fee is required when submitting details pursuant to the discharge of conditions. In order to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force from 22.11.2012, a fee of £97 per request or £28 where the related permission was for extending or altering a dwellinghouse, is needed.

2. Statement Required by Article 31 (cc) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management) Order 2010: Improvements required to make the proposal acceptable were negotiated and submitted, in accordance with para 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

3. To the extent that any part of the application site is held for open space purposes it may under a separate legal procedure be subject of a proposed appropriation under section 122(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

## REPORT DETAIL

### **1. Site Description**

- 1.1 The application site comprises Harold Wood Park located off the junction of Recreation Avenue and Coombe Road. The subject site consists of a number of single storey buildings to the south-western corner of Harold Wood Park. The Park is situated in a predominantly residential area. Harold Wood Primary School is situated to the south of the site. The site is Council owned land.

### **2. Description of Proposal**

- 2.1 The Council is in receipt of a planning application seeking permission to demolish the existing outbuildings situated in the south-western corner of Harold Wood Park and the re-surfacing to provide a new 29 space carpark, new footpaths and drop-off area.
- 2.2 The existing single storey buildings on site would be demolished in order to make room for the proposed parking spaces, footpaths and drop-off area. The proposed parking will be for the use of the park as well as the school. The timings are complimentary, i.e. the park use is expected to be mainly in the evening and at weekends. A drop off point will also be provided for parent of children attending the school.

### **3. History**

- 3.1 P0222.13 - Extensions and alterations to Harold Wood Primary School to increase pupil intake from 420 to 630 pupils including additional parking for staff - Approved
- 3.2 P1431.05 - Installation of internal platform lift, construction of external access ramp and conversion of two store rooms into a disabled WC facility - Approved.

### **4. Consultation/Representations**

- 4.1 Notification letters were sent to 26 neighbouring properties, 1 letter of objection was received raising the following concerns:

- objecting to demolishing all of the building and suggest providing a toilet in one of them

- 4.2 Highways have not raised an objection provided that the standard vehicle access condition be added in the event of an approval.

## **5. Relevant Policies**

- 5.1 Policies CP14 (Green Belt), CP17 (Design), DC26 (Location of Community Facilities), DC28 (Dual use of School Facilities), DC29 (Educational Premises), DC45 (Appropriate Development in the 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.
- 5.2 In addition, Policies 3.18 (Educational facilities), 3.19 (Sport facilities), 7.4 (Local character) and 7.16 (Green Belt) of the London Plan and Chapters 7 (Requiring good design) and 8 (Promoting healthy communities) of the National Planning Policy Framework are relevant.

## **6. Staff comments**

- 6.1 The issues in this case are the principle of the development, the impact on the open character of the Green Belt, the impact of the development in the street scene, impact on the amenities of nearby residential occupiers and highways/parking
- 6.2 *Principle of development*
- 6.2.1 The application is for additional parking and new drop-off facility for children attending the school. The parking facilities would be available for the use of current school pupils and also for community use when visiting the park. Staff consider the development to comply in principle with Policies DC26 and DC28, as it serves community facilities and enables dual use of the parking for the school and wider community.
- 6.2.2 Although the proposed development would result in a loss of a small part of the grassed open area of the park the proposal does not involve the loss of any land containing a sports pitch.
- 6.2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework states that, as with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 6.2.4 The proposed development does not fall within the category of development which is allowed in the Green Belt and is therefore considered to be inappropriate development. Inappropriate development can only be

justified where the in principle inappropriateness, together with any other harm, is clearly outweighed by very special circumstances. Prior to determining whether any such circumstances exist, an assessment of whether any other harm arises is given below.

### 6.3. *Green Belt*

6.3.1 Looking first at the visual impact of the proposal, the general setting of the site is relatively open with vegetation limiting views into the site from Recreation Avenue and Coombe Road. The proposal would not result in the removal of any of the vegetation along the western boundary of the site. Although the proposal would still cause a degree of harm to the current openness of the site and the Green Belt, Staff consider the impact to be partly mitigated by the existing high hedge along the western boundary and the removal of the existing single storey buildings on site. Members are invited to apply their judgement to this aspect of the scheme.

6.3.2 The new car park would also materially intensify the overall usage of the site and result in further urban sprawl within the Green Belt. This would partly replace the previous open green land and would be contrary to the aims of the NPPF.

6.3.3 A case for very Special Circumstances is discussed later in the report

### 6.4 *Impact on Local Character and Street Scene*

6.4.1 It is considered that the proposal would not be harmful to the streetscene as the car park would only be partly visible in the streetscene given a high hedge which runs along the western boundary.

6.4.2 The proposal would be tucked into the southwestern boundary of the park which is surrounded by residential development and Harold Wood Primary School to the southeast. Any potential impact to the surrounding area is therefore also deemed acceptable.

### 6.5 *Impact on Amenity*

6.5.1 Policy DC61 considers that new developments should not have an unreasonably impact on noise and disturbance. The nearest residential dwelling at no. 67 Recreation Avenue is situated approximately 20m from the subject car park.

6.5.2 The proposed parking area would be used by the school and Harold Wood park and would be open during school and park hours. Opening times would coincide with the school hours and closing time would be at dusk (closing time of Harold Wood Park). Staff do not consider the proposal to result in an unacceptable impact in terms of noise and disturbance given the daytime opening hours. There is therefore no need to add an opening hours condition given that the car park would only be open during school and park hours.

## 6.6 *Highways / Parking Issues*

6.6.1 The application would not raise highways or parking concerns. The proposal would utilise the existing access arrangements and would result in an increase in parking provision for the Harold Wood Primary School and Harold Wood Park.

## 6.7 *The Mayor's Community Infrastructure Levy*

6.7.1 The subject premises would not create additional floor space and the application would therefore not be CIL liable.

## 6.8 *Other Issues*

6.8.1 Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted and very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (NPPF, paragraph 88).

6.8.2 The applicants very special circumstances case centres around the lack of existing parking for the existing sport facilities in Harold Wood Park and the mitigated impact of the development resulting from the removal of the existing single storey buildings on site.

6.8.3 Harold Wood Park's facilities include a summer meadow, playsite with inclusive play equipment, multi-use ball court, skate/BMX equipment, tennis courts and outdoor gym. The resident sports association use the park for football and cricket. There are currently 7 football pitches, 2 cricket pitches and 3 tennis courts. Parking is available towards the northern part of the site for 34 vehicles. Given the amount of sport facilities available and limited number of parking spaces it is clear that there is a significant shortage of existing parking. The proposal would add an additional 29 spaces to the benefit of this community facility.

6.8.4 The replacement of the existing single storey building with hard standing, albeit a larger area, would arguably also not result in a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt compared to the existing site circumstances.

6.8.5 Staff consider, on balance, that the reasons given for very special circumstances justify the unacceptable impact on the openness of the Green Belt. However, it is acknowledged that this is a matter for judgement of Members.

## **7. Conclusion**

7.1 The proposal is considered to acceptable on balance in terms of its impact on the Green Belt. Although the proposal is considered inappropriate

development in the Green Belt, the applicant has submitted very special circumstances to overcome the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, as required by the guidance contained in the NPPF.

- 7.2 The application under consideration has been assessed in accordance with planning policy and guidance. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable having had regard to Policies CP14, DC45 and, DC61 of the LDF, and all other material considerations.

## **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.

To the extent that any part of the application site is held for open space purposes it may under a separate legal procedure be subject of a proposed appropriation under section 122(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **Human Resource Implications:**

None

### **Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications:**

The Council's planning policies are implemented with regard to Equalities and Diversity. The proposals are considered to assist accessibility to the school and park.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Application forms and plans received 18/09/14, revised drawings received 08/10/14.