

## **ITEM**

<b>Application Reference</b>	<b>DC/071305</b>
<b>Location:</b>	Cheadle Hulme School Claremont Road Cheadle Hulme Cheadle SK8 6EF
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Variation of condition 13 attached to planning permission DC054582 to enable use of the coach park for a temporary period of 10 days per academic year for car parking at high traffic volume events.
<b>Type Of Application:</b>	Variation Of Conditions
<b>Registration Date:</b>	17.10.2018
<b>Expiry Date:</b>	20181212
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Jane Chase
<b>Applicant:</b>	Sue Kershaw
<b>Agent:</b>	P4 Planning Limited

## **DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS**

Should the Area Committee be minded to grant permission under the Delegation Agreement the application should be referred to the Planning & Highways Regulations Committee as the application relates to a Departure from the Statutory Development Plan.

## **DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT**

Members will recall that planning permission was approved in 2014 for the reconfiguration of the car and coach park including a new coach drop off area as part of a wider application for the construction of new all-weather sports pitch, extension of the Junior School; improved vehicular access, lighting, landscaping and associated works (DC054582).

Attached to that permission, condition 13 reads:-

*The coach drop off/collection area, plan reference 8195-C PI-01-Proposed Coach & Car Parking-Rev A shall not be brought into use until the area has been constructed in accordance with detailed drawings that have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Such details shall include full construction specification for the means of access, parking area and pedestrian spaces; surfacing and drainage details; lining, signing and bollard/railing details and any lighting to be provided. The coach drop off / collection area shall not be used before 8.00 a.m. or after 6.00 p.m. on any day. The coach drop off /collection area as shown on plan reference 8195-C-PI-01 shall be used for no purpose other than for the provision of drop-off and collection by coach / bus / minibus.*

*Reason*

*To ensure that the coach drop off/collection area is of a safe and practical design in accordance with Policies SD-6 'Adapting to the impacts of climate change', SIE-1 'Quality Places', T-1 Transport and Development', and T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD, in the interests of safeguarding the amenities of neighbouring residents and in the interest of minimising the impact on the openness of the Green Belt in accordance with the requirements of Policy GBA1.2 'Control of Development in Green Belt'.*

This current application seeks the variation of condition 13 to enable use of the coach park for a temporary period of 10 days per academic year for car parking at high traffic volume events. In this respect, the supporting information submitted with this application advises as follows:-

- The application seeks permission to use the coach drop off to park up to 86 cars on up to 10 specified days each year to help relieve existing congestion and parking pressures in surrounding streets associated with large school events (such as open day and speech day) when higher than normal visitors need to be accommodated.

- The proposal is therefore seeking to help mitigate existing occurrences of parking pressure for operational, safety and community benefits. It is not facilitating any increase in activity or number of pupils.

- Over time, the residential suburb of Cheadle Hulme has developed around the School and there are resultant pressures on parking at morning and afternoon peaks (common to most schools in urban areas). To help address this, permission DC054582 granted consent in 2014 for the coach drop off (along with a new pavilion and 3G sports pitch) which enabled the separation of coaches and cars and the reconfiguration of parking which, along with a comprehensive Travel Plan and committed operations team, has had a positive effect on reducing the impact that school related traffic has on the surrounding community. However, there remain events on a few occasions each year where extra visitors must be accommodated. This continues to cause difficulties in surrounding streets and is a safety concern.

- The events in question are programmed each academic year and comprise the new Year 7 induction day; the Senior School open day; the sixth form open evening; two annual conferences; the Junior and Senior School open day; the day of the entrance exam; the careers convention; and the Head's lecture events.

- The first two parts of condition 13 have already been formally discharged prior to construction of the drop off area. This planning application therefore proposes to delete the part already discharged and to vary the wording of the last two sentences of the condition to permit use of the coach area as a car park for up to 10 days per academic year. The proposed wording is as follows:

*The coach drop off / collection area as shown on plan reference 8195-C-PI-01 shall not be used before 8.00 a.m. or after 6.00 p.m. on any day and for no purpose other than for the provision of drop-off and collection by coach / bus / minibus. In addition, on a maximum of 10 days per year, the School will be able to use the coach drop off area as an overspill visitor car park including after 6.00pm. The School will notify the Council in writing of each event no less than seven days in advance.*

- On those days when the overspill car parking is required, visitors arriving to the site by car will be directed to the existing car parking around the school campus, as shown on the School's Car Parking Protocols. Once this parking is fully occupied, motorists will then be directed to the coach drop off area. This ensures that the coach drop off area will only be used when absolutely necessary.

- The use of the coach park for large events would be marshalled by two members of staff, with a total of 10 marshals across the School site, communicating via radio and directing visitors into the drop off area to park safely. A total of 86 cars can be accommodated within the coach drop off area. Use of traffic cones and marshals will direct drivers to spaces based on the parking layout plan, with no permanent markings proposed.

Following discussions with Officers additional information has been submitted and the proposed revised wording of the condition has been amended further:-

- The School proposes to upload a Schedule of Events and dates to the neighbourhood section of their website as a way of informing residents. From here, neighbours/residents are already able to sign up to the School newsletter to keep informed about School events and developments. (Members are advised that this Schedule is appended to this report).

- The School propose to provide an annual update of the Schedule of Events posted to their website each academic year and provide it to the Council. The Council can then advise any necessary highways authorities of the dates well in advance. Reference to the word "car" has also been removed from the revised wording of the condition so the use of the coach park is for overspill visitor parking and doesn't restrict use for extra minibuses or coaches when traveling in association with the events. A time restriction of 9pm for the 10 events is now proposed.

- The wording of the condition has been revised further as follows:-

*The coach drop off / collection area as shown on plan reference 8195-C-PI-01 shall not be used before 8.00 a.m. or after 6.00 p.m. on any day and for no purpose other than for the provision of drop-off and collection by coach / bus / minibus other than on a maximum of 10 days per year in accordance with the Schedule of Large Events Requiring Additional Parking, when the School will be able to use the coach drop off area for overspill parking until 9pm. The School will update the Schedule of Large Events Requiring Additional Parking on an annual basis and notify the Council in writing prior to the start of each academic year, publishing the Schedule on the School website.*

- The use of the coach area for additional parking would not coincide with the coach drop off function during weekdays. If its use for parking does coincide with use by coaches for visiting sports teams on Saturdays, an area of the coach park would be sectioned off for coaches. The area would be marshalled by staff in any case to ensure highways safety.

## **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The application site is located to the east of the school complex and comprises a recently constructed coach park accommodating 16 parking bays enclosed by an automatic gate and accessed from the main school entrance off Hulme Hall Road/School Drive. Within the wider school grounds to the east of the site is an open grassed area which extends to the south of the coach park. To the west of the coach park are numerous sports pitches whilst to the north are the school buildings and car parking in the form of staff and parent parking overflow parking and a parent drop off/pick up area. Outside the application site to the north is Woodlands Close, a short cul de sac of 9 detached houses accessed off School Lane whilst to the east are residential properties on Hulme Hall Road.

## **POLICY BACKGROUND**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (“PCPA 2004”) requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **The Development Plan includes-**

- Policies set out in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review adopted 31<sup>st</sup> May 2006 which have been saved by direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; &
- Policies set out in the Stockport Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

### **Saved policies of the SUDP Review**

LCR1.1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

LCR1.1a: THE URBAN FRINGE INCLUDING THE RIVER VALLEYS

EP1.7: DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK

GBA1.1: EXTENT OF GREEN BELT PROTECTION

GBA1.2: CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN GREEN BELT

CTF1.1: DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### **LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies**

CS1: OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

SD-1: Creating Sustainable Communities

SD-3: Delivering the Energy Opportunities Plan – New Development

SD-6: Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change

CS5: ACCESS TO SERVICES

AS-2: Improving Indoor Sports, Community and Educational Facilities and their Accessibility

CS8: SAFEGUARDING AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

SIE-1: Quality Places

SIE-3: Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment

CS9: TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

CS10: AN EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT NETWORK

T-1: Transport and Development T-2: Parking in Developments

T-3: Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) initially published on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012, subsequently revised and published on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The revised National Planning Policy Framework will be a vital tool in ensuring that we get planning for the right homes built in the right places of the right quality at the same time as protecting our environment.

N.B. In respect of decision-taking the revised NPPF constitutes a “material consideration”.

Para.1 *"The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied".*

Para.2 *"Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise".*

Para.7 *"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development".*

Para.8 *"Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):*

- a) an economic objective*
- b) a social objective*
- c) an environmental objective"*

Para.11 *"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.*

*For decision-taking this means:*

*c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*

*d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

*i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

*ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole".*

Para.12 *".....Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed".*

Para.38 *"Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way..... Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible".*

Para.47 *"Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing".*

Para.124 *“The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.*

Para.133 *“The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”.*

Para.134 *“Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land”.*

Para.141 *“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land”.*

Para.143 *“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”.*

Para.144 *“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”.*

Para.146 *“Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These include:-*

*c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location and*

*e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds.*

Para.213 *“existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)”.*

## **Planning Practice Guidance**

The Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place (launched in March 2014) and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

## **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

DC054582 - Demolition of existing and construction of new sports pavilion; car and coach park reconfiguration including a new coach drop off area; construction of new all-weather sports pitch; minor extension of Junior School; improved vehicular access, lighting, landscaping and associated works. Approved October 2014

Following the issuing of this permission the applicant signed and submitted a Unilateral Agreement to the Council undertaking to comply with conditions 7 & 8 of DC054582 without the phrase 'unless the LPA has given its written approval to any variation'. Condition 7 relates to the times at which the floodlighting shall be used and condition 8 restricts the installation of floodlighting to the pavilion other than in accordance with details to be approved).

## **NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS**

The receipt of the application has been advertised by way of a site and press notice. In addition to this the occupiers of 70 neighbouring properties were notified of the receipt of the application by letter. To date:-

1 letter has been received supporting the proposed development on the grounds that it will help to improve pupil and pedestrian safety, ease road congestion, and reduce parking on nearby residential streets. A more complete variation, not just for 10 days per year would be strongly supported.

2 letters have been received objecting to the proposed development on the following grounds:-

- We have seen a steady build-up of vehicles already on Hulme Hall Road and School Lane during busy times of the day, so encouraging more traffic is not supported by us. The build-up on Hulme Hall Road can cause significant delays for journeys to and from our home, so encouraging more traffic is not supported by us. Hulme Hall Road is not designed to take high volumes of traffic at any point of the day, so encouraging more traffic is not supported by us.
- I don't want to encourage anything that could cause Woodlands Close to become an overflow car park.
- If the application is approved we need to understand A) will there be a human presence guiding the vehicles and ensuring flow of traffic and that Woodlands Close does not become an overflow car park? B) how many vehicles will be allowed to park in the area and what is the impact to Hulme Hall Road and School Lane (and surrounding area)? C) will local residents be informed on when the 10 occasions will be, so we can plan accordingly?
- Concerns that Section 73 is not appropriate for varying what is a significant part of the prior planning application and permission.
- The application to vary the condition goes against national and local planning guidance and policy. The intent of the original application was for separating the Coach Drop Off and Pick Up to a) alleviate and create more efficient car parking and travel arrangement b) to separate coaches and car / pupil traffic and remove health and safety risks of mixing these two types of traffic. To quote from the Officers Report in respect to the latter this was a '*key material consideration and important element of the very special circumstances to justify this proposed element of the development in the Green Belt*'. Amending the application to now allow cars to join and or use the Coach Drop Off & Pick Up area would clearly go against and make light of this prior key consideration, guidance and policy.

- The previous development was designed to 'significantly improve the efficiency of on-site circulation, and the impact of traffic and parking on the wider community'. This seems to have been a relative success, however the SMBC policy on the quantity of car parking spaces for schools is also clear and was cited in the original application as not being affected as the applicant was fully aware any request for additional car spaces would give rise to the Officers objection. If the variation is approved, SMBC will now be allowing a further 86 car parking bays to be formally 'white lined' not only in the Green Belt land designated for Coach Drop Off and Pick Up only, but this would be far in excess of local school car parking policy applied for other schools in the local area and without any real justification.
- There are numerous errors in the proposal and the language leads readers to assume details that are not accurate. Appendix 3 photos show buses not cars. The applicant refers on numerous occasions to feedback from the community and in discussion with Council Members that it is the community road network that is under pressure. The applicant has not however proven the need, over and above current car parking provision for this variation.
- It would be normal for a traffic impact assessment to be carried out and or some form of further transport assessment. I have looked through the files on line and I have not seen anything that supports the need, a) in theory or b) any factual reports that would warrant allowing the Green Belt Coach Drop off and Pick Up area to be used as overspill or other general car parking. What exists in the proposals are a series unsubstantiated anecdotes as rhetoric that there is an unmanageable problem. Contrary to the suggestion that these events are unmanageable I have details that can be shared than strongly suggest the need for overspill seem over estimated, certainly this year. Time line photos taken on the two most recent out of core hours existing school open days, show significantly less traffic than departs daily at the end of the school day and which disperses quickly within 15-20 minutes from the current car parking / pick up zones. There is certainly never a queue of cars departing or arriving. Day to day / weekday use of the schools is far busier. It is possible there was a complete miss estimation of traffic and travel arrangements, but hopefully this evidence plus details issued previously allow to assess to what degree the application has the necessary grounds to succeed.
- Referring to the capacity issues being long standing and not new or of the school's own design / making is disingenuous. Out of the 10 days proposed, almost half of these are new events that have been marketed to generate income for the profit-making part of the Schools complicated business structure and nothing to do with a core educational use and any charitable service it still provides. These events also seem to stem from the new usage granted to the Sport Pavilion to double up as a conference centre and even marketed as a wedding venue too.
- The statement that 'the principle of the use of the land for parking vehicles has already been established' is not accurate. The original Officers Report made it very clear that parking was not intended for coaches, mini buses or cars. This was supported by the High Court Judge. Now linking vehicles to include cars because they are smaller, completely distorts the nature of the prior application and all the prior checks and balances of the approval process that the Committee and associated parties went through to maintain the Green Belt status. The proposal also paints an unhelpful and lowly value referring to this space as a 'field'.
- In Appendix 7 the applicant summarises the alternative travel arrangements and implies that these have been exhausted. However, there are no accurate details as to what these welcome sustainable travel planning arrangements have generated. How many staff or children car share? What exactly is the arrangement with the Hesketh for Park and Stride, and how many use this? How has coach use increased? This appendix should establish the results of these worthwhile aspects and of the Travel Plan rather than infer they have been exhausted; and which I strongly suspect if investigated further would not be the case.



- The out of hours nature and purpose of the 10 events, notably not listed in the application but listed in the communication to the community, should be considered, as too the capacity of the whole site and legitimate use of the associated highways infrastructure. For example, there are no details that warrant why a 'Nurses Convention' at a weekend, should give rise to justification to warrant a very significant part of a prior application being varied against national and local policy. How many attendees are expected and what basis are the metrics justified – prior attendance? Why have they not come on a coach or in a mini bus? Just how many cannot park in the other car parking bays available out of hours and unlikely to be extensively used by staff at these times?
- The applicant clearly suggests for this to be an 'overspill' car park, however there is a very real concern that it will become the preferred first option for visitor car parking. In the event that you are minded to approve the variance of Condition 13, I would be interested to understand what further limitations you would put on the applicant to ensure that the balanced interests as noted above are duly considered and that the legalities and possible illegalities are made clearer.
- There would also be a concern as to whether the 'temporary period of 10 days' was itself something that could be unilaterally extended or even worse the 10 days and or temporary nature abandoned altogether and or just further diluted.
- The revised wording of the condition is too open ended in that it could be any ten days, even overnight and for any purpose.

## **CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

Highway Engineer - The School has a coach drop off/collection area which is not permitted, via the terms of a planning condition, to be used before 8am or after 6pm on any day. This application is for the variation of the relevant condition to permit the use of the coach park for general car parking purposes on a maximum of 10 days per year, in addition to the typical and daily coach usage associated with the site.

The School has occasional large events programmed during each academic year and these have occurred in recent years with limited management of the traffic and transportation issues, the consequence being a negative impact on the surrounding area. The proposal is a means by which the School could alleviate some congestion, improve circulation around the School and reduce overspill parking within the adjoining residential road network.

The events which are programmed each academic year comprise the new Year 7 induction day; the Senior School open day; the sixth form open evening; two annual conferences; the Junior and Senior School open day; the day of the entrance exam; the careers convention; and the Head's lecture events.

I feel that it would be difficult and unreasonable to express concern with or oppose the use of the coach park for general car parking purposes on a limited number of occasions each year. The events occur outside of the normal academic day so will not materially impact on general School traffic and site operation. The infrastructure already exists, a safe parking area can be provided and car trips are already being made to and from the site in association with these events and will continue whether a vehicle is able to be parked within the School grounds or outside on the adjoining residential streets. Reducing overspill parking will have clear highway operation and public safety benefits and a concentrated use of the coach park for circa 80 cars to be parked will not give rise to traffic levels that will cause operational difficulties, congestion or safety concerns.

Recommendation: No objections.

## **ANALYSIS**

The main issues for consideration are the impact of the proposed development upon the Green Belt, upon residential amenity and conditions of highway safety.

### Green Belt

UDP Review policy GBA1.2 confirms that forms of development other than new buildings including changes in the use of land will not be permitted unless they maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

The revised 2018 NPPF offers the Government's most up to date policy position and post dates the UDP review. The Framework explains that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence and asserts that one of the purposes of including land within Green Belts is to safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

The NPPF reaffirms 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 and outlines that local authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. The NPPF identifies that '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.

Para 145 of the NPPF confirms that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate other than in 7 exceptions. Clearly the application does not relate to the erection of a building however para 146 allows for certain other forms of development provided they preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within in. These include (amongst other matters) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location and material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation or for cemeteries and burial grounds).

In response to that policy position Members are advised that issues relating to the change of use of the land were considered under application DC054582. This application does not seek a change of use of the land but rather seeks to use the land in a different way to that consented and over longer hours on 10 occasions a year. It is therefore proper to consider the impact of this on the openness of the Green Belt.

As with the original application, the parking of vehicles in the coach park is considered to impact on the openness of the Green Belt and as such is contrary to policy GBA1.2. It is noted that the NPPF allows for certain forms of development other than the construction of new buildings including local transport infrastructure and material changes in the use of land. The caveat with this provision is however that such development should preserve openness and not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Whilst there is no definition of what 'local transport infrastructure' comprises Officers are inclined to conclude that this does not refer to what is essentially a private car park but rather might relate to infrastructure of a more public nature such as public transport interchange or a park and ride facility. So far as the material change in the use of the land is concerned, it has already been determined

through the consideration of DC054582 that this will impact on the openness of the Green Belt through the parking of vehicles and this remains the same with this current application.

On the basis of the above, as the proposed development is contrary to policy GBA1.2 and would not fall within any of the exceptions to development set out at para 146 of the NPPF it is concluded that the variation of condition 13 would result in inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Inappropriate development can only be approved in very special circumstances.

In support of their application the School presents a case in relation to the need for the development. In this respect the following as presented as part of this case is noted:-

- The need to mitigate congestion in the vicinity of the School associated with large events has been long established through ongoing community engagement and discussions with the Council. The proposal seeks to provide additional car parking spaces for visitors to the site at specified peak times. The events are long established and already take place in the School each year. They are not new events and will therefore not generate additional trips over and above what already exists.
- The School has invested significant resources to improving parking and congestion at the School and surrounding area. These include improving safety through the delivery of a pedestrian-friendly and vehicle-free central area in the School, to allow pupils, staff and visitors to walk through the School areas safely and efficiently; reducing congestion in the campus and on the neighbouring roads by decreasing the number of cars coming to and from School at the beginning and end of the School day. Also helping to minimise air and noise pollution around the School and in the local vicinity; removing barriers (both perceived and actual), to walking, cycling and using coach transport for journeys, by promoting information and opportunities that demonstrate the benefits of active, sustainable transport and help to inform travel options. Despite these measures there remains parking pressure at certain times including these 10 large events.
- Although the events are carefully managed by the operations team, the number of visitors to these events creates extra pressure on parking in and around the School. This generates highway safety concerns for pedestrians, children and neighbours in the vicinity of the site which this proposal will help alleviate.
- Together with the comprehensive Travel Plan (which is updated annually) aimed at reducing the need to travel by car, the additional space will greatly help School operations during key events, and improve congestion and parking for the local community.

In response to this case, it is considered that as the coach park would only be used on 10 occasions a year for the parking of cars or minibuses associated with these specific events, any impact on the openness of the Green Belt would be limited. For the majority of the time, the coach park would either be used in its approved manner or be free of any vehicles. It is also acknowledged and accepted by the Council that despite the measures put in place by the School there are still issues with regards to on street parking in the streets surrounding the site. The case for very special circumstances as presented by the applicant is considered robust and compelling. This together with the limited use of the facility proposed is considered sufficient to outweigh harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness.

#### Impact on Residential Amenity

The entrance to the coach park is opposite Woodlands Close and is accessed via Hulme Hall Road. The vehicles using the coach park on the 10 occasions

would therefore drive past the entrance to Woodlands Close but would not need to enter it. Having regard to the location of the site in a suburban area adjacent to a school complex where there is already a degree of noise and disturbance associated from movements into and out of the site, it is not considered that the use of the coach park on 10 occasions a year at the times proposed would give rise to a loss of residential amenity to the occupiers of Woodland Close or Hulme Hall Road.

Clearly on the 10 occasions when the events are being held at the school, the use of the coach park for parking will help alleviate pressure for on street parking in the surrounding residential streets. This will help improve the amenities for these residential occupiers.

#### Impact on Highway Safety

The comments of the Highway Engineer are noted. It is important to note that the traffic and parking associated with these events already exists and will continue irrespective of whether this application is approved or refused. The primary aim behind the proposal is to address the specific problem of on street parking that occurs on these 10 occasions. The reduction in this on street parking will have direct highway safety benefits and the use of the coach park to accommodate parking in association with the 10 specific events can be undertaken with no harm to the safe operation of the highway.

It is acknowledged the school has an over provision of on-site car parking against the adopted parking standards (269 spaces existing vs 225 required by the standards) and as such there is an argument that no further provision should be granted as this will simply encourage more visitors to drive to the site rather than making sustainable transport choices. The spaces are proposed are however not permanent nor will be used on a daily basis, rather they are for 10 occasions a year and a direct response to address over spill parking that already takes place on street. On this basis, it is not considered that the provision of these spaces will necessarily encourage visitors to drive to the school but rather will address an identified parking problem that occurs already and the use of the facility for the temporary parking of cars can be justified in highway terms.

#### Other matters

UDP Review policy LCR1.1 indicates where it is acceptable in principle, development should: (i) be sensitively sited, designed and constructed of materials appropriate to the landscape character area in which it is located; and (ii) be accommodated without adverse effect on the landscape quality of the particular character area. This application proposes no physical works to the coach park however it is considered that the variation in the use of the facility can be accommodated without adverse effect on landscape quality.

In response to objections received which have not been addressed above, Members are advised accordingly:-

- The proposed development will not encourage more trips to the school by car. It will however direct some of that existing traffic to the entrance off Hulme Hall Road and past Woodlands Close. As advised by the Highway Engineer, it is considered that this traffic can be accommodated on the network in this location without an unacceptable impact on highway conditions.
- Woodlands Close is a very short cul de sac with a shared surface which presents little opportunity for on street parking. It is difficult to envisage where on street parking would occur within the cul de sac. Noting that the application seeks to redirect existing on street parking on to the school site rather than to

encourage further on street parking, it is not considered that objections relating to the development encouraging overspill parking in this location can be sustained.

- There will be operatives within the wider school site and coach park directing visitors to where they should park their car. This should ensure no overspill parking in Woodlands Close. The facility can accommodate up to 86 vehicles. The school has advised that they will publish this diary of events at the start of each academic year on their website which will give members of the wider community advanced notice of when the facility is to be used.
- The Council's Solicitor has confirmed that Section 73 of the Act gives an express power to apply for planning permission for the development of land without complying with conditions attached to an earlier permission. The power extends only to the amendment or removal of conditions and may not be used to amend any other part of the permission. As such a S73 application is wholly appropriate for the variation of a planning condition.
- The use of the coach area for additional parking would not coincide with the coach drop off function during weekdays. If its use for parking does coincide with use by coaches for visiting sports teams on Saturdays, an area of the coach park would be sectioned off for coaches. The area would be marshalled by staff in any case to ensure highways safety. As such, the proposed use of the coach park would not prejudice that already approved.
- The application does not propose the 'white lining' of parking spaces. On the occasions when the facility would be accessed by vehicles other than school coaches, the use of traffic cones and marshals will direct drivers to spaces based on the parking layout plan, with no permanent markings proposed.
- Having regard to the fact that the application seeks to address existing traffic congestion from existing and established events, it has been agreed with Council Officers that a Transport Statement or Impact Statement is not required.
- Objections have been made that reference to capacity issues being long standing and not new is disingenuous. It is claimed that of the 10 days proposed, almost half of these are new events that have been marketed to generate income for the profit-making part of the Schools complicated business structure and nothing to do with the core educational use and any charitable service it still provides. Members are advised that as evidenced by the schedule of events appended to this report, the events which are the subject of this application are clearly related to the educational use and enrichment of the school.
- With regards to the alternative travel arrangement referenced by the objector, these are part and parcel of the Travel Plan adopted by the school. It is acknowledged that these measures can only secure so much in terms of influencing travel modes, however, it remains the case that they are in force and are reviewed on a regular basis.
- The use of the coach park would be for 10 occasions a year only and therefore would not and could not become an option for regular parking. Conditions will be imposed to ensure that the use of the coach park is regulated as per the terms of this application and for no other purpose.
- Should the school wish to use the facility for car parking in excess of 10 days then a further variation of condition application would have to be submitted for formal consideration..

**RECOMMENDATION** GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS