

Item 6(iii)

Application Reference	DC/080594
Location:	Laurus Cheadle Hulme Cheadle Road Cheadle Hulme Cheadle SK8 5GB
PROPOSAL:	Construction of a 3G synthetic sports pitch with sports fencing, floodlights, storage container, spectator area and pedestrian access.
Type Of Application:	Full Planning Application
Registration Date:	7 th April 2021
Expiry Date:	22 th October 2021 (extension of time agreed)
Case Officer:	Rebecca Whitney
Applicant:	Laurus Cheadle Hulme
Agent:	MUGA UK Ltd

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

14 objections have been received, contrary to the Case Officer's recommendation of approval.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks planning permission for the installation of an artificial grass sports pitch on the site of an existing grass sports pitch within the school playing field. Alongside the proposed pitch, sports fencing, floodlighting, a spectator area and a storage container are proposed.

The proposed sports pitch would be approximately 4m wider than the existing pitch and would have a similar depth. The pitch would measure 7420sqm, and the additional hardstanding would measure 850sqm.

The proposed sports fencing would measure 4.5m and be sited around the perimeter of the pitch. The proposed floodlighting would be provided by 6no. 15m high columns.

The proposed pitch would allow an increase in usage as it would be suitable for most weather conditions. The proposed artificial grass pitch would be more durable than a grass pitch, and would avoid the need for close season maintenance works, allowing the site to operation all year round. It is proposed that the operating hours would be 07:00-21:00 Monday-Sunday, including Bank Holidays.

The application initially proposed vehicular access via North Downs Road, currently only used by staff. In response to an objection from the Highways Engineer and concerns raised by neighbouring residents, the site plan has been amended to propose vehicular access from Cheadle Road instead.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Laurus Cheadle Hulme secondary school opened in September 2018 and is expected to accommodate 1050 pupils by September 2022. The wider site is shared with Cheadle Hulme Primary School and Cheadle College.

The application site is partially within a Predominantly Residential Area and partially within land designated as Local Open Space. A small area of the proposed pitch to the north of the site would be located within the land designated a Predominantly Residential Area, with the remainder being sited within designated Local Open Space.

An established tree belt and Public Right of Way Footpath (64 CG)s runs along the western site boundary, between the planned pitch and the watercourse to the west of the site. Land immediately west of the application site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3 (low to medium and medium to high flood risk respectively), and is designated as Green Chain and Strategic Open Space.

Part of Bruntwood Park (further to the west of the site) is also designated as a Site of Biological Importance (SBI) and the woodland corridor adjacent to the site is listed on Natural England Inventory as Priority Habitat (albeit low confidence).

The site is bound to the north by the existing school building, associated car parking areas and sports pitches and playing areas. To the south and east, the site is bound by residential development.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications/appeals to be determined in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Statutory Development Plan includes:-

- Policies set out in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review (SUDP) adopted 31st 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 (CS) adopted 17th March 2011

Saved policies of the SUDP Review

UOS1.3 Protection of Local Open Space

L1.1 Land for Active Recreation

CTF1.1 Development of Community Services and Facilities

CDH1.2 Non Residential Development in Predominantly Residential Areas

CDH1.9 Community Facilities in Predominantly Residential Areas

NE1.2 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance

NE3.1 Protection and Enhancement of Green Chains

LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies

CS8 Safeguarding & Improving the Environment

SIE-1 Quality Places

SIE-3 Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment

CS9 Transport & Development

T-1 Transport & Development

T-2 Parking in Developments

T-3 Safety & Capacity on the Highway Network

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance does not form part of the Statutory Development Plan; nevertheless it does provide non-statutory Council approved guidance that is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

The following are relevant to the determination of this application:

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD

Sustainable Transport SPD

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

A Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 20th July 2021 replaced the previous NPPF (originally issued 2012, revised in 2018 and 2019). The NPPF has not altered the fundamental legal requirement under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations (such as the NPPF) indicate otherwise.

The NPPF represents the Governments up-to-date planning policy position. In respect of decision-taking the revised NPPF constitutes a “material consideration”.

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.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Reference: DC/072554; Type: DOC; Address: Land To The South West Of The Cheadle College, Cheadle Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, SK8 5HA, ; Proposal: Discharge of condition 18 of planning permissions DC/066326 and DC/069498; Decision Date: 30-JUL-19; Decision: DOC

Reference: DC/070378; Type: DOC; Address: Land To The South West Of The Cheadle College, Cheadle Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, SK8 5HA; Proposal: Discharge of conditions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 19 of planning permission DC/069498 DC/066326 - Development of a nursery, primary and secondary school with sports hall and sports pitches, and associated boundary treatments, external lighting, landscaping, parking and access arrangements.; Decision Date: 06-SEP-18; Decision: DOC

Reference: DC/069498; Type: VC; Address: Land To The South West Of The Cheadle College, Cheadle Road Cheadle Hulme Cheadle, SK8 5HA; Proposal: Application for variation of conditions 1 (specified plans and documents) and 5 (materials) following grant of planning permission DC/066326 for Development of a nursery, primary and secondary school with sports hall and sports pitches, and associated boundary treatments, external lighting, landscaping, parking and access arrangements.; Decision Date: 28-AUG-18; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/069317; Type: DOC; Address: Land To The South West Of The Cheadle College, Cheadle Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, SK8 5HA; Proposal: Application for approval of details reserved by Condition 5 (building envelope materials) of planning approval DC/066326 - Development of a nursery, primary and secondary school with sports hall and sports pitches, and associated boundary treatments, external lighting, landscaping, parking and access arrangements; Decision Date: 22-MAY-18; Decision: DOC

Reference: DC/066326; Type: FUL; Address: Land To The South West Of The Cheadle College, Cheadle Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, SK8 5HA; Proposal: Development of a nursery, primary and secondary school with sports hall and sports pitches, and associated boundary treatments, external lighting, landscaping, parking and access arrangements.; Decision Date: 20-OCT-17; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/070438; Type: ADV; Address: Land To The South West Of The Cheadle College, Cheadle Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, SK8 5HA; Proposal: Advertisement Consent Application for building mounted signage to identify the buildings and entrances, ground mounted signage for highway entrances and general wayfinding.; Decision: Yet to be determined.

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

53 neighbouring properties were consulted by letter and a site notice was displayed at the application site.

14 objections have been received. The grounds can be summarised as follows:

- a. Need for the proposed development
- b. Access via North Downs Road, including highway safety issues, increased traffic, parking, and disturbance from noise, light and pollution.
- c. Noise impacts on residential amenity
- d. Lighting impacts on residential amenity
- e. Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- f. Pitch siting
- g. Operating hours
- h. Highway safety, traffic generation and car parking
- i. Biodiversity
- j. Unsustainable development
- k. Crime and antisocial behaviour, including shouting and foul language
- l. Health implications of the materials to be used in construction
- m. Misrepresentation in the supporting documents.
- n. Consultation process

One objector submitted a second comment following the amendment allowing the vehicular access to be taken via Cheadle Road rather than North Downs Road. This comment notes an improvement in the access, and that this would support an alternative location being the most appropriate site for the proposed pitch as it would be closer to the entrance and other parking areas, would utilise a disused area and would result in less disturbance to others.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Sport England

Comments dated 20th September 2021:

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the amended plans. I have no further comments in addition to those already submitted on 2nd June 2021.

Comments dated 2nd June 2021:

Summary: Sport England raises no objection to this application which is considered to meet paragraph 97(c) of the NPPF and Exception 5 of our adopted Playing Fields Policy, subject to a condition for a Community Use Agreement with Football Development Plan.

An assessment of the proposal and reason for the condition with wording is set out below.

Sport England - Statutory Role and Policy

It is understood that the proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). The consultation with Sport England is therefore a statutory requirement.

Sport England has considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (in particular paragraph 97), and against its own playing fields policy, which states:

'Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:

- all or any part of a playing field, or
- land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or
- land allocated for use as a playing field

unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.'

Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document can be viewed via the below link:

https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#playing_fields_policy

The Proposal and Impact on Playing Field

The proposal is for a floodlit full size 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP). The AGP will be located on the site of an adult football pitch.

Assessment against Sport England Policy

This application relates to the provision of a new outdoor sports facility on the existing playing field at the above site. It therefore needs to be considered against Exception 5 of Sport England's policy, which states:

'The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.'

I have therefore assessed the existing and proposed playing fields against the above policy to determine whether the proposals meet Exception 5.

Sport England has assessed the potential benefit of the new AGP by taking into account a number of considerations. As a guide, these include whether the facility:

- meets an identified local or strategic need e.g. as set out in a local authority or NGB strategy (rather than duplicating existing provision);
- fully secures sport related benefits for the local community;
- helps to meet identified sports development priorities;
- complies with relevant Sport England and NGB design guidance;
- is accessible by alternative transport modes to the car.

Also considered were any potential negative impacts of the AGP. For example, it is unlikely that a loss would be acceptable if:

- it would result in the main user being unable to meet their own minimum requirements for playing pitches.
- other users would be displaced without equivalent replacement provision;
- it would materially reduce the capability and flexibility of the playing field to provide for a range of sports and natural grass playing pitches; or the area of playing field is significant in meeting local or strategic needs.

Having consulted with the Football Foundation and with reference to the supporting information supplied by the applicant, on balance the proposal meets the majority of the above points and there are no negative impacts on existing provision. The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) identifies a need for one additional AGP in Cheadle but no indication of the location is given. The subsequent Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) which was based on evidence presented in the PPS, identified a need for two AGPs in Cheadle given the demand from local clubs in the area, and Laurus School is cited as a priority project in the LFFP.

In order to ensure the sporting benefits that outweigh the loss of natural turf playing field are implemented, a Community Use Agreement is required and should be secured by condition. Wording is set out below.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Given the above assessment, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application as it is considered to broadly meet paragraph 97(c) of the NPPF and Exception 5 of the above policy. The absence of an objection is subject to the following condition and informative being attached to the decision notice should the local planning authority be minded to approve the application:

Condition - Community Use Agreement

Use of the development shall not commence until a Community Use Agreement and Football Development Plan, prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply to the Artificial Grass Pitch and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-school users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. The Agreement shall be implemented on first use of the Artificial Grass Pitch, and the development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement and for the duration of the development.

Reason: To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord with Development Plan Policy [insert relevant local plan policy] and paragraph 97 of the NPPF.

Informative: Guidance on preparing Community Use Agreements is available from Sport England <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/community-use-agreements>. For artificial grass pitches it is recommended that you seek guidance from the Football Foundation on pitch construction when determining the community use hours the artificial pitch can accommodate.

If you wish to amend the wording of the condition, or use another mechanism in lieu of the condition, please discuss the details with the undersigned. Sport England does not object to amendments to conditions, provided they achieve the same outcome and we are involved in any amendments.

Should the condition required above not be imposed on any planning consent, Sport England would consider the proposal to not meet Exceptions 5 of our playing fields policy, and we would therefore object to this application. In the event the application

is approved without the conditions, in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 the application should be referred to the Secretary of State via the National Planning Casework Unit.

Sport England would also like to be notified of the outcome of the application through the receipt of a copy of the decision notice.

The absence of an objection to this application, in the context of the Town and Country Planning Act, cannot be taken as formal support or consent from Sport England or any National Governing Body of Sport to any related funding application, or as may be required by virtue of any pre-existing funding agreement.

SMBC Education

The land is not within Council ownership. No comments.

SMBC Highway Engineer

Comments dated 5th October 2021:

The submission has been revised to address issues raised in previous comments about the proposed use of North Downs Road for access and to the car parking area currently controlled for staff usage.

The proposed is now predicated on community users accessing the site via the new and recently constructed site entrance and parking being accommodated within the Schools existing parking areas. The Highways Engineer has no particular reservations or concerns with community use of an artificial sports pitch noting that the traffic generated by such use will not be significant, the impact on the operation of the site access will be negligible and there generally being sufficient parking available within the site to accommodate the realistic demands of evening and weekend use of the pitch. There may be occasions where conflict occurs between school parking demand and community use particularly during evening periods however the Highways Engineer is satisfied that this can be managed under the terms of a parking management plan. A condition should be imposed on any permission to be granted requiring submission and approval of such.

The only other matter for which the Highways Engineer offers comment is construction and this is capable of management under the terms of a construction management plan to minimise the impact of construction work on highway operation, safety and amenity. This is also a matter capable of conditional control in the event that permission is to be granted.

Comments dated 6th July 2021:

The Highways Engineer has no concern with provision of an artificial sports pitch to replace a grass pitch for school purposes and is supportive in principle of community use of the pitch outside of school hours. That been said, the Highways Engineer has a number of concerns with this proposal as submitted.

The application site edged red does not include any car parking areas and shows access to be taken from North Downs Road. The lack of identified parking within the context of the application is a concern as this suggests that community users of the pitch would not have access to off street parking. The suggestion that access it to be

from North Downs Road is also concerning and seems to be contradictory to the supporting information provided with the application.

The supporting information (in particular the Design and Access Statement) is misleading. Paragraph 6.1 refers to the site being accessed via the existing entrance off Cheadle Road whereas paragraph 6.3 refers to the car park to the east of/fronting the school with 82 spaces being available in association with the proposal. This parking area is accessed from North Downs Road, not Cheadle Road.

For the avoidance of doubt the parking area accessed from North Downs Road is controlled under the original planning permission for use by school staff only. This use restriction was for reason of the tidal nature of vehicle arrivals and departures for a long stay car park and the means of access and approach road network not being entirely suitable for intensification in vehicular use. As such, the Highways Engineer will not be accepting of the use of the staff parking area for traffic associated with the pitch, i.e. community use, outside of normal school hours. Car parking to serve any community use must occur within the other 58 space car park provided for the school for visitor and drop off and pick up purposes or the 40 spaces that are under lease control within the College site, both of these areas being accessed from the new main site entrance that has been formed off Cheadle Road.

The application needs revising to clarify access arrangements and clearly identify acceptable parking arrangements for community use. Any proposed use that is reliant on access via North Downs Road and use of the staff car park will not be supported and the Highways Engineer would oppose the application on the grounds of likely unacceptable impact on the safety and operation of the highway network and the unsuitability of the means of access.

The Highways Engineer adds that condition 11 on the planning permission DC/066326 which refers to community use does not appear to have been discharged. Notwithstanding this the community scheme submission (that appears to remain pending) specifically refers to community use of the car park accessed off Cheadle Road outside of school hours. Whilst this they are in principle supportive of, it is the case that this understanding is contradictory to the supporting information that has been provided within this latest application.

The Highways Engineer also notes that some information provided with respect to construction management is misleading and contradictory. The Design and Access Statement at paragraph 6.3 refers to construction access to be via the vehicular access off Cheadle Road whereas the accompanying Construction Management Plan is focused on all construction access to be from North Downs Road. Whilst construction management is not really a determinant for planning permission and is a matter capable of conditional control, misleading and conflicting information needs to be addressed and the Highways Engineer has to be clear that they will not be supporting of the use of North Downs Road for any construction purposes. The submission should be revised to reflect this it is otherwise it would be a matter for pre-commencement conditional control.

SMBC Public Rights of Way Officer

From the drainage plan: "Overland Flows In the unlikely event of system failure. Overland flows will be directed away from any buildings towards the west of the pitch towards the watercourse."

Footpath 64 CG runs between the planned pitch and the watercourse. While natural water flow across land into a neighbouring property is allowed, the words "directed away from buildings...towards the watercourse" indicate a "channelling" that is not allowed, particularly onto a highway. I would ask that additional mitigation measures be considered to minimise flow of water onto the Right of Way.

SMBC Arboriculture Officer

Comments dated 24th September 2021:

As below.

Comments dated 25th May 2021:

Conservation Area Designations

There is no Conservation Area protection within this site or affected by this development.

Legally Protected Trees

There are no legally protected trees within this site or affected by this development.

Recommendations

The proposed construction and associated infrastructure of the site predominantly sits within the informal grounds and hard standing areas of the site and will not have a major impact on trees on site, trees located on highway verges or neighbouring the site.

The main concern for the development is the potential accidental damage to any of the trees on the edge of the site as there is no proposed impact but several root protection areas on the fringe of the development, as well as the ever increasing urban aspect of the site and surrounding areas through construction works. There is no indicative tree planting shown on the plan to off-set the ever increasing urban setting, so some consideration needs to be given to the screening of the site from the footpaths and residential boundaries, whilst also considering the education aspect of trees with fruit trees being used on site with several new trees being planted to soften the aspect of the site and improving the biodiversity of the site.

Specific consideration needs to be given to the potential benefit urban tree planting throughout the site to enhance the biodiversity, the amenity and the SUDs capacity through hard landscaped tree pits, these hard landscaped tree pits will also assist in the Green Infrastructure for the site and surrounding borough as the sites surrounding brooks are subject to major flooding so any increase in hard landscaped areas will only further impact on this issue.

The proposed development will not impact on the trees on site. Due to the ever increasing urban aspect of Cheadle a compensatory planting scheme needs to be considered to lessen the impact on the biodiversity of the site.

The tree planting will impact on biodiversity, aesthetics and general screening of the site. The development will need to supply protective fencing and advisory notices to prevent any damage, accidental spillage or compaction on the trees and their root systems.

In addition to the protective fencing some consideration should be given to the tree planting as part of the scheme to be detailed within a landscaping plan and this should include a level of biodiversity and fruit interest as well as considering the use of variegated holly tree which offers evergreen screening in the species proposed and where possible location should consider screening of the proposed development in the ever increasing urban area.

In principle the proposed construction will not have an impact on the trees on site and within neighbouring properties, therefore it is acceptable in its current format with the confirmation from agents for the level of replacement planting to assure there is an enhancement of tree cover in the site to work within council policy and the Green Infrastructure strategy and the submission of detailed landscaping schemes submitted to discharge the conditions and consideration of the above is given in these schemes, compliance with the root protection plans for fencing at the side and rear of the site.

If further information can be submitted by agents in relation to the tree enhancement requirements as detailed above then the application may be considered favourably. The root protection plan will need to be conditioned and complied with prior to works commencing on site.

Conditions are requested regarding the protection and retention of existing trees, and regarding new planting, are requested.

Nature Development Officer

Comments dated 3rd June 2021:

Nature Conservation Designations

The site itself does not have any nature conservation designations. Directly to the west of the application site the brook and associated woodland corridor, along with Bruntwood Park, are designated as Green Chain. Part of Bruntwood Park is also designated as a Site of Biological Importance (SBI). It is important that the proposals do not adversely impact the integrity of the designated areas.

The Green Chain designation has not been referred to within the submitted ecology report.

The woodland corridor adjacent to the site is listed on Natural England Inventory as Priority Habitat (albeit low confidence).

Legally Protected Species

An ecological appraisal report has been submitted with the application (RPS, 2021). An extended Phase 1 Habitat survey was carried out in February 2021 to identify and map the habitats on site and assess the potential for protected species to be present and impacted by the proposals. It is acknowledged that the survey was

carried out at a sub-optimal time of year for botanical surveys however this is not considered to be a significant limitation owing to the habitats present. The site comprises short-mown amenity grassland, with tall ruderal, scrub and broadleaved woodland in the wider area.

No potential roosting features were identified within trees in the vicinity of the application area. The woodland habitat will however offer foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

All breeding birds and their nests are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). No suitable nesting opportunities were identified on site but the scrub and trees in the wider area provide suitable nesting habitat.

No badger setts were recorded during the survey but mammal pathways were observed – evidence of use by fox was observed. Badgers and their setts are legally protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Ponds and their surrounding terrestrial habitat have the potential to support amphibians such as great crested newt (GCN). GCN receive the same level of legal protection as bats (outlined above). One pond is located within 500m of the application site (approx. 450m to the west) and this pond has a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) score of 'poor' indicating it has poor suitability to support GCN. Given the distance of this pond from the application area, and that the habitats on site (short-mown grassland) are of limited value to GCN, the risk of GCN being present within the application area and being impacted by the proposals is considered to be low.

No impacts on the banks of the watercourse or works within 10m of the watercourse (which runs just beyond the west boundary of the site) are anticipated although existing pipework will be used to discharge surface run-off from the proposed sports pitch. The risk of significantly impacting riparian species such as otter and water vole (should these species be present) is considered to be low provided that best practice pollution prevention measures are followed. Otter receive the same legal protection as bats and GCN (outlined above) whereas water vole are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Recommendations

There is considered to be sufficient ecology information available to inform determination of the application.

It is recommended that a Construction and Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) is prepared to ensure that the nearby woodland corridor and stream habitats are adequately protected from potential adverse impacts during construction (this can be conditioned as part of any planning consent granted). This will help protect the Green Chain and SBI and ensure the developed accords with policies NE1.2 and NE3.1 of the retained UDP. Appropriate measures to protect wildlife are also detailed in section 5 of the ecology report and should be implemented in full (can be secured

via condition).

No evidence of or potential for a bat roost was recorded in the tree line along the west boundary of the application site. The woodland corridor is however likely to represent an important bat foraging and commuting route to habitats within the wider landscape. As such, (and also to ensure the proposed scheme does not lead to light disturbance which may adversely affect the integrity of the SBI and Green Chain – e.g. due to disturbance of wildlife). Particular attention should therefore be given to the principles outlined in Bat Conservation Trust guidance:

<https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2018/09/new-guidance-on-bats-and-lighting> and sections 5.3.2-5.3.4 of the ecology report.

It is acknowledged that the lighting will be mainly used during the football season (much of this period coincides with the bat hibernation season (November-March) when bat activity is reduced) but the Design and Access statement also states that there will use during the spring and summer period for football training. Lit times will be limited to 21:00 (according to the design and access statement). This will result in some dark periods throughout the night. Suitable measures to further reduce the risk of light disturbance include:

- Avoid blue-white short wavelength lights: these have a significant negative impact on the insect prey of bats. Use alternatives such as warm-white (long wavelength) lights as this will reduce the impact on insects and therefore bats
- Asymmetric beam flood lighting to decrease the horizontal light spill (it is not clear as to whether or not the proposed lighting already encompasses this)
- Reduce column height to reduce light spill on adjacent habitats
- Further reduce lit times from that currently proposed
- Landscape planting to try and screen important wildlife corridors and reduce light disturbance to the designated SBI and Green Chain (this needs to be less than 3 lux at ground level and light spill plans submitted with the application suggest this is likely to be the case)

In relation to the last bullet point it is recommended that a landscaping scheme is submitted for review by the LPA. Biodiversity enhancements are expected within the developments in line with national and local planning policy (NPPF and paragraph 3.345 of the LDF). In addition to supplementary landscape planting along the woodland corridor, provision of bat and bird roosting/nesting facilities around the site (in unlit areas) is also advised (these recommendations are also outlined in section 5.4 of the ecology report). A Biodiversity Enhancements Scheme, detailing the proposed landscaping (number, species etc.) and the proposed number, type and location of bat/bird boxes to be provided should therefore be conditioned as part of any planning permission granted.

Comments dated 3rd June 2021:

Nature Conservation Designations

The site itself does not have any nature conservation designations. Directly to the west of the application site the brook and associated woodland corridor, along with Bruntwood Park, are designated as Green Chain. Part of Bruntwood Park is also designated as a Site of Biological Importance (SBI). It is important that the proposals do not adversely impact the integrity of the designated areas.

Legally Protected Species

The woodland corridor adjacent to the site is listed on Natural England Inventory as Priority Habitat (albeit low confidence).

Many trees have the potential to support roosting bats. All species of bats, and their roosts, are protected under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. The latter implements the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. Bats are included in Schedule 2 of the Regulations as 'European Protected Species of animals' (EPS).

Under the Regulations it is an offence to:

- 1) Deliberately capture or kill a wild EPS
- 2) Deliberately disturb a wild EPS in such a way that significantly affects:
 - a) the ability of a significant group to survive, breed, rear or nurture young.
 - b) the local distribution of that species.
- 3) Damage or destroy a breeding place or resting site of such an animal.

Trees/vegetation can also offer suitable nesting bird habitat. All breeding birds and their nests are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

No ecological survey appears to have been submitted with this application and it is therefore not possible for potential impacts on protected species to be fully assessed.

Recommendations

An ecological assessment of the site should be carried out prior to the determination of this application. This survey should include an assessment of the site to support protected species such as bats, and nesting birds. This work should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist, at an appropriate time of year following best practice guidance. Depending on the findings of the initial survey further survey work may be required, and this will also need to be submitted prior to the determination of the application. Assessment of the impact of the proposed work on designated sites (Green Chain and SBI) as well as protected species and appropriate mitigation is also required. Once this information is available, I will be able to comment on the application further.

The requirement for the survey information prior to determination of the application is

in line with national and local planning policy and is reinforced by legal cases which emphasise the duty the local planning authority has to fully consider protected species when determining planning applications.

The ecological assessment should include consideration of the potential for bat roosts to be present – e.g. in the tree line along the west boundary of the application site. Should a roost be present, the lighting proposals risk disturbance of the roost. Even if the ecological survey can demonstrate that a roost is unlikely to be present, the woodland corridor is likely to represent an important bat foraging and commuting route to habitats within the wider landscape.

Moreover, it is important that the proposed scheme does not lead to light disturbance which may adversely affect the integrity of the SBI and Green Chain (e.g. due to disturbance of wildlife). Particular attention should therefore be given to the principles outlined in Bat Conservation Trust guidance:
<https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2018/09/new-guidance-on-bats-and-lighting>

It is acknowledged that the lighting will be mainly used during the football season (much of this period coincides with the bat hibernation season (November-March) when bat activity is reduced) but the Design and Access statement also states that there will use during the spring and summer period for football training. Lit times will be limited to 21:00 (according to the design and access statement). This will result in some dark periods throughout the night. Nonetheless, it is advised that further consideration is given as to how potential light disturbance impacts can be further reduced. Suitable measures may include:

- Avoid blue-white short wavelength lights: these have a significant negative impact on the insect prey of bats. Use alternatives such as warm-white (long wavelength) lights as this will reduce the impact on insects and therefore bats
- Asymmetric beam flood lighting to decrease the horizontal light spill (it is not clear as to whether or not the proposed lighting already encompasses this)
- Reduce column height to reduce light spill on adjacent habitats
- Further reduce lit times from that currently proposed
- Landscape planting to try and screen important wildlife corridors and reduce light disturbance to the designated SBI and Green Chain (this needs to be less than 3 lux at ground level)

Opportunities for biodiversity enhancements should also be sought within the development in line with national and local planning policy (NPPF and paragraph 3.345 of the LDF). Suitable measures include additional landscape planting along the woodland corridor and the provision of bat and bird roosting/nesting facilities around the site (in unlit areas) A landscaping scheme and details regarding the proposed number, type and location of bat/bird boxes can be secured via condition as part of any planning permission granted.

It is also recommended that a Construction and Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) is prepared to ensure that the woodland corridor and stream habitats are adequately protected from potential adverse impacts during construction (this can be conditioned as part of any planning consent granted).

SMBC Environmental Health Officer (Amenity)

Comments dated 31st August 2021:

The above has been assessed in relation to Quality of Life. The proposal has been assessed in terms of impact on neighbouring residential amenity by way of light spillage and noise. Due to the level of objection to this proposal, reference has been made to the previous NIA. This service has assessed and accepts the NIA and Light Spillage Reports and has no objection to the above proposal.

Location

Residential gardens directly face the proposed AGP to the east on East Downs Road, to the south at Willows Avenue and Taplow Grove to the south-west. The dwellings to the north are shielded from the AGP by the school building.

Proposal & Existing Planning Status

Laurus Cheadle Hulme opened in September 2018. The introduction of an artificial grass pitch (AGP), expected to primarily be used for football, also available for other appropriate general training/physical education activities. Located on the existing grass playing field; positioned in such a way that existing grass sports pitches/facilities will be retained alongside the proposed AGP.

It is understood that full planning permission was granted in 2017 for DC/066326: Land To The South West Of The Cheadle College, Development of a nursery, primary and secondary school with sports hall and sports pitches, and associated boundary treatments, external lighting, landscaping, parking and access arrangements.

The 2017, DC/066326 included 2 grass pitches and netball courts to be located close to the rear boundaries of residential properties to the South and East of the site on East Downs Road and Willows Avenue. The pitches would be made available for community use outside of normal school hours, including weekday evenings and weekends.

Planning Approval DC/066326, 20th October 2017:

Condition 22. The development hereby approved shall only be made available for use during the following hours:

07:00 – 21:00 - Sports Pitches, Outdoor Play Areas and Multi-Use Games Area's

07:00 – 22:00 – School Buildings

Reason: In order to minimise the impact of the proposed use upon the amenities of the residents of nearby properties in accordance with Policies CDH1.2, "Non Residential Development in Predominantly Residential Areas", E3.1, "Protection of

Employment Areas", of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review and Policy SIE-1 "Quality Places" of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

Therefore the principle of development has been established. It appears that the hours of operation 07:00 – 21:00 for the sports pitches has previously been approved.

The current application (DC/080594) seeks planning permission to introduce a new external Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) onto the existing School playing field/ sports pitch.

The proposed replacement / 'change of use', of one of the two pitches (already approved) from a grass pitch to an 'artificial grass pitch' with the addition of floodlighting. An intensification of an already established use as the proposed AGP, will avoid closed season maintenance works and allow the site to operate all year round.

Noise associated with school activities is a character of the area.

The proposed hours of operation: 07:00 – 21:00, seven days a week including Bank Holidays, are the same as that already approved under DC/066326, 20th October 2017:

Condition 22. The development hereby approved shall only be made available for use during the following hours: 07:00 – 21:00 - Sports Pitches, Outdoor Play Areas and Multi-Use Games Area's.

Noise

The D&A, by MUGA-UK Ltd, Ref: MCA-MUK2434-DAS Rev C, Date: 24th February 2021 section 5.10 Noise:

"A 2.5m high timber acoustic fence has been included to the south east corner of the proposal and also adjacent the eastern and southern boundaries of the existing tennis courts, to mitigate noise levels to surrounding properties along the eastern boundary.

For further details refer to Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Acoustic Consultants Ltd dated February 2021 which accompanies this application."

Examination of the NIA, submitted in support to the proposal by Acoustic Consultants Limited, Proposed Artificial Grass Pitch, Laurus Cheadle Hulme, Ref: 8785/DO, v.4, 28 March 2021, has not recommended the inclusion of a 2.5m acoustic fence.

There is no specific noise assessment methodology or criteria for the assessment of recreational use impact upon noise sensitive residential occupiers. The NIA consultant, has measured and modelled 'typical' noise level data from activities measured at existing AGP's on the nearby noise-sensitive residential properties. An

environmental site noise survey was not completed, as the NIA consultant did not consider it necessary for the assessment of impact at this site AND it was not possible to undertake representative noise levels through site measurement due to the impact Covid19 restrictions on transportation and activity noise (NIA dated: 28 March 2021 – Covid19 restrictions applied).

The NIA predicted noise level of 48 dB LAeq (1 hour) is below the proposed criterion of 50 dB LAeq (1 hour) derived from WHO1999 as being the threshold for the onset of moderate community annoyance and the predicted noise level within the dwellings achieves the WHO1999 guidance “To enable casual conversation indoors during daytime, the sound level of interfering noise should not exceed 35 dB LAeq.” HOWEVER, it is the short duration peak noise – shouting, ball hits – that will generate residential annoyance/ complaint. The NIA consultant has attempted to assess this type of noise: There are no specific noise criteria for maximum noise levels from this type of noise during the day. There is a night time maximum noise criterion of 45dB LAmx(fast) for bedrooms at night in BS8233:2014 and WHO1999... During the daytime, a higher maximum noise level is likely to be permissible but is not stated in any relevant guidance documents.

The NIA consultant concludes the proposals are considered acceptable in terms of noise: the proposals result in minor to moderate change in the overall noise climate, depending on the time of day. However, although there is a moderate impact on the existing noise climate the overall levels are below those considered to cause onset community annoyance. Resultantly, it is expected that noise levels generated from the proposed AGP would be audible at the NSR but not at a noise level which is intrusive and therefore acceptable in terms of noise impact.

As the March 2021 NIA, did not undertake background noise measurements at the site, this service has examined the previous and original NIA (by, Ramball, 22 June 201, LAURUS CHEADLE HULME NEW SCHOOL, Ref 1620003434) submitted in support of: DC/066326, Land To The South West Of The Cheadle College, Development of a nursery, primary and secondary school with sports hall and sports pitches, and associated boundary treatments, external lighting, landscaping, parking and access arrangements.

The DC/066326 proposal included 2 grass pitches and the netball courts to be situated close to the rear boundaries of the residential properties to the South and East of the site on East Downs Road and Willows Avenue, with the pitches available for community use outside of normal school hours, including weekday evenings and weekends.

Noise levels across the site were measured during the EFA feasibility study by Clement Acoustics noise survey report (Document reference 11532-ENS-01 dated 21st October 2016). Background noise measurements confirms that noise from aircraft is the primary noise source affecting both the site and the residential receptors during the daytime and evening periods. The site is directly under the

flightpath for Manchester Airport. The noise climate in and around the site is dominated by the noise of aircraft arriving and departing from Manchester Airport. Noise levels across the site are fairly consistent at a level of between 60 to 63 dB LAeq and around 79 dB LAmax throughout the daytime period (0700h to 2300h).

The Sports pitch was measured at 45m from the nearest NSD at East Downs Road – the NIA calculated that the noise from the use of the pitches (i.e. individual noisy events (LAmax)) will be at a level significantly lower than the noise levels (LAmax) currently experienced at the boundaries to the residential properties.

Officer Assessment – NIA – Accepted

The NIA: by Acoustic Consultants Limited, Proposed Artificial Grass Pitch, Laurus Cheadle Hulme, Ref: 8785/DO, v.4, 28 March 2021. The reports methodology, conclusion are accepted.

In reaching this decision, this service has also considered the previous NIA, submitted in support of the DC/066326, a NIA was submitted by, Ramball, 22 June 201, LAURUS CHEADLE HULME NEW SCHOOL, Ref 1620003434.

This service accepts, that it is expected that noise levels generated from the proposed AGP would be audible at the NSR, but not at a noise level which is intrusive and therefore acceptable in terms of noise impact. The noise from the use of the pitches (i.e. individual noisy events (LAmax)) will be at a level significantly lower than the noise levels (LAmax) currently experienced at the boundaries to the residential properties.

The principle of development has been established. It appears that the hours of operation 07:00 – 21:00 for the sports pitches has previously been approved. In addition, noise associated with school activities is a character of the area.

Light Spillage Assessment – Accepted

The purpose of the proposed lighting scheme is to allow the AGP to be used during periods of low natural light levels (in winter this can be morning, late afternoon and evenings) between 07:00 – 21:00.

The current use of the two non-illuminated pitches will be dictated by natural light levels. Use, will be greater in the summer months where natural brighter evenings will extend its use.

It would be reasonable to expect, that during brighter nights, when the grass sports pitches are in use, that sensitive residential receptors surrounding the site, would also be utilising their garden areas to a greater degree than during the winter: colder, darker months.

The use of the two sports pitches during the summer, brighter later nights, has not resulted in any noise complaints to this service. Conversely in the winter darker

months, residents are less likely to fully utilise garden areas for entertainment purposes, therefore are less likely to be disturbed by extended play/training on the proposed AGP.

External Lighting Assessment – Accepted

An external lighting/ illumination assessment has been submitted in support of the application: Halliday Lighting, Laurus High School, Floodlighting Lighting Impact, Study/Overspill Readings, Project Ref: 2282, Report By – JM, 23/02/2021 and Drawing Title: Source Intensity Calculations, Drawing No: HLS2282, date 23/02/2021, details shows the proposed mast locations, floodlight orientation, pitch lighting levels and overspill predictions.

The proposed external lighting/ illumination scheme, complies the Institute of Lighting Professionals, Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2011, Design Guidance for exterior lighting installations. The Lux levels are in compliance with the lighting design guidance for an E3 environmental zone, Suburban Surrounding, a Medium district brightness lighting environment. The Obtrusive Light Limitations for Exterior Lighting Installations – General Observers, Light intrusion into windows is:

- 10 lux pre 23.00 and
- 2 lux post 23.00.

The proposed external lighting levels on the plans, shows a 5 lux light spillage contour predicted beyond the AGP – retained within the school grounds. As the light spillage will reduce further over distance to the rear gardens it is in compliance with the above 10 lux pre 23:00.

The E3 environmental zone is referenced at condition 24 of planning approval DC/066326, 20th October 2017:

Condition 24. All external lighting associated with the development hereby approved shall not exceed the Design Guidance set out for Zone E3 (Suburban) within Table 2 of the Institute of lighting engineers Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting.

Reason: To ensure that any external illumination is the minimum necessary for its purpose in accordance with Policies SIE-1 "Quality Places" and SIE-3 "Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment" of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

Recommendation

The external lighting scheme : Halliday Lighting, Laurus High School, Floodlighting Lighting Impact, Study/Overspill Readings, Project Ref: 2282, Report By – JM, 23/02/2021 and Drawing Title: Source Intensity Calculations, Drawing No: HLS2282, date 23/02/2021, shall be installed and thereafter operated in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, 20 July 2021:

AMENITY para. 130 (f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users

LIGHT para. 185 (c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation

SMBC Environmental Health Officer (Contaminated Land)

Comments dated 30th September 2021:

The proposed development site has not been identified as potentially contaminated, the developer will need to keep a watching brief for any unexpected contamination during development and if any is found or suspected then this is to be reported to the LPA. It is recommended that an informative to this effect is attached to any planning permission granted.

Comments dated 4th June 2021:

I have reviewed the Phase 2 ground investigation report submitted in support of the proposed development. The report concluded that soils are suitable for re-use on site and that no further investigation works or remediation works are necessary. As such the developer will just need to keep a watching brief for any unexpected contamination. It is recommended that an informative to this effect is attached to any planning permission granted.

SMBC Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

Comments dated 29th September 2021:

Great, thanks for confirming. In this case and following on from our previous review, we have no further

comment and would still recommend approval. .

Comments dated 2nd June 2021:

The LLFA has no comment on DC/080594 and subsequently approves the planning proposal.

Manchester Airport Safeguarding Officer

Comments dated 13th September 2021:

As below.

Comments dated 27th May 2021:

The Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport has assessed this proposal and its potential to conflict aerodrome Safeguarding criteria. We have no objection to this development, however we request that the following detailed informatives are added to the permission should it be given:

- The applicant's attention is drawn to the new procedures for crane and tall equipment notifications, please see: <https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Airspace/Event-and-obstacle-notification/Cranenotification/>
- All exterior lighting must be capped at the horizontal in accordance with Institution of Lighting Professionals GN01-ILP-Guidance-Note-1- The Reduction of Obtrusive

Light 2021.

It is important that any conditions or advice in this response are applied to a planning approval. Where a Planning Authority proposes to grant permission against the advice of Manchester Airport, or not attach conditions which Manchester Airport has advised, it shall notify Manchester Airport, and the Civil Aviation Authority as specified in the Town & Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosive Storage Areas) Direction 2002.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

Relevant planning policies for the determination of this application are saved policies UOS1.3 'Protection of Local Open Space', L1.1 'Land for Active Recreation', CTF1.1 'Development of Community Facilities', CDH1.2 'Non Residential Development in Predominantly Residential Areas' and CDH1.9 'Community Facilities in Predominantly Residential Areas' of the UDP Review. The aims of these policies and the compliance of the development with them are summarised below. It is noted that neighbour objections have been received which query the need for the proposed facility.

Saved UDP Policy UOS1.3 restricts development within Local Open Space unless it is clearly needed in connection with the outdoor recreational use of the land and it would clearly enhance the overall quality of Local Open Space provision in the area.

The proposed development seeks to provide expanded and improved sporting facilities on the site, enabling the school to deliver the sporting curriculum on site and to offer facilities to local clubs. The existing pitches of similar size are grassed, and are therefore not suitable for use in all weather conditions. The Design and Access Statement states that the Football Association (FA) "have identified a need within the local area for a 3G pitch and as part of the FA framework are prepared to fund the introduction of an appropriate facility at Laurus Cheadle Hulme. An artificial grass pitch (AGP) will provide a good quality football facility that removes weather as a factor and ensures sports fixtures, curriculum activities and general training are not cancelled due to adverse weather or ground conditions. The introduction of this new proposal will expand and improve the facilities available at the School and within the wider community, thus encouraging a wider range of participants. The synthetic pitch will help to raise the standard of play and training opportunities within the local area as well as hopefully enhancing pupil's enjoyment of sport."

The comments provided by Sport England indicate that a need for the development has been identified, and notes that it sought the views of the Football Foundation. The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) identifies a need for one additional AGP in Cheadle. The subsequent Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) which was based on evidence presented in the PPS, identified a need for two artificial grass pitches in Cheadle given the demand from local clubs in the area, and Laurus School is cited as a priority project in the LFFP.

It is therefore considered that an identified need has been established and that the proposed development is clearly needed in connection with the outdoor recreational use of land. Due to the improvements secured by the proposed development, it is considered that the proposal will enhance the overall quality of the Local Open Space compliant with saved policy UOS1.3.

Saved UDP Policy L1.1 seeks to achieve an overall minimum standard for the Borough of 2.4 hectares per thousand population for active recreation. Development of land currently or last used as playing fields will not be permitted unless the playing fields that would be lost would be replaced by a playing field or fields of equivalent or better quantity, quality, usefulness and attractiveness in a location at least as accessible to current and potential users; or the proposed development is for an outdoor sport facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the loss of the playing field.

The proposed development would result in the loss of part of the existing pitch, but would replace that facility with a pitch which can be put to a variety of uses. It is expected that the pitch would primarily be used for football although the facility would also be available for other appropriate general training/physical education activities. The submitted plans indicate that the proposed pitch would be larger than the existing, but this is not considered to be material to its usefulness (an increase of 40sqm as a result of an increase in 4m in width). It is considered that the provision of all weather pitches with fencing and floodlighting which offer use for multiple sports by both the school and external clubs will enhance recreation opportunities in the Borough. As such it is considered that the proposed development will result in the replacement of the existing playing field with a facility of equivalent or better quality, quantity, usefulness and attractiveness in a location that is as accessible to users.

Furthermore, the benefit of the proposal to the development of sport outweighs the loss of the playing field. Sport England has commented that in order to ensure the sporting benefits that outweigh the loss of natural turf playing field are implemented, a Community Use Agreement is required and should be secured by condition. The Design and Access Statement confirms that “a draft Community Use Agreement has not been included with this application but in line with normal practice, the applicant is happy to engage with Sport England/the Council in agreeing a Community Use Agreement as a pre-usage planning condition.” Subject to the imposition of a condition to this effect, the proposed development is in compliance with saved policy L1.1.

Saved UDP Policy CTF1.1 permits proposals for additional community services and facilities provided that they are well located to public transport, achieve satisfactory access, parking and landscaping, cause no harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents and do not result in the loss of urban open space. The supporting text to this policy advises that where development is proposed involving the enhancement of existing community facilities, the widest possible community use will be considered.

The site is served by bus stops on Cheadle Road, approximately 38m north of the pedestrian access to the site. There are a six bus services operating from these stops, with five being schools services. The 42B service provides connections between Woodford and Manchester Piccadilly and in particular, stops in Bramhall, Cheadle Hulme, Didsbury, Withington, Fallowfield and Rusholme. The bus service operates hourly throughout the day, with an increase in services at morning and evening peak times.

Cheadle Hulme Station is the nearest Rail Station at circa 1.45km distance from the site. The walking and cycling route is relatively simple, and is predominantly along adopted highway. The route is good quality, is well lit and the station provides high frequency access to and from multiple origins and destinations.

On this basis the development is considered to be well located in relation to public transport.

The existing car parking within the site would be made available to users of the pitches out of school hours. The Highways Engineer is of the view that the traffic generated by community use will not be significant, and that the impact on the operation of the site access will be negligible. There are generally sufficient parking spaces available within the site to accommodate the realistic demands of evening and weekend use of the pitch. There may be occasions where conflict occurs between school parking demand and community use particularly during evening periods however the Highways Engineer is satisfied that this can be managed under the terms of a parking management plan, to be secured via condition.

The design of the pitch is appropriate to its proposed location. As recommended later in this report, in the interests of biodiversity, a condition should be attached to any planning permission granted to require the submission of a landscaping scheme to include supplementary planting along the western site boundary.

The impact of the development upon the amenities of the neighbouring residents is assessed in more detail later in this report, however it is noted that having regard to the current lawful use of the site, the amenities of neighbouring residents would not be impacted such that it would justify the refusal of planning permission.

On the basis of the above, the proposed development is considered to comply with policy CTF1.1.

Saved UDP Policy CDH1.2 permits non residential development within Predominantly Residential Areas where it can be accommodated without harm to residential amenity. Particular account will be paid to noise, traffic generation and links to public transport, parking, hours of operation, proximity to dwellings, the scale of the proposal and whether the character of the area will be changed.

As noted above in relation to Policy CTF1.1, the impact of the development upon the amenities of the neighbouring residents is assessed in more detail later in this report, however it is noted that having regard to the current lawful use of the site,

the amenities of neighbouring residents would not be impacted such that it would justify the refusal of planning permission.

As noted above in relation to Policy CTF1.1, the Highways Engineer is of the view that the traffic generated by community use will not be significant, and that the impact on the operation of the site access will be negligible. There are generally sufficient parking spaces available within the site to accommodate the realistic demands of evening and weekend use of the pitch. There may be occasions where conflict occurs between school parking demand and community use particularly during evening periods however the Highways Engineer is satisfied that this can be managed under the terms of a parking management plan, to be secured via condition.

With regard to hours of operation, the proposed facility would be for both school and community use. The school building is currently open until 10pm for community sports use and the proposed facility is proposed to have operating hours of 07:00-21:00 Monday-Sunday including Bank Holidays. This is in line with the current operating hours permitted by planning permission DC/066326 which was granted in 2017, and amended in 2018 under application DC/069498.

Issues of noise and light pollution are considered further later in this report, however, Officers are of the view that any impact in this respect will not be unacceptable. On this basis and subject to the imposition of a condition in relation to the hours of operation, the development is considered acceptable.

In terms of proximity to dwellings, it is noted that the pitch would replace an existing grass pitch in the same location, with an increase in width of 4m. The pitch would remain separated from the dwellings to the south by a distance of approximately 98m. The pitch would remain separated from the dwellings to the east by the existing asphalt netball/tennis courts and a distance exceeding 37m. The proposed development is of a similar scale and nature to the existing pitch, and in the same location, and therefore the spatial relationship to neighbouring dwellings is not significantly different to the existing situation. The impacts of noise and lighting on residential amenity are assessed in detail later in this report.

The replacement of a grass pitch with an artificial grass pitch with lighting and fencing is not considered to be of a scale out of keeping with that of the existing school. It is accepted that the development will facilitate increased usage through the provision of floodlighting and a surface which is less dependent on weather and the seasons than the existing grass pitch, however, the site is located in suburban area where there is already a mix of residential, educational and community uses. On this basis it is not considered that the character of the area will be changed.

For the above reasons, the proposed development is considered to comply with policy CDH1.2.

Saved UDP Policy CDH1.9 permits community facilities in Predominantly Residential Areas provided that there is no over-riding detrimental effect on

residential amenity, there is adequate parking provision, highway safety is not prejudiced and the development is accessible by public transport.

The requirements of this policy are similar as in relation to CDH1.2 and for the reasons outlined above and further on in this report, Members are advised that the development is considered policy compliant in this respect.

Paragraph 92(c) of the NPPF states that “planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which... enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”

Paragraph 93(a) of the NPPF states “to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should...plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.”

Paragraph 99 of the NPPF states that “existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

Sport England has commented that the proposed development would broadly meet Paragraph 97(c) of the NPPF (which was revised in July 2021, and is now Paragraph 99(c) as above) and Exception 5 of the Sport England’s policy, which requires that “the proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field”.

The proposed development is considered to be compliant with paragraphs 92, 93 and 99 of the NPPF.

In light of the above, the principle of development could be supported, subject to all other material planning considerations as assessed below.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Core Strategy Policy CS8 and the NPPF welcome development that is designed and landscaped to a high standard and which makes a positive contribution to a sustainable, attractive, safe and accessible built and natural environment. This position is supported by Policy SIE-1 which advises that specific regard should be paid to the use of materials appropriate to the location and the site's context in relation to surrounding buildings (particularly with regard to height, density and massing of buildings).

The NPPF sets out the Government's most up to date position on planning policy and confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment.

It is noted that objections have been received regarding the impact upon the character and appearance of the area, particularly in relation to the siting, scale and height of the proposed development.

A small area of the proposed pitch to the north of the site would be located within the land designated a Predominantly Residential Area, with the remainder being sited within designated Local Open Space, as defined in the UDP Proposals Map.

An established tree belt and Public Right of Way Footpath runs along the western site boundary, between the proposed pitch and the watercourse to the west of the site.

The site is bound to the north by the existing school building, associated car parking areas and sports pitches and playing areas. To the south and east the site is bound by residential development.

The existing character of the locality in the vicinity of the application site is derived mainly from residential properties, with the existing education development within the wider site being an important element in the locality, contributing to the developed suburban character of the area.

Currently, the site benefits from 6 grass pitches, a tennis court, tennis/netball courts, and a grass playing area. The proposed pitch would be sited in place of the largest existing grass pitch which measures 100m x 60m, and is sited south of the school building. The pitches are currently used by the school where possible to deliver the sporting elements of the national curriculum and are made available for use by clubs and organisations outside of the school. The use of the facilities during the evenings and weekends is controlled by the existing planning permission, and no changes to operating hours is proposed (07:00-21:00 Monday to Sunday including Bank Holidays).

In terms of the built form of the development, the proposed pitch, fencing and lighting are not considered to be out of keeping with the existing developed nature of the wider school site and suburban location. So far as the proposed use is concerned, this part of the site is already used for sporting and recreational purposes by the school and outside clubs; that proposed is no different and will not impact adversely on the character of the locality.

The proposals include the siting of storage container to the east of the proposed pitch, and the provision of a spectator area. It is noted that neighbour objections have been received in relation to the appearance of the proposed container. Whilst Officers are of the view that a permanent structure may be a more appropriate design solution, it is also noted that the proposed container would be sited next to the sports pitch and spectator area, it is considered to be of a reasonable scale (6.1m in depth, 2.4m in width and 2.59m in height), and it would be finished in green in order to assimilate with the surrounding pitch and playing fields. The proposed storage container is therefore considered acceptable, as it would not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

The proposed sports fencing would measure 4.5m and be sited around the perimeter of the pitch. It is noted that neighbour objections have been received in relation to the visual impact of the proposed fencing. The Design and Access Statement confirms that the proposed fencing would be open mesh fencing, finished in a dark green colour. The fencing would be fitted with inserts to reduce rattle and vibration from ball impacts. The fence is required to prevent ball loss and prevent harm to individuals outside of the pitch, and is consistent with current Football Association requirements. The fencing would be set within the context of the school playing fields, and would be well separated from the neighbouring residential dwellings. On balance, the proposed fencing is considered to be acceptable.

The proposed floodlighting would be provided by 6no. 15m high columns. It is noted that neighbour objections have been received in relation to the impacts of the proposed lighting, and the impacts of the columns. The proposed lighting columns would exceed the height some of the surrounding development, and as a result of its siting, will be prominent when viewed from inside the school site. As a result of the siting of the proposed development within the site and away from the boundaries with the neighbouring residential properties, the impact on public views will be limited. Views from the public spaces west of the site will be limited as a result of the existing tree belt which is to be enhanced through a landscaping scheme (recommended later in this report, in the interest of biodiversity). Officers note the benefits of the proposed flood lighting in terms of the usability of the proposed pitch and also note the nature of the use of the site as existing for sports and recreation. On balance, the proposed lighting columns are not considered to result in harm to the character and appearance of the area such that this would warrant refusal of the application.

It is recommended later in this report that a landscaping scheme is required by condition in the interests of biodiversity, and this would also serve to ensure that the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area in accordance with Core Strategy Policies H-1, CS8, SIE-1 and SIE-3.

Impact Upon On Residential Amenity

Development Management policy SIE-1 advises, "development that is designed and landscaped to the highest contemporary standard, paying high regard to the built and/or natural environment within which it is sited, will be given positive

consideration. Specific account should be had of..." a number of factors including, "the site's context in relation to surrounding buildings and spaces (particularly with regard to the height, density and massing of buildings);" "Provision, maintenance and enhancement (where suitable) of satisfactory levels of access, privacy and amenity for future, existing and neighbouring users and residents; The potential for a mixture of compatible uses to attract people to live, work and play in the same area, facilitating and encouraging sustainable, balanced communities."

In respect of impacts on residential amenity, impacts arising from noise disturbance and light pollution are key considerations. The application is accompanied by noise and lighting assessments. The Environmental Health Officer for Amenity has assessed the proposal and their comments are provided in full in the "Consultee Comments" section above. It is noted that neighbour objections have been received in relation to disturbance from noise and lighting, and in relation to the proposed operating hours.

The proposed sports pitch would be installed on the site of an existing grass pitch which currently has permitted operating hours of 07:00 – 21:00 as controlled by Condition 22 of planning permission DC/066326 and the amended planning permission reference DC/069498.

Noise

The application is supported by a Noise Impact Assessment. The submitted noise assessment does not include a specific noise assessment methodology or criteria for the assessment of recreational use impact upon noise sensitive residential occupiers. The Noise Impact Assessment has measured and modelled typical noise level data from activities measured at existing pitches on the nearby noise-sensitive residential properties. An environmental site noise survey was not completed, as the Noise Impact Assessment did not consider it necessary for the assessment of impact at this site and it was not possible to undertake representative noise levels through site measurement due to the impact COVID-19 restrictions on transportation and activity noise (the Noise Impact Assessment is dated 28th March 2021 when some restrictions applied).

As the March 2021 Noise Impact Assessment did not undertake background noise measurements at the site, the Environmental Health Officer has examined the Noise Impact Assessment submitted in support of planning application reference DC/066326 as a part of their assessment. Planning application reference DC/066326 granted planning permission for the development of a nursery, primary and secondary school with sports hall and sports pitches, and associated boundary treatments, external lighting, landscaping, parking and access arrangements, and was amended in 2018 under application DC/069498.

The Noise Impact Assessment concludes that the proposals are considered acceptable in terms of noise as the proposals would result in a minor to moderate change in the overall noise climate, depending on the time of day. However, although there is a moderate impact on the existing noise climate the overall levels are below those considered to cause onset community annoyance. As a result, it is expected that noise levels generated from the proposed development

would be audible at the noise sensitive receptors but not at a noise level which is intrusive and is therefore acceptable in terms of noise impact.

The Environmental Health Officer concludes that the methodology and conclusion of the Noise Impact Assessment are accepted.

Lighting

The application is supported by a Lighting Impact Assessment which provides details of the proposed lighting locations, floodlight orientation, lighting levels and lighting overspill predictions. The Lighting Impact Assessment is accepted by the Environmental Health Officer as the proposed lighting scheme complies with the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2011, Design Guidance for Exterior Lighting Installations.

It is also noted that the proposed lighting would be in line with the restrictions attached to the original planning permission for the site. Condition 24 of planning permission reference DC/066326 and the Condition 24 of the amended permission reference DC/069498 limits the level of external illumination so that it shall not exceed the Design Guidance set out for Zone E3 (Suburban) within Table 2 of the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting.

The Environment Officer has requested that a condition is attached to any planning permission granted to require that the external lighting is installed in accordance with the approved details. Officers recommend that a condition to this effect is attached to any planning permission granted.

It is concluded that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact upon the residential amenities of the locality, subject to control through conditions, in accordance with the NPPF and the development plan, including Core Strategy Policy SIE-3.

It is noted that neighbour objections have been received which raise concerns regarding crime and antisocial behaviour, including shouting and foul language. Officers note these concerns, however the site is occupied by a school and the pitches are currently permitted to operate between 07:00-21:00, as proposed. On this basis, Officers consider it unlikely that there would be a significant increase in crime and antisocial behaviour arising from the proposed development.

Highway Safety, Traffic Generation and Parking

Core Strategy policy CS9 supported by Policy T-1 requires development to be in locations which are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Policy T-2 requires developments to provide car parking in accordance with the maximum standards and confirms that developers will need to demonstrate that developments will avoid resulting in inappropriate on street parking that causes harm to highway safety. Developments are expected to be of a safe and practical design (Policy T-3). The NPPF confirms at paragraph 111 that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an

unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The Highways Engineer has assessed the proposal and their comments are provided in the “Consultee Comments” section above. It is noted that neighbour objections have been received in relation to car parking provision, increased traffic and highway safety.

As noted in the Highways Engineer’s comments, concerns were initially raised regarding the proposed use of North Downs Road for access, the use of the car parking area currently controlled for staff usage, and the consistency of the submitted documents. These concerns were also raised in neighbour objections.

Following amendments, the proposal is now predicated on community users accessing the site via the new and recently constructed site entrance to Cheadle Road, with parking being accommodated within the existing parking areas.

The Highways Engineer is of the view that the traffic generated by community use will not be significant, and that the impact on the operation of the site access will be negligible. It is also commented that there are generally sufficient parking spaces available within the site to accommodate the realistic demands of evening and weekend use of the pitch. There may be occasions where conflict occurs between school parking demand and community use particularly during evening periods however the Highways Engineer is satisfied that this can be managed under the terms of a parking management plan. It is recommended that a condition is attached to any planning permission granted to require the submission of a parking management plan in order to manage any issues arising from conflicting parking demands at the site.

It is noted that a number of revisions of a construction management plan have been submitted in support of the proposal. Additional detail will be required for approval, and therefore it is recommended that a condition is attached to any planning permission granted to require the submission of a construction management plan in order to minimise the impact of construction work on highway operation, safety and amenity.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Core Strategy Policy SD-6 requires development to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) so as to manage the run-off of water from the site. Development on previously developed (brownfield) land must reduce the rate of unattenuated run-off by a minimum of 50% if it is within an identified Critical Drainage Area (CDA). Until CDAs have been identified in detail the same reduction (a minimum of 50%) will be required of developments on brownfield sites in all areas; once detailed CDAs have been identified the minimum required reduction of run-off on brownfield sites outside of CDAs will be 30%. Development on greenfield (not previously developed) sites will be required, as a minimum, to ensure that the rate of run-off is not increased.

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low risk). The Lead Local Flood Authority has assessed the submitted drainage details, and raises no objections. It is recommended that a condition is attached to any planning permission granted to require compliance with the submitted details.

The Public Rights of Way Officer has commented that Footpath 64 CG runs between the planned pitch and the watercourse. While natural water flow across land into a neighbouring property is allowed, the words "directed away from buildings...towards the watercourse" in the submitted documents indicate a "channelling" that is not allowed, particularly onto a highway. They request that additional mitigation measures be considered to minimise flow of water onto the Right of Way, and it is recommended that an informative to this effect is attached to any planning permission granted, for the attention of the applicant.

Trees and Landscaping

The Arboriculture Officer has assessed the proposal and their comments are provided in the "Consultee Comments" section above. There are no legally protected trees within this site or affected by this development.

The main concern for the development is the potential accidental damage to any of the trees on the edge of the site as there is no proposed impact but several root protection areas on the fringe of the development, as well as the ever increasing urban aspect of the site and surrounding areas through construction works.

There is no indicative tree planting shown on the plan to off-set the urban setting, so some consideration needs to be given to the screening of the site from the footpaths and residential boundaries, whilst also considering the education aspect of trees. It is recommended that fruit trees are used on site with several new trees being planted to soften the aspect of the site and improve the biodiversity of the site. Specific consideration needs to be given to the potential benefit urban tree planting throughout the site to enhance the biodiversity, the amenity and the SUDs capacity through hard landscaped tree pits.

The development will need to include protective fencing and advisory notices to prevent any damage, accidental spillage or compaction on the existing trees and their root systems.

It is recommended that conditions are attached to any planning permission granted regarding the protection and retention of existing trees, and to require new tree planting.

Biodiversity

The Nature Development Officer has assessed the proposal and their comments are provided in the "Consultee Comments" section above. It is noted that neighbour objections have been received in relation to biodiversity, particularly in relation to the replacement of a grass pitch with artificial grass.

The site itself does not have any nature conservation designations. Directly to the west of the application site the brook and associated woodland corridor, along with Bruntwood Park, are designated as Green Chain. Part of Bruntwood Park is also designated as a Site of Biological Importance (SBI). It is important that the proposals do not adversely impact the integrity of the designated areas.

The woodland corridor adjacent to the site is listed on Natural England Inventory as Priority Habitat (albeit low confidence).

An ecological appraisal report has been submitted with the application (RPS, 2021). No potential roosting features were identified within trees in the vicinity of the application area. The woodland habitat will however offer foraging and commuting habitat for bats. All breeding birds and their nests are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). No suitable nesting opportunities were identified on site but the scrub and trees in the wider area provide suitable nesting habitat.

No badger setts were recorded during the survey but mammal pathways were observed and evidence of use by fox was observed. Badgers and their setts are legally protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Ponds and their surrounding terrestrial habitat have the potential to support amphibians such as great crested newt (GCN). One pond is located within 500m of the application site (approx. 450m to the west) and this pond as a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) score of 'poor' indicating it has poor suitability to support GCN. Given the distance of this pond from the application area, and that the habitats on site (short-mown grassland) are of limited value to GCN, the risk of GCN being present within the application area and being impacted by the proposals is considered to be low.

No impacts on the banks of the watercourse or works within 10m of the watercourse (which runs just beyond the west boundary of the site) are anticipated although existing pipework will be used to discharge surface run-off from the proposed sports pitch. The risk of significantly impacting riparian species such as otter and water vole (should these species be present) is considered to be low provided that best practice pollution prevention measures are followed. Otter receive the same legal protection as bats and GCN (outlined above) whereas water vole are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The Nature Development Officer considers that there is considered to be sufficient ecology information available to inform determination of the application.

It is recommended that a Construction and Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) is prepared to ensure that the nearby woodland corridor and stream habitats are adequately protected from potential adverse impacts during construction. This will help protect the Green Chain and SBI and ensure the developed accords with Saved UDP Policies NE1.2 and NE3.1. It is recommended that a condition is attached to

any planning permission granted to require the submission of a Construction and Ecological Management Plan for the reasons set out above.

Appropriate measures to protect wildlife are also detailed in Section 5 of the ecology report and should be implemented in full. It is recommended that a condition is attached to any planning permission granted to ensure compliance with the submitted details.

No evidence of or potential for a bat roost was recorded in the tree line along the west boundary of the application site. The woodland corridor is however likely to represent an important bat foraging and commuting route to habitats within the wider landscape. As such, (and also to ensure the proposed scheme does not lead to light disturbance which may adversely affect the integrity of the SBI and Green Chain – e.g. due to disturbance of wildlife), particular attention should be given to the principles outlined in Bat Conservation Trust guidance and sections 5.3.2-5.3.4 of the ecology report. As above, it is recommended that a condition is attached to any planning permission granted to ensure compliance with the submitted details, and an informative should be attached to any planning permission granted regarding the Bat Conservation Trust guidance for lighting, for the attention of the applicant.

It is acknowledged that the lighting will be mainly used during the football season (much of this period coincides with the bat hibernation season (November-March) when bat activity is reduced) but the Design and Access statement also states that there will use during the spring and summer period for football training. Lit times will be limited to 21:00 (according to the design and access statement). This will result in some dark periods throughout the night. Suitable measures to further reduce the risk of light disturbance include:

- Avoid blue-white short wavelength lights: these have a significant negative impact on the insect prey of bats. Use alternatives such as warm-white (long wavelength) lights as this will reduce the impact on insects and therefore bats
- Asymmetric beam flood lighting to decrease the horizontal light spill (it is not clear as to whether or not the proposed lighting already encompasses this)
- Reduce column height to reduce light spill on adjacent habitats
- Further reduce lit times from that currently proposed
- Landscape planting to try and screen important wildlife corridors and reduce light disturbance to the designated SBI and Green Chain (this needs to be less than 3 lux at ground level and light spill plans submitted with the application suggest this is likely to be the case)

It is recommended that an informative should be attached to any planning permission granted regarding the above, for the attention of the applicant.

In relation to the final bullet point it is recommended that a condition is attached to any planning permission granted to require that a landscaping scheme is submitted

to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Biodiversity enhancements are expected within the developments in line with national and local planning policy. In addition to supplementary landscape planting along the woodland corridor, provision of bat and bird roosting/nesting facilities around the site (in unlit areas) is also advised (these recommendations are also outlined in section 5.4 of the ecology report). A Biodiversity Enhancements Scheme, detailing the proposed landscaping (number, species etc.) and the proposed number, type and location of bat/bird boxes to be provided should be included in the proposed landscaping scheme to be required by condition.

Subject to the imposition of conditions to ensure habitat enhancement and protection of protected species, the proposed development is considered acceptable in relation to Core Strategy Policy SIE-3, and the NPPF.

Other Matters

Aviation Safeguarding

The application is acceptable in terms of safeguarding aerodromes and aviation facilities, pursuant to Saved UDP Policy EP1.9 and Core Strategy Policy SIE-5. The Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport has assessed the proposal and its potential to conflict aerodrome Safeguarding criteria. It raises no aerodrome safeguarding objections to the proposal, and requests that informatives are attached to any planning permission granted with regard to cranes and tall equipment notifications, and exterior lighting, which is to be capped at the horizontal.

Land Contamination

The Environmental Health Officer for Contaminated Land has assessed the proposal and their comments are set out above. The application is supported by a Phase 2 Ground Investigation Report which concludes that soils are suitable for re-use on site and that no further investigation works or remediation works are necessary. As such the developer will just need to keep a watching brief for any unexpected contamination. It is recommended that an informative to this effect is attached to any planning permission granted, pursuant to Core Strategy Policy SIE-3.

Other Matters

It is noted that neighbour objections have been received which raise concerns regarding the siting of the proposed artificial grass pitch, with a preference for other sites within the wider school site. Officers do not raise significant concerns in relation to the proposed siting, and therefore this matter is not considered to weigh significantly against the proposal.

It is noted that neighbour objections have been received which raise concerns regarding the sustainability of the development noting that the existing grass pitch was installed only around 3 years ago. This is noted, however the due to the nature of the existing and proposed development, this matter is not considered to weigh significantly against the proposal.

It is noted that neighbour objections have been received which raise concerns regarding the health implications of the materials to be used during construction. This is not a matter for planning control.

It is noted that neighbour objections have been received which raise concerns in relation to the neighbour consultation process and the number of neighbours consulted. 53 neighbours were consulted via letter, and a site notice was displayed at the site.

CONCLUSION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that “the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.” It is considered that the proposed scheme serves to balance the three overarching economic, social and environmental objectives of the planning system, to achieve a sustainable form of development.

The principle of the replacement of the existing grass pitch with an artificial grass pitch is acceptable in relation to local and national planning policy.

The layout, scale and appearance of the development is considered acceptable, subject to conditions to ensure that the proposed materials and landscaping are of high quality and suitable in the proposed location.

In light of the submitted information, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of residential amenity, particularly in relation to noise and light disturbance impacts.

Following amendments which would see vehicular access being taken from Cheadle Road, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to highway safety, subject to conditions.

sThe proposal is also considered acceptable in relation to trees and biodiversity, subject to conditions, as well as in terms of drainage and flood risk.

Summary

In considering the planning merits against the NPPF, the proposal would, as a whole, represent a sustainable form of development; and therefore, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 would require that the application be granted subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to conditions.

UPDATE Cheadle Area Committee 14th September 2021

The Planning Officer introduced the application and highlighted the pertinent issues of the proposal.

No questions were asked of the Planning Officer by Members at this stage.

No members of the public spoke against the application.

A representative from Laurus then spoke about the following points:

- reason for the application is to make vital improvements to the sports pitches to support the continued success of the school and to benefit the wider community;
- The new pitch would allow pupils to play sports all year round which they are not currently able to do;
- Key Stage 3 students are entitled to 2 hours of P.E a week and Key Stage 4 students are entitled to 2 hours of P.E a week as a basic minimum;
- For part of the year, those classes which would be accommodated on the grass pitch have to be accommodated in the sports hall which then has a negative impact on the students already being taught in there;
- Regrettably, teaching the P.E curriculum as it should be taught then takes a back seat as 100 or more students cannot be in the sports hall at any one time on top of the two groups of 25 that are already there;
- As a consequence, this is preventing P.E teachers from teaching in line with the school's outstanding ethos and by the standards expected by OFSTED;
- In addition to the formally taught curriculum, as a school, there is also a moral responsibility to teach all students so that they go on to lead healthy lifestyles in the future and educate their own children to do so;
- A 2014 report from the Deputy Director of Public Health to Stockport Council states that across Stockport, the proportion of obese children in Year 6 was at 31.2%;
- One of the most effective ways to achieve a lifelong engagement with sport is via extracurricular sports and clubs;
- The new pitch would allow teaching of the full sports curriculum throughout all Key Stages as well as run extracurricular activities every lunchtime and after school, and to play fixtures against other schools;
- Sports facilities will also be available to the rest of the community in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays. This will meet an identified need for sports facilities locally and fulfil the requirements of the playing pitch strategy;
- A summary of the playing pitch strategy findings states there are 92 clubs generating 648 teams with demand dominated in Heaton and Reddish and Cheadle Areas. Provision is serviced by a mix of grass and 3G artificial grass pitches.

The Members had a number of questions for the applicant including the following:

- Councillor Holloway asked the applicant to speak about the links they have with Cheadle College adjacent to the site. This is asked because many years ago, Cllr Holloway was on the governing body for what was the precursor to Cheadle College and they had links with Manchester City and some of the children going

through sports sciences clearly would need the ability to put their theory into practice. Cllr Holloway could see this being something that Cheadle College would be very interested in having some access to.

The applicant responded to say that apart from having a good relationship with Cheadle College, nothing has been discussed with regard to that but the facilities would be there for them to be able to access.

- Councillor Julian commented that from personal experience, they could see why there were some initial concerns regarding the North Downs Road access proposal in the first instance, so they were happy to see that the main Cheadle Road access is now being used for that because particularly on weekends, the proposed community use can present some difficulties. Councillor Julian commented that they were delighted to see that it is a 3G pitch as that type of surface is intended for football, rugby and netball as opposed to other surfaces which can cause injuries. Councillor Julian commented that there is undoubtedly a requirement for those kinds of facilities in the area and thanked the applicants for taking into account the impact on residents on North Downs Road.
- The Chair (Councillor Greenhalgh) commented that they had visited the site when considering the planning application for the school and it was quite a damp field then, so they can appreciate that the applicant needs something more sophisticated in order to have an all-weather football/sports facility.

The Members then debated the proposals and spoke about the following matters:

- Councillor Meller acknowledged that the proposal for a pitch of this size and quality could have significant community benefit, however the residents around the Downs Estate have had to put up with quite a lot of upheaval in terms of the building of the school, the construction of it, and a number of objections have been received;
- Trying to balance the impact of the proposal on local residents versus the community benefit, and for that reason would like more reassurance, potentially through a site visit;
- Reassurance was sought in terms of parking issues as well, because although there are measures in place in the application, even with the existing measures, complaints are being received from residents;
- For that reason, Cllr Meller suggested to the Chair that Members have a site visit and that it goes to the Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee;
- Cllr Meller commented that they accept that it is a potentially good proposal for the area and that the community could use it, but they are mindful of the objections and that there has been a lot of impact on the residents in the area during the construction of the school and onwards to now, so they want to ensure that the balance is correct going forward;
- Cllr Roberts acknowledged Cllr Meller's point and commented that they have read the summary of objections which are fair objections to raise;
- Cllr Roberts queried the need for a site visit as Members have the application before them and a lot of experience with 3G pitches in Stockport, citing pitches at the Seashell Trust and on Park Road;

- Noted the distance from neighbouring properties and the use of existing car parking and access.
 - Cllr Roberts expressed the view that there was a strong enough case to approve the application, but that they were happy to be guided by colleagues.
- Cllr Holloway spoke to agree with Cllr Roberts' comments;
 - Cllr Holloway noted the conditions of the field during the winter months;
 - It is crucial that the increasing number of students have the opportunity for outdoor exercise as frequently as possible;
 - Now that the Highways Engineer is happy with access from Cheadle Road, they could not see anything that a site visit would show that Members did not already know,
 - Strongly suggested that that Members approve this application .
- Cllr Morrison spoke to agree with Cllr Meller.
 - Still dealing with fallout from an application elsewhere at the former Queens Arms site where the approval was a long time ago, but residents did not feel that their voices were properly heard or that they were engaged with enough;
 - Trusts the applicant and thinks ultimately the proposal is positive;
 - Requests a site visit to see where the concerns and objections from residents are coming from and to understand them more;
 - Not comfortable to approve or recommend an approval without a visit.
- Cllr Julian noted that the existing car parking provision is to be made available to people using the pitches for community uses;
 - The point around parking issues around the school is a good one, and Cllr Julian queried whether this site could be added to the list of potential sites which could benefit from additional enforcement presence;
 - Asked the applicant if they envisaged any occasions where the parking provision for community use might collide with the school time use of the facility;
 - The applicant responded that they did not. They currently run Club Cheadle Hulme which is Cheadle Hulme High School on the same proviso, which is that school finishes and the community use starts at 5pm or 6pm without overlap;
 - Cllr Julian sought clarification that there would not be an increased likelihood of parking issues as a result of the facility;
 - The application responded that there would not.
- Cllr Meller spoke to acknowledge the comments of Cllr Roberts and Cllr Holloway;
 - Cllr Meller clarified that they were not suggesting that the development should not happen, but would like the reassurance of a site visit to gather the scope and look at the separation distances from neighbouring properties and the impact that lighting may have;
 - Acknowledges the drawings and noise measurements submitted;
 - Appreciates that a site visit could protract the process;
 - Would like the reassurance that a site visit could provide;
 - Notes that the proposal could be a good asset, as the school development is as a whole, aside from the issues outlined earlier.
 - Mindful of impacts on residents.

- Cllr Charles-Jones spoke to state that this application was not in their ward but that they do sit on the Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee;
- Cllr Meller has summed up what they were going to say;
- Can see the point that the application could be determined, but having listened to the discussion, there are questions;
- If a site visit can provide reassurance, it is worth doing.

The Planning Officer spoke to address the concerns raised, and spoke about the following matters:

- In respect of impacts on neighbouring properties, it was reiterated that noise and light assessments were submitted with the proposal. These were assessed by the Environmental Health Team and have been considered to be appropriate;
- Conditions can be imposed to ensure compliance with the noise and light impact reports, and the light spillage assessment plans have been included in the report pack;
- In terms of parking around the site and potential conflicts between the existing use and the proposed, it has been recommended by the Highways Engineer that a parking management plan is imposed which has been considered appropriate to address those concerns;
- Having spoken to residents, the Planning Officer was aware of issues with dust during previous development on the site. There is a recommendation for a construction management plan to be required by condition, which can be worded to include a dust management plan if that provides some additional comfort.

The Chair (Cllr Greenhalgh) noted that the Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee would not necessarily make a site visit, but that would be the recommendation.

At 6 votes to 2, the Committee resolved to defer the application to the Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee for a site visit to be completed.