

Hadlow (Hadlow) **562718 149914** **24 February 2014** **TM/13/01482/FL**
Hadlow, Mereworth And
West Peckham

Proposal: Erection of two storey school building together with access, car parking, vehicle circulation area, footway improvements and landscaping, relocate floodlighting within existing sports ground and change of use of agricultural land to a new unlit rugby pitch

Location: Land At Bourne Grange Lane Hadlow College Tonbridge Road Hadlow Tonbridge Kent TN11 0AL

Applicant: Hadlow College

1. Description:

- 1.1 This planning application was deferred from Area 1 Planning Committee on 12 September 2013, following a detailed debate which was informed by a Members' Site Inspection which had taken place on 6 September 2013. A copy of my earlier report, along with the associated supplementary report, are both annexed for ease of information and should be read in conjunction with this report where referenced.
- 1.2 In taking the decision to defer, Members were clear that there was not an objection to the overarching concept behind the development of a Free School with a rural ethos provided by Hadlow College. Furthermore, the argument put forward by the College in respect of the need for such a secondary school was not disputed *in principle*. The deferral reflected concerns about the specific siting of the school at Faulkners Farm and was designed to enable the College to further consider the possibility of an alternative site (sports field) along with the detailed design of proposed highway improvements to the A26 at Ashes Lane suggested by KCC and the applicants at that time. Given the length of time that has passed since the previous debate, it would be useful to summarise those particular issues in more detail, and these are set out as follows:

Impact on the openness of the Green Belt and visual impact on the countryside:

- 1.3 The desire to further examine alternative sites arose from the potential impact that the school building, with an overall footprint of 3,364 sq. m, and a height ranging from 7.9m to 10m, would have sited at Faulkners Farm. At that location it was considered to represent a significant additional physical presence in the rural area adjoining Ashes Lane which would be exacerbated by virtue of the exposed position of the site, its particular topography and the resultant views afforded when travelling along Ashes Lane and the A26.
- 1.4 The siting of the school at Faulkners Farm would have also necessitated the resiting of an existing lambing shed. Although it was accepted that this is an agricultural building that could reasonably be expected within a Green Belt location, its proposed re-siting to allow for the arrangements for the school to be

accommodated were considered to place it in a more open and exposed area of land. It was therefore considered that the combined impact of the various elements comprising development of the Faulkners Farm site would have a demonstrably harmful visual impact on the open nature and function of the Green Belt and rural amenities of the Green Belt.

Highway and pupil safety:

- 1.5 There was a general consensus amongst Members that the bus stops closest to Ashes Lane were not ideally suited to serve pupils of the proposed secondary school, given the general local traffic speeds on this stretch of road, with no crossing points and inadequate passenger waiting space at the bus stops. Members felt that despite the inclusion of a footpath proposed to run parallel to the A26 within the adjacent field, it was inevitable that some pupils using public transport would seek to use the bus stops closest to Ashes Lane given their proximity to the Faulkners Farm site and the associated convenience that these bus stops would offer. This was considered to represent a considerable risk to the safety of pupils and other road users alike. At the time, KCC had suggested a number of improvements to the A26 that could be undertaken at the cost of the College to mitigate the impact of the proposed development in these respects, but Members were not convinced that these would be sufficient in the absence of any detailed designs having been drawn up for consideration.

Residential amenity:

- 1.6 Members also expressed concerns about the impact of the proposed development on the residential amenities of the nearest neighbours given the proximity of the proposed bus drop-off point to their boundaries and the increased levels of activity that would arise as a result of the school use.

Outcome following Committee discussion:

- 1.7 Having listened to the debate and subsequently reconsidered their options, the College has taken the decision to amend the planning application, proposing an alternative location for the siting of the new school. The school is now proposed to be located on the sports pitches serving the College and would be accessed via the main access route through the College campus (Bourne Grange Lane). The College had previously discounted this site, stating that it was not available as it was reserved for its Sports and Applied Therapy centre, intended to consist of a sports hall, gymnasium and sports therapy centre. It is, however, clear that the issues identified by the Committee together with the local opposition to the Faulkners Farm site has led the College to rethink their overall strategy.
- 1.8 As part of the Members' Site Inspection that took place on 6 September 2013, Members usefully took the opportunity to walk through the main College campus along Bourne Grange Lane to the sports fields and along the private footpath

which runs along the southern boundary of the rugby pitch. They were, therefore, able to appreciate the context of this alternative site, albeit that it was cited as being discounted at that time.

- 1.9 As with the previous iteration of the scheme, the school itself is proposed to comprise a two storey building with a footprint of 3,248 sq. m to accommodate facilities for up to 330 pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. The building is to be set over two floors and is proposed to comprise of a series of teaching classrooms, science labs, an assembly/sports hall, a learning resource centre, a multi-use dining/breakout area and ancillary facilities. A mixture of brick, buff concrete blocks and cedar cladding are shown to be used in the construction of the building.
- 1.10 As with the previous scheme, a number of outdoor teaching areas are proposed adjacent to the science labs, along with a vegetable garden adjacent to the food tech room. A habitat area intended to be planted with a wide variety of plants/trees to promote local wildlife species is also proposed.
- 1.11 The submission explains that the building is intended to be based around a central outdoor courtyard which is intended to provide the pivotal hub for the school. The proposed building would wrap around three sides of this external courtyard. The sports/assembly hall is to be located within the northern wing of the building with the eastern and southern sides of the courtyard being enclosed by administration and teaching blocks.
- 1.12 Access to the proposed school is now proposed to be via the existing Hadlow College access, Bourne Grange Lane. A dedicated provision of a bus/car pick up area and vehicle circulation area are also proposed between Bourne Grange Lane and the school building itself. A staff and visitor car park (total of 33 spaces) is to be provided along with secure cycle parking for a minimum of 38 cycles. A hard and soft playground is proposed to be located to the south of the school building.
- 1.13 It is also proposed to alter an existing adjacent football pitch in order to provide a multi-use pitch, providing for both football and rugby. The floodlights currently serving the rugby pitch that is to be lost as a result of the new school building will be relocated to serve the multi-use pitch.
- 1.14 An additional, new football pitch has already been constructed on land to the north west of the proposed school (approved under planning reference TM/12/00362/FL) and this will be ready for use by the start of the 2014 season, prior to the loss of the rugby pitch arising from the proposed siting of the school. In addition, a further separate rugby pitch is proposed to be provided to the south west of the new school. This is not proposed to be served by any floodlighting.

2. Reason for reporting to Committee:

2.1 Significant local interest and Departure from the Development Plan.

3. The Site:

3.1 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt, outside the rural confines of Hadlow and outside but immediately adjoining the Major Developed Site (MDS). The site is interlocked with the geographical extent of the MDS and forms an area of land immediately to the south west which is identified as “open space to be protected”, subject to policy OS1A – Hadlow College playing field. Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt are defined as being acceptable for infill development or redevelopment subject to a number of criteria concerning the scale and footprint of the development along with requirements relating to landscape setting and traffic generation.

3.2 The application site currently accommodates a series of sports pitches which are seen directly within the context of the wider College campus. The MDS itself effectively wraps around the application site to the north, south and east with open countryside to the west with Faulkners Farm situated beyond.

3.3 The site is located to the rear (south west) of the Hadlow College Student Union, adjacent to the Broadview Garden Centre and to the south west of the College’s main Campus.

3.4 Access to the site is taken from the main College access (Bourne Grange Lane), which links up with the A26 just outside the edge of Hadlow Village centre.

4. Planning History (most recent):

TM/12/00362/FL Approved 16 March 2012

Change of use from agricultural use to provide a football pitch

5. Consultees (received in connection with the revised location of the school):

5.1 PC: Agreed.

5.2 KCC (Highways): The applicant has demonstrated that the traffic generated from this development will operate within capacity standards with respect to its connection to the public highway network. The applicant’s transport consultant has further demonstrated that the car park proposed for staff use is suitable. It is noted on page 17 of the new Transport Assessment provided that 30 trips by car to the new school are expected. It is also noted on page 26 of this document that it is intended that the access road proposed, which is approximately 50m in length, will provide adequate waiting space for school buses to exit the site at the end of the school day and allow for parents to accumulate also at this time. From the plan

provided the access road proposed is to be of 5.5m width with 1.8m footways on both sides. It is considered for ease of movement at this time of the day that the width of the access road should be wider or at the very least that a length of outbound bus lay by should be provided. I would be grateful if the applicant could consider this issue further to ensure that the intended operation proposed is achievable.

5.2.1 It is noted from pages 11 and 12 of the original Transport Assessment provided that there was discussion regarding the accumulated need for a formal pedestrian crossing to be provided adjacent to the main college entrance, between the existing northbound and southbound bus stops on the A26 at this location. Encouraging safe sustainable transport use is considered to be key element for the college as a whole and for the success of this proposed free school. I would also be grateful, therefore, if the applicant could expand, with the latest proposal, its approach to the need for provision of a formal crossing on the A26 in this area. It is further considered that interruptions to traffic flow on the A26 provided by pedestrians using a formal crossing here, will assist the operation of the college Bourne Grange Lane entrance at peak times of traffic generation.

5.3 Sport England: It is understood that the site forms part of, or constitutes a playing field as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (Statutory Instrument 2010 No. 2184), in that it is on land that has been used as a playing field within the last five years, and the field encompasses at least one playing pitch of 0.2 ha or more, or that it is on land that is allocated for the use as a playing field in a development plan or in proposals for such a plan or its alteration or replacement.

5.3.1 Sport England has therefore considered the application in the light of its playing fields policy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of quality pitches to satisfy the current and estimated future demand for pitch sports within the area. The policy seeks to protect all parts of the playing field from development and not just those which, for the time being, are laid out as pitches. The policy states that:

“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 last used as a playing field or allocated for use as a playing field in an adopted or draft deposit local plan, unless, in the judgement of Sport England, one of the specific circumstances applies.”

Reason: Development which would lead to the loss of all or part of a playing field, or which would prejudice its use, should not normally be permitted because it would permanently reduce the opportunities for participation in sporting activities.

Government planning policy and the policies of Sport England have recognised the importance of such activities to the social and economic well-being of the country.

5.3.2 The planning application involves the erection of a two storey school building together with access, car parking, vehicle circulation area, footway improvements and landscaping, relocation of floodlighting within existing sports ground and change of use of agricultural land to a new unlit rugby pitch.

5.3.3 While Sport England has not visited the site, the proposed two storey school building, access, car parking, vehicle circulation area, footway improvements and landscaping would appear to be sited on an existing area of playing field, including a floodlit natural turf rugby pitch.

5.3.4 However, the proposed development includes the provision of a new area of playing field and this will accommodate the relocated rugby pitch. Furthermore, the existing floodlights will be relocated to the playing pitch to the north west of the pitch to be lost. This will accommodate a football and rugby pitch. Furthermore, an additional football pitch is being provided to the north west of the existing playing field (this is part of a separate planning application).

5.3.5 Therefore, Sport England is satisfied that the proposed development meets exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Field Policy which states:

E4 - The playing field or playing fields, which would be lost as a result of the proposed development, would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development.

5.3.6 This being the case, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application, subject to certain conditions being imposed which secure the provision of the replacement playing field prior to the occupation of new school building and which require a detailed scheme to be submitted in order to ensure that the playing field will be provided to an acceptable quality.

5.3.7 If your Authority decides not to attach the above condition(s), Sport England would wish to maintain/lodge a statutory objection to this application. Should your Authority be minded to approve this application without the above condition(s), then in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, and the DCLG letter of 10 March 2011, the application should be referred to the National Planning Casework Unit.

- 5.3.8 From the applicant details, ownership certificate and recent site history, Sport England understands that the application (in whole or part) is local authority owned land/land currently used by an educational institution as playing field/ has at any time in the five years before the application been used by an educational institution as a playing field.
- 5.3.9 Sport England would recommend that the detailed design of the proposed sports facilities accords with Sport England's relevant design guidance in order to ensure that the facilities are fit for purpose and of an appropriate quality. The guidance is available to view on Sport England's website at <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/>.
- 5.3.10 The absence of an objection to this application in the context of the Town and Country Planning Acts, does not in any way commit Sport England's or any National Governing Body of Sport's support for any related application for grants funding.
- 5.4 NE: No objections.
- 5.5 UMIDB: The relocation of the proposed school changes the route of off-site drainage. However, as the outline drainage proposals effectively remain the same as the original application (runoff restricted to 2.5l/s with on-site storage provided for to accommodate the 1 in 100 year rainfall event +30% for Climate Change) my comments broadly remain the same.
- 5.5.1 Please note that the revised location directly borders the Board's district, so formal consent is likely to be required for the discharge point, along with any other works affecting the existing downstream drainage ditch (a copy of the Board's byelaws was provided previously).
- 5.5.2 It is requested that drainage details be made subject to a condition requiring separate consent of the LPA. As part of this, the applicant should be requested to confirm the condition and capacity of this existing watercourse, including any downstream structures. I would be grateful to be consulted again in respect of this.
- 5.6 KCC PROW: Public Rights of Way MT114 footpath is Bourne Grange Lane and runs to the eastern boundary of the site and you have mentioned widening, however, this work should not obstruct the public right of way. Footpath MT127 does go through the football pitch. I have, however, enclosed a copy of the Public Rights of Way network map showing the line of this path for the information of yourself and the applicant. The County Council has a controlling interest in ensuring that the footpath is maintained to a standard suitable for use by pedestrians. Any maintenance to the higher level required for continuous motorised vehicular access would be the responsibility of the relevant landowners.

5.6.1 The granting of planning permission confers no other permission or consent on the applicant. It is, therefore, important to advise the applicant that no works can be undertaken on a Public Right of Way without the express consent of the Highways Authority. In cases of doubt the applicant should be advised to contact this office before commencing any works that may affect the Public Right of Way. Should any temporary closures be required to ensure public safety then this office will deal on the basis that:

- The applicant pays for the administration costs;
- The duration of the closure is kept to a minimum;
- Alternative routes will be provided for the duration of the closure;
- A minimum of six weeks notice is required to process any applications for temporary closures.

5.7 Ramblers Association: No response received to date.

5.8 Kent Fire & Rescue Services: No response received to date.

5.9 Police Architectural Liaison Officer: No objections.

5.10 CPRE: No response received to date.

5.11 EA: No objections.

5.12 Private Reps: 107 + site + press notice/1X/1R/1S.

Objections raised can be summarised as follows:

- Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate and there is no clear case of need or very special circumstances;
- Infill development should take place within the Major Developed Site rather than on an open site;
- Floodlighting already causes harm to rural and residential amenity and future floodlighting should be explicitly prevented to avoid further light pollution;
- Pupil drop off/pick up should not take place from Faulkners Farm which is likely to be inevitable given the presence of a footpath between the two;
- Conditions still remain outstanding in respect of the temporary school permission.

Question how this revised submission effects the temporary permission at Faulkners Farm – a further permission here should not be allowed.

Comments made can be summarised as follows:

- Question why amendments have been accepted rather than the Council requiring a wholly fresh planning application to be submitted and the earlier scheme formally withdrawn;
- Wish to record thanks to the College for revisiting their proposals for the new school given the fundamental concerns raised in respect of the Ashes Lane site;
- Disappointing to see that the proposed development is still to be sited outside the Major Developed Site given the policy support for development in such areas. No detailed evidence has been submitted that demonstrates no site within the MDS could be developed for the school;
- Introduction of floodlights onto the multi-use pitch and the creation of a new rugby pitch closer to the residential properties in Ashes Lane – floodlights serving the multi-use pitch should be sensitively sited and timed;
- If planning permission is granted, conditions should be imposed controlling hours of use of the new pitch and preventing community use of the pitch;
- Controls should be put in place preventing access to the pitches or running track from Ashes Lane;
- Detailed landscaping and appropriate boundary treatment should be introduced along the southern and western boundaries to ensure access cannot be obtained from Ashes Lane, to screen views and act as an acoustic barrier.

5.12.2 Letter of support states that the issues previously raised have been satisfactorily examined and the application now represents a considered response that clearly demonstrates an exceptional circumstance where development in the Green Belt should be supported.

6. Determining Issues:

- 6.1 I would firstly like to take the opportunity to briefly explain why the decision was taken to accept the revised siting of the proposed school as an amendment to the current planning application rather than seeking an entirely fresh application, given that this matter has been expressly raised as part of the representations received.
- 6.2 There is no clear cut legislative provision that defines when a Local Planning Authority must seek an entirely fresh planning application, rather than accepting amendments to an existing application. Instead, this is largely a matter of fact and

degree. Ministerial advice generally holds that it is sensible and time saving to allow applicants to amend details of applications provided the amendments do not materially change the character and description of the development.

Fundamentally, the character and the description of the development in this case have remained the same, with the siting of the building and access arrangements serving that building now changed. The new site proposed for the school also falls with the "blue land" defined in the original submission as falling within the ownership of the applicant. It is also worth noting that most of the supporting evidence accompanying the application remains appropriate, albeit in an amended form to reflect the revised siting.

- 6.3 When considering these aspects on a cumulative basis, in a climate where the government repeatedly advises that red tape be kept to a minimum, allowing the planning system to become more responsive, cutting down on delays and unnecessary paperwork, this was seen to be the most pragmatic way forward in this particular case.
- 6.4 Notwithstanding the above, I would also like to make clear that the planning application in its amended form requires a thorough and detailed independent assessment to be undertaken. I do appreciate that the broad concepts that will form the basis of this assessment are similar to the earlier scheme, and that it may be difficult to not draw comparisons between the proposed site and that previously put forward at Faulkners Farm. However, that is **not** the fundamental test to be made on this occasion - the scheme in its revised form must be assessed entirely on its own merits. This assessment is set out below.
- 6.5 The application site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt, albeit located on the edge of the MDS as described at paragraph 3.1, where restrictive policies apply. There are certain elements of the scheme which are compliant with Green Belt policy and I intend to address these first. The NPPF states that the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation does *not* constitute inappropriate development as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 6.6 The playing fields proposed to serve the new school and the new rugby pitch proposed to compensate for the loss of the existing pitch would be located behind the school itself, in the south east end of the site. I am satisfied that these particular elements of the scheme taken alone do not constitute inappropriate development. The new rugby pitch is not proposed to be served by any floodlighting, which further suitably preserves the openness of the Green Belt.
- 6.7 The resurfacing of the existing football pitch to allow for rugby games to also take place would not cause any material harm to openness. This pitch would be served by the floodlights to be relocated from the existing rugby pitch. As such, there

would be no net increase in the number of floodlighting columns. This part of the scheme does not constitute inappropriate development.

6.8 Turning to the new school building itself, the NPPF indicates that new buildings within the Green Belt are considered to be inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. There are, however, specific exceptions to this position which include:

- *“The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces; or*
- *Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.”*

6.9 It is clear that the construction of a new school building would constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt, as it would not fall within any of the specific exceptions cited within the NPPF. As such, the project as amended can be granted planning permission *only* if it is demonstrated that very special circumstances exist to justify that permission, even if Members *prefer* this as an alternative to Faulkners Farm in locational terms.

6.10 In addition to the harm caused by virtue of the fact that the school building constitutes inappropriate development, it is also necessary to consider whether the development causes any other harm and, having done so, whether there are other considerations relevant to the overall balance that demonstrates very special circumstances.

6.11 It is undeniable that the footprint, massing and height of the building proposed are substantial and thus the physical presence on what is currently an undeveloped site would cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt. The site is predominately open in nature and is exposed to views from across the wider College campus and from the PROW that runs immediately north of the sports fields. Views from these areas would see a new, significant building against a wider background of open countryside. The school building on this site would, therefore, have a demonstrable impact on openness which to a degree would be harmful to the character and function of the Green Belt.

6.12 Policy OS1 of the MDE DPD states that development that would result in the loss of, or reduce the recreational value of existing open spaces will not be permitted unless a replacement site is provided which is equivalent or better in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. In addition, Sport England policy P1 opposes the loss of a playing field unless one of several specific circumstances applies. Specific circumstance E4 states that in order for a development proposal which

involves the loss of a playing field to be acceptable *“the playing field or fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or better quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of the development.”*

- 6.13 The siting of the school would result in the loss of a single rugby pitch, managed and used by the College. Having regard to the above requirements, the applicant is proposing to retain and alter the existing football pitch which would be sited alongside the new school, to allow for both football and rugby to be played here. In addition, a further rugby pitch is proposed to be constructed on land to the rear of the new school and a football pitch already approved is shortly to be made available for use. It has already been established that these aspects do not constitute inappropriate development. I consider that the quantity of pitch provision will be better than the existing provision. There is, therefore, no objection in principle to the loss of the one rugby pitch provided that the alternative provision comes forward in a suitably timely fashion. I would suggest that this can be ensured through a suitably worded planning condition in the event that planning permission is granted that expressly requires a scheme timetabling implementation. With such a condition in place, the development would accord with the requirements of policy OS1 of the MDE DPD. I, therefore, consider that this aspect of the scheme would not cause any other harm to the openness of the Green Belt requiring very special circumstances to be demonstrated in its own right.
- 6.14 With the above in mind, it is clearly necessary to establish whether very special circumstances exist which outweigh the degree of harm caused by the proposed development by virtue of both its inappropriate nature and its physical impact on openness.
- 6.15 The NPPF states that *“inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt”* and such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. In view of the presumption against inappropriate development, substantial weight is attached to the harm to the Green Belt when considering any planning application concerning such inappropriate development. The NPPF states (paragraph 88)

“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to the harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

6.16 In addition to setting out the national policy for development within the Green Belt, the NPPF also sets out its planning policy in respect of school facilities as part of the role of NPPF in “promoting healthy communities”. At paragraph 72 it states:

“The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and*
- work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.”*

6.17 Furthermore, the Planning for Schools Development Policy Statement (DCLG - August 2011) is an important material national policy consideration, and states that:

“...We expect all parties to work together proactively from an early stage to help plan for state-school development and to shape strong planning applications. This collaborative working would help to ensure that the answer to proposals for the development of state-funded schools should be, wherever possible, “yes”.

The Government believes that the planning system should operate in a positive manner when dealing with proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of state-funded schools, and that the following principles should apply with immediate effect:

- There should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools, as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework.***
- Local authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state-funded schools in their planning decisions.*** *The Secretary of State will attach significant weight to the need to establish and develop state-funded schools when determining applications and appeals that come before him for decision.*
- Local authorities should make full use of their planning powers to support state-funded schools applications.*** *This should include engaging in pre-application discussions with promoters to foster a collaborative approach to applications and, where necessary, the use of planning obligations to help to mitigate adverse impacts and help deliver development that has a positive impact on the community.*

- **Local authorities should only impose conditions that clearly and demonstrably meet the tests set out in Circular 11/95.** Planning conditions should only be those absolutely necessary to making the development acceptable in planning terms.
- **Local authorities should ensure that the process for submitting and determining state-funded schools' applications is as streamlined as possible,** and in particular be proportionate in the information sought from applicants. For instance, in the case of free schools, authorities may choose to use the information already contained in the free school provider's application to the Department for Education to help limit additional information requirements.
- **A refusal of any application for a state-funded school, or the imposition of conditions, will have to be clearly justified by the local planning authority.** Given the strong policy support for improving state education, the Secretary of State will be minded to consider such a refusal or imposition of conditions to be unreasonable conduct, unless it is supported by clear and cogent evidence.
- **Appeals against any refusals of planning permission for state-funded schools should be treated as a priority.** Where permission is refused and an appeal made, the Secretary of State will prioritise the resolution of such appeals as a matter of urgency in line with the priority the Government places on state education.
- **Where a local planning authority refuses planning permission for a state-funded school, the Secretary of State will consider carefully whether to recover for his own determination appeals against the refusal of planning permission.**

This statement applies to both change of use development and operational development necessary to the operational needs of the school..."

6.18 There is clearly a strong national policy impetus in favour of new state school development as a matter of principle, and the above is an important material planning consideration. Much of the case of very special circumstances put forward in this case continues to centre on the need for a new local secondary school in this part of West Kent and the need for local education in land based and food sectors. These aspects are discussed in detail below:

Need for a local secondary school:

6.19 The applicant submits that there is a shortfall of local secondary school places based upon forecasts by KCC for this area of West Kent. With regard to secondary

school provision in Tonbridge and Malling, KCC's Commissioning Plan for Education Report (2012 – 2017) states that:

“There is forecast to be a deficit of up to 80 places from 2016/17 to 2019/20. 180 places would be required at the peak if a 5% surplus is to be maintained.’ ‘The larger Year 7 cohorts will cause the total school numbers to rise, leading to an overall shortfall of places from 2018/19.’ ‘Post 16 numbers are forecast to increase throughout the forecast period reaching 2174 by 2021. There is a deficit of places throughout the period, although surplus accommodation in schools is sufficient to offset this until 2018.

At the time of writing, the Hadlow Rural Community School, a free school based at Hadlow College is being supported, and moving to the development stage. If this proceeds, it will provide 40 places per year group in Years 7 to 11. It is anticipated the school will open in September 2013, initially with intakes into Years 7 and 10.”

- 6.20 The applicant goes on to state that *“KCC suggest that school provision in Maidstone, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells should also be taken into account when considering the need for schools in Tonbridge and Malling. The document stated that Maidstone and the northern part of the Sevenoaks District have pupil capacity, although predicted sustained growth in the southern parts of Sevenoaks District is not catered for. In Tunbridge Wells, KCC predicts that demand for non-selective schools can be managed through existing capacity at the High Weald Academy and Skinners Kent Academy.”*

Need for local education in land based and food sectors:

- 6.21 The applicant emphasises that the south east is a leading agricultural region and is expected to play a growing role in the supply of food and non-food products in the years to come. This sector makes a significant economic contribution to the sub-region and there are around 5,500 land based and food businesses in Kent and Medway (accounting for around 8% of the local business base in the area).
- 6.22 The submission explains that there are currently six other secondary schools in Kent with a ‘rural ethos’ but the rural facilities at these schools are of a far smaller scale than those at Hadlow College, which is a County specialist for land based provision. As part of the Hadlow College group, the new school will have access to the ‘*excellent*’ outdoor and educational facilities of the College for both their vocational, practical and academic studies. The applicant argues that *‘this gives an outstanding opportunity to contextualise studies within the classroom and to enrich and engage through the use of outdoor environment, leading to higher levels of motivation, better lessons and higher outcomes.’* The Department for Education, in approving the College’s bid for the new school, clearly accepts the logic and educational advantages of co-locating new land based secondary school with the Hadlow College facilities.

- 6.23 The existing six schools with a rural ethos are Brockhill Park, Hythe; The North School, Ashford; Kent College, Canterbury; New Line Learning, Maidstone; High Weald Academy, Cranbrook; and Homewood School, Tenterden. The applicant points out that these are located in Central and East Kent, leading to a lack of provision within West Kent. On this basis, the proposal would respond to the lack of rural specialist schools in West Kent and consequently also beneficially contribute to meeting the need for additional secondary school places in the local area (to address KCC predictions).
- 6.24 In terms of investment in education facilities of this kind, at this general location, and in the context of the general needs assessment and the policy context outlined above, the case for the proposal and its benefit to the community can be given significant weight. I am also mindful that Members did not dispute the wider need for such a new land based educational establishment serving this part of the Borough and West Kent more generally nor did they contend the general principle behind such a school requiring a Green Belt location given the recognised functional and educational links with land based Hadlow College; rather **it was the specific siting of the school at Faulkners Farm** that formed the basis of Member concern for the reasons discussed earlier in this report.
- 6.25 It cannot be disputed that the site now proposed still stands to be assessed against the same fundamental Green Belt tests as Faulkners Farm in terms of policy principles. However, in addition to the justification put forward in connection with the wider need for a school of this type and in this rural location (as discussed above) a case has also been set out which seeks to identify that very special circumstances exist for the specifically chosen sports field. In this respect, the College states that *“whilst the openness of the Green Belt will be affected, it is possible to associate the built form with the built up nature of the adjacent Campus.”*
- 6.26 It must be recognised that the proposed site is characteristically open and exposed to views from across the wider College campus and from the PROW that runs immediately north of the site. However, it is also important to recognise that these views are limited and the school building would be seen against the backdrop of the wider built environment of the College Campus, which wraps around the site, thus limiting its visual impact on the wider countryside. In support of this argument, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared by Marpaul in support of the proposed development. This states:

“The overall visual impact of the scheme will be minimal due to the proposed siting of the building in relation to existing structures and the proposed planting and landscaping work.

The landscape character of the site itself will change, with the new development. The character of the site is, however, already influenced by the adjacent built environment, and it is very well contained in the wider landscape. There will be a

medium change to the landscape character of the site itself and combined with a medium landscape sensitivity will lead to a moderate landscape effect on the site itself.

The site itself contains little of intrinsic landscape interest, apart from the existing hedgerow and trees along all of the playing fields boundaries. The site is influenced in character by the surrounding land uses associated with the College's existing educational facilities constructed on the site."

6.27 At this point, it is useful to explain that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The NPPF states that the Green Belt serves a number of purposes including:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas and;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

6.28 I appreciate that for many the ideal position might be for a site within the MDS to come forward for development. However, it should be acknowledged that there is not a blanket prohibition in policy terms concerning inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Instead, I would reiterate once more that it is necessary for very special circumstances to exist that outweigh the degree of harm caused to the Green Belt. Whilst some have suggested that the College have not been exhaustive in their discounting of alternative sites within the MDS which, in their view, might be better suited to accommodating the school, as I explained earlier, assessment now should not take place on the basis of what might be a *preferred* option. Crucially, the preceding assessment that took place in September did not identify a site within the MDS as potentially providing a suitable alternative, a matter that was discussed in detail within my previous report.

6.29 In balancing these related factors, I agree with the landscape and visual analysis provided by Marpaul and I conclude that the position of the new school building relative to the existing MDS serves to minimise its physical impact on the Green Belt. Furthermore, the proposed siting of the school in close proximity to the existing MDS would ensure that encroachment into the open countryside would be limited.

6.30 Of course in the original submission, the applicant placed considerable emphasis on the need to develop the Faulkner's Farm site due to the advantages it offered in providing safeguarding standards for pupils of the new secondary school. A crucial element of this was the need for the site to be served by a separate access, independent of the main College campus, whilst still maintaining the close links to the College for educational reasons. The original submission, in discounting alternative sites (including that now proposed) indicated that a separate and secure access was a funding requirement of the Department for Education. However, at no time was there any forthright statement demonstrating that there would be an absolute prohibition for development on the site now proposed in

regard to safeguarding. This is really a matter for the College, as the managing authority of the school, to correctly administer and need not play any further significant part in the assessment of this application.

The submission does also explain that this particular portion of the sports pitches is proposed for development to avoid any unacceptable conflicts with the HE facility, stating that:

“To locate a secondary school in the centre of a Higher Education Centre would have a significantly adverse impact upon the feel of the entire campus, transforming it from a university campus to a feeling more like the senior part of a secondary school.

Students choosing their college or university degree course make their choice on a number of factors, one of the stronger being the attractiveness of the campus. At this point of their lives, they are moving to an adult environment with all of the associated responsibilities and atmosphere that comes with higher education research projects.....In the proposed position, the school is sufficiently separated from the HE facilities to allow the College to retain its Campus feel.

For these reasons, the HRCS location is at the rear rather than the side of the Student Union.”

6.31 Part of the justification for the specific siting of the school building, therefore, now centres on retaining the attractiveness and viability of the main College Campus rather than there being a particular case for the safeguarding of pupils attending the secondary school.

6.32 *In the overall balance of all the factors that determine whether a justifiable claim for very special circumstances has been made in support of the elements of the proposal that constitute inappropriate development and harm to the MGB, I conclude that a sufficient case of very special circumstances has been made that outweighs the degree of harm that would arise in this instance. I will now turn to the various other issues to be considered in the assessment of this proposal.*

6.33 *Turning firstly to highways and transport impact, paragraph 32 of the NPPF states that: “All developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. [Plans and] decisions should take account of whether:*

- the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;*
- safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and*

- *improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limits the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are **severe**.*” (my emphasis).

6.34 Paragraph 34 of the NPPF goes on to state that planning “*decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximise. However, this needs to take into account of policies set out elsewhere in this Framework, particularly in rural areas.*”

6.35 Policy SQ8 of the MDE DPD states that before proposals for development are permitted they will need to demonstrate that any necessary transport infrastructure, the need for which wholly or substantially arises from the development, is in place or is certain to be provided. Development proposals will only be permitted where they will not significantly harm highway safety.

6.36 With regard to the matter of traffic and transport the proposal shows provision for 33 parking spaces. The proposal also identifies that pupils will be transported in a number of ways, including the running of a bespoke bus service which I understand is operating currently in respect of the temporary school at Faulkners Farm.

6.37 The submission explains that access is to be provided solely via the main College entrance, with new footway links to be provided within the College campus as necessary. The extent of these footway improvements has been indicated as part of the submitted Transport Assessment. Fundamentally, use of the existing College access onto the A26 means that this proposal will not give rise to vehicle and pupil activity nor any associated potential for increased vehicular movements, at the Ashes Lane junction with the A26 and along Ashes Lane itself, which is undoubtedly an improvement in terms of both highway and pupil safety. Now that the activity is to be focused at the main College entrance only, the revised documentation more robustly refers to the provision of a controlled crossing on the A26 close to the main College entrance, serving the bus stops on either side of the road at this point. As I explained in my previous report, it has long been the view of KCC that such a crossing would need to be in place *prior* to the school opening in order to ensure an acceptable degree of highway and pupil safety. I continue to support that view and the applicant has suggested that this could be secured by planning condition should Members now be minded to grant planning permission. Of course, the detailed design of a controlled crossing would need to be the subject of a safety audit and this would require close liaison with KCC. However, unlike the suggested improvements to the A26 at the Ashes Lane junction which were conceived only in very approximate terms and relatively last minute, I believe that the proposed controlled crossing, being a long held aspiration of the Borough and County Councils, is far more certain in terms of both feasibility and deliverability. I would suggest that this should lead Members to have the

necessary comfort that a planning condition controlling this aspect is appropriate in this instance, although I do appreciate that KCC Highways have suggested in their representations that further information be sought. Subject to relevant conditions I do not consider that further information is required at this stage.

6.38 Turning to matters related to visual and residential amenity, the NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, stating that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is indivisible from good planning (paragraph 56). It also stresses the need for development to respond positively to local character, reflecting the identity of local surroundings whilst not discouraging appropriate innovation (paragraph 58).

6.39 Furthermore, policy CP24 of the TMBCS requires that development must respect the site and its surroundings and that it will not be permitted where it would be detrimental to the built environment and amenity of a locality. This is supported by policy SQ1 of the MDE DPD (2010) which states that all new development proposals should protect, conserve and where possible enhance:

- the character and local distinctiveness of the area including any historical and architectural interest and the prevailing level of tranquillity;
- the distinctive setting of, and relationship between, the pattern of settlement, roads and the landscape, urban form and important views.

6.40 As I have already discussed at length, the new school would be seen directly against the backdrop of and within the context of the existing buildings that make up the MDS. These buildings are relatively simple in design but do vary in both scale and mass. I am satisfied that the proposed scale of the school would not be at odds with the adjacent College complex in any way. The detailed design of the building combined with the proposed palette of materials and associated landscaping would add some visual interest here but would not jar with the existing built environment. Rather than being seen as a separate, standalone entity, the school in occupying this position would be seen to provide some important synergy, not only in terms of the educational functionality of the wider College campus but also in terms of the built environment and the aesthetics of the wider site. I am, therefore, satisfied that the school design in itself and in combination with the other buildings in this complex, meets the tests of NPPF, CP24 and SQ1 in respect of design and visual impacts.

6.41 The school building and relocated rugby pitch are to be located a significant distance away from the nearest private residential dwellings. Although I appreciate that accommodation does exist in relatively close proximity, this is associated with the College itself, providing accommodation to staff and students.

6.42 I do acknowledge the representations put forward in connection with the potential for the pitches to increase disturbance to the properties in Ashes Lane, and their suggestion that the use of the pitches and means of illumination be restricted. The

pitch is located a considerable distance from the nearest residential properties in Ashes Lane and is not proposed to be illuminated. The relocation of the floodlights from the existing rugby pitch to what is proposed to become the multi-use pitch would shift the illumination in a north-westerly direction. The impact on residential amenity arising from this relocation would therefore be negligible.

6.43 Concern has also been raised as to the potential level of community use the new rugby pitch might attract. However, the applicant has explained within the Planning Statement that:

“In terms of community use of the pitches, currently Tonbridge Angels FC has use of one pitch for training but there is no other community use, as this is a College field used according to the academic requirements of academic courses in the week and for some College matches at weekends. The proposal is for Tonbridge Angels to continue to have this as their training ground, for Barming Ladies football team to use the new pitch for training and matches and for other community uses to be encouraged.”

6.44 I am confident that this arrangement can be suitably controlled by planning condition in order to protect residential amenity, but it must be remembered that outdoor recreation is a specifically identified purpose for the Green Belt.

Conclusions:

6.45 In considering applications in the Green Belt, and particularly in larger scale proposals such as this, the Council is required to address three key factors; whether inappropriate development is involved, whether there are very special circumstances to be taken into account and whether these very special circumstances are of sufficient weight to overcome the harm arising from the proposal.

6.46 I have explained in some detail that I consider that the school building itself constitutes inappropriate development but that aspects of national Policy, both in the NPPF and the Planning for Schools Development Policy Statement identify considerable policy in favour of the building of new state schools. The latter document does not focus on matters related to the Green Belt, but must be seen as a material consideration in the overall decision. This is especially so if the specialist nature of the school provision requires a rural location, as would be the case for a new secondary school co-located with other land based educational facilities simply because those other land based teaching facilities already exist very successfully in the countryside and in the Green Belt. It was this careful balance of factors in light of overt government support enshrined in the policy statement which led to my previous recommendation to approve the school at its original location at Faulkners Farm and I would again mention that these broad matters of principle were not brought into question during the previous debate.

6.47 It is undoubtedly clear that the College have carefully thought out the wide ranging and significant concerns expressed by Members along with the objections raised by the local community in proposing this alternative site. However, the question now arises as to whether the detail of the proposal in terms of specific site location and design (including any transportation related improvements/requirements) are sufficiently well developed themselves to override aspects of harm such that the Green Belt location, on the edge of the MDS, may be accepted. From the above analysis, I consider that, on balance, this case is made and the harm would be adequately mitigated by virtue of the physical relationship that would arise between the new school and the existing MDS, albeit that in some instances (such as the provision of adequate transportation/traffic related infrastructure and detail of materials/landscaping) this will require further details to be submitted, in due course, pursuant to conditions.

6.48 As a result, and when bearing in mind all of the above factors and the community benefits that would arise from the significant new educational opportunity, I am satisfied that a case of very special circumstances exists to justify the grant of permission for this school on the submitted site. Although I appreciate that this site suffers many of the same fundamental Green Belt concerns as those assessed in the case of Faulkners Farm, it must be inherently more logical and practical to locate the new school alongside the existing MDS in terms of both functionality and physical impact on the MGB and I therefore recommend that planning permission be granted. (Note: the intention to grant such permission in the Green Belt must be referred to the Secretary of State under the relevant Direction and such permission cannot be issued without the SoS acceptance.)

7. Recommendation:

7.1 **Grant Planning Permission** in accordance with the following submitted details: Letter dated 24.02.2014, Site Plan A620-PL- 401 dated 24.02.2014, Site Plan A620-PL- 402 existing dated 24.02.2014, Drawing A620-PL- 405 dated 24.02.2014, Existing Elevations A620-PL- 430 A dated 24.02.2014, Existing Elevations A620-PL- 431 dated 24.02.2014, Site Plan A620-PL- 501 proposed dated 24.02.2014, Site Plan A620-PL- 502 proposed dated 24.02.2014, Landscape Layout A620-PL- 503 dated 24.02.2014, Proposed Floor Plans A620-PL- 510 A dated 24.02.2014, Proposed Floor Plans A620-PL- 511 dated 24.02.2014, Proposed Roof Plan A620-PL- 512 dated 24.02.2014, Proposed Elevations A620-PL- 530 A dated 24.02.2014, Proposed Elevations A620-PL- 531 dated 24.02.2014, Proposed Elevations A620-PL- 540 dated 24.02.2014, Sections A620-PL- 550 dated 24.02.2014, Artist's Impression A620-PL- 560 sheet 1 dated 24.02.2014, Artist's Impression A620-PL-561 sheet 2 dated 24.02.2014, Artist's Impression A620-PL-562 sheet 3 dated 24.02.2014, Artist's Impression A620-PL-563 sheet 4 dated 24.02.2014, Tree Report dated 24.02.2014, Flood Risk Assessment dated 24.02.2014, Landscape Statement with visual impact dated 24.02.2014, Report Green Belt dated 24.02.2014,

Planning Statement dated 24.02.2014, Transport Assessment dated 24.02.2014, Travel Plan dated 24.02.2014, subject to:

7.2 Referral of the application to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 and;

7.3 The following conditions:

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2 The development hereby approved shall be used solely as a Secondary School providing a land-based curriculum in association with the facilities available at Hadlow College.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to regulate and control the future use of the site in the interests of preserving the open nature and function of the Metropolitan Green Belt and in recognition of the very special circumstances advanced for inappropriate development in the Green Belt and in the interests of highway safety.

3 The development hereby approved shall not commence until details of all materials to be used externally have been approved by the Local Planning Authority. In order to seek such approval, written details and photographs of the materials (preferably in digital format) shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and samples of the materials shall be made available at the site for inspection by Officers of the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the visual amenity of the rural locality.

4 The development shall be constructed at the level indicated on the approved drawing.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the visual amenity of the rural locality.

5 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order amending, revoking and re-enacting that Order) no development shall be carried out within Class A of Part 32 of Schedule 2 to that Order unless planning permission has been granted on an application relating thereto.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to regulate and control any such future development in the interests of preserving the function and character of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

- 6 No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping and boundary treatment. All planting, seeding and turfing comprised in the approved scheme of landscaping shall be implemented during the first planting season following occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the earlier. Any trees or shrubs removed, dying, being seriously damaged or diseased within 10 years of planting shall be replaced in the next planting season with trees or shrubs of similar size and species, unless the Authority gives written consent to any variation. Any boundary fences or walls or similar structures as may be approved shall be erected before first occupation of the building to which they relate.

Reason: Pursuant to Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to protect and enhance the appearance and character of the site and locality.

- 7 The number of pupils attending the school at any time shall not exceed that set out in the Planning Statement hereby approved.

Reason: In the interest of pedestrian and traffic safety.

- 8 No external lighting shall be installed in connection with the buildings or the new rugby pitch until such details have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and the work shall be carried out in strict accordance with those details.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and or visual amenity of the locality and in the interests of residential amenity.

- 9 No development shall be commenced until a programme for the provision of a controlled pedestrian crossing across the A26 at the Hadlow College entrance, including a timetable for implementation prior to the opening of the school to pupils, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved programme and timetable.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

- 10 No development shall be commenced until a programme for the provision of the replacement rugby pitch, including a timetable for implementation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved programme and timetable.

Reason: To ensure the development accords with the requirements of policy OS1 of the Managing Development and the Environment DPD 2010.

- 11 Prior to the commencement of development a scheme for the management of traffic using the bus/car drop off area as identified on plan number A620-PL-501 hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The use of this area shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme at all times thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

- 12 The use shall not be commenced, nor the premises occupied, until the area shown on the submitted layout as vehicle parking space has been provided, surfaced and drained. Thereafter it shall be kept available for such use and no permanent development, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order amending, revoking or re-enacting that Order) shall be carried out on the land so shown or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to this reserved parking space.

Reason: Development without provision of adequate accommodation for the parking of vehicles is likely to lead to hazardous on-street parking.

- 13 No building shall be occupied until the area shown on the submitted plan as turning area has been provided, surfaced and drained. Thereafter it shall be kept available for such use and no permanent development, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order amending, revoking and re-enacting that Order), shall be carried out on the land so shown or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to this reserved turning area.

Reason: Development without provision of adequate turning facilities is likely to give rise to hazardous conditions in the public highway.

- 14 Prior to the commencement of development hereby approved, details of a scheme of drainage for the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: Development without the provision of adequate means to drain the site is likely to contribute to the risk of localised flooding which should be avoided as anticipated in paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

- 15 Prior to the first use of the pitches hereby approved, a scheme shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval, setting out arrangements for providing community use of both the replacement rugby pitch and multi-use pitch hereby approved. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and highway safety.

- 16 No development shall be commenced until:

(a) A detailed assessment of ground conditions (including drainage and topography) of the land proposed for the replacement playing field which identifies constraints which could affect playing field quality; and

(b) the results of the investigation, together with an assessment by a competent person and details of a scheme which ensures that the playing field will be provided to an acceptable quality have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

The scheme pursuant to (b) shall include a written specification of soils structure, proposed drainage, cultivation and other operations associated with grass and sports turf establishment and a programme of implementation.

(c) The approved scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with a specified timetable to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Thereafter, no works shall take place within the site such as to prejudice the effectiveness of the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure that the playing field is prepared to an adequate standard and is fit for purpose and in accordance with policy OS1 of the Managing Development and the Environment DPD 2010.

Informatives:

- 1 The applicant is advised that the scheme should comply with the relevant industry Technical Guidance, including guidance published by Sport England, National Governing Bodies for Sport. Particular attention is drawn to 'Natural Turf for Sport' (Sport England, 2011).
- 2 In seeking to formally discharge conditions 10 and 16, the applicant is strongly advised to liaise with Sport England.

- 3 In seeking to formally discharge condition 9, the applicant should ensure that the crossing be implemented prior to the first opening of the approved school.

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