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**8. 17/2204/FUL - Erection of a 9,212 sq m (GIA) secondary school, for 1206 pupils, incorporating the erection of a two storey academic building, sports hall and facilities, playing fields, landscaping, 1,242 sq m (GIA) of temporary accommodation (Use Class D1) together with car parking, drop-off area and associated highway works AT LAND NORTH EAST OF BALDWINS LANE, CROXLEY GREEN, HERTFORDSHIRE for Croxley Danes Free School on behalf of the Education and Skills Funding Agency**

◼(DCES)

**PRELIMINARY REPORT**

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| Parish: Croxley Green Parish | Ward: Durrants |
| Expiry Statutory Period: 15 January 2018 | Officer: Matthew Roberts |
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| **Recommendation: That the Committee notes the report, and is invited to make general comments with regard to the material planning issues raised by the application. The application to then be returned to a future Committee for a decision.** | |
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| Reason for consideration by the Committee: Called in by three Members of the Planning Committee. | |

1. **Relevant Planning History:**

1.1 95/0565: Erection of a stable - Permitted and implemented.

1.2 17/1399/PREAPP: Pre-Application: Erection of Six Form Entry Secondary School, including new access, parking, sports pitches and landscaping.

Summary:

*The proposal would provide a six form entry school within a site allocated for education. There is no objection in principle to the development, although any application should ensure that there is sufficient parking to serve the use; that future expansion to accommodate an eight form entry school is not prejudiced; that there is no harm to neighbouring occupiers through use of the site; and should give further consideration to land level alterations with the currently indicated embankment to the west boundary of the site giving rise to concerns regarding impact on the Green Belt, character of the area and neighbours.*

*The retention of all the trees on site which have been protected by the Tree Preservation Order would be welcomed, and the Landscape Officer considers that G4 should be protected at all costs, together with T4 and T5 in a revised building layout. If possible all of the other groups and individual trees should be retained, and where this is not possible the loss of trees should be minimised and any loss suitably mitigated.*

1.3 17/1460/PREAPP: Pre-Application: Construction of Six Form Entry Secondary School and 6th Form with associated sports facilities, playing fields, car parking and landscaping.

Summary:

*The proposal would provide a six form entry school within a site allocated for education. There is no objection in principle to the development, although any application should ensure that there is sufficient parking to serve the use; that future expansion to accommodate an eight form entry school is not prejudiced; that there is no harm to neighbouring occupiers through use of the site; and should give further consideration to land level alterations. You are also advised that it would be preferable for hard surfaced sports provision to be located within the ‘Building Zone’ of the allocation.*

*There would be significant loss of trees as part of the proposals and the Landscape Officer has advised that it has not currently been demonstrated that the level of tree loss would be acceptable, and that where it is not possible to retain trees, the losses should be minimised and any loss suitably mitigated.*

1.4 17/2429/EIA: EIA Screening Opinion Request for erection of a 9,212 sq m (GIA) secondary school for 1206 pupils incorporating the erection of a two storey academic building , sports hall and facilities, playing fields and landscaping. Determined on 1 December 2017, no EIA required.

2. **Site Description:**

2.1 The application site lies to the north of Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green. The site has an area of approximately 12.3 hectares. It is low grade agricultural land previously used for the grazing of horses and includes some stables to the central part of the site. Land levels across the site are extremely undulating with the highest part of the site situated towards the north. The land levels slope down gradually from north to south, falling towards the Baldwin Lane frontage.

2.2 The northern boundary of the site adjoins Rousebarn Lane, to the north of which lies the West Herts Golf Course. The western boundary of the site adjoins Lodge End which is predominately an unmade track running north to south for most of the length of this boundary. Immediately to the west of Lodge End there is residential development including dwellings fronting onto Links Way with their gardens adjoining the unmade track. The south eastern boundary of the site adjoins a railway embankment which is at a higher level and well vegetated. The Grand Union Canal runs north to south adjacent to the east boundary of the site with Canal Cottage (Cassiobridge Lock House - a Grade II Listed Building) abutting the site. At the south west boundary of the site with Baldwins Lane there are existing parallel parking bays on the highway.

2.3 There are a number of trees on the site, including individual trees and groups of trees protected by Tree Preservation Order 790.

2.4The majority of the application site (with the exception of the north east section to the rear of Gade Bank) is allocated for education use to provide a secondary school within the Site Allocations document.

2.5The southern part of the site is identified as a ‘Building Zone’, with much of the northern part of the site identified for ‘Playing Fields’, although this excludes areas of trees to the north, west and central parts of the site. The area outside the Building Zone falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

3. **Description of Proposed Development:**

3.1 Planning permission is sought for the construction of a new secondary school incorporating the erection of a two storey building, playing fields, landscaping, parking and associated highway works. The proposal also seeks permission for a temporary school (Use Class D1) comprising five buildings and an area of hard surfacing.

3.2 The school once fully occupied would provide for 1,206 pupils aged 11-18 years old (900 11-16 year olds and 306 post-16 students). The school would operate between the hours of 08.30 until 16.30 on weekdays supplemented by a number of optional learning and extra-curricular activities before and after school which would mean pupils will be able to arrive from 07.30 until 18:00. The school will also be making a number of facilities available for community use after school hours and on the weekends (hours to be agreed).

3.3 The main school building would occupy the eastern part of the site taking the form of a “V” shaped footprint with the main principal elevation fronting Baldwins Lane. The building would be two stories in height with a flat roof form (height of 9.4m) set back from the splayed highway boundary with Baldwins Lane by approximately 20m at its closest point increasing to 30m. The principal elevation would measure approximately 40m with the western arm of the school building (extending south to north) measuring 83m in depth with a width of 31.5m, set from the western boundary with the un-made track (Lodge End) by 19m to 20m. The eastern arm (extends south west to north east) would have a depth of 110m with a width of 12m with the rear elevation comprising a central glazed rear projection providing a featured entrance. The building would have a part bricked and part rendered exterior, the latter of which would be used at first floor level. The windows would make up a large percentage of the elevations, excluding the northern element of the western arm which serves the sports facilities, and would include the use of decorative perforated panels.

3.4 The main building would provide approximately 9,212sqm of floorspace split over two floors with the ground floor providing teaching areas, staff and admin areas, sixth form social space/study area, library, dining hall, kitchen, drama hall, main hall, activity studio, sports hall with associated changing rooms and toilets. At first floor level teaching areas including a science preparation room and amenities would be provided.

3.5 To the front of the school building there would be a pedestrian “arrival plaza” which would be denoted by the use of bricked paving flanked by grass, shrub planting and hedging with the path at the highway boundary. The front boundary of the site would be supported by replacement tree planting, hedging and steel railings at a height of 1.3m.

3.6 The main school building would sit slightly higher than the adjacent circulation spaces which surround the main building. To the western side of the building there would be access to a bin store (fully enclosed) and cycle storage (52 cycle spaces) with future cycle provision denoted on the submitted plans running parallel with the western boundary and to the northern end of the building (adjacent to the sports hall). Access would also be provided to the internal sports facilities. In-between both projections of the school building two netball courts are proposed supported by 8 lighting columns with soft social spaces extending outwards towards the elevated playing fields.

3.7 To the north of the western arm of the building, four tennis courts are proposed measuring 38m in width by 32m in depth enclosed by 3m high sports fencing. No external lights are proposed at the current time. The tennis courts would be set in from the western boundary by approximately 9m. A surface water attenuation basin enclosed by 1.2m timber post and rail fencing is proposed immediately to the north of the tennis courts and is to be partially enclosed with the playing fields with new planting.

3.8 The site entrance will be provided from a single access via Baldwins Lane which would curve within the site eastwards where it would enable access to a service bay (for deliveries) before opening out onto an expanse of tarmac hard surfacing which would support the first of two parking areas located either side of the avenue of Lime trees. The initial parking area positioned to the south of the main school building would accommodate 49 drop off bays (short stay), 15 student spaces, 3 mini bus spaces, 9 disabled spaces and a drop off bay for coaches. The parking area would be secured by weldmesh fencing and gates at either end. The parking area would be supported by shrub and new tree planting. The second parking area will give access to a further 5 student parking spaces and 94 staff spaces with pedestrian paths immediately adjacent supported further by planting along the northern edge. This particular parking area covers a distance of approximately 120m running parallel with the railway embankment with a depth of 9m. A total of 175 parking spaces would be provided within the application site.

3.9 Towards the north eastern corner of the staff car park an all weather pitch (MUGA) is proposed. The pitch would be enclosed by sports fencing at 3m in height supported by six lighting columns. The MUGA would measure 60m in depth by 32.5m in width.

3.10 The existing avenue of protected Lime trees would largely to be retained (3 protected trees would be removed to facilitate the access road to the staff car park) and would play an important part in providing pedestrian access to and from the MUGA and staff car park to the main school building.

3.11 To the north of the main school building, extensive re-profiling/terracing of the land would occur to enable level threshold sport pitches which would include:

* Football pitches (Over 18 and adult, under 18 and 9 a side)
* Rugby pitch (5 a side, not senior)
* Cricket pitch
* Rounders pitch
* Shot putt circle and throwing area
* Discus circle and throwing area
* Grassed 400m running track
* Long jump with two running strips

3.12 The areas surrounding the above pitches/areas will be banked falling at various different gradients given the varied topography of the site. The most notable land changes would be from Lodge End where the land within the application site would rise between 4-6m over a distance of 32m to 44m. The elevated banks would in parts be supported by new tree planting and meadow grassland. Another notable increase would be from the eastern boundary bordering Canal Cottage (a Grade II Listed Building) whereby the land would rise by approximately 7m over a distance of approximately 58-70m, with the more significant elevated increase set well within the site.

3.13 The proposed areas of lighting are confined to the car parks, building perimeters, outdoor communal areas, walkways and cycle paths, bicycle shelters, signage lighting and sports areas (excluding tennis courts and sports pitches). Details of the external lighting are set out within the Design & Access Statement.

3.14 The majority of the boundary of the application site would be enclosed by 2.4m high weld mesh fencing with the retention of the existing fencing along the northern boundary and to the rear of properties fronting Gade Bank.

3.15 In respect of highway works (subject to a Section 278 agreement), the new access into the school would require the removal of a large number of unrestricted parking bays (hard to quantify the exact amount) adjacent to Baldwins Lane. Discussions are currently on-going to ascertain whether parking bays can be retained and/or provided opposite.

3.16 The proposal also seeks permission for temporary accommodation for 300 students and approximately 25 full time staff in the form of five buildings (large portable structures) surrounding a hard social area. The temporary buildings will be located in the area designated for the MUGA. Two of the buildings will be two stories in height while the remaining buildings would be single storey providing classrooms, dining hall, admin areas and toilets.

3.17 Due to the required positioning of the building and associated works a total number of 27 trees (9 of which are subject to TPOs) and 9 groups of scrub/lower grade vegetation would be removed. In mitigation the scheme seeks extensive re-planting throughout the site including enhancement planting along the western boundary with Lodge End and new groups of trees within and across the site.

3.18 The application is accompanied by the following reports:

* Local Biodiversity Checklist
* CIL Form
* Design & Access Statement (October 2017)
* Planning Statement (October 2017)
* Arboricultural Development Report (October 2017)
* Landscape & Visual Appraisal with Effects Statement (October 2017)
* Landscape Design & Access Statement (October 2017)
* Transport Assessment (October 2017)
* Framework Travel Plan (October 2017)
* Bat Survey (October 2017)
* Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Assessment (October 2017)
* Reptile Survey (October 2017)
* Stag Beetle Survey (October 2017)
* Badger Survey (October 2017)
* Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan (October 2017)
* Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (August & October 2017)
* Flood Risk Assessment (October 2017)
* Drainage Strategy (October 2017)
* Energy and Sustainability Statement (October 2017)
* Environmental Management Plan (EMP) (October 2017)
* Lighting Impact Assessment (September 2017)
* Environmental Noise Assessment Report (October 2017)
* MUGA Assessment (October 2017)
* Statement of Community Involvement (October 2017)
* Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (October 2017)
* Construction Management & Logistics Plan (October 2017)

4. **Consultation:**

4.1. **Statutory** **Consultation:**

4.2 Highway Authority: [Further information being received]

4.2.1 *“This application requests permission for the construction of a new secondary school and associated facilities within the site. The details submitted with this application include a detailed Transport Assessment document providing information on the following transport issues:*

***Site Access / Parking:***

*Baldwins Lane is classified as a Local Distributor Road within Hertfordshire’s road hierarchy. The road is subject to a 30mph speed restriction, carries a large volume of traffic to and from the A412 and has a recorded history of road collisions.*

*The parking facilities have been designed to accommodate suitable and safe drop-off facilities for car and coach passengers away from the highway. A total on-site car parking provision of 175 spaces is proposed which will include 44 (sic 54 in total proposed) spaces for pick-up/drop-off of pupils. An area for cycle parking is identified that can accommodate up to 220 cycle stands. The Local Planning Authority is asked to review the proposed parking capacity in relation to its current standards.*

***Trip Generation and Distribution:***

*The Transport Assessment presents trip generation information calculated using pupil and staff numbers identified for the proposed school. Travel mode share and traffic distribution predictions associated with the development have been based on survey information from the local Rickmansworth school site. The vehicular trips predicted are considered appropriate and the conclusions reported are not disputed by the Highway Authority.*

*The Transport Assessment submitted assumes travel mode share information from existing school sites in the area and predicts that up to 46% of the secondary school students could travel to and from the site on foot or cycle. The Highway Authority will require that off-site highway improvement measures are identified to promote cycle travel to and from the site.*

*The calculated traffic flows have not included any assumptions with respect to diverting or linked trips and in this respect the traffic generation flows can be considered to be robust. The Transport Assessment has given consideration to existing traffic data in terms of speed, volume and flow patterns.*

***Junction Capacity Analysis:***

*The proposed access arrangements are designed to accommodate the traffic generated by the proposed school. Junction capacity analysis has been undertaken assuming the predicted traffic flows to and from the development site together with the existing flows on the highway network. Assumptions with respect to the future growth in the existing traffic flows have also been included in the analysis.*

*The nature of the proposed junction will result in the formation of some traffic queues on Baldwins Lane and these have been analysed for the periods of peak traffic generation for the school (08:00-09:00 and 15:15-16:15). The Highway Authority will require that the junction analysis is updated to reflect the current access proposal.*

***Sustainable Travel Modes:***

*The site is identified to be within an acceptable walking distance of a large number of residential properties in Croxley Green (to the west) and West Watford (to the east). The proposed highway improvements include off-site works to deliver improved crossing facilities on Baldwins Lane for pedestrians.*

*Baldwins Lane and Watford Road are served by a number of existing bus services and existing bus stops are positioned within walking distance of the site. Access to the underground rail network is also available via the Croxley and Watford stations.*

*The site can therefore be considered to be well located in terms of sustainable travel options. It therefore accords with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework in relation to promoting sustainable transport.*

***Highway Safety:***

*The Transport Assessment includes details of personal injury collisions recorded on the highway network in the vicinity of the site for a five year period ending 31/03/17. There are no significant clusters or patterns to the collisions identified and the proposed development is not expected to have a significant detrimental impact on the safety of users of the adjacent highway network.*

***Travel Plan:***

*The details submitted with this application include a Framework Travel Plan document giving consideration to the likely travel demands associated with the development. The Highway Authority will require that the drop-off and pick-up of pupils at each end of the day is carefully supervised to ensure that this on-site facility operates efficiently. It will also require that the document is reviewed and updated to identify any appropriate improvement measures to promote sustainable travel to and from the site.*

***Highway Consultation Summary:***

*The on-site parking layout has been designed to accommodate drop-off facilities for car and coach passengers. The proposed development will generate a significant number of person trips. Many of these trips can be accommodated by sustainable travel modes.*

*The capacity analysis undertaken confirms that the predicted trips by private car can be catered for and these are accommodated within the site within the separate drop-off and pick-up area. The development is therefore not expected to result in any significant detriment to the safety and operation of the highway network at the location of the site access. The development will increase vehicular trips through the A412 roundabouts close to the site and the Highway Authority requests that funding contributions are made to mitigate for this impact.*

*The Highway Authority requests that any granting of permission is subject to a condition to facilitate further clarification on the junction capacity analysis within the Transport Assessment (although this may be resolved in advance of the LPA’s decision on the application). Further information on the School Travel Plan, the off-site highway improvements and all construction vehicle movements and parking arrangements is also requested to ensure that any inconvenience to users of the adjacent highway is kept to a minimum. The Highway Authority therefore does not raise any objection to the application subject to confirmation of the suggested planning conditions and advisory notes identified above.*

*I’ve just been advised that there may be a lack of existing capacity in the bus services passing the site. We will therefore need some further consideration of that. However, that issue can be covered in the update of the Transport Assessment I have requested and/or S106 contributions (not yet defined).”*

4.2.2 **Officer Comment:** Discussions between the developer and the Highway Authority are on-going and therefore the required contributions have yet to be confirmed.

4.3 Landscape Officer: [No objection, conditions recommended]

4.3.1 *“The proposals have gone some way to secure the retention of most of the trees on the site protected by the TPO. TPO790 is entitled: Three Rivers (Land North East of Baldwins Lane) TPO 2014, and this protects a number of individual trees, groups of trees and several Woodlands within the site. It is proposed as part of the proposals to remove a total of 27 trees, including 9 trees the subject of the TPO, including 3 trees assessed as category A, 14 trees and 2 groups assessed as category B.*

*The school building will result in the direct loss of two Sycamore trees T4 and T5 of the TPO, both mature and one assessed as a category A and one B. While both trees are of significance it is considered as part of the overall site design that the significance of the Lime Avenue far outweighs these two individual trees and as such the loss of these two trees allows the avenue to be retained.*

*Three of the lime trees to the south of the avenue will it is proposed be lost in order to accommodate vehicular access to the south. The impact of this will be to slightly foreshorten the avenue, however long term, tree planting to the north of the avenue will extend the avenue slightly in the direction of the playing pitches.*

*Tree loss elsewhere is proposed in order to accommodate the playing pitches and associated ground remodelling and the removal of those protected trees in the centre of the site comprising G5 (6 Common Lime and 1 Sycamore) T1 (Scots Pine), T2 a Sycamore and T3 a Common Lime. During a recent site visit it was not possible to identify either T1 or T2 and as a result I believe that these trees must have been removed at some point prior to the submission of the application. There will also be a small part of the Root Protection Area of G1 which will be impacted upon by the ground modelling works associated with the playing pitch provision. This is considered to be relatively insignificant.*

*I would expect the trees removed will be replaced with advanced nursery stock trees in the case of T4 and T5, and I would expect a replanting scheme which would significantly improve the views into the site from the west. This together with the retention of the area of scrub running north south and marked up on the plans as G9 would assist in improving views across the site.*

*The key remnant arboricultural features at the site are G4 the Lime Avenue and W1 the dominant woodland ridge to the north of the site. These features are being protected with the exception of three of the Lime trees to the southern end of the Avenue. Again I would expect these to be replaced, and this is proposed to the north of the retained avenue. There are also a number of scattered individual parkland trees which are of significant value and which it is proposed to retain within the school playing fields. These features will be significant in providing an established landscape setting for the new school and it’s playing pitch provision.*

*Overall I have no objection to the proposal on landscape grounds. The most significant arboricultural features are proposed to be retained and where tree loss is unavoidable, proposed tree planting can secure the long term amenity of the site.*

*I would like to see the imposition of the following conditions:*

***Landscaping – Details – CR095***

*No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, which shall include the location of all existing trees and hedgerows affected by the proposed development, and details of those to be retained, together with a scheme detailing measures for their protection in the course of development.*

*All hard landscaping works required by the approved scheme shall be carried out and completed prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted. All soft landscaping works required by the approved scheme shall be carried out in accordance with a programme to be agreed before development commences and shall be maintained including the replacement of any trees or plants which die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased in the next planting season with others of a similar size or species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation for a period for five years from the date of the approved scheme was completed.*

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).*

***Landscape Management Plan – Details – CR096***

*A landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.*

*Reason: In order to ensure that the approved landscaping is satisfactorily maintained, in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).*

***No Felling or Lopping – CR097***

*No trees, hedgerows or shrubs within the curtilage of the site, except those shown on the approved plan(s) or otherwise clearly indicated in the approved details as being removed, shall be felled, lopped or pruned, nor shall any roots be removed or pruned without the prior consent of the Local Planning Authority during development and for a period of five years after completion of the development hereby approved. Any topping or lopping approved shall be carried out in accordance with BS: 3998 (2010) ‘Recommendations for tree works’. Any trees, hedgerows or shrubs removed or which die or become dangerous, damaged or diseased before the end of a period of five years after completion of the development hereby approved shall be replaced with new trees, hedging or shrub species (of such size species and in such number and position as maybe agreed in writing), before the end of the first available planting season (1st October to 31st March) following their loss or removal.*

*Reason: The existing trees/hedgerows/shrubs represent an important public visual amenity in the area and should be protected in accordance with the requirements of Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).*

***Tree Protection Scheme- Details – CR098***

*No operations (including tree felling, pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction, or any other operation involving the use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) shall commence on site in connection with the development hereby approved until the branch structure and trunks of all trees shown to be retained and all other trees not indicated as to be removed and their root systems have been protected from any damage during site works, in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

*The protective measures, including fencing, shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved scheme before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed within any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority. No fires shall be lit or liquids disposed of within 10.0m of an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the approved scheme.*

*Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the trees, area and to meet the requirements of Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).*

***Arboricultural Method Statement – CR100A***

*No development or other operation shall commence on site until a scheme (herein called the Approved Method Statement of Arboricultural Works Scheme) which indicates the construction methods to be used in order to ensure the retention and protection of tree, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.*

*No operations shall commence on site in connection with the development hereby approved (including tree felling, pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction, or any other operation involving the use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the approved scheme are in place on site.*

*The fencing or other works which are part of the approved scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.*

*Reason: To ensure that the protected trees are not affected during construction of the development hereby permitted, in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).”*

4.4 Croxley Green Parish Council: [No objection, additional information requested]

4.4.1 *“The Council is well aware of the need for additional secondary school places within the local area and* ***supports*** *the proposed development in principle. However there are some aspects of the proposed development which is causing local concern and the Parish Council wishes to see these addressed before planning permission is given.*

*The main concerns relate to the effect of the proposed development on local traffic and parking. There are also some other matters that we wish to bring to the attention of the District Council as the local planning authority.*

***Consultation and design:***

*The Parish Council appreciates the efforts taken by the developers to consult local residents, others potentially affected by the development, and this Council. The Parish Council understands the complexity of the design brief and respects the efforts made by the developer to provide an acceptable solution to a number of major local concerns. In particular, the shape and scale of the proposed buildings, their position within the site, and the proposed landscaping, all address local concerns. The Parish Council welcomes the assurances provided by the Trust and the developers concerning community use of the facilities, and how this has been incorporated into the design.*

*The Parish Council notes that the proposed Metropolitan Line Extension (MLX) is currently on hold and considers that it should not be taken into account in determining the transport and traffic impact of this application as there can be no guarantee of completion within the foreseeable future.*

*The Parish Council also notes that a number of other developments have been permitted within the local area that will generate considerable additional local traffic. These are identified in the Transport Assessment but some of them were permitted anticipating the completion of the MLX. The transport assessments for these permitted developments should be revised to allow for the changed circumstances with consequential impacts on the local conditions.*

*The Transport Assessment identifies the local bus routes but does not assess the extent to which there is spare capacity on these routes at peak times. The availability of sufficient capacity and the need for additional dedicated services should be assessed before the development is permitted*

*The Transport Assessment claims the total trip generation is robust, on the basis that discounts associated with existing school trips being made by local children attending existing secondary schools, and linked trips, have not been discounted within the junction modelling assessments. This seems optimistic, as the requirement for additional secondary school places demonstrates that all the existing places at other schools will be required in addition to the new school. There can therefore be no guarantee that future allocations policies will result in shorter journeys or less travel in cars.*

***Road network and junction capacity:***

*Local residents have expressed concerns about the impact of additional car journeys by staff and pupils on the congested road network in the vicinity. The Parish Council draws TRDC’s attention to the existing conditions outside Rickmansworth School. There are significant delays during school terms, particularly during the morning peak, with slow moving queues extending up to half a mile (800m) or more along The Green as well as on the Watford Road in both directions.*

*Local residents have told the Parish Council that traffic on Baldwins Lane moves very slowly from The Green down to the Watford Road (A412) in the morning peak period (08:00 to 09:00) during school terms. The Parish Council is concerned that, in this situation, traffic will seek to divert from Baldwins Lane to “rat run” through residential streets to avoid the delays, leading to congestion and the risk of further accidents throughout Croxley Green.*

*The Transport Assessment identifies that the effect of committed development traffic is such that by 2024 the Baldwins Lane Roundabout will be operating at full capacity. As a result additional traffic generated by the proposed school will generate congestion and queueing on the eastbound approach on Watford Road.*

*The Transport Assessment also identifies that further junction assessment work is required to assess the existing operation of local junctions and the effect of school traffic on their operation. Following submission of the planning application additional traffic surveys and modelling of Baldwins Lane/ Winton Drive, Winton Approach, A412, A412 Winton Drive and Watford Road/ Ascot Road roundabout is proposed. Once the modelling has been completed the results together with potential mitigation measures are to be discussed with HCC.*

*The Parish Council considers that the impact on the local road network has been underestimated by modelling the effects of the proposed development at isolated junctions and the assessment should include the interaction between the different junctions and the entrance to the proposed school.*

*The Parish Council notes that the Transport Assessment states:*

*“…in order to conclude the assessment in terms of the agreement of any mitigation with TRDC and HCC, further surveys will be required including additional parking and traffic surveys. The need for additional analysis is identified within this TA, and it is proposed that the scope of any further surveys is agreed with TRDC and HCC and carried out during the planning determination period of 13 weeks from the date of validation.”*

***Parking:***

*Local residents have expressed concerns about the impact of additional car journeys by staff and pupils on the demand for parking at the bottom of Baldwins Lane. The Parish Council notes that the Transport Assessment (section 9.6) proposes further parking surveys to identify:*

* *residual parking capacity*
* *potential means of improving controls parking adjacent to the parade of local shops opposite the proposed school, and*
* *whether new controls are required to protect residential parking amenity in local streets.*

*The Parish Council has heard that TRDC intends to introduce a controlled parking zone (CPZ) in the vicinity of the proposed school. The Council considers that the additional parking surveys should be completed before planning permission is given, and that parking controls will be required to ensure that the needs of local businesses and residents are protected as a pre-occupation condition.*

***Dropping off and picking up:***

*The Parish Council notes that the proposed design provides for pupils to be dropped from cars within the school’s curtilage and is concerned that, when this facility is busy, there will be a risk of traffic backing up to Baldwins Lane and causing further congestion and delay. Traffic modelling should be carried out to demonstrate either that the proposed facilities will be adequate and sufficient to meet demand, or that there is a traffic management strategy to control the situation. The Council notes that a car park management plan (CPMP) is proposed in the Transport Assessment and considers that a proposed CPMP should be required before development consent is given, as well as a pre-occupation condition. The Parish Council draws TRDC’s attention to the existing conditions outside St Joan of Arc School, Rickmansworth. There is extensive traffic congestion around the school when people collecting children after school are looking for temporary parking spaces. The Council considers that a management plan to control temporary on-street parking should be required as a pre-occupation condition.*

***Cinnamond Site:***

*The Parish Council believes that the purchase of the Cinnamond site as an adjunct to the proposed development site could address a number of the issues raised by the Transport Assessment. In particular, there is an existing vehicle access off the Baldwins Lane roundabout, the site could provide a space for short term parking and for drop off and collection, reducing the traffic flows at the school entrance and reducing the number of turning movements across Baldwins Lane*

*In addition, a further opportunity exists by way of considering a pedestrian tunnel under the embankment from the Cinnmond Site leading straight into the school or alternatively a dedicated footpath from the Cinnamond Site leading to Baldwins Lane adjacent to the railway bridge.*

*The Council suggests that the purchase of this site could proceed in parallel with the development of the school, to provide for the traffic and pedestrian requirements when the school is fully developed.*

***Road Safety:***

*The Parish Council notes the accident analysis in the Transport Assessment (4.5 Personal Accident Injury Data) and that ALL the serious injuries were sustained by vulnerable road users (1 pedestrian, 3 cyclists and 2 on motor cycles). Notwithstanding the Cycle Skills Network Audit (CSNA) carried out in 2009 (Appendix C) the Parish Council wishes to see a complete reassessment of the suitability of the local road network for the anticipated pedestrian and cycle traffic and a programme of minor road improvements to ensure the safety of vulnerable road users, especially the school’s pupils, as a basis for encouraging walking or cycling to school as a pre-occupation condition.*

***Admissions Criteria:***

*The Parish Council wishes to see that the admission criteria prioritise the needs of local children with the aim of reducing the environmental impacts of traffic, and traffic congestion, by encouraging sustainable modes of travel (walking, cycling and public transport).*

***Safeguarding the landscape:***

*The Parish Council remains of the view that the part of the site designated for playing fields**is an important element in the local landscape. The use of this land for playing fields is**acceptable provided the development is carried out in a sensitive manner that respects the**present landscape. The objective of safeguarding the northwest portion of the site as open**space is to prevent its development either for housing or by gradually expanding the school**buildings to cover the whole site. The Parish Council accepts that further development for**educational purposes may be required in the future, but believes the land within the Green**Belt should continue to be protected for at least the foreseeable future.*

*Evidence by way of successful implementation elsewhere should be provided to**demonstrate that the proposed wildflower treatment on the steeper slopes (1 in 3 quoted) on**a southerly aspect with a chalk substrate, both on cutting and on an embankment is**achievable.*

***Safeguarding the buildings:***

*The Parish Council notes that there appears to be no provision for water sprinklers for fire suppression. This is not a matter of safety whilst the building is occupied as it should be relatively straightforward to evacuate the children in the event of a fire, but a concern for the safety of the building in the event of an arson attack or acts of vandalism. There have been press reports of malicious arson on school properties in other parts of the country and at least two public buildings have been burned down in Croxley Green (the railway station by suffragettes in March 1913 and the library in January 1993). The Parish Council suggests that water sprinklers for fire suppression should be included in the design before the development is approved.*

*I trust that the TRDC Planning Committee will consider the above carefully to ensure that the issues and concerns raised are satisfactorily addressed in arriving at its decision.”*

4.5 Hertfordshire Ecology: [No objection, conditions recommended]

4.5.1  *“Thank you for consulting Hertfordshire Ecology on this application. We previously commented on the pre application for new school development proposals at this site. I have the following comments to make:*

*The application site includes an Ecosite\* in our database known as ‘Horse Pasture by Lodge End’ (reference 83/041), which is described as being semi-improved horse-grazed neutral grassland with Meadow buttercup, Sorrel, Black Medick, Creeping cinquefoil, Lesser stitchwort, Yarrow and Selfheal.*

*\*Ecosites do not have any form of status of importance, but are merely sites that we have some ecological information on - thus they do support some wildlife interest, at least at a local level. Whilst these sites are often a valuable starting point in identifying the county's wildlife resource, they do not meet the rigorous and quantifiable assessment criteria needed to identify them as non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites.*

*To the north is ‘Jacotts Hill / West Herts Golf Course’, a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) designated for its grassland and woodland interest. To the east is Cassiobury Park, which includes a Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust reserve as well as being a LWS with important wet and fen/swamp habitat communities.*

*We have records of Grass snake in the area.*

*A number of ecological reports (by Middlemarch Environmental Limited) have been submitted in support of this application:*

* + *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Report RT-MME-122841-01 Rev A);*
  + *Pre-development Arboricultural Survey (Report RT-MME-122841-02);*
  + *Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Assessment (Report RT-MME-125227);*
  + *Reptile Survey (Report RT-MME-125421-01);*
  + *Badger Survey (Report RT-MME-125421-02);*
  + *Stag Beetle Survey (Report RT-MME-125421-03); and*
  + *Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan (Report RT-MME-126508).*

*Within these reports, consideration has been given to replacement tree removal with native planting; protection of woodland and retained trees; creation of wildflower meadow; protected and notable species including bats, badgers, Great crested newts, reptiles, nesting birds and Stag beetle; sympathetic external lighting scheme; and biodiversity enhancements.*

*I consider that adequate information has been provided to: fully inform the impacts of the proposals on biodiversity and; provide appropriate mitigation and enhancements to ensure overall net gain for biodiversity. In this respect, I do not consider the net impact on biodiversity needs to be qualified (i.e. specifically measured) further.*

*I advise the Recommendations in all of the Middlemarch reports listed above are followed.”*

4.6 Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust: [Objection]

4.6.1 *“Net impact on biodiversity must be quantified to clearly demonstrate no net loss or net gain in accordance with NPPF and BS 42020. All measures should be definitively expressed not suggested or recommended, as required by BS 42020.*

*In principle there is no objection to the location and concept of this development. However, in order to conform with the requirements of NPPF and BS 42020, the proposals need to demonstrate that the development will achieve measured no net loss and where possible net gains to biodiversity. The information submitted to date does not contain the required objective assessment of ecological value pre and post development.*

*In order to objectively assess the ecological value of the site and to guide the amount of ecological compensation or mitigation required, the DEFRA metric e.g. Biodiversity Impact Calculator (Environment Bank 2015) should be employed to quantify the net ecological impact of the development.*

*Ecological information should clearly, definitively and measurably show: what is there, how it will be affected by development, how any negative impacts can be avoided, mitigated or compensated to ensure no net loss and where possible net gains to biodiversity, as required by NPPF. NPPF and BS 42020 require that ecological information demonstrate no net loss and where possible net gain in biodiversity and not merely a subjective assessment of the significance of impacts on significant habitats.*

*NPPF, paras 109 and 118 state: 109 “the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

* *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.”*

*118 “When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity….”*

*In order to objectively assess the ecological value of the land proposed for development a consistent and fair methodology should be employed. It is not sufficient to subjectively state that no net loss will be achieved, this must be measured or the phrase becomes meaningless and a matter of opinion. The implementation of an acceptable biodiversity accounting methodology should ensure appropriate mitigation or compensation resources are provided to achieve the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, as required by NPPF.*

*Therefore it is advised that the Biodiversity Impact Calculator (BIC Environment Bank 2015) be employed to assess the pre and post development ecological value of this proposal. The calculator must show a neutral or positive ecological unit score in order for the development to demonstrate that it is consistent with NPPF. The requirement to clearly demonstrate net gain is consistent with BS 42020 Biodiversity - code of practice for planning and development.*

*The reason for the application of the calculator is that it provides an objective mechanism to measure ecological impacts of any given development. It is transparent and ensures a measurable, standard and fair approach for developers and the local authority to provide consistency in assessing and calculating ecological impacts and therefore the required mitigation and or compensation measures. Without the application of the calculator, assessments of precise ecological impacts are subjective. The calculator has been devised by DEFRA, Natural England, several Local Authority Planning departments and upheld in a number of planning decisions as a suitable mechanism to assess no net loss or net gain.*

*Once this has been done it will guide whether enough has been provided in terms of the habitats proposed to be created and managed in the ‘biodiversity enhancement and management plan’. Without an objective assessment no net loss and therefore compliance with NPPF cannot be stated with any legitimacy.*

*Many of the measures proposed in the enhancement and management plan are welcomed but need amending or stating definitively (once it has been established that they are sufficient to deliver no net loss). If they are not definitively proposed they are not compliant with BS 42020 which states:*

*‘6.6.2. An ecological report should avoid language that suggests that recommended actions “may” or “might” or “could” be carried out by the applicant/developer (e.g. when describing proposed mitigation, compensation or enhancement measures). Instead, the report should be written such that it is clear and unambiguous as to whether a recommended course of action is necessary and is to be followed or implemented by the applicant.'*

*Accordingly the following statements from the enhancement and management plan are not compliant with BS42020:*

* *Table 2.1 retained and proposed trees. ‘Newly planted trees should be native and in keeping with the surroundings. Canopy trees such as field maple etc.’ The planting list should be definitively proposed – no coulds, shoulds or such as.*
* *Table 2.1 native boundary planting. ‘Native species are proposed to be planted along the western site boundary. The species mix should comprise field maple etc.’ This must be definitively expressed and marked on plans. Ten species should be included in the mix not 6.*
* *Table 3.1. This must be definitively stated and marked on maps. Only measures that will be employed not should be employed should be stated.*
* *Table 3.2. Only measures that will be employed not should be employed should be stated.*
* *Table 3.4. The species mix is acceptable but it must be stated definitively that it will be used – not just suggested or recommended.*
* *Table 3.5. Wildflower meadows should not be cut in September. This will lead to long term botanical decline. Cut and clear in mid-July and October as recommended by the seed supplier. Leave one quarter uncut in July on rotation then cut and clear all in October.*
* *Table 3.6. This is very much welcomed but it must be made clear whether it will be done and exactly where it will be done. It is not sufficient to recommend measures. All measures must be definitively stated to be compliant with BS 42020.*
* *Table 3.8. ‘It is recommended that the attenuation feature is seeded with a mix such as Emorsgate EM8 ‘Again this must be definitively stated not suggested or recommended. The species mix is acceptable.*
* *Table 3.9. Wildflower meadows should not be cut in September. This will lead to long term botanical decline. Cut and clear in mid-July and October as recommended by the seed supplier. Leave one quarter uncut in July on rotation then cut and clear all in October.*
* *Table 3.11. How many and where will these be created.”*

4.7 Sport England: [No objection, conditions recommended]

4.7.1 “***Sport England – Non Statutory Role and Policy:***

*The Government, within their Planning Practice Guidance (Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Section) advises Local Planning Authorities to consult Sport England on a wide range of applications.* [*https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities*](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities)

*This application falls within the scope of the above guidance as it relates to the creation of a major sports facility and the creation of a site for one or more playing pitches.*

*Sport England assesses this type of application in line with its planning objectives and with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Sport England’s planning objectives are to PROTECT existing facilities, ENHANCE the quality, accessibility and management of existing facilities, and to PROVIDE new facilities to meet demand. Further information on Sport England’s planning objectives can be found here:*

[*http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/aims-and-objectives/*](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/aims-and-objectives/)

*The Proposal and Assessment against Sport England’s Objectives and the NPPF:*

*The proposal is for a new 1200 place secondary school to allow the recently formed Croxley Danes School to relocate from its temporary site. The school would be constructed on an area of agricultural land in Croxley Green.  The new school would include a sports hall and activity studio supported by changing facilities.  In terms of external sports facilities, there would be natural turf playing fields, an all-weather pitch designed for football and hockey and games courts suitable for tennis and netball.  As set out in the Community Use Statement, the sports facilities would be available for community use outside of school hours.*

***Principle of the Development:***

*There is no up-to-date sports facility strategy available for Three Rivers district that would inform community indoor and outdoor sports facility needs in the Croxley Green area.  However, the consultations with sports governing bodies that I have undertaken indicate that this is an area of high participation levels in a range of sports and that the existing supply of facilities does not meet current needs.  For example, the Lawn Tennis Association have advised that 4 tennis courts with community access would support their vision of getting more people playing more often and that the facilities could be hired by local clubs or offer a pay and play option for the community.   The Hertfordshire County FA have advised that the local football clubs have training and match venues scattered across the local area and struggle to find pitches suitable for their match needs. These clubs (Croxley Green Youth FC and Chorleywood FC) would welcome the opportunity to develop a relationship with the school and use their all weather and natural turf pitch facilities.*

*As it is proposed to make the sports facilities available for community use, Sport England would be supportive of the principle of the sports facility proposals in the proposed school development as they would offer potential to accord with the above objective relating to providing new facilities to meet demand.  However, the following specific issues and comments outlined below about particular aspects of the scheme require consideration as part of the determination of the application to help ensure that the sports facilities are fit for purpose for meeting school and community needs.*

***Indoor Sports Facilities:***

*The provision of a sports hall and activity studio that would be available for community use outside of school hours would be welcomed in principle as it would offer potential for meeting any unmet indoor sports facility needs.  However, community access would need to be secured through a community use agreement to help ensure that the facility meets community needs over a long term period in practice.  Attention will also need to be given to the design and layout of the facility. To this end, Sport England has developed detailed guidance on expectations for good facility design.  Further information on design is detailed on our website at* [*http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/*](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/)*.   Advisory comments based on the submitted floor plans are appended to this response which I would be grateful if the applicant could be requested to consider before the internal design is finalised in order to ensure that the design and layout is broadly in accordance with our design guidance.*

*In order to help ensure that the detailed elements (such as internal flooring and lighting specifications) of the design of the sports hall are fit for purpose, it is requested that an informative be added to a decision notice if the application is approved advising that the sports hall should be designed in accordance with Sport England’s relevant design guidance notes.*

*Informative: The applicant is advised that the design and layout of the sports hall should comply with the relevant industry Technical Design Guidance, including guidance published by Sport England, National Governing Bodies for Sport. Particular attention is drawn to the “Sports Hall Design & Layouts” design guidance note* [*http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/sports-halls/*](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/sports-halls/)*.*

***Natural Turf Playing Fields:***

*The Landscape Masterplan shows that a range of winter and summer sports pitches could be marked out in practice on the natural turf playing field which is welcomed.  The provision of an artificial grass cricket wicket is particularly welcomed as this will help facilitate school and community cricket use on the site and artificial wickets are preferable to natural turf wickets on school sites due to the relative maintenance costs associated with them.  I have the following advisory comments:*

* *The design and construction of the natural turf playing pitches will need to be informed by a sports pitch feasibility study to ensure that it is fit for purpose in practice;*
* *The artificial cricket wicket should meet the ECB’s Guidance for the Provision and Installation of Non Turf Cricket Pitches and Net Cage Facilities and installation must be by a supplier of an ECB approved NTP system to ensure that it is safe and meets performance requirements.  See the ECB’s website* [*https://www.ecb.co.uk/be-involved/club-support/club-facility-management/surface-types*](https://www.ecb.co.uk/be-involved/club-support/club-facility-management/surface-types)*for design guidance and approved systems;*
* *The football pitches should have dimensions which meet the FA’s recommended dimensions to ensure that the pitches are suitable for school and community competitive use.  The Football Foundation (on behalf of the FA) have advised that the pitches should meet the following dimensions:*

*Youth U11 and U12 (9v9) 73 x 46m (79 x 52m including safety run-off area)*

*Youth U13 and U14 (11v11) 82 x 50m (88 x 56m including safety run-off area)*

*Youth U15 and U16 (11v11) 91 x 55m (97 x 61m including safety run-off area)*

*Youth U17 and U18 (11v11) 100 x 64m (106 x 70m including safety run-off area)*

*Over 18 and Adult (11v11) 100 x 64, (106 x 70m including safety run-off area)*

***Sports Pitch Feasibility Study & Specification:***

*As the grass playing fields are being designed to accommodate both school and potential community use it is considered essential that the school’s playing field is constructed to a standard that will allow intensive use.  Unless specialist consideration is given to the ground conditions and the proposals for the construction and maintenance of the new playing field, there are likely to be constraints on the ability of the playing field to meet the needs of the school and the community in terms of the carrying capacity of the playing fields and surface quality.  Sport England’s has had regular experience of playing fields on new school sites being unusable for the majority of the academic year due to inadequate consideration being given at the planning and design stages.  As retrospectively addressing such scenarios is usually very costly and disruptive to schools, it is considered essential that appropriate provision is made for addressing playing field construction issues through any planning permission.  The applicant has acknowledged that the site will require remodelling to provide fit for purpose playing fields due to the gradients of the site. Sport England would therefore expect a feasibility study to be prepared to assess the ground conditions (drainage, soils, topography etc) and identify the constraints that may affect the ability to deliver good quality playing surfaces that would sustain the anticipated levels of use by both the school and the community.  A sports pitch specification would also need to be prepared (based on the feasibility study recommendations) to ensure that an appropriate quality playing field is provided in practice.  Sport England’s guidance note “Natural Turf for Sport” (2011) provides guidance on what should be included in a site assessment and how new playing pitch sites can be planned, designed, managed and maintained to maximise their quality.  This document and the other design guidance notes referred to in this response can be downloaded from our website at* [*http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/natural-turf-for-sport/*](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/natural-turf-for-sport/)*.  The feasibility study and sports pitch specification should be prepared by an agronomist/sports turf consultant.  Sport England can provide details of agronomists/sports turf consultants as well as example studies upon request.*

*I would therefore request that a planning condition be imposed on any planning permission requiring the submission and approval of an assessment of the ground conditions of the area proposed for playing field use which would lead to a related detailed sports pitch specification being prepared for addressing ground condition constraints (such as gradients, drainage, surface quality and maintenance issues) that have been identified in the assessment which may restrict the playing capacity and performance quality of the playing field.  This should be approved before any works commence on the playing field element of the development.  It is requested that the following condition is used for addressing this matter (based on model condition 10a of our conditions schedule* [*https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-applications/*](https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-applications/)*) :*

#### *No development of the playing field area hereby approved shall commence until the following documents have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England:*

##### 

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

##### Based on the results of the assessment to be carried out pursuant to (i) above, a detailed scheme which ensures that the playing field will be provided to an acceptable quality. The scheme 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.

##### The approved scheme shall be carried out in full and in accordance with a timeframe agreed with the Local Planning Authority.  The land shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the scheme and made available for playing field use in accordance with the scheme.

*Reason: To ensure that the playing field is prepared to an adequate standard and is fit for purpose and to accord with Development Plan Policy...*

*Informative: 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).*

***Artificial Cricket Wicket:***

*A planning condition and associated informative is requested requiring the specification of the proposed artificial cricket wicket to be submitted and approved.  This is justified to ensure that the facility is fit for purpose and of a suitable quality to meet safety and performance requirements.  An implementation programme is also requested to provide clarity and certainty about when the wicket will be constructed in practice.  The ECB have advised that compliance with these standards would be a pre-condition of their support in order to ensure that the facilities are suitable for community cricket use.*

*It is requested that the following condition and informative be imposed on any planning permission to address this matter (which is based condition 9 of our model conditions schedule):*

*“Prior to installation of the artificial cricket wicket, details of the design and layout of the artificial grass cricket wicket together with an implementation programme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England. The artificial grass cricket wicket shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details.*

*Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to accord with Development Plan Policy...”*

*Informative: The applicant is advised that the design and layout of the artificial grass cricket wicket should comply with the relevant industry Technical Design Guidance, including the England & Wales Cricket Board’s (ECB) TS6 document on Performance Standards for Non-Turf Cricket Pitches Intended for Outdoor Use* [*http://www.ecb.co.uk/development/facilities-funding/facilities-guidance-and-project-development/non-turf*](http://www.ecb.co.uk/development/facilities-funding/facilities-guidance-and-project-development/non-turf)*.  The applicant is also advised to ensure that an ECB approved non-turf system is installed.*

***All Weather Pitch:***

*A floodlit all weather pitch (sometimes referred to in the application as a MUGA) is proposed to the south east of the site which is intended for football and hockey. No details appear to have been provided of the proposed surface or layout of the pitch although the dimensions appear to be approximately 60x35 metres. The provision of an all-weather pitch is welcomed in principle as this would provide the school with a consistent surface that could be used in all weathers throughout the year which will be of particular value when the natural turf pitches cannot be used due to weather and surface conditions. The proposals for artificial lighting would offer the school extra-curricular PE and sports opportunities as well as significant potential community use opportunities. However, in the absence of detail about the rationale and design of the facility I would have the following potential concerns which require consideration by the applicant:*

***Dimensions:***

*The proposed dimensions do not correspond with the recommended dimensions for a conventional all weather pitch intended for football or hockey. The proposed pitch would be too small to allow most football pitch sizes to be marked out. A 5v5 mini football pitch suitable for the under 7/8 group or small sided football could be accommodated but senior and junior football pitches suitable for the age range that the school will be providing for could not be accommodated within the proposed size. In relation to hockey, an overall area of 101.4 x 63 m is required for a conventional hockey pitch. Consequently, while the pitch may be suitable for hockey training it would not be large enough for matches. Unless the all-weather pitch is intended principally as a training facility with match use taking place on the natural turf pitches then it will be unsuitable for meeting football or hockey match needs for a secondary school. The proposed size of the pitch will also influence the suitability for meeting community needs and consequently the revenue generating potential. It is therefore advocated that the applicant reviews the siting and dimensions of the all-weather pitch if it is intended that the facility will be used for meeting football and hockey match needs.*

***Surface:***

*The choice of surface will dictate the suitability of the pitch for particular sports. If the pitch is to be used for football and hockey, there is not a surface type that is ideal for both sports as 3G rubber crumb is the preferred surface for football while sand dressed (often referred to as astroturf) is the preferred surface for hockey. Compromises will therefore need to be made in terms of surface suitability to allow both sports to be played on the pitch. The school are advocated to consider the joint publication ‘Selecting the Right Artificial Surface’ that has been developed by Sport England and the pitch sports governing bodies and Sport England’s ‘Artificial Surfaces for Outdoor Sports’ design guidance to help ensure that an informed decision is made about the choice of surface. Details of these guidance notes are on our website at* [*http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/*](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/) *and Sport England would be happy to provide further guidance on this matter.*

***Lighting:***

*While an outline lighting scheme for the pitch is included in the Lighting Impact Assessment, full details of the lighting specifications including the proposed maintained average lux levels which inform the suitability for particular sports have not been provided at this stage.*

*As the design specifications for the all-weather pitch are not available at this stage, details will need to be submitted prior to commencement of development of the facility to demonstrate that the detailed design is fit for purpose and meets the relevant design guidance. The planning application does not provide detail of matters such as the surface, line marking, fencing and lighting specifications which will dictate whether the facility will be fit for purpose in practice for meeting the school’s and the community’s needs. The design specifications should include details of the specification of at least the surface, fencing, line markings and lighting. Furthermore, the Football Foundation and England Hockey have requested that such detail be provided to ensure that the detailed design of the facilities will be acceptable. The applicant is requested to discuss the design specifications with the Sport England before submitting details to discharge this condition. It is requested that the following condition and informative be imposed on any planning permission to address this matter (which is based condition 9 of our model conditions schedule* [*https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-applications/*](https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-applications/)*):*

*“No development of the all-weather pitch hereby approved shall commence until details of the design and layout of the artificial grass pitch including the surface specification, fencing specification, lighting specification and line markings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England. The artificial grass pitch shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details.*

*Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to accord with Development Plan Policy...”*

*Informative: The applicant is advised that the design and layout of the artificial grass pitch should comply with the relevant industry Technical Design Guidance, including guidance published by Sport England, National Governing Bodies for Sport. Particular attention is drawn to Sport England’s Artificial Surfaces for Outdoor Sports* [*http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/*](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/)*, the Football Association’s Guide to 3G Football Turf Pitches Design Principles and Layouts.* [*http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/player/facility-development-and-technical-guidance*](http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/player/facility-development-and-technical-guidance) *and England Hockey’s guidance on Outdoor Hockey Pitches and Facilities* [*http://www.englandhockey.co.uk/landing.asp?section=2078&sectionTitle=Outdoor+Hockey+Pitches+and+Facilities*](http://www.englandhockey.co.uk/landing.asp?section=2078&sectionTitle=Outdoor+Hockey+Pitches+and+Facilities)*.*

*If the Council wishes to impose a separate condition relating the detailed design of the proposed lighting scheme then condition 13 of our model conditions schedule could be used. While Sport England would not require a planning condition to be imposed relating to the hours of use of the all-weather pitch and it lighting, it is acknowledged that the Council may wish to impose such a condition in order to address potential impact on residential amenity or the environment. If planning permission is granted, it is recommended that any condition that may be imposed by the Council relating to the hours of use of the lighting and the use of the pitch is not overly restrictive. In this regard, it is advised that peak community use of all-weather pitches on similar sites usually extends until 10.00 on weekday evenings. If the Council wishes to impose a planning condition restricting the hours of use of the pitch or its sports lighting, consideration should be given to using condition 14 from our model conditions schedule.*

***Games Courts:***

*The proposal to provide games courts that would be suitable for 4 netball and tennis courts is welcomed.  Sport England would advocate that the facility is designed for a range of sports informed by the school’s priorities and that the detailed specification is informed by the priority sport as there are some differences in the detailed specification of the surface for instance if netball has greater priority than tennis or vice versa.  It is noted that sports lighting for the courts is not proposed in the application which will restrict the extra-curricular and community use potential of the MUGA.  To future proof the potential to install lighting at a later date (subject to planning permission), it is recommended that the games courts are constructed with the electrical services (i.e. service ducting) provided so that the school can install lighting at later efficiently without the costs of retrospectively providing electrical services to the facility.*

*At this stage, there is no information available about the detailed specifications for the design and layout of the courts to determine their suitability e.g. surfacing, line marking, fencing.  This should be provided at pre-commencement stage to allow an informed assessment to be made of whether the detailed design will be fit for purpose in practice.  Without such information being provided, there is a risk that the design will not be suitable in practice for meeting the needs of proposed sports that will be played or opportunities may be missed which may not be viable to retrospectively address.  When developing the specifications for the detailed design of the games courts, attention should be given to the relevant Sport England and national governing body design guidance referred to in the informative below and discussions should take place with the relevant sports governing bodies.  It is requested that the following condition and informative be imposed on any planning permission to address this matter (which is based on condition 9 of our model conditions schedule):*

*“No development of the games courts hereby approved shall commence until details of the games court specifications including the surfacing, fencing and line markings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England.  The games courts shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details.*

*Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to accord with Development Plan Policy...”*

*Informative: The applicant is advised that the design and layout of the games courts should comply with the relevant industry Technical Design Guidance, including guidance published by Sport England, National Governing Bodies for Sport. Particular attention is drawn to: Sport England’s Artificial Surfaces for Outdoor Sports’ guidance note (2013) , England Netball’s ‘Performance Requirements for Indoor Surfaces guidance note* [*https://englandnetball.co.uk/make-the-game/facilities-information/*](https://englandnetball.co.uk/make-the-game/facilities-information/)*,  and the LTA’s Porous Macadam Tennis Courts and Floodlighting Outdoor Tennis Courts guidance notes* [*https://www.lta.org.uk/venue-management/facilities-advice/*](https://www.lta.org.uk/venue-management/facilities-advice/)

***Community Use:***

*The new school provides a rare opportunity to provide substantive new sports facilities that the community in the Croxley Green area could use for meeting their needs.  Regardless of the facilities provided and their design, community use should be maximised outside of school hours and access should be formalised and secured through a formal community use agreement being completed.  A community use agreement sets out a school’s policy and arrangements for community use of its sports facilities and covers matters such as hours of use, types of bookings accepted, restrictions on community use etc.  The agreement is usually between a school (or academy trust) and the relevant local authority (e.g. Three Rivers District Council) but may involve additional bodies such as the Hertfordshire Sports Partnership who can provide support to schools and local authorities in terms of developing community use of school sports facilities.  The completion of such agreements is usually secured through planning conditions on planning permissions for school developments.  Such a condition is justified to avoid a scenario where community access (outside of school hours) to the proposed facilities does not take place (or is significantly restricted) following the implementation of the proposed development and to ensure that the community use arrangements are safe and well managed.  Without suitable community access being secured over a long term period in practice, the potential offered by this development in terms of meeting wider community needs may not be realised.  A community use agreement also provides clarity and formalisation with respect to community access arrangements for all parties.  It has been noted that the applicant has advised that the school would be willing to offer community use of the facilities.  Community use agreement templates, examples of completed agreements and further advice can be provided upon request.  For information, Sport England’s guidance for schools on preparing for and delivering community use is available at* [*http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/use-our-school/*](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/use-our-school/)*. The following condition is requested to be imposed to address this (which is based on model condition 16 of our conditions schedule):*

*“No occupation of the sports hall shall commence until a community use agreement  prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement has been provided to the Local Planning Authority.  The agreement shall apply to the sports hall, activity studio, all weather pitch, games courts, playing field and other suitable facilities to be defined in the agreement and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review, and anything else which the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England considers necessary in order to secure the effective community use of the facilities.  The development shall not be used at any time other than in strict compliance with the approved agreement.*

*Reason: To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility/facilities, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord with Development Plan Policy...”*

*The absence of an objection to this application in the context of the Town and Country Planning Act, does not in any way commit Sport England or any National Governing Body of Sport to support for any related funding application.*

*If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s). We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by sending us a copy of the decision notice.”*

*Appendix – Advisory Design Comments:*

***Location:***

*The location of the indoor facilities in relation to the school reception is not ideal in relation to community use as community users would need to pass through other parts of the school to access the facilities.  This will have potential security implications and may present operational issues as the whole of the area between the reception and the sports facilities would need to be kept open to facilitate community use.  Consideration should be given to a separate entrance and foyer area being provided to the sports facilities which avoids the requirement for community users to access the facilities from the main reception.  This will have operational benefits for the school and address the costs and secure.*

***Activity Studio:***

*This space proposed is supported as this would provide a large activity area suitable for a class of 30 pupils or a community group. The entrance doors should not open into the activity space for safety reasons.*

***Summary:****The principle of the planning application is supported as a non-statutory consultee.*

*The following issues require consideration and, if appropriate, addressing before a planning application is determined:*

* *Design and Layout of the Sports Hall  – advisory comments are made and an informative regarding design is requested;*
* *All Weather Pitch – the size of the pitch should be reviewed as the current dimensions are unsuitable for both football and hockey match use and the choice of surfacing will require careful consideration to ensure that the facility is fit for purpose.*
* *The football pitch dimensions should be reviewed against the Football Association’s guidance*

*The following matters are requested to be addressed through planning conditions being imposed on any planning permission:*

* *Sports Pitch Feasibility Study and Specification*
* *Artificial Cricket Wicket Specification;*
* *All Weather Pitch Design Specifications (plus consideration to separate conditions regarding the pitch lighting scheme and hours of use of the facility and its lighting if necessary)*
* *Games Court Design Specifications;*
* *Community Use Agreement.”*

4.8 Environment Agency: No comments received.

4.9 Herts County Council Flood Risk: [Objection]

4.9.1 *“We have reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment Revision B, Project no. JAG/DJL/AD/JF/39852 - Rp001, prepared by Alan Wood & Partners, dated 16/10/2017, together with the Proposed Drainage Strategy prepared by PEP Civil & Structures Ltd, document reference 463417–PEP–00–XX–RP–D-6201, Revision 2, dated 13/10/ 2017.*

*LLFA objects to the grant of planning permission on the above application based on the overall feasibility of the proposed drainage scheme for this site. There are 7 main issues that need to be addressed or clarified in relation to this site, these being:*

1. *Clarification of the proposed discharge mechanism and confirmation of the discharge point. This to include confirmation that permission has been provided by Thames Water to connect into their surface water sewer network for the proposed volumes and runoff rates or consent from Canal River Trust has been given in case surface water is to be discharged into the Canal.*
2. *Justification for the use of below ground attenuation measures to store surface water on a greenfield site.*
3. *Clarification on the runoff rate for the site and justification as to why the applicant is proposing to discharge at greater than the greenfield runoff rate from the entire site.*
4. *Clarification of the proposal to modify the current ground levels and confirm that this action will not give rise to any consequential increase in flood risk.*
5. *Provision of any mitigation/management measures of any identified source of flooding*
6. *Provision of updated drainage layout to include the discharge points and clarification regarding the proposed location of the temporary accommodation site. Provision of updated detailed engineering drawings for the proposed SuDS features and plan for the exceedance flow paths surface water for events greater than the 1 in 100 year plus climate change allowance should also be provided.*
7. *Detailed maintenance plan to include any SuDS features and structures and who will be adopting these features for the lifetime of the development.*

*In order for the applicant to satisfactorily address these 7 points the following clarification is provided along with the details of what we expect the applicant to achieve so that our objection can be removed.*

*1. We note that the applicant proposes to discharge the runoff water from the development into the surface water sewer network located to the south west corner of the site. This is stated in the Proposed Drainage Strategy and also shown on the drawing No. 1850 Rev. P01.1 – Schematic Drainage Layout. However, the Flood Risk Assessment submitted by the applicant refers the intention of discharging the surface water runoff into the Canal located to the eastern side of the development. The applicant should clearly define how it will manage the surface water runoff from the development and indicate the proposed discharge points. We will also require the agreement from the relevant authority that they will have no objection to the connection and to the proposed volume and discharge rate.*

*2. The applicant proposes the use of underground attenuation features. The installation of underground attenuation tanks in a greenfield site is considered to be the least desirable solution and carried significant risk in relation to the long-term operation and maintenance of the drainage system. As stated in our previous letter dated 06/11/2017, we expect that the applicant explores alternative above ground storage/attenuation features to be included as part of the drainage system. If it is not possible then a full justification as to why this approach cannot be undertaken will need to be provided.*

*3. We note that the applicant states that the proposed discharge rate will be no greater than the greenfield runoff rate and has provided calculations regarding attenuation/storage requirements for a rainfall events equating to 1 in 1 year, 1 in 30 years and 1 in 100 years+40% for climate change. However, micro drainage calculations doesn’t comply with our requirements. The contributing area considered in the calculation solely takes into account the impermeable area and the half drain time is longer than 24 hours for the 1 in 30 year and for the 1 in 100 + 40% for climate change return period rainfall events.*

*Clarification needs to be provided to demonstrate that the calculations are in accordance with the proposed drainage strategy and these need to be updated to include the whole site area, including the permeable areas. The calculations should include all SuDS features comprised within the drainage strategy for the proposed development. We would remind the applicant that the sum of the all sub catchment areas must equal the greenfield runoff rate for the undeveloped site. The applicant should provide calculations for the relevant return periods, that is, 1 in 1 year, 1 in 30 year, 1 in 100 and 1 in 100 year + 40% for climate change.*

*4. The applicant has included within the overall proposals the changing on the ground levels for the site. Regarding this, we require a drawing with the proposed ground levels.*

*Changing the ground levels will involve soil import from external places. This will change the orography of the site and will interfere with the existing flow routes. It will also affect the existing permeability and infiltration capacity of the site. Therefore we require a thorough analysis of the impact of this proposal. It will have to demonstrate that there will be no increase on flood risk on site and outside of the development as well. Also must demonstrate that the permeability will not be significantly affected.*

*We note that infiltration tests have been undertaken on site. The abstract from the Ground Investigation report submitted as an appendix of the Flood Risk Assessment refers low infiltration capacity and unfeasibility of this mechanism. However, the infiltration test result of the TP53 shows an acceptable infiltration rate of 10-5 m/s. We would require more detailed information regarding the infiltration tests results and a plan showing the exact location where these have been undertaken.*

*5. As referred in our former letter we acknowledge that this site lies partially within the high groundwater flood risk area and flood zone 2. Regarding this we require that the applicant provides details of mitigation or management measures of any identified source of flooding supported by detailed modelling. Special attention should be given to the main building and to the temporary accommodation building as these are the areas that are likely to be more affected from surface water flooding.*

*The applicant will have to present a full detailed surface water drainage plan with all sites to be included. Also it must provide detailed engineering drawings of the proposed SuDS measures including their, size, volume, depth and any inlet and outlet features including any connecting pipe runs and discharge points and informal flooding (no flooding to occur below and including the 1 in 30 year rainfall return period) showing the extent and depth of the flooding and under what rainfall event the flooding will occur.*

*We also expect that the applicant clarifies the location of the temporary accommodation building. The drawing No. 10001724-HKS-ZZ-00-DR-A-9001 Revision 1 – Temporary accommodation location plan, shows this building to be located to the southeast corner of the site. However, other drawings, including Drawing no. 1850 Rev. P01.1 - Schematic Drainage Layout, do not show this building.*

*6. As stated in our previous letter, we require a strong maintenance plan that explains and follows the manufacturer’s recommendations for maintenance and follows the guidelines explained by The SuDS Manual by CIRIA. A maintenance plan should also include an inspection timetable with long term action plans to be carried out to ensure efficient operation and prevent failure throughout the lifetime of the development.*

*What we expect to be contained within the FRA to support a planning application, can be found in our Developers Guide and Checklist on our surface water drainage webpage below.*

*If further information is required, the LLFA offer an advisory service that can be requested by completing the advice request form available on line.*

[*https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/water/surface-water-drainage/surface-water-drainage.aspx*](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/water/surface-water-drainage/surface-water-drainage.aspx)

***Informative to the LPA***

*We recommend the LPA to obtain a maintenance plan that explains and follows the manufacturer’s recommendations for maintenance or that it follows the guidelines explained by The SuDS Manual by CIRIA. A maintenance plan should also include an inspection timetable with long term action plans to be carried out to ensure efficient operation and prevent failure.*

*The Applicant will need to satisfy the LPA that the proposed drainage scheme can be adopted and maintained for its lifetime by providing a maintenance plan, detailing key operations and management.*

*The Applicant can overcome our objection by submitting information which covers the deficiencies highlighted above and demonstrates that the development will not increase risk elsewhere and where possible reduces flood risk overall, and gives priority to the use of sustainable drainage methods.*

*If this cannot be achieved we are likely to maintain our objection to the application.*

*We ask to be re-consulted when the amended surface drainage assessment will be submitted. We will provide you with bespoke comments within 21 days of receiving formal re-consultation. Our objection will be maintained until an adequate surface water strategy has been submitted.”*

4.10 Herts County Council Minerals and Waste Team: [No objection, condition recommended]

4.10.1 *“I am writing in response to the above planning application insofar as it raises issues in connection with minerals or waste matters. Should the District Council be minded to permit this application, a number of detailed matters should be given careful consideration.*

*The site is located within the sand and gravel belt as shown in the adopted Minerals Local Plan. In relation to the draft sand and gravel Mineral Safeguarding Area being prepared for the Draft Minerals Local Plan review document, the site falls partially within this area.*

*Whilst it is identified that there could be minerals present, there are unlikely to be significant mineral (sand and gravel) deposits within the area in question. The relevant Policy 5 within Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016, adopted March 2007 states that mineral extraction will be encouraged prior to other development taking place where the mineral would otherwise be sterilised.*

*On this basis, development may give rise to ‘opportunistic’ use of some limited or poorer quality minerals at the site that could be utilised in the development itself.*

*Examination of these opportunities would be consistent with the principles of sustainable development.*

*Government policy seeks to ensure that all planning authorities take responsibility for waste management. This is reflected in the County Council’s adopted waste planning documents. In particular, the waste planning documents seek to promote the sustainable management of waste in the county and encourage Districts and Boroughs to have regard to the potential for minimising waste generated by development.*

*Most recently, the Department for Communities and Local Government published its National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014) which sets out the following:*

* *‘When determining planning applications for non-waste development, local planning authorities should, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities, ensure that:*
* *the likely impact of proposed, non- waste related development on existing waste management facilities, and on sites and areas allocated for waste management, is acceptable and does not prejudice the implementation of the waste hierarchy and/or the efficient operation of such facilities;*
* *new, non-waste development makes sufficient provision for waste management and promotes good design to secure the integration of waste management facilities with the rest of the development and, in less developed areas, with the local landscape. This includes providing adequate storage facilities at residential premises, for example by ensuring that there is sufficient and discrete provision for bins, to facilitate a high quality, comprehensive and frequent household collection service;*
* *the handling of waste arising from the construction and operation of development maximises reuse/recovery opportunities, and minimises off-site disposal.’*

*This includes encouraging re-use of unavoidable waste where possible and the use of recycled materials where appropriate to the construction. In particular, you are referred to the following policies of the adopted Hertfordshire County Council Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2012 which forms part of the Development Plan. The policies that relate to this proposal are set out below:*

*Policy 1: Strategy for the Provision for Waste Management Facilities. This is in regards to the penultimate paragraph of the policy;*

*Policy 2: Waste Prevention and Reduction: &*

*Policy 12: Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition.*

*In determining the planning application the District Council is urged to pay due regard to these policies and ensure their objectives are met. Many of the policy requirements can be met through the imposition of planning conditions.*

*Waste Policy 12: Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition requires all relevant construction projects to be supported by a Site Waste Management Plan*

*(SWMP). This aims to reduce the amount of waste produced on site and should contain information including types of waste removed from the site and where that waste is being taken to. Good practice templates for producing SWMPs can be found at:*

[*http://www.smartwaste.co.uk/*](http://www.smartwaste.co.uk/) *or*

[*http://www.wrap.org.uk/category/sector/waste-management*](http://www.wrap.org.uk/category/sector/waste-management)

*SWMPs should be passed onto the Waste Planning Authority to collate the data. The county council as Waste Planning Authority would be happy to assess any SWMP that is submitted as part of this development either at this stage or as a requirement by condition, and provide comment to the District Council.”*

4.11 Herts County Council Fire & Rescue: [No objection, condition recommended]

4.11.1 *“I refer to the above mentioned application and am writing in respect of planning obligations sought by the County Council towards fire hydrants to minimise the impact of development on Hertfordshire County Council Services for the local community.*

*Based on the information provided to date we would seek the provision of fire hydrant(s), as set out within HCC's Planning Obligations Toolkit. We reserve the right to seek Community Infrastructure Levy contributions towards the provision of infrastructure as outlined in your R123 List through the appropriate channels.*

*All developments must be adequately served by fire hydrants in the event of fire. The County Council as the Statutory Fire Authority has a duty to ensure fire -fighting facilities are provided on new developments. HCC therefore seek the provision of hydrants required to serve the proposed buildings by the developer through standard clauses set out in a Section 106 legal agreement or unilateral undertaking.*

*Buildings fitted with fire mains must have a suitable hydrant provided and sited within 18m of the hard-standing facility provided for the fire service pumping appliance.*

*The requirements for fire hydrant provision are set out with the Toolkit at paragraph 12.33 and 12.34 (page 22). In practice, the number and location of hydrants is determined at the time the water services for the development are planned in detail and the layout of the development is known, which is usually after planning permission is granted. If, at the water scheme design stage, adequate hydrants are already available no extra hydrants will be needed.*

*Section 106 planning obligation clauses can be provided on request.*

*Justification:*

*Fire hydrant provision based on the approach set out within the Planning Obligations Guidance - Toolkit for Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire County Council's requirements) document, which was approved by Hertfordshire County Council's Cabinet Panel on 21 January 2008 and is available via the following link: www.hertsdirect.org/planningobligationstoolkit*

*The County Council seeks fire hydrant provisions for public adoptable fire hydrants and not private fire hydrants. Such hydrants are generally not within the building site and are not covered by Part B5 of the Building Regulations 2010 as supported by Secretary of State Guidance “Approved Document B”.*

*In respect of Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 the planning obligations sought from this proposal are:*

*(i) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.*

*Recognition that contributions should be made to mitigate the impact of development are set out in planning related policy documents. The NPPF states “Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Conditions cannot be used cover the payment of financial contributions to mitigate the impact of a development (Circular 11/95: Use of conditions in planning permission, paragraph 83).*

*All developments must be adequately served by fire hydrants in the event of fire. The County Council as the Statutory Fire Authority has a duty to ensure fire fighting facilities are provided on new developments. The requirements for fire hydrant provision are set out with the Toolkit at paragraph 12.33 and 12.34 (page 22).*

*(ii) Directly related to the development;*

*Only those fire hydrants required to provide the necessary water supplies for fire -fighting purposes to serve the proposed development are sought to be provided by the developer. The location and number of fire hydrants sought will be directly linked to the water scheme designed for this proposal.*

*(iii) Fairly and reasonable related in scale and kind to the development.*

*Only those fire hydrants required to provide the necessary water supplies for fire -fighting purposes to serve the proposed development are sought to be provided by the developer. The location and number of fire hydrants sought will be directly linked to the water scheme designed for this proposal.*

*I would be grateful if you would keep me informed about the progress of this application so that either instructions for a planning obligation can be given promptly if your authority if minded to grant consent or, in the event of an appeal, information can be submitted in support of the requested provision.”*

4.12 Herts County Council Archaeology: [Further information being received]

4.12.1 “*The applicant has submitted an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Archaeological Solutions Ltd, October 2017) with this planning application. However the figures, maps and appendices are not included with the report. In addition this report was not produced in consultation with this office and we did not have the opportunity to issue a design brief for the archaeological work.*

*We recommend that the full report, including the missing information is submitted. This should include modelling of the impact of this proposal on the site - for example landscaping and regrading of the ground for playing fields, so that the likely impact on below ground heritage assets can be assessed.”*

4.12.2 **Officer Comment:** The full report has been submitted to Herts Archaeology, further comments are awaited.

4.13 Herts County Council Property Services: [No objection]

4.13.1 *“Thank you for your consultation on the above mentioned application, I am writing in respect of planning obligations sought towards education, childcare, library and youth services to minimise the impact of development on Hertfordshire County Council Services for the local community.*

*Based on the information to date for the development we will not be seeking financial contributions.”*

4.14 TRDC Leisure Department: [No objection, condition recommended]

4.14.1 ***Sportshall:***

*In the past, Building Bulletin 98 referred to a minimum size of 18 x 33 x 7.6m. This size is now considered by Sport England and NGBs to be unsuitable as it does not allow the recommended court sizes and limits teaching / coaching and flexibility of use. The minimum recommended size of a four-court sports hall is 34.5 x 20 x 7.5 m but a five-court hall (40.6 x 21.35 x 7.5 m) would give greater potential for the range of sports and flexibility of programme over the life of the building. This does not appear to have changed with the revised application.*

*The programming of spaces will need to cater for a mix of curricular and community activities. Design in flexibility, for example, with movable partitions and controllable lighting to sub-divide a single space allowing for a wider range of sporting activities to take place independently and simultaneously. I can’t see anything in the plans about how the space may be marked/divided.*

*Flexible spaces require adequate storage for a wide variety of fixtures, fittings and equipment. A lack of sufficient storage space is the most common fault in the design of dual-use facilities. Stores should have easy access from the hall with wide door openings and at least 2.5 m clear height to allow for storing small trampolines. Storage should be located on the long side of the hall with direct access and good proportions. Recommendation is to allow for storage space which is 12.5% minimum of the sports hall floor area. Currently 72m2 given (should be 74.5m2). In a Sport England’s recommended size sports hall storage space should be 86.25m2.*

*Mats can be a potential fire risk and consideration should be given to a separate one-hour fire-rated enclosure. No current provision marked for this.*

***Dance Studio:***

*A space measuring 15 x 12 m x 4.5 m will cater for the majority of forms of recreational dance, exercise and martial arts classes. Configuration is slightly different in the plans but the total space allocated is the same.*

***Outdoor Courts:***

*For outdoor sporting provision lighting can considerably extend the hours of use especially outside the summer months and is critical to the viability of community use facilities which rely on income from mid-week evening lettings to cover operating costs. Sports lighting also creates opportunities for curriculum and after school sport and recreation on educational establishment sites where it becomes dark in the winter months. Lighting is therefore essential if these facilities are to be used to their full capacity as lighting not only allows more people to participate in sport, it also provides opportunities for sports clubs to become more viable by increasing user numbers. It is positive to see that lighting has been included as an addition to the MUGA area and to the netball courts, however further lighting should be considered for the tennis courts area to extend the usage of this area. Consideration should be given to neighbouring properties and appropriate lighting should be used to reduce light pollution.*

***General points to consider:***

* *Sports hall access doors should open outwards to avoid creating a hazard to the users within*
* *DDA access from the car park to the field also needs consideration – path widths, lighting – especially the pathway through the trees. Confirmation is also required as to the pathway material.*
* *Consideration should also be given to the location of disabled parking and the distance to the building (main entrance), sports hall and fields. A DDA access statement would demonstrate this.*
* *It is positive the school are committed to providing community facilities; however a Community Use Agreement (CUA) must be agreed as a condition on the planning permission. This should include areas of use, the hours of use and the price.*

***Other Considerations:***

* *Developing a sport specific outdoor specialism on the school site. For example, athletics track and field facilities which could be shared with a local club and a local network of coaches and volunteers*
* *Integrating physical activity opportunities within the external landscape design of the school site. For example, consider providing trim trails, nature paths and small-scale orienteering routes*

*These comments are given to help the development achieve the aims of Three Rivers District Council’s Local and Strategic plans and National Policy Framework sections detailed below:*

* *Achieving Sustainable Development paragraph 6-10,*
* *Promoting Healthy Communities paragraphs 69, 70, 73*
* *Health and Wellbeing paragraph 171*

4.15 TRDC Environmental Health: [No objection]

4.15.1 *“I have looked at the plans and I cannot see any particular issue with the proposal.”*

4.16 TRDC Environmental Protection: [No objection]

4.16.1 *“I cannot see any problems with collections”*

4.17 TRDC Local Plans: [No objection]

4.17.1 *“The application site was allocated for secondary education provision through the Site Allocations LDD (Adopted November 2014). The site is referred to as Site S(b) Croxley Green – Land north east of Baldwins Lane in the Site Allocations LDD.*

*The site was allocated to accommodate the provision of the equivalent of an 8fe secondary school over the plan period (to 2026) within the 4ha build zone in the southern part of the site. The remainder of the site is within the Green Belt where Green Belt policies will still apply.*

*Policy SA3 of the Site Allocations LDD states that allocated education sites will be safeguarded for secondary and primary school use. The proposals are for a 6fe secondary school and the development proposed is confined to the south west part of the build zone occupying approximately 1/2 of the area leaving sufficient room to accommodate future expansion of the school up to 8fe. The proposal therefore meets the requirements of Policy SA3 of the Site Allocations LDD.”*

4.18 TRDC Economic & Sustainable Development: No comments submitted.

4.19 Watford Borough Council: No comments submitted.

4.20 Herts Constabulary (Crime Prevention): [No objection]

4.20.1 *“Thank you for sight of planning application 17/2204/FUL-, Location: Land North East of Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green .I have studied the documentation, crime figures, location and I am content that security and crime prevention is being addressed for the proposed development. This is reflected in the Design and Access statement, 9.0, 9.1, 9.2 Security, page 51, therefore from a crime prevention perspective I am able to support this application.*

***9.2 Secured By Design:***

*As the detailed design and specification progresses, reference will be made to the principles set out in the Secured by Design “New School’s 2014” guidance document and the measures recommended within implemented where possible.*

*Adopted measures at this stage include:*

* *All main entrance doors specified to be made secure to standards (independently certified) set out in PAS 24.*
* *Windows specified to be fabricated by Secured by Design certified fabricators, and made secure to standards (independently certified) set out in BS7950.*
* *Consideration given to the design of rainwater goods to ensure these cannot be climbed.*

*These measures will be continuously reviewed by the design team and supplementary measures considered at each stage of the design process up to completion of the building.”*

4.21 Affinity Water: [No objection]

4.21.1 *“Thank you for notification of the above planning application. Planning applications are referred to us where our input on issues relating to water quality or quantity may be required.*

*You should be aware that the proposed development site is located close to or within an Environment Agency defined groundwater Source Protection Zone (GPZ) corresponding to Tolpits Lane Pumping Station. This is a public water supply, comprising a number of Chalk abstraction boreholes, operated by Affinity Water Ltd.*

*The construction works and operation of the proposed development site should be done in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practices, thereby significantly reducing the groundwater pollution risk. It should be noted that the construction works may exacerbate any existing pollution. If any pollution is found at the sites then the appropriate monitoring and remediation methods will need to be undertaken.*

*For further information we refer you to CIRIA Publication C532 "Control of water pollution from construction - guidance for consultants and contractors".*

4.22 Thames Water: [No objection, conditions recommended]

4.22.1 *“Thames Water recommends the installation of a properly maintained fat trap on all catering establishments. We further recommend, in line with best practice for the disposal of Fats, Oils and Grease, the collection of waste oil by a contractor, particularly to recycle for the production of bio diesel. Failure to implement these recommendations may result in this and other properties suffering blocked drains, sewage flooding and pollution to local watercourses.*

*There are public sewers crossing or close to your development. In order to protect public sewers and to ensure that Thames Water can gain access to those sewers for future repair and maintenance, approval should be sought from Thames Water where the erection of a building or an extension to a building or underpinning work would be over the line of, or would come within 3 metres of, a public sewer. Thames Water will usually refuse such approval in respect of the construction of new buildings, but approval may be granted for extensions to existing buildings. The applicant is advised to visit thameswater.co.uk/buildover*

*With the information provided Thames Water, has been unable to determine the waste water infrastructure needs of this application. Should the Local Planning Authority look to approve the application ahead of further information being provided, we request that the following 'Grampian Style' condition be applied - “Development shall not commence until a drainage strategy detailing any on and/or off site drainage works, has been submitted to and approved by, the local planning authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker. No discharge of foul or surface water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until the drainage works referred to in the strategy have been completed”. Reason - The development may lead to sewage flooding; to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to cope with the new development; and in order to avoid adverse environmental impact upon the community. Should the Local Planning Authority consider the above recommendation is inappropriate or are unable to include it in the decision notice, it is important that the Local Planning Authority liaises with Thames Water Development Control Department (telephone 0203 577 9998) prior to the Planning Application approval.”*

*Water Comments*

*With regard to water supply, this comes within the area covered by the Affinity Water Company. For your information the address to write to is - Affinity Water Company The Hub, Tamblin Way, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9EZ - Tel - 0845 782 3333.*

*Supplementary Comments*

*Please provide evidence of following drainage hierarchy (why surface water can't be discharged to watercourse as suggested in FRA dated 12/10/2017).”*

4.23 Canal and River Trust: [No objection]

4.23.1 “*The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales. We are among the largest charities in the UK. Our vision is that “living waterways transform places and enrich lives”. We are a statutory consultee in the development management process.*

*The Trust has reviewed the application. This is our substantive response under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Based upon the information available we have the following general advice to offer:*

*The Trust has no comments to make on the principle or details of the proposed school. However, we wish to advocate that the Travel plan considers the use of the canal towpath as a sustainable, off road, active travel route to the school as an alternative to the roadside cycles routes proposed. The Trust suggests that the use of the towpath in this way would accord with the aims of paragraph 29-41 of the NPPF.*

*The Trust ask the council to consider whether in order to maximise opportunities for staff and pupils to access the school by a wide range of transport options, new or improved access points, and/ or towpath improvements are required. If this is the case, whether a S106 request would be appropriate, or whether any such improvements could be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy.*

*The Grand Union Canal corridor is recognised by the adopted Core Strategy as a key element of Green infrastructure and Policy CP 10 Transport and Travel states that ‘every opportunity will need to be taken to integrate means of travel. The following transport and travel measures will be supported at appropriate locations across the District, and development will need to consider the provision of measures and facilities that encourage integration including:*

*g) Links to and from the Grand Union Canal towpath*

*The Transport Assessment has not adequately considered whether the canal towpath might be used in this way and we request that this is considered further in order to ensure that the proposal complies with the County and District Council’s own policies on Sustainable Transport and Green infrastructure.*

*We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further with the council in order to determine if the use of the towpath in this way is suitable and feasible.”*

4.24 National Grid: [No objection]

4.24.1 *“It is YOUR**responsibility to take into account whether the items listed above may be present and if they could be affected by your proposed activities. Further "Essential Guidance" in respect of these items can be found on the National Grid Website:*

*http://www2.nationalgrid.com/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=8589934982”*

4.25 Conservation Officer: [No objection]

4.25.1 *“This site is adjacent to the Grade II Listed Cassio Bridge Lock House, on the south side of Rickansworth, Cassiobridge Terrace.*

*However, I consider that the new school and, playing fields will not be seen widely in conjunction with the listed building. This is mainly due to the low levels of the new building and the low levels of the new landscaping and playing fields.   
  
On the edge of the site, the existing fields will be slightly remodelled and some level changes will be introduced, although I consider that the views between the listed building and the new school and playing fields will be limited and will not be harmed from the listed building setting point of view.”*

4.26 **Public Consultation:**

4.26.1 Number consulted: 581

No responses received: 153

(17 objections; 128 support; 8 neutral)

8 further comments were submitted under application 17/2429/EIA – all in support of the development.

4.26.2 Site Notice: (x5) Posted 27.10.17 Expired 17.11.17

4.26.3 Press notice in Watford Observer: Published 27.10.17; Expired 17.11.17.

4.27 **Summary of Responses:**

4.27.1 Objections:

Traffic congestion, highway safety concern, traffic assessment’s estimates appear wrong (25% of those travelling would use a car); methodology adopted in the transport assessment does not consider the disruptive effect on morning peak period traffic flows; infrastructure in the area is already at high risk; move access to private lane; reliance upon on-street parking in Baldwins Lane is not a safe or acceptable solution; space outside existing bus stops is poor; remodelling of local roads should occur; School should take over the Cinnamond site; frontage will be overpowering due to loss of hedging; building structure should use a more natural colour to blend in with surrounding greenery; the beautiful rural landscape that separates Croxley and Watford will be destroyed; it is a well-known fact that many local school places are given to students outside of our local area; Government should be spending more time making all schools good so parents don’t need to send children outside of their local areas; why didn’t the Council use a site away from the main road?; damage to trees and wildlife; no provision of sprinklers?

4.27.2 Support:

All for another secondary school; more school places needed; excellent addition to the already excellent village that is Croxley Green; really need a school for our local children; schools in the area are over-subscribed; design has taken into account the concerns of local people; great new sports facilities for the local community to access; huge amount of thought and sensitivity has gone into the design and ecology of the site; access far preferable to the location of Rickmansworth School; location will encourage local residents to walk to shops or cycle; it will be an asset for everyone; site is designated for development; instrumental in continuing the community spirit of Croxley Green; great opportunity to add a valuable resource for the area; proposal accommodates the existing landscape and tree lines where possible; bring a buzz to the area and increase revenues for local cafes; change is difficult but we need to consider the future; building is non-imposing; many students will be within walking or cycling distance; excellent use of the space available to maximise outdoor areas for the school children; development will bring jobs to the area.

4.27.3 Neutral:

School should be greened roofed; energy efficient; be good if local people could have access to the gym or hall in the evening or weekend; further pedestrian access points; strict conditions relating to food preparation; respectfully respect that further consideration is given to the access and entrance arrangements; clients and staff struggle to park at the moment.

4.27.4 Comments received have suggested that there is written support of over 1200 residents/customers of the shops who do not want to lose on street parking bays as they are essential to the survival of the retail parade.

4.27.5 Comments were also received from Croxley Green Residents’ Association and raised concerns in respect of traffic congestion during construction, certain details within the transport assessment, the loss of parking bays for retailers and residents, the possibility of a pedestrian access point from Rousebarn Lane, opportunities for further sustainable measures and ensuring that the building’s materials are reflective of the area.

5. **Reason for Delay:**

5.1 No delay.

6. **Relevant Planning Policy, Guidance and Legislation:**

6.1 On 27 March 2012, the framework of government guidance in the form of Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes was replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The adopted policies of Three Rivers District Council reflect the content of the NPPF.

The Three Rivers Local Plan:

6.2 The Core Strategy was adopted on 17 October 2011 having been through a full public participation process and Examination in Public. Relevant policies include: PSP2, CP1, CP8, CP9, CP10, CP11 and CP12.

6.3 The Development Management Policies LDD was adopted on 26 July 2013 having been through a full public participation process and Examination in Public. Relevant policies include DM2, DM3, DM4, DM6, DM7, DM8, DM9, DM10, DM11, DM12, DM13 and Appendices 4 and 5.

6.4 The Site Allocations LDD (SALDD) was adopted on 25 November 2014 having been through a full public participation process and Examination in Public. Relevant policies include SA3 and site S(b).

The following Acts and legislation are also relevant:

6.5 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Habitat Regulations 1994, the Localism Act 2011 and the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013.

6.6 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was adopted on 24 February 2015.

6.7 Online Planning Practice Guidance.

7. **Planning Analysis**

7.1 Overview:

7.1.1 The adoption of the application site as a secondary school is historical, stemming back to the preparation of the Site Allocations LDD in 2011. The Local Authority’s Statement of Education Need in September 2013 confirmed that it was the most suitable and appropriately located to meet the required need for new school places given the continued growth in demand exceeding current capacity within South-West Hertfordshire. A large number of historical feasibility and technical studies were undertaken before arriving at the Council’s decision to allocate the site.

7.1.2 Prior to the submission of this application extensive pre-application discussions have been held with relevant parties to mitigate the impact of the development on the environment and local residents given its location, topography complexities and planning related constraints. In addition a consultation programme (2 day public exhibition) was conducted with the local community to enable the design team the ability to identify key issues, priorities and future aspirations.

7.1.3 This application has been submitted on behalf of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to facilitate the use of the site as an all-ability, co-educational state secondary school serving South-West Hertfordshire, known as “Croxley Danes School”. The school has opened for its first year with 120 year 7 students currently attending the established St Clement Danes School site in Chorleywood.

7.1.4 From September 2018 it is anticipated, subject to planning permission, that the school will be relocated to the application site, occupying the western part, housed within temporary buildings able to accommodate up to 300 pupils and approximately 25 full time members of staff. Where necessary, it is proposed to provide transport between St Clement Danes School and the temporary accommodation to allow students to fulfil their academic needs where this cannot be met on the temporary site. The submitted Construction Management Plan sets out how the operation of the temporary school buildings and construction of the permanent school structure will simultaneously function and avoid impacting the education of school children on the site.

7.2 Principle of Development:

7.2.1 Strategic Objective 6 of the Core Strategy is to facilitate the provision of services and infrastructure to meet the needs of existing development and new development. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy refers to provision of necessary infrastructure including for education, and Policy CP8 relates to infrastructure provision and advises that infrastructure will be provided to support growth in the area. Policy PSP2 also advises that provision of and access to services and facilities within the Key Centres including Croxley Green is supported, and refers specifically to expansion of existing schools and provision of new schools to meet identified needs.

7.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework refers at paragraph 72 to the importance of ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Paragraph 72 of the NPPF states that;

*“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”.*

7.2.3 The majority of the application site (excluding the wooded area to the rear of Gade Bank) is allocated for secondary education purposes in the Site Allocations LDD as site S(b) referred as “land north east of Baldwins Lane”. The southern part of the site which is more closely related to Baldwins Lane is identified as the “Building Zone” which has been removed from the Green Belt while the northern part of the site designated as “playing fields” retains its Green Belt status. The allocation is intended to provide for an 8 form entry secondary school (over the plan period to 2026) and acknowledges that the topography of the site may constrain potential to provide the full requirement of playing fields with vehicular access from Baldwins Lane achievable subject to the diversion of Lodge Lane and replacement car parking for Baldwins Lane.

7.2.4 The submitted proposal is for a 6 form entry secondary school with the main school building confined to the south western part of the building zone. The parking area which is to run parallel with the railway embankment, all weather pitch, netball courts and associated paths are all solely contained within the building zone. The tennis courts which would be positioned towards the western boundary to the immediate north of the sports hall would fall outside the building zone and therefore within the Green Belt (assessed at Section 7.3 later on in the report). The proposed layout of the school building and associated works would not prejudice future development potential with sufficient space kept available within the building zone towards the south eastern part of the site, in between the main school building and the MUGA.

7.2.5 The proposal will also provide an enhanced sport and recreational facility and community use which would accord with Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy and Policies DM11 and DM12 of the Development Management Policies document.

7.3 Current need for school places:

7.3.1 Without the newly opened Croxley Danes School there would be shortfall of 102 school places this year (2017/2018) rising to 276 in 2019/2020. The new forecasts produced by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) show an increased level of demand compared to the previous summer 2016 forecast, by approximately 2 forms of entry. This increase is reflective of the secondary pupil numbers in the 2016/17 intake being higher than forecast and the latest primary school numbers for the area.

7.3.2 Even with the new Croxley Danes School and the expansion of local schools (St Clement Danes, Rickmansworth and Watford Grammar School for Boys and Watford Grammar School for Girls) the demand for school places rises above capacity. The new school is therefore essential for addressing a significant part of the demand for secondary school places.

7.4 Impact on Green Belt:

7.4.1 The application site is located partly within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The building zone towards the south of the site was removed from the Green Belt during the Site Allocation process; however, a large majority of the site has retained its Green Belt status and would comprise playing fields and tennis courts.

7.4.2 Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) sets out that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development that would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt or which would conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Policy CP11 is supported by Policy DM2 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

7.4.3 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that Green Belt serves five purposes:

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

7.4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework advises that Local Planning Authorities should regard construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are set out at Paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework as:

* Buildings for agriculture and forestry;
* **Provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;**
* The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the original building;
* The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
* Limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; 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.

7.4.5 Paragraph 90 of the NPPF advises that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided that they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These are:

* Mineral extraction;
* **Engineering operations;**
* Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
* The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of a permanent and substantial construction; and
* Development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order.

7.4.6 Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The National Planning Policy Framework states that when considering proposals, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt and that very special circumstances will not exist unless harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

7.4.7 In relation to the submitted scheme the main “V” shaped school building, netball courts, MUGA, parking areas and highway works would not fall within the Green Belt; however, the tennis courts and playing fields would be within the Green Belt.

7.4.8 The tennis courts and playing fields would be considered to constitute the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation and would be used by the wider community. Excluding the hard surfacing of the four tennis courts and long jump with running strips no built development is proposed and thus the majority of the site will remain open, a key characteristic of Green Belts. The tennis courts (33m by 62m) would be enclosed by sports fencing (mesh design) at a height of 3m (details of which are set out within the submitted Design & Access Statement) of which would allow views through and be coloured sympathetically. However, importantly, no external lighting is proposed to the netball courts nor would any be installed within the playing fields. The pathways are kept to a minimum and the long jump running strips would be relatively minimal forms of development.

7.4.9 One of the most notable changes within the Green Belt relates to the extensive remodelling of the playing fields. The proposed land level changes would constitute an engineering operation which, as set out within paragraph 90 of the NPPF, is not inappropriate development within the Green Belt provided that such operations preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. The existing ridge level towards the northern part of the site would be maintained with two sections across the site plateauing at two points to provide useable sport pitches with the land rising gradually from south to north, as per the existing situation. The north western part of the playing fields would increase relatively steeply by approximately 5m while the eastern part of the land would rise by approximately 7m but more gradually thereby maintaining, to some extent, the current landscape views from public vantage points from the Grand Union Canal. Whilst acknowledging that the resulting land level changes would result in a more formal appearance, the northern part of the site is allocated for use as playing fields and the alterations are not considered to result in significant harm to openness of the site and would facilitate the use of this part of the land for outdoor sport. It should be acknowledged that the slopes which are more sharply graded would be mitigated by meadow grassland and native whip woodland mix planting. Due to the absence of built development (other than those previously mentioned above) the engineering operation to facilitate the land level alterations across the site would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt with surrounding landscape views maintaining a green and open outlook especially from the established residential area to the west (Links Way etc.), from neighbouring outlook from Canal Cottage and public vantage points from the Grand Union Canal towpath.

7.4.10 In respect of fencing the entire site perimeter would be secured by weld mesh fencing at 2.4m in height with the existing metal fencing retained to the northern boundary with the woodland and properties along Gade Bank. The new fencing would be of a design which would enable views through into the site and of a colour (to be confirmed) that would be sympathetic. A large majority of the fencing would also be erected in-front of existing hedging along Lodge End which would be enhanced further via the landscaping proposals. As such, given the fencings siting, design and height it would not harm the openness of the Green Belt.

7.4.11 No external lighting would be proposed within the confines of the Green Belt whilst any light spill from lighting from the school building and car park would also be contained within the building zone.

7.4.12 In light of the above, the engineering operations to facilitate the use of the northern part of the site for playing fields and sporting facilities would not be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Additionally, the openness would be preserved and no conflict with the purpose of including land in Green Belt has been identified.

7.5 Design and Impact on Streetscene and Landscape:

7.5.1 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy seeks to promote buildings of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness and Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy relates to design and states that in seeking a high standard of design the Council will expect development proposals to “have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area” and “conserve and enhance natural and heritage assets”. The NPPF (paragraph 56) advises that;

*“The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people”.*

7.5.2 The NPPF continues at paragraph 60;

*“Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms of styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness”.*

7.5.3 Policy DM7 (Landscape Character) of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) requires that proposals make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape.

7.5.4 The application site is currently open agricultural land which is largely undeveloped and is in a relatively prominent location with views readily achievable, particularly from residential roads to the west, views from Baldwins Lane and from the Grand Union Canal from the east.

7.5.5 The proposed “V” shaped building would be two stories in height with a flat roofed building set back from the Baldwins Lane frontage by approximately 20m at its closest point. The main principal elevation would have a stepped and splayed design angling away from the highway with the frontage comprising a wide vehicular access and a pedestrian plaza with formal landscaping. Due to the recessed siting of the main school building and its elevational break up its impact on the streetscene is suitably reduced although it is recognised that by virtue of its scale, loss of existing vegetation along the highway boundary and the requirement for a significant vehicular entrance that there would be a visual impact arising from the development. Nevertheless, the building has been designed in such a way to ensure its prominence does not have a significant adverse impact on the streetscene character, which is already varied and largely dominated by the railway line with commercial premises immediately opposite the site. The building would have a contrasting appearance with the use of light coloured brickwork, white render to the upper parts of the building and the use of perforated metal panels to provide visual interest.

7.5.6 The frontage would be largely open in character with the use of steel railings at 1.2m in height supported by new tree planting and a variety of hard surfacing to mitigate the use of tarmac.

7.5.7 Whilst the new building would sit isolated from existing adjacent development, the building would not dominate the site given it would be set in from the western boundary by 19/20m and would be increasingly set in from the railway embankment to the east thereby providing important spacing to offset the scale of the building.

7.5.8 Within the circulation spaces around the school building there would be a mixture of hard and soft play, landscaped areas, footpaths and refuse and cycle stores with the latter confined to the south western corner of the site. The main school car park, adjacent to the school building would not be evidently visible from Baldwins Lane; nevertheless the mass of hard surfacing would be broken up by new planting areas (including new trees).

7.5.9 Due to the surrounding topography the application site is viewed from the established residential areas to the west including the roads feeding into Links Way and from looking into the site from the Grand Union Canal towpath. Views from the elevated parts of Baldwins Lane towards the application site are dictated by the densely vegetated railway embankment as well as the Lime Avenue which is to be largely retained. The application was accompanied by a Landscape & Visual Appraisal with Effects Statement which states that the landscape character of the application site is formed by a series of landscape elements which together give rise to two distinct but related character areas; an area of parkland (typified by areas of open rough grassland and mature individual trees or groups of trees) and the more enclosed central portion of the application site which is surrounded by a collection of derelict stables.

7.5.10 The Landscape and Visual Impact Statement states that there will be a minor adverse effect on the landscape from the adjacent heritage asset of the Grade II Listed Cassio Bridge Lock House (Canal House). This is due to the change in appearance of the site from rough grassland to well-maintained sport pitches. Nevertheless, this is considered to have a negligible change on the wider landscape. From residential outlook, especially from those along Links Way and surrounding roads the remodelling of the land to support playing fields will bring the ridge height of the field closer to view; however, such visual impacts have been mitigated by retention (i.e. the prominent Lime Avenue) and careful reinforcing of vegetation which over time will diminish further as the planting matures. Due to the existence of the railway embankment the impact on the wider area is significantly reduced with the site viewed as a logical expansion of the adjacent settlement area.

7.5.11 With regards to the two storey building which is confined to the south western corner of the site, there would be minor visual intrusion on the wider landscape especially from the elevated sections of Baldwins Lane. This impact would be offset by the recessed siting of the building from Baldwins Lane and the wooded backdrop of the railway embankment which will not change.

7.5.12 The impact on the land use would result in a moderate adverse impact (noticeable deterioration in the character and amenity of the view from a range of visual receptors and range of distances) however this will be mitigated over time by the enhancements through landscaping and use of meadow grassland on the elevated banks.

7.6 Impact on residential amenity:

7.6.1 Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy states that development should protect residential amenities by taking into account the need for adequate levels of disposition of privacy, prospect, amenity and garden space.

7.6.2 There are residential dwellings to the north east (Gade Bank) and west (Links Way and north west (Rousebarn Lane) of the site with those residents on Links Way separated by an unmade private track known as Lodge End. To the immediate east, Canal Cottage backs onto the site. To the south and on the opposite side of Baldwins Lane there is a three storey building which comprises commercial units and residential flats at first and second floor levels which overlook the site. To the south west, 50 Baldwins Lane abuts the unmade track with its front elevation facing in a south easterly direction set in from the application site by approximately 11m. The neighbouring dwelling has a first floor window within the north eastern flank elevation which is angled towards the application site. The garden serving the said dwelling is enclosed by 2m fencing and hedging with the unmade track.

7.6.3 When considering the siting of the main school building, set in from the western boundary by 19/20m, and its two storey height it is not considered that it would result in a loss of light or result in an overbearing impact which would adversely affect the living conditions currently enjoyed by the occupiers at 50 Baldwins Lane or those along Links Way. It is fully acknowledged that the building would be highly visible; however, the degree of separation including the retention of trees and hedging (along with further planting enhancements) would aid in mitigating the visual prominence of the building from neighbouring outlook.

7.6.4 In terms of overlooking to neighbouring properties, the elevation of most concern is the south western flank which would run parallel with the unmade private track. This particular elevation will support a number of ground and first floor openings. The first floor flank would comprise 8 windows, 2 of which would be narrow full length windows, all serving science classrooms and would be contained within a 32m section when taken from the front of the building. The remainder of the elevation would not contain any fenestration as it supports the drama hall, storage room and sports hall. Whilst not directly applicable as the proposal is not residential development, the *Design Criteria* as set out within the Development Management Policies document states that in the interests of privacy and to prevent overlooking distances between buildings of 28m (indicative) should be achieved. The distances between the south western elevation and 50 Baldwins Lane would be approximately 30m with this distance even greater to those on Links Way. As a result, the separation distances provided would exceed the indicative distance. When considering the siting of the building, the separation distance between neighbouring properties and the retention of vegetation along the boundary, no significant harm in relation to overlooking would arise.

7.6.5 One of the fundamental changes arising from the development would be the intensification of the site through its use as a school, resulting in greater on-site activity thereby creating potential issues over noise and disturbance. Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies documents states that the Council will refuse planning permission for development which has an unacceptable adverse impact on the indoor and outdoor acoustic environment of existing or planned development.

7.6.6 Due to the location of the entrance and car park, the majority of the movements within the school would be contained to the south east, away from the most sensitive neighbours. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the general activity associated with a school would materially alter the character of the site and surrounding area with a significant increase in movements by both vehicular and pedestrian modes. Such increase in movements would be highly evident from the flats opposite the site and 50 Baldwins Lane. To minimise the impact, a Parking Management Plan would be imposed by way of condition to ensure that disturbance is kept to a minimum, especially during the early morning and afternoon drop off periods. In addition to the normal day to day movements, the school would also be used for community purposes, thereby allowing the use of both internal and external sports facilities outside of general school hours. The school would operate between the hours of 08.30 until 16.30 on weekdays supplemented by a number of optional learning and extra-curricular activities before and after school which would mean pupils will be able to arrive from 07.30 until 18:00 with weekend use of the facilities between the hours of 07:00 to 16:00. The proposed hours are in keeping with those generally associated with a school use with comings and goings predominately concentrated to two times a day.

7.6.7 Whilst the majority of the school building is concentrated away from the western boundaries, a tennis court is to be located to the north, running parallel with the unmade track. This particular area will therefore give rise to a degree of noise disturbance; however, it should be noted that it would be used intermittently (due to climatic conditions) and no external lighting is proposed which would further limit its availability. The tennis court would also be relatively well screened from neighbouring outlook with new planting provided along the adjacent boundary. A separation distance of approximately 32m would also be achieved with the rear building lines of residential dwellings on Links Way.

7.6.8 The majority of the site would form playing fields and also includes the use of a MUGA. A Noise Impact Assessment was submitted with the application and concludes that the resultant noise levels from the use of the sport pitches would not exceed the recommended noise levels within gardens and outdoor amenity areas. The said report also concludes that the human perception of change in the noise climate would result in a perceptible change in ambient noise level that imposes a slight impact on the local amenity around the site.

7.6.9 The noise associated from the building is to be mitigated through the use of a hybrid ventilation system with the use of mushroom vents to a number of the first floor science teaching spaces and the sports hall. If windows are to be opened within the western elevation, it is not considered that unacceptable noise impacts to residential amenity would arise. Due to the requirement for plant arising from the kitchen and ventilation systems (currently shown on the flat roof), further details would be required prior to commencement by way of condition.

7.6.10 In respect of external lighting, a number of lights would be inserted on the south western elevation of the main school building for security/health and safety reasons; nevertheless their extent it considered appropriate and would not result in any unacceptable levels of light spill to those residential properties adjacent. The lights to the building and its perimeter, car park, cycle storage and walking lighting will be controlled, programmed to automatically switch off between the 23.00 hours and 07:00 hours (as set out within the submitted External Lighting Assessment).

7.6.11 The Residential Environmental Health Manager has reviewed the supporting documentation concerning noise and lighting and has raised no in principle objections to the application on residential amenity grounds. It would also be necessary to control the hours of operation of lighting by condition.

7.6.12 The proposal would also include highway works with the inclusion of a large access into the site, creation of new parking bays in front of the three storey building opposite with minor alterations to footpaths. Such changes are not considered to result in any demonstrable harm.

7.6.13 It is acknowledged that the would be a change in outlook from the flats opposite, however, the site is allocated for educational purposes and the comings and goings associated with a school are not considered to be to the detriment of the residential amenities of nearby residential properties.

7.6.14 If approved, the construction process would undoubtedly give rise to a degree of disruption. A Construction Management & Logistics Plan has been submitted with the application and sets out a vast array of mitigation measures. The grant of planning permission would be subject to a Construction Management Plan to ensure such measures are adhered to during the construction phase.

7.7 Highways & Access:

7.7.1 The NPPF recognises that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development. Paragraph 32 of the NPPF comments 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 limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe

7.7.2 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) advises that in ensuring all development contributes to the sustainability of the District, it is necessary to take into account the need to reduce the need to travel by locating development in accessible locations and promoting a range of sustainable transport modes. Policy CP10 required development to demonstrate that it will provide a safe and adequate means of access.

7.7.3 The school would be accessed by a single vehicular entrance from Baldwins Lane, classified as a Local Distributor Road which is subject to a 30mph speed restriction and carries a large volume of traffic to and from the A412 and includes a recorded history of road collisions. Due to the location of the access a number of unrestricted parking bays would be removed (approximately 8 in total; although this is hard to quantify). The existing signalled pedestrian crossing outside the site will be retained. Discussions between the agent and the Highway Authority are on-going in an attempt to make highway improvements and whether a number of parking bays can be retained or re-located.

7.7.4 In terms of transport connectivity, three bus stops exist in close proximity of the site with good accessibility to Croxley and Watford Train Stations. The proposed Croxley Rail Link has the potential to provide further direct benefits to the site; however, the Council has been clear in pre-application discussions that assumptions should not be made on the basis that the rail link will be provided but on the current circumstances which exist today.

7.7.5 Pedestrian access is also provided by a single access point along the frontage entering into the “arrival plaza”. Within the site a delivery and service bay is to be provided and will also aid access to the adjacent sub-station. Provisions have also been made to enable emergency access to the periphery of the school buildings in the event of fire or for maintenance purposes as well as a suitable means of access to the sports pitches.

7.7.6 The impact on the highway network is considered as one of the main issues which would arise from the development, predominately due to the busy nature of Baldwins Lane and the fact that at peak times (08.00 to 09:00 and 15:15-16:15) it is accepted that the resultant impact of the school would result in traffic queues, with the worse-case of 224 arrivals and 206 departures during the morning network peak hour. The development will also completely change the level of movements to and from the site given its existing use.

7.7.7 The application has been supported by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan. The former sets out the trip generation and distribution information which is based on Rickmansworth School, considered the most appropriate comparison to assess the likely mode share of pupils attending the new school. This information is not disputed by the Highway Authority although concern has been highlighted by local residents that the 46% mode share of pupils walking/cycling to school is questionable. However, it is should be noted that this percentage simply provides a baseline travel demand for the new school.

7.7.8 The submitted information from the Transport Assessment indicates that full occupation of the school would take place in 2024 and that the majority of the roundabout approaches will operate with residual capacity, although the approach to the roundabout from Watford Road is expected to exceed practical capacity resulting in a potential increase in queuing and delay. The Transport Statement indicates that the changes to the performance of the roundabout will occur without the development of the school but accepts that an increase in queuing will result, but not in a substantial manner.

7.7.9 In order to ensure that highway concerns are mitigated, it is essential that an adequate drop-off area is provided on site. A Parking Management Plan will therefore be required to avoid significant disruptions from parents dropping off and picking up their children. The school will also be required to ensure all parents are fully aware that the drop off area must be used rather than local roads. This can be achieved by providing strategies via the Travel Plan to increase walking and cycling, educating and communicating with all parents and having good relationships with local businesses. A Working Group will also be established which will focus on encouraging more walking and cycling to school. The Travel Plan will therefore aid to influence travel behaviour, reduce the number of car trips, promote safer journeys and ensure the parking on local roads is minimised.

7.7.10 Furthermore, the new school is not proposed to be a selective school with the admissions criteria giving priority to Children in Public Care, Children of Staff, 10% for those with musical aptitude, siblings of existing pupils, and other children. In the event the school is over-subscribed the first test to be applied will be proximity to the school with those living closest being given priority.

7.7.11 The Highway Authority have requested that further information on the School Travel Plan, the off-site highway improvements and all construction vehicle movements and parking arrangements. It is also noted that the local bus services potentially lack capacity and thus this is currently being looked into. Additionally, the Highway Authority has also requested that funding contributions (to be confirmed) are made to mitigate the increase in vehicular trips through the A412.

7.7.12 In respect of the temporary accommodation of the school, a Construction Management Plan will be essential to avoid disruption during the construction phase.

7.8 Parking:

7.8.1 The development will provide 175 parking spaces (94 staff bays; 54 drop off bays; 15 student spaces; 9 disabled bays and 3 mini bus bays) split into two sections both running parallel with the railway embankment and wholly within the building zone. A service bay would also be provided close to the Baldwins Lane frontage for deliveries.

7.8.2 The first of the two parking areas would predominantly be used as a drop off area and includes a drop off bay for coaches, parking for mini buses, students and accessibility spaces.

7.8.3 Cycle storage is proposed to the western side of the main school building and will initially accommodate 52 open cycle stands with provision shown on the submitted details for future provision up to 220 cycle spaces.

7.8.4 The NPPF (paragraph 39) advises that, if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, local planning authorities should take into account:

* *The accessibility of the development;*
* *The type, mix and use of development;*
* *The availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
* *Local car ownership levels; and*
* *An overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.*

7.8.5 Policy DM13 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) advises that development should make provision for parking in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix 5. Appendix 5 does advise that the standards for car parking may be adjusted according to which zone the proposed development is in.

7.8.6 The maximum requirements as set out in Appendix 5 are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Cars | 1 space per full-time member of staff plus 1 space per 8 pupils over 17 years old plus 1 space per 20 pupils under 17 years old. |
| Disabled Motorists | Individual spaces for each disabled employee plus 2 spaces or 5% of total capacity, whichever is greater. |
| Cycle Parking | 1 long-term space per 10 full time staff plus 1 long-term space per 5 students. |

7.8.7 When fully occupied, the school would provide placement for 1206 students (which includes 306 sixth form students) and 93 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff.

7.8.8 The policy would therefore require:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Cars:**  Staff  Pupils >17  Pupils <17  Total | 93 (FTE staff) x 1 = 93  153/8 = 153 x 1 = 19.1  1053/20 = 1053 x 1 = 52.65 | **165** car parking spaces |
| Disabled  Motorists | 5% of 164 = 8.2 | **8** disabled spaces |
| Cycle Parking | 93 (FTE staff) / 10 = 9.3 x 1 = 9.3  1206 / 5 = 241.2 x 1 = 241.2 | **251** cycle spaces |

7.8.9 The above table illustrates a requirement for 165 car parking spaces (of which 8 should be accessible) and 251 cycle spaces.

7.8.10 It should be noted that the car parking requirement is the maximum and does not include any zonal reduction. The application site is located adjacent to zone 3 where provision of 50 - 75% of the parking standard may be appropriate and would equate to 83-124 spaces. Nevertheless, the proposed development seeks to provide 175 spaces of which 9 will be accessible thereby exceeding the policy standards.

7.8.11 The provision of 220 cycle spaces for students and staff currently shown, would result in a shortfall of 31 spaces. The submitted Transport Statement advises that the proposed provision would represent a combined staff/student mode share of 17%.

7.8.12 In respect of the temporary school which will provide for 300 pupils (<17 years old) and 25 full time staff members, a total provision of 40 parking spaces would be required. As it stands, the submitted information in the form of the Construction Management Plan indicates that 18 spaces will be provided. Information has been requested to increase the availability of spaces on site for staff.

7.8.13 Due to the highway alterations as a result of the access and required visibility splay lines a number of unrestricted parking bays (approximately 8) will be lost on the northern side of Baldwins Lane. Due to the development constraints of the site, such a loss is unfortunately unavoidable. As advised previously, discussions are on-going to seek whether a number of parking bays can be maintained or relocated to allow for a proportionate response between the requirement for the new development and the continued viability and function of the established retailers opposite.

7.9 Impact on Heritage Assets:

7.9.1 Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that the Local Planning Authority have regard to the special architectural interest of a building stating that:

*‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.’*

7.9.2 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) seeks to promote development of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness and Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy relates to design and states that in seeking a high standard of design, the Council will expect development proposals to have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area and conserve and enhance natural and heritage assets. Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) sets out that the Council will preserve the District’s listed buildings and will only support applications where the extension or alteration would not affect a listed building’s character as a building of special architectural or historic interest or its wider setting.

7.9.3 To the east of the site a Grade II listed building is located, otherwise known as Canal Cottage (Cassiobridge Lock House). As it stands the listed building is highly visible from parts of the application site with the land gradually rising from the shared boundary to the central ridge. The remodelling of the land would have a landscape impact as previously discussed although the changes in the land from neighbouring outlook would not be significant when compared with the existing levels. In addition to the land alterations, the MUGA would be visible from the property and by virtue of its evening use would have a further visual impact. When considering the impact on the siting of the listed building, it is accepted that there would be some adverse impacts due to the change in the use of the land and through the introduction of external lighting. However, the MUGA would be positioned approximately 76m from the listed building, a considerable distance with the majority of the sporting enclosure screened by the retention of a wooded area adjacent. The Conservation Officer has not raised an objection to the scheme.

7.9.4 Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies LDD also states that where an application includes, or is considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, it must be accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation.

7.9.5 The application was supported by an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment which sets out that the site only has a low or low to moderate potential for landscape remains. The site does not lie within an area of archaeological significance.

7.9.6 Given the extent of groundworks proposed and the fact a large proportion of the site has remained, to some extent, relatively undisturbed, the development will pose an ideal opportunity to investigate, in the form of archaeological trenching, the former site of Cassiobridge Farm/House and possibly even the potential site of the medieval Snells Hall (one of some 13 pre-dissolution manors in Rickmansworth Parish).

7.9.7 The submitted details are still being reviewed by the County Archaeologist.

7.10 Trees and Landscaping:

7.10.1 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF advises that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.

7.10.2 In ensuring that all development contributes to the sustainability of the District, Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy expects development proposals to ‘have regard to the character, amenities and quality of an area’, to ‘conserve and enhance natural and heritage assets’ and should ensure that ‘development is adequately landscaped and is designed to retain, enhance or improve important existing natural features; landscaping should reflect the surrounding landscape of the area and where appropriate integrate with surrounding networks of green open spaces’. Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy also seeks a net gain in the quality and quantity of Green Infrastructure through the protection and enhancement of assets and the provision of new green spaces.

7.10.3 Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD advises that development proposals for new development should be submitted with landscaping proposals which seek to retain trees and other landscape and nature conservation features. Landscaping proposals should also include new trees to enhance the landscape of the site and its surroundings as appropriate.

7.10.4 Policy DM7 (Landscape Character) of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) advises that in all landscaping regions, the Council will require proposals to make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape.

7.10.5 The application site has a number of trees and groups of trees which are subject to Tree Preservation Order (TPO 790). The Arboricultural Survey submitted with the application recorded a total of 91 individual trees and 17 groups of trees across the site which poses various challenges for their full retention. It is however understandably clear from various vantage points that the existing landscaping on site provides an important visual influence with the principal arboricultural features predominately formed by the dominant woodland and the Lime Avenue. However, due to the requirement to provide built form development within the building zone there will undoubtedly be pressure on the landscape features of the site.

7.10.6 To the west of the site and extending centrally is a rectangular area dominated principally by young to early mature trees within overgrown areas of scrub. Due to the requirement for sports pitches all trees within this particular area of the site are to be removed, the majority of which fall within Category C (trees of low quality and value with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years). This particular area includes individual TPOs (T1, T2 & T3) and a group of trees (G5). It should also be noted that the school building will result in the direct loss of 2 TPO trees (T4 & T5) while a further 3 TPO trees which fall within the Lime Avenue (G4) will be lost to facilitate the link road to the east car park. In total 27 individual trees and 9 groups of trees will be lost across the site which includes 9 TPO trees.

7.10.7 In terms of root protection encroachment, as the built form is limited to the south west of the site the main school building is set outside the root protection areas (PRA) of retained trees. To the east of the proposed building a new “no dig construction” footpath would be constructed through the historic Lime Avenue providing an attractive entrance towards the rear of the school building. The proposed link road will encroach within the RPA of two Limes (T15 & T16); however the intrusion is marginal and will enable their retention. The Lime Avenue is to be appropriately protected during construction.

7.10.8 To offset the loss of the abovementioned trees, replanting will occur on a large scale, especially towards the western boundary where a new extensive tree belt will be provided to the immediate north of the main building with the replacement of 2-3 trees for each TPO tree removed with the same or similar species across the site. The entire boundary with the unmade track to the west will also be supplemented up to Baldwins Lane. The circulation space around the building including the parking areas will also include tree planting.

7.10.9 One of the most notable changes from Baldwins Lane will be the loss of the hedging and trees which are not protected along the frontage to facilitate pedestrian and vehicular access. Notwithstanding this loss, a number of new trees (3 adjacent to Baldwins Lane and a group towards the east) will be planted to provide some relief from the introduction of the main school building.

7.10.10 The Landscape Officer raises no objection to the proposal on landscape grounds and comments that the most significant arboricultural features are to be retained.

7.11 Sustainability:

7.11.1 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires all applications for new development to submit an Energy and Sustainability Statement demonstrating the extent to which sustainability principles have been incorporated into the location, design, construction and future use of proposals and the expected carbon emissions.

7.11.2 Policy DM4 of the Development Management Policies LDD states that from 2016, applications for new residential development will be required to demonstrate that the development will meet a zero carbon standard (as defined by central government). However, the Government is yet to provide a definition for zero carbon and the Council is therefore continuing to apply the 2013 requirements, i.e. applicants will be required to demonstrate that development will produce 5% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part L (2013) requirements having regard to feasibility and viability.

7.11.3 The application is accompanied by an Energy Strategy and Sustainability Statement which sets out the following proposed carbon reduction strategy to achieve the required reduction in carbon dioxide emissions:

* Night purge cooling strategy using exposed concrete soffits as thermal mass
* Use of low energy lighting systems
* All primary plant will be high efficiency type
* A BEMS system will monitor energy use
* Photovoltaics array of approximately 75m2-95m2

7.11.4 The development has been designed to comply with the requirements of Building Regulations Part L with a saving of approximately 5.6% and therefore is in accordance with Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM4 of the Development Management Policies LDD.

7.12 Wildlife and Biodiversity:

7.12.1 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This is further emphasised by regulation 3(4) of the Habitat Regulations 1994 which state that Councils must have regard to the strict protection for certain species required by the EC Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive places a legal duty on all public bodies to have regard to the habitats directive when carrying out their functions.

7.12.2 The NPPF (paragraph 109) advises that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

*“Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures”.*

7.12.3 When determining planning applications, the NPPF (paragraph 118) advises that local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying principles which include:

* *If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.*
* *Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.*

7.12.4 National Planning Policy requires Local Authorities to ensure that a protected species survey is undertaken for applications where biodiversity may be affected prior to the determination of a planning application. This is in line with Policy CP9 (Green Infrastructure) of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) which sets out the Council’s priorities for green infrastructure, which includes conserving and enhancing key biodiversity habitats and species.

7.12.5 Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) requires that development conserves, enhances, and where appropriate, restores biodiversity.

7.12.6 Due to the nature of the site which is dominated by semi-improved grassland, a previous equestrian centre as well as groups of trees a number of surveys have been undertaken which are set out below:

**Great Crested Newts:** Due to the proximity of 13 ponds within a 500m radius of the site, a Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Assessment was submitted. The assessment concluded that a Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement for Amphibians must be complied in order to protect amphibians which may be present and detrimentally impacted via the development, especially given the habitat connectivity to the site from the pond which borders the site on the south eastern boundary.

**Reptile Survey:** The survey identified that a low population of grass snake, present within the habitats along the northern boundary. Due to the nature of the proposed works, including the removal of trees and remodelling of the site, to avoid adverse impacts a retile mitigation strategy should be complied, containing enhancements to ensure favourable conservation status of reptiles is maintained. A number of recommendations are listed.

**Stag Beetle Survey:** Following the survey it is recommended that the Stag Beetle Mitigation Strategy is maintained within the site. This will mean that the existing dead wood resource present within the centre of the site that would be destroyed should be relocated to the woodland to the north and east of the site area. Any translocation works should be supervised by an experienced ecologist.

**Preliminary Ecological Appraisal:** A Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEcMP) should be complied for the site as the proposed works could potentially indirectly impact upon Jacotts Hill/West Herts which is designated as a Local Wildlife Site. Habitat loss and Enhancement through planting of native seed/fruit bearing species, nectar-rich species, wildflower grassland margins, provision of nesting/roosting habitat (nest boxes) and inclusion of hedgehog passes under fences.

**Bats:** A bat roost has been identified in tree T1, G16b and G16c, a development licence must be obtained from Natural England. Trees T13, T40, T48 and G12 have been identified as having high potential to support roosting bats.

7.12.7 A Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan has also been submitted which indicates that the following ecology/enhancement features.

* Semi-natural Broadleaved woodland
* Retained and Proposed trees
* Native boundary planting
* Wildflower meadow
* Amenity grassland
* Attenuation feature (primarily drainage function)
* Ornamental grasses and shrubs
* Log piles and rock features.

7.12.8 Hertfordshire Ecology have been consulted and consider that adequate information has been provided and request that the enhancements listed within the reports should been followed.

7.12.9 Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust have also been consulted and question whether the development will achieve a measured no net loss and where possible net gains to biodiversity. This is mainly in respect of the statements made within the Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan and further clarification is sought.

7.13 Flooding, Drainage & Contamination:

7.13.1 The application site falls within flood zone 1 and due to the nature of the development (major planning application) details for the management of surface water drainage is required. The site is in close proximity to the Grand Union Canal to the east which forms a navigational cut to the River Gade, residential properties and a railway line.

7.13.2 The NPPF at paragraph 94 states:

*“Local Planning Authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk, costal change and water supply and demand considerations”.*

7.13.3 Paragraph 100 states:

*“Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere…”*

7.12.4 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF advises that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

7.13.5 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy recognises that taking into account the need to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding will contribute towards the sustainability of the District.

7.13.6 Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy also acknowledges that the Council will expect development proposals to build resilience into a site’s design taking into account climate change, for example flood resistant design.

7.13.7 Policy DM8 (Flood Risk and Water Resources) of the Development Management Policies LDD advises that development will only be permitted where it would not be subject to unacceptable risk of flooding and would not unacceptably exacerbate the risks of flooding elsewhere and that the Council will support development where the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater are protected and where there is adequate and sustainable means of water supply. Policy DM8 also requires development to include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs). A SuDS scheme for the management of surface water has been a requirement for all major developments since April 2015.

7.13.8 Policy DM9 (Contamination and Pollution Control) of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) advises that the Council will refuse planning permission for development which would give rise to polluting emissions.

7.13.9 The submitted Drainage Strategy concluded that there are a number of constraints likely to impact the proposed development and thus recommended that a detailed site wide Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is undertaken. A FRA was undertaken and has been submitted with the application.

7.13.10 In respect of surface water drainage it is reported that there are no historical records of flooding due to drainage issues. The ground investigation report indicates that sockaways/infiltration are not a suitable solution to the method of surface water disposal. To ensure the discharge of surface water will not increase the risk of flooding to other properties, it will be necessary to attenuate the drainage by restricting the discharge to the agreed run-off rate (4.2 litres per second) by providing appropriately sized pumps and additional storage volume contained below ground level with a cellular storage system.

7.13.11 In terms of surface water the site is prone to surface water flooding, albeit this is outside of the main building areas and will be incorporated within the playing field areas or areas of landscaping. As such, the risk from surface water flooding to nearby properties is therefore considered to be low.

7.13.12 Hertfordshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has raised an initial objection to the proposal and require further clarification over a variety of aspects highlighted at paragraph 4.9 above.

7.13.13 Neither Thames Water or Affinity Water raise any objections to the proposed development. Thames Water have provided guidance and recommends that installation of a properly maintained fat trap on all catering establishments and the collection of waste oil by a contractor. As Thames Water have not been able to determine the waste water infrastructure needs of the application, a pre-commencement condition is requested.

7.14 CIL / Planning Obligations:

7.14.1 Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that:

*“Local Planning Authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning Obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition”.*

7.14.2 Policy CP8 (Infrastructure and Planning Obligations) of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) advises that:

*“Development proposals will provide, or make adequate contributions towards, infrastructure and services to:*

*a) Make a positive contribution to safeguarding or creating sustainable, linked communities*

*b) Offset the loss of any infrastructure through compensatory provision*

*c) Meet ongoing maintenance costs where appropriate”.*

7.14.3 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area. The Three Rivers Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) came into force on 1 April 2015. This is a charge on new developments for use towards infrastructure projects within the District, including transport proposals, education facilities, leisure facilities, health care facilities, social and community facilities and emergency services. However, the development would not be liable for CIL as this only applies to residential and retail uses.

7.15 Community facilities:

7.15.1 The NPPF under paragraph 69 states that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Therefore to deliver social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning decisions should provide community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

7.15.2 The proposed development includes the ability for community groups to hire out a number of internal and external facilities, listed below as set out within the Community Use Statement provided by the Headteacher of the school:

* A multi-use games area for football and hockey
* An indoor sports hall
* A gym with a sprung wooded floor
* Playing fields for a variety of sports
* 4 tennis courts
* 2 netball courts
* A school hall with the capacity to seat 360
* A drama studio

7.15.3 Sport England have advised that they support the principle of the development but require further consideration, if appropriate, on a few issues. The concerns raised relate to the location of the indoor facilities in relation to the school reception, size of the sports hall (would not conform to the latest size guidance) for a 4 court hall suitable for community use, provision of separate toilets within the indoor and outdoor changing areas and that the entrance doors to the activity studio should not open into the activity space.

7.15.4 Sport England have outlined a number of planning conditions relating to a Sports Pitch Feasibility Study, Artificial Cricket Wicket Specification, All Weather Pitch Design Specification, Games Court Design Specification and a Community Use Agreement.

7.16.1 Other:

7.16.2 Paragraph 112 of the NPPF states that;

*“Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality”.*

7.16.3 Whilst objections to the loss of agricultural land are noted, the application site is an allocated Education Site, referred to as site S(b) in the Site Allocations LDD (adopted November 2014).

7.16.4 The proposed building has been set well back from the railway line and through the use of appropriate insulation the teaching environment is considered acceptable and would not be constrained by nearby noise sources.

7.16.5 The Crime Prevention Design Advisor has raised no objections to the proposed development but has provided guidance on design standards.

8. **Recommendation:**

8.1 Members should note that there is no recommendation for approval or refusal at this stage in the consideration of the application.

8.2 Consequently, it is recommended that the Committee notes the report, and is invited to make general comments with regards to the material planning issues raised by the application.