

Item No. 13

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/17/4050/FULL
LOCATION	Holywell Middle School, Red Lion Close, Bedford, MK43 0JA
PROPOSAL	Extension to reception area, new 7 classroom teaching block, new 3 court sports hall and teaching area.
PARISH	Cranfield
WARD	Cranfield and Marston Moretaine
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Morris, Matthews and Clark
CASE OFFICER	Matthew Heron
DATE REGISTERED	22 August 2017
EXPIRY DATE	28 November 2017
APPLICANT	Ellis Williams Architects
AGENT	EWA
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Objection from Cranfield Parish Council to a major development
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Recommended for Approval

Summary of Recommendation

The development would upgrade the existing teaching environment and would offer significant benefits to the development of sport at the school. The development complies with Policies CS3 and DM4 in this regard and, in accordance with the Framework, great weight in favour is afforded to the expansion of Holywell Middle School

Further, the loss of pitches as a result of the proposal would be replaced by better, indoor, provision (in terms of quantity and quality) in a suitable location. As such, the relevant criteria of Policy DM5 and paragraph 74 of the Framework would be met and the development is considered acceptable in this regard.

The proposal has also been assessed in terms of its impact upon; the character of the area, the living conditions of surrounding properties, highway safety, flooding and drainage and other relevant material considerations. The development is considered acceptable in this regard.

Overall, the proposal would provide considerable social benefits, including the community use of the sports hall, and is considered to represent sustainable development. Accordingly, the development complies with the Development Plan and the Framework when assessed as a whole.

Site Location:

The application site comprises a series of educational buildings at Holywell Middle School, positioned towards the eastern edge of Cranfield. The school has recently been expanded and now has 610 pupils and 80 members of staff in total.

The Application:

This application seeks full planning permission for the construction of seven additional classrooms and ancillary space in a new building, an extension to the entrance to the school and a new three court sports hall.

This development will increase the pupil yield to approximately 720 pupils and it is anticipated that an additional 8.5 teaching staff would be required.

RELEVANT POLICIES:**National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)****Core Strategy and Development Management Policies - North 2009**

Policy CS1 – Development Strategy

Policy CS2 – Developer Contributions

Policy CS3 – Healthy and Sustainable Communities

Policy CS13 – Climate Change

Policy CS14 – High Quality Development

Policy CS16 – Landscape and Woodland

Policy CS18 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Policy DM2 – Sustainable Construction of New Buildings

Policy DM3 – High Quality development

Policy DM4 – Development Within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes

Policy DM5 – Important Open Space within Settlement Envelopes

Policy DM14 – Landscape and Woodland

Policy DM15 – Biodiversity

Local Plan

The Council is currently consulting on its Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19). The Plan outlines the overarching strategy for growth and also sets out more detailed policies which will be used to determine planning applications. A substantial volume of evidence gathered over a number of years supports this document. These technical papers are consistent with the aspirations of the National Planning Policy Framework and therefore will remain on the Council's website as material considerations, which will, along with the direction of travel of the Local Plan, inform development management decisions.

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Other Documents

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (March 2014)

Relevant Planning History:

Application:	Planning	Number:	CB/16/01869/FULL
Validated:	13/05/2016	Type:	Full Application
Status:	Decided	Date:	05/07/2016
Summary:		Decision:	Full Application - Granted
Description:	Single storey side extension for Holywell Middle School.		

Application:	Planning	Number:	CB/14/03648/FULL
Validated:	30/09/2014	Type:	Full Application
Status:	Decided	Date:	30/09/2014
Summary:		Decision:	Not Proceeded With
Description:	Installation of a 40 foot container (12.2m long, 2,45m wide) for use as storage facility and for a site office for the school's site agents.		

Consultees:

Cranfield Parish Council

"The Council objects on the basis that the school travel plan is not sufficiently robust enough to mitigate the additional traffic and pedestrian movements that will be generated by this expansion of the school.

The Council feels that the school travel plan has weaknesses that need to be addressed;

1.the suggestion that parking is available nearby in residential streets is not appropriate as residents such as in Red Lion Close face inconsiderate and dangerous parking and excessive vehicular movements at the start and end of the school day

2. The suggestion that parents in cars drop off and collect their children from the Cross Keys public house car park is not seen as a long term or reliable provision because the car park is private land, not highway land and this facility could be withdrawn at any time (which it has in the past)

3. More provision and encouragement for walking to school should be provided. For example, pupils living in the Home Farm development do not have the option of walking on a footpath to the village and existing walkways such as the bridleway from Flitt Leys to the High Street is not surfaced."

Consultees

Highways Team – No objection subject to relevant conditions

Drawing no. AG(9-)-01 Revision A, AG(0-)-10 Revision A, 05, AE90-)-01, 106250-02

The proposal is for an additional 7 classrooms, extended entrance hall and 3 court sports hall extension at an existing school. Access is taken from a cul-de-sac via the High Street, with a turning head suitable for a car, located prior to the school entrance; all properties appear to have an access and on site parking provision.

The existing school currently has 610 pupils and 80 members of staff, with 71 on site parking spaces and 40 cycle parking spaces. The school is mostly utilised by pupils from 10km away, with up to 5 double decker buses serving the school and bringing

to/taking from the majority of the pupils.

There is no on site parent drop off area, other than on street parking at Red Lion Close. The school state the pub (The Crosskeys) on the High Street is also used to drop off/pick up pupils by parents, but this does not appear to be a legal agreement and therefore should be discounted as this provision could cease at any time. (There is a footpath running from opposite the pub into Red Lion Close and a pedestrian crossing that can be used to access this).

The applicant has submitted a Transport Statement with the proposal which states the proposal will increase the pupil numbers by an additional 110 and an increase of 11 staff.

The on site parking provision will be increased to provide additional parking for the staff and up to 2 additional double decker buses will cater for the increase in pupils.

Using the assessment surveys of the modes of transport of pupils using the school, it is assumed that the majority of the 110 pupils will use the school buses provided, and there will be 10 additional parent vehicles for the pupil increase. Whilst all the information provided is helpful in assessing the site, there is no information regarding how existing issues, which will be exacerbated by the proposal, are going to be addressed. The school has incremental pupil increases which, is just continually adding to the issues of on street parent parking along a residential cul-de-sac to the detriment of residents, highway users and access to/from the site by the school buses.

I would suggest (and expect something along these lines) that 'H' bars are provided at the residential accesses/drop kerbs along Red Lion Close from the High Street junction to the school gates (not including the part of Red Lion Close that is a spur to the north). The turning area adjacent to the school gates should have keep clear hatching to allow vehicles (cars) to turn and leave the close in forward gear; it is currently used for parking.

A TRO of waiting restrictions at peak school times should be provided at the south side of the radii of the junction with the High Street. The same should apply on the north side and continue to the school gates along the north side of Red Lion Close. This should also include the radii of the north spur of Red Lion Close.

This will provide residents access into/from their drives during school time and turning within the allotted turning area. On street parking along the south side of Red Lion Close only, with gapping where residential accesses are to allow for vehicles to pass each other. This should provide a clear route for the school busses to enter/exit the site. **As the waiting restriction will only be at peak school times it should not impact on residents during other times or weekends.**

The applicant has provided a plan and information regarding where buses park within the site, offload and turn within the site. This shows a crossed hatched area for turning, and an area where up to 3 busses can stack and unload/load children. The tracking diagrams show that 2 vehicles can pass each other where the busses are stacked, and with better positioning of busses at the east waiting area, cars can pass the waiting busses to access the parking spaces.

This stacking and bus parking does not affect the public highway as vehicles can enter,

turn and leave in forward gear. However the waiting of busses between the parking bays is not ideal, or the reversing of buses with children on board. I realise that provision is required for only an additional 2 busses on site, (the 5 using the site already exist). The internal parking layout may be better suited with the relocation of the 'lone' 2 parking spaces elsewhere within the site. The area (north) behind the existing parking bays on entering the site, used as an additional bus stacking area (this could also include an informal 'zebra' type pedestrian crossing from this area to the entrance pathway) or a allocated parking area for 2 busses (or more) taken from the new internal access for the additional parking area. A condition has been included for this, but is left at your discretion to consider its inclusion?

Note: I am not requesting that the speed limit be reduced to 20mph along Red Lion Close, as the on street parking during peak school times will self regulate the speeds of vehicles using the cul-de-sac.

Please include the following in any permission issued:

- Prior to the development being brought into use the additional on site car parking and access thereto, shall be constructed in accordance with the approved drawing no. AG(9-01A

Reason For the avoidance of doubt and to provide adequate on site vehicle and cycle parking provision

- Details of a waiting/parking area for at least 2 busses shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the development shall not be brought into use until the busses waiting/parking area has been constructed in accordance with the approved details

Reason To provide bus parking/waiting area clear of parked and manoeuvring vehicles within the site and to avoid vehicle/pedestrian conflict

- Before the development is brought into use all on site vehicular areas shall be surfaced in a stable and durable materials in accordance with details to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Arrangements shall be made for surface water drainage from the site to soak away within the site so that it does not discharge into the highway or into the main drainage system.

Reason To avoid the carriage of mud or other extraneous material or surface water from the site so as to safeguard the interest of highway safety and reduce the risk of flooding and to minimise inconvenience to users of the premises and ensure satisfactory parking of vehicles outside highway limits

- Prior to the development being brought into use details of the additional secure and covered parking of cycles on the site (including the internal dimensions of the cycle parking area, stands/brackets to be used), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be fully implemented before the development is first occupied or brought into use and thereafter retained for this purpose.

Reason To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking to meet the needs of

occupiers of the proposed development in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.

- No development shall commence until details of measures to improve safety in the vicinity of the school such as keep clear markings and parking and waiting restrictions have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority, and the development shall not be brought into use until funding for the safety improvements has been secured

Reason To avoid obstruction to traffic using the public highway, the site and residential properties

- Prior to development a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), including the following, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved details for the CTMP will be implemented at the start of the demolition/construction phase and continue until the development is completed
- Site parking for construction workers, deliveries, loading and unloading areas
- Materials storage area
- Wheel cleaning facility
- Details of any traffic management/signage within the public highway
- Deliveries outside of peak times

Reason In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and the site.

Archaeology – No objection

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application. It has been noted that Archaeology Team previously made comments to pre-application enquiry (CB/17/03156/PAPC) concerning the same proposals. The advice remains essentially the same and is as follows:

The proposed development site lies just to the east of the historic core of the settlement of Cranfield, (HER 16931) and within known area of Iron Age and Roman occupation (HER 11866, 13418 and 19791). Under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) these are the heritage assets with archaeological interest.

The proposed development site has the potential to contain archaeological remains relating to Iron Age and Roman activity as well as to origins of the medieval settlement of Cranfield. However, the proposed locations of the new class rooms and sports hall are likely to have been compromised by the construction of the existing buildings and tennis court. Taking that into account there is unlikely to be a major impact upon any surviving archaeological remains. Consequently, there would be no archaeological objection to this application.

Sport England – No objection, subject to relevant conditions

Summary: Sport England raises <u>no objection</u> to this application as a statutory consultee which is considered to meet exception E5 of our adopted Playing Fields

Policy and paragraph 74 of the NPPF, subject to two planning conditions being imposed relating to a community use agreement and sports hall layout and design specifications as set out in this response. The principle of the application is supported as a non-statutory consultee. An informative is requested to be added in relation to sports facility design.

Sport England –Statutory Role and Policy

It is understood that the site forms part of, or constitutes a playing field as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). The consultation with Sport England is therefore a statutory requirement.

Sport England has considered the application in the light of the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Para 74) and Sport England's policy on planning applications affecting playing fields 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England' (see link below): www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy

Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, unless one or more of the five exceptions stated in its policy apply.

The Proposal and Impact on Playing Field

The application involves a new classroom block, an extension to the school reception and a sports hall building on Holywell Middle School's site. The classroom block and reception extension would not affect the playing fields or any sports facilities. However, the sports hall would be sited on a substantial part (over a third of the area) of the school's multi-use games area (MUGA) which forms part of the wider playing fields and it is not proposed to be replaced.

Assessment against Sport England Policy

This application relates to the provision of a new indoor sports facility that would be sited on an existing outdoor sports facility at the above site. It therefore needs to be considered against exception E5 of the above policy, which states:

- E5 - The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.

I have therefore assessed the existing and proposed playing fields against the above policy to determine whether the proposals meet exception E5.

Sports Development Benefits

The key potential sports development benefits of the proposed development are set out in the design and access statement and in subsequently submitted information in response to Sport England's queries. In summary, these are considered to be as

follows:

- School Benefits: A three (badminton) court sports hall would be provided. This would provide a modern indoor sports facility for meeting the school's curricular and extra-curricular PE and sport needs. At present, the school uses its dated 1970s gym for indoor sport which was not designed for meeting modern indoor sports use. Furthermore, it was not designed with sufficient capacity to meet the expansion needs of the school as it does not have enough space to allow 3 PE classes to take place at the same time. The proposed sports hall would address the capacity and quality deficiencies of the school hall and provide a modern sports hall. The new changing facilities would offer modern facilities that would help encourage participation in sport and physical activity by students and could also be used for supporting the outdoor sports facilities;
- Community Benefits: While the sports hall has been proposed mainly for meeting the school's needs, it would offer benefits to the community as it would be made available for community use outside of school hours to complement existing and proposed sports halls in the Cranfield area and the school would be willing to complete a community use agreement to secure such use. Central Bedfordshire Council's Leisure Facilities Strategy (2013) assessed community sports facility needs in the area and while it did not identify a need for additional sports halls in this area, policy N3 supported improved public access to existing school sports halls in the western part of Central Bedfordshire which includes Cranfield. The development of a new school sports hall that would be made available for community use would be considered as responding positively to an identified local need for increased community access to school sports hall provision and would help address any unmet demand in the Cranfield area. The proposed size of the sports hall (3 courts) would restrict the range of sports that could be accommodated in the hall but it would still be suitable for use for some of the most popular sports such as badminton.

Impact on Playing Field

In relation to the impact on the games courts, the sports hall building would result in the loss of about a third of the games court area and would reduce the capacity and number of courts that could be accommodated on the residual area. The applicant has explained that other options for siting the sports hall were explored before the siting was confirmed, some of which would have had an impact on the natural turf playing field. The surface of the games courts is understood to be poor which in practice restricts formal sports use to the summer period and other dry periods of the year due to a lack of slip resistance. As part of the development, it is proposed to resurface the residual area to allow it to be fully used for outdoor sports throughout the year. Furthermore, despite the reduction in size the residual area would still have sufficient space for accommodating a netball court or a tennis court which are the most popular courts marked out on school games courts and it would also be possible to transfer some of the sports that are currently played outside to the sports hall which would not have any restrictions on its use in relation to daylight or weather conditions. As set out above, the changing facilities would improve ancillary facilities for the users of the outdoor sports facilities including the playing field and residual games court area.

Conclusions and Recommendation

On the basis of the above assessment, I consider that the potential sports development benefits that the proposed sports hall would offer would clearly outweigh the detriment caused by the impact on the games court area. I therefore consider that the proposal would meet exception E5 of our playing fields policy. This being the case, Sport England **does not wish to raise an objection to this application, subject to the following conditions** being attached to the decision notice should the local planning authority be minded to approve the application:

- Community Use Agreement: A condition requiring a community use agreement for the school's sports facilities to be submitted and approved by the local planning authority (in consultation with Sport England) prior to first occupation of the development in order to ensure that community access to the sports hall and other suitable school sports facilities are secured in practice. 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 and the relevant local authority (i.e Central Bedfordshire Council). Sport England regularly secures the completion of such agreements through planning conditions on planning permissions for school developments. While it is acknowledged that community access arrangements are already in place for the school's existing sports facilities, 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, one of the principal sports development benefits of the proposals would not be realised. Furthermore, securing community access to the facility would help deliver the Council's leisure facilities strategy. A community use agreement also provides clarity and formalisation with respect to community access arrangements for all parties. Community use agreement templates, examples of completed agreements and further advice can be provided upon request although advice should be sought from both CBC and Sport England before an agreement is prepared.

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/>. Sport England has developed a schedule of model planning conditions for local authorities to use which are on our website at <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-applications/>. The following condition is requested to be imposed to address this which is based on model condition 16 of the schedule:

"No occupation shall commence of the sports hall hereby permitted 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, playing fields and games courts 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 **.*

- Sports Hall Design Specifications: As it has been confirmed by the applicant that the submitted sports hall floor layout is indicative and because technical specifications for the sports hall are not available at this stage, details should be submitted and approved prior to construction of the sports hall to ensure that the design and layout of the sports hall is fit for purpose. The condition should specifically require details to be provided of the sports hall layout and the specifications for the flooring, lighting and court markings. This is justified to ensure that the facility is fit for purpose for meeting school and community needs and to help ensure that it delivers the benefits to sport that would help mitigate the loss of the games court area. **It is requested that the following condition and informative** which is based on model condition 9 of Sport England's model conditions schedule is imposed:

"No development of the sports hall shall commence until details of the layout of the sports hall and the technical specifications of the sports hall including flooring, lighting and court markings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority [after consultation with Sport England]. The sports hall 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 sports hall should comply with the relevant industry Technical Design Guidance, including guidance published by Sport England, National Governing Bodies for Sport.

If you wish to amend the wording of the conditions or use another mechanism in lieu of the condition, please discuss the details with the undersigned. Sport England does not object to amendments to conditions, provided they achieve the same outcome and we are involved in any amendments. If your Council decides not to attach the above condition, Sport England would wish to raise an objection to this application. Should the local planning authority be minded to approve this application without the above conditions, then given Sport England's subsequent objection and in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, the application should be referred to the Secretary of State via the National Planning Casework Unit.

COMMENTS MADE AS A NON-STATUTORY CONSULTEE

As a non-statutory consultee, without prejudice to our position as a statutory consultee set out above, Sport England would wish to make comments on the following issues:

Principle of the Development

Sport England has assessed the application in the light of its Planning for Sport Aims

and Objectives Guide (2013) www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/aims-and-objectives/ which is consistent with the NPPF. Objective 3 of this guide relates to ensuring that the provision of facilities and opportunities for sport and recreation meets the needs of the local community which includes new facilities and the enhancement of existing facilities. The proposed development would provide a new indoor sports facility that would offer potential to make a contribution towards meeting community sports hall needs in the Cranfield area for the reasons set out above. The proposals are considered to meet the above objective therefore. Sport England would therefore wish to confirm its **support** for the principle of the proposed development as a non-statutory consultee.

Facility Design

Detailed attention to facility design can make a significant difference to the utility and quality of a proposed sports facility. To this end, Sport England has developed detailed guidance on expectations for good facility design. Further information on sports hall design issues are detailed on our website at <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/sports-halls/>. 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/>.

SuDS Officers – No objection subject to relevant conditions.

We consider that planning permission could be granted to the proposed development and the final design and maintenance arrangements for the surface water system agreed at the detailed design stage, if the following recommendations and planning conditions are secured.

Permeable paving is the preferred method of pollution control than an oil interceptor, if the parking areas were to be permeable paving there would be no need for drainage channels on each stretch of parking. This would also provide storage reducing the land take for attenuation.

Where the use of permeable surfacing is proposed, this should be designed in accordance with the 'CIRIA RP992 The SuDS Manual Update: Paper RP992/28: Design Assessment Checklists for Permeable/Porous Pavement'.

We require detailed plans and drawings showing the proposed surface water drainage system in its entirety, including location, pipe run reference numbers, dimensions, gradients and levels (in metres above Ordinance Datum). This shall include all elements of the system proposed, including source control, storage, flow control, discharge and storage elements;

We will expect that any components that require replacement and/or maintenance will be designed to be accessible without undue impact on the drainage system and adjacent structures or infrastructure.

The final detailed design including proposed standards of operation, construction, structural integrity and ongoing maintenance must be compliant with the 'Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems' (March 2015, Ref: PB14308), 'Central Bedfordshire Sustainable Drainage Guidance' (Adopted April 2014, Updated May 2015), and recognised best practise including the Ciria SuDS Manual (2016, C753).

Land drainage Consent under the Land Drainage Act 1991 must be secured to discharge surface water to an existing watercourse, and details of this provided with the full detailed design. An easement should be provided on the developable side of the watercourse to allow for access for maintenance, this should be 9m but may depend on the maintenance requirements considered appropriate.

Recommended conditions;

Condition 1: No development shall commence until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall also include details of how the system will be constructed, including any phasing, and how it will be managed and maintained after completion. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved final details before the development is completed, and shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed management and maintenance plan.

Reason: To ensure the approved system will function to a satisfactory minimum standard of operation and maintenance and prevent the increased risk of flooding both on and off site, in accordance with para 103 of the NPPF.

Condition 2: No building/dwelling shall be occupied until the developer has formally submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority a finalised 'Maintenance and Management Plan' for the entire surface water drainage system, inclusive of any adoption arrangements and/or private ownership or responsibilities, and that the approved surface water drainage scheme has been correctly and fully installed as per the final approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the implementation and long term operation of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) is in line with what has been approved, in accordance with Written Statement HCWS161.

Cranfield Airport – No objection.

Leisure Officers – No objection

Rights of Way Officer – No objections.

Anglian Water – No objection subject to relevant conditions.

Trees and Landscape – No objection subject to relevant conditions.

Environmental Health – No objection.

Local Residents

3 letters of objection have been received from surrounding addresses. Comments are summarised as:

- Loss of a community facility (MUGA).
- Harm in terms of highway safety.
- Detrimental impact upon parking provision.

Letters not expressing objections but instead raising concerns have also been received from surrounding addresses. Concerns include; additional traffic, damage to road surface, impact on parking provision and harm in terms of highway safety.

It should, however, be noted that damage to the surface of the road as a result of the proposal would represent a legal matter. This is therefore outside of the remit of planning and no weight is afforded to this particular concern in this balancing exercise.

Determining Issues:

The main considerations of the application are;

- The principle of the development
- The quality of the design and the impact upon the character of the area
- The impact upon living conditions
- Highway safety and parking provision
- Other material considerations
 - Sustainability – including community use of facility MUGA
 - a. Ecology
 - b. Flooding and Drainage – Anglian conditions
 - c. Rights of Way
 - d. Archaeology

Considerations

1. The principle of the development

The Expansion of the School

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (henceforth referred to as the Framework), in paragraph 72 attaches great importance to the ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing communities. This paragraph goes on to state that Local Planning Authorities should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

- 1.2 Policy CS3 is consistent with the above mentioned national policy and seeks to support the upgrading of education facilities. Further, Policy DM4 seeks to encourage development within settlement envelopes.
- 1.3 The applicant has illustrated that the new teaching spaces are required to upgrade the cramped and unwelcoming teaching environment and to provide extended office space for Administration and the management team. Further, the proposal would provide a covered sports hall and associated changing facilities that are currently not provided at the site.
- 1.4 Taking the above into account, it is considered that the development would upgrade the existing teaching environment and would offer significant benefits to the development of sport at the school. The development complies with Policies CS3 and DM4 in this regard and, in accordance with the Framework, great weight in favour is afforded to the expansion of Holywell Middle School.

Impact on Open Space and Playing Pitches

- 1.5 The development would be constructed on land designated as 'Important Open Space' and the proposed sports hall would be positioned on a substantial part of the existing multi-use games area (MUGA) which forms part of the wider playing fields.
- 1.6 Policies DM5 and DM17 seek to resist the loss of existing green space and Policy DM5 states that partial redevelopment of areas identified as Important Open Space will only be considered favourably:
 - v) *Where proposals would result in enhanced provision in functional terms (both the facility itself and its location).*
 - *Where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in overall community benefit.*
 - *Where there would be no adverse effect on the visual quality of the settlement.*
- 1.7 The Framework, as stated within the Core Planning Principles (paragraph 17), seeks to encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban areas, and recognises that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife and recreation). Additionally, the Framework, in paragraph 73, acknowledges that open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.
- 1.8 Furthermore, paragraph 74 of The Framework states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
 - (i) *An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
 - (ii) *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location;*
or

(iii) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

- 1.9 As illustrated, though broadly consistent with national policy, the criteria of Policy DM5 differs from that identified within paragraph 74 of the Framework. Accordingly, more weight is given to the provisions of the Framework in this regard.
- 1.10 As discussed, the three court sports hall would be positioned on existing playing pitches. However, this would be a modern, high quality, facility for meeting the school's curricular and extra-curricular PE and sport needs. The facility would address the capacity and quality deficiencies of the schools current indoor sporting facility (the school hall) and the changing rooms would offer modern facilities which could support other outdoor sports facilities.
- 1.11 Though the development would reduce the existing games court area, the applicant has illustrated that the surface of the existing MUGA is poor and this restricts formal use in warmer months. As part of this proposal, the remaining MUGA would be resurfaced to allow for year round use. Further, the remaining MUGA would still provide sufficient space for accommodating netball or tennis courts.
- 1.12 Taking all of the above into account, and as the applicant has illustrated that other sites for the sports hall were explored but would have had a detrimental impact upon natural turf playing pitches, it is considered that the loss of pitches as a result of the proposal would be replaced by better, indoor, provision (in terms of quantity and quality) in a suitable location. As such, the relevant criteria of Policy DM5 and paragraph 74 of the Framework would be met and the development is considered acceptable in this regard.
- 1.13 Notwithstanding the above, to ensure that the indoor sports pitches are indeed of a high quality, it is recommended that a condition is imposed requesting specifications of the layout of the sports hall – including flooring, lighting and court markings. Subject to the imposition of this condition, no objection is raised by Sport England.

2. The quality of the design and the impact upon the character of the area

- 2.1 Policies CS14, DM3 and DM4 seeks to ensure proposals are of a high quality of design, respect the local context in which they are in, are appropriate in terms of scale and have an acceptable impact upon the landscape. Chapter 7 of the Framework emphasises the importance of good design in context and, in particular, paragraph 64 states permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
- 2.2 The application site is located within the settlement envelope of Cranfield, towards the eastern edge of this village. The site comprises a mix of educational buildings, constructed in a variety of architectural forms, of various ages. Though there is established vegetation adjacent to public rights of way which run adjacent to the southern boundary of the site, views would be available of elements of the

proposed development from certain vantage points along the surrounding footpath network.

- 2.3 The proposed entrance extension would infill an area between existing educational buildings, would be subordinate to the host building and would be framed in render under a flat polymeric covering. Taking this into account, it is not considered that this extension would appear visually prominent or disrupt the rhythm of the existing built form at the site.
- 2.4 The proposed classroom block would be located on the northern side of the existing buildings and would be constructed of facing brickwork and roof tiles to match those of the existing built form. Though two storey in scale, views of this element of the development would be largely restricted from the public domain, and it is not considered that this building would appear visually cramped or dominant at the school site. As such, it would not disrupt the harmony of the existing educational facility.
- 2.5 The proposed sports hall would be located towards the eastern boundary of the site and would be a functional building constructed of metal cladding under a metal profiled roof. Some, restricted, views of this building would be available from certain vantage points along the surrounding footpath network. However, this building is typical in terms of design of a building of this nature and would not appear visually incongruous in this educational setting. As such, and given the development would not appear cramped upon its plot, it is not considered that this element of the development would disrupt the character of the school site.
- 2.6 Taking all of the above in account, it is not considered that the development would result in harm to the character of the immediate setting or the visual interests its surroundings. Accordingly, the scheme complies with identified local and national policy in this regard. Notwithstanding this, to ensure the scheme is of a high quality and that built form is appropriately softened, it is recommended that conditions are imposed requesting the exact specifications of materials to be used for proposed buildings and a Landscaping Plan (including details of any means of enclosure, hardstanding and additional vegetation).

3. The impact upon living conditions

- 3.1 Policy DM3 aims to preserve neighbouring amenity. Furthermore, guidance in paragraph 17 of the NPPF is to always seek to secure high quality design and good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupiers of land and buildings.
- 3.2 The single storey entrance extension would be in excess of 22m away from residential built form to the west of the site and there are no residential properties within close proximity of either the classroom block or the sports hall. As such, it is not considered that the development would result in harm to the living conditions of the occupants of surrounding properties, in terms of overbearing, overlooking and loss of light.
- 3.3 Furthermore, no concern has been raised in terms of noise and disturbance from Environmental Health. It is therefore not considered that the proposal would result in harm in this regard over and above the existing operating school.

- 3.4 Taking all of the above into account, the proposal would not result in harm to the living conditions of the occupants of surrounding residential properties and complies with identified policy in this regard.

4. Highway safety and parking provision

- 4.1 Access to the site is taken from a cul-de-sac via the High Street, with a turning head suitable for a car located prior to the school entrance. Surrounding properties have an access and on site parking provision.
- 4.2 The existing school currently has 610 pupils and 80 members of staff and benefits from 71 on-site parking spaces and 40 cycle spaces. The school is mostly utilised by pupils from 10km away, with up to five double decker buses transporting pupils to/from the site.
- 4.3 There is no on site 'parent drop off' area, other than on street parking at Red Lion Close. It is also stated by the applicant that, informally, the nearby public house (The Crosskeys) is used as a drop off point. However, as this is not formal parking in association with the school and could cease at any time, this parking provision has not been included in this assessment.
- 4.4 The applicant has submitted has submitted a Transport Statement illustrating that this proposal would increase the pupil yield by a maximum of 110 students and that a maximum of 11 additional staff members.
- 4.5 12 additional off-street parking spaces would be provided to accommodate for the expansion of the school and an area has been illustrated on drawing no. AG(9-) 01 Rev. A for additional cycle parking. Subject to conditions requesting further detail of these parking spaces, it is considered that parking provision would be acceptable.
- 4.6 Using the assessment surveys of the modes of transport of pupils using the school, it is assumed that the majority of the 110 pupils will use the school buses provided, and there will be 10 additional parent vehicles for the pupil increase. It is clear that the school has incremental pupil increases which, is continually adding to the issues of on street parent parking along a residential cul-de-sac to the detriment of residents, highway users and access to/from the site by the school buses.
- 4.7 To alleviate the above mentioned concerns, it is considered that 'H' bars should be provided at the residential accesses/drop kerbs along Red Lion Close from the High Street junction to the school gates (not including the part of Red Lion Close that is a spur to the north). The turning area adjacent to the school gates should also have keep clear hatching to allow vehicles to turn and leave the close in forward gear.
- 4.8 Furthermore, a TRO of waiting restrictions at peak school times should be provided at the south side of the radii of the junction with the High Street. The same should apply on the north side and continue to the school gates along the north side of Red Lion Close. This should also include the radii of the north spur of Red Lion Close. This will provide residents access to their drives during school

time and turning within the allotted turning area. As the waiting restriction will only be at peak school times it should not impact on residents during other times or weekends.

- 4.9 The above mentioned highways improvements are considered reasonable and necessary and will be secured conditionally, to be carried out under a S278 agreement. This has been agreed by the applicant.
- 4.10 The applicant has provided a plan showing the locations that buses park, offload and turn within the site. This shows a crossed hatched area for turning and an area where up to three busses can stack and unload/load children. The tracking diagrams show that two vehicles can pass each other where the busses are stacked, and with better positioning of busses at the east waiting area, cars can pass the waiting busses to access the parking spaces. To ensure that this area is indeed acceptable, it is considered reasonable to impose a condition requesting details of a waiting/parking area for at least two busses.
- 4.11 Taking all of the above into account, as Highways Officers have no objection to this development, it is considered that, subject to the imposition of relevant conditions, the development would be acceptable in this regard.

5. Other material considerations

(i) Sustainability

- 5.1 The Framework adopts a broad definition of sustainable development in that it states that the policies in paragraphs 18 – 219, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice. The Framework also establishes that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which includes economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Economic

- 5.2 Sustainable economic growth is one of the key aspects of the current planning system. Paragraph 19 of the Framework states:

'The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.'

- 5.3 Paragraph 20 of the Framework then goes on to state:

'To help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.'

- 5.4 As identified, this proposal would increase the teaching staff at the school by 8.5 full time employees. These identified economic benefits weigh heavily in favour of the grant of permission.

Social

- 5.5 Clearly the upgrading of the school facilities to provide modern facilities to deliver education brings considerable social benefits. Furthermore, the school has agreed to an element of community use of the proposed sports hall. To ensure that this community use is appropriate, it is recommended a condition is imposed requiring a Community Use Agreement. The social benefits of this proposal weigh heavily in favour of this scheme.
- 5.6 Further, the economic benefits outlined above would in turn provide social benefits. Job creation often promotes healthy local government budgets, improves income distribution, reduces inequality and results in decreased crime rates.

Environmental

- 5.7 The school site is located in a sustainable location and, as discussed above, would not result in harm to the character of the area. As such, the development is considered sustainable in this regard.

(ii) Ecology

- 5.8 The presence of protected species is a material consideration, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 118-119), Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (section 40), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 as well as Circular 06/05. Furthermore, Policy CS18 seeks to support the maintenance and enhancement of habitats and states that development that would fragment or prejudice the biodiversity network will not be supported.
- 5.9 On discussion with Ecology Officers, it is considered that the site itself is of very limited ecological value. As such, subject to the imposition of a condition ensuring that the applicant provides details of ecological enhancements at the site, the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard.

(iii) Flooding and Drainage

- 5.10 Policy CS13 seeks to ensure that proposals incorporate suitable drainage infrastructure.
- 5.11 The site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1 – indicating a low probability of flooding. Further, on discussion with internal Drainage Engineers and Anglian Water, it is considered that, subject conditions requesting the submission of a detailed Surface Water Drainage Plan and a Foul Water Strategy (and associated maintenance plans) the proposal would not increase the risk of flooding to the surrounding area and proposed units would not be susceptible to such risks. Subject to the imposition of these requested conditions, the proposal would be acceptable in this regard.

(iv) Rights of Way

5.10 On discussion with Public Rights of Way Officers, it is not considered that the development would impact upon the surrounding footpath network. As such the proposal is acceptable in this regard.

(v) Archaeology

5.11 On discussion with Archaeology Officers, the proposed development site has the potential to contain archaeological remains relating to Iron Age and Roman activity as well as to origins of the medieval settlement of Cranfield. However, the proposed locations of the new class rooms and sports hall are likely to have been compromised by the construction of the existing buildings and tennis court. Taking this into account, there is unlikely to be a major impact upon any surviving archaeological remains. Consequently, the development is considered acceptable in this regard.

6. Overall Planning Balance

6.1 The development would upgrade the existing teaching environment and would offer significant benefits to the development of sport at the school. The development complies with Policies CS3 and DM4 in this regard and, in accordance with the Framework, great weight in favour is afforded to the expansion of Holywell Middle School

6.2 Further, the loss of pitches as a result of the proposal would be replaced by better, indoor, provision (in terms of quantity and quality) in a suitable location. As such, the relevant criteria of Policy DM5 and paragraph 74 of the Framework would be met and the development is considered acceptable in this regard.

6.3 The proposal has also been assessed in terms of its impact upon; the character of the area, the living conditions of surrounding properties, highway safety, flooding and drainage and other relevant material considerations. The development is considered acceptable in this regard.

6.4 Overall, the proposal would provide considerable social benefits, including the community use of the sports hall, and is considered to represent sustainable development. Accordingly, the development complies with the Development Plan and the Framework when assessed as a whole.

Recommendation:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans; AE(0-01 & AE(0)20 & AE(01)01 & AG(0-)05 & AG(0-)10 & AG(04)01 & AG(04)02 & AG(04)03 & AG(04)04 & AG(04)05 & AG(05)01 & AG(05)02 & AG(05)03 & AG(06)01 & AG(07)01 & AG(9-)01.

Reason: To identify the approved plans and to avoid doubt.

- 3 The development of the sports hall shall not commence until details of the layout of the building and the technical specifications of the sports hall including flooring, lighting and court markings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority [after consultation with Sport England]. The sports hall 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 Policies DM3, DM4 and CS14 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 4 Prior to first occupation of the buildings hereby approved full details on a suitably scaled plan of both hard and soft landscape works must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Subsequently, these works shall be in addition to those shown on the approved plans and shall be carried out and retained as approved. The landscaping details to be submitted shall include:-

- a) means of enclosure;
- b) existing and proposed finished levels and finished floor levels.
- c) planting plans, including specifications of species, sizes, planting centres, planting method and number and percentage mix;
- d) details for all external hard surface within the site, including roads, drainage detail and car parking areas.

Reason: The landscaping of this site is required in order to protect and enhance the existing visual character of the area and to reduce the visual and environmental impacts of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policy DM14 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 5 All planting, seeding or turfing and soil preparation comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following first occupation of the building; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species. All landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the guidance contained in British Standards.

Reason: The landscaping of this site is required in order to protect and enhance the existing visual character of the area and to reduce the visual

and environmental impacts of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policy DM14 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 6 Prior to the construction of the buildings hereby permitted full specifications of the materials to be used for their external surfaces must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Subsequently, the development shall be carried out and retained in accordance with approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with Policies CS14, DM3 and DM14 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 7 No occupation shall commence of the sports hall hereby permitted 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, playing fields and games courts 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 the provisions of the Framework.

- 8 Prior to the first operation of the development hereby approved details for ecological enhancements at the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Subsequently, the development shall be carried out and retained in accordance with these details.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity, in accordance with Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 9 No development shall commence until a detailed surface water drainage scheme and a foul water strategy for the site, and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The schemes shall also include details of how the systems will be constructed, including any phasing, and they will be managed and maintained after completion. The schemes shall be implemented in accordance with the approved final details before the development is completed, and shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed management and maintenance plan.

Reason: To ensure the approved system will function to a satisfactory minimum standard of operation and maintenance and prevent the increased risk of flooding both on and off site, in accordance with para 103 NPPF.

- 10 No building shall be occupied until the developer has formally submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority a finalised 'Maintenance and Management Plan' for the entire surface water drainage system, inclusive of any adoption arrangements and/or private ownership or responsibilities, and that the approved surface water drainage scheme has been correctly and fully installed as per the final approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the implementation and long term operation of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) is in line with what has been approved, in accordance with Written Statement HCWS161.

- 11 Prior to the first occupation of the buildings hereby permitted the additional on site car parking and access thereto, shall be constructed in accordance with the approved drawing no. AG(9-)01A.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to provide adequate on site vehicle and cycle parking provision.

- 12 Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, details of a waiting/parking area for at least 2 buses shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the development shall not be brought into use until the buses waiting/parking area has been constructed in accordance with the approved details

Reason: To provide bus parking/waiting area clear of parked and manoeuvring vehicles within the site and to avoid vehicle/pedestrian conflict.

- 13 Before the development is brought into use all on site vehicular areas shall be surfaced in a stable and durable materials in accordance with details to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Arrangements shall be made for surface water drainage from the site to soak away within the site so that it does not discharge into the highway or into the main drainage system.

Reason: To avoid the carriage of mud or other extraneous material or surface water from the site so as to safeguard the interest of highway safety and reduce the risk of flooding and to minimise inconvenience to users of the premises and ensure satisfactory parking of vehicles outside highway limits

- 14 Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved details of the additional secure and covered parking of cycles on the site (including the internal dimensions of the cycle parking area, stands/brackets to be used), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be fully implemented before the development is first occupied or brought into use and thereafter retained for this purpose.

Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking to meet the needs of occupiers of the proposed development in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.

- 15 No development shall commence until details of measures to improve safety in the vicinity of the school and a schedule for their implementation have

been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details and schedule of implementation.

Reason: To avoid obstruction to traffic using the public highway, the site and residential properties

16 No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Management Plan, associated with the development of the site, has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which will include information on:

- (A) The parking of vehicles.
- (B) Loading and unloading of plant and materials used in the development.
- (C) Storage of plant and materials used in the development.
- (D) The erection and maintenance of security hoarding / scaffolding affecting the highway if required.
- (E) Footpath/footway/cycleway or road closures needed during the development period.
- (F) Traffic management needed during the development period.
- (G) Times and means of access and egress for construction traffic and delivery vehicles (including the import of materials and the removal of waste from the site) during the development of the site.

The approved Construction Management Plan associated with the development of the site shall be adhered to throughout the development process.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Part 6, Article 35

Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively to secure a sustainable form of development in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

DECISION

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