

2018/0632

Reg Date 12/07/2018

West End

LOCATION: GORDONS SCHOOL, BAGSHOT ROAD, WEST END,
WOKING, GU24 9PT

PROPOSAL: Erection of a new sports hall including changing facilities, cafe, first aid room and storage and an outdoor all weather sports pitch with associated fencing, floodlighting, landscaping and revised access routes utilising existing vehicular access from Bagshot Road (A319). (Additional information rec'd 13/7/18).

TYPE: Full Planning Application

APPLICANT: Mrs Meikle

OFFICER: The Gordon Foundation (Gordon's School)

OFFICER: Ross Cahalane

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT subject to conditions and referral to the Secretary of State as a Departure from the Development Plan.

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a new sports hall including changing facilities, cafe, first aid room and storage and an outdoor all weather sports pitch with associated fencing, floodlighting, landscaping and revised access routes utilising existing vehicular access from Bagshot Road (A319).
- 1.2 The proposal has the support of Sport England, subject to a community use agreement to be submitted under a planning condition, along with the County Highway Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority, Surrey Wildlife Trust and the Council's Environmental Health Officer.
- 1.3 Although the proposed all-weather sports pitch (AWP) and proposed sports hall building would all be appropriate facilities to support a curricular need for the school, the building would be harmful to Green Belt openness and conflict with the purposes of including land within it. As such, the proposal would be an inappropriate and harmful development in the Green Belt. However, it is considered that very special circumstances exist to outweigh the identified harm. The application is therefore recommended for approval.
- 1.4 Under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 this proposal represents a departure from the Development Plan, because it is major development (greater than 1000 sq m) within the Green Belt. Under this Direction and if Members agree with the recommendation to grant, the application must therefore be referred to the Secretary of State. This gives the SoS the opportunity to either make no comments or use call-in power and make the decision on the application. The Planning Authority cannot grant permission until the expiry of 21 days from the date the SoS confirms receipt of the consultation.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The 1.24ha application site forms part of the grounds of Gordon's School, which was originally established in 1885. The site is located within the Green Belt and is split by Bagshot Road, with a footbridge link over the road. The main school buildings are located on the south side of Bagshot Road.

- 2.2 Playing fields, car parking and ancillary buildings on the north side of the road. The playing fields are used for rugby, football and cricket, with the addition of all-weather sports pitches to the east near the boundary with Windlesham Road. The site is well screened from the surrounding roads by boundary hedging and mature trees. A public footpath (FP 130) runs across the site of the proposed AWP from the A319/A322 roundabout junction to the west to Windlesham Road to the east.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 There are a number of planning applications relating to this long established school, those most relevant to the proposal site are listed below:
- 3.2 92/0007 Erection of new teaching accommodation and ancillary facilities, extensions to existing boarding houses, school sports pavilion and changing facilities, alteration to access, car parking arrangements and landscaping strategy.

Decision: Granted (sports pavilion not implemented)

- 3.3 01/0433 Outline application for the erection of new teaching accommodation and ancillary facilities to include the erection of a three storey girls house, a detached sports pavilion, a single storey science building, three replacement combined cadet force huts, detached accommodation for chaplain and head teacher, single storey extensions to classrooms, administration building, boarding accommodation and 6th form building and creation of an all weather pitch.

Decision: Granted (sports pavilion not implemented)

- 3.4 05/0153 Variation to condition 2(a) attached to Outline planning permission 2001/0433 dated 7/03/02 to extend the period in which an application for approval of the reserved matters could be made from 3 years to 6 years.

Decision: Granted

- 3.5 08/0389 Reserved matters application pursuant to Outline Application SU/01/0433 and application SU/05/0153 for the erection of a sports pavilion. (Design, external appearance and landscaping to be considered).

Decision: Granted (not implemented)

- 3.6 10/0494 Construction of an all-weather sports pitch and associated fencing 3 metres to 5 metres high.

Decision: Granted (implemented – to east of application site)

- 3.7 10/0754 Erection of no.6 floodlight columns of 13 metre height to illuminate all weather pitch and no.3 further floodlight columns of 10 metre height to illuminate adjacent tennis courts.

Decision: Refused – appeal allowed (implemented)

- 3.8 18/0753 Removal of condition 2 of 10/0494 (all weather sports pitch) that limits its use to Gordons School and not the general public.

Decision: Pending

- 3.9 The school has been recently advised that any further applications for extensions or redevelopment of parts of Gordon's School should be submitted as part of a comprehensive master plan to enable a holistic assessment of the impact of development on the Green Belt and the heritage asset. This issue is discussed further in below.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a new sports hall including changing facilities, cafe, first aid room and storage and an outdoor all weather sports pitch with associated fencing, floodlighting, landscaping and revised access routes utilising existing vehicular access from Bagshot Road (A319).
- 4.2 The proposed sports hall would have a total floorspace of 1,187sq m, consisting of two main curved roof forms with front and rear gable ends, and would have and would have a maximum depth of approx. 42m, maximum width of approx. 35m, eaves heights ranging from approx. 3m – 11m and maximum height of approx. 11.5m. The proposed building is a “4 badminton court size” sports hall as set out by Sport England Guidance, with associated changing facilities, cafe, first aid room and storage. Landscaping is proposed to integrate the building within its surroundings.
- 4.3 The proposed all weather sports pitch (AWP) would be “3G” standard and 106m x 70m in size replacing an existing rugby pitch, to increase the amount of play the pitch can sustain. This AWP could also facilitate football games. The submitted cross-sections show the proposed floodlights serving the AWP to have a maximum height of approx. 15m, with the proposed perimeter fencing being 6m in height.
- 4.4 The existing vehicular access to the site off Bagshot Road (A319) would be utilised and remodelled on the approach to the proposed facilities to provide two marked disabled parking bays adjacent the AWP, a loading bay/drop off area between the AWP and the sports hall and dedicated pedestrian paths to facilitate level access points and connectivity across the wider school grounds.
- 4.5 In support of the application, the applicant has provided the following information, and relevant extracts from these documents will be relied upon in Section 7 of this report:
- Planning Statement
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Sports Facility Report
 - Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and Proposed Strategy
 - Arboricultural Survey and Report
 - Transport Statement
 - Ecology surveys/reports
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Plan
 - External Lighting Plans
 - Energy Demand Statement and BREEAM Assessment

- 4.6 Section 3.12 of the Planning Statement outlines the specific benefits for both the school and the local community that would arise from the proposed sports facilities. The key points are summarised in Section 7.12 (Very Special Circumstances) of this report below.
- 4.7 A concurrent Section 73 application (18/0753) seeking removal of condition 2 of 10/0494 (existing all weather sports pitch) that limits its use to Gordons School and not the general public has also been submitted. This has not been determined yet, as the Council's Environmental Health Officer has requested a noise impact assessment that demonstrates compliance with the noise limits as set out under the Sport England Design Guidance Note for Artificial Grass Pitch Acoustics – planning implications 2015.

5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

5.1	Sport England	No objection raised, subject to condition <i>[See Section 7.3]</i>
5.2	Council Arboricultural Officer:	No objection raised, subject to conditions <i>[See Section 7.5]</i>
5.3	Council Environmental Health Officer:	No objection raised <i>[See Section 7.6]</i>
5.4	Surrey County Council Highway Authority:	No objection raised, subject to conditions <i>[See Section 7.7]</i>
5.5	Surrey Wildlife Trust:	No objection raised, subject to condition <i>[See Section 7.8]</i>
5.6	Surrey County Council Lead Local Flood Authority:	No objection raised, subject to conditions <i>[See Section 7.9]</i>
5.7	Surrey County Council Countryside Access Officer:	No objection <i>[See Section 7.11]</i>
5.8	West End Parish Council:	No objection

6.0 REPRESENTATION

- 6.1 At the time of preparation of this report, no representations have been received.

7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATION

- 7.1 The application site is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt, to the north of and detached from the settlement area of West End as outlined in the Surrey Heath Core Strategy & Development Management Policies 2012 (CSDMP). The proposal is considered against the principles of Policies CP1, CP2, CP12, CP14, DM9, DM10, DM11, DM14 and DM16 of the CSDMP, and the revised National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF).

7.2 The main issues to be considered are:

- Whether the development is appropriate in the Green Belt;
- Impact on playing pitch provision and need;
- Impact on local character and trees;
- Impact on amenities of neighbouring properties;
- Impact on access, parking and highway safety;
- Other matters; and,
- Very Special Circumstances.

7.3 **Whether the development is appropriate in the Green Belt**

- 7.3.1 The revised NPPF 2018 attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The purposes of the Green Belt include checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (Paragraphs 133-134 of the NPPF).
- 7.3.2 Paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF indicate that development involving the construction of buildings in the Green Belt would be inappropriate except in a number of cases including the replacement of a building, providing the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces; and the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, including the safeguarding of the countryside.
- 7.3.3 Paragraph 146 also indicates that other forms of development, such as engineering operations, are also not inappropriate provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. In this case, the provision of 3G artificial surface would not be inappropriate development, having no greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.3.4 The ancillary facilities within the proposed sports hall building would comprise two changing rooms for the sports hall and the AWP, two locker rooms, small entrance reception/office room, internal circulation/viewing areas, shower and toilet facilities, first aid room and plant and storage rooms. The proposal would also provide supporting café and kitchen facilities. It is considered that the proposed development as a whole would form the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation as outlined in the NPPF.
- 7.3.5 Turning to the impact on the openness of the Green Belt and its purposes, the Design and Access Statement advises that the proposed building would provide an internal floorspace of 1187 square metres (comprising a 690m² sports hall and ancillary facilities on the ground floor, with no mezzanine accommodation proposed), and would have a correspondingly significant width, depth and mass of built form up to a maximum sloping roof height of approx. 11.5m. The proposed building would constitute a new building in the Green Belt, which, by definition, is harmful. In addition, this quantum of built form would be harmful to openness.
- 7.3.6 The proposal would also result in a significant change in the rural character and appearance of the site from one which is predominantly open, natural and undeveloped to a site with a

semi-urban appearance. The fencing would have an enclosing effect and the floodlighting, whilst individually slim in profile, would cumulatively add to the sense of enclosure and harm provided by the fencing. The site is largely screened from the surrounding highways and tree cover, and a site plan has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposed floodlighting illumination would be contained significantly within the wider application site.

- 7.3.7 However, it remains that the proposed sports hall building does not meet any of the exceptions under Paragraph 145 of the NPPF and is therefore considered to represent inappropriate and harmful development in the Green Belt. The following paragraphs consider whether any other harm exists before considering whether there are "very special circumstances" which outweigh the identified harm.

7.4 Impact on playing pitch provision and need

- 7.4.1 Policy DM15 of the CSDMP indicates that existing formal recreation facilities (including sports facilities) will be protected unless it can be demonstrated that appropriate replacement facilities are to be provided. In this case, an existing grass pitch used for rugby and cricket is to be replaced with a synthetic all-weather pitch to be used for rugby and football. The proposed new building would provide a "4 badminton court size" sports hall as set out by Sport England Guidance, with associated changing facilities, cafe, first aid room and storage.

- 7.4.2 The Planning Statement advises that the needs of the school have changed over time, due to a number of factors including changes in curriculum and the Government Strategy for Education in respect of "extended school day" provision. It is also stated that both the proposed sports hall and all-weather pitch would also be made available for community use outside of school operation times, anticipated to be during holiday periods, evenings and weekends. The Sports Facility Report, covering the whole of the Gordons School site, refers to the Sport England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance, and also outlines that the sports hall would have sufficient space for the following sports:

- one club-level basketball court;
- four indoor/practice cricket wickets;
- gymnastic training space suitable for community use;
- one five-a-side/futsal pitch for club/community use;
- one pitch korfball/handball community use pitch;
- one club-level netball pitch;
- athletics practice space suitable for premier, club and community levels; and
- one volleyball pitch to premier, club or community standard.

- 7.4.3 Sport England has commented that the proposed replacement of the existing grass field for a 3G pitch would result in the loss of a cricket pitch. However, there is an alternative playing field capable of cricket use at the southern end of the school site, and Sport England has commented that if a planning condition is imposed requiring a community use agreement to ensure that the community benefits arising from the mixed-use sports facilities are secured, these benefits would outweigh the reduction of the cricket capacity to comply with Sport England policy.

- 7.4.4 Furthermore, the Surrey Heath Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report May 2016 also indicates that there is an oversupply of grass pitches but an undersupply of synthetic (3G)

pitches in the Borough, with a priority being the creation of further 3G pitch provision. It is considered that there remains a deficit of such provision in the Borough, and the current proposal would assist in addressing this deficit.

- 7.4.5 In light of all the above and subject to a planning condition requiring a community use agreement, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy DM15 of the CSDMP.

7.5 Impact on local character and trees

- 7.5.1 Policy DM9 (Design Principles) promotes high quality design that respects and enhances the local environment, paying particular regard to scale, materials, massing, bulk and density. Policy CP2 of the CSDMP indicates that development should respect and enhance the quality of the natural and rural environment. The National Planning Policy Framework also seeks to secure high quality design, that also takes account of the character of different areas. Development which fails to integrate into its context, promote or reinforce local distinctiveness and fails to take the opportunity to improve the character and quality of the area and the way it functions should be refused (paragraphs 59, 61 and 64 of the NPPF). Policies CP2 (iv) and DM9 (ii) of the CSDMP reiterate this requirement.
- 7.5.2 The proposed external materials would consist of vertical timber cladding, aluminium curtain glazing, standing seam metal roof and red bricks. The proposal would provide a large building on this site and although it would be sited at a lower ground level than surrounding buildings, its maximum height of 11.5m would still be noticeably higher than these buildings and would undoubtedly have a more urbanising effect. However, in this location and setback not in view from the public domain, no harm to the wider streetscene is envisaged. A planning condition can be imposed to ensure that the precise external material specifications are appropriate for the character of the surrounding area.
- 7.5.3 The provision of 15m high floodlighting and 6m high fencing around the AWP would also have an urbanising effect, but any resulting harm to the wider rural character of the area would also be limited as it would not be widely visible from outside the site. The proposed building and floodlighting and perimeter fencing around the AWP would be visible from Public Footpath No. 130, which runs across the site of the proposed AWP from the A319/A322 roundabout junction to the west to Windlesham Road to the east. However, Surrey County Council's Countryside Access Group has raised no objection to the proposal. The applicant has provided a Visual Impact Assessment which concludes that although the proposed development would have a moderate impact upon Public Footpath No. 130, this impact would be mitigated by the proposed replacement planting and the impact would be downgraded to negligible as the walker exits the school grounds. In light of the above, it is not considered that the proposed development would have an adverse impact upon the rural character and setting of the public footpath and surrounding area.
- 7.5.4 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan have been provided. 12 individual trees (including one grade A oak tree and a number of B grade trees), six groups and part of one group will need to be removed in order to construct the proposed development. The Council's Arboricultural Officer has commented that whilst their loss to the canopy cover of the area and impact on the wider landscape would be regrettable, the proposed development could be an opportunity to not only mitigate the loss of these trees but to also enhance the landscape profile of the area for the long term. The report advises 54 new trees to be planted as part of a broader landscaping scheme. The

Arboricultural Officer has commented that the loss of the 12 significant trees must be replaced with far larger stock than that proposed. Locations can be agreed prior to planting

and may be remote from the proposed development if it would enhance landscaping elsewhere. This could be secured by an additional landscaping condition. On this basis, Arboricultural Officer has raised no objection to the proposed development.

7.6 Impact on amenities of neighbouring properties

- 7.6.1 Policy DM9 (Design Principles) states that the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties should be respected by proposed development. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing both new and existing development from being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of noise pollution.
- 7.6.2 No specific hours of operation have been proposed, although the supporting documents advise that the proposed sports hall and all-weather pitch would be made available for community use outside of school operation times, anticipated to be during holiday periods, evenings and weekends. The Planning Statement advises that the school receives regular enquiries from netball, cricket and football clubs seeking training space and facilities, along with a local football club who currently have no home. The proposed building may therefore lead to increased noise and disturbance from the use of the new sports hall building, along with the increased use arising from the provision of the proposed AWP.
- 7.6.3 The Council's Environmental Health Officer (EHO) has commented that the noise from the proposed AWP will not lead to an excess of 50 decibels from the nearest residential gardens during daytime hours. This noise limit is set out under the Sport England Design Guidance Note for Artificial Grass Pitch Acoustics – planning implications 2015. The EHO has also commented that the proposed lighting scheme is compliant with the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance on intrusion, glare and sky glow. The EHO has therefore raised no objection. The use of the existing AWP and floodlighting to the east is limited by planning condition to 08:00 – 21:00 Mondays to Saturdays and 10:00 to 20:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays. This condition was imposed by the Inspector in allowing the appeal against refusal of the 10/0754 floodlighting scheme now implemented. For consistency, it would be considered necessary and reasonable to impose this time restriction as a condition for the current proposed facilities.
- 7.6.4 The proposed sports hall building would be sited approx. 17m from the nearest residential dwelling elevation to the east on the far side of Windlesham Road, with considerable tree cover in between. This is considered sufficient to avoid adverse harm in terms of loss of light, privacy or overbearing impact.
- 7.6.5 It is considered that the proposed development as a whole would be sited at sufficient distance from other neighbouring boundaries and habitable windows to avoid adverse harm to residential amenity.
- 7.6.6 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the amenity considerations of Policy DM9 of the CSDMP, as it sufficiently respects the amenities of occupants of neighbouring properties.

7.7 Impact on access, parking and highway safety

- 7.7.1 Policy DM11 (Traffic Management and Highway Safety) states that development which

would adversely impact the safe and efficient flow of traffic movement on the highway network will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that measures to reduce and mitigate such impacts to acceptable levels can be implemented.

- 7.7.2 The existing vehicular access to the site off Bagshot Road (A319) would be utilised and remodelled on the approach to the proposed facilities, including an increased road width to 4m. Two marked disabled parking bays adjacent the AWP, a loading bay/drop off area between the AWP and the sports hall, and dedicated pedestrian paths to facilitate connectivity across the wider school grounds are also proposed. The transport statement includes track paths for emergency and refuse vehicles to demonstrate that there would be sufficient access and turning space at the loading bay/drop off area. It is also stated that the proposed facilities will primarily be used by the existing school population, although the new all-weather sports pitch will also be booked out to local sports teams for practice in managed timeslots during evenings and weekends. An existing 27 space car park is located within the school grounds to the north of Bagshot Road. A larger car park is located to the west and although it is unmarked, it is understood that this has capacity for an additional 139 vehicles.
- 7.7.3 The County Highway Authority (CHA) has been consulted and has raised no objections on safety, capacity or policy grounds, subject to conditions.

7.8 Other matters

- 7.8.1 The development site falls within Flood Zone 1, the lowest probability category for flooding from rivers, and part of the site is located within an area of low risk from surface water flooding. A flood risk assessment and drainage strategy has been provided. Surrey County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority has raised no objection, subject to planning conditions requiring detailed designs of the surface water drainage scheme and a verification report undertaken by a qualified drainage engineer.
- 7.8.2 The application site itself is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation. However, the proposed development is within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) 400m buffer zone. An ecology statement has been provided, summarising the various ecological surveys that have been undertaken since 2016. Surrey Wildlife Trust was consulted and raised no objection, subject to compliance with the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, and a planning condition requiring the submission of a Sensitive Lighting Management Plan. On this basis, it is not envisaged that the proposed development would lead to harm or loss of protected species or other features of interest for biodiversity, in compliance with Policy CP14 of the CSDMP.
- 7.8.3 Surrey Heath's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was adopted by Full Council on 16 July 2014. As the CIL Charging Schedule came into effect on 01 December 2014, an assessment of CIL liability has been undertaken. However, as the proposal does not relate to development in Use Class C3, or A1 - A5, the development is not CIL liable.
- 7.8.4 A public footpath (FP 130) runs across the site of the proposed AWP from the A319/A322 roundabout junction to the west to Windlesham Road to the east. Surrey County Council's Countryside Access Group has raised no objection to the proposal, but has commented that works should not begin until the formal process for a public footpath diversion has been applied for. An advisory informative will be added.

7.9 Very special circumstances

7.9.1 Paragraphs 143 and 144 of the NPPF indicate that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. "Very special circumstances" will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In Section 7.3 above, it was concluded that the proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

7.9.2 The Planning Statement outlines a case for very special circumstances, as follows:

- a) The need for the facility and the associated facilities to the School and wider community;
- b) The extant planning permission for a new sports hall; and,
- c) The lack of suitable sites for the size and layout of the building required within the school grounds.

a) Need and associated community benefits

7.9.3 Section 3.12 of the Planning Statement specifically outlines all the school's current indoor sports provision as follows:

- i) 18m x 9m 3 lane swimming pool with changing accommodation.
- ii) A gym hall with floorspace of two badminton courts, but with height restrictions. First call on using this space is the PE department but the gym also has to be used for examinations, talks, exhibitions and school plays.
- iii) The recreation hall, which again is a multi-use space within the administration building and next to a sixth form classroom.
- iv) The small sports pavilion adjoining the pitches on the northern side of Bagshot Road, that provides a social area and changing facilities for two teams.

7.9.4 The need for the proposed sports facilities has already been outlined in Section 7.4 above. Sport England has commented that if a planning condition is imposed requiring a community use agreement to ensure that the community benefits arising from the mixed-use sports facilities are secured, these benefits would outweigh the reduction of the cricket capacity to comply with Sport England policy. Furthermore, the Surrey Heath Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report May 2016 also indicates that there is an oversupply of grass pitches but an undersupply of synthetic (3G) pitches in the Borough, with a priority being the creation of further 3G pitch provision. It is considered that there remains a deficit of such provision in the Borough, and the current proposal would assist in addressing this deficit.

7.9.5 The supporting statements to the application advise that in order for the building to be BREEAM rated, a roof height of 11.5m is required to allow a depth to meet the required acoustic and thermal levels. The Sport England guidance also requires a clear height of 7.5m for club-level badminton. The supporting facilities are set in a smaller single storey volume ancillary to the main sports hall. It is also stated that the existing gymnasium in which the school has to rely on for internal sports hall space is currently not fit for purpose. Its provision of two badminton court spaces is at odds with the Government's current physical education guidelines for mainstream schools, which for schools with more than 600 spaces such as Gordons, require a sports hall capable of three-four badminton courts. Although the school also contains a recreation hall, it is within the administration building and next to a classroom and therefore, can only be used for basic fitness lessons or activities with mat work such as Pilates. Although a small sports pavilion also faces the

existing main grass pitches, it can only accommodate two changing rooms.

7.9.6 Section 3.12 also outlines the specific improvements and benefits for both the school and the local community that would arise from the proposed sports facilities. These can be summarised as:

- i) The existing gym has to be also used for exams, talks, exhibitions, school plays and more. The Recreation Hall is also multi-purpose and near to a sixth form classroom;
- ii) The school cannot offer popular activities such as badminton, basketball, gymnastics or dance, all of which provide an alternative to more boy-focused football and rugby;
- iii) Having a large indoor space would gather the school in one place;
- iv) If the school were to have the sports hall, the current gym would be improved to provide a multi-use space with retractable raked seating and lighting for use for lectures and drama productions;
- v) The sports hall would be designed to allow use by local sports groups (see Section 7.4 above);
- vi) The school receives regular enquiries regarding possible hire of sports facilities;
- vii) The school would also like to provide its alumni football teams with a permanent home for its home matches, not currently possible with the overplay of the grass pitches;
- viii) The addition of a sports hall and second all-weather pitch would transform the school's ability to accommodate more sport-specific holiday camps.

7.9.7 The support for this proposal from Sports England, subject to a community use agreement as outlined in Section 7.4 above, is noted. Furthermore, Paragraph 94 of the NPPF encourages a proactive and positive approach to development that will widen choice in education and therefore seeks "to give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools". The above forms a clear social benefit in favour of the proposal and when this is added to the Government's current policy requirements for school sports facilities as already outlined above, the case officer considers that significant weight can be afforded to these benefits. The applicant has made reference to interest received from Bagshot Cricket Club (indoor practice nets), adult netball clubs (indoor and outdoor), local football clubs (training pitches), along with preliminary discussions with a local football club which has no permanent home. Any further information received regarding local interest in the hire of the school sports facilities will be provided in an update.

b) Extant planning permission

7.9.8 The applicant refers to the planning history of the site, specifically the outline planning permissions that include provision of a sports hall in a similar location to that currently proposed. All reserved matters were agreed in May 2008 (08/0389) and although this permission has now expired, the applicant contends that this remains a legitimate fallback position as there has since been no material change in planning circumstances. However, since 2008 all relevant planning policies have been changed with the introduction of the CSDMP and the NPPF. Furthermore, although this approved sports hall would have had a

similar floor to that currently proposed, its maximum height would have been 2.6m lower and its use would have been restricted by a planning condition imposed to be ancillary to

Gordons School only. The case officer therefore considers that only very limited weight can be attached to this argument.

c) Lack of suitable alternative sites

- 7.9.9 Although a formal masterplan for future school development has not been provided, as outlined in the Planning Statement an assessment of suitable sites within the school grounds for the proposed sports hall has been undertaken. The grounds to the south of Bagshot Road have been discounted, due to its remoteness from the existing playing fields to the north of Bagshot Road; the lack of available space at this location, and; the impact of any further development of the required size upon the setting of the Listed Buildings at this location. A further assessment was then undertaken to focus on the northern section of the grounds and the current site was chosen to minimise the impact upon the existing trees, sports facilities and associated parking, whilst minimising views from public vantage points and allowing for sufficient proximity to the existing pitches. These existing site constraints and the Government's current policy requirements for school sports facilities (outlined in paragraphs 7.9.4-7.9.5 above) are accepted.
- 7.9.9 Whilst the entire school site is located within the Green Belt, the case officer considers that the applicant has demonstrated that there is a lack of suitable alternative sites, and that the best site has been chosen for the sports hall in terms of limiting the impact on the Green Belt, the existing sports pitches and Listed Buildings, along with the rural and verdant character of the area. Moderate weight can therefore be afforded to this argument.

Conclusion of consideration of (a) – (c)

- 7.9.10 The support for this proposal from Sports England, subject to a community use agreement, forms a clear social benefit in favour of the proposal and when this is added to the Government's current policy requirements for school sports facilities, it is considered that this existing curricular need and the resultant social benefits arising from the provision of the proposed sports facilities for the school and the local community amount to Very Special Circumstances, that clearly outweigh the inappropriateness of the development in the Green Belt. Given the maximum height of the proposed sports hall building, it is however considered necessary and reasonable to impose a planning condition requiring additional planning permission for any future provision of mezzanine accommodation within the building, to ensure that its function remains related to the sports facilities within and adjacent to it.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed sports hall building and floodlighting and perimeter fencing around the proposed all-weather sports pitch, by reason of its footprint, bulk, height and the additional presence of development across the site, would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and cause significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt and conflict with its purposes. However, it is considered that the curricular need and the resultant social benefits arising from the provision of the proposed sports facilities, subject to a community use agreement under a planning condition, would significantly outweigh the harm to amount to very special circumstances to justify this development in the Green Belt. The proposal is therefore recommended for approval.

9.0 WORKING IN A POSITIVE/PROACTIVE MANNER

- 9.1 In assessing this application, officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner consistent with the requirements of paragraphs 38-41 of the NPPF. This

included:

- a) Provided or made available pre application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development;
- b) Provided feedback through the validation process including information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to the following conditions:-

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

Reason: To prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The proposed development shall be built in accordance with the following approved plans:

Proposed site plans: Drawing Nos. 1763 2701 D; 1763 2702 F; 1763 2703 D; 1763

2704 E;

Proposed floor plan and roof plan: Drawing Nos. 1763 2100 C; 1763 2101 B;

Proposed elevations: Drawing Nos. 1763 2300 C; 1763 2301 C;

Proposed cross sections: Drawing Nos. 1763 2730 D; 1763 2731 D;

Proposed external lighting plans: Drawing Nos. 1116EGS-MET-ZZ-00-DR-E-70_80-0001 Rev S2-P02; 1116EGS-MET-ZZ-00-DR-E-70_80-0002 Rev S2-P02; UKS16526-3

Proposed drainage layout: Drawing No. L01195-SWH-GS-XX-DR-D-0200 Rev P05 - all received on 12 July 2018, unless the prior written approval has been obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning and as advised in ID.17a of the Planning Practice Guidance.

3. The building works, hereby approved, shall be constructed in external fascia materials as stated in Section 7 of the application form received on 12 July 2018.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to accord with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

4. Use of the sports hall building and 3G rubber crumb pitch hereby approved shall not 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.

The agreement shall apply to the 3G pitch facility and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. The development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement.

Reason: To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facilities, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord with Policy DM15 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

5. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Report prepared by Bosky Trees [Ben Rose] and dated 22 June 2018. No development shall commence until digital photographs have been provided by the retained Consultant and forwarded to and approved by the Council's Arboricultural Officer. This should record all aspects of any facilitation tree works and the physical tree and ground protection measures having been implemented and maintained in accordance with the Arboricultural Report. The tree protection measures shall be retained until completion of all works hereby permitted.

Reason: To preserve and enhance the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

6.
 1. No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscaping works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and these works shall be carried out as approved, and implemented prior to first occupation. The submitted details should include provision of semi mature tree stock with a minimum 25-30cm girth [nominal 8.8cm diameter]. Locations can be agreed prior to planting and may be remote from the proposed development if it would enhance landscaping elsewhere. The submitted details should also include an indication of all level alterations, hard surfaces, walls, fences, access features, the existing trees and hedges to be retained, together with the new planting to be carried out and shall build upon the aims and objectives of the supplied **BS5837:2012 – Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction** Arboricultural Method Statement [AMS].
 2. All hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. All plant material shall conform to **BS3936:1992 Parts 1 – 5: Specification for Nursery Stock**. Handling, planting and establishment of trees shall be in accordance with **BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape**

Reason: To preserve and enhance the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

7. All hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Arboricultural work to existing trees shall be carried out prior to the commencement of any other development; otherwise all remaining landscaping work and new planting shall be carried out prior to the occupation of the development or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants, which within a period of five years of

commencement of any works in pursuance of the development die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced as soon as practicable with others of similar size and species, following consultation with the Local Planning Authority, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To preserve and enhance the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

8. The development hereby approved, including the operation of the floodlighting, shall not be used by school pupils or the public except between the hours of 08:00 - 21:00 Mondays to Saturdays and 10:00 to 20:00 on Sundays and Public Holidays, without the prior agreement in writing of the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt 'Public Holidays' include New Years Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, May Day, all Bank Holidays, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of adjoining residential occupants and to accord with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. No development shall commence until details of the materials and finish of the all-weather sports pitch perimeter fencing, and the finish to be applied to the floodlighting columns and lamps, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, the development shall be carried out using only the agreed materials.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenities of the area and to accord with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

10. No development shall commence until a Construction Transport Management Plan, to include details of:
 - (a) parking for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors
 - (b) loading and unloading of plant and materials
 - (c) storage of plant and materials
 - (d) HGV deliveries and hours of operation
 - (e) measures to prevent the deposit of materials on the highway
 - (f) no HGV movements to or from the site shall take place between the hours of 8.30 and 9.15 am and 3.15 and 4.00 pm nor shall the contractor permit any HGVs associated with the development at the site to be laid up, waiting, in Bagshot Road and Windlesham Road during these times
 - (g) on-site turning for construction vehicles

has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Only the approved details shall be implemented during the construction of the development.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users and to accord with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

11. The development hereby approved shall not be first accessed unless and until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with the approved plans for vehicles to be parked and for vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear. Thereafter the parking and turning areas shall be retained and maintained for their designated purposes.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users and to accord with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. The development hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations as outlined in Paragraphs 7.1 and 7.5 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal [Acom Ecology Limited - February 2018].

Reason: To ensure the protection of protected species in accordance with Policy CP14 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

13. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until details of the design of a surface water drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The design must satisfy the SuDS Hierarchy and be compliant with the national Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS, NPPF and Ministerial Statement on SuDS. The required drainage details shall include:

- a) Evidence that the proposed solution will effectively manage the 1 in 30 & 1 in 100 (+40%) allowance for climate change storm events, during all stages of the development (Pre, Post and during), associated discharge rates and storages volumes shall be provided using a maximum discharge rate of 2.9 litres/sec for all return periods (or otherwise as agreed by the LPA).
- b) Detailed drainage design drawings and calculations to include: a finalised drainage layout detailing the location of drainage elements, pipe diameters, levels, and long and cross sections of each element including details of any flow restrictions and maintenance/risk reducing features (silt traps, inspection chambers etc.).
- c) Details of how the drainage system will be protected during construction and how runoff (including any pollutants) from the development site will be managed before the drainage system is operational.
- d) Details of drainage management responsibilities and maintenance regimes for the drainage system.
- e) A plan showing exceedance flows (i.e. during rainfall greater than design events or during blockage) and how property on and off site will be protected.

Reason: To ensure the design meets the national Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS and the final drainage design does not increase flood risk on or off site, in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

14. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, a verification report carried out by a qualified drainage engineer must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This must demonstrate that the drainage system has been constructed as per the agreed scheme (or detail any

minor variations), provide the details of any management company and state the national grid reference of any key drainage elements (surface water attenuation devices/areas, flow restriction devices and outfalls).

Reason: To ensure the Drainage System is designed to the National Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS and in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

15. No additional floors, including mezzanine floors, shall be erected in the sports hall building hereby approved without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the function of the sports hall building remains related to the sports facilities within and adjacent to it, in accordance with Policies CP1, CP2 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informative(s)

1. Decision Notice to be kept DS1
2. The applicant is reminded that it is an offence to allow materials to be carried from the site and deposited on or damage the highway from uncleared wheels or badly loaded vehicles. The Highway Authority will seek, wherever possible, to recover any expenses incurred in clearing, cleaning or repairing highway surfaces and prosecutes persistent offenders. (Highways Act 1980 Sections 131, 148, 149).
3. The applicant is advised that the granting of planning permission does not authorise the obstruction or interference with a public right of way, specifically Public Footpath 130 West End which runs across the site of the proposed AWP from the A319/A322 roundabout junction to the west to Windlesham Road to the east. No works on the proposed AWP should therefore commence until a separate application under Section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is submitted to and approved in writing by Surrey County Council Countryside Access Group.
4. The applicant is advised that if the proposed site works affect an Ordinary Watercourse, Surrey County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority should be contacted to obtain prior written Consent. More details are available on their website.

If proposed works result in infiltration of surface water to ground within a Source Protection Zone the Environment Agency will require proof of surface water treatment to achieve water quality standards.

5. Any new footpath should be of a benefit to the public. Therefore, a greater width of 2/2.5m and a surfaced path would be desirable. At present the current application documents do not explain how the current public footpath will be dealt with.

Safe public access must be maintained at all times. If this is not possible whilst work is in progress then an official temporary closure order will be necessary.

Notice, of not less than 6 weeks, must be given and the cost is to be borne by the applicant.

There are to be no obstructions on the public right of way at any time, this is to include vehicles, plant, scaffolding or the temporary storage of materials and/or chemicals.

Any alteration to, or replacement of, the existing boundary with the public right of way, or erection of new fence lines, must be done in consultation with the Rights of Way Group. Please give at least 3 week's notice.

Any down pipes or soakaways associated with the development should either discharge into a drainage system or away from the surface of the right of way.

There should be no encroachments by new fascias, soffits, gutters etc. over the boundary of the existing property onto the public right of way.

Access along a public right of way by contractors' vehicles, plant or deliveries can only be allowed if the applicant can prove that they have a vehicular right. Surrey County Councils' Countryside Access Group will look to the applicant to make good any damage caused to the surface of the rights of way connected with the development.