

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT

PROPOSED TWO-STOREY CLASSROOM BLOCK, ADDITIONAL CAR PARKING AND SITE WORKS, THE HIGHFIELD SCHOOL, HIGHFIELD, LETCHWORTH.

Report of the Director of Environment

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Local Member:- K Emsall

1. Purpose of Report

To consider planning application ref. 1/1490-02 for a two-storey classroom block, additional car parking and site works at Highfield School, Highfield, Letchworth.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The majority of Highfield School is situated in the Green Belt on the western edge of Letchworth, south of the railway line, accessed via Highfield. The school shares a communal vehicular access and egress with St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Primary School.
- 2.2 On 22nd April 2002, the County Council authorised the publication of a statutory notice concerning the closure of Norton School from 31st August 2002 and the expansion of Fearnhill, The Highfield and Knights Templar Schools.
- 2.3 Hertfordshire School Organisation Committee approved the closure of Norton School on 11 June 2002, and it was agreed that the three remaining schools in that area would be expanded by one additional form of entry from September 2003. Pupils starting their secondary school careers and those commencing GCSE studies from September 2002 have already been located at all of the three remaining schools in order to minimise disruption to their education. Temporary mobile classrooms were located at Highfield School in the summer of 2002 to provide accommodation for these additional pupils until such a time as permanent accommodation could be provided.
- 2.4 In September 2002 a planning application was submitted for development at Highfield School. The application proposes the construction of a two-storey teaching block immediately to the south-west of the existing school buildings, close to the boundary with Briar Patch Lane to provide 18 classrooms and associated offices, stores and toilets. The provision of a new classroom block would allow the removal of the recently introduced mobile classrooms. The

application also includes landscape proposals. The application proposes an additional 31 car parking spaces at the rear of the site. A proposal for constructing a bus waiting facility directly off the A505 Hitchin Road was withdrawn after traffic monitoring showed that additional bus services would not be required in September 2003. Following the findings of traffic monitoring, an amended scheme was submitted in November 2002 which proposes alterations to the school frontage to accommodate a further 31 parking spaces, widening of the site access and the introduction of waiting controls along sections of Highfield. It should be noted that the school frontage area where additional car parking is proposed is outside of the Green Belt.

- 2.5 North Hertfordshire District Council will be taking the amended application to their committee on 11th December 2002 therefore their views will be reported orally. The Highways Authority have stated that details of the frontage proposals shall be as shown on the submitted drawing subject to full details being agreed with the Highways Authority. There have been no objections from the statutory undertakers whose responses have been received so far. A response document has been received from the 'Residents of Highfield' highlighting their concerns, and a petition of 52 signatures has been received from residents who are concerned over increased traffic in Highfield.
- 2.6 The main issues raised by this application and considered within the report are Green Belt Policy, location and design of the building, traffic and highway implications, car parking provision, visual impact and landscape proposals.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The report finds that the harm caused to the Green Belt is outweighed by the educational need for the development so exception to the Green Belt policy is justified. Nevertheless the application should be referred to the First Secretary of State in accordance with departure procedures.
- 3.2 The report concludes that the location and design of the new classroom block is considered to be suitable. The amendments to the school frontage would increase car parking provision on site to a level that is more adequate than current provision. The provision of the landscaping scheme is acceptable subject to certain modifications.
- 3.3 The report therefore concludes that, subject to the Secretary of State not wishing to intervene, the Director of the Environment should be authorised to grant planning permission for the proposed development, subject to suitable conditions to include provision for car parking, continued site monitoring, contractors working arrangements, implementation of a landscaping scheme, and the preparation and implementation of a School Travel Plan that is acceptable to the Highways Authority.

1. Background Information

- 1.1 On 22 April 2002, the County Council authorised the publication of a statutory notice concerning the closure of Norton School from 31 August 2002 and the expansion of Fearnhill, The Highfield and Knights Templar Schools. It also resolved to use the capital receipts from the sale of the Norton School site to fund replacement accommodation at the three secondary schools.
- 1.2 Norton School had experienced difficulties over the last few years, and had been identified by Ofsted as requiring special measures. Due to a high turnover of staff, the school was unable to improve its performance. Alternative options to open a new school on the existing site, or for the Church of England to open a school there were considered, but rejected as they would be unable to deliver the educational improvements required within an appropriate timescale.
- 1.3 The Hertfordshire School Organisation Committee approved the closure of Norton School on 11 June 2002. The Committee also agreed that the three remaining schools in the area – Fearnhill, The Highfield and Knights Templar each be expanded by one additional form of entry from September 2003. This planning application relates to development necessary to implement that decision.
- 1.4 In order to minimise the disruption to those children starting their secondary school careers and those commencing GCSE studies, prospective and former Norton School Pupils who are currently in year 7 and year 10 have been relocated to the remaining three schools as from September 2002. These pupils are currently accommodated in temporary mobile classrooms until such a time as they can be accommodated within permanent extensions. The Norton School will continue to be used during the academic year 2002/3 for other school years.
- 1.5 Three double mobile units were located at Highfield School during the summer of 2002, adjacent to the southern boundary of the existing school building complex. These were constructed to provide temporary accommodation to the additional pupils who started at the school in September 2002, pending the consideration of purpose built extensions to the school.

2. Description of site and proposed development

- 2.1 The majority of Highfield School is situated in the Green Belt on the western edge of Letchworth, south of the railway line, accessed via Highfield. The site shares a communal vehicular access and egress with St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Primary School. The school frontage area falls outside of the Green Belt boundary.
- 2.2 Residential properties are located on the eastern boundary of the school site along Highfield, and at the southern boundary of the school site off Briar Patch Lane.

- 2.3 The planning application proposes the construction of a two-storey teaching block of 1638m² immediately to the south of the existing school buildings, close to the boundary to Briar Patch Lane. The teaching block would provide 18 classrooms with associated offices, stores and toilets. It would be formed by plain rectangular shapes in keeping with the school's 1960's architecture and would have a flat roof. Although the building would be a single block, it has been designed to appear as two linked buildings. A light yellow facing brick would be used to construct the block, with infill panels located under ground floor windows. The area between the proposed block and the existing block would be created into a courtyard. In order to accommodate the new block, four over-mature apple trees would require felling. The number of sycamore trees in the adjoining hedgerow along Briar Patch Lane would be reduced by half to allow more natural daylight into the new block. Landscape proposals have been submitted for this area which includes replacement tree planting elsewhere on site.
- 2.4 The three mobile classrooms that were constructed in the summer of 2002 would be removed from the site should permission be granted for the new classroom block. The area they currently occupy would be surfaced and used to provide the necessary hard play area.
- 2.5 Access to the site is via Highfield, which has a 4.9 metre wide carriageway. Highfield School shares an access with St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Primary School. The latter has around 230 pupils, the majority of whom would appear to be delivered and collected by car because of the large catchment area. The main problems associated with traffic at Highfield School would appear to arise from its shared access with St. Thomas More Primary School. Parents parking along Highfield and Sollershott West (an unadopted private road) during times of dropping off and picking up of pupils is causing congestion along Highfield.
- 2.6 To comply with a condition required under the recent permission for the three mobile classrooms, 14 temporary additional car parking spaces have been provided at the rear of the school, together with a turning area for delivery and refuse vehicles. This planning application proposes to retain the temporary car parking spaces on a permanent basis, and to provide a further 17 car parking spaces at the rear of the site.
- 2.7 Amendments to the layout of the school frontage area are proposed. The proposal would involve widening the access into the site to ensure that obstructions to the free flow of traffic do not occur. The pavement area next to the school entrance would be increased in size. At present children currently congregate by the school access which may deter parents from using the parking and drop off areas inside the school. The increased paved area should therefore encourage pupils to wait near the school entrance as opposed to the school access and ensure a comfortable separation between pedestrians and vehicles. Further amendments to the frontage include providing a bay for 2 buses near the Highfield School buildings, and providing a waiting area for up to 12 cars around the outside of the circulatory system. A segregated parking area would be constructed within the middle of the circulatory area and would

provide an additional 31 car parking spaces. Designated crossing points are proposed between the car park and both schools, and pedestrian barriers would be introduced to control pedestrian movements.

- 2.8 The additional car parking proposed at both the front and rear of the site would bring the total provision at Highfield School to 122 spaces, which is below the maximum standards of approximately 160 spaces for this site. Waiting restrictions are proposed outside the school on Highfield. The police have confirmed that they would not object to a traffic order along Highfield, but can not commit themselves to increased levels of enforcement above existing patterns. The extent of these restrictions would need to be a matter for the Highway Authority and the Police to agree upon. Current traffic calming measures along Highfield include speed bumps and yellow 'School Keep Clear' markings directly outside the school access/egress.
- 2.9 The revised proposals for within the school frontage would result in the loss of 12 trees, including 5 sycamore. Landscape proposals for this area have been submitted which provide for replacement tree planting.
- 2.10 The original application included proposals for constructing a bus waiting facility directly off the A505 Hitchin Road. This part of the proposal was withdrawn after traffic monitoring showed that additional bus services would not be required in September 2003.
- 2.11 Access for construction vehicles would be via Highfield and the school's existing road access. Once inside the school site the construction vehicles would use the existing service road to the rear of the site and follow the boundary parallel to Briar Patch Lane to reach the building site/construction compound. Larger vehicles may not be able to respect the schools' present one-way system therefore a temporary alteration to the exit crossover may be necessary. To provide a safe environment for pupils whilst construction is ongoing, precautions would be taken which include limiting the hours when contractors vehicles can access the site, a school management regime to control pupils entering and leaving the site, and speed restriction bumps on the service access road.

3. Consultations

- 3.1 North Hertfordshire District Council are taking the amended scheme to their committee on 11th December 2002. Their response will be reported verbally to this committee.
- 3.2 Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation has no objection to the amended proposals. However they highlight their concern over Highfield and Sollershot West.

They state that Highfield will need appropriate traffic calming measures/restrictions. They highlight that Sollershot West, which is a main feeder road into Highfield School and currently unadopted, should ideally be adopted. Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation are currently preparing

a scheme for the adoption of the road, which would allow for the introduction of traffic calming. They feel that, as part of the scheme at Highfield School, a contribution should be made towards the adoption works in Sollershott West.

3.3 The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that any permission which is granted shall include a condition stating that the improvement to access and parking arrangements shall be as shown on the submitted drawing subject to full details being agreed with the Highway Authority.

3.4 St. Thomas More Roman Catholic School are declining the offer to use the parking spaces that the amendments to the school frontage will provide. Their reasons for this are as follows:

- the governing body believes that a highly dangerous situation would be created if the proposed car park were to be shared by drivers visiting the site for different purposes;
- if the offer were accepted parents using the facility would have to cross a busy roadway close to the junction of three roads – one which separates the two school sites, one which leads to a parking area for St. Thomas More staff, and one which filters traffic off the site;
- the governors of the school have worked hard to maintain a safe environment for their pupils by refusing St. Thomas More parents the right to park on the school site or on the roadways over which visitors to the site have right of access. This is an extremely common health and safety rule implemented by every other primary school in Letchworth. If parents were allowed to park on the site once again, it would revert to a dangerous unmanageable situation which the school believes would endanger the lives of their very young pupils. This view is borne out of experience of a real situation that existed until the safer methods of parking control were put in place.

Although St. Thomas More governing body does not wish to accept the offer of parking places on the proposed car park at this time, they would be very happy to meet with the Highfield governors and members of CSF Planning, in a year or so, to review the situation.

3.5 The Local Member is glad to see amendments to the original application to include additional onsite parking, but states that parking restrictions need to be imposed between 2pm and 4pm on the whole of Highfield if the parking problem is to be resolved.

3.6 Landscape consider that the development is acceptable on landscape grounds subject to minor modifications.

3.7 Sport England originally objected to the application, but the objection was withdrawn following the removal of the proposed coach lay-by off the A505 from the application.

3.8 Transco confirm that the company has plant in the vicinity, which may be affected by this proposal.

3.9 A total of 22 properties were consulted on the application, with responses from the 'Residents of Highfield' Association. A petition of 52 signatures was received expressing concern about increased traffic in Highfield. The main issues of concern can be summarised as:

- the petition received highlights residents concerns over increased traffic in Highfield;
- The 'Residents of Highfield' have submitted their response to the amended scheme and their view is that the creation of 31 car parking spaces within the school frontage will not resolve the dangerous congestion in Highfield, unless parking and waiting restrictions are introduced, policed and enforced. They raise the following issues in their response document:
 - (a) they request that the restrictions run the full length of Highfield and apply to both sides of the road otherwise car park will not be used and congestion will worsen;
 - (b) both schools should have a policy that pupils who are driven to school must be dropped inside the school grounds;
 - (c) waiting/parking should be restricted during the hours of 8.30am to 9.30am, and between 2.30pm and 4.00pm;
 - (d) the residents agree that parking in the school grounds coupled with parking restrictions the full length of Highfield would ease the daily congestion and the associated dangers and inconvenience;
 - (e) parking facilities inside the school grounds without parking restrictions will just turn Highfield into a parking lot. The residents would object most strongly to this;
 - (f) restrictions could take the form of 'permit holders only' during peak times as is common practice in many roads in Letchworth.

4. Planning Considerations

4.1 The majority of the application site lies within the Green Belt as defined on the proposals map of the adopted district plan. The relevant development plan policies are:

- County Structure Plan – policies 1 (Sustainable Development), 5 (Green Belt), 13 (Education & Training), 22 (Reduction of travel need & car usage), 23 (Networks and facilities for non-motorised transport & buses), 25 (car parking).
- North Hertfordshire District Local Plan – policies 2 (Green Belt), 13 (Countryside Area), Policy 21 (Landscape & Open Space Patterns in Towns).

4.2 The principal issues to be taken into account in determining this application are:-

- development within the Green Belt, including the educational need to accommodate additional pupils from the closure of Norton School;
- impact of additional traffic movements on the highway network, together with car and cycle provision;
- design of the building;
- visual impact and landscaping.

4.2 Green Belt

School buildings, even on an existing school site, are not included within the categories of development regarded as appropriate within the Green Belt. Such buildings, therefore, are not acceptable unless any harm to the Green Belt is outweighed by other considerations.

4.4 Most of the site area of Highfield School lies within the Green Belt, however the school frontage area of the site where the additional parking is proposed lies outside the Green Belt. The new two-storey block would extend the built-up area of the site that lies within the Green Belt.

4.5 The closure of Norton School, due to its consistent failure to meet Ofsted standards, results in the need to provide additional school places at Highfield School. The proposal has been made with the educational objective that all pupils within Letchworth have equal access to good quality education and the future success of the three remaining schools fundamentally depends on this factor.

4.6 To ensure that the three schools have equal status they must be of a similar size. The applicant has indicated that to expand two of the schools to 7FE and leave one at 5FE would send the wrong signals to both parents and pupils and as such would not achieve the overall objective of good quality education throughout the town. The applicant considers that the perception would be that one school is more worthy than another because of the higher level of investment and expansion than an other therefore attracting pupils with higher academic potential.

4.7 In these circumstances it is considered that the harm which the development would cause to the Green Belt is outweighed by the school and the LEA's need for the additional accommodation.

4.8 Highway Implications

Highfield is a 4.9 metre wide carriageway upon which the access into Highfield School is located. Highfield School shares an access with St. Thomas Moore Primary School, at which there are around 230 pupils, the majority of whom would appear to be delivered and collected by car, a reflection of its large catchment area. The main problem associated with traffic at the Highfield School would appear to arise from its shared access with St. Thomas More Primary School.

- 4.9 Start and finish times at both schools are staggered, however congestion still occurs both on and off site between arriving and departing vehicles. The consultant's report states that, in the afternoons, Sir Thomas More pupils finish at 15.10, by which time many cars line the edge of Highfield whilst parents walk into school grounds to collect their children. St. Thomas More parents are not permitted to drive into the school grounds unless special disability permits are obtained.
- 4.10 The Highfield parents start to arrive at around 15.10 and park in the drop off point inside the school access, which accommodates four cars. When this facility is full, vehicles also use Highfield. Delays are experienced by the school buses avoiding parked cars, with some disruption to public bus services that travel along Highfield between 15.00 and 15.30. Parents also park on Sollershott West, which is an unadopted road that leads onto Highfield.
- 4.11 Traffic calming measures along Highfield include speed bumps and yellow 'School Keep Clear' markings directly outside the school access/egress. Buses and parents dropping off or collecting children at Highfield School may enter the site via one gate, navigate a loop, and exit via another gate, with separate drop off zones provided for buses and cars.
- 4.12 Since September 2002, the school roll has been 1000 pupils, compared with 888 in the previous academic year. More than half the additional pupil numbers expected from the expansion of the school (which will have a final capacity for 1080 pupils) are therefore already at the school, and their impact on traffic conditions apparent. Consultants have carried out traffic monitoring since the start of the school term in September 2002. Since the school roll increased in September 2002, the consultants state that traffic monitoring has shown some growth in school traffic, but that no compounding of congestion problems were observed.
- 4.13 A new school service bus was laid on to cater for Highfield pupils from the eastern side of the school in September 2002. There are now two bus services that enter the school site to deliver and collect pupils, and a further service stops in Highfield outside the site. Following monitoring of bus usage, together with data for travel modes identified for future Highfield pupils, the Passenger Transport Unit indicate that the three current bus services are likely to be sufficient to meet demand during the next academic year in 2003/4 assuming a similar fare structure. In light of this information, the applicants have withdrawn the proposed bus lay-by off the A505 from the application.
- 4.14 The traffic monitoring report concluded that further measures were required to improve the existing situation. In light of the consultant's recommendations, amendments to scheme have been submitted. These amendments are detailed under paras 2.7 and 2.8.
- 4.15 The proposed 31 space car park that would be constructed within the school frontage would be available to both Highfield and St. Thomas More School visitors and parents. Whilst St. Thomas More School has not objected to the

proposal, they have indicated that they would not use the facility for reasons set out in para 3.4. They state that they would be happy to review their standpoint on this situation in a year or so. All additional 31 spaces would therefore be available to Highfield School initially.

- 4.16 The fact that St. Thomas More will prevent their pupils' parents from entering the site means that they will have no option but to continue to park on Highfield. As this application relates to the Highfield School it is not possible to place a condition on St. Thomas More School requiring that they must use this proposed facility. Should the proposal be accepted then it is hoped that St. Thomas More School would see the advantages of the proposed facility, that it would be a safer and more effective way of providing access to the school as opposed to the existing situation.
- 4.17 The proposals would provide a total of 122 on site car parking spaces, and a further 12 drop-off/pick-up spaces. Although this figure is below the County Council's maximum car parking standards of around 160 spaces, it is considered that number would amount to a significant increase from the existing situation, and when considering the constraints for development on site, it is considered that the quantity of car parking spaces would be acceptable.
- 4.18 Whilst it is acknowledged that there is an existing traffic congestion problem on Highfield, it is considered that the scheme that forms the basis of this proposal would assist in improving the overall situation. The additional car parking spaces, in conjunction with restrictions outside the school, would enable cars that currently park on Highfield to park inside the school grounds. It is imperative that the future development needs of this site are continuously assessed through monitoring, and that a subsequent annual report is submitted assessing the situation. A condition to this effect could be placed on the permission should it be granted.
- 4.19 Security improvements were introduced on the cycle storage facilities last year. The applicants state that there are 130-160 spaces available for students and 4 spaces for staff. All but 40 of these are under cover. There are always at least 50 spaces available, therefore it is considered that the provision of additional storage facilities are not necessary at this time. The School Travel Plan will monitor the demand for cycle parking and review the need for additional storage in future.
- 4.20 The School is currently working on the preparation of a School Travel Plan, which should be completed by January 2003. The establishment of a formal School Travel Plan will allow regular monitoring to take place by means of regular travel questionnaires and surveys. Trends should therefore be picked up and potential problems identified. School Travel Plans will be required for all three schools which are subject to expansion, and they must interact with each other to achieve sustainability of Letchworth and Baldock Secondary Schools as a whole, although each school will need to set its own targets. The traffic consultant's report states that School Travel Plans should be strictly

enforced and will need to be capable of capping any growth in car usage for the foreseeable future.

4.21 Having a School Travel Plan in place will enable the school to bid for funding through the 'Safer Routes to School' scheme, which would contribute towards financing any future improvements, especially in terms of works on the highway within Highfield itself.

4.22 Should permission be granted, a condition should be imposed to ensure that the contractors working arrangements do not cause any problems for the public highway and that delivery times are limited during the construction phase of the development. The usual times for this are between 8am and 6pm on Mondays to Fridays, and between 9am and 1pm on Saturdays, with none permitted on Sundays and Bank Holidays and, during term time, no such vehicles to enter or leave the site within a period of half an hour either side of the start and finish of the school day. Such a restriction would also help to protect the residential amenity of those living adjacent to the school's access and egress points.

4.23 Design of the Building

The new classroom block would provide 18 classrooms with associated offices, stores and toilets. It would be formed by plain rectangular shapes in keeping with the school's 1960's architecture and would have a flat roof. Although the building would be a single block, it has been designed to appear as two linked buildings. It would be constructed using a light yellow facing brick, with infill panels located under the ground floor windows. Although the adjacent school buildings are white with blue infill panels, the proposed yellow brickwork can be found within other buildings on the school complex. Buildings located nearby on Briar Patch Lane have been constructed of yellow facing brick therefore the development would not be totally out of keeping with the local environment. It is therefore considered that the design and appearance of the new classroom block is suitable in this instance.

4.24 Visual Impact and Landscaping

The visual impact of the proposed new building on the local amenity needs to be considered. The two-storey extension would take the built aspect of the site further toward Briar Patch Lane, although it is not considered that the extension would have a significant adverse impact on the residential amenity of nearby buildings. There are a number of sizeable trees on the nearby boundary with Briar Patch Lane and the construction of the new block would necessitate the removal of four over-mature apple trees and the removal of half the sycamore trees in the adjoining hedgerow in order to allow natural daylight to enter into the building.

4.25 The submitted landscape scheme for the area around the proposed classroom block makes provision for additional tree planting to compensate for loss of trees in the hedgerow adjoining Briar Patch Lane. Shrub beds are proposed next to the classroom block and landscape advice received recommends that these are protected either by permanent low rail or temporary fencing during establishment. The landscaping scheme for the proposed additional car parking

at the rear of the school includes provision for the planting of shrub beds and a single tree.

- 4.26 The proposed amendments to the school frontage would necessitate the removal of 12 trees, including five sycamore, two cherry, two plane, one lime, one cypress and one silver birch. The existing frontage is grassed over and accommodates the above large trees. A landscaping scheme has been submitted for the frontage area, which makes provision for an additional 16 trees, a hedgerow and shrub beds. The amendments to the frontage would have a detrimental effect on the visual amenity of properties directly opposite the school entrance on Highfield. To compensate for this, a section of the grassed area adjacent to the boundary with Highfield would remain and 9 trees would be planted in this area, along with a hedgerow. It is considered that, in time, following the establishment of the proposed planting, this would assist in screening the car park from residential properties. The two large trees located along the frontage with Highfield would remain, and these would provide additional screening from the proposed car park.
- 4.27 Whilst it is accepted that a large area currently grassed over would be lost, it is considered that in this instance the need for the car park outweighs the loss of greenery from the school frontage, particularly as additional tree planting is proposed to mitigate the impact. It is therefore considered that the landscaping scheme is acceptable.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Highfield School is situated in the Green Belt on the western edge of Letchworth, south of the railway line, accessed via Highfield. Following the closure of Norton School the Local Education Authority has decided to expand the three remaining schools in the area, Highfield being one. This in turn requires the provision of additional built accommodation for the school. However, it is considered that this harm to the Green Belt is outweighed by the schools need for the accommodation. As such the special circumstances required to justify the setting aside of Green Belt Policy has been shown to exist in this instance.
- 5.2 The external yellow facing brick of the proposed classroom block would provide a contrast to the adjacent school buildings on site, however as the design and appearance do not detract from the general layout of the built complex, it is considered that the proposed building is suitable in this instance.
- 5.3 The other main issue in the determining of this application is that of on-site parking provision, and congestion along Highfield at the start and end of the school day. Whilst it is accepted that St. Thomas More's decision at this time not to utilise the proposed frontage car parking facility does not assist in solving the traffic issue, it is considered that the additional car parking spaces proposed at the site frontage will inevitably go some way towards taking traffic from Highfield and Sollershott West into the school site therefore reducing the impact on the public highway. The number of car parking spaces on site would rise to 122, which is a considerable increase from the existing amount

of around 70 spaces. When considered against the constraints for development within the site, this number of car parking spaces is considered to be acceptable. Monitoring of the situation, along with the preparation and implementation of a School Travel Plan, are critical in the assessment of future requirements on site and enable further improvements to be carried out if required.

- 5.4 The provisions of the landscape plan are satisfactory subject to slight modifications.
- 5.5 The report concludes that the Director of Environment should be authorised to grant planning permission subject to conditions to include implementation of landscape scheme, provision of car parking spaces, contractors working arrangements, and the approval and implementation of a School Travel Plan that is acceptable to the Highways Authority.
- 5.6 As the application involves significant development within the Green Belt, which would be a departure from the development plan, the application would need to be referred to the First Secretary of State in accordance with departure procedures before it could finally be determined.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are none for this committee.

Background information used by the author in compiling this report

Planning application reference 1/1490-02

Consultation responses and representations received in response to planning application ref. 1/1490-02

Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review 1991-2011, adopted April 1998

North Hertfordshire Local Plan, adopted 1996

Supplementary Planning Guidance : Parking Provision at New Development