

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 15th July 2020

Ward: Caversham

Application No.: 200512/FUL

Address: Westfield Road Recreation Ground Westfield Road Caversham Reading

Proposal: Retention of fenced off area of the Westfield Park Recreation Ground for educational use during school hours for use by the Heights Primary School until 31st August 2021

Date valid: 15th April 2020

Target Decision Date: 10th June 2020 **Extension of Time Date:** 17th July 2020

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT temporary planning permission subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

1. No later than 31 August 2021 all fencing, gates and associated ancillary structures shall be removed from the site (including removal of any tarmac/asphalt or other hardstanding areas) and the site shall be left in a clean and tidy condition.
2. In accordance with approved plans
3. In accordance with approved materials
4. Educational use of the land shall not operate outside of 1040 to 1530 hours Monday to Friday only
5. Prior to removal of the structures and hard surfacing from the site an arboricultural method statement to demonstrate how the trees on and adjacent to the site will be protected during removal and reinstatement works. No removal of buildings or reinstatement works to take place other than in accordance with the approved method statement.
6. No later than 6 months from the date of this permission, submission and approval of a reinstatement scheme for the land and implementation of the scheme no later than 30th September 2021

Informatives:

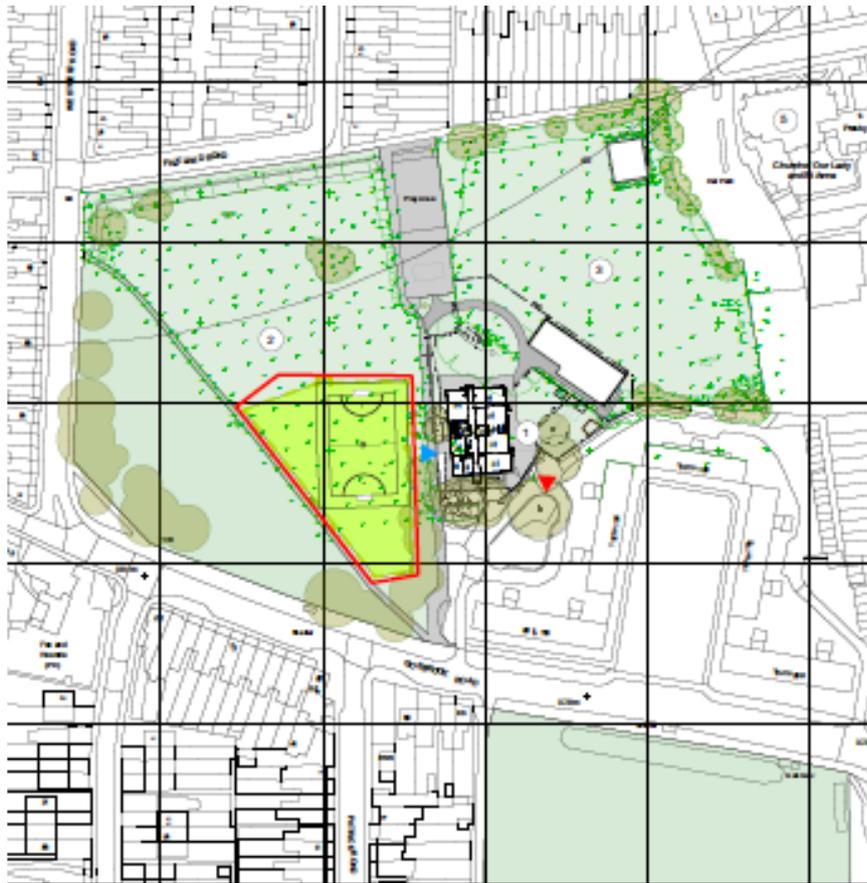
1. Positive and proactive requirement
2. Terms and conditions
3. Works affecting the Highway

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site consists of an approximately triangular area of land of some 1,930 square metres towards the South-East of Westfield Road Playing Fields in Caversham. The site is relatively flat and laid to grass. There is a line of trees along

the east and southern edges of the site and the diagonal path from Gosbrook Road to Westfield Road bounds the west/south-western side of the site.

- 1.2 The land is currently fenced off from the rest of Westfield Road playing fields and is in use as a playground for use by the temporary heights school following grant of a temporary planning permission (ref. 181035) in 2018. In line with the planning permission for siting of the temporary school adjacent to the playing fields (ref. 180552) the planning permission for use of the playing field requires the playground use to cease and the land to be restored to its former use by 31st August 2020.



Location Plan (red line area)

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 This application seeks planning permission to retain the fenced off area of Westfield Road playing fields for use as a playground by the Heights Temporary School for a further 12-month period until 31st August 2021. Continued use of this land as a playground area for the adjacent primary school is required for a further year due to construction delays with the new permanent site for the school at Mapledurham Playing Fields. A separate application for retention of the school buildings for a further year (ref. 200564) is also on the committee agenda for determination.
- 2.2 The application has been submitted by the Department for Education (DFE) and is being reported to Planning Applications Committee following a request by Caversham Ward Councillor Sokale due to the level of public interest in the application.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 131353: Application for a certificate of lawful use as a children's nursery school (Use Class D1). CERTIFICATE ISSUED 27/1/14.
- 3.2 140940: Demolition of existing nursery school buildings and construction of a temporary single storey modular unit and minor external works associated with the site's use as a non-residential institution (Class D1) for 2 years. GRANTED with S.106 agreement 25/7/14.
- 3.3 151283: Construction of a first-floor classroom extension over existing single-storey classrooms to form enlarged temporary school, for an extended temporary period until 31 August 2018. GRANTED with S.106 agreement 10/3/2016.
- 3.4 180552: Extension to the existing planning approval ref 151283 until 31st August 2020. Erection of a new build 2 storey, 6 classroom modular unit on part of the St. Anne's School site, to allow the school to expand towards a capacity of 325 pupils on the temporary school site until 31st August 2020. Associated external works (amended description) - GRANTED 27/09/2018.
- 3.5 181035: Fencing off an area of the Westfield Park Recreation Ground for educational use during school hours for use by the Heights Primary School - GRANTED 27/09/2018.

4. CONSULTATIONS

(i) Statutory:

- 4.1 Sport England - no objection.

(ii) Non-Statutory:

- 4.3 RBC Transport - No objection.
- 4.4 RBC Leisure and Recreation - The area segregated within Westfield Recreation Ground was introduced to manage differing needs between the adjacent Heights School and general recreation provision within the open space area of the Park/ Recreation Ground. The enclosure of this space has had a negative impact on Westfield Road Recreation Ground and the very wet six months from September last year has further affected how this space may be utilised.

In a similar arrangement to some other schools, the Heights are using an adjacent open space, in this case Christchurch Meadows Playing Field and tennis courts, for much of their sports activities. This is accommodated within the existing capacity of these facilities.

The school has stated that they are using the fenced area with Westfield Rd Rec for short informal activity such as breaks, where travelling across to Christchurch Meadows is a less effective option. In uses such as these, physical barriers are often

required to prevent children wandering off and to comply with safeguarding guidelines. These sessions are often short in duration, meaning proximity to the school is important. The space is being used by the school for this activity, however as the space is limited by the fencing the turf has become very worn in places. This is, compromising (and often preventing) it's uses by both the school and the local residents. This has been significantly exacerbated by the very wet autumn/winter, renovation or restoration whilst the area is in use by either public or school is problematic, if not impossible, to undertake.

The fenced area, within the planning permission given, is designated to be available for public use during the periods the school are not using it. Fencing by its nature is unwelcoming and this along with the ground condition has dissuaded the majority of people, from using the space for general recreation. Although some use is observed by the local community it is significantly less than the rest of the Recreation Ground and is most likely to be used for a kick around along with another fenced kick around space in the recreation ground.

The negative impact of the fenced area has been complained about periodically by local residents since it was installed. These complaints regarding the public's lack of use have recently increased during the Covid19 pandemic, when parks and open spaces have taken on an increasing level of importance to allow the public sufficient space in which to unwind and exercise.

While the general recreational amenity and perceived accessibility of the entire Park site has been diminished by the establishment of the fenced area, it is acknowledged it does support the school. As the school uses the adjacent Christchurch Meadows, so also are the Thames Parks available to local residents for their use. They are immediately adjacent to Westfield Road Recreation Ground, separated by Gosbrook Road which has a pedestrian crossing serving the Park.

Given the importance for public open space and due to the inconvenience caused the local community, it is important that as soon as the school's need for the fenced area ceases that the area is reintegrated into the Recreation Ground. Reintegrating the area into the recreation ground should be commenced immediately the school closes. This should include fence removal, post holes being filled and possibly seeding in the first week. The area will, as a whole, need seeding and top dressing in a similar fashion to park football pitches. This may need to be undertaken in September 2021 after the summer holidays if the School moves in the summer or in the unlikely case the school moves in time for Easter, in April/May. The reestablishment of grass is dependent on damp weather but may be lightly used during this period, as is the case with park pitches over the late spring/summer.

- 4.5 RBC Environmental Protection - No complaints received about the school within the last 12 months

- 4.6 RBC Planning Natural Environment (Tree Officer) - No objection, subject to a condition to secure an arboricultural method statement for the protection of trees during works remove existing structures and reinstate the land.
- 4.7 RBC Ecologist - No objection.
- 4.8 Crime Prevention Design Advisor (Thames Valley Police): Does not wish to comment.

Public Consultation

- 4.9 Due to the restrictions of the ongoing Covid19 epidemic site notices were not displayed at the site, however extensive neighbour notification was carried out with four hundred and twenty-five surrounding properties notified of the application by letter.
- 4.10 This application and the application for retention of the school buildings which also on the committee agenda (ref. 200564) were advertised together and many of the representations received relate to both applications. For consistency representations have been recorded against both applications and are reported together in both reports. Twenty-four objections have been received raising the following issues:
- Traffic congestion and associated pollution
 - Parents parking on streets which are for permit holder parking only
 - Parent parking on double yellow lines creates traffic hazards
 - Cromwell Road should become permitted
 - Deterioration of Elizabeth House private road for school deliveries and vehicles blocking access and creating traffic hazards. Residents should not be required to pay extra maintenance for the road as a result of vehicles associated with the school
 - Pupils should arrive at the school by bus to reduce congestion
 - Security alarm at the school often goes off during the night creating noise pollution to surrounding residents
 - Anti-social behaviour of parent and children travelling to and from the school
 - Continued loss of open/green space that is for public use by residents
 - The school has uses St Anne's Playing Field and Christchurch Playing Field so the space on Westfield Park is not required.
 - The school do not use the fenced off area of the park
 - The fenced off-area of Westfield Park has not been maintained and during the winter it has become muddy and unusable by both the school and residents outside of school hours
 - Negative visual impact of fence within the centre of the park
 - Fence obstructs and hinders use of the park by residents outside of school hours
 - The Covid19 epidemic has accentuated the impact of the loss of the area of green space on the local community
 - There is no shade to the fenced off area meaning the school do not use it during the summer months
 - The original application stated the area would be fenced off for one year only

- Details of the reinstatement works for the land when the school is removed should be provided as part of this application together with firm date for this to take place

- The reduced number of objections for this application is due to Covid19 social distancing reducing awareness of the application

4.11 One letter of support for the application has been received from Councillor Pearce

- Lead Councillor for Education - raising the following points:

- The Covid19 pandemic has increased the need for outside space for schools further with the DFE now encouraging outside lessons where possible

- The delays with the construction of the permanent school in Mapledurham are not the fault of local residents, the school or its pupils

- The application seeks use of the fenced off area of the playing fields from 10:40 to 15:30 during term time only, this is around 20% of each day for the 40 school term time weeks in a year

- The school will be very keen to move to the new permanent site as soon as possible

- Frustrations of local residents with how long the fence has been in place are shared by the school who together with the DFE and Council are doing all then can to ensure the permanent site opens as soon as possible and so that the fence can be removed, and park returned to normal

4.12 The applicant also carried out their own public consultation exercise prior to submitting the application with consultation leaflets sent to one thousand and twenty-seven surrounding properties. The applicant confirms that seven responses were received raising the following issues:

- Increased traffic congestion and parking on surrounding roads

- Details of reinstatement works should be provided as part of any application

- Faulty alarm to school buildings causing noise disturbance

- No objection to the proposals

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

5.2 Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

Section 8 - Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 12 - Achieving Well Designed Spaces

Section 14 - Meeting the Challenges of Climate Change Flooding and Coastal Change

Section 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

5.4 Reading Local Plan 2019

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

CC9: SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE

EN6: LOCAL GREEN SPACE AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

EN15: AIR QUALITY

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

EN18: FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

TR4: CYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITIES

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

5.5 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

Supplementary Planning Document: Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Supplementary Planning Document: Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

6. APPRAISAL

The main issues raised by this planning application are as follows:

- Principle
- Impact on Westfield Road Recreation Ground
- Disturbance to Neighbouring Properties

Principle

- 6.1 The Heights Primary School has been at the temporary site at 82 Gosbrook Road since 2014 and at the time of the original planning application, it was envisaged to be for a temporary two-year period only. Issues with finding a permanent site meant that the school temporary classrooms were subject to a later permission to add more classrooms with a first floor in 2015 and extend the use for a further two years. In 2017 planning permission (ref. 171023) was granted for a permanent site for the school on Mapledurham Playing Fields. A further temporary planning permission for retention of the existing temporary school, including the addition of further temporary building was granted for a further two-year period in 2018 (ref. 180552) whilst the plans for the permanent school were still at an early stage

and building works had not yet commenced. Planning permission was also granted in 2018 (ref. 181035) for fencing off of an area of Westfield Park playing field to provide a playground for the expanded temporary school. This planning permission aligned with that for the school buildings and required the playing field to fencing to be removed and playing field reinstated by August 2020.

- 6.2 The fenced off area of the playing field is 19030m² in size, triangular in shape and located immediately to the west of the school buildings. The permission allows use of the land by the school between 1040 to 1530 hours Monday to Friday and at all other times the land is available for use by the public.
- 6.3 Construction of the permanent school at Mapledurham Playing Fields began in 2019 but due to delays with the construction works the permanent site is not yet ready for occupation. An application (ref. 200564) has been submitted for retention of the temporary school site for a further 12 months to allow construction of the permanent site to be completed. This separate application is also on the committee agenda for consideration. The current application subject of this report seeks to also retain the fenced off area of the playing fields for a further 12 months, until August 2021, to align with the proposed retention of the school building for this further temporary period.
- 6.4 In general terms there is support for school development in various policies, both at the national and local level and in turn, the enhancement of current educational facilities through alteration or expansion of existing schools is also supported. In particular, the NPPF at paragraph 94 says:

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

- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and*
- b) work with schools' promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.*

- 6.5 When planning permission (ref.181035) was granted for the temporary fencing off of an area of the playing fields this was assessed under the previous and now superseded Development Plan. Since this permission was granted the Council has adopted the new Reading Borough Local Plan in November 2019. The general thrust of policies remain the same but where there are changes these are discussed in this report.
- 6.6 One minor change is in relation to Policy OU1 (New and Existing Community Facilities) which now provides some more specific guidance on applications for schools. The policy states that *community facilities will be considered favourably, particularly where co-location of facilities on a single site and that proposals for intensification of important facilities, such as schools and healthcare user will be supported, subject to other policies.* Although the application site is not in

Caversham Centre, it is nearby and is well served by public transport. The use of Westfield Road playing fields is the closest area of public space to the temporary school site and doesn't involve crossing a significant road and is therefore considered to adhere to the requirements of Policy OU1 in this respect also.

- 6.7 Policy OU1 goes on to refer to applications which proposed an intensification of existing sites stating that *on-site intensification of some facilities, particularly schools, may result in some loss of open areas. This may be acceptable where the impact on open areas is minimised, and the area has no specific use, or where that use can satisfactorily be accommodated elsewhere on the site, subject to other policies in the plan. The above does not include loss of sports pitches and playing fields, which should only be developed where:*

- a) an assessment clearly shows the area to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.*

New community facilities should be located where there is a choice of means of travel (including walking and cycling), and in existing centres where possible. Where a proposal for a new school meets a clear need, and it would otherwise accord with national and local policy, it will be acceptable on sites identified for residential or other development.

- 6.8 Whether or not the proposals result in an intensification of use must be assessed against what currently has planning permission on the site. In short, the current proposals seek to retain the same area of playing field are not seeking to provide any additional space or material intensification of the site, the principle of which has already been established via the previous permission.
- 6.9 Therefore, the principle of retaining the fenced off area of playing field as a temporary playground for a further 12 months in connection with the proposed retention of the temporary school buildings for this further temporary period is considered to meet the aims of the NPPF and Policy OU1. As with the previous approvals, this proposal, were planning permission to be granted, would require the full removal of the fencing/structures and the making good of the land.

Impact on Westfield Road Recreation Ground

- 6.10 Policy EN7 (Local Green Space and Public Open Space) seeks that such spaces are protected from development and proposals that would result in the loss of any of these spaces, erode their quality through insensitive development or jeopardise their use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted. This aligns with that of the previous Development Plan Policy CS28 under which the previous permission was approved.
- 6.11 In considering the previous application, it was concluded that the fencing off of the area of the playing fields and its change of use to a mixed/dual use of

recreation and education use would result in some harm to the ability of the public to use and enjoy the space. Therefore, there was conflict with Policy CS28 (now Policy EN7) but that the harm caused due to the temporary loss of the area of the playing fields was outweighed by the significant need for the school to continue on this site for a continued temporary period. This was subject to conditions that the temporary education use of the land was limited to 1040-1530 hours Monday to Friday and that at all other times the land was available for recreation use as part of the playing fields by the public and that the land is to be returned fully to its former use and condition and that all associated structures are removed from the site by the end of the temporary period.

- 6.12 As set out earlier in this report the significant need for the school to continue on the site remains due to construction delays with the site of the permanent school at Mapledurham Playing Fields which is still under construction and not yet ready for occupation. Therefore, this proposal seeks to retain the existing fencing and temporary change of use to a mixed/dual use of recreation and education for a further 12-month period within which time period it is expected the permanent school will be ready for occupation.
- 6.13 As with the original application to fence off the area of the playing fields, the majority of objections received to this current planning application relate to concerns for the loss of part of the playing fields land to school use. With the fencing having now been in place for some time, objections have raised a number of concerns regarding how the space is used. In particular, that the school does not use the space regularly and that teachers and pupils will often be seen crossing Gosbrook Road to use off-site facilities and that outside of the permitted hours of educational use of the land the fenced off nature of the site means that public use of the land is much reduced. Residents also make the point that the Covid19 pandemic has exacerbated the impact of the loss of the area of playing fields on the local community for people who don't have gardens and with the need to practice social distancing. Some objections are concerned with the poor and muddy condition of the land in wet weather, further reducing usability of the area by both the public and the school.
- 6.14 RBC Leisure and Recreation, who are responsible for maintenance of the wider playing fields, comment that the particularly wet Autumn and Winter last year and enclosed nature of the area has been the main factor resulting in the poor condition of the land and they acknowledge that this has played a significant factor in both the attractiveness and suitability of the area for use both by the public and the school and has often prevented the area from being used. RBC Leisure and Recreation go on to advise that renovation or restoration of the area whilst in use by either the public or the school is problematic, if not impossible, to undertake.
- 6.15 The school is continuing to use adjacent open space at Christchurch Meadows Playing Field and tennis courts for much of their formal sports activities and this use is considered to be satisfactorily accommodated within the existing capacity of these facilities. The school have advised that, where the condition of the land allows, the fenced off area within Westfield Road playing fields is used for short informal activities such as breaktimes where travelling across to Christchurch

Meadows is not worthwhile as these sessions are short in duration meaning proximity to the school is important. Less so than during formal sports activities or PE lessons, physical barriers such as the fencing to the playing field land at Westfield Road are required to provide enclosure and prevent children wandering off and to comply with safeguarding guidelines for schools.

- 6.16 RBC Leisure and Recreation advise that the negative impact of the fenced area has been raised periodically by local residents since it was installed. These complaints regarding the public's lack of use have recently increased during the Covid19 pandemic, when parks and open spaces have taken on an increasing level of importance to allow the public sufficient space in which to unwind and exercise. While the general recreational amenity and perceived accessibility of the Park area has been reduced by the establishment of the fenced area, it is acknowledged it is an important facility which is required for the school and as advised above, outside the limited school hours, there is no restriction on public access. The school and residents have continued access to Christchurch Meadows and the Thames Parks, accessible via a pedestrian crossing nearby on Gosbrook Road.
- 6.17 RBC Leisure and Recreation consider that given the importance for public open space and acknowledging the inconvenience caused to the local community, it is important that as soon as the school's need for the fenced area ceases, the area is reintegrated into the Recreation Ground and that this should be commenced immediately when the school closes. They advise that this should include fence removal, post holes being filled and possibly seeding in the first week. The area will, as a whole, need seeding and top dressing in a similar fashion to park football pitches. This may need to be undertaken in September 2021 after the summer holidays if the School moves in the summer or in the case the school moves in time for Easter 2021, in April/May 2021. The reestablishment of grass is reliant on damp weather but may be lightly used during this period, as is the case with park pitches over the late spring/summer. Given the issues with the condition of the land an additional condition is recommended to secure submission and approval of a scheme for reinstatement of the land.
- 6.18 Officers fully acknowledge the concerns of residents regarding the continued mixed use of the area of the playing fields by the school. Whilst a permanent retention of the fenced off area would conflict with Policy EN7 it is considered that subject to full reinstatement of the land, the harm caused by retention of the fenced off area for education use for a further 12 month period is outweighed by the need for the school to continue on the site for this temporary period, the provision of which is supported by Policies OU3 and the NPPF. The ongoing Covid19 epidemic is also likely to require increased use of the space by the school in order to accommodate outdoor teaching and lessons whilst practicing social distancing.
- 6.19 Relatedly officers consider that the visual impact of the fencing is minor and suitable for a park setting and whilst to be retained for a further 12-month period is temporary in nature. In this respect, subject to the condition to require reinstatement of the land and removal of the fencing and structures, the proposals are considered to comply with Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) which

seeks that development maintains and enhances the character of the area within which it is located.

Disturbance to Neighbouring Properties

- 6.20 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to protect the amenity of existing surrounding occupiers. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to protect surrounding occupiers from the impact of pollution.
- 6.21 RBC Environmental Protection have advised that there have been no noise complaints received within the last 12 months regarding activities at the school site. Subject to continued application of the condition which restricts use of the space for educational purposes to the hours of 1040 to 1530 on Mondays and Fridays only during terms time, it is not considered that retention of the fenced off area of land for use by the school would not result in any unacceptable impacts on surrounding residential occupiers and would comply with Policies CC8 and EN16.
- 6.22 The majority of the objections received relating to noise and disturbance matters refer to people travelling to and from the school site and are considered under the separate application on the agenda (ref. 200564) for retention of the school buildings.

Other Matters

Natural Environment

- 6.23 Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) requires development to retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest found within the application site into their schemes. Policy EN14 (Trees Hedges and Woodlands) states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal, and the Borough's vegetation cover will be extended with new development to make provision for tree planting within the application site, or off-site in appropriate situations.
- 6.24 The application seeks to retain the fencing on site as existing and the RBC Natural Environment Tree Officer is satisfied that there would be no adverse impact on trees. However, a condition is recommended to require an arboricultural method statement to be submitted and approved by the LPA to set out how existing trees near to the site would be protected during reinstatement works. The RBC ecological consultant raise no objection the proposals which are not considered to have any implications for biodiversity.

Transport

- 6.25 This site is located in an accessible location close to Caversham Local Centre in terms of Policy CC6 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development), with good access to a range of transport modes. Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking Facilities) seek to ensure the development proposals are acceptable in transport

related matters. RBC Transport raises no objection to the continued use of the area of the playing field for a further 12-month temporary period and officers are satisfied that the nature of the proposal is such that it would not have any adverse transport implications. A number of objections received relating to transport matters are in relation to the retention of the school site and buildings and are considered under the separate application on the agenda (ref. 200564).

Archaeology

- 6.26 Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance) seeks that development proposals should not have an adverse impact on archaeological remains. Archaeological investigation was undertaken prior to installation of the fencing due to the presence of a 'cropmark' on the land which was reported to Berkshire Archaeology. No further action is required in respect of archaeology to retain the fence for a further temporary 12-month period.

Equalities Impact

- 6.27 When determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 In the particular circumstances of the continued educational need, an extended temporary period for use of the fenced off area of the playing fields is accepted and is considered to outweigh the temporary harm to/loss of open space subject to full reinstatement of the land at the end of the temporary period. The officer recommendation is to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the recommendation box at the beginning of this report.

Drawings and Documents Submitted:

- Site Location Plan (Drawing no. E03620 A PL 1060 A);
- Existing site plan (Drawing no. E03620 A PL 1063); and
- Proposed site plan (Drawing no. E03620 A PL 1062 A).
 - Design and Access Statement, (included within this Planning Statement);
 - Ecological Appraisal, by RPS;
 - Acoustic Report, by RPS;
 - Acoustic Report Addendum, by RPS;
 - Noise Technical Note, by BWB;

Case Officer: Matt Burns



Site Plan