

## UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020

ITEM NO. 9

**Ward:** Caversham

**App No:** 200564/FUL

**Address:** The Heights Primary School, 82 Gosbrook Road Caversham, Reading

**Proposal:** Retention of two modular school accommodation blocks (Use Class D1) and associated facilities for use by the Heights Primary School until 31st August 2021

**Determination Date:** Originally 10/6/2020; EOT agreed until 17/7/2020

### RECOMMENDATION:

As per the main Agenda report, but the recommendation is no longer 'subject to' confirmation that the proposals are acceptable in flood risk terms.

The following additional conditions are also recommended:

18. Retention of the floor levels of both buildings as existing
19. Submission and approval of details confirming that the void area beneath both buildings are being retained and kept free from obstruction.

### 1. Flooding

- 1.1 The recommendation within the main agenda report is subject to the outstanding flooding matters being resolved. The Environment Agency has since responded further on the application and have withdrawn their objection subject to conditions.
- 1.2 The EA has acknowledged that the buildings are existing temporary structures and have floor levels that are set above the flood level for the site as agreed when the previous applications on the site were granted. They also recognise that construction of the permanent replacement school is underway elsewhere within the Borough at Mapledurham Playing Fields. On this basis and because permission is being sought to retain the buildings for a further 12-month period only, the EA is satisfied that the flood risk assessment submitted as part of the application is acceptable and that due to the temporary nature of the retention of the buildings a revised assessment which takes into account the impact of the climate change flood level is not required in this instance. This is the same approach that the EA applied when the buildings were first installed at the site. The EA has also advised that in the event that planning permission is sought to retain the building beyond August 2021, then any flood risk assessment would then be required to consider the climate change flood level due to the extended period the buildings will have been in place on the land.

1.3 The EA recommends conditions to secure retention of the floor levels of both buildings as existing and to secure submission and approval of confirmation that the void areas beneath both buildings are being retained and kept free from obstruction.

## 2. Other

2.1 Paragraph 4.8 of the main agenda report sets out that due to Covid19 restrictions officers were unable to display site notices at the application site. However, the agent has confirmed that they received the planning site notices and that these were display at the site on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The agent has submitted photographs to officers confirming display of the site notices).

2.2 Paragraph 4.10 of the main agenda report states that the applicant carried out their own public consultation exercise prior to submitting the planning application with 1,027 leaflets sent to surrounding properties. Officers can also confirm that in addition to this the applicant also erected a number of their own site notices regarding the proposed further retention of the school around the site prior to submission of the application.

2.3 Paragraph 5 of the main agenda sets out the relevant national and local planning policy context. Reference to the Government's Policy Statement - *Planning for Schools Development* (2011) should also be included here which sets out the Government's commitment to support the development of state funded schools through the planning system. In summary this document states that the creation and development of state-funded schools is strongly in the national interest and that planning decision-makers can and should support that objective, in a manner consistent with their statutory obligations. The statement seeks that all parties work together proactively from an early stage to help plan for state-school development and to shape strong planning applications. This collaborative working would help to ensure that the answer to proposals for the development of state-funded schools should be, wherever possible, "yes".

**Officer: Matt Burns**