

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 1 June 2022

ITEM NO. 14

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Ward: Thames

App No.: 212061

Address: Richfield Driving Range, Richfield Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8EQ

Proposal: The demolition of existing driving range structures and the development of a new three-storey 8 form entry school for years 11 - 16, including a SEND unit and 300 place 6th form (total school capacity of 1500 pupils) including the creation of a new access from Richfield Avenue, new parking area, cycle parking landscaped areas, external play areas, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and sporting pitches

Applicant: Bowmer & Kirkland

Deadline: 23 May 2022 Extended to 30 June 2022

AMENDED RECOMMENDATION:

Transport Works required by S106 amended to:

- (i) The Owner will design and construct a Tiger Crossing close to the school entrance in the position shown on Drawing 600353-HEX-00-00-DR-TP-0500/P02 to include the provision of stage 2, 3 and 4 safety audits in accordance with GG 119 DMRB or any subsequent revision amendment or re-enactment thereof published by the U K Government
- (ii) The Owner will widen the existing footway/cycleway to 3 metres on the northern side of Richfield Avenue between the pedestrian entrance to the application site and the junction of Richfield Avenue and Thames Side Promenade as shown in brown on Drawing 600353-HEX-00-00-DR-TP-0500/P02 to include the provision of stage 2, 3 and 4 safety audits in accordance with GG119DMRB or any subsequent revision amendment or re-enactment thereof published by the U K
- (iii) The Owner will widen the existing footway to 3 metres to create a shared footway/cycleway on the south side of Richfield Avenue from the signalised crossing adjacent to the petrol station to the junction of Richfield Avenue / Cardiff Road to include the provision of stage 2, 3 and 4 safety audits in accordance with GG119DMRB or any subsequent revision amendment or re-enactment thereof published by the U K
- (iv) The Owner will allow, permit and maintain an access route for large vehicles to access and egress the land to the south of the car park
- (v) £5,000 towards a Traffic Regulation Order for alterations to the parking

restrictions along the ~~Caversham Road~~ Richfield Avenue frontage of the site.

CONDITIONS as on main report but delete:

11. Odour Management details to be approved

14. Floodlighting of External Sports Areas details to be approved

1. REASONS FOR UPDATE REPORT

1.1 To amend the S106 obligations for transport works

The obligations set out in the main report preceded further discussions on extent of the works required with the preference for the applicant to carry out the works rather than pay the Highway Authority to do them as would facilitate meeting the timetable for the school being ready to open. Amendment also to correct the street where the TRO is required. Employment and Skills Plan obligations remain unchanged.

1.2 To delete two planning conditions (no. 11 & 14).

The applicant has made the case that given the distance from nearest houses the odour management plan from the school kitchen is not necessary. Also, as they do not intend to install floodlighting to the external play areas the floodlighting condition is not needed either. Officers have re-considered and agree that the cooking smells would not be such a nuisance as to require additional controls. Should the school require floodlighting in the future that would require a separate planning permission and lighting levels could be controlled at that stage.

1.3 To clarify the bicycle provision position.

In the initial comments from the transport officer it was stated that “The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority’s standards in respect of cycle and pedestrian access to the site and is in conflict with Reading Local Plan Policy TR4”. To clarify, TR4 refers to Cycle Routes and Facilities and while the number of and specifications for the proposed bicycle parking facilities are in accordance with this policy, the access routes were not, given the width of the footways leading to the site. The S106 requirement to widen the footways as specified enables the proposal to meet all of this policy.

1.4 To clarify the reasons for BREEAM ‘Very Good’.

The proposed development has been identified as likely to meet BREEAM ‘Very Good’ standards when the assessments are carried out prior to construction and then prior to the school opening. Officers have pressed for clarification and improvements on this score and the applicant confirmed that the development is likely to achieve a BREEAM standard between 60-65% so in excess on the minimum ‘Very Good’ score. Therefore, the recommended conditions build in the expectation that the completed building will achieve a score of at least 60% (the minimum to be ‘Very Good is 55%).

No development above ground works shall occur until evidence has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority demonstrating that the development is to be constructed to achieve a BREEAM Sustainability Standard with a minimum standard of BREEAM 60% Very Good rating.

and

Within 6 months of the first occupation of the development hereby approved, evidence demonstrating that the development has achieved a BREEAM Sustainability Standard with a minimum standard of BREEAM 60% Very Good rating is to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority

- 1.5 The applicant has been asked to explain the potential for further improvements to the energy performance of the school and has provided the following:

The energy statement confirms that the school will have a heat profile significantly less than 5,000 hours per annum and therefore, onsite CHP is not viable. The decarbonisation of grid electricity also further reduces feasibility of CHP systems with respect to carbon emissions. The emission factor for grid electricity is expected to be reduced below that for the emission factor gas fired CHP.

The project budget has been focused on the building fabric in a 'fabric first' approach. Whilst PV panels and ASHP are feasible, ensuring the building consumes as little energy as possible is a higher priority. PV panels and ASHP can be added as a bolt on renewable in the future, improving the construction performance at a later time is significantly more difficult and would involve greater costs. Therefore, the approach is the most appropriate within the available funding.

The building has been designed to minimise energy consumption from the outset and to meet the overheating criteria to ensure the building will stay cool during warm spells without the need for energy hungry air conditioning through passive design measures. The building is also heavily insulated and energy efficient services such as LED lighting have been used throughout. Whilst the funding for heat pumps is not provided, the building's heating infrastructure has been designed to incorporate low temperature heating thus giving a robust solution in a rapidly changing environment for policy and technologies allowing the heat source to be easily swapped in the future to adopt the most appropriate technology be it heat pumps or other sources such as hydrogen boilers.

We did look at moving towards a more electric led heating strategy, but existing supply capacity constraints meant that there

would be an 8 year delay for the supply to be upgraded to the required standard.

- 1.6 The main report (para 7.55) explains that while sustainability Policy CC2 requires all major non-residential developments to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Excellent' standards, the explanatory text recognises that schools may struggle to meet these standards. Information is required to demonstrate that the sustainability standard to be achieved is the highest possible for the relevant development type and officers are satisfied that the applicant has justified their approach in accordance with this Policy. The recommended conditions will ensure that their approach is followed.

Julie Williams