

Committee: **Regulatory
Planning Committee**

Date: **18 April 2018**

Report by: **Director of Communities, Economy and Transport**

Proposal: **Demolition of an accommodation block and erection of new Sports Hall and single storey ancillary accommodation, new student entrance lobbies, first floor corridor with other internal alterations and site landscaping. Revised car parking layout to include an additional 28 spaces and parking for 72 cycles.**

Site Address: **Willingdon Community School, Broad Road, Willingdon, BN20 9QX**

Applicant: **Director of Children's Services**

Application No. **WD/3385/CC**

Key Issues: **1. Need
2. Siting, design and impact on residential amenity
3. Impact on Traffic (including the Ashdown Forest)**

Contact Officer: **David Vickers, Tel No: 01273 481629**

Local Member: **Councillor Stephen Shing**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To grant planning permission subject to conditions as indicated in paragraph 8.1 of this report.

CONSIDERATION BY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES, ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT.

1. The Site and Surroundings

1.1 Willingdon Community School is on the north-western outskirts of Eastbourne off the A22 Eastbourne Road and lies near to the South Downs within the Polegate and Willingdon development boundary.

1.2 The School occupies a relatively level L-shaped site covering almost 6 hectares. The main School buildings and areas of hardstanding are concentrated in the south-eastern corner of the site, with extensive playing fields to the north-west and south-west. The School buildings comprise

rectangular blocks, the majority of which are two storeys in height. A large hard surfaced area lies to the rear of the main School buildings and provides dual use informal play space and four external games courts. A number of temporary mobile classrooms sit immediately to the north of the games courts on the perimeter of the playing fields. The proposed development would be on the western edge of the games courts and extend north towards the School playing field.

1.3 The School is accessed from Broad Road to the south and benefits from separate vehicular and pedestrian entrance points. There are two car parks on site; at the School entrance and to the east of the main School building. The School is surrounded by housing including on Broad Road to the south, Farmlands Avenue to the east, Millstream Gardens to the north, Glen Close to the west and Wannock Lane to the south-west. As such, the majority of the School playing fields share a boundary with the gardens of residential properties. The site is landscaped around the main entrance and benefits from dense boundary vegetation to the front of the School site and a high hedge along Broad Road.

2. The Proposal

2.1 The proposal is mainly for the construction of a new sports hall which would be comparable to the height of the adjacent two storey buildings with single storey wrap around ancillary accommodation on its southern elevation. This would improve sports facilities at the School and at the same time allow another Form of Entry increasing the numbers on roll by 200 to a maximum of 1200 over a period of 5 years. Another 7 (full time equivalent) staff are anticipated making a total of 69 teaching and 45 non-teaching staff.

2.2 The proposed building will be predominantly clad in vertical timber boarding and will comprise a sports hall providing a multi-use games court, changing rooms, toilets, disabled and staff changing facilities, additional classroom space, plant room and stores. The hall itself will measure approximately 33 metres x 18 metres x 7.5 metres clear internal height and will require demolition of the RoSLA (Raising of the School Leaving Age) building. The proposed sports hall layout allows separate access from the main School building in order to continue to offer community use of the School's buildings 'out of hours'. During these times the School is currently used mainly for adult education and is generally available until 10 pm Monday – Saturday but is closed on Sunday. A covered walkway is also proposed to link the sports hall with the existing School and direct access will also be provided between the sports hall and the outside games courts.

2.3 The proposal also includes additional cycle and car parking on the site, including an extension to the car parking to east of the site and the formation of a new car parking area off Broad Road to the front of the site. The two areas would provide an additional 28 parking spaces with the total rising to 64 on the site. Both car parks will be lit by a combination of bollard lights and columns, 4 metres high. An additional covered area for the storage of cycles is also proposed off Broad Road initially providing capacity for 72 cycles. The

works will also include the hard surfacing of the grass verge adjacent to the Bus Stop on Broad Road to improve the waiting area for pupils and allow the buses to use the entire length of the stop without having to wait alongside grass verges.

2.4 Other works are also proposed as follows. Firstly, to extend two entrance lobbies on the north side of the School adjacent to the games court to accommodate the increased movement of pupils in this area. Secondly, a new first floor corridor is proposed adjacent to the gym to improve circulation. The gym will be refurbished to provide additional teaching space. The Raising of the School Leaving Age (RoSLA) building will be demolished so in total 1214 m² gross floorspace (737 m² net) is proposed.

3. Site History

3.1 Willingdon Community School has been subject to a number of planning applications dating back to 1956 when the building was first constructed as a 2 Form of Entry Secondary School. The most recent permissions on the site relate to the installation of a temporary single mobile classroom to extend the existing temporary double mobile classroom to the north-east of the School playground (Ref: WD/3313/CC) and a retrospective planning permission for the retention of four existing mobile classrooms to the north of the playground (Ref: WD/3311/CC).

3.2 Whilst there are no permissions of direct relevance to this proposal the School has been significantly extended since its construction including, in 1975, the construction of the RoSLA building, which is proposed to be removed as part of this application. In addition in 1993 planning permission was granted (Ref: WD/1427/CC) for the construction of a two storey extension to the main School building to provide 8 additional classrooms and an extension to the car park and hard play area. In 2010 planning permission was granted (Ref: WD/2884/CC) for the provision of a new timber clad stand alone two storey classroom block to the rear of the main School building providing four classrooms, staircase and platform lift.

4. Consultations and Representations

4.1 Wealden District Council: Raise no objection in principle to the development, however it is noted that the proposal is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and therefore it is necessary to determine if the proposal has a likely significant effect on the Ashdown Forest SPA. East Sussex County Council should, as the competent authority, satisfy themselves that the proposal would not have a likely significant effect upon the Ashdown Forest SPA and Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

4.2 Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council: Raise concern with regard to the long standing issues at the School site, which do not appear to have been addressed by this proposal. It is noted that parking at all times of the day and

especially at School arrival and departure times, affects the residents as well as access by emergency vehicles and public transport along Broad Road. This proposal provides an opportunity to alleviate the issues for neighbours by providing more parking spaces than proposed, a drop off/pick up lay-by and consideration of safer walking routes including a drop kerb at the corner of Tott Yew Road. It is also considered that increased traffic movements during the day will add to the poor air quality.

4.3 Sport England: Raise no objection and note that the proposal is for a four-court sports hall, and does not negatively impact the playing field or its pitches. This proposal is considered to meet Policy exception E5 whereby the proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field. It is also recommended, that if the Local Planning Authority wish to do so, a condition is placed on any grant of planning permission requiring a community use agreement.

4.4 Highway Authority: Do not wish to raise objection subject to the provision of conditions to secure the proposed additional on site parking provision and an update to the School Travel Plan.

4.5 Flood Risk Management: The proposals for managing surface water runoff are acceptable in principle. Any permission should include conditions to ensure runoff is managed safely.

4.6 Sussex Police (Designing Out Crime Officer): Raises no objection to the proposal and note that the controlled access to this new build would be advantageous given it would be used externally of the School's normal hours.

4.7 Environment Agency: No observations received.

4.8 Local Representations: Four objections have been received from local residents. The main concerns relate to an increase in parking and traffic pressures in the vicinity of the School. It is noted that staff and parent park alongside the School's playing fields in Broad Road. There are no passing places so the free movement of traffic is obstructed by parked cars and creates difficulties for buses and emergency vehicles. This is exacerbated by parents dropping of and collecting children from nearby Willingdon Primary School. In addition concerns are raised with regard to an increase in noise and disturbance from the extra traffic that would be generated by the proposal particularly at the junction of Broad Road, Farmlands Avenue and Coppice Avenue.

Other objections raise concerns with regard to the suitability of the proposed extension in terms of size and appearance, which is considered to be out of character in the area. It is suggested that it is too large and unsightly to look at and would result in overshadowing, overlooking and loss of privacy. In addition, concerns are raised with regard to the potential for extra noise levels from the site especially from an increase in weekend and evening use of the

grounds. It is considered that the existing boundary treatment of the School is not substantial enough to help reduce the noise levels.

5. The Development Plan and other policies of relevance to this decision are:

5.1 Wealden District (incorporating part of the South Downs National Park), Core Strategy – Adopted February 2013 (as amended following the Court of Appeal judgement): WCS12 (Biodiversity)

The Wealden District (incorporating part of the South Downs National Park) Core Strategy Local Plan was adopted on 19 February 2013. The Core Strategy Local Plan is the key policy document setting out a strategic vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the area up to 2027. The Core Strategy Local Plan only replaces parts of the Wealden Local Plan 1998. Some policies from this earlier plan are still “saved” where they remain of relevance and until they are superseded by further Development Plan documents.

5.2 Wealden Local Plan 1998: Saved Policies EN27 (layout and design of development), EN28 (Design of Development for People with Disabilities), TR3 (Traffic impact of New Development)

Saved development management policies contained in the Wealden Local Plan remain part of the Development Plan for the area. Wealden District Council has not formally determined whether its Saved Policies in the Wealden Local Plan are in general conformity with the NPPF. However the County Planning Authority has assessed the Saved Policies as being in general conformity with the overarching principles of the NPPF.

5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 (NPPF)

The NPPF does not change the status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 72 of Part 8 (Promoting healthy communities) advises Local Planning Authorities to give great weight to the need to alter and expand Schools. Furthermore, Part 4 (Promoting sustainable transport) and Part 7 (Requiring Good Design) are of particular relevance to this proposal.

5.4 Policy Statement on Planning for Schools Development (2011)

The policy statement states that the planning system, when dealing with planning applications for state-funded schools should operate positively and there should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools. The policy statement encourages a collaborative approach to applications, in particular encouraging pre-application discussions and the use of planning obligations to help mitigate the adverse impact of developments. The policy statement indicates that the Secretary of State will be minded to consider refusal of any application for state-funded schools to be unreasonable conduct, unless it is supported by clear and cogent evidence

6. Main Considerations

Need

6.1 The County Council's educational strategy set out in its 'Education Commissioning Plan 2017 – 2021' expects demand for secondary school places within the wider Eastbourne area to exceed the overall Published Admission Numbers (PAN) from the early 2020s. The applicant attributes the increase to recently completed and planned housing developments, coupled with a growing number of primary places within the feeder primary Schools serving Willingdon Community School. As a result, it is predicted that future Year 7 intakes to Willingdon School will be significantly above the current PAN of 200 and total of 1000 pupils. As such, this proposal seeks to increase the PAN between academic years 2020 and 2024 with an additional 40 places per year, ultimately to a total of 1200 pupils on roll.

6.2 The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools. This is echoed in the Government's 2011 Policy Statement on Planning for Schools Development which also advises that the planning system should operate positively when dealing with planning applications for state funded Schools. The applicant has indicated that there is likely to be a shortfall of secondary School places within the Eastbourne area in 2020, given the numbers of pupils entering local feeder primary Schools together with planned housing development within the area. This will gradually increase demand at Willingdon Community School which is already regularly oversubscribed. It is therefore considered there is demonstrable need to address this increase and to expand and enhance teaching provision at the School in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF.

Siting, design and impact on residential amenity

6.3 Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden Local Plan requires development be of a suitable scale, form and design in relation to the surrounding environment; to respect the character of adjoining development and to create no unacceptable impact on the privacy and amenity of adjoining developments by reason of scale, height, form or noise. In addition Saved Policy EN28 requires proposals for development on land used for education purposes to provide safe and convenient access for people with limited mobility, where it is reasonable and practicable.

6.4 The main element of the proposals is the sports hall and the ancillary accommodation to its west and south elevations. Although a large structure in its own right this is a correspondingly large site and the sports hall is comparable in scale with other buildings on the site. Quite rightly it has a flat roof in order to minimise its bulk but this is hidden behind a parapet which will also mask the solar pv panels, sunpipes and ventilation stacks. The ancillary accommodation around the sports hall is to be constructed to allow for an additional floor above to help 'futureproof' the site against uncertainties with

housing numbers in Wealden District (although any proposals of this nature would need planning permission under current legislation).

6.5 The form of the sports hall follows its function. It is essentially a windowless box but the predominantly timber clad elevations are considered appropriate in the edge of urban area location with reciprocal views to and from the South Downs to the west. The use of colour to waymark approaches to the building is welcomed and complements, rather than competes with, the timber cladding forming an attractive composition.

6.6 The layout of the proposal makes provision for users with restricted mobility. There will be disabled facilities in each changing room together with wide circulation spaces and doors. The opportunity is also being taken to improve accessibility around those parts of the School which are to be refurbished, for example by adjusting local levels to minimise or eliminate thresholds.

6.7 The scale of the proposal will not result in loss of light or overshadowing to neighbouring properties. The nearest is at 12 Glen Close to the west and the distance between its boundary and the proposal is approximately 55 metres. This is considered sufficient to avoid harm to their amenity from overshadowing, loss of privacy, an overbearing nature or noise disturbance. The greater proportion of any additional noise arising from the proposal will be contained within the sports hall.

6.8 The proposal is therefore in accordance with Saved Policies EN27 and EN28 in the Wealden Local Plan

Impact on Traffic (including the Ashdown Forest)

6.9 Saved Policies EN27 and TR3 of the Wealden Local Plan require that new development does not create or perpetuate unacceptable traffic conditions and provides satisfactory means of access.

6.10 A minor alteration to the grounds maintenance access from Broad Road is proposed to allow for more frequent use that will occur with the new car parking area. In addition part of the grass verge on Broad Road will be hard surfaced. Currently the verges are worn by children waiting to board school buses. The hard surfacing will also allow buses more freedom to park within the designated bus markings on Broad Road.

6.11 An additional 24 car parking spaces are proposed which is well in excess of the 7 required to mitigate the additional demands of the proposal itself. This will go a long way to reducing the historical parking shortfall that has evolved on the site, the resulting overspill in Broad Road having been highlighted in local representations as well as those of the Parish Council.

6.12 A School Travel Survey carried out in October last year found that 42% of children walk to school, 32% come by school bus and 23% by car (including sharing and linked trips). This is considered quite a good base to

build from with a relatively low proportion of children being transported by car. Nevertheless the surrounding area is quite level and the roads generally quiet. As 77% of the School's children live in Polegate, Wannock and Willingdon there would appear to be some scope to raise the proportion of trips made by cycle from the current 2.4%. With this in mind an area in front of the school has been identified for cycle parking and this together with other measures to encourage sustainable travel and considerate parking will be developed through an updated Travel Plan to be secured through condition. This should help alleviate some of the congestion currently experienced in Broad Road at the beginning and end of the school day although it should be emphasised that any issues are highly localised and acute being experienced over a short period of time. Additionally the afternoon peak, as with any school, does not coincide with general 'rush hour'.

6.13 While congestion and inconsiderate parking are clearly issues for those local representations received they are not considered to amount to either the 'severe' test set out in paragraph 32 of the NPPF or the "clear and cogent" evidence set out in the Government's Policy Statement. The proposal is therefore considered to satisfy the aims of Saved Policies TR3 and ENV27 in the Wealden Local Plan.

6.14 The representation made by Wealden District Council raise no objection in principle but advise that the County Council needs to be satisfied that the proposal would not have a likely significant effect upon the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC. These designated areas are sensitive to impacts associated with recreational pressure, within the SPA, and nitrogen deposition arising from vehicular traffic, within the SAC.

6.15 Given the location of the application site and the nature of proposed development, there is not considered to be any likely increase in recreational pressure on the Ashdown Forest, should planning permission be granted and the scheme implemented. With regards to increases in vehicular traffic across the Ashdown Forest the movement of children and carers attending the School currently and in the future is confined to Willingdon and its immediate vicinity including smaller villages to the north served by school buses. Any impacts of increased vehicular traffic will be localised and would not increase numbers of vehicle trips on routes through the Ashdown Forest. Nitrogen levels in Ashdown Forest would therefore not be materially affected by the proposal both by itself and in combination with other plans and projects, the need for any further assessment can be screened out and Core Policy WCS12 is satisfied.

7. Conclusion and reasons for approval

7.1 In accordance with Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the decision on this application should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2 The proposal is considered to be acceptable in its impacts on the visual and neighbouring amenities of the area as well as the local highway network. It will not increase vehicular trips across the Ashdown Forest and therefore complies with Policy WCS12 (Biodiversity) in the Wealden District Core Strategy 2013 and with Saved Policies EN27 (layout and design of development), EN28 (Design of Development for People with Disabilities) and TR3 (Traffic impact of New Development) in the Wealden Local Plan 1998.

7.3 In determining this planning application, the County Council has worked with the applicant and agent in a positive and proactive manner. The Council has also sought views from consultees and neighbours and has considered responses in preparing the recommendation. This approach has been taken positively and proactively in accordance with the requirement in the NPPF, and as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

7.4 There are no other material considerations and the decision should be taken in accordance with the development plan.

8. Recommendation

8.1 To recommend the Planning Committee to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the plans listed in the Schedule of Approved Plans.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No works which include the creation of trenches or culverts or the presence of pipes shall commence until measures to protect badgers (and other animals) from being trapped in open excavation and/or pip culverts are submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. The measures should include:
 - a. creation of sloping escape ramps for badgers, achieved by edge profiling or trenches/excavations or by using planks placed into them at the end of each working day; and
 - b. open pipework greater than 150mm outside diameter being blanked off at the end of each working day.

Reason: to ensure badgers are not trapped and harmed on site and to prevent delays in site operation.

4. No development shall take place, including any ground works or works of demolition, until a Construction Management Plan, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. Thereafter the approved Plan shall be implemented and adhered to in full throughout the entire construction period. The plan shall provide details as appropriate but not be restricted to the following matters;
- the anticipated number, frequency and routing of vehicles during construction
 - the method of access and egress and routing of vehicles during construction,
 - the management of flood risk
 - the parking of vehicles by site operatives and visitors,
 - the loading and unloading of plant, materials and waste,
 - the storage of plant and materials used in construction of the development,
 - the erection and maintenance of security hoarding,
 - the provision and utilisation of wheel washing facilities and other works required to mitigate the impact of construction upon the public highway (including the provision of temporary Traffic Regulation Orders),
 - details of public engagement both prior to and during construction works.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and amenity of the area.

5. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, including any demolition, a condition survey of the surrounding highway network is required to be undertaken and submitted and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. Any damage caused to the highway as a direct consequence of the construction traffic shall be rectified at the applicant's expense.

Reason: In the interest of Highway safety and amenity of the area.

6. Prior to commencement of development a detailed surface water management design shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. The design shall include hydraulic calculations which take account of connectivity with different surface water drainage features together with details of maintenance and management. Before the development is occupied the approved drainage system shall be made available for use and written confirmation provided to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

Reason: To ensure appropriate management of surface water in accordance with Saved Policy EN27 in the Wealden Local Plan 1998.

7. All ecological measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Ecological Design Strategy and

Landscape Management Plan (Lizard Landscape and Ecology, December 2017).

Reason: To ensure that the measures considered necessary as part of the ecological impact assessment are carried out as specified.

8. No part of the development hereby approved shall be occupied until the car parking has been constructed and provided in accordance with the approved plans. The areas shall thereafter be retained for that use and shall not be used other than for the parking of motor vehicles.

Reason: To provide car-parking space for the development in accordance with Saved Policy TR3 in the Wealden Local Plan 2003.

9. No part of the development hereby approved shall be occupied until the bicycle parking has been constructed and provided in accordance with the approved plans. The areas shall thereafter be retained for that use and shall not be used other than for the parking of bicycles.

Reason: To provide bicycle parking for the development in accordance with Saved Policy TR3 in the Wealden Local Plan 2003.

10. No part of the development shall be occupied until a Draft Framework Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. Thereafter the approved Travel Plan shall be implemented and reviewed as specified within the approved document.

Reason: To encourage and promote sustainable transport options in accordance with Saved Policy TR3 in the Wealden Local Plan 2003.

11. Prior to occupation of development the applicant will be required to carry out off site highway works as agreed with the Highway Authority.

Reason: To ensure works in the public highway are properly carried out.

12. Prior to construction above ground samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the extension hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the appropriate appearance of the development in the area in accordance with Saved Policy EN27 in the Wealden Local Plan 1998.

INFORMATIVES

1. The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (section 1), it is an offence to remove, damage or

destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use of being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this Act. Trees and scrub are likely to contain nesting birds between 01 March and 31 August inclusive. Trees and scrub are present on the application site and are to be assumed to contain nesting bird activity on site during this period and shown it is absolutely certain that nesting birds are not present.

2. The applicant is requested to contact the Transport Development Control Team (01273 482254) to commence the process of implementing off-site highway works. The applicant is advised that it is an offence to undertake any works within the highway prior to the agreement being in place.

Schedule of Approved Plans

Detailed Plant Schedule and Specification, Ecological Design Strategy and Landscape Management Plan, 8918/P100 - Existing Location Plan, 8918/P101 - Existing Block Plan, 8918/P102 - Existing Ground Floor Plan of the School, 8918/P103 - Existing First Floor Plan of the School, 8918/P104 - Proposed Site Plan, 8918/P105 - Proposed External Works - Car Park 1, 8918/P106 - Proposed External Works - Car Park 2, 8918/P107 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan with External Work - Sports Hall, 8918/P108 - Proposed Roof Plan, 8918/P112 - Cross Sections, 8918/P113 - Longitudinal Section, 8918/P115 - First Floor Gym Alterations, 8918/P116 - Proposed Inclusion Suite, 8918/P117 - Proposed new Pupils Entrance, 8918/P118 - Proposed new pupils entrance - North East, 8918/P119 - Proposed Corridor Extension - First Floor Plan 1/2, 8918/P120 - Proposed Corridor Extension - First Floor Plan 2/2, 002 - Tree Retention and Protection Plan, 004 - Tree Retention and Protection Plan, 100 Rev01 - Soft Landscape Layout, 200 Rev01 - Detailed Planting Plan, 201 Rev01 - Detailed Planting Plan, Detailed Planting Plan (Habitat Creation), M15/06/502 Rev A - Lower Car Park Lighting Layout, M15/05/504 Rev A - Upper Car Park Lighting Layout, Existing School Refurbishment External Works Sheet 1 of 2, Existing School Refurbishment Site Drainage Sheet 1 of 2, Existing School Refurbishment Site Drainage Sheet 2 of 2, Existing School Refurbishment External Works Sheet 2 of 2

RUPERT CLUBB
Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
10 April 2018

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Planning Application File
Development Plan
National Planning Policy Framework