

Item D4

Construction of covered swimming pool with associated car parking, Paddock Wood Primary School, Paddock Wood – TW/07/560

A report by Head of Planning Applications Unit to Planning Applications Committee on 17 April 2007.

TW/07/560 – Revised application for construction of covered swimming pool, including changing accommodation and plant room with associated car parking, paving and landscaping. Paddock Wood Primary School, Old Kent Road, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge.

Recommendation: Permission be granted.

Local Members: Mr A. King

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

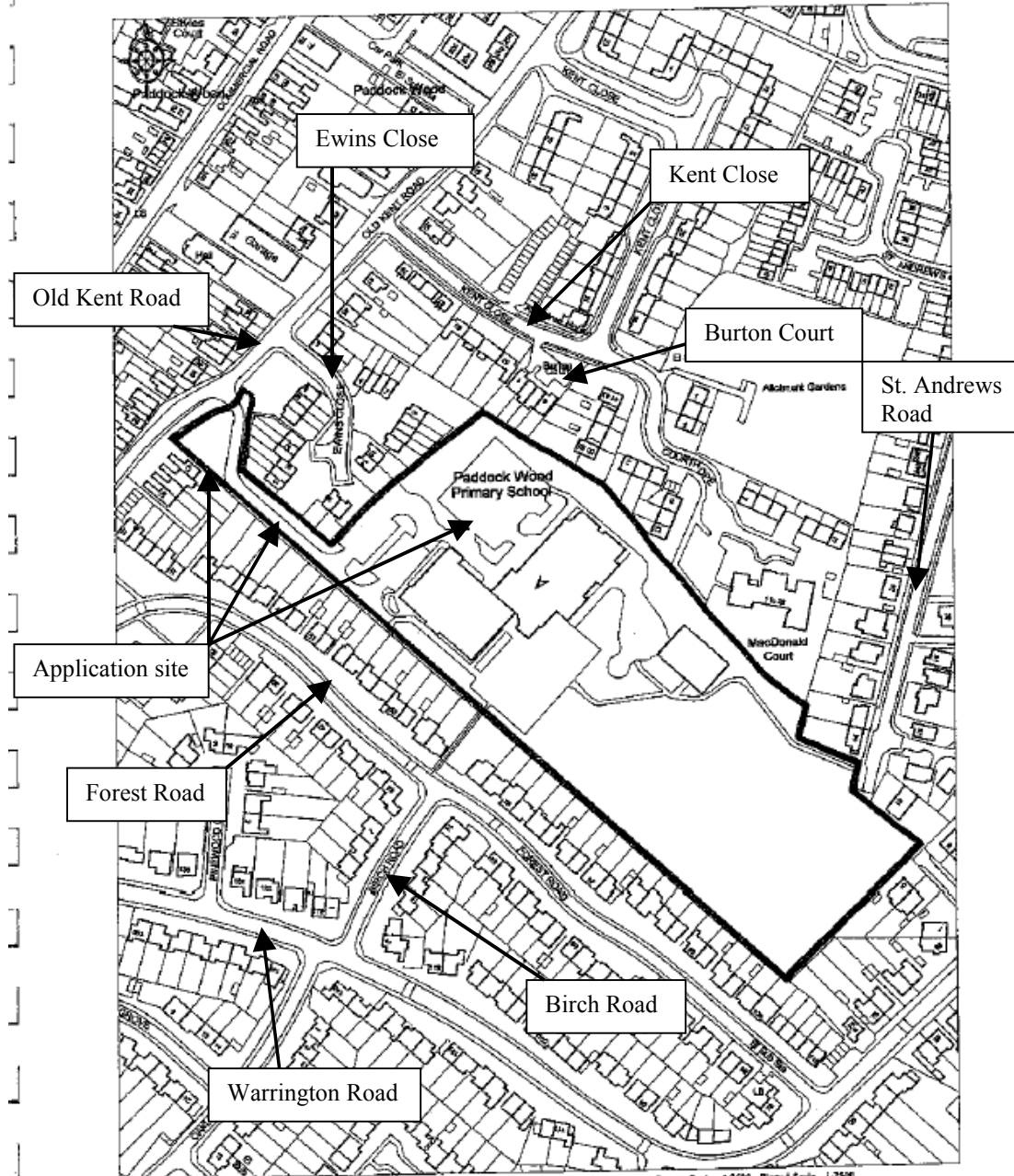
1. Paddock Wood County Primary School is located off Old Kent Road near to Paddock Wood town centre. Access to the site is via dedicated access road off Old Kent Road, and via a pedestrian footway onto Forest Road.
2. The application site is located towards the north corner to the front of the school grounds adjacent to Ewins Close, Burton Court and Kent Close, as well as minor extensions to the existing hard standing on site either side of the access road. The proposed location consists of part of the existing school playground area and a grassed area to north east of the existing car park and the main school building.
3. The Paddock Wood School site is surrounded by housing (please see attached plan). The nearest residential properties to the proposed building are located approximately 18 metres to the north-west in Ewins Close and 31 metres to the north-east in Burton Court. The closest façade to façade distance between the proposed building and residential property in Ewins Close would be approximately 28 metres.
4. There are no site-specific land designations within the Development Plan relating to the site.

Background

5. In February 1994 an application to develop a swimming pool in a similar location within Paddock Wood Primary School grounds was permitted by the County Planning Authority (ref: TW/93/1172). The planning permission required that the development be commenced within 5 years of the date on which permission was granted. Due to financial constraints the permission was never implemented and has now lapsed. The planning permission restricted the use of the pool to use by pupils and staff only during normal school hours, with use at other times restricted to between the hours of 0800 to 2100 Mondays to Saturdays only.
6. Since the 1994 application was considered, the land located to the north-west of the site (which constituted part of the school grounds) and land to the north-east, has been a redeveloped accommodating the housing development in Ewins Close and Burton Court.

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**PROPOSED SWIMMING POOL
PADDOCK WOOD COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL**



Ordnance Survey

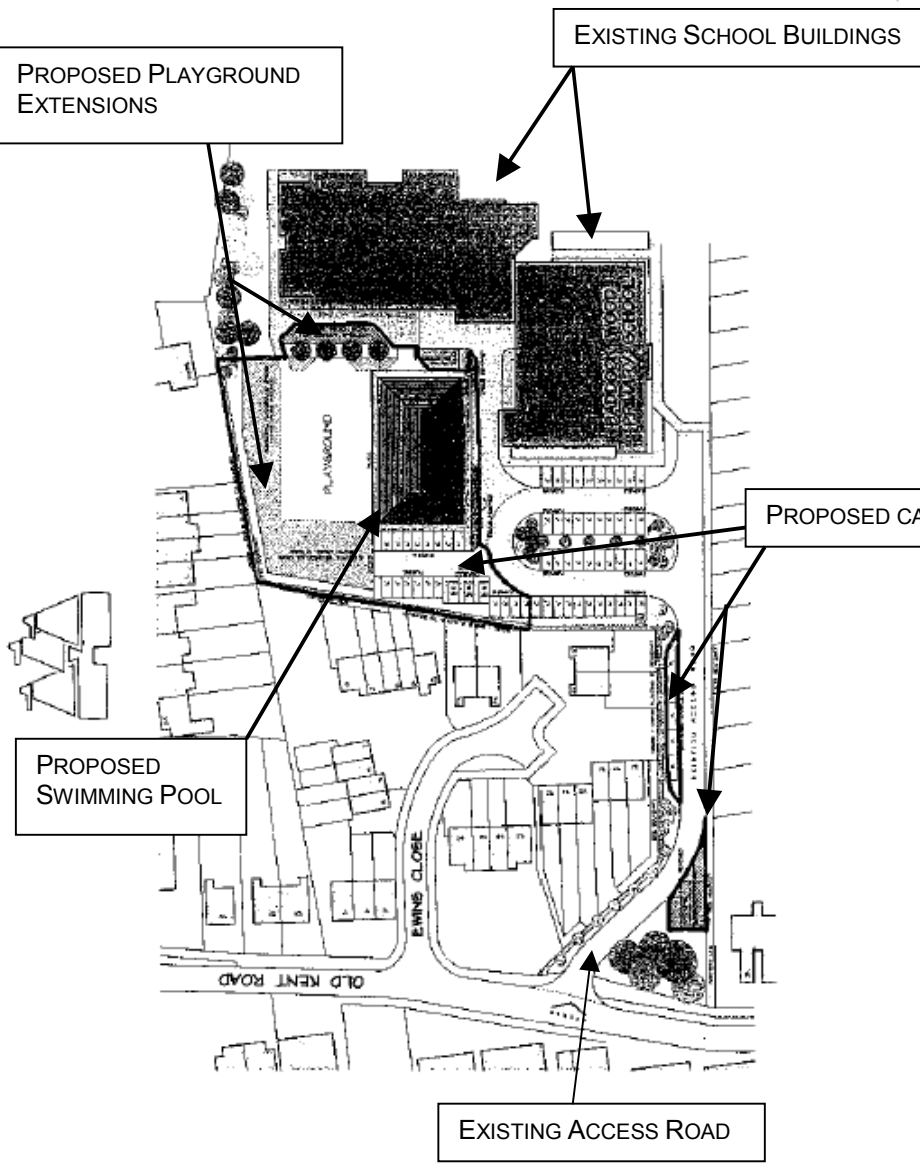
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The Johnson Dennehy Planning Partnership
The Coach House, Beacon End House,
London Road, Stanway, Colchester, Essex, CO3 0NY

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28 MAR 2007

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PROPOSED SWIMMING POOL – PADDOCK WOOD COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL
 PADDOCK WOOD – KENT
 First Strokes Swim Schools Ltd



NORTH

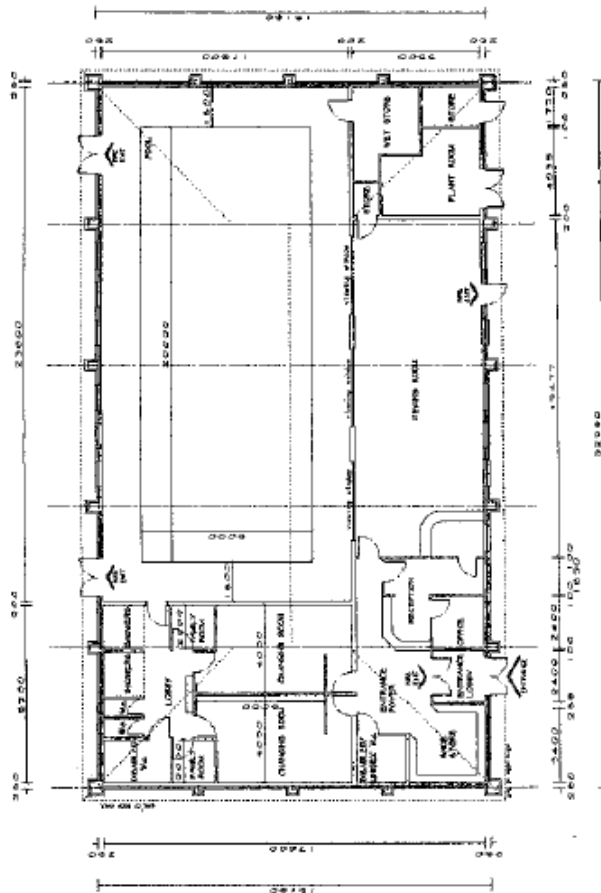
!SITE LAYOUT
 SCALE 1 : 500.

31 JULY 2007

	THE JOHNSON DENISHEY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP LTD. The Coach House, River End House, London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent, CO5 0BN Telephone: 01474 120670/22281 Fax: 01474 120670/22281 E-Mail: jdp@denishy.com		CLIENT FIRST STROKES SWIM SCHOOLS LTD.	SCALE DATE FILE No. 0742, DRG No. 220, P.1
	PROJECT Proposed Swimming Pool Paddock Wood County Primary School Paddock Wood – Kent	TITLE !SITE LAYOUT.	Revisions Description Date	

Construction of swimming pool, Paddock Wood Primary School, Paddock Wood – TW/07/560.

PROPOSED SWIMMING POOL – PADDOCK WOOD COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL
 PADDOCK WOOD – KENT
 First Strokes Swim Schools Ltd



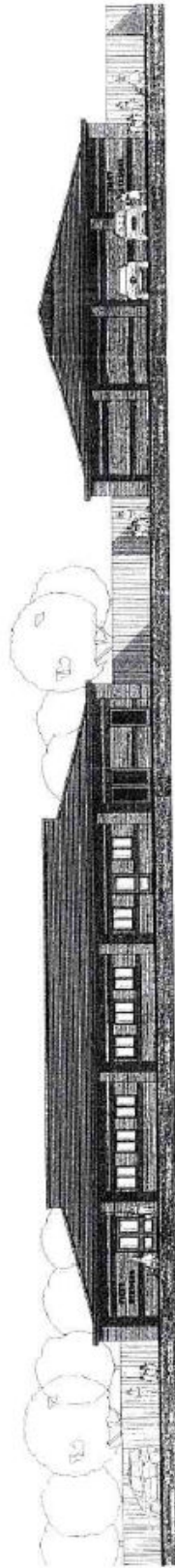
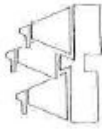
FLOOR PLAN.

28 MAR 2007

<p>THE JOHNSON DENNERLY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP LTD. The Coach House, Broomfield Road, Lymington, Hampshire, B315 2JY Telephone: 01534 733331 Fax: 01534 733332 Email: hds@jdennerly.com T: 01534 733331 F: 01534 733332 E: hds@jdennerly.com</p>	<p>PROJECT</p> <p>Proposed Swimming Pool Paddock Wood County Primary School Paddock Wood - Kent</p>	<p>TITLE</p> <p>FLOOR PLAN.</p>	<p>CLIENT</p> <p>FIRST STROKES SWIM SCHOOLS LTD.</p>	<p>Revisions</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>NO.</th> <th>DATE</th> <th>BY</th> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>	NO.	DATE	BY				<p>SHEET</p> <p>DATE</p> <p>FILE NO.</p> <p>DWG No.</p>
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<p>DATE</p> <p>28 MAR 2007</p>	<p>DATE</p> <p>December 06.</p>	<p>FILE No.</p> <p>62062.</p>	<p>DWG No.</p> <p>221.</p>	<p>P.A.</p>	<p>P.A.</p>						

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PROPOSED SWIMMING POOL – PADDOCK WOOD COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL
 PADDOCK WOOD – KENT
 First Strokes Swim Schools Ltd



South West Elevation.

North West Elevation.



North East Elevation.

South East Elevation.

PROJECT NO. TW/07/560
 DRAWING NO. 001
 DATE: 11/11/2010
 SCALE: 1:50
 DRAWN BY: J. HARRIS
 CHECKED BY: J. HARRIS
 APPROVED BY: J. HARRIS
 PROJECT NO. TW/07/560
 DRAWING NO. 001
 DATE: 11/11/2010
 SCALE: 1:50
 DRAWN BY: J. HARRIS
 CHECKED BY: J. HARRIS
 APPROVED BY: J. HARRIS

	THE CORPORATION OF KENT COUNTY COUNCIL 100, GOSWELL ROAD, BUCKINGHAM, KENT, TN11 9JL TEL: 01843 830000 FAX: 01843 830001 WWW.KENTCC.CO.UK	PROJECT Proposed Swimming Pool Paddock Wood County Primary School Paddock Wood – Kent	TITLE ELEVATIONS.	CLIENT FIRST STROKES SWIM SCHOOLS LTD	Revisions 1/11/2010 2/11/2010 3/11/2010 4/11/2010 5/11/2010 6/11/2010 7/11/2010 8/11/2010 9/11/2010 10/11/2010 11/11/2010 12/11/2010 13/11/2010 14/11/2010 15/11/2010 16/11/2010 17/11/2010 18/11/2010 19/11/2010 20/11/2010 21/11/2010 22/11/2010 23/11/2010 24/11/2010 25/11/2010 26/11/2010 27/11/2010 28/11/2010 29/11/2010 30/11/2010 31/11/2010 1/12/2010 2/12/2010 3/12/2010 4/12/2010 5/12/2010 6/12/2010 7/12/2010 8/12/2010 9/12/2010 10/12/2010 11/12/2010 12/12/2010 13/12/2010 14/12/2010 15/12/2010 16/12/2010 17/12/2010 18/12/2010 19/12/2010 20/12/2010 21/12/2010 22/12/2010 23/12/2010 24/12/2010 25/12/2010 26/12/2010 27/12/2010 28/12/2010 29/12/2010 30/12/2010 31/12/2010	SCALE DATE DRAWN BY CHECKED BY APPROVED BY
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PADDOCK WOOD COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL - SWIMMING POOL TIMETABLE OF USES

DAY	SCHOOL USE	PUBLIC LESSONS	PUBLIC SWIM	SCHOOL LESSONS	PUBLIC LESSONS	SWIM CLUB	PRIVATE HIRE OR ADULT ONLY SWIM
MONDAY	7AM - 8.30AM Staff Only	9.30 - 11.30AM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	12 - 1 PM 5 - 10 Adults	1PM - 3PM	4 PM - 7PM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	7PM - 8PM 15 to 20 Swimmers	8 PM - 9PM
TUESDAY	7AM - 8.30AM Staff Only	9.30 - 11.30AM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	12 - 1 PM 5 - 10 Adults	1PM - 3PM	4 PM - 7PM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	7PM - 8PM 15 to 20 Swimmers	8 PM - 9PM
WEDNESDAY	7AM - 8.30AM Staff Only	9.30 - 11.30AM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	12 - 1 PM 5 - 10 Adults	1PM - 3PM	4 PM - 7PM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	7PM - 8PM 15 to 20 Swimmers	8 PM - 9PM
THURSDAY	7AM - 8.30AM Staff Only	9.30 - 11.30AM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	12 - 1 PM 5 - 10 Adults	1PM - 3PM	4 PM - 7PM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	7PM - 8PM 15 to 20 Swimmers	8 PM - 9PM
FRIDAY	7AM - 8.30AM Staff Only	9.30 - 11.30AM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	12 - 1 PM 5 - 10 Adults	1PM - 3PM	4 PM - 7PM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	7PM - 8PM 15 to 20 Swimmers	8 PM - 9PM
DAY	SWIM CLUB	PUBLIC LESSONS	PUBLIC LESSONS	ADULT SWIM			
SATURDAY	7.30AM - 9AM 15 to 20 Swimmers	9AM - 1PM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	1PM - 6PM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	6PM - 8PM 5 - 10 Adults			
SUNDAY	7.30AM - 9AM 15 to 20 Swimmers	9AM - 1PM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	1PM - 6PM 18 Swimmers per half hour maximum	6PM - 8PM 5 - 10 Adults			

31 JAN 2007

PRJ/DP/6092/JAN 07

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7. The current application, as set out within this report, is a revised version of a proposal received in October 2006 that was the subject of a Members site visit on 12 December 2006 (reference TW/06/3088). Please see a copy of the notes from the site visit attached below. The earlier application was withdrawn in anticipation of the submission of revised proposals in response to representations received.
8. Should the proposal for a swimming pool on site be afforded planning permission the development would be financed through an enabling development for a housing scheme on part of the School's playing field. An outline planning application for 11 new houses was considered by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, as the Local Planning Authority, at its Eastern Area Planning Committee meeting on 12 March 2007 (TWBC Ref.: TW/06/02573). The Borough Council resolved to grant planning permission subject to conditions covering, amongst other matters, that the housing scheme cannot proceed independent from any development to provide a swimming pool, that should permission for the pool be granted then the housing can not be occupied prior to any pool being brought into use, and that the School enter into a Community Use Agreement for the remainder of the playing field and the swimming pool. For information, the housing scheme is proposed on the far end of the playing field off St Andrew's Road, to the south-east of the existing school buildings.

Proposal

9. The application proposes the construction of an indoor swimming pool for use by Paddock Wood Primary School and the wider community. The proposed pool would measure 20 by 8 metres and would be housed in a building with a footprint approximately 32 by 18 metres. The proposed building is shown as a single storey brick built construction with a pitched roof to a height of approximately 3.1 metres at eaves level and 5.8 metres at the ridgeline. Along with the swimming pool, the building would accommodate associated changing areas, viewing room, reception/ office space and plant room. The application also details additional hard surfacing on site, including extensions to the car parking and playground arrangements.
10. The current application represents a revised version of the scheme as originally submitted to the County Planning Authority. The revisions being proposed by the applicants are in response to views received in association with this original application. The key alterations include rotating the swimming pool building through 90 degrees and moving it away from the respective site boundaries with residential properties, extensions to the school playground to compensate for the footprint of the building over the existing playground, and the provision of additional car parking to the north west.
11. The application specifies the external materials of the swimming pool building as buff stock facing brickwork with smooth blue engineering bricks, under an insulated profiled metal roof in grey with blue facing details, and blue aluminium windows and doors. The application documents identify construction techniques to reduce noise breakout and confirm that windows to the pool area would be fixed shut with obscured glazing to protect the amenity of the nearby residents.
12. A separate noise assessment for the proposed building has been supplied in support of the application. The report recommends specific materials with an acoustic performance to mitigate noise generated within the building and minimise noise break out.
13. In addition to the existing car parking on site (45 spaces), an extra 22 spaces are being proposed within the application. Extensions to the existing car parking arrangements

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are shown directly to the north-west of the proposed swimming pool building, and on either side of the existing access road to the school site.

14. The documentation received details that 6 trees would be removed as a result of the proposals, and confirms that ample opportunity for replacement planting exists on site. The existing boundary landscaping would be reinforced with hedging and shrub planting as appropriate.
15. The supporting information also details that as part of the scheme the existing school CCTV system would be extended and improved to include the proposed swimming pool building, which would also be provided with a burglar alarm system and appropriate external lighting. Further fencing would also be provided between the pool and the playground area.
16. The use of the proposed facilities would include a mixture of education and general public/ community access. Outside of the educational use by the school an independent operator, First Strokes Limited, would operate the pool on a commercial basis. The operating hours applied for are as follows: 0700 to 2100 Monday to Friday, and 0730 to 2000 on Saturdays and Sundays. Public access to the pool would start from 0930 on weekdays with public/ community use throughout weekdays until 2100, except between 1300 to 1500 hours during school term time when the school lessons would take place. On the weekends public/ community use of the pool is detailed from 0730 to 2000 hours. Please see (attached above) the proposed timetable of uses for the swimming pool submitted accompanying the application. The timetable of uses details up to 18 swimmers per half-hour session, and the pool would employ approximately 20 full and part time members of staff in various shifts across the week.

Development Plan Policies

17. The Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to consideration of the application.

- (i) The adopted Kent and Medway Structure Plan

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|-------------|--|
| Policy SP1 | Seeks to protect and enhance the environment and achieve a sustainable pattern and form of development. |
| Policy SS6 | Seeks to improve the built and natural environment, functioning and appearance of the suburbs of the urban areas, including the provision of services and facilities that serve local needs. |
| Policy EN9 | Seeks to maintain tree cover and provision of new habitat as part of development proposals. |
| Policy QL1 | Seeks all development be well designed and of high quality that respond positively to the local character. Development, which would be detrimental to the built environment, amenity, function and character of settlements or the countryside, will not be permitted. |
| Policy QL11 | Provision will be made for the development and improvement of local services in existing residential areas and in town and district centres, particularly where services are deficient. Flexibility in the use of |

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buildings for mixed community uses, and the concentration of sports facilities at schools, will be encouraged.

- Policy QL15 Seeks all new formal recreation and sports facilities to be accessible by a choice of transport and designed to avoid nuisance from traffic, noise and lighting. Provision for sport facilities to take account of the potential for dual use. Existing facilities will be protected.
- Policy TP3 Local Planning Authorities should ensure that development sites are well served by public transport, walking and cycling.
- Policy TP19 Seeks development proposals to comply with the respective vehicle parking policies and maximum standards adopted by Kent County Council and Medway Council.

(ii) Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (2006):

- Policy EN1 Seeks all proposals to be compatible in nature and intensity with neighbouring uses and not cause significant harm to character and amenities of the area in terms of daylight, sunlight, privacy, noise or excessive traffic generation. Seeks the design of the proposal to respect the context of the site and not cause significant harm to residential amenities.
- Policy TP4 Seeks new development to be located where the road hierarchy has adequate capacity to cater for the traffic which would be generated by the development, and not compromise the safety and free flow of traffic or for other road users. Seeks a safely located access with adequate visibility.
- Policy TP5 Seeks vehicle parking in connection with development proposals to be restricted to the maximum necessary having regard to local highway conditions.
- Policy TP9 Seeks cycle parking to Kent Vehicle Parking Standards.

Consultations

18. **Tunbridge Wells Borough Council** – no formal comments received on writing this report. The Borough Council is considering the application at its Eastern Area Planning Committee Meeting on 2 April 2007. Any comments received prior to the Planning Applications Committee meeting will be reported verbally.

19. **Paddock Wood Town Council** - objects to the application on the following grounds:

- Proposed development would be too close to existing dwellings;
- The site of the proposed development is not the most suitable within the school grounds;
- Access for coaches and buses is not adequate;
- Increase in traffic on unsuitable roads leading to the proposed site;

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- Increase in noise coming from proposed development may disturb local residents, particularly late at night;
- Not enough slots proposed for general public use;
- Concerns for the safety of children due to the presence of adults, not subject to security checks, using the swimming pool during sessions taking place during school hours.

20. **Environment Agency** - raises no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions covering:

- the disposal of foul and surface waters; and
- the handling of any land contamination not previously identified on site.

21. **The Divisional Transportation Manager** – raises no objection to proposal subject to the provision of the additional vehicle parking shown on the submitted drawings.

The Divisional Transportation Manager comments further as follows, *'Because the pool is of relatively modest size and there is a restricted number of people who can use it at any given time, traffic movements associated with the scheme are likely to be modest and not cause significant harm in highway terms.'*

22. **Sport England** – raises no objection to the proposal on the following grounds:

'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 playing field.'

Comments received are summarised below:

- Sport England has considered this application in conjunction with a related application being considered by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for the enabling development of 11 houses on part of the school playing field.
- The pool measures 20 x 8m which would not accord with Sport England's technical guidance notes which recommends that it should be 25m in length. That would be more beneficial for community use, particularly swimming clubs, and in achieving government targets for swimming, for children aged 11 to be able to swim 25 metres.
- The application has not provided any evidence of the need for a pool in Paddock Wood. Sport England advise that whilst Tunbridge Wells compares reasonably well with other local authorities provision in Kent and the South East, the Paddock Wood area and surrounding rural districts are relatively less well provided for.
- It is understood that whilst there is a planning consent for a swimming pool at the nearby Putlands Leisure Centre, there is no funding for the development and no prospect of the consent being implemented.
- The acceptability of the developments taken as a whole would rely on the demonstration of the overall benefits to sport. Sport England would wish to see the School enter into a Community Use Agreement related to the swimming pool and the remaining playing field as part of any planning conditions as well as a Sport Development Plan for swimming.

23. **The County Council's Environmental Adviser** – raises no objection. Comments as follows:

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Noise

'The Applicant has moved the position of the swimming pool thus increasing the distance between the pool and the closest noise sensitive receivers. I agree with the Applicant that noise levels from the use of the proposed pool should not affect the amenity of the closest noise sensitive receivers. To safeguard the amenity of those closest properties I would however wish to see a condition attached to any permission granted to ensure fire exit doors and windows to the pool area remain closed at all times.

Car park noise is difficult to assess; the British Standard is not appropriate in this instance. It is understood that there is an existing 1.8m high close-boarded fence to the rear of properties in Ewins Close. The existing noise level in the evening (9pm) is 42dB Laeq. Traffic movements in the car park of vehicles leaving from the spaces immediately adjacent to properties in Ewins Close, could generate an Laeq of approximately 38 dB in the gardens, which would be insignificant.

Odour

It is unlikely that a chlorine smell from use of the pool disinfectant will cause a detriment to amenity at the closest sensitive properties. Dispersal through open air should ensure this.'

Local Member

24. The Local County Member for Tunbridge Wells Rural, Mr A. King, was notified of the application on 15 February 2007.

Publicity

25. The application was publicised by the posting of one site notice and the notification of 130 neighbouring properties.

Representations

26. 8 letters of representation objecting to the proposal were received from local residents to the original application, a further 18 letters have been received to the revised application and a petition including the signatures of approximately 90 local residents objecting to the selling of school land and the proposed swimming pool. The main points raised can be summarised as follows:

- The nature of the proposed use would be incompatible with the residential uses in such close proximity, and would cause significant harm to residential amenities and the character of the area in general, particularly in terms of noise and smell;
- The hours of use proposed, particularly early mornings and late into the evenings and at weekends would impact on the enjoyment of residential amenities;
- The proposed scale and site coverage of the pool building does not respect the context of the site;
- Considers the proposal is contrary to policy EN1 of the adopted Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan;
- Considers that the access to the school site via Old Kent Road is inappropriate to service the proposed development, due to the road being narrow with residential parking further restricting the carriageway creating a bottleneck at the school, the no

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entry arrangements at the north-east end of Old Kent Road effectively make the street one way, and the nearly blind narrow bend at the junction with Commercial Road;

- Considers with up to an additional 65 cars attempting to gain entry/exit the site, the proposal would cause excessive congestion/ noise and pollution at a point not suitable for the amount of traffic, both cars and pedestrians, using the area.
- Concerns about highway safety as a result of the increased traffic.
- Concerns that any increase in traffic associated with the school grounds would intensify existing congestion and extend the times when problems/disturbance occur;
- Concerns that the existing access arrangements to the school are already deemed to be small/dangerous by the School to allow parents to drop off children on site, causing traffic problems and road safety issues on surrounding roads, including Old Kent Road, Forest Road, Warrington Road and Birch Road, feels improved/safer access arrangements should be provided;
- Concerns about the location of new car parking areas directly adjacent to residential property.
- Concerns about the security arrangements on site considering the swimming pool would use a lot of chemicals;
- Concerns about security and well being as a result of the increased use of the site and the potential for anti social behaviour outside school hours.
- Raises concerns that a swimming pool within the school grounds can be classified as a public pool due to the number of restrictions to access by the general public, considers an alternate location where everyone can gain access would be more beneficial for the town and surrounding area, with particular reference to the proposals to build a swimming pool at the local Putlands Leisure Centre;
- Concerns that there would be insufficient recreation space/ playing field on site for education or community uses, in light of the swimming pool and enabling housing developments proposed;
- Questions what the specifications for screening to the north and east boundaries would be?
- Questions what alternative locations were considered?
- Would welcome a swimming pool in the local area, especially if it is so placed to have clear and proper access with enough parking to benefit all who may use it and not cause unnecessary congestion, noise and pollution to the centre of a small town, considers there are more suitable sites nearby, including Putlands Leisure Centre.
- Concerns that the development of the pool within Paddock Wood Primary School would deprive the general public of the opportunity of a local public swimming pool;
- Concerns that the design and dimensions of the pool are inadequate to meet the community's requirements, being below the standard 25 metres in length.

27. In addition to the above, concern has been expressed by a number of residents about the loss of playing field as a result of the enabling development for housing necessary to fund the scheme. These representations were passed on to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in relation to the housing application, but do not constitute a material objection to the swimming pool application, as the pool would not be located on the playing field. Some local residents have also expressed concerns about the long-term financial viability of operating a swimming pool at the school, however, financial issues are not material to the consideration of the application.

28. 1 letter of representation supporting the application has been received by the County Planning Authority. The main points raised can be summarised as follows:

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- Considers that traffic outside of peak school travel hours is relatively quiet and that the development would not cause an unacceptable increase in traffic as public access to the pool would avoid the peak traffic times.
- Considers that the pool would be an asset to the community.

29. The County Council has also received 119 reply slips indicating support from parents and local residents for the provision of the swimming pool.

Discussion

30. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (17) above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, this proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity.

Siting

31. As set out above, the proposed development is shown within the Paddock Wood School grounds on an area of land currently consisting of part of the playground and grassed amenity space on site. The school site is surrounded by two storey residential properties to the north, east and west, with the main school building to the south. The application represents a revised version of the proposal that was originally submitted and subsequently withdrawn due to material objections to the siting of the building. The changes from the earlier application include rotating the swimming pool 90 degrees to the north west boundary and moving it away from residential property and closer to the main school building. The main school building at its closest point would be approximately 10 metres away, with the closest residential property approximately 28 metres façade to façade distance.

32. Objections have been raised by Paddock Wood Town Council and a number of nearby residents about the appropriateness of locating a swimming pool within the school site. The grounds of objection, include the compatibility and proximity of the use to adjoining residential dwellings, the appropriateness of the siting within the school grounds, the appropriateness of the access arrangements, the impact on the external recreation space available for education and community use (please see paragraphs (19, 26-29) above). The potential environmental and traffic implications of the application are considered in later sections. This section will consider the siting of the building as proposed.

33. The area of land proposed for development is not subject to any site-specific land use policies, and as such the application should be considered in the context of the appropriate Development Plan policies (including those set out in paragraphs (17) above). The site also does not constitute part of the playing field provision for the school. As detailed above, the area currently forms part of the hard surfaced playground space and landscaped area within the school grounds. Sport England was consulted as part of the planning process as the swimming pool development proposed relates to an enabling development for housing (considered by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council under a separate application). The issue of the loss of playing field, whilst material to the application for the enabling development, does not have a direct bearing on the

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application for a swimming pool. Sport England has not raised objection to either application as proposed, subject to the school entering a Community Use Agreement for the remaining playing field and the swimming pool if approved, and a Sport Development Plan for swimming. Should Members be mind to grant permission, I can advise that the issue of provision of a Community Use Agreement has been covered within the conditions imposed on the planning permission for the enabling housing development granted by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, and I would not consider it necessary to replicate this condition on any decision. The agreement and implementation of a Sport Development Plan for swimming could be covered by a condition on any planning consent.

34. The area proposed for development does constitute part of the hard surfaced playground space available, this would be replaced within the proposals through extensions to the remaining playground area. Given the lack of an objection from Sport England in relation to the use of the land, and the undertaking to replace the playground space potential lost as a result of the scheme, I would not raise objection to the development on the grounds of loss of outdoor recreation space.
35. Objections received from nearby residents over the proximity of the building to the boundary have, to a certain extent, been taken account of within the revisions proposed in the current application. In my opinion, the movement of the building away from the boundary, achieving a distance of approximately 18 metres between the proposal and the nearest neighbouring properties has overcome the concerns about the building being too close to adjoining residential property. The building as proposed would be approximately 5.8 metres in height at the ridgeline of the roof. Given the height building and distances involved between the proposal and residential property, and taking account of the existing close-boarded fence and proposals to improve the boundary treatment, I would not consider the building as proposed would have an overbearing or significant impact on the amenities of adjoining property in terms of daylight, sunlight or privacy. The height and scale of the proposed development reflects the surrounding development including both housing and the existing school buildings, being comparable with the eaves height of a standard two-storey house.
36. Paddock Wood Town Council has raised concerns that the site of the proposed development is not the most appropriate within the school grounds. The application constitutes a revised proposal that repositions the building away from residential property and closer to the existing built envelope of the school. There are a limited number of options within the school grounds for any new development, taking account of the existing buildings on site and the need to retain sufficient practicable playing field space. Due to the community use aspect of the development as proposed it would also need to be easily accessible via the existing access arrangements for the site, without compromising the day to day operation of the school. In my opinion, given the limitations of the site, I would consider the location shown to be an acceptable solution.
37. I also consider that the layout and siting of the development as proposed is a logical response to a proposal to site a swimming pool within the school grounds. The size and scale of the building reflect the existing built development and would not substantially extend the built envelope of the school. The location of the building would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy for surrounding properties, with obscured glazing shown to windows to the swimming pool area. For the most part the building would be screened from the ground floor and gardens of residential property by the close-boarded fencing that surrounds the site, and this could be further improved through the provision of a new landscaping scheme. Therefore, subject to consideration of traffic and access,

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noise, landscaping, design, security, and community use below, I would not wish to raise an objection to the siting of the proposal and consider that it accords with the appropriate Development Plan policies.

Traffic and Access

38. There are a number of material highway and access considerations that have arisen as a result of consultations undertaken in association with this application. These are summarised in paragraphs (19, 21, and 26) above. Objections raised by Paddock Wood Town Council and nearby residents include the suitability of the local road network to accommodate any increase in traffic, concerns about the on site access road, the cumulative impact of traffic associated with the school site on residential amenity, the location and adequacy of the car parking provision, and highway safety issues.
39. The existing access arrangements for the site consist of the main vehicle and pedestrian access off Old Kent Road, and a pedestrian footway off Forest Road. The vehicle access is via a driveway that leads onto the school site between properties on Forest Road and Ewins Close, with existing car parking provided for approximately 45 vehicles. The application as proposed would increase the parking provision by an additional 22 spaces, and confirms that up to 29 spaces would be available during the school day for the swimming pool.
40. The provision of a swimming pool with public access would potentially increase the vehicle movements associated with the site. With up to 18 swimmers using the pool in any one half hour period during public swim sessions, school use of the pool, and 20 full and part time staff attending the site at various times across the week, there would be potential for an increase in movements during the operating hours. However, it would be unreasonable to assume that everyone using the site would potentially travel by car. Paddock Wood Primary School is located in close proximity to the town centre with easy access to public transport. The hours of public access proposed have been deliberately staggered to ensure that any traffic generated would not add to movements at school peak travel times. The application details that there would be no access to the public on weekday mornings before 0930 with the weekday afternoon use not recommencing until after 1600 hours.
41. Local residents have raised concern that the road layout in the immediate vicinity of the site is designed to accommodate local traffic. With roads, including Old Kent Road and Forest Road, considered by nearby residents to be narrow and ill-equipped to accommodate the existing traffic movements in the area, and specifically not buses and coaches that on occasion attend the school site. Concerns have been raised that the provision of a swimming pool on site would exacerbate the problems on the roads surrounding the site, extending the impact traffic movements can have on residential amenity. Whilst it is not possible to control the existing vehicle movements associated with the school, including the routing of buses, Members would need to consider the likely impacts of any increase in traffic as a result of the development. It would be unenforceable to dictate the routing of any traffic attending the site, including buses and coaches. The application does detail the possibility that the pool could be offered to other Schools in the area. However, given the size of the pool proposed it is unlikely that the development would attract a significant number of bus movements to the site, and these are likely to be in the form of smaller mini buses.
42. The Divisional Transportation Manager has formally assessed the scheme as proposed, and in commenting on the proposals has been made aware of the concerns being raised

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by Paddock Wood Town Council and local residents on highway grounds. His comments on the proposals are set out in paragraph (21) above. In conclusion, he is not raising objection to the scheme subject to the provision of the additional car parking facilities shown in the accompanying drawings. He advises that given the scale of the pool proposed, the use of the facility would not generate an unacceptable numbers of traffic movements to cause significant harm in highway terms.

43. Development Plan policies as set out in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan require that new development only be permitted where the site is well served by public transport, walking and cycling, and complies with vehicle parking standards. I would advise that the primary school site is well served by public transport and pedestrian footways being in close proximity to the town centre, and that, should Members be minded to permit the scheme, the provision of appropriate cycle parking could be required by way of condition on any permission. The Divisional Transportation Manager considers that the car parking provision is acceptable. On the basis of the details set out above, I would not raise a planning objection to the proposals on highway grounds.

Noise

44. A noise assessment was included with the application. A report was prepared to gauge the impact on residential amenity of noise levels that would potential be generated by the proposed swimming pool. Existing background noise levels were measured at the boundary of the closest noise sensitive properties during the daytime and evening until 2200 hours. This information was used alongside noise level data taken from a First Strokes Swim School in Stanway, Colchester, including typical noise levels from internal activity, plant room and extractor fans, to predict noise levels at the appropriate boundaries of the school grounds. The report recommends specifications for materials that could be used in construction to prevent noise break out from the pool building, and a condition that could be applied to any planning consent to ensure that the fixed plant machinery within the building does not cause significant disturbance. Kent County Council's noise consultants have considered the report in the context of the hours of use proposed and confirmed that the predictions within accord with acceptable noise levels set out in the appropriate British Standard Advice (BS4142:1997). The noise consultants conclude that the proposed pool should not affect the amenity of the closest noise sensitive receivers subject to a condition ensuring the windows and fire exit doors to the pool area remain closed at all times.
45. In addition, the proposal has potential to generate noise from activities associated with its use outside the building, pedestrians moving back and forth and vehicles manoeuvring along the access road and within the car park. This noise needs to be considered in the context of the new car parking arrangements and hours of use set out within the application. The proposed use of the swimming pool in the early mornings, into the evenings, and at weekends would extend activity on site outside of the normal school hours.
46. The County Council's noise consultants have advised that noise generated by vehicle movements and activity within a car park is difficult to assess given the intermittent nature of the noise generating events. The consultants have advised that in their professional opinion, given the existing background noise levels recorded on site, traffic movements in the car park immediately adjacent to properties in Ewins Close would not be significant.

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47. Notwithstanding the above, I would raise some concern over the extent of the hours of operation proposed, in particular the use from 0730 hours in the morning through to 2000 hours on Saturdays and Sundays. I acknowledge that the size of the pool would limit the amount of potential activity, however the existing and proposed car parking is in close proximity to residential property. The application sets out new spaces to the access road approximately 5 metres from the façade of the closest house in Ewins Close, and the proposed parking area adjacent to the pool building would be 11 metres from the rear elevations of property in Ewins Close. I acknowledge that the existing close boarded fence and improvements to boundary landscaping should provide a barrier to some of any noise generated. The use of the parking area during daytime and the early evening is not likely to cause a significant change to the existing background noise levels, however, the extent of the weekend use would need to be considered carefully in the context of local amenities.
48. The noise report makes clear that the noise generated within the swimming pool building from use of the pool and plant machinery can be controlled through the provision of appropriate insulation and is unlikely to result in an unacceptable increase in noise levels. It is the noise generated outside the building in association with the swimming pool use that has more potential to cause disruption. Controls on the hours of use would potentially limit activity on site reducing the potential for a disruption to residential amenity. In my opinion, should Members be minded to permit the application the hours of use proposed for the facilities on the weekend should be controlled to reflect the residential area. I would consider 0800 to 2000 hours on Saturday and 0900 to 1700 hours on Sunday to be appropriate. Therefore, subject to conditions ensuring windows and doors to the swimming pool area are kept closed, the recommended insulation is achieved, appropriate noise condition(s) to monitor levels at the site boundary, and the hours of use for the pool, I would not raise objection to the application on noise grounds.

Odour and pollution

49. Concern has been raised by local residents about the potential for odour from the use of chlorine in the swimming pool to impact on residential amenities, and the potential for an increase in local pollution caused by fumes from vehicles moving into the site. In reference to the concern about the potential for odour from the swimming pool the County Council's environmental consultants have commented that chlorine smell from the use of disinfectant would not cause a detriment to the amenity of the closest sensitive properties, due to the distances involved and dispersion through open air. The concerns about pollution from car exhausts are noted, however, the swimming pool is not on a sufficient scale to generate a substantial change from the existing use of the site. Under the circumstances, I would not raise objection to the application on atmospheric emissions.

Landscaping

50. As outlined above, 6 trees would be removed as a result of the development work. 4 trees would be removed as a result of the footprint of the building with a further 2 removed through the proposed improvements to car parking along the access road. The application confirms that as part of the proposed development these trees could be replaced and the boundary landscaping enhanced.
51. In principle, I would have no objections to the trees proposed being removed, since most are semi mature and in my opinion do not make a substantial contribution to the amenity of the local environment. The improvements to the boundary treatment to include

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hedging planted against the close-boarded fence would enhance and improve the screening of the site and, coupled with appropriate replacement planting for the trees removed as part of the proposals, would soften the impact of any development. Therefore, subject to a condition requiring the submission of an appropriate landscape scheme, I have no objection to the proposals on landscape grounds.

Design of the building

52. The issue of design is material to the consideration of this application in that it involves the construction and operation of a swimming pool that would be available the general public. It is important that the development as proposed reflects the character of the surrounding urban environment. Objections have been raised by nearby residents that the building as proposed is out of keeping with the surrounding area.
53. The building proposed constitutes a single story brick built structure under a shallow pitched roof. The application sets out the materials selected as buff stock facing brickwork with smooth blue engineering bricks in two feature bands running around the building, the windows and doors would be aluminium colour coated blue with blue fascias and a grey metal profiled roof.
54. Kent and Medway Structure Plan policies SS6 and QL1, and Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan policy EN1 seek, amongst other matters, development that is well designed, and respects and enhances its setting.
55. The building as proposed reflects the original design of the swimming pool granted planning permission in 1994. The scale of the building is appropriate to the existing structures on the school site and the movement of the pool closer to the existing buildings would not substantially extend the built envelope. The materials selected for the exterior of the building would contrast with the palette of materials used in the existing school buildings allowing a clear distinction between the land uses on site.
56. In my opinion, the overall effect of the design would not be out of character with the area. The siting of the proposals closer to the school buildings mean that views of the development from outside the site would be interrupted and absorbed by the main school block. Therefore, subject to conditions covering the external materials to be used, I would not raise a planning objection to the design of the development as proposed.

Security

57. Representations received from local residents have raised concerns about the security of the site and the potential for an increase in anti-social behaviour as a result of the longer hours of use. The application confirms that the building itself would be secured with sophisticated door and window locks and a burglar alarm. In addition, as part of the proposals the existing CCTV system at the school would be extended to include the swimming pool building. The applicant also points out that the opening hours proposed for the pool would mean that there would be staff attending the site for longer periods than at present, improving the arrangements outside of normal school hours. Whilst the proposed use would result in the general public having increased access to the school grounds, including when the pupils are in attendance, the application proposes improvements to the internal fencing within the grounds to segregate the swimming pool and car park from the rest of the school grounds. The issue of public access to the

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grounds would be mainly a school management issue, to be considered by the board of Governors and the Head Teacher.

Community use/access

58. Objections have been raised by nearby residents and Paddock Wood Town Council about the extent of community use proposed in the application, and whether the development as proposed is appropriate to service the needs of the town. I would advise that the development as proposed is a mixed-use arrangement, which would allow for educational use of the pool along with community access, and the application would need to be considered in this context. I acknowledge Sport England's advice that at 20 x 8 metres the pool being proposed would be under their technical specification that it should be 25 metres in length. The applicant has commented that the facilities proposed would offer local swimming opportunities to the public as well as specialist training facilities for educational purposes that would be sufficient to meet the applicant's needs.
59. Representations received from local residents have raised concern that the swimming pool should be provided at the Putlands Leisure Centre and that to develop a pool within the school grounds could compromise any future proposals to provide a public pool locally. I am unable to comment on plans to provide a swimming pool elsewhere, and can only advise on the acceptability of the application that has been brought forward on this occasion in land use terms. In addition to the above, I would note Sport England's comments about existing public swimming pool provision within the Borough.
60. Kent and Medway Structure Plan policies QL11 and QL15 provide policy support for development that provides community facilities and the dual use of school sites. Encouraging flexibility in the use of buildings for mixed community uses, and the concentration of sports facilities at schools where the activity is compatible with other Development Plan policies. Therefore, taking account of the requirement for the School to enter into a Community Use Agreement for the playing field and swimming pool under the planning consent for the enabling development for housing, and subject to a condition requiring a Sport Development Plan for swimming be provided as part of any planning permission, I would not consider that the mix of uses proposed to be unacceptable.

Conclusion

61. The application proposes the construction of an indoor swimming pool and associated car parking and replacement playground space. In principle, I would consider that the overall location and design of the building proposed is not out of keeping with the area. In the absence of an objection to the development from the Divisional Transportation Manager, I would not raise objection to the scheme on highway grounds. Whilst the development has the potential to increase traffic movements to the site, the facilities proposed are not of sufficient scale to generate an unacceptable increase. The timing of public access set out in the application would avoid peak school travel times, and the location proposed is within easy walking distance of the town centre and good public transport links. The advice supplied by the County Council's noise consultants would indicate the any noise generate within the building would not cause a significant impact on local amenities and could be managed and mitigated for through the use of the appropriate conditions on any decision. It is the associated activity outside of the building that is most likely to have an impact on the surrounding area. Taking account of

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the advice provided by the noise consultants, I am of the opinion that it is the mainly the extended hours of use proposed on the weekends (0730 to 2000 hours) that would have the most potential to result in an impact on residential amenities. Therefore, I would recommend that the hours of use proposed be controlled by way of condition to 0730 to 2100 hours Monday to Friday, 0800 to 2000 hours on Saturdays, and 0900 to 1700 hours on Sundays. I therefore consider that subject to the imposition of appropriate condition that the benefits of providing local sports facilities from education and community use outweigh any detrimental impacts the proposal may have and that planning permission should be granted.

Recommendation

62. SUBJECT TO any views received from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council prior to Committee Meeting, I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions, including the following:

- the development to be commenced within 3 years;
- the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
- the hours of use for the swimming pool be controlled to 0730 to 2100 hours Monday to Friday, 0800 to 2000 hours on Saturdays, and 0900 to 1700 hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays;
- the windows and fire doors to the swimming pool area to be fixed closed at all times, except in an emergency;
- the development be carried out in accordance with the materials recommended in the noise assessment;
- the noise from the fixed plant shall not exceed the background noise level by more than 5dB;
- submission of a landscape scheme to include improvements to the boundary screening and replacement tree planting;
- submission of details of the internal fencing arrangements proposed;
- submission of details of foul and surface water drainage;
- submission of details of all external lighting proposed;
- submission of details of appropriate cycle parking;
- the car parking to be provided prior to commencement of use;
- obscured glazing be provided to the windows to the pool area;
- submission of a Sport Development Plan for swimming for approval prior to first use of the pool;
- hours of working during construction; and
- requirements for the treatment of ground contamination not previously identified on site.

Case officer – James Bickle

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Background documents - See section heading
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