

**One Form entry primary school and associated facilities at open ground to north of the B2231 Leysdown Road, Leysdown-on-Sea, Sheerness – SW/09/1215**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 11 May 2010.

Application by Kent County Council Children, Families and Education Directorate for the construction of a proposed one form entry primary school to be developed in one phase with all the external facilities including, playgrounds, sports field and parking at open ground situated to the north of the B2231 Leysdown Road, close to the junction with Warden Bay Road, Leysdown-on-Sea, Sheerness (SW/09/1215)

Recommendation: Planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

**Local Member(s): Mr. A. D. Crowther**

**Classification: Unrestricted**

**Site**

1. The application site is located on a virgin parcel of land situated to the north of the B2231 (Leysdown Road), close to the junction with Warden Bay Road within Leysdown-on-Sea, Sheerness. The site is located some 900 metres from the settlement of Warden, approximately 900 metres from Leysdown-on-Sea and approximately 3 kilometres from Eastchurch. Access to the site is proposed to be gained via the construction of a dedicated 'in' and 'out' circulation road. The site itself is located in a relatively prominent location, with long distance views to the north and north-west across arable land to the settlements of Warden and Eastchurch.
2. The area surrounding the application site consists predominantly of caravan parks, the nearest parks being Happy Valley Holiday Camp (approximately 95 metres to the north), Isle of Sheppey Holiday Village (approximately 110 metres to the east) and Vanity Holiday Village Park / Vanity Farm Holiday Camp (approximately 360 metres to the south east). The nearest residential properties include The Old Vicarage (210 Leysdown Road), located some 45 metres on the opposite side of the carriageway of Leysdown Road. Paradise Farm, a Grade II Listed Building is located approximately 150 metres to the south west and 235 Leysdown Road lies approximately 170 metres to the west.
3. The application site is not designed for any specific use within the adopted Local Plan, other than being designated as land outside the limits of built development. It does however fall within the Government's Thames Gateway Growth Area. A Public Right of Way runs to the south east of the application site on the opposite side of Leysdown Road. *A site location plan is attached on page D5.2.*

**Background**

4. Until recently the education system on the Isle of Sheppey consisted of a three tier system with first, middle and wide ability high schools. Following a long period of consultation that system is now changing to a two-tier structure, consisting of primary schools and a new academy secondary school. As part of this restructuring process, the capability of the first schools to become primary schools of the appropriate size was examined and a decision was made by Kent County Council that Eastchurch Church of

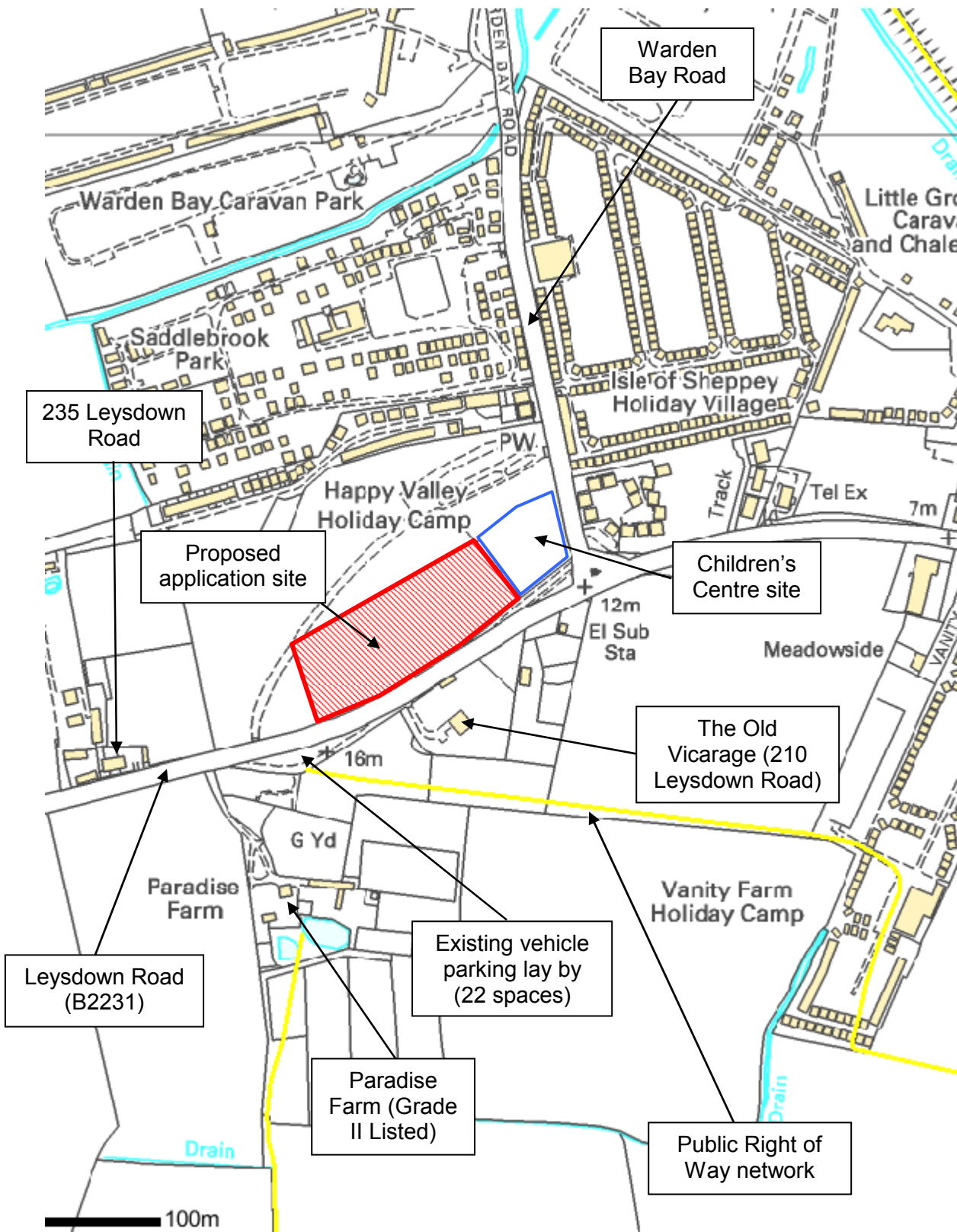
**Proposed one form entry primary school and associated facilities,  
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**General Location Plan**



**Proposed one form entry primary school and associated facilities,  
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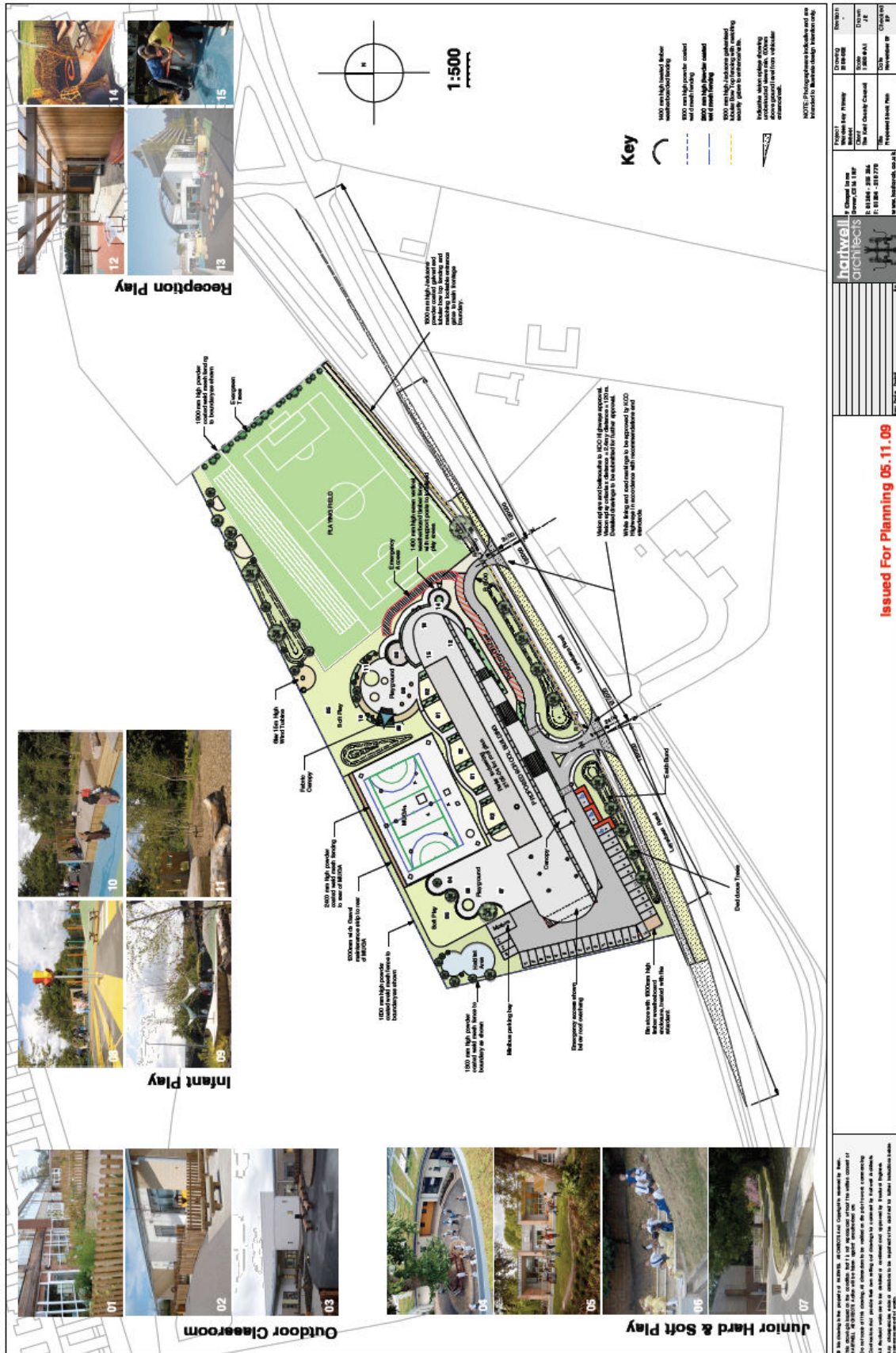
**Site Location Plan**



**Site Location Plan – Proposed 1FE Primary School at Leysdown-on-Sea**  
Scale 1:5000

Proposed one form entry primary school and associated facilities, Leysdown-on-Sea, Sheerness – SW/09/1215

Proposed Block Plan

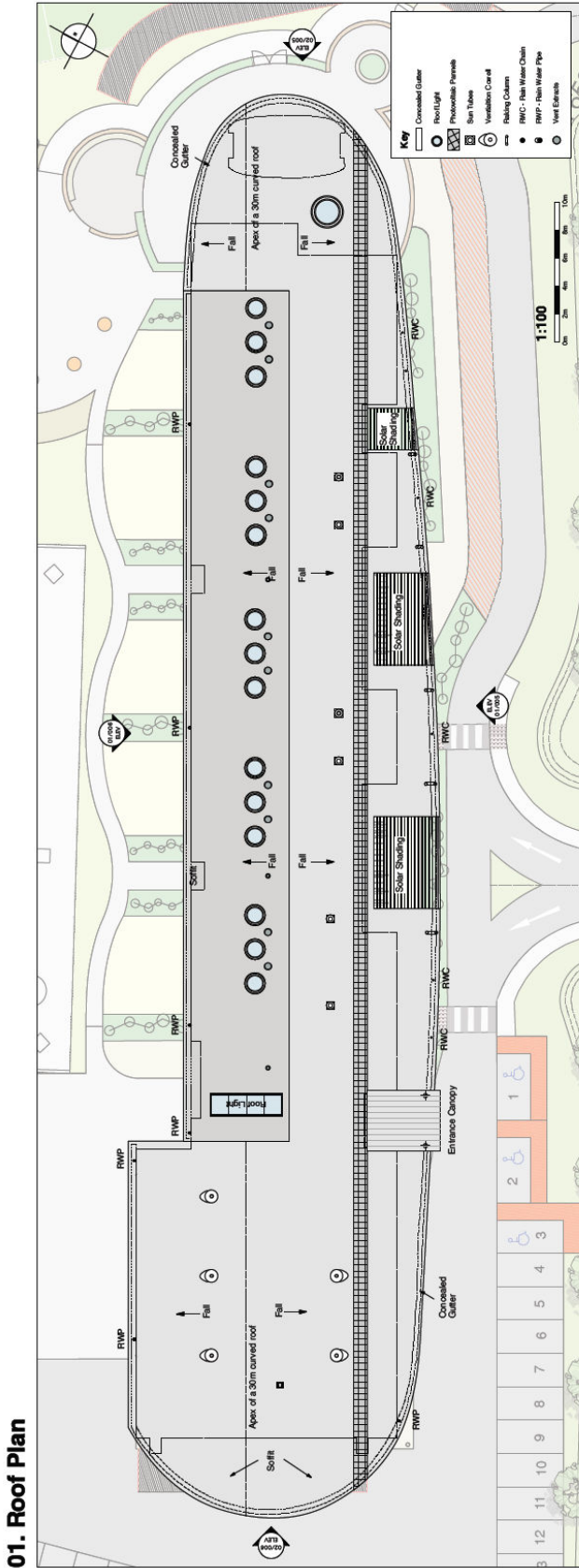


<p><b>hairwell architects</b></p> <p>11, 12 &amp; 13, The Old Rectory, Leysdown-on-Sea, Sheerness, Kent, ME11 5JG</p> <p>01783 811177</p> <p>www.hairwell.co.uk</p>		<p>Project: Primary School</p> <p>Client: Dover District Council</p> <p>Site: Leysdown-on-Sea, Kent</p> <p>Phase: Final Design</p> <p>Date: 05.11.09</p>
<p><b>Issued For Planning 05.11.09</b></p>		
<p><small>By making the subject of this contract, the contractor agrees to the following conditions:</small></p> <p>1. The contractor shall be responsible for obtaining all necessary planning and building regulations approvals for the works.</p> <p>2. The contractor shall be responsible for obtaining all necessary planning and building regulations approvals for the works.</p> <p>3. The contractor shall be responsible for obtaining all necessary planning and building regulations approvals for the works.</p> <p>4. The contractor shall be responsible for obtaining all necessary planning and building regulations approvals for the works.</p> <p>5. The contractor shall be responsible for obtaining all necessary planning and building regulations approvals for the works.</p>		

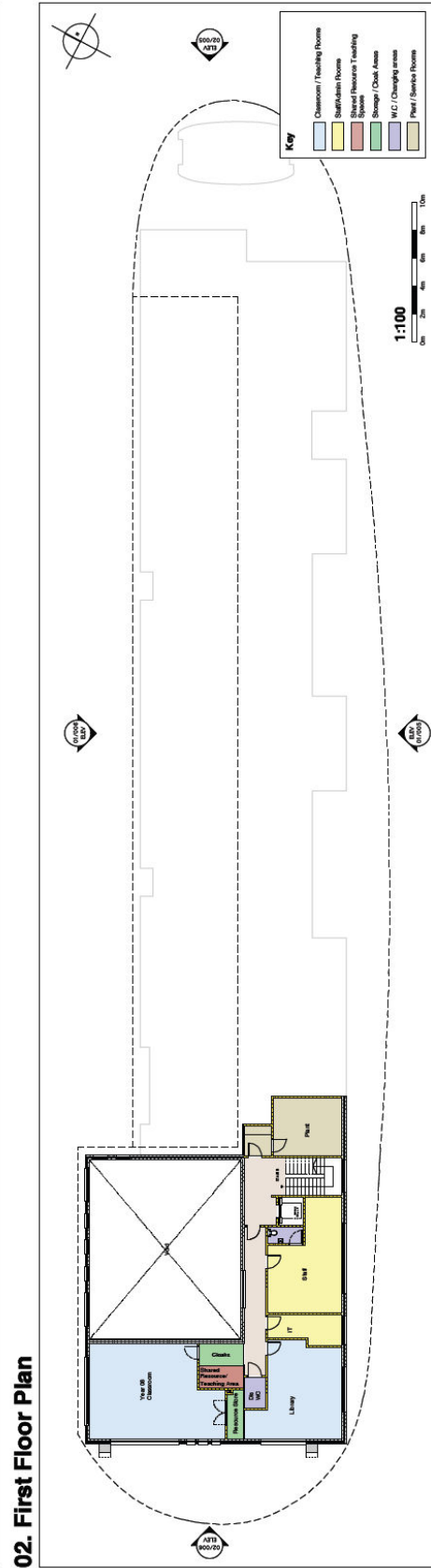


Proposed one form entry primary school and associated facilities, Leysdown-on-Sea, Sheerness – SW/09/1215

Proposed First Floor/Roof Plan



01. Roof Plan



02. First Floor Plan

<p><b>Key</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Controlled Gallery</li> <li>Roof Light</li> <li>Photovoltaic Panels</li> <li>Sun Tubes</li> <li>Ventilation Cover</li> <li>Raking Column</li> <li>RWC - Rain Water Chain</li> <li>RWP - Rain Water Pipe</li> <li>Vent Extract</li> </ul>		<p>Scale: 1:100</p> <p>North Arrow</p>
<p><b>Key</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom / Teaching Rooms</li> <li>Staff/Admin Rooms</li> <li>Shared Resource/Teaching</li> <li>Storage / Club Areas</li> <li>W/C / Changing areas</li> <li>Plant / Service Rooms</li> </ul>		<p>Scale: 1:100</p> <p>North Arrow</p>

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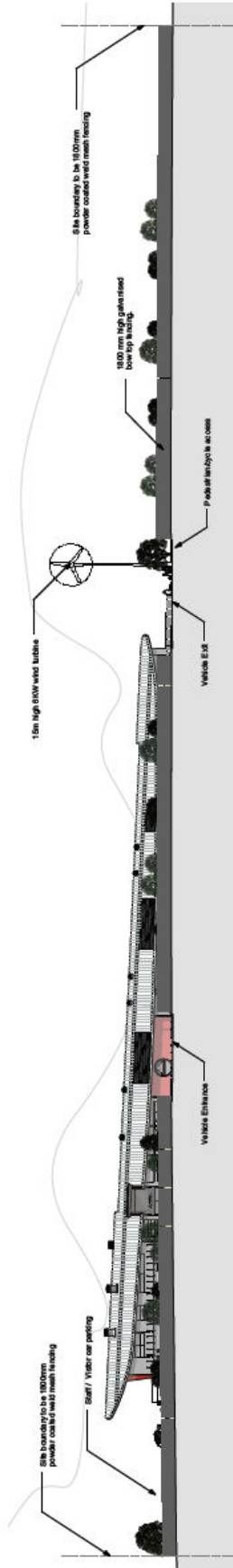




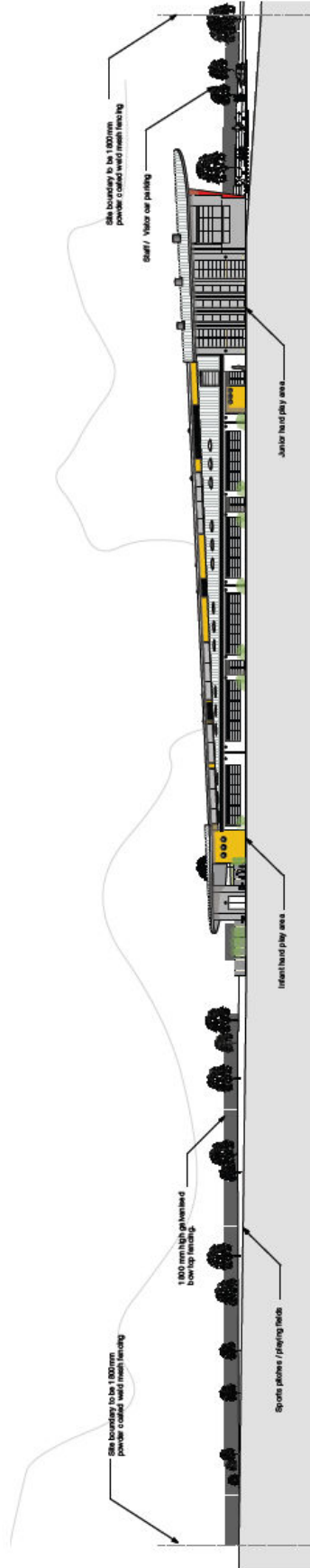
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Proposed Contextual Elevations

Contextual Elevations



01. South Elevation

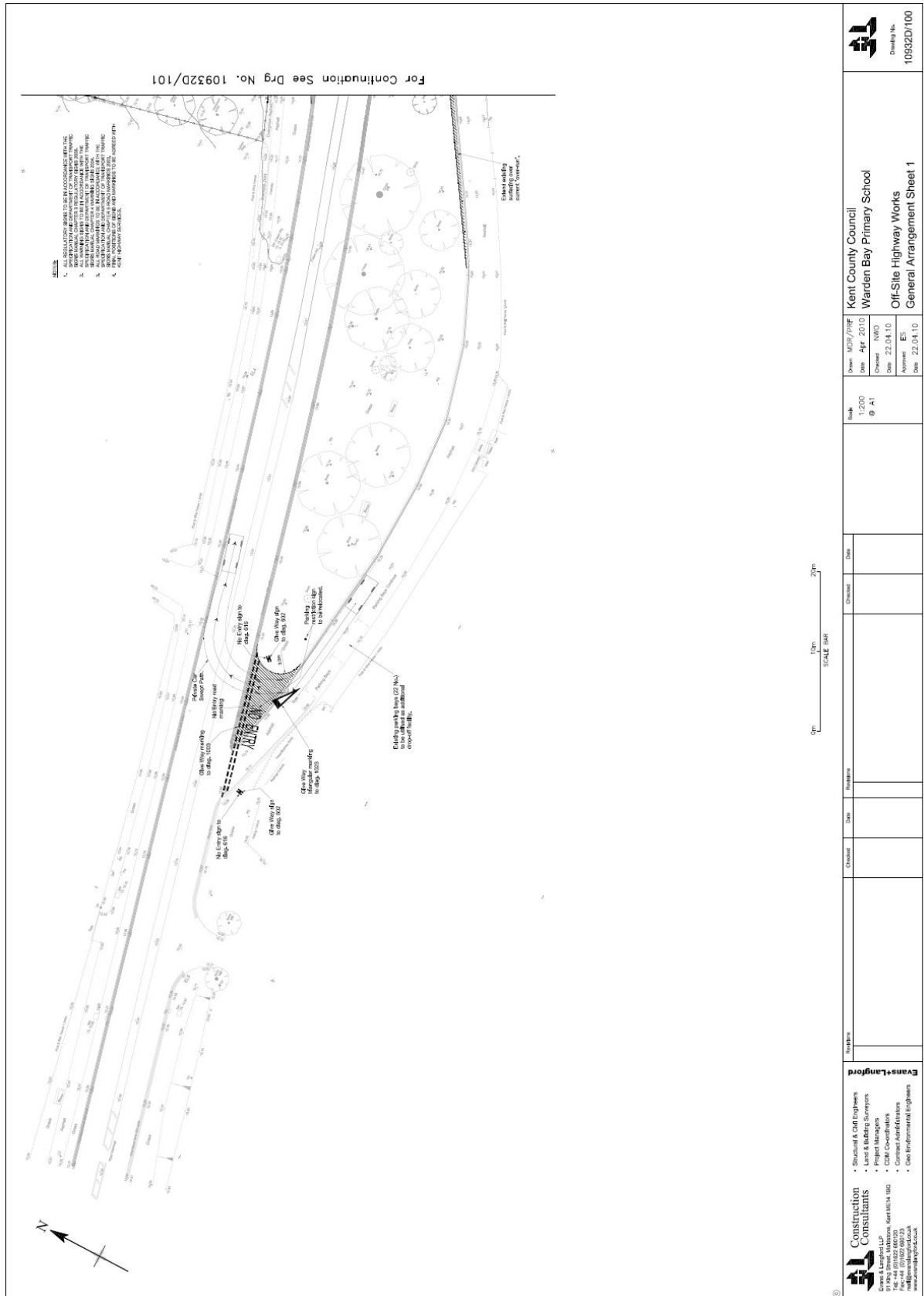


02. North Elevation

<p>It is a condition of this approval that the applicant must ensure that the proposed development is in accordance with the conditions of this approval and that the applicant must ensure that the proposed development is in accordance with the conditions of this approval and that the applicant must ensure that the proposed development is in accordance with the conditions of this approval.</p>		<p>PROJECT: One Form Entry Primary School</p> <p>CLIENT: Sheerness Local Council</p> <p>DATE: 01/04/2015</p> <p>SCALE: 1:500</p> <p>DRAWN BY: J.P.</p> <p>CHECKED BY: J.P.</p>
<p>Issued For Planning 05.11.09</p>		<p>haithwell architects</p> <p>01854 218 864</p> <p>01854 218 276</p> <p>www.haithwell.co.uk</p>

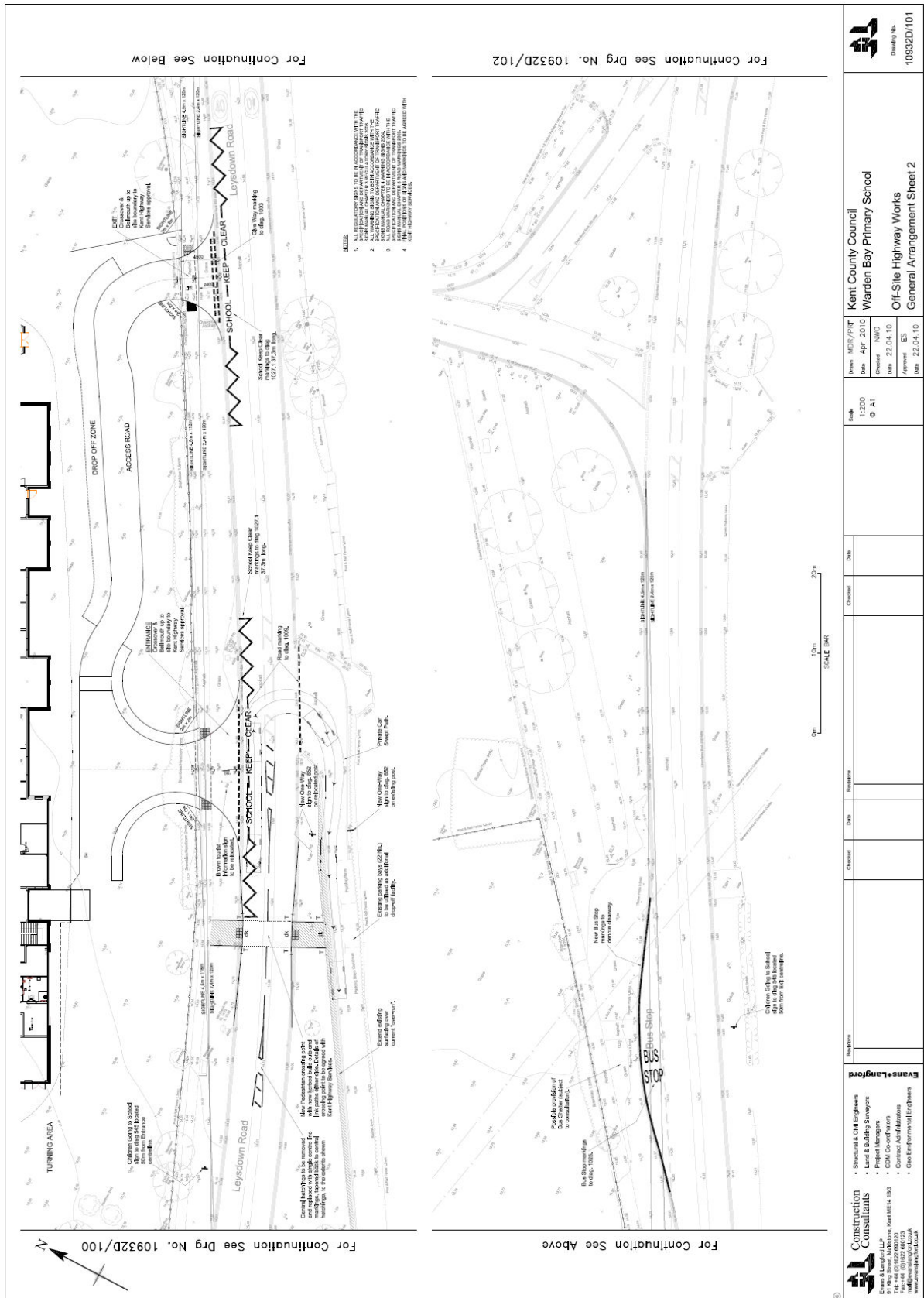
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**Proposed Off-Site Highway Improvement Works (Sheet 1)**



**Proposed one form entry primary school and associated facilities, Leysdown-on-Sea, Sheerness – SW/09/1215**

**Proposed Off-Site Highway Improvement Works (Sheet 2)**



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England First School should become a two form entry primary school on two sites – its existing site in Eastchurch and a new site acquired by the County Council in Leysdown. It is intended that this new school would be run by the Head Teacher and Governors of the existing Eastchurch Church of England Primary School.

5. An adjoining parcel of land to the west of the proposed new school site was granted planning permission by Members of the County Council's Planning Applications Committee at its meeting on 29 July 2008 (under application reference: SW/07/1271) for a new single storey modular building for use as a community Children's Centre.

**Proposal**

6. The application is made by Kent County Council Children, Families & Education Directorate and seeks planning permission for a new one form entry (1FE) primary school to be situated on a previously undeveloped site off Leysdown Road [B2231], Leysdown-on-Sea, Sheerness. The application seeks permission for the construction of a new purpose-built school building, together with all associated external facilities, including boundary fencing, playgrounds, sports field and vehicle parking.
7. The school building has been designed as a 1 FE primary school to cater for 210 pupils aged between 5 and 11 years. The total gross internal floorspace of the proposed school building would be 1453 sq. metres, whilst the application site (i.e. the total land-take of the school grounds) is approximately 1.25 hectares. The building itself would consist of a predominantly single storey building, with a part two-storey element on the western side of the building, concealed under a gently sweeping roof form.
8. The application sets out intended staff numbers for the new school which include 23 full-time staff and 10-12 part time staff. The applicant identifies that on-site car parking provision has been designed in accordance with guidance set out within the Kent Vehicle Parking Standards, taking account of proposed staffing levels, and would include 35 parking spaces, 3 of which would be designated for disabled use.
9. The application proposes a circulatory traffic management system with a staff/visitors and deliveries area to the west of the proposed school building and a parents' drop off and collection zone to the north eastern front edge of the proposed school. Visibility splays would be provided on both the 'in' and 'out' vehicle entrance/exists taking account of Leysdown Road's 40 mph speed limit. The applicant proposes additional off-site highway improvements, following discussions with Kent Highway Services. These measures include the provision of a new pedestrian crossing point to link existing footways on both sides of Leysdown Road; the provision of 'School Keep Clear' markings outside the proposed vehicular entrance; the provision of a new bus stop lay-by on Leysdown Road together with a new bus shelter; appropriate road signage advising users of Leysdown Road the presence of a school; and the use and minor modifications to the junctions of an existing car parking lay-by on the opposite side of the carriageway to the proposed new school which provides up to 22 vehicle parking spaces.
10. In terms of the design philosophy for the new school, the application details that a site massing analysis was undertaken, the outcome of which led the applicant to consider that the best location for the proposed new school building would be to the south west of the application site. This location would allow the school building to be adjacent to Leysdown Road and to make the best use of the views from the site. The application also identifies that the proposed building location would ensure that the privacy and

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security of pupils is not compromised, that the building would be positioned away from overhead power cables and would make the most of the existing site's topography by allowing the playing fields to be placed on the north-east plateau of the overall site.

11. A design analysis undertaken by the applicant indicated that there was no substantive architectural context on or adjacent to the development site to take account of, and therefore three design references were pursued in the initial development of the architectural concept. These included the following: -
  - Local history sources which indicated that early flight technologies had been developed within the local area, a fact that had been picked up by the existing Eastchurch Primary School, who use the aviation theme in their pupil house system;
  - Initial archaeological investigation on the site indicated the remains of a circular late iron age settlement; and
  - The existing Eastchurch Primary School was the first in Kent to become an Eco-School, of which the very nature of sustainability figures highly in the life and ethos of the School. There are already alternative technologies in place on the existing Eastchurch Primary School site, including a wind turbine (as permitted by the County Planning Authority under application reference: SW/08/948).
12. Drawing these references together led the applicant to a design which draws upon the School's ecological and sustainability aspirations, as well as reflecting the local area's historic heritage. The application sets out that the design concept of the proposed school called for a built form that echoed the area's pioneering aviation tradition, whilst allowing the building to be sited within its semi-rural context. The eco-tech ethos of the existing school informed every aspect of the applicant's design from the buildings orientation on site to the selection of materials and the use of natural ventilation and daylight to the landscape concept.
13. The applicant sets out that the proposed school building is a linear composition that subtly picks up on the historic aviation context by having a roof form that is shaped like an aircraft wing. This strong visible form gives interest to the internal spaces and has ensured that each classroom would be a unique teaching environment. The sweeping form of the roof has allowed the applicant to design teaching spaces that are tailored in scale and proportion to the pupils using them.
14. The applicant goes on to identify that the 'wing' roof concept captures a sense of flight by tilting in a southerly direction whilst sweeping up in a westerly direction giving a smooth transition between the one and two storey elements. The lower mono-pitched classrooms to the rear of the building draw reference to an aircraft wing flaps being drawn down as it to prevent the roof form from flying away. Furthermore, the ranking columns and timber boarding proposed would pay homage to materials and forms used in early twentieth century aviation design.
15. The application sets out the intended materials of the new school building which include a standing seam aluminium roof; cladding panels, render (in a variety of colours including terracotta, yellow and white) and cedar wood cladding for walls; a polyester powder coated canopy above the main school entrance and aluminium windows and doors. Exact details/specifications of external materials and finishes would be controlled by condition should planning permission be granted.
16. In terms of sustainability measures, the school has been developed to achieve a BREEAM Education Rating of 'very good' taking account of the following sustainable principles:

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- **Orientation:** the building has been designed on a North/South axis with ancillary areas on the south side of the building in order to form an acoustic buffer between the road and the teaching spaces. The teaching spaces would be North facing to take advantage of north light and avoid overheating through solar glare;
  - **Lighting:** the project has been designed to maximise the amount of natural daylight used throughout the building. Teaching spaces would have tinted glazed vertical windows and clear glazed roof lights. Internal corridors would have sun pipes with integral electrical lights. A smart lighting system using daylight sensors is proposed;
  - **Ventilation:** a passive ventilation strategy is incorporated within the design of the proposed school;
  - **Renewables:** It is proposed to install an area of 98 sq. metres of photovoltaics on the south-facing curved wing roof. The application sets out that the PV panels would have the potential to sell electricity back to the National Grid if energy is produced when it is not required (i.e. during school holiday periods).  
At a later date it is proposed to install a wind turbine – the wind turbine does not form part of this planning application (this element would be subject to a separate planning application made to the County Planning Authority), but details are included for information to demonstrate the school's commitment to sustainability matters.
  - **Landscaping:** the application sets out that ecological surveys were undertaken to ensure that the proposed development would not disturb any rare or endangered species. It is proposed to establish mature trees on proposed earth mounds to the school's site frontage on Leysdown Road. Evergreen trees would be planted along the eastern boundary to establish a wind break to shelter the external areas from the prevailing winds. A habitat area would be constructed in the north-western corner of the site;
  - **Water Provision and Treatment:** Grey and black water recycling strategies were considered at the initial design stage, but give the nature of the London clay soil it was decided that this approach could not be justified. Instead, the scheme includes water butts on rainwater downpipes so that water can be stored for watering plants in the external areas;
  - **Materials:** materials for external elements have been specified which have long life spans and low maintenance requirements. The building would be insulated to high standards in order to reduce future running costs for heating/cooling, which in conjunction with high efficiency boilers would assist in reducing future running costs.
17. The hours of use of the proposed school are intended to be between 07:00 and 22:30 Monday to Saturday and 09:00 and 20:00 on Sundays. The internal layout of the proposed building has been designed such that community use would occur within the two-storey element, with all other parts of the school being locked off to ensure that members of the public could not access restricted areas.
18. The proposal includes hard and soft external landscaped areas. These comprise of soft play (5525 sq. metres), games courts / Multi Use Games Court [MUGA] (1020 sq. metres), hard play (715 sq. metres) and habitat area (410 sq. metres). The application

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sets out that the main objective in the design of external areas is to enable the landscape to become part of the school's learning environment, where the grounds are seen as a resource for teaching and learning for a wide range of curricular studies. The concept of exterior overlapping circles framed by earth-mounds draws reference from the remains of a circular iron-age settlement found during initial archaeological investigations. An overall site landscaping plan would be controlled by planning condition in the event of planning permission being granted.

19. The site is proposed to be fenced with 1.8 metre high powder coated weld-mesh fencing to the northern, eastern and western boundaries, with 1.8m high powder coated tubular bow top fencing and matching gates to the principal frontage with Leysdown Road. The exact colour treatment of perimeter fencing and gates would be controlled by condition in the event of planning permission being granted.
20. The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment Report. The Report concluded that the site is within a Zone 1 'low probability' of flooding according to National Planning Policy, and does not lie over a Water Source Protection Zone. It also proposes that foul water would be routed into the local sewer network, whilst surface water within the site would be collected and held in an attenuation system and discharged into a public storm water sewer at a rate equal or lower to the current Greenfield run-off modified for climate change.
21. The application is accompanied by a Great Crested Newt Survey Report. The Report was prepared jointly for this development, together with a separate development considered by the County Planning Authority for the construction of a Children's Centre on an adjoining plot of land (reference: SW/07/1271). The Report concluded that Great Crested Newts are likely to be absent from ponds and ditches within 500 metres of the development sites and as such there is a negligible risk that proposals would result in disturbance, injury or killing to newts, both during and after construction. Therefore, the Report indicates that there is no requirement to design and implement mitigation or apply for a European Protected Species licence from Natural England. However, as a precautionary measure should Great Crested Newts be observed at any stage during the construction activities, all works should stop and an ecologist contacted.
22. The application is also accompanied by a Noise Report and Archaeological Evaluation Report. The Noise Report considers the acoustic properties of the internal building spaces to comply with Part E of the Building Regulations together with noise issues associated with the proposed multi-use games area and general traffic movements to/from the site associated with the school and community use. It is noted that this is a technical building design matter, which is directly outside the scope of planning permission. The Archaeological Evaluation Report details archaeological works undertaken on site to date, identifying significant remains from the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Medieval periods, concluding further work is required in order to fully understand the archaeology of the site.
23. The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment and School Travel Plan. The Transport Assessment identifies that the existing highway network has been investigated to ensure that there are no existing issues which could be amplified by the proposed development. It identifies that there is no trend in the location or causality of road traffic accidents within the locality, and that the proposed location is served by a number of bus routes serving bus stops near to the proposed development. A footway already exists along the duration of the site boundary with Leysdown Road, further to the west and east of the site (towards the town centre) and along Warden Bay Road. The Assessment recognises that the majority of journeys made to and from the new

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school would be undertaken by private car, given the age of the pupils and location of the site. That said, the Assessment recognises that a considerable number of school related journeys are expected to be undertaken on foot and that the School Travel Plan presents opportunities to increase the number of sustainable journeys that are made and to reduce car journeys through car sharing. Overall, the Transport Assessment estimates that 85 car trips are expected to be associated with pupil drop offs and collections over the course of the school day, with those in the mornings being the most concentrated. Furthermore, the Assessment recognises that the level of on-site car parking has been determined in accordance with the relevant parking standards provided by Kent Highway Services, that a dedicated Pupil Drop-Off Zone would be provided within the site and that further public off-road parking is available opposite the school, off Leysdown Road.

24. The site is crossed by an existing overhead power line. The applicant notes the lines presence and has demonstrated the proposals can be developed without interference to the power line. They also note the intention of EDF Energy to relocate/divert the power line off-site in the future, but are unable to confirm the exact date as to when this would occur.

**Planning Policy**

25. The most relevant Government Guidance and adopted Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to the consideration of this application:

(i) **National Planning Policies** – the most relevant National Planning Policies are set out in PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), PPS7 (Development in Rural Areas), PPS9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation), PPG13 (Transport), PPS23 (Planning and Pollution Control) and PPS25 (Development and Flood Risk).

(ii) The adopted 2009 **South East Plan**:

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|-------------------|---|
| <b>Policy CC1</b> | Seeks to achieve sustainable development in the region.   |
| <b>Policy CC2</b> | Seeks new development to mitigate and adapt to current and forecast effects of climate change.  |
| <b>Policy CC4</b> | Refers to sustainable design and construction.  |
| <b>Policy CC6</b> | Actions and decisions associated with the development and use of land will actively promote the creation of sustainable and distinctive communities.  |
| <b>Policy T4</b>  | Local development documents should adopt restraint-based maximum levels of parking provision for non-residential development, reducing provision in locations with good public transport, and ensure the provision of sufficient cycle parking at new developments. |
| <b>Policy BE1</b> | Seeks new development to help improve the built environment with design solutions relevant to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place.  |



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**Policy S3** States that, local planning authorities, taking into account demographic projections, should work with partners to ensure the adequate provision of pre-school, school and community learning facilities.

**Policy S6** The mixed use of community facilities should be encouraged by local authorities.

**Policy NRM1** Water supply and ground water will be maintained and enhanced through avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment.

**Policy NRM4** Refers to sustainable flood risk management.

**Policy NRM5** Local planning authorities shall avoid a net loss of biodiversity, and actively pursue opportunities to achieve a net gain across the region.

**Policy NRM11** Requires local authorities to encourage the greater use of renewable or low-carbon energy in new development.

**Policy W2** Refers to sustainable design and construction.

(iii) The adopted 2008 **Swale Borough Local Plan:**

**Policy SP1** Requires development proposals to accord with sustainable development principles.

**Policy SP2** Requires development proposals to protect and enhance the special features of the visual, aural, ecological, historical, atmospheric and hydrological environments of the Borough and promote good design in its widest sense.

**Policy SP5** Development proposals in the countryside should seek to increase local self-sufficiency whilst protecting and where possible, enhancing the character of the wider countryside. Seeks high design standards, to protect the countryside from unnecessary development, and to permit innovative proposals that provide new services.

**Policy SP6** Seeks to ensure that new developments are located so as to be close to good quality public transport and principle highway network and which seek to reduce dependence on private motor cars through measures to encourage walking, cycling and increased public transport use.

**Policy SP7** Seeks the provision of new community facilities.

**Policy TG1** Within the Thames Gateway Planning Area, amongst other matters, development should seek to provide adequate community facilities as well as raising environmental standards through high quality design and the better management of environmental resources.

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- Policy E1** All developments should, amongst other matters, respond positively by reflecting the positive characteristics and features of the site and locality; protect and enhance the natural and built environments; be both well sited and of a scale, design and appearance, that is appropriate to the location with a high standard of landscaping; cause no demonstratable harm to residential amenity or other sensitive uses or areas; and provide parking in accordance with the County Council's standards.
- Policy E6** The quality, character and amenity value of the wider countryside of the Borough, which is all the land falling outside the built-up areas, will be protected and where possible enhanced. Development will only be permitted when, amongst other uses, it is for necessary community infrastructure.
- Policy E8** Development on agricultural land will only be permitted when there is an overriding need that cannot be met firstly on land within the built-up area boundaries.
- Policy E9** The quality, character and amenity value of the wider landscape will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. Within the countryside and rural settlements, seeks proposals to be sympathetic to local landscape character and quality, and minimise the adverse impacts of development upon landscape character.
- Policy E19** Seeks development to be of high quality design that responds positively to creating safe, accessible, and attractive places; enriching the qualities of the existing environment by promoting the local distinctiveness and strengthen the sense of place; making efficient and prudent use of natural resources; providing native landscaping; appropriate to its context in respect of scale, height and massing; making best use of texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials; and achieving flexibility to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle and demographics.
- Policy E11** The Borough's biodiversity and geological conservation interests will be maintained, or enhanced – development will be permitted that conserves or enhances the biodiversity of that area and/or locality.
- Policy E14** Proposals involving a Listed Buildings setting will only be permitted if the buildings special or historic interest and its setting are preserved.
- Policy E19** The Borough Council will expect development to be of high quality design. Development proposals should, amongst other matters, respond positively to the following: creating safe, varied and attractive places; making efficient and prudent use of natural resources; providing native plant species for landscaping; providing development that responds in respect

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- of scale, height and massing; and maximising opportunities for including sustainable design and construction techniques.
- Policy E20** The Borough Council expects proposals to integrate security and safety measures within their design and layout.
- Policy E21** The use of innovative and high quality low-impact design and build techniques will be supported. The Borough Council will expect development proposals to meet BREEAM 'good' standards as a minimum requirement.
- Policy T1** The Borough Council will not permit proposals that generate volumes of traffic in excess of capacity of the highway network, and/or result in a decrease in safety of the highway network.
- Policy T3** The Borough Council will only permit development if appropriate vehicle parking is provided in accordance with the Kent Vehicle Parking Standards.
- Policy T4** On new development, the Borough Council will require that cycle parking facilities be provided in accordance with the County Council's cycle parking standards.
- Policy T5** Seeks development proposals to be well located in relation to public transport links.
- Policy C1** The Borough Council will grant planning permission for new or improved community facilities.

**Consultations**

26. **Swale Borough Council:** has raised no objection to the proposals, subject to any conditions being imposed as recommended by the Environment Agency and Kent Highway Services.
27. **Leysdown Parish Council:** no comments received to date. Any comments received prior to the Committee Meeting will be shared with Members verbally.
28. **Warden Parish Council** (adjoining Parish Council): no comments received to date. Any comments received prior to the Committee Meeting will be shared with Members verbally.
29. **Divisional Transportation Manager:** raises no objections to the proposals subject to the provision of off-site highway improvements to (i) improve the lay-by facilities opposite the proposed school to cater for school drop-off/pick-up traffic and (ii) to provide a suitable crossing point to enable users to cross Leysdown Road in a safe manner and the imposition of planning conditions to cover the following aspects:
- parking being made on site for construction operatives and construction vehicles during construction works;
  - adequate measures to control mud and debris from being tracked onto the public highway;

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- vehicle and cycle parking (as proposed in the application) being provided prior to the first occupation of school;
- vehicular and pedestrian site entrance and exits being provided in accordance with approved details (including required visibility splays) prior to first occupation of school;
- provision of off-site highway works prior to first occupation of school; and
- submission of a Travel Plan (including an implementation programme) prior to the first occupation of the school;

Notes that the applicant proposes to introduce a one-way traffic flow through the existing lay by opposite the school (within highway ownership) which would formalise the movement of vehicles through it, reducing conflicting traffic movements at its junctions and eliminating the current problem of vehicles trying to pass one another along its single width carriageway. He notes that the alterations to this lay by would not adversely affect access to/from The Old Vicarage (210 Leysdown Road) as the section of highway outside that property would still operate as two-way.

Furthermore, notes that the proposals do not include a reduction in speed limit to 30mph outside the school. This has been accepted as the road environment at this location does not lend itself to a 30mph restriction. However, it is expected that vehicle speeds are likely to be lower during busy school traffic periods, as the presence of vehicles associated with the school would naturally reduce speeds, as is the case in similar locations.

Recommends that the School considers the provision of a school crossing patrol in addition to the installation of the dedicated crossing point – this should be explored as part of the School Travel Plan.

30. **Environment Agency:** has no objections to the application.
31. **County Council's Archaeological Advisor:** notes that the site was subject to pre-planning archaeological evaluation which identified significant archaeological remains from the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Medieval periods and which suggested that this topographically prominent area was used for intensive settlement in the past. This Office has advised the applicant that a scheme of archaeological mitigation is necessary in order to investigate and record the remains. This first stage of the archaeological mitigation scheme is ongoing but it would need to be followed by further works during construction. As such, recommends that a condition be placed on any forthcoming consent controlling that no development take place until a programme of archaeological works has been submitted to and agreed by the County Planning Authority.
32. **County Council's Noise Consultant:** considers that noise emanating from the proposed use of the MUGA is unlikely to result in adverse noise impacts for nearby sensitive receptors (notably the Isle of Sheppey Holiday Village and Happy Valley Holiday Camp). Also considers that there would be no substantial adverse noise impact associated with the new school traffic or vehicles accessing and leaving the site.
33. **County Council's Landscaping Consultant:** notes that the proposed school building would be visually prominent from the surrounding holiday villages and residential properties throughout Leysdown-on-Sea given the open and undulating landscaping which has limited tree cover. Considers that whilst the building is not particularly tall, its significant length would contrast in scale and style with the surrounding built

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environment, which largely comprises extensive caravan parks. Considers that the proposed school building would not have any significant adverse impact on the immediate setting of Paradise Farmhouse (a Grade II Listed Building), although the use of more subtle render colours would be more appropriate in this instance. Considers that proposed planting should have regard to the surrounding landscape in terms of species and patterns and should be the subject of a planning condition.

34. **County Council's Public Rights of Way Officer:** notes that the public right of way network would not be affected by the proposals, and accordingly has no objections to the application.
35. **County Council's Biodiversity Officer:** raised no objections to the proposals, subject to the applicant taking appropriate measures to ensure that the development minimises the risk of harm to protected species and that biodiversity enhancement measures are included within the proposals.
36. **Kent Police Architectural Liaison Officer:** no comments received to date. Any comments received prior to the Committee Meeting will be shared with Members verbally.
37. **EDF Energy:** has raised no objections to the proposals.

**Local Member**

38. The local County Member, Mr. A. D. Crowther, was notified of the application on the 25 November 2009. Mr. A. D. Crowther was notified on the receipt of further information on 9 March 2010.

**Publicity**

39. The application was publicised by the posting of several sites notices around the perimeter of the development site, a newspaper advertisement in the KM Sittingbourne Extra indicating that the development is likely to affect the setting of a nearby Grade II Listed Building and may also affect a nearby Public Right of Way, and the individual notification of 16 residential properties, including nearby holiday caravan parks.

**Representations**

40. To date I have received one letter of representation in respect of this application. The letter sets out various grounds of objection to the proposals, the key points of which are outlined below: -
  - Shocked at the scale of the proposed development – we are the only residential property [The Old Vicarage] that the proposed development would directly affect;
  - The planning application has not taken into consideration the safety of the primary school children – the B2231 Leysdown Road is a very dangerous stretch of road, where there have been many serious road accidents and fatalities;
  - The planning application shows off-road parking in the school grounds for the school teaching staff, disabled parking and a mini bus, but no off-road parking for school bus services that would be bringing the children to and from the school on a daily basis. There would be no safe off-road parking for parents of the school children to bring their children to and from school, only a drop-off point within the

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school grounds at the front. This drop-off area proposed would not be large enough to accommodate the amount of parents/children/visitors that will be dropped off and picked up on a daily basis 7 days a week. This would cause untold traffic chaos for the residents of the Warden Bay and Leysdown areas, as the infrastructure is not in place at this end of the island to accommodate a large school which would be used 7 days a week.

- It is well known by KCC and Swale Borough Council that parents dropping off children would have no off-road parking, so would park their vehicles on the busy B2231 Leysdown Road causing traffic congestion twice a day for 7 days a week. This disruption would not just affect the local people of Leysdown and Warden Bay areas, but also the visiting holiday makers that visit the area between March to October which are the life blood of the Leysdown/Warden Bay shops and businesses;
- The planned opening times of the school – 7 days a week from 07:00 until 22:30 is completely unacceptable. It would disrupt our quiet enjoyment and privacy;
- How on earth can the proposed entrance planned be not only on a main road, but dead opposite our property?
- The erection of this site would completely ruin the countryside – Leysdown being a rural area and our property being a country house set in the country;
- The building would ruin the skyline, upset all the wildlife along with unnecessary destruction of yet more land and hedging;
- There is a Grade II Listed Building within close proximity of the proposed school which would be affected;
- The size of the school is far too big for the area; and
- The proposed building works would cause complete chaos, mess and disrupt the structure of our property – the recent archaeological excavations affected our property with vibration movements.

**Discussion**Introduction

41. The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a one form entry (1FE) primary school to be situated on a previously undeveloped site off Leysdown Road [B2231], Leysdown-on-Sea, Sheerness. The proposed new school would cater for 210 pupils aged between 5 and 11 years. The application includes the provision of all associated external facilities, including boundary fencing, playgrounds, sports field and games area (including a multi-use games area – ‘MUGA’) and vehicle parking. The application is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee as a result of the residential objection received (*as outlined in paragraph 40*). In considering this proposal, regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (25). 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 the 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. In my opinion, the key material planning considerations in this particular case can be categorised under the following headings:

- the impact of the proposals on the wider countryside in terms of design considerations;
- the impact of the proposals on the local highway network and associated highway safety considerations;

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- the impact of the proposals on local amenity in terms of the potential for adverse noise and light pollution;
- the impact of the proposals on the setting of a nearby Grade II Listed Building (Paradise Farmhouse);
- the impact of the proposals on ecological and archaeological interests; and
- any other issues arising from consultation and publicity.

Design and landscape considerations

42. The application site is not designated for any specific land use within the adopted Local Plan, other than being located within land outside of the limits of built development. Therefore the proposals needs to be considered in light of adopted Development Plan Policy which seeks to preserve the open characteristics of the countryside, notably through Local Plan Policies SP5, E6, E8 and E9. Specifically, Policy E6 refers to the *'quality, character and amenity value of the wider countryside being protected and where possible enhanced'* and that *'development will only be permitted when [amongst other uses] it is for necessary community infrastructure'*. I note that in this instance there is a demonstratable need for an additional one form entry primary school within the broad locality to serve the changing education system on the Isle of Sheppey from a three-tier system to a two-tier education system comprising of a number of primary schools and a new academy. Accordingly, I consider that the proposal meets with the broad objective of Local Plan Policy E6 in terms of allowing development within the countryside that is for necessary community infrastructure. Similarly, I note that policy support is provided by South East Plan Policy S3 which seeks the adequate provision of school and community learning facilities taking into account demographic projections.
43. Members should note that the application site falls within the Government's Thames Gateway Growth Area. Local Plan Policy TG1 seeks to ensure that adequate community facilities are provided within this growth area using high quality and well-designed proposals which seek the better management of environmental resources. The proposed new primary school building has been designed to a high environmental performance standard and this point has been explicitly made within the proposals design justification, largely driven by the desire of the management team and governing body of the existing Eastchurch Primary School as an established eco-school. It is proposed that the new school building would achieve a BREEAM environmental performance rating of "Very Good" and include an area of some 98 sq. metres of photovoltaic cells on the roof. On this basis, I consider that the proposals accord with the general thrust of Local Plan Policy TG1 and exceeds the requirements of Local Plan Policy E21 which requires at least a 'Good' BREEAM rating, together with according with South East Plan Policies CC2, CC4 and NRM11 which seek to ensure sustainable development across the Region and the provision of renewable and/or low-carbon energy within new development proposals.
44. The development site itself is located on an agricultural parcel of land lying just off the junction between Leysdown Road and Warden Bay Road. Arguably when considering the wider context of the site against adjacent built development, I consider that the setting is one of a semi-rural context on the periphery of the settlements of Leysdown and Warden Bay. Built development located to the north includes seasonal holiday caravans (Happy Valley Holiday Camp and the Isle of Sheppey Holiday Village) separated by an existing agricultural field; to the east a previously consented single storey modular Children's Centre (albeit not yet constructed); to the south Leysdown Road and a residential property on the opposite side of the carriageway (The Old Vicarage – 210 Leysdown Road); and to the west open agricultural land prior to the residential dwelling of 235 Leysdown Road. Wide views across the application site from

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Leysdown Road are achievable for some considerable distance across open and undulating agricultural land to the settlements of Warden Bay and towards Eastchurch.

45. As noted by the County Council's Landscaping Consultant, the proposed school building would be visually prominent given the existing open and undulating landscape which has limited tree cover. Furthermore, they note that whilst the building is not particularly tall (single storey with a two-storey element to the western end), given its significant length it would contrast in scale and style with the surrounding built environment. Whilst I note these views in this instance, I consider that the new school building is intended to be read in its wider context as a landmark feature representing the area's past history in terms of its pioneering aviation history. Whilst the scale and massing of the proposed primary school would not match that of adjacent built developments, notably residential dwellings and holiday caravans, given the size of the building required for a one form entry primary school, I consider that the design solution proposed is justifiable in this instance. Accordingly, I would not raise objection to the design of the proposed new school within this locality and note that through the provision of an appropriate landscaping scheme the building would in time become gently softened within its landscape.
46. Furthermore, in terms of design issues, I consider that the exact specification of both the external materials of the school building together with the specification and colour treatment of all fencing should be controlled by planning conditions to be agreed in writing with the County Planning Authority prior to the commencement of construction activities.

Highway issues

47. Members will note that highway concerns form a large part of the neighbour's objection received (*see paragraph 40 above*). In considering the impact of the proposed new school on the local highway network, the professional advice from the Divisional Transportation Manager was sought. He has considered that subject to the provision of off-site highway improvement works which include the construction of an appropriate crossing point to enable users of the new school to cross Leysdown Road in a safe manner and the improvement of existing lay facilities opposite the new school, together with the imposition of highway related conditions (*as outlined in paragraphs 29 above*), there are no overriding justifiable grounds to substantiate a highway objection to these proposals. In relation to highway safety concerns raised by the neighbour in this instance, the Divisional Transportation Manager is satisfied that the existing road environment does not lend itself to a 30mph restriction and accepts that traffic is likely to naturally reduce speeds in the presence of vehicles associated with school drop off and pick up times. Furthermore, he recommends that the School considers the provision of a dedicated school crossing patrol which is a matter the applicant should consider through the School Travel Plan process.
48. As discussed above, the Divisional Transportation Manager has requested a number of conditions be placed on any planning consent to secure the provision of vehicle and cycle parking being provided on site (as proposed by the application) prior to the first occupation of the school. It is considered that this approach accords with Development Plan Policies, most notably South East Plan Policy T4 and Local Plan Policy T3. Other recommended conditions from the Divisional Transportation Manager include parking being made available on site for all construction related vehicles; the agreed visibility splays being provided and maintained on both the entrance and exit vehicle access points; measures to control mud and debris being tracked out onto the public highway and the submission of a School Travel Plan. I support the imposition of these



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conditions, and accordingly recommend they are incorporated within any future planning consent.

49. The proposals include the provision of a dedicated circulatory traffic management system with a staff/visitors and deliveries area to the west of the proposed school building and a parents' drop off and collection zone to the north eastern front edge of the proposed school. There is an existing bus lay by a short distance from the front of the school on the same side of Leysdown Road, and the applicant proposes the upgrading of an existing parking lay by on the opposite side of Leysdown Road to accommodate additional school drop off/collection traffic. The provision of 'School Keep Clear' zigzag markings to the front of the proposed vehicular entrance / exit points would ensure that the school's road frontage with Leysdown Road would be kept clear.
50. Based on the professional advice received from the Divisional Transportation Manager in this instance, I am satisfied that subject to the provision of the off-site highway improvements together with the imposition of highway related conditions, the proposed school could be accommodated within this locality without a significant adverse impact on either highway safety or to the detriment of the nearby residential dwelling – The Old Vicarage (210 Leysdown Road). I therefore do not raise objection to this proposal on the basis of highway matters and consider the proposals to be broadly in line with Development Plan Policy.

Amenity considerations

51. There are a number of amenity considerations to take into account when determining this proposal, primarily noise impacts associated with the operational hours of the school and vehicle movements to and from the site, together with impacts associated with proposed external site lighting. The application is accompanied by a Noise Assessment Report which assesses the impact of the proposed development in noise terms on its locality. Specifically, the Report assesses the acoustic properties of the proposed school building together with noise impacts of the associated external facilities, including the intended multi-use games area (MUGA) which would be located to the rear of the school building. It is noted that the MUGA would consist of an area of hard-surfaced play area surrounded by weld-mesh fencing and would not be floodlit. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that the MUGA could be used during daylight periods only, up until around 21:30 during summer time months.
52. The application details that the school would be occupied between the hours of 07:00 and 22:30 Monday to Saturday and 09:00 and 20:00 on Sundays. The majority of these uses would take place within the new school building, with community use occurring at times outside of core school hours. It is noted that there is strong policy support for the shared-use of community facilities, notably through South East Plan Policy S6 and Local Plan Policy SP7 and C1, and that these intended hours of use are not dissimilar from those adopted by many existing Schools across the County.
53. The Noise Report accompanying the application has been independently assessed by the County Council's Noise Consultant who has concluded that noise emanating from the proposed use of the MUGA during daylight periods is unlikely to result in adverse noise impacts for nearby noise sensitive receptors (the closest being holiday caravans located within Happy Valley Holiday Camp some 95 metres to the north). The County Council's Noise Consultant has also considered that there would be no substantial adverse noise impact associated with new school traffic or vehicles accessing and leaving the site in terms of any detrimental impact on the amenity of the nearest residential property – The Old Vicarage (210 Leysdown Road) located on the opposite

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side of the carriageway to the proposed new primary school. Accordingly, I would not raise objection to the proposals in respect of noise issues based on the proposed MUGA, the intended operational hours of use of the new primary school and wider community use or on the grounds of vehicle movements associated with the operation of the school facility. Furthermore, to ensure that noise impacts associated with the MUGA could not continue late into evenings and weekends during non-daylight periods, I propose that a condition be placed on any future planning consent to prevent the installation of floodlighting on the MUGA without the benefit of planning permission from the County Planning Authority. This mechanism would allow the County Planning Authority to maintain control over this element of the proposal and would allow any amenity issues to be looked at afresh should the applicant wish to install floodlighting at the site at a later date.

54. The application proposes a number of elements of external lighting to allow the safety and security of the school users during night-time periods. Generally the vehicle circulation areas are proposed to be lit with luminaires on 6 metre high columns, whilst the perimeter of the building would be illuminated to minimal levels through the use of down-lighters and a series of low level lighting bollards. I do not consider that any of the proposed external lighting would have any detrimental impact on surrounding residential amenity or any impact on the wider semi-rural context. Therefore, I see no reason to raise objection to the lighting element of the proposals.

*Impact on nearby Listed Building*

55. It is noted that the application site is located approximately 150 metres to the north of Paradise Farm, a Grade II Listed Building. However, this distance is separated by Leysdown Road, a graveyard and several field boundary demarcations consisting of trees, shrubs and hedgerows. Whilst the consideration of the setting of the nearby Grade II Listed Building is a material planning consideration in this instance, given the separation distances involved and the existing landscaping planting between the proposed development and the Listed Building, it is not considered that the setting of the Listed Building would be materially altered as a result of this proposal. In particular, the two developments would largely be separated by intervening planting, Leysdown Road and a graveyard, so the two are unlikely to be viewed together in the same context. Whilst it is important to protect the immediate curtilage and setting of Listed Buildings, it is not reasonable to expect to maintain a wide development exclusion zone around them. Therefore, on that basis I would not raise an objection to the development of a new primary school in this locality on the grounds of the Listed Building, and consider that the proposals are consistent with the general thrust of Local Plan Policy E14.

*Impact on ecological and archaeological interests*

56. The application was accompanied by a Great Crested Newt survey which concluded that Great Crested Newts are likely to be absent from ponds and ditches within 500 metres of the application site and therefore there would be a negligible risk that the proposals would result in disturbance or injury to newts both during and after construction. It is noted that the County Council's Biodiversity Officer concurs with this view and raises no objections to the proposals, subject to the applicant taking appropriate measures to ensure that the development minimises the risk of harm to protected species and that biodiversity enhancement measures are included within the proposals. With this advice in mind, the applicant has detailed that should Great Crested Newts be observed at any stage during construction activities, all works would stop and a suitably qualified ecologist employed to advise on an appropriate course of

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action. In this event, further discussions would take place between the applicant and their ecologist, the County Planning Authority and the County Council's Biodiversity Officer to ensure the best possible outcome. The applicant has agreed to ensure that any vegetation clearance would take place outside the bird breeding season, mid March to August, unless an ecologist is employed to assess individual trees, shrubs or hedges for breeding birds and if found, to ensure sufficient time for young breeding birds to fledge before the removal of vegetation takes place. Additional biodiversity enhancement measures proposed by the applicant including the planting of native species of trees and shrubs as part of the overall site landscaping scheme together with the establishment of a habitat area including a new school pond. On the basis of the negligible risk to the disturbance of protected species at the site and the various biodiversity enhancement measures proposed, I am satisfied that the proposals are broadly in accordance with the general thrust of South East Plan Policy NRM5 and Local Plan Policies SP2 and E11.

57. It is noted that the proposed school building footprint has already been subject to pre-planning archaeological evaluation which identified significant archaeological remains from the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Medieval periods. To ensure that archaeological interests are safeguarded in terms of construction activities on the remainder of the site (i.e. those areas not covered by the proposed school building footprint) the County Council's Archaeological Advisor has requested that prior to the commencement of any development a programme of further archaeological work is agreed with the County Planning Authority. I therefore consider that this approach is proportional and reasonable to the proposals and that a condition should be placed on any future planning consent to this effect. I consider this approach to be consistent with the policy requirements of Local Plan Policy SP2.

Landscaping

58. Local Plan Policy E1 requires all new developments to incorporate a high standard of landscaping whilst Local Plan Policy E19 seeks development to be of high quality design that responds positively by enriching the qualities of the existing environment through the provision of native landscaping. To this effect I consider that the proposed new school development be accompanied by an appropriate native landscape planting scheme to help soften the development into the wider landscape. Accordingly, I suggest that a condition be placed on any future planning consent to ensure the submission and agreement of an appropriate native landscaping scheme with the County Planning Authority which would then be implemented within the first planting season following the completion of construction activities.

Other issues

59. I note that residential concerns have been raised over the scale of the proposed school in this particular locality. The scale of the school building itself and the size of the external areas is driven largely by the intended school roll. Therefore the size of school in this instance has been designed to cater for the needs of a one-form entry primary school for some 210 pupils, with approximately 23 full-time staff and 10-12 part time staff. Whilst I can acknowledge the concerns of the resident in this instance on the basis that up until now the application site has been previously un-developed, for the reasons discussed above I find no overriding grounds to substantiate a planning objection to the development proposed in this case. Furthermore, I note that the residential dwelling opposite the proposed school is well set back from the main Leysdown Road [B2231] in this instance, and benefits from a strong vegetated boundary treatment to its road frontage.

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60. The impacts of construction impacts have also been raised by the nearest residential dwelling in this instance. In order to ensure that construction activities are carried out during appropriate periods and therefore to safeguard residential amenity, I propose to impose a condition to restrict all construction activities to between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00 and 13:00 on Saturday and no operations taking place on Sundays, Bank and Public Holidays. As discussed above, I propose that a condition be placed on any planning consent to ensure that mud and debris is not tracked out of the construction site onto the public highway as part of these proposals.

**Conclusion**

61. The proposal seeks to provide a new purpose built one-form entry primary school with all associated external facilities at Leysdown-on-Sea, Sheerness. The school building itself has been designed around the concept of sustainability and includes the incorporation of renewable energy technology with roof mounted photovoltaic cells, whilst respecting the area's past pioneering aviation history in terms of its built form with a sweeping roof form designed around the concept of an aircraft wing. Whilst I accept that in this locality the proposed school building would not accord with the existing built form and would be discernable from relatively long-distance views, I consider that the design approach adopted instead proposes an eye-catching and landmark design aimed at providing an inspirational teaching facility for all its pupils. Whilst I note the concerns raised by a nearby residential dwelling in this instance, for the reasons discussed above I consider there to be no overriding grounds for objection to the proposed development in this instance. I therefore recommend accordingly.

**Recommendation**

62. I RECOMMEND that PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO conditions, including conditions to cover the following aspects:
- 5 year implementation period;
  - the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
  - external materials to be agreed;
  - specification and colour treatment of all fencing to be agreed;
  - submission of landscaping scheme and implementation with first planting season following construction activities;
  - measures to prevent mud and debris being tracked out onto the public highway;
  - parking being made on site for construction operatives and construction vehicles during construction works;
  - vehicle and cycle parking (as proposed in the application) being provided prior to the first occupation of school;
  - vehicular and pedestrian site entrance and exits being provided in accordance with approved details (including required visibility splays) prior to first occupation of school;
  - provision of off-site highway works prior to first occupation of school;
  - submission of a Travel Plan (including an implementation programme) prior to the first occupation of the school;
  - clearance of vegetation outside bird breeding season, mid March to August inclusive, unless ecologist is present;
  - implementation of biodiversity enhancement measures;
  - hours of construction limited;

## **Item D5**

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- no external lighting to be installed on MUGA without the prior written planning permission of the County Planning Authority; and
- archaeological watching brief.

Case officer – Julian Moat	01622 696978
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Background documents - See section heading
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