

Application for an extension to Cliftonville Primary School, Margate – TH/14/0148 (KCC/TH/0005/2014)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 16th July 2014.

Application by Kent County Council Property and Infrastructure for an eight classroom extension along with a multi use hall and kitchen, plant room, toilets and staff room and external playspace at Cliftonville Primary School, Northumberland Avenue, Margate – KCC/TH/0005/2014 (TH/14/0148).

Recommendation: SUBJECT TO any further views received from Sport England before the Committee meeting, the application be referred to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and subject to his decision planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member(s): Mr W Scobie & Mrs M Elenor

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. Cliftonville Primary School is located off Northumberland Avenue, to the east of Margate Town Centre and to the south of Cliftonville.
2. The school is surrounded by residential property to the north and east, school playing fields to the west and south and the Laleham Gap School also to the south. A footpath runs between Northdown Park Road and Northdown Road to the west of the School site and between the Laleham Gap School playing fields.
3. This application is on land which is currently part of the school playing field at the existing Laleham Gap School. The applicant expects the Laleham Gap School to be relocated to a new site which would then make land available to this proposal. A planning application has been received for a new site for the Laleham Gap School at land at Ozengell Place Ramsgate planning application reference KCC/TH/0139/2014.
4. The nearest residential property to the proposal is approximately 38m east of the building façade at 87 Northumberland Avenue.

Background

5. This proposal is for new classroom and hall space that would be required for expansion of the Cliftonville Community Primary School to a 4FE 810 place school. The school currently has a published admission number of 90 which means that the school currently admits 90 children as a 3FE school to Reception classes each year. It is proposed to increase the reception intake from 90 to 120 so that the school would admit 120 children into Reception in September and each year thereafter to provide an additional 210 school places between Reception and Year 6. Numbers would gradually increase by 30 each year over a 7 year period.
6. Expansion of the school is considered by the applicant to be necessary to help meet the future demand for school places within Margate and to provide school places for local children. The applicant considers that even with the proposed enlargement of the School a deficit of places is expected to exist in Margate. The Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2013 to 2018 provides forecasts of demand for primary school capacity and includes provision for commissioning an additional 1FE at Cliftonville Primary School.

Planning History

7. The original school was built in the late 1970's and further extended in 1996. The school site currently includes a main building with a number of satellite buildings located to the south and west. There is a separate nursery building to the south of the site.
8. Planning permission (reference TH/13/0585) was recently granted (30th August 2013) by Thanet District Council for change of use from residential use to use as meeting rooms for Cliftonville Primary School for the nearest property which is to the north east of the proposal at no. 88 Northumberland Avenue. Prior to that the following more recent planning applications relate to the Cliftonville Primary School site:

TH/12/755 - Retrospective application for two timber framed chalet style buildings to provide specialist mentoring for pupils was granted 17th December 2012.

TH/10/963 – A meeting room and classroom extension was granted 29th December 2010.

TH/07/681 – A three classroom teaching block, extension to the junior playground and re-location of the PTA building was granted 27th June 2007.

TH/05/535 – A disabled persons' entrance, reception area and extending head teacher's office and staff room was granted 11th August 2005.

TH/05/233 - Retention and continued use of 1 no. 2 bay and 1 no. 3 bay mobile classroom was granted 6th April 2005.

TH/02/699 – Permission was granted for a four classroom teaching block was granted 6th December 2002.

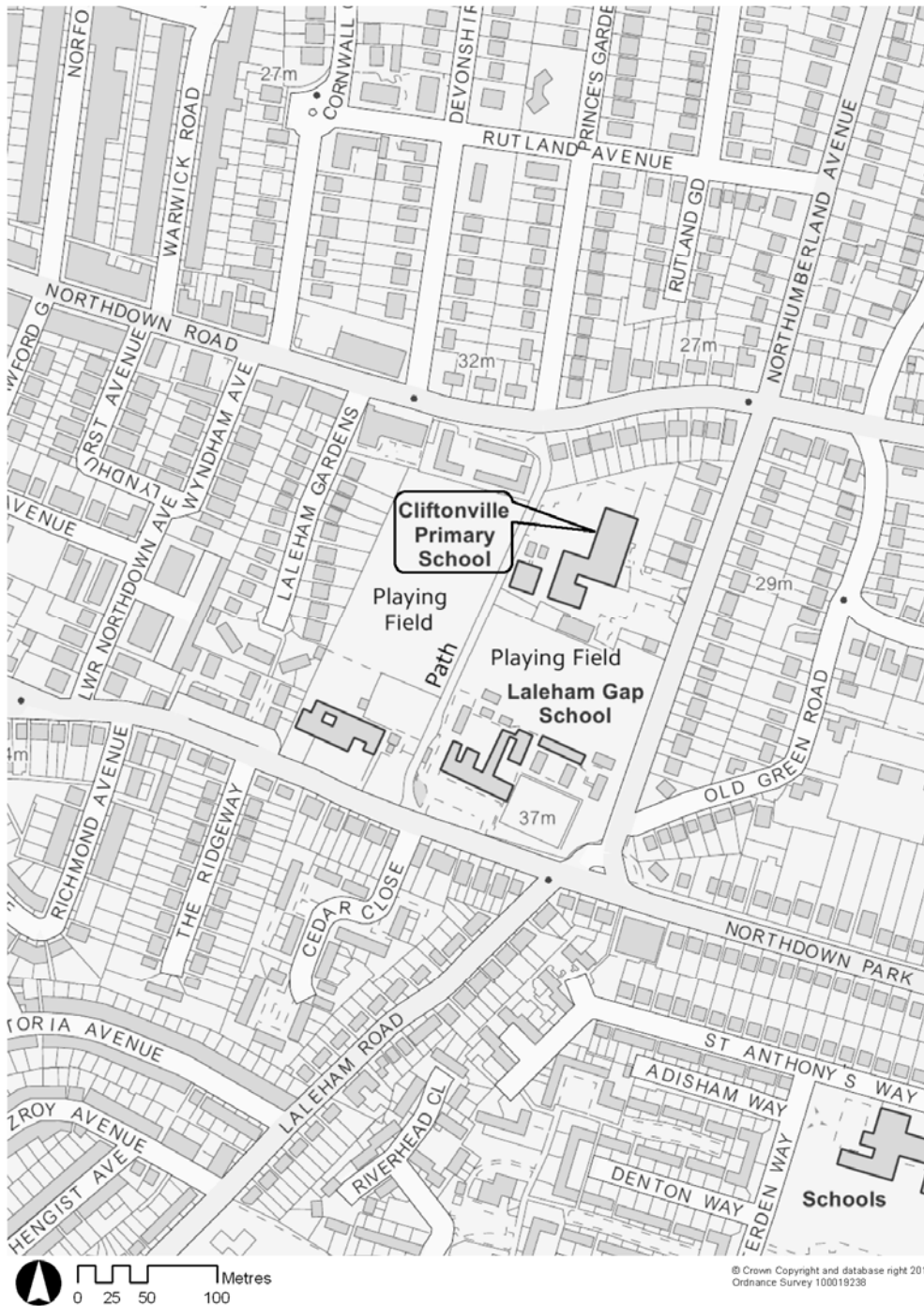
Proposal

9. The application is for a new build 8 classroom extension, multi-use hall with allocated storage and a plant room, kitchen, toilets, staff room and new external play space. These aspects of the development are to the south of the existing school buildings on land which is currently part of the Laleham Gap school playing fields.
10. The proposal would result in some internal reconfiguration and reassignment of spaces to the existing school buildings and would connect the existing nursery building to the proposed buildings to the south.
11. The proposed new hall (215m²), and kitchen (58m²) would be to the south east of the site, connected with an internal hall store, lobby, staff room and plant room area. Space for a future hall extension of 80m² is indicated in the application plans submitted although its inclusion is not part of this planning application proposal.
12. The proposed key stage 1 extension area for 8 classrooms would link to the existing nursery building and the proposed new hall and kitchen areas. There would be new courtyard, canopy and outdoor play areas between the two and new toilet areas internally.
13. The classroom block is proposed to be single storey with a flat roof with rooflights. The roof is to be extended over the line of the building to act also as a sun shield and shelter. The building materials proposed are brick with sections of render.

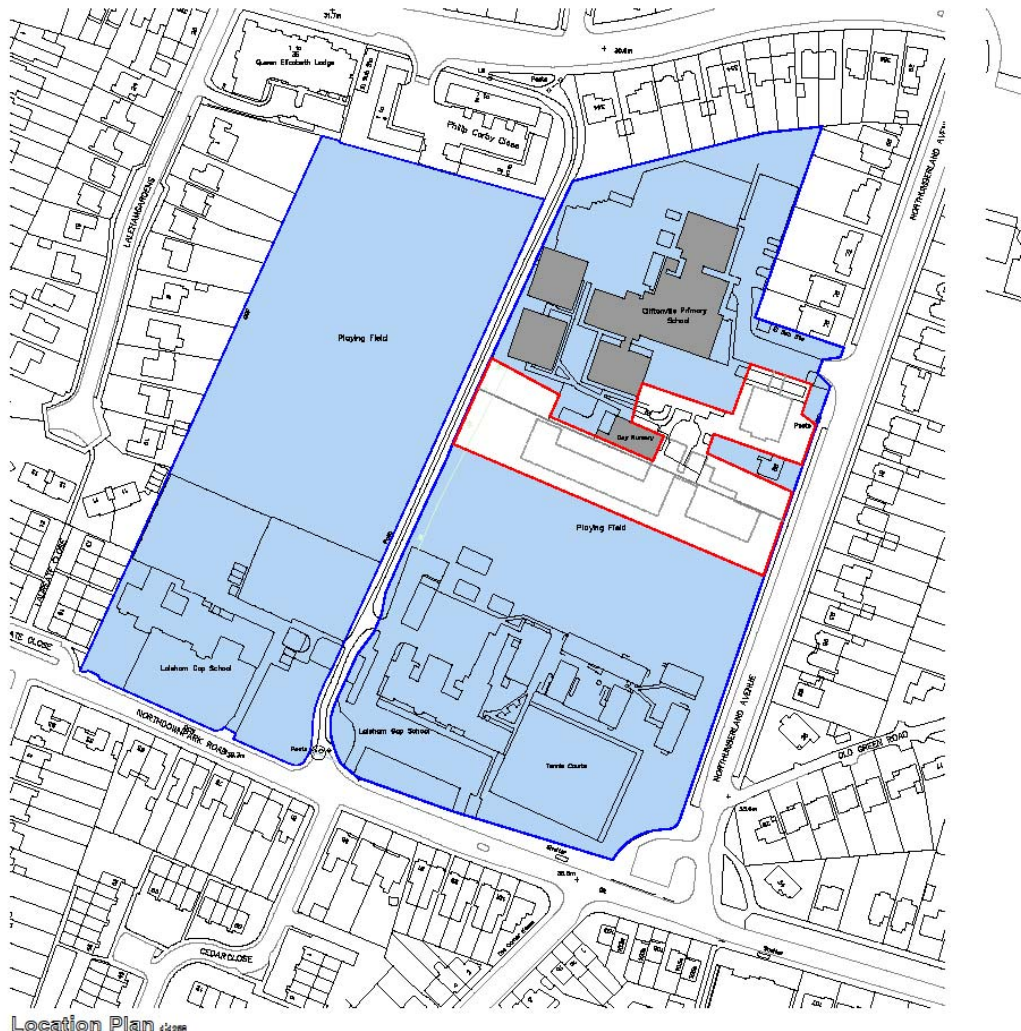
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Location

Cliftonville Primary School, Margate



Proposed Site Plan



Location Plan

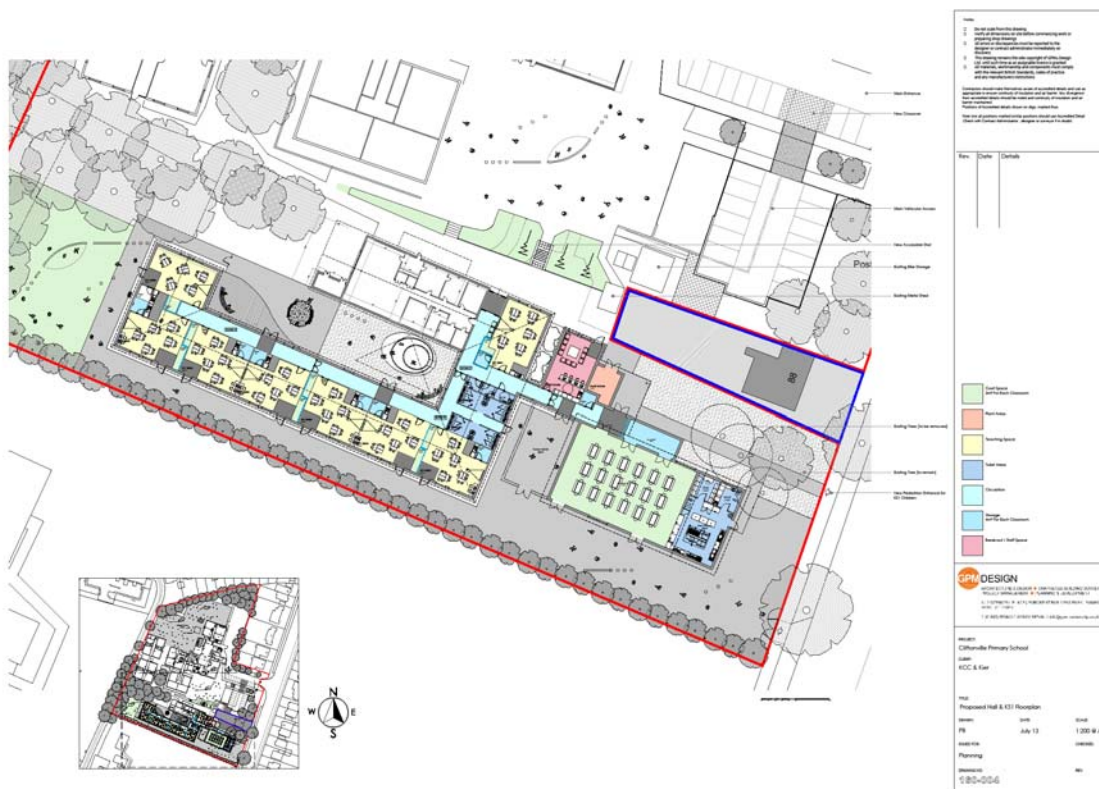


14. The hall, which would be 6m high, is also proposed with a flat roof and would be constructed in Marley Eternit panels with an off white colour finish, which according to the applicant is designed to match the render although with a more hardwearing finish. The kitchen is proposed to be a flat roof to a height of 3.8m. The application shows the location of possible extractor plant on the roof of the kitchen although no details are provided.
15. The buildings would be set back from the road being 10.5m at its nearest to the site boundary with Northumberland Avenue.

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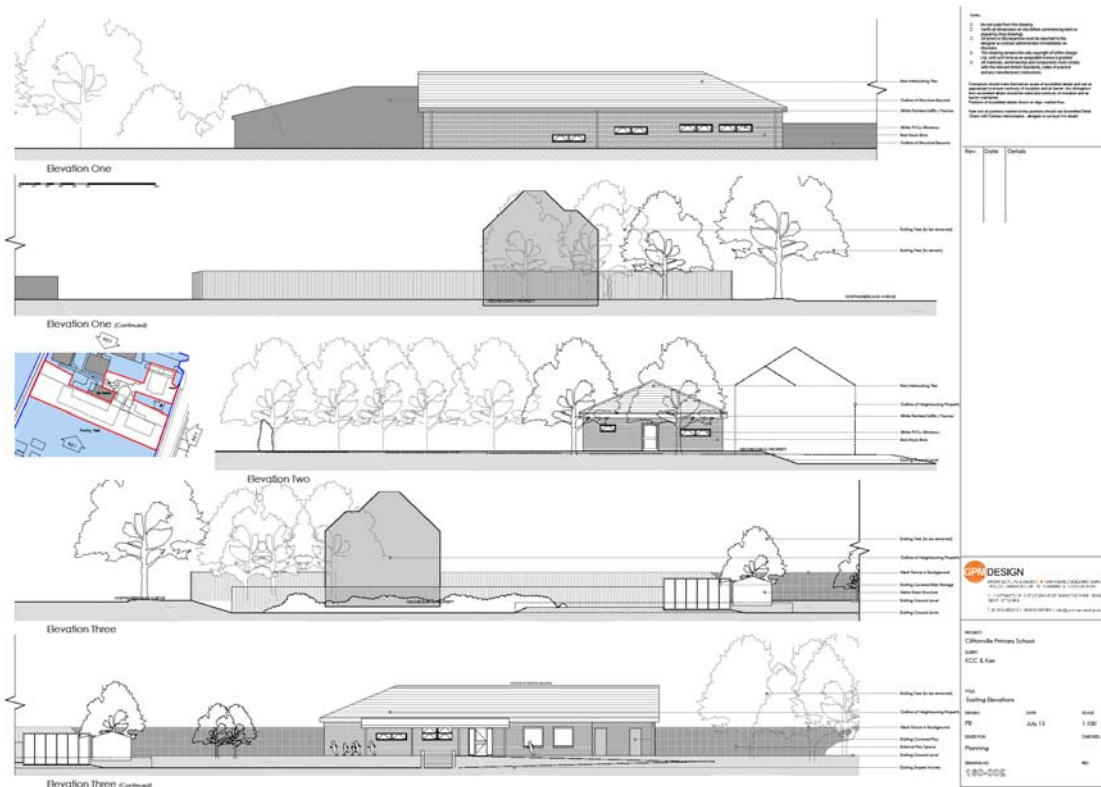
16. The proposal also includes additional staff parking for 12 cars within the existing school area, provision for 20 scooter parking spaces and a new pedestrian access route from Northumberland Avenue to the proposed hall block. The proposed new pedestrian access would be set back from the road and incorporates a waiting area for parents. The proposal includes a separate contractor's construction access from Northumberland Avenue. It is intended that there would be a contractor's site compound for the proposed construction works on site.
17. The Applicant states that the school would also have in the future access to 8510m² playing fields immediately adjacent to the west of the site.
18. The applicant states that all trees at the site would be retained except for 3 trees that would need to be removed to the north of the proposed kitchen extension in order to allow space for the proposed new pedestrian access.
19. New fencing and planting to the new southern boundary between the site and the Laleham Gap School is proposed.

Proposed Hall and KS1 Floorplan



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Existing Elevations

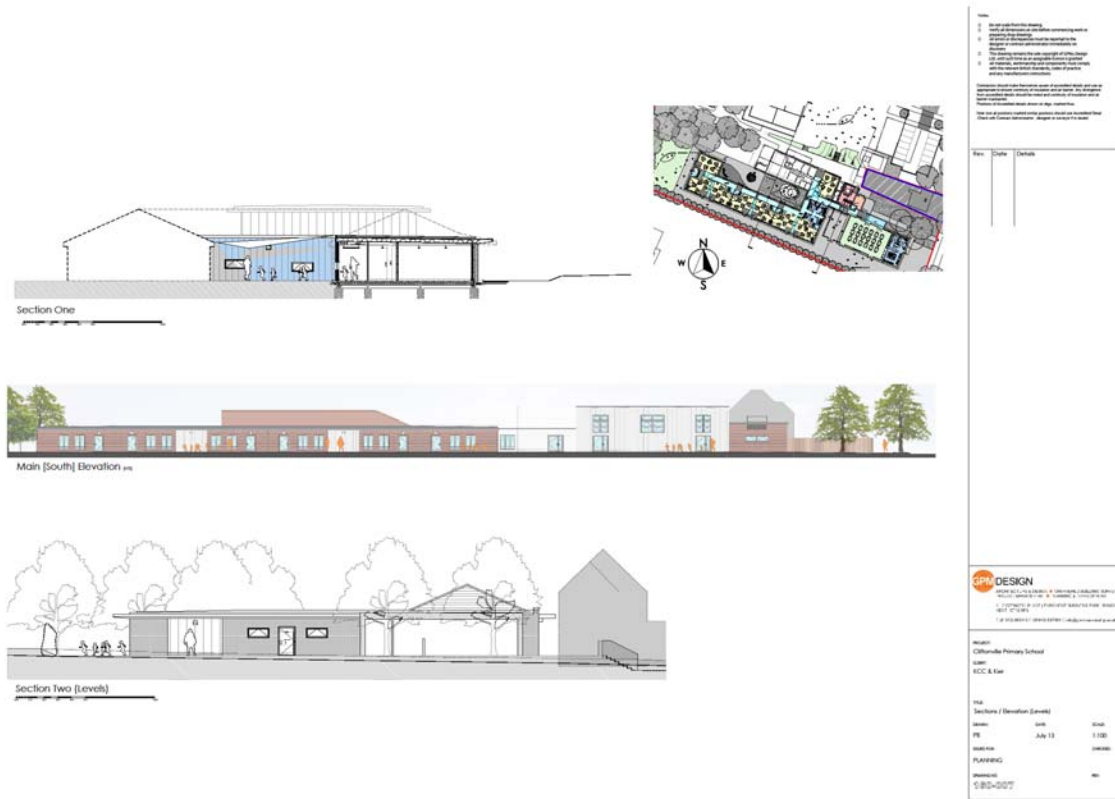


Proposed Elevations



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Sections and Elevations



View of Site Location on Field in Yellow



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View across existing site showing nursery building to the west of the site.



View of western edge of site and view to the south toward Laleham Gap School



Planning Policy

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012, and the 2014 guidance sets out the Government's planning policy guidance for England at the heart of which is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The guidance is a material consideration for the determination of planning applications but does not change the statutory status of the development plan which remains the starting point for decision making. However the weight given to development plan policies will depend on their consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the development plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

In determining applications the NPPF states that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. In terms of delivering sustainable development in relation to this development proposal, the NPPF guidance and objectives covering the following matters are of particular relevance:

- consideration of whether the opportunities for sustainable transport have been taken up and safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people;
- achieving the requirement for high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;

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- the promotion of healthy communities; including that great weight that the Government attaches to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, and that great weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools and that there is opportunity for sport and recreation and that existing open space, sport and recreation land including playing fields are protected; and
- conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Planning Statement on Planning for Schools Development - where there is commitment for planning to work in a positive manner when dealing with proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of state-funded schools and that there should be a presumption in favour of the sustainable development of state-funded schools as expressed in the NPPF.

Local Plan/Local Development Framework policies are contained in the Thanet Local Plan 2006 Saved Policies.

Thanet Local Plan 2006 Saved Policies:

Policy TR12 – promotes the increased use of cycling including incorporation of cycle parking facilities.

Policy TR15 – supports measures that assist implementation of school travel plans

Policy TR16 – seeks to ensure satisfactory provision for parking of vehicles

Policy D1 – all new development is required to provide high quality and inclusive design, sustainability, layout and materials and which respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area which is compatible with neighbouring buildings and spaces and does not result in unacceptable loss of amenity. Development is required to consider means of access, retain and respects biodiversity and the quality of the local environment.

Policy D2 – seeks to enhance the development site in its setting by retention and protection during site works of as many of the existing trees, hedges and habitat features as possible; provision of maintenance of landscape planting.

Policy SR12 – seeks to protect playing field land from development if it would be detrimental to the character of the area and provides exceptions where development on playing field land would be acceptable including where there is an excess of playing field provision in the area, where the land is incapable of forming a pitch and does not result in loss of use of a pitch, if the playing fields that would be lost as a consequence of the development would be replaced.

Policy CF1 – concerns proposals for new and reuse of or alternative community facilities which accord with other local plan policies and the community use and location are appropriate and

Policy HE11 – concerns assessment of the archaeological or historical importance of the site and the likely impact on development.

Policy HE12 – concerns arrangements to ensure that arrangements are in place to allow satisfactory archaeological investigation and recording.

21. The school is not within the Cliftonville Development Plan Document area and there are no site specific land designations within the Development Plan in association with the site.

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Consultations

22. **Thanet District Council** raises no objections.

Environment Agency has no objection in principle and request a number of conditions relating to dealing with contamination should it be identified, foul and surface water drainage and fuel, oil and chemical storage.

Southern Water requests a condition on any approval to require details of the proposed means of foul and surface sewerage disposal.

KCC Biodiversity Officer comments that the proposed development has limited potential to be used by protected/notable species and requires no additional information to be submitted prior to determination.

Public Rights of Way and Access Service raises no objections.

Kent Highways and Transportation raises no objection to the proposal subject to inclusion of scooter parking spaces, funding of corner protection waiting restrictions at the corner of Northumberland Avenue and Northdown Road, provision of a suitably surfaced pedestrian waiting area within the proposed new pedestrian access, a guard rail between the verge and the highway and provision of an extended period of time for dropping off and picking up which is available to all children at the school and which will be at no cost to parents.

Sport England raises a holding objection to the proposal as it is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions in Sport England playing fields policy. However, Sport England indicates that it would be prepared to review the position if it can be demonstrated that one of the policy exceptions can be met. It requested further information from the applicant with regard to the provision of replacement playing field provision within a fixed and clearly defined timescale before providing a further formal consultation response to the proposal. Further information has been provided by the applicant and a further response from Sport England is awaited. I will update Members of the position at the Committee meeting.

Local Member(s)

The Local Members for Margate and Cliftonville, Mrs Mo Elenor and Mr William Scobie were notified of the application on 11th February 2014.

Publicity

23. The application has been advertised by the posting of site notice in two locations, newspaper advertisement and by the individual notification of 37 properties. Two responses have been received.

Representations

24. The neighbouring Laleham Gap School is in support of the development of the Cliftonville School extension as long as the date of completion of the Laleham Gap new school is taken into consideration. They say that this is proposed to be open for pupils in September 2015 although is behind schedule and planning permission not yet agreed. Meanwhile the Laleham Gap School continues to be fully functioning and

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oversubscribed with very little playground and sporting facilities and that the proposed field for the Cliftonville extension is the only large outside functioning area for the Laleham Gap School which is for high functioning pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders who have very low sensory thresholds. The School would not support any building works whilst the school is in session as it would affect the behaviour and progress of students. The School comments that the expansion of good schools is supported, but not to the detriment of some of the most vulnerable pupils in society.

25. An objection to the proposal has been received from a local resident who considers that there is a lack of cohesion between this application and the Laleham School development (reference F/TH/14/0518) for 70 houses. The neighbour comments that the transport report for this application suggests a further 50 cars both morning and afternoon attending at the school and does not take into account the large surge of travel caused by the occupiers of 70 new houses within a hundred yards of the school entrance. The School and road residents make repeated attempts to educate drivers about suitable parking, and littering, when picking up children, to add to this will see a considerable increase in friction between residents and the school.

Discussion

26. In considering this proposal regard must be had to Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (8) 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 Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity.
27. This application is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee because of the Sport England objection to the proposal and also because of neighbour representation.
28. I consider that the key determining issues in relation to this application are the need for expansion and the locational impacts, including design and the impact upon school playing field land. These matters are discussed further below under the headings of Need, Location and Impacts.

Need

29. This proposal is part of the Kent County Council's Basic Needs project. The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent (2013 to 2018) forecasts demand for primary school capacity which in Thanet indicates that there is pressure on primary school places in the Margate area and that a deficit of places is expected within the Margate planning area over the next four year period. The applicant states that this proposal is to increase the number of places available at Cliftonville Primary School in order to help meet future demand in Margate.
30. Given the national planning context relating to promoting healthy communities and a presumption in favour of the sustainable development of state-funded schools in order to meet the needs of existing and new communities I accept that there is a need for this proposal. However, that must be balanced against the location of this proposal on playing field land and the impacts to healthy communities as a result of the loss of playing field land and the wider amenity impacts that the development may create.

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Location

31. The application states that a number of previous piecemeal building projects at the school have impacted on circulation and levels around the school site. The applicant states that a number of design options were initially considered and that the opportunity to secure and use extra land as a result of planned relocation of the Laleham Gap School offered an opportunity to establish a design proposal that addressed the requirement to provide additional accommodation, improves circulation within the existing site, and limits the impact of the building works during construction to the existing children at the school.
32. As a result, utilising the extra land has been taken forward in this planning application. This proposal is located to the south of the existing nursery building on land which is currently part of the Laleham Gap School playing field. It would extend and link to the existing nursery building, enabling key stage one children to all be located in one building. That in turn provided the applicant with opportunities to review and reconfigure the existing collection of buildings at the site and to group year classes together elsewhere within the site.
33. In considering the location of this proposal it should be noted that the closest property at 88 Northumberland Avenue has recently been granted permission by Thanet District Council for a change of use from residential use to use as part of the school pastoral activities and would as a result be incorporated into the school grounds. The proposed buildings would be approximately 35m from the nearest residential property to the east of the site along Northumberland Avenue.
34. It should also be noted that there has recently been a planning application (reference F/TH/14/0518) to Thanet District Council for a residential development at Laleham School, Northdown Park Road, which if permitted would follow demolition of the existing Laleham School buildings. That application was made by Kent County Council Property Services to Thanet District Council in June 2014 and has not yet been determined by Thanet District Council. It does not include the area of playing field land that this proposal relates to. The neighbour objection referred to above relates to the impact of additional traffic which may result from proposed housing in the location proposed within the F/TH/14/0518 application to Thanet District Council. This is discussed further below in relation to highways impacts.
35. Playing field land is protected from development in planning policy terms and there are only a limited number of exceptions to playing field policy whereby development of playing field land would generally be regarded as acceptable. Sport England is a statutory consultee for all development proposals affecting playing fields or land used as playing fields.
36. The NPPF paragraph 74 states that playing field land should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the land to be surplus to requirements or the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and quantity in a suitable location or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss. That is within the context of the contribution that open space and opportunity for sport and recreation has to the health and well being of communities.
37. This proposal would result in the reduction in width of the Laleham Gap field from 60m to 40m wide and a consequential loss of 2000sq m of playing field. The applicant states

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that an additional 10,500 sq m area of playing field would still be available to the north west of the site.

38. However, the applicant also states that the playing fields that would be lost as a result of this development proposal would be replaced by playing fields elsewhere. They propose that the replacement for the Laleham Gap School, at land at Ozengell Place, Ramsgate, Kent, CT12 6PB would provide the replacement playing field land in exchange for that which would be lost in this location should planning permission be granted for this proposal. They also propose that the replacement playing field land would be greater in area as the proposed new school at Ozengell Place would provide an additional 11,000 sq m of playing field. That would represent an overall increase in provision of 9000 sq m when considering the provision holistically.
39. Whilst a planning application (ref KCC/TH/0139/2014) has been received for the replacement Laleham Gap School, it has not yet been determined and there would in any event be a timing issue in relation to the availability of the replacement playing fields. That might lead to a temporary shortfall in availability of playing field land or, should permission not be granted for the replacement Laleham Gap School or should it not be relocated, the proposal would lead to a loss of 2000 sq m of available playing field space in the Thanet district. That would have impacts to the facilities and environment currently enjoyed by pupils at the existing Laleham Gap School.
40. The response to the neighbour notification from the Headteacher of the Laleham Gap School was that whilst in support of the proposal it requested the date of completion of the Laleham Gap new school to be taken into consideration and also the requirement for the existing school to be fully functional, including use of the field, in the meanwhile. The Headteacher states that the Laleham Gap School would not support any building works whilst the school is in session as it would affect the behaviour and progress of students.
41. The location of the proposal on playing field land therefore has the potential for a short term negative impact to the functioning of the KCC Laleham Gap School. KCC, which is also the applicant for this proposal, state that this would only be a temporary shortfall which would not have significant impact as the school would still have access to the retained open space. On moving to a new site, the Laleham Gap School would no longer need to use the playing field area. A timetable for the project is not included within the application. In my opinion, some disruption would be inevitable and it would be expected that the applicant manages the project timings in order to minimise conflict and disruption to both schools given the nature of the works proposed, the interests of the applicant and the longer term objectives for education and the learning environment and the provision of sufficient places for Kent's young people. The amenity impacts of the proposal to neighbouring property and the timing of works are discussed in relation to amenity impacts below.
42. The applicant considers that the shortfall of open space as a result of this development proposal would only be short term and that the Laleham Gap School would still have access to the open space to the north of the site. The applicant requests that commencement of the proposed scheme be allowed should planning permission be granted once a contract for the delivery of the new Laleham Gap School has been signed such that there would be a guarantee in place that the lost land would be replaced. Furthermore, in order to address the Sport England holding objection, the applicant suggested that either an agreement be entered into or a condition be imposed preventing commencement of the development until permission has been granted for the new Laleham Gap School and a contract entered into for its construction. This may

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allow Sport England to remove its holding objection to the proposal. Sport England comments are awaited and I will update Members of the position at the Committee meeting. This may also address some of the concerns discussed above with regard to the proposed timescales and the functioning of the Laleham Gap School. Given that there is currently no planning permission in place, there can be no certainty that the proposed Laleham Gap School would be relocated to the proposed location. It is also not known as to whether the application for proposed demolition of the Laleham Gap school and redevelopment with housing will succeed. The relative timing of each of these projects should permission be granted is also not known.

43. Sport England policy exception E4 requires the playing fields to be lost as a result of the proposed development to be replaced prior to the commencement of the development by playing fields of equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity; in a suitable location and subject to better management arrangements. There is currently not the certainty over whether the proposed replacement playing fields as part of the new site proposed for the Laleham Gap School will receive planning permission and there would in any case be a time lag between any grant of permission and the grounds becoming available as a replacement. A condition preventing commencement of the development until permission has been granted for the new Laleham Gap School and a contract entered into for its construction would in my view address this policy requirement. The view of Sport England is awaited.
44. The applicant does not provide any information with regard to a comparison of the quality of the proposed replacement field in relation to the quality of the existing field, suitability of location or management arrangements. However, in my opinion the proposal to replace the area of playing field lost by a larger area of school playing field, subject to planning permission being granted would be at an appropriate location. The proposed replacement location is approximately 4.5 miles from the site. Whilst information about management arrangements has not been provided by the applicant at this stage, I consider that it is reasonable to assume that the management arrangements of school playing field land will be at least equivalent.
45. Unless Sport England confirm removal of their holding objection, I consider that, on the basis of the information provided within the application, arguably, the proposal would be against national planning policy contained within the NPPF because it may lead to loss of playing field land. Currently, there is no certainty that the proposal for the replacement Laleham Gap site and therefore the replacement playing field land will succeed in planning terms. Given the Sport England holding objection to this proposal a decision to grant planning permission for the proposal would need to be first referred to the Secretary of State.
46. Local Plan Policy SR12 also seeks to protect playing field land from development if it would be detrimental to the character of the area and provides exceptions where development on playing field land would be acceptable. That includes where there is an excess of playing field provision in the area, where the land is incapable of forming a pitch and does not result in loss of use of a pitch and if the playing fields that would be lost as a consequence of the development would be replaced. No information has been provided by the applicant in relation to the general playing field provision in the area or with regard to a comparison of the quality and the impact of the loss of pitch on the wider Thanet Area. However, Thanet District Council has carried out an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment in July 2005 which looks at provision and quality of facilities in the area. The planning consultation with Thanet District Council does not give rise to any objection to the proposal.

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47. Given the scale of the proposal, that Thanet District Council does not object to the proposal and that replacement provision is intended (although not yet secured) at the proposed location for the new Laleham Gap School, and that there is an intention to not commence development until permission has been granted for the new Laleham Gap School and a contract entered into for its construction, I consider that it is reasonable to conclude that the loss of playing field land when balanced against the need to provide additional school places to meet the demand in this location would not be significantly detrimental to the character of the area and would generally be an acceptable exception in this location and in these circumstances. However, I am also mindful that the outcome of the Laleham Gap application cannot be predetermined and that this proposal would at this point in time, be against Sport England policy for playing fields.
48. Determination of the planning application for the replacement Laleham Gap School at Ozengell Place (KCC/TH/0139/2014) would give a clearer picture as to the likelihood and timing of the applicant's proposed replacement playing field land coming forward. However, that information is not currently available, although at the time of writing it is expected that it will be possible to determine this application shortly, subject to resolution of an outstanding objection. I will update Members of the position at the Committee meeting.
49. Therefore, should Sport England not remove their holding objection to this proposal in response to additional information from the applicant, my view is that in determining this application consideration needs to be given as to whether to give more weight to the national policy concerning the protection of playing field land contained in the NPPF and Sport England policy, or to the national policy concerning the development of schools proposals and meeting the need for school places in a local context. Given that Thanet District Council and the response discussed above to the neighbour publicity, my recommendation to Members is to give more weight to the local context and meeting the need for the development by extension at this already established school site. However, if Members are minded to grant planning permission, unless Sport England confirms removal of their holding objection, the application would have to be subject to a referral to the Secretary of State in view of Sport England's objection.

Impacts

50. The NPPF and Local Plan policy in particular, Policy D1, requires consideration of design matters, impacts and amenity for new development proposals.
51. The main publicity of this proposal took place in February and March 2014. This attracted one response from the neighbouring Laleham Gap School, which is discussed above in relation to the proposed location on school playing field and consideration of timing of the proposal. It includes also concern for the proposal to adversely impact on the behaviour and progress of the students is discussed below as it relates to the amenity impacts of the proposal to neighbouring property.
52. A further neighbour response was received in July 2014. That concerns the impact of another planning application in the vicinity of the site at the Laleham Gap School (application reference F/TH/14/0518). This is discussed below in relation to Highway and other matters.
53. It should be noted that the proposal has not attracted any other comments from neighbouring property with regard to unacceptable design or amenity impacts. Notwithstanding this, I summarise the main issues of consideration of impacts arising from the proposal below.

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Highway matters

54. The NPPF suggests that developments should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.
55. The Transport Assessment submitted with the planning application states that this planning application should not have a significant impact in terms of transport. The Transport Assessment was submitted at the time of the application in December 2013. It calculates that there will be an increase of 53 vehicles in the morning peak (0800-0900) and 52 vehicles in the afternoon peak (1500-1600).
56. The neighbour representation raises a concern about a lack of cohesion between this application and the proposed Laleham School development (reference F/TH/14/0518) for demolition and 70 houses. It suggests that the Transport Assessment submitted with this application should take account of the proposed housing development at the Laleham Gap School. There is a concern for the potential for increased "friction" between residents and the school. It should be noted that this application was submitted to this Authority in December 2013 whereas the application F/TH/14/0518 has only recently been submitted to Thanet District Council. At the time of submission of the school extension application, the application for housing had not been made and so it would have been difficult to include reference to it within the Transport Assessment. Given the relative timing of these applications I consider that it would be appropriate for the highways impacts and travel patterns arising from the proposed housing development to be considered afresh and assessed within the processing and context of the housing planning application F/TH/14/0518. It should be noted that Kent County Council Highways and Transportation are also a statutory consultee in relation to that proposal. It should further be noted that there is also opportunity for comments to be made to Thanet District Council in response to publicity for the planning application F/TH/14/0518. These would be considered in relation to determination of that planning application. I do not consider that this proposal should be expected to mitigate against the highway impacts of the proposed residential development nearby, which would be subject to separate consideration within the planning process.
57. I am informed by Kent Highway and Transportation that there has recently been an e-petition in relation to perceived safety issues for current pupils crossing Northumberland Avenue. As a result of the petition, a Member funded scheme has been proposed which seeks to provide a new zebra crossing outside the school entrance. This has recently been approved and is due to be constructed within the coming months. It is evident from this, and also by the presence of cones marking the driveways of neighbouring property at school pick up times, that in common with many schools, there are currently issues concerning road safety and access to neighbouring property in the vicinity of the school.
58. In response to initial comments from Kent Highways and Transportation, the applicant has made amendments to the original proposal in order to accommodate a range of measures to mitigate against potential adverse highway impacts. That includes agreement to provision of 20 scooter parking spaces, funding of new corner protection waiting restrictions on the corner of Northdown Road and Northumberland Avenue, incorporation of a suitably surfaced pedestrian waiting area within the proposed new pedestrian access area which is recessed from the pavement and also provision of a guard rail between the verge and the highway. In addition, the applicant has agreed to provision of staggered dropping off and picking up times in order to reduce the concentration and impact of additional traffic as a result of the proposal at peak times at the beginning and end of the school day. The proposal takes the form of extended drop

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off and pick up times by provision of an out of hours club facility which would be free of charge and have the capacity to accommodate all of the children at the school from 8am Monday to Friday morning until 6pm Monday to Thursday and to the normal finishing time on a Friday afternoon. The School currently has a school travel plan in place and proposes to update this upon development of the school. A revised travel plan could be required by planning condition.

59. Given this package of proposals I am satisfied that there is a range of mitigation measures that can be underpinned by planning conditions in order to address the potential highways impacts of this proposal such that it would not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts within the existing site context. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal accords with the Local Plan policies TR12, TR15, TR16 and D1 in relation to access, pedestrian safety and highways matters. I am also satisfied that the highways impacts of the proposal for demolition and housing at the Laleham Gap School will also be assessed and considered within the determination of that planning application.

Design matters

60. The proposal has not attracted any comments with regard to design matters. Local Plan policy D1 requires consideration of a number of principles including inclusive design, sustainability, layout and materials with respect of the character and appearance of the surrounding area and also gives consideration to safe and satisfactory access arrangements, landscaping and open spaces, and the quality of the local environment. Policy D2 concerns the enhancement of development sites with regard to landscaping, including by retention of existing planting and new planting.
61. The application including the additional highway mitigation measures discussed above gives consideration to access and highway matters arising from the proposed development in terms of provision for pedestrians with an extra pedestrian entrance, cars with provision for additional parking and for scooters to add to the existing provision at the site for cyclists. It also includes consideration within the design for safety and including spreading the use of the highway at school drop off and pick up time and these matters are discussed above.
62. The layout of the building gives consideration to movement and traffic on and around the site and to linking the new buildings proposed with the existing buildings at the site.
63. The extension has been designed to reduce the impact of the build on the existing buildings in design and construction and to limit the requirement for mechanical cooling by making use of passive ventilation via orientation of the building and the location of windows and rooflights. The single storey design for the KS1 classrooms, in my view links well with the existing site context. Whilst the hall building is taller it is lower than the elevation of the nearest building at 88 Northumberland Avenue and is set back from the road and uses the height of the proposed new kitchen and store in order to create a stepped approach. The hall building is proposed with a flat roof and in off white eternit boards and render which is intended to contrast with the red brick used elsewhere.
64. The application shows the location of possible extractor plant on the roof of the kitchen although no details are provided. I am satisfied that additional details can be required by condition in order to address any potential for visual impact which may arise from this.
65. The site is currently well screened by fencing and vegetation from residential property along Northumberland Avenue and also from views along the footpath to the west of the

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site. The existing buildings would screen the development from views from the north. The proposal includes planting and fencing to the southern boundary which would help further screen the proposed development, from views from the neighbouring school to the south. The proposal involves the removal of three trees to the east of the site and replacement planting. I would recommend further detail be provided with regard to the landscaping and planting plan and this could be required by planning condition.

66. National planning policy requires good design and positive contributions to making better places for people and this includes making developments visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. In my opinion, care has been taken to ensure that the proposal is well designed and to incorporate the existing building form and function. It would be set back and subservient to the existing frontage and would not result in a bringing forward of the current building line. I consider that the proposed design would not be out of keeping with the street scene in this location.

Amenity Impacts

67. NPPF and Local Plan policy D1 also requires consideration of other amenity impacts resulting from proposals.
68. The neighbouring Laleham Gap School has concerns that the proposed building works may have potential to adversely impact on the behaviour and progress of the students at the school. The school is for high functioning pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders and who have very low sensory thresholds. A timetable for the works should planning permission be granted has not been provided within the application. The timetable for relocation of the Laleham Gap School is also not fully known. Clearly given this concern, any change would need to be managed carefully with due consideration to pupils currently at both of the schools as well as neighbouring residents, and I would regard this as a managerial as well as a good neighbour issue. Given that the applicant for this proposal, the replacement Laleham Gap School proposal and the proposed demolition of the existing Laleham Gap School is Kent County Council Property, and that the Laleham Gap School is also KCC Property I would regard this as an issue which should be resolvable within project planning and timescales and local construction site management should permission be granted. However, this issue also relates to the promotion of healthy communities. The guidance within the NPPF encourages planning decisions which aim to achieve places that promote safe and accessible environments and developments which deliver social and recreational facilities which the community needs and which guard against the loss of valued facilities and services particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet everyday needs. It also encourages decisions that ensure that established facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable and are retained for the benefit of the community.
69. I consider that temporary disruption arising from building works needs to be balanced against the longer term need for developing and modernising community facilities and ensuring that there is sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities. The Government attaches great importance to this consideration.
70. The proposal includes provision for a separate construction access to the south of the site, and provision for a construction compound within the site, although further details of the specific location and size of the temporary compound would need to be secured by planning condition. I consider that planning conditions can be used to control construction hours. The applicant states that they propose to use heras fencing with netting to limit the temporary visual impacts during construction and to assist with dust

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management. I consider that conditions can be used to provide control over the potential for impacts from dust and noise during construction activities and over other potential impacts from lighting.

Biodiversity and other matters

71. Taking into account comments received from Kent County Council Biodiversity, I consider the impacts in terms of biodiversity not to be unacceptable in planning policy terms. The proposal is located on land which is currently short amenity grassland and it is considered that this has limited potential to be used by protected species. The applicant has submitted a specification for an archaeological watching brief during proposed groundworks. The applicant has also submitted a desktop study and site walkover survey to address the risk of contamination of the existing site. Taking into account comments received from the Environment Agency and Southern Water, I am satisfied that conditions can be used in relation to groundwater protection matters and surface water and foul water drainage. I consider that the application accords with development plan policies D2, HE11 and HE12 in relation to these matters.

Conclusion

72. Planning policy seeks to promote healthy and inclusive communities. It seeks to prevent the loss of recreational and open space which can make an important contribution to the health and well being of communities. However, it also seeks to ensure that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities and this is also relevant to promotion of healthy communities.
73. In this case, given the need for additional school places and within the context of the intention to provide replacement playing field land, I consider that the need for school places to meet demand outweighs the detriment caused by loss of part of the playing field in this location.
74. Taking into account the views from Kent Highways and Transportation received in relation to highways matters, and that in my opinion the proposal is acceptable in terms of location, need, design and amenity impacts, I conclude that the proposal would be acceptable in this location.
75. However, in the event that a Sport England objection remains, should Members support my views expressed in paragraph (50) above and be minded to grant planning permission, the County Planning Authority is required to consult the Secretary of State and not grant planning permission until the Secretary of State has first considered the application. The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, requires that the Authority may only proceed to determine an application once the Secretary of State has had an opportunity to consider whether to call in the application for his own determination.

Recommendation

76. SUBJECT TO any further views received from Sport England before the Committee meeting, I RECOMMEND that the application BE REFERRED to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and SUBJECT TO his decision, PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO conditions, including:

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- The standard time limit for implementation;
- That the development be carried out in accordance with submitted details
- That a scheme of landscaping and replacement tree planting, including fencing detail be submitted prior to commencement;
- Submission of a revised travel plan within 6 months of the date of the permission and subsequent annual review;
- Submission and approval of external lighting details prior to installation;;
- Submission and approval of details of external building materials prior to commencement;;
- Submission and approval of details of kitchen roof extract plant prior to commencement;
- Provision of detailed drainage details concerning foul and surface water prior to commencement;
- Remediation strategy should contamination not previously been identified be found to be present
- Restriction of construction working hours to between 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1300 Saturday with no work on Sundays and Public Holidays;
- Restriction of construction vehicles delivering materials between the hours of 08:00 to 09:00 and 14:45 to 15:45 Monday to Friday;
- Submission of details of construction vehicle loading, unloading, turning, circulation and parking and details of the location of the construction compound prior to commencement of work on site
- Restoration and making good of any disturbed areas of field or planting.
- Provision of wheel washing facilities prior to commencement of work on site and for the duration of construction;
- Within 6 months of occupation of the development, provision of funding of corner protection waiting restrictions on the corner of Northdown Road and Northumberland Avenue;
- Extension of the time period over which all parents can drop off and pick up children at the school from 8am to 6pm Monday to Thursday and from 8am to normal school time on Fridays, to be in place prior to occupation of the development;
- Submission, and approval of further details of recessed entrance, surfacing and layout of the new pedestrian waiting area and location of guard railing;
- That the proposal not commence until planning permission has been granted for the new Laleham Gap School and a contract has been entered into for its construction.

I FURTHER RECOMMEND THAT the applicant BE ADVISED of informatives covering the following:

Advice from Southern Water with regard to the requirement for a formal application for connection to the public sewer system;

Advice from the Environment Agency with regard to surface water drainage, soakaways and fuel oil and chemical storage and pollution prevention.

Case officer – Hazel Mallett	01622 221075
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Background documents - See section heading
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