

SECTION D
DEVELOPMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Background Documents: the deposited documents; views and representations received as referred to in the reports and included in the development proposals dossier for each case; and other documents as might be additionally indicated.

Item D1

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 13th July 2016.

Application by Kent County Council Property & Infrastructure Support for the erection of a new 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields. Proposed building to consist of 18 class rooms with associated stores and WC's, 4 of which are dedicated to Special Education Needs at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member: Peter Homewood

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The application site lies to the south of the village of Wouldham and on the eastern side of Hall Road. The site is currently an undeveloped agricultural field, which is approximately 2.9ha (7.16 acres) in area. It is located just to the north of the 'Peters Village' development site, for which there is planning consent for the creation of a new community, determined by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. The new Medway River crossing is being created to the south-west of the site. Hall Road is a two way carriageway, currently closed off just south of the site. There is an established hedge screen along the road which separates it from a newly constructed footpath and cycleway, and there is a post and wire fence which then separates this path and the edge of the field.
2. The field has a gradual incline towards the east, and has existing electricity pylons cutting across the site in a general north-south direction. There are two residential properties fronting onto Hall Road, which are located at the southern end of the application site. Hall Road links into the southern end of Wouldham village at its junction with High Street, which carries through the village to the north, and Knowle Road which extends to the east. The existing Primary School is located at the northern end of Wouldham, to the east of the High Street, and is a 1 form entry school.

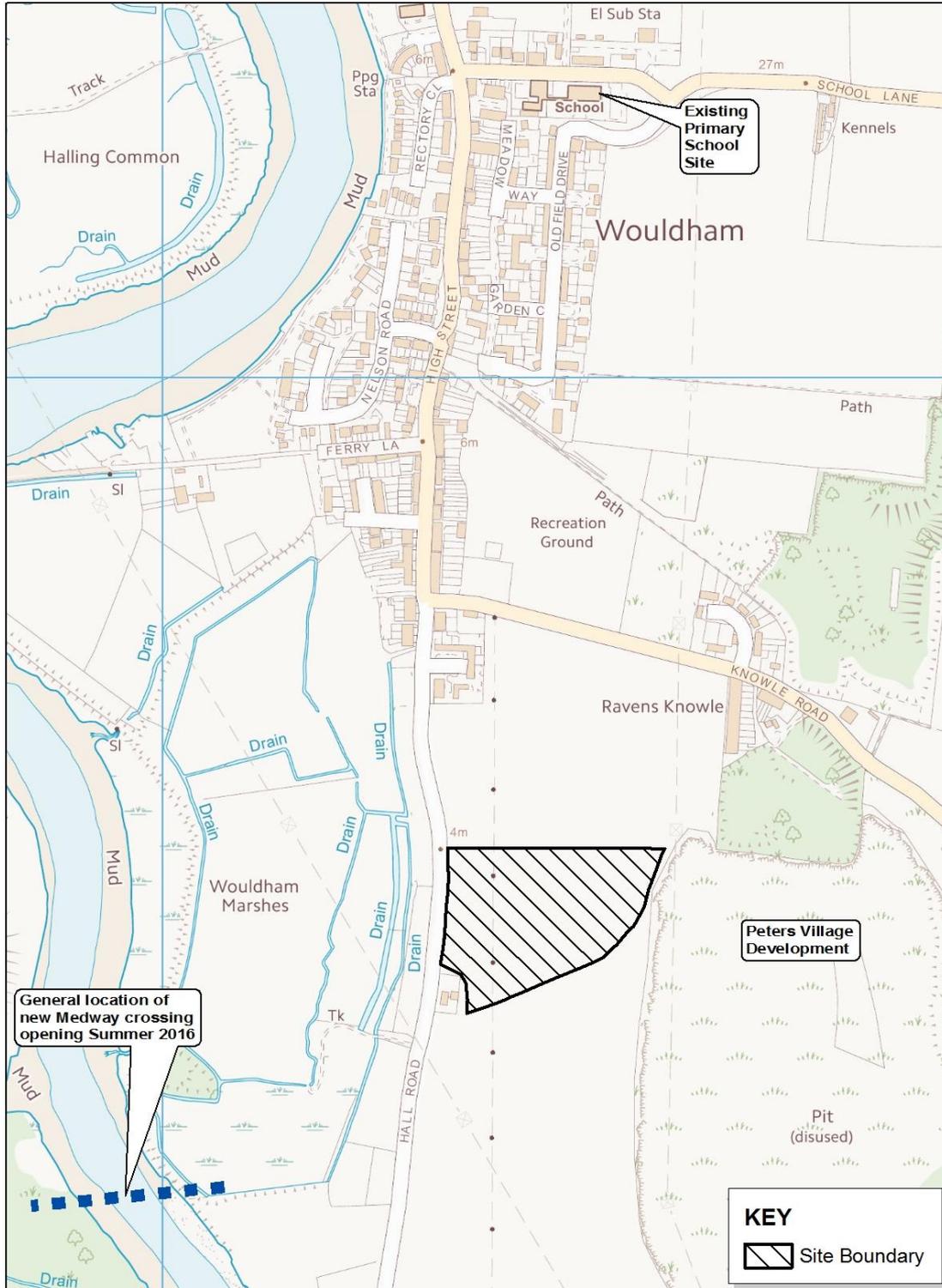
Background

3. The Tonbridge and Malling section of the Kent Commissioning Plan (2015-2019) identifies significant pressure points which are primarily linked to house building and inward migration. The Peters Village development itself is expected to create over 1000 new homes. The existing school is a 1 form entry primary, with limited space to expand and would therefore be unable to adequately provide for children from the new housing development and surrounding area.

Item D1

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

General Location Plan



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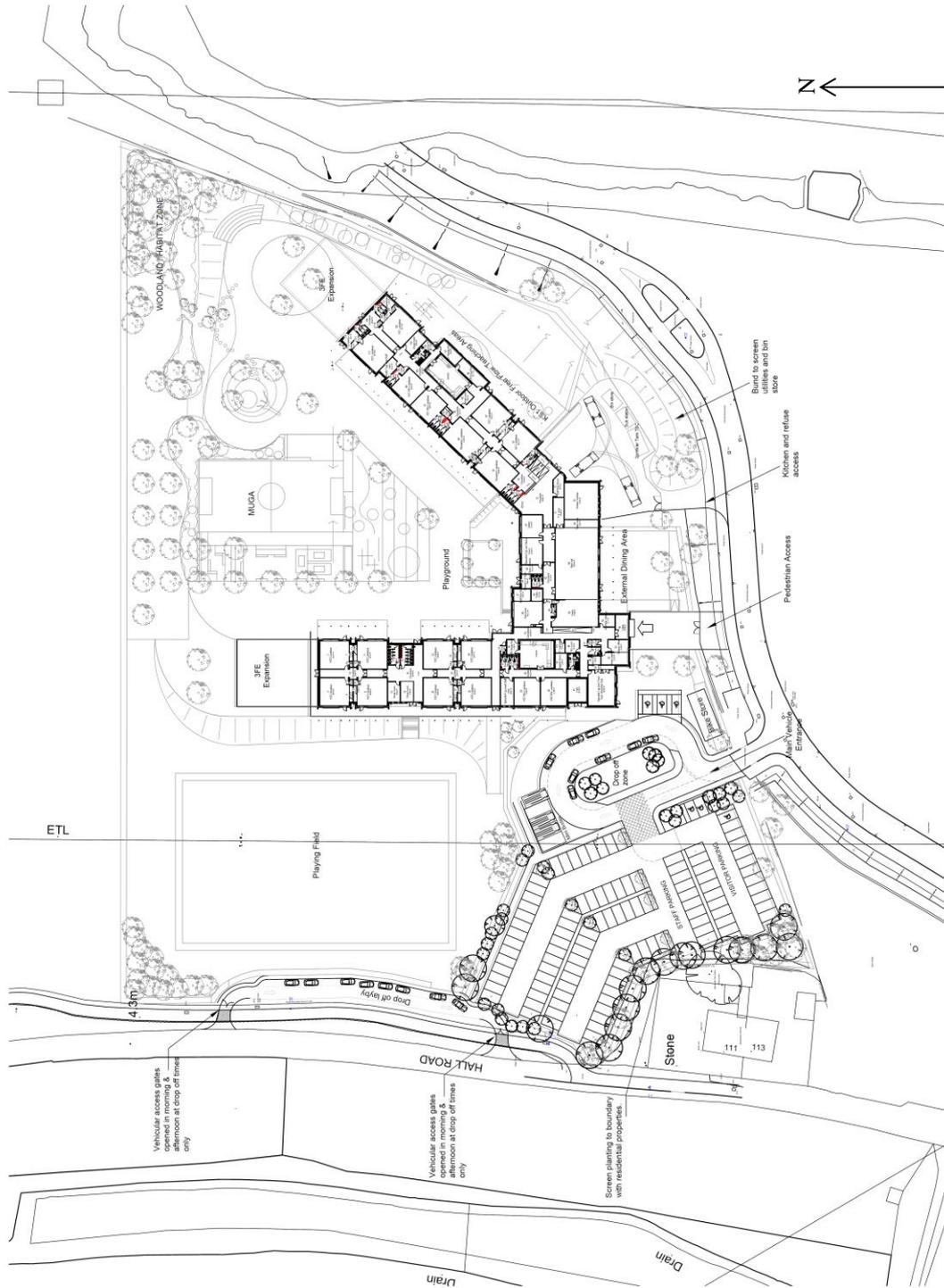
Item D1
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Site Location Plan



New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

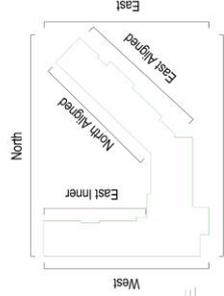
Proposed Site layout Plan



New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

Proposed Elevations

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- Materials:**
- External walls: Composite timber effect cladding
 - Brick
 - Roofing: Timber shingles
 - External canopies: Timber pergola with clear PVC rain cover
 - Roof: Metal standing seam
 - Timber roof: Single ply membrane
 - Timber frames: Dark grey PVC aluminium
 - Door frames: Dark grey PVC aluminium
 - Covered surrounds: Covered trella on timber framing
 - Keyways entrance canopies: PVC louvered slat with turned edge
 - Rainwater goods: Dark grey

Received: 09 January 2018
Planning Applications Group

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Planning - North Elevation
1:200

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Planning - South Elevation
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Planning - East Elevation
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Planning - West Elevation
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New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

Without expansion of places, the Education Authority would not be able to meet its statutory duty of ensuring adequate school places are provided.

4. The Peters Village development site included an allocated site for a new primary school, within the development area, but due to the proposed amalgamation of the existing primary school, the need for space for the future expansion to a 3 form entry school and the inclusion of additional Special Educational Needs provision, the allocated site was not large enough to accommodate that, nor well positioned to cater for existing Wouldham pupils.

Proposal

5. The application seeks approval for the construction of a new two form entry primary school, with capacity for 420 pupils and space to incorporate an expansion for a third form at a later date, should it be required. 50 members of staff would be employed at the new school, and a further 12 staff for the Special Education Needs pupils, who would be accommodated here as a satellite to the Ridgeview Special School in Tonbridge. The proposed school would be a single storey building, with two wings of classrooms enclosing a central courtyard. The courtyard would contain the hard surfaced playground, moving out to the general recreational spaces and MUGA. A woodland habitat zone would be provided at the northern end of the site where it backs onto the remainder of the agricultural field. To the west of the proposed school would be the playing field and the parking.
6. Access into the school would be taken from a new link road provided as part of the Peters Village development, which runs along the southern boundary of the application site. This access would be a two way entrance and exit point, leading to a drop off zone provided around a loop road, with an area for minibus parking, and also providing access to an area of both staff and visitor parking. In total 113 parking spaces would be provided, broken down as 81 staff spaces, 21 visitor/parent spaces, 5 minibus parking spaces and 6 spaces for disabled parking. A further drop off layby would be created to the west of the playing field accessed off Hall Road. This would be a drop off layby only, with no vehicular access to the car park and would be controlled through gates at either end, which would only be opened at the drop off and pick up times at the beginning and end of each school day. The two drop off zones would provide between them space for between 10 and 14 cars at any one time. Pedestrian access into the site would be available from this drop off zone, as well as the on-site car park areas, and from the new access road from the south.
7. A secondary vehicular access would be provided further to the east along the new link road, which would be used for delivery and service vehicles and is also the proposed location for the bin stores, sub-station and septic tanks. This area would be screened from the road by a planted bund. A cycle store would be provided just to the east of the main access point, near the drop off zone, providing storage for 20 bikes, at 10 cycle stands. Landscape planting is proposed within the site, and particularly additional screen planting is shown along the boundary with the two existing cottages on Hall Road.
8. Each wing of the school would house a key stage of teaching and would allow for the necessary SEN provision to be integrated with the relevant age groups. The central linking element would house the general spaces such as the main entrance, school hall,

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library, staff room and offices. The Key Stage 1 classroom wing (the eastern wing) would be provided with the required outside teaching areas. The proposed school would be constructed with a pitched roof design, broken up with some flat roof elements, and with the long wings being articulated with ridges and parapet brick walls. The roof would be constructed in metal standing seam in a goosewing grey colour and the window frames, door frames and rainwater goods would be dark grey. The walls would be constructed from a mixture of brickwork and composite timber effect cladding. The windows and doors would have coloured surrounds to provide further relief to the elevations, and all external canopies would be timber pergolas with clear PVC rain covers. The main entrance façade would have an asymmetric gabled end with oversize windows to give prominence to this elevation, and the main entrance canopy would have a brushed aluminium edge to further define it. Solar panels are proposed on the southern facing roofs.

Planning Policy

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

(i) **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** March 2012 and the **National Planning Policy Guidance** (March 2014), 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;
- The great importance 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;

(ii) **Policy Statement – Planning for Schools Development** (15 August 2011) which sets out the Government's commitment to support the development of state-funded schools and their delivery through the planning system.

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Core Strategy September 2007:

- Policy CP1 Sustainable Development:** 1) All proposals for new development must result in a high quality sustainable environment; 2) provision should be made for housing, employment and other development to meet the needs of existing and future residents of the Borough; 3) the need for development will be balanced against the need to protect and enhance the natural and built environment; 4) locations for development should seek to minimise waste generation, water and energy consumption, reduce the need to travel and where possible avoid areas liable to flooding; 5) new housing development should include a mix of house types and tenure and mixed use developments promoted where appropriate; 6) development to be concentrated at the highest density compatible with the local environment, and be well served by public modes of transport; 7) that development should minimise the risk of crime and make appropriate provision for infrastructure to serve the new development including social leisure, cultural and community facilities and adequate open space accessible to all.
- Policy CP2 Sustainable Transport:** New development that is likely to generate a significant number of trips should (a) be well located relative to public transport, cycle and pedestrian routes and with good access to local service centres; (b) minimise the need to travel through the implementation of Travel Plans and the provision or retention of local services and facilities; (c) either provide or make use of, and if necessary enhance, a choice of transport modes, including public transport, cycling and walking; (d) be compatible with the character and capacity of the highway network in terms of the volume and nature of traffic generated; (e) provide for any necessary enhancements to the safety of the highway network and capacity of transport infrastructure whilst avoiding road improvements that significantly harm the natural or historic environment or the character of the area; and (f) ensure accessibility for all, including elderly people, people with disabilities and others with restricted mobility.
- Policy CP5 Strategic Gap:** Unless justified by special circumstances development will not be permitted that would harm the function of the mid-Kent Strategic Gap as a physical break maintaining the separation and separate identities of the built-up areas of Maidstone, Medway towns and the Medway Gap.
- Policy CP6 Separate Identity of Settlements:** Development will not be permitted within the countryside or on the edge of a settlement that might unduly erode the separate identity of settlements or harm the setting or character of a settlement when viewed from the countryside or adjoining settlements. Any development that is considered acceptable should maintain or enhance the setting and identity of the settlement and be consistent with Policy CP14 (Development in the Countryside)

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

Policy CP14 Development in the Countryside: In the countryside development will be restricted to (a) extensions to existing settlements; (b) the one for one replacement, or appropriate extension of an existing dwelling or conversion of an existing building for residential use; (c) development that is necessary for the purposes of agriculture or forestry; (d) development required for the limited expansion of an existing authorised employment use; (e) development that secures the viability of a farm provided to forms part of a comprehensive farm diversification scheme; (f) redevelopment of the defined Major developed Site in the Green Belt which improves visual appearance, enhances openness and improves sustainability; (g) affordable housing which is justified as an exception under Policy CP19; (h) predominantly open recreation uses together with associated essential built infrastructure; or (i) any other development for which a rural location is essential.

Policy CP24: Achieving a High Quality Environment: All development must be well designed and of a high quality in terms of detailing and use of appropriate materials, and must through its scale, density, layout, siting, character and appearance be designed to respect the site and its surroundings. All development should accord with the detailed advice contained in Kent Design, By Design and Secured by Design and other supplementary planning documents.

Policy CP25 Mitigation of Development Impacts: Development will not be permitted unless the service, transport and community infrastructure necessary to serve it is either available, or will be made available by the time it is needed. Development proposals must therefore either incorporate the infrastructure required as a result of the scheme, or make provision for financial contributions and/or land to secure such infrastructure or service provision at the time it is needed, by means of conditions or a planning obligation.

Policy CP26 Safeguarding of Community Services and Transport: The Council will safeguard land required for the provision of services to meet existing and future community needs as identified by service providers.

(iv) **Tonbridge and Malling Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document April 2010:**

Policy CC1 Mitigation – Sustainable Design: Requires all proposals for new development, building conversions, refurbishments and extensions to incorporate passive design measures to reduce energy demand.

Policy CC3 Adaptation – Sustainable Drainage: Requires the provision of sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) appropriate to the local ground water and soil conditions and drainage regimes. Where SUDS are not practical the proposal should incorporate alternative means of surface water drainage to ground watercourses or surface water sewers.

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

Policy NE3 Impact of Development on Biodiversity: Seeks to protect biodiversity interest across the Borough.

Policy SQ1 Landscape and Townscape Protection and Enhancement: Proposals for development are required to reflect the local distinctiveness, condition and sensitivity to change of the local character areas as defined in the Character Area Appraisals SPD. All new development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance (a) the character and local distinctiveness of the area including its historical and architectural interest and the prevailing level of tranquillity; (b) the distinctive setting of, and relationship between, the pattern of settlement, roads and the landscape, urban form and important views; and (c) the biodiversity value of the area, including patterns of vegetation, property boundaries and water bodies.

Policy SQ6 Noise: Proposals for noise sensitive development (including schools) will be required to demonstrate that noise levels are appropriate for the proposed use. Proposals for built development should incorporate design measures such that internal noise levels are demonstrated to meet criteria levels in relevant guidance, including BS 8233:1999 and Building Bulletin 93.

Consultations

10. **Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council** raises no objection, but suggests a number of informatives relating to air pollution, the School Travel Plan and ventilation systems relating to cooking odours.

Wouldham Parish Council states that they are disappointed there is no pre-school provision and ideally would like to see one attached to the primary school. If this is not possible they would like the community centre to accommodate a pre-school. They would like to discourage cars around the school and see a walk way/cycle way through the centre of Wouldham, which would require a crossing over Knowle Road. They would like to encourage parents to park in the car park in Knowle Road and walk the rest of the way so that there will be less congestion.

KCC Landscape Officer considers that there would not be any adverse impacts on the land or to the wider countryside and surrounding fields, farm land and residential areas.

KCC School Travel Planner has provided guidance for updating the submitted School Travel Plan through the Jambusters website

Environment Agency raises no objection subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the finding of contamination on site that has not been previously identified, and no infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground. Also suggest the need for informatives regarding drainage, taking waste off the site and pollution prevention.

UK Power Networks raise no objection.

Southern Water raises no objection subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the protection of the public water supply main, the need for a foul and surface water

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

drainage strategy and details of the foul and surface water sewerage disposal. They also suggest the need for informatives regarding the entering into a formal agreement with Southern Water for the necessary sewerage infrastructure and the need for a grease trap on the kitchen waste drain.

KCC Biodiversity Officer raises no objection subject to the imposition of conditions to ensure the landscape scheme uses species suitable for commuting and foraging Great Crested Newts, the submission of a simple management plan to ensure the landscape on site is managed to benefit biodiversity, the submission of the method of clearing the vegetation on site to ensure a precautionary approach is taken in case Great Crested Newts are present on site, a condition to ensure that the site is cleared outside the breeding bird season, and that the proposed ecological enhancements are incorporated on site.

KCC Archaeological Officer raises no objection subject to the imposition of a condition regarding archaeological field evaluation work.

KCC Sustainable Drainage and Flood Risk Project Officer raises no objection subject to the imposition of a detailed sustainable surface water drainage scheme.

KCC Highways and Transportation Officer raises no objection subject to the imposition of conditions requiring the provision of keep clear markings, an additional raised zebra crossing at the drop off zone, the submission of a Travel Plan, submission of a Construction Management Plan, and various conditions to secure the provision of vehicle and cycle parking, laying out the access and visibility splays.

Local Member

11. The local County Member, Mr Peter Homewood was notified of the application on 7th March 2016.

Publicity

12. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice along the site boundary with Hall Road, an advertisement in a local newspaper, and the individual notification of the two adjoining residential properties.

Representations

13. In response to the publicity, three letters of representation have been received. The key points raised can be summarised as follows:
 - The current road infrastructure of Wouldham High Street and the country lanes is not suitable for the vast increase in traffic;
 - Traffic through Wouldham High Street will be significantly increased as a result of this development
 - Most of the current school traffic does not travel along the narrowest section of the High Street – between Ferry Lane and the junction of the High Street and Knowle Road/Hall Road;
 - The existing school can be accessed by School Lane for those travelling from

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

- villages to the south and east;
- The additional traffic movements would be significantly higher than suggested in the Transport Statement and no remedial work to the road has been undertaken to achieve this;
 - Do not believe the figures given include the SEN pupils who would travel to the new school by taxi, or the proposed staff;
 - If the Hall Road drop off layby is full or parents wish to park at the school they will have to queue at the traffic lights section of Hall Road which would cause longer queues than the predicted 2-3 cars at peak times stated in the 2012 Transport Statement;
 - The additional traffic through the village could cause the junction of Hall road, High Street and Knowle Road to seize up
 - Each passing car would cause the houses on the High Street, within 1m of the road and with no pavement, to vibrate;
 - Already a problem in this section of Hall Road where buses have hit cars and properties;
 - Mitigation for the proposed traffic should be provided including the resurfacing of the recreation car park and marking out spaces; providing a pedestrian crossing from the recreation ground across Knowle Road to link up with the new footpath/cycleway on Hall Road; and a footpath from the recreation ground to the Oldfield Drive development;
 - Suggest some access to the proposed school car park should be made from the Hall Road layby to avoid cars queuing at the traffic lights.

Discussion

14. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 9 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 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.
15. This application is being reported for determination by the Planning Applications Committee due to the neighbour representations received, and the comments given by the Parish Council. In my opinion, the key material planning considerations in this particular case are compatibility with Development Plan policies together with the principle of providing the school in this location; the siting and design of the proposed school in terms of its built form and the layout on site; any amenity impacts resulting from the development on the occupiers of the adjoining properties; the highway and traffic implications of a new two form entry school in this location, along with other matters such as heritage, landscape and biodiversity.

Location of School in Strategic Gap and Countryside

16. The Strategic Gap as shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map extends over a wide area and seeks to ensure the built up areas of the Medway Towns, Maidstone and the Medway Gap retain their separation and separate identities. The Policy states that, unless justified by special circumstances, development will not be permitted that would

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

harm the function of the gap. Although the new school site would be located within the gap, it must be viewed in the context of its surroundings, where it would be closely related to the new settlement being created at Peters Village. It is considered that in this context the school site would have a limited effect on the wider strategic gap when viewed in association with the new housing scheme currently being built here. At the more local level, a clear gap would be retained between the existing village of Wouldham and the proposed school/Peters Village development site, so that coalescence would not occur. Furthermore the proposed site layout ensures that open recreational space is to the north side forming part of this undeveloped gap. Nevertheless, the provision of necessary and appropriate education facilities would be considered to fall within the remit of 'special circumstances' allowing the proposed development to be permitted in this area.

17. The site also lies within an area defined as open countryside on the Local Plan Proposals Map where development is generally restricted, as set out in paragraph 9 above. The proposed school would not meet any of the criteria specifically listed in the Policy, however the context of the site will ultimately be altered dramatically by the building out of the development of Peters Village and therefore the site would not appear to be located amongst wider open countryside; the site would be considered more of an extension to the new settlement and seen within this context. Furthermore the settlement boundary for Wouldham is tightly drawn round the existing village therefore any new school development would need to have a countryside location to meet local need. No objection has been raised by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council on policy grounds and it is therefore considered that the scheme would not conflict with the aims of the Strategic Gap (Policy CP5), Policy CP6 which ensures the separate identity of settlements is retained, or Policy CP14 which seeks to protect open countryside from inappropriate development.

Siting and Design

18. The proposed school would have a U shaped layout on the site and would therefore be able to provide an interesting façade in all directions. It would have a modern design which has been carefully thought out to provide detail and interest along each façade. The materials palette being proposed would reflect those being used in the Peters Village development to the south, and the design picks up on the vernacular aesthetic of Wouldham. Overall the design and materials are considered to be well chosen in this regard, to provide a cohesive wider development. The single storey nature of the development would mean the size and bulk of the new school would be limited and would more easily blend into the wider landscape setting. The school would be well situated within the plot and would have ample space about the building to allow the development to be landscaped and blend into the wider area.
19. The school site wraps round two existing cottages on Hall Road, and it would be the parking area that would back onto the rear of their gardens, with the school building itself being located much further away to the east. Although there would be a level of increased movement around the dwellings due to the development, ample space has been designed into the site to provide a buffer screen between the houses and the school parking area. The hard surfaced playground would be sited within the courtyard therefore the building itself would serve to buffer noise from the children using this, and the outside learning areas associated with key stage 1 children would be on the eastern wing, away from the houses. The proposed school would introduce a new level of

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

activity to the rear of the houses, different to their current outlook, however, it is considered that it would not result in an unusual relationship, or one that would be so detrimental as to be considered harmful.

20. The site layout has been designed to provide sufficient space for an extension to the school to a three form entry at a later date, should it be required, without compromising, in principle, the overall appearance of the site. It is considered that the overall layout and design of the proposed school would therefore be acceptable and in accordance with the aims of the NPPF, and the more specific planning policies of the Core Strategy, CP1 and CP24, and Policy SQ1 of the Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document.

Highway and Traffic Implications of the Proposed School

21. The planning application was supported by the submission of a Transport Statement, and supplemented by a Transport Statement Addendum to clarify issues raised by the Highways and Transportation Officer. Both documents have been taken into account in the consideration of the application.
22. Access to the school would be from the new distributor road running along the south of the site, which would link Village area 1 and Village area 2 in the Peters Village development. The area immediately to the south of this road would be open space lying between the village areas. Two vehicular access points into the school would be provided off this road, one for the main car park and one for servicing. The road would have footpaths along it and further to the east there would be an island crossing point. Outside the school entrance a dropped kerb, tactile paving crossing point would be provided across the main road, to ease safe movement in this direction. Tracking diagrams have been provided to demonstrate that service vehicles would be able to adequately access the site, turn and leave in a forward gear; and additional tracking diagrams demonstrate that cars can access the internal loop road, drop off zone and car park satisfactorily.
23. The newly constructed footpath and cycle way which runs along the length of Hall Road where it leaves the village to the proposed school site would allow a safe pedestrian access route for those travelling to the new school from Wouldham. Pedestrians could then access the site from a footpath running from the drop off layby through to the school between the car park and the playing field. An additional raised table zebra crossing has been requested by the Highways and Transportation Officer between the drop off zone in the main car park and the school buildings. This would avoid any potential conflict occurring between pedestrians and cars, given that drop off bays would be available either side of the loop road. As that has not been shown on the plans it should be secured by condition if permission is given.
24. The on-site parking provision has been designed to provide adequate future space for staff should the school need to expand to three form entry. In total 81 spaces would be provided for staff and 21 for visitors to the school. This parking provision would accord with the Kent and Medway vehicle parking standards for the 3 form entry school, but as the proposals are only for a two form entry, there would be an overprovision of parking for the current staffing numbers. Under the circumstances, it is required that some spaces are held back until the time that the school might need to expand, in the same way that the school developments at Gibson Drive in Kings Hill and St George's in

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

Broadstairs were. An updated plan has been requested to illustrate which spaces would be retained for a future 3FE use and this will be available at the committee meeting.

25. The original planning application for the Peters Village development included in its Transport Assessment the provision of a new school on the Peters Village site. The mitigating measures currently being provided on the highway therefore allow sufficient capacity for traffic generated by the proposed school, even though it is to be located in a slightly different position. The closure of the existing school would result in the local redistribution of some car trips, but the Highways and Transportation Officer considers this unlikely to lead to any significant impact on the highway. Hall Road, between the new school site and Wouldham High Street would be traffic calmed and the footway/cycleway detailed above has already been provided. Although there is a wish for a crossing to be provided over Knowle Road to link to the recreation ground parking area, and a wider cycle link to be provided from here to the Oldfield Drive development to the north, this does not form part of the current proposal and falls outside of the development area of this current application. The lack of this crossing does not make the proposed school development unacceptable in highway terms and therefore cannot be insisted upon, however it is suggested that an informative be included asking the applicants to investigate the possible provision of this at some point in the future.
26. As set out above, the proposed school would be used as a satellite for the Ridgeview Special School in Tonbridge. Children with special educational needs (SEN) are generally brought to site by dedicated taxi and the Transport Assessment suggests that different drop off and collection times will be used for these children so as not to coincide with the main school opening hours. By altering the arrival and departure times by 15-30 minutes it would ensure that pupils attending the SEN facility can safely access the pick-up area unimpeded by other pupils awaiting collection. Although this cannot be conditioned, this is something that the School could implement (with the exact timings decided once the school is occupied) and cover in their School Travel Plan to ensure that all pupils can access the site in the safest possible manner.
27. The School would need to produce a School Travel Plan which would help them promote more sustainable methods of transport to and from the school for both staff and pupils. Given the proximity of the school to the two developments it would serve, Wouldham to the north and Peters Village to the south, and the existing and proposed infrastructure that will be provided as part of Peters Village development, it is expected that the level of walking and cycling to the school would increase with time. A condition requiring the submission of a Travel Plan within 3 months of occupation of the new school would be considered appropriate (should approval be given) and it should be submitted via the County Council's 'Jambusters' website to allow ongoing monitoring and review.
28. All of the representations received relate to the expected impact of the traffic on the village of Wouldham and the surrounding roads, particularly Hall Road. However as stated above the impact of a two form entry school had already been taken into account for the Peters Village development – this proposal simply seeks to relocate the school to a site further north than previously agreed, but with the same access from Wouldham. Whilst the comments are noted, it is considered that the proposed highway improvements being carried out as part of the Peters Village development, the bus service enhancements that would come forward in time, the cycle and footpath links between Peters Village and Wouldham, and the implementation of the School Travel

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

Plan would provide sufficient mitigation for the re-routing of traffic through the village from the existing school site. Since the existing High Street is already used as a bus route, it is difficult to argue that the route is unsuitable for use by school traffic, but even so the new school site could still be reached by more distant traffic via Knowle Road, without passing through the High Street.

29. Subject to the imposition of conditions requiring the provision of keep clear markings, the raised zebra crossing, the submission of a Travel Plan, submission of a Construction Management Plan, and various conditions to secure the provision of vehicle and cycle parking, laying out the access and visibility splays the application is considered to be acceptable in highway terms and in accordance with Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy.

Other Matters**Ecology**

30. The application was supported by the submission of an Extended Phase 1 Ecological Habitat Survey which considered the likely presence of a variety of protected species on the school site including protected fauna, great crested newts, reptiles, birds, badgers, bats, dormice and invertebrates. The report concluded that due to the arable nature of the site and the fact it has been ploughed regularly and subject to herbicides and nutrient input, there was limited potential to support protected species. However it does have potential to support breeding birds and lies close to several designated wildlife sites. In addition the report set out various ecological enhancements that could be incorporated on the site which included creating a buffer strip of broadleaved trees and plants and the sowing of a chalk grassland meadow.
31. The County's Biodiversity Officer suggests that the proposed landscaping on site should be designed to provide suitable habitat for foraging/commuting great crested newts that might move from the Peters Pit SAC and SSSI, and this could be secured through the submission of a detailed landscape scheme. A precautionary approach to the clearing of the existing vegetation from the site will also be needed, to ensure the potential for affecting Great Crested Newts that might have moved to the site is minimised.
32. The submitted survey suggested the need for a breeding bird survey to be carried out, in particular in relation to the grey partridge which had been seen within the wider arable field. For a number of reasons the recommended survey was not carried out this year. The applicants have stated that the location of the school is next to a new road which has been subject to works and vehicle movements over the last 18 months. The noise from this is likely to have deterred farmland birds such as grey partridge seen within the wider arable field, from breeding or foraging in this area. The County's Biodiversity Officer does not disagree with this view, but recommends that the site should not be cleared during the breeding bird season and that this should be secured via condition.
33. The Bat Conservation Trust's advice for lighting would need to be taken into account for this scheme to avoid the lighting being detrimental for roosting, foraging and commuting bats, and this advice can be covered through an informative. Finally the recommendations for ecological enhancements set out in the report would need to be included in the final landscape design, and this should be secured through a suitably worded condition if permission is given. Subject to the suggested conditions, the

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

scheme is considered to accord with Policy NE3 of the Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document.

Landscape

34. There is little on-site landscaping at present, given the ploughed and agricultural nature of the site. A landscape scheme has been shown on the landscape plan which includes areas of buffer planting to the rear of the two cottages on Hall Road, and trees interspersed within the car park. Additional woodland tree planting and orchard planting are shown on the northern and eastern boundaries of the site surrounding the MUGA and the informal recreational space. The landscape officer has considered the information submitted and raises no objection to the proposed development. A condition could also be imposed to secure an appropriate landscaping scheme if planning consent was forthcoming, and which could include details of the future maintenance of the landscaping on site.

Construction

35. Given the proximity of the two neighbouring residential properties, if planning permission is granted it is considered appropriate to impose a condition restricting hours of construction to protect residential amenity (Monday to Friday between 0800 and 1800; Saturday 0900 to 1300; and no operations on Sundays or public holidays).
36. A condition requiring the submission of a full Construction Management Strategy, prior to commencement of development is considered appropriate, to include amongst other matters the routing of construction and delivery vehicles to and from the site; the location of parking and turning areas for construction and delivery vehicles and for site personnel and visitors; the provision of wheel washing facilities; and temporary traffic management and signage.

Sustainability

37. The proposed school would include an array of passive sustainable design measures and environmental practices, including reducing water consumption through eco flush toilets, aerating taps and flow restrictors, the use of sustainable heating and natural ventilation systems, high efficiency heating plant, and the use of LED lighting. The scheme would also include the provision of rooftop solar PV panels on the south facing hall and kitchen roofs, and south-east facing classroom roofs. The proposal would therefore accord with Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy and CC1 of the Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document.

Archaeology

38. The site lies within an area of archaeological potential associated with early prehistoric and later activity. The deposits laid down within the valley, close to the river, have potential for remains associated with Palaeolithic activity and palaeoenvironmental resource. The Medway Valley was generally a favourable place for occupation and there are indications of activity from the Neolithic Period onwards. Recent excavations to the south and on the site itself, associated with Peters Village, have noted extensive Iron Age and Romano-British activity. The application was supported by a Desk Based Assessment which has been reviewed by the County's Archaeological officer. The

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

report is considered to provide a thorough assessment and includes the key information of archaeological findings on the site itself. In view of the archaeological potential a condition is recommended, should permission be given, which requires archaeological field evaluation works to be undertaken in order to ensure that any features found on site are properly examined and recorded and that due regard is had to the preservation in situ of any important archaeological remains found.

Flood Risk & Drainage

39. The application was supported by the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment which showed that the site is predominantly located within Flood Zone 1 (the zone least vulnerable to flooding), but partially within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The area of the site outlined for the construction of the school is wholly located within Flood Zone 1 and an additional plan has been submitted which shows the precise flood zone areas. It demonstrates that Flood Zone 2 includes a small strip of land to the western side of the site which runs along the edge of the playing field and includes the Hall Road drop off layby. Flood Zone 3 extends up to the edge of the access of the Hall Road layby and covers part of Hall Road. The County's Flood Risk Officer is therefore content that the site access is clear of the highest flood risk area and therefore the on-site layout is acceptable in this regard.
40. Should permission be granted a condition is requested for the submission of a detailed sustainable surface water drainage scheme. The Environment Agency, in considering the application, has requested a condition ensuring that no infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground is permitted without written consent from the County Planning Authority, to ensure there is no pollution of controlled waters. Subject to these, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy CC3 of the Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document.

Conclusion

41. In my view the key determining factors for this proposal are the planning policy aspects, together with the appropriateness of the new school in terms of design and layout and the suitability of the highway network to accommodate school traffic in this location. There is strong Government support in the NPPF for the development of new schools to ensure that there is sufficient provision to meet growing demand, increased choice and raised educational standards, subject to being satisfied on local amenity and all other material considerations, such as highway matters, design, ecology, flooding and surface drainage. In my view the proposed development would not give rise to any significant and demonstrable harm in any of these respects, as far as planning, environmental and amenity aspects are concerned, as demonstrated in the discussion above.
42. It is considered that subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, the proposal would not have any significant detrimental effects on the local highway network, the amenities of local residents or the natural environment. In my view the development is sustainable and there are no material planning considerations that indicate that the conclusion should be made otherwise. However, I recommend that various conditions be placed on any planning permission, including those outlined below.

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

Recommendation

43. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions covering (amongst other matters) the following:

- the standard 5 year time limit;
- the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
- the submission and approval of details of all construction materials to be used externally;
- hours of working during construction to be restricted to between the hours of 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no operations on Sundays or Bank Holidays;
- the submission of a Construction Management Plan, providing details of how the routing of construction and delivery vehicles to and from the site; the location of parking and turning areas for construction and delivery vehicles and for site personnel and visitors; the provision of wheel washing facilities; and temporary traffic management and signage;
- that the ecological enhancements recommended in the Ecological Appraisal be implemented through the landscape scheme;
- the site shall be cleared outside of the breeding bird season;
- the submission of details of vegetation clearance to provide a precautionary approach regarding Great Crested Newts;
- the submission of archaeological field evaluation works;
- if contamination found on site not previously identified, no further development will take place until a remediation strategy has been found;
- no infiltration of surface water drainage into the site without the written consent of the County Authority;
- the means of foul and surface water sewerage disposal be agreed with the County Authority in consultation with Southern Water;
- the provision of a raised zebra crossing, prior to occupation of the school, between the drop off zone and the school buildings in accordance with details to be submitted;
- the gates to open away from the highway and to be set back a minimum of 5.5m from the edge of the carriageway;
- details of School Keep Clear parking restrictions and traffic signs to be submitted, approved and provided prior to occupation of the school;
- completion and maintenance of the access shown on the plans prior to the use of the site commencing;
- the provision and maintenance of the visibility splays, with no restrictions over 0.6m above carriageway level within the splays, prior to the occupation of the school;
- the provision and permanent retention of the cycle parking facilities prior to the occupation of the school;
- the gradient of the access to be no steeper than 1 in 10 for the first 1.5m from the highway boundary and no steeper than 1 in 8 thereafter;
- the provision and maintenance of 2m x 2m pedestrian visibility splays behind the footway on both sides of the access, with no obstruction over 0.6m above footway level, prior to the occupation of the school;
- the submission of a School Travel Plan within 3 months of the occupation of the school hereby approved and its ongoing annual review for a period of 5 years;
- the submission of a fully detailed sustainable surface water drainage scheme for the

New 2 form entry primary school, car park, playground and playing fields at Land adjacent to Hall Road, Wouldham, Kent – TM/16/00853/CR3 (KCC/TM/0031/2016)

site prior to commencement of development, and the written approval of such a scheme and its on-going maintenance prior to occupation of the extension;

- the submission of a native species landscape scheme that supports biodiversity and details of a maintenance scheme for such landscaping to ensure the establishment of the planting and that it be managed to benefit biodiversity.

44. I FURTHER RECOMMEND that the following INFORMATIVES be added:

- The registering with Kent County Council of the School Travel Plan through the “Jambusters” website following the link <http://www.jambusterstpms.co.uk>;
- That the applicant ensures that all necessary highway approvals and consents are obtained;
- The development should take account of the Bat Conservation Trust’s ‘Bats and Lighting in the UK’ guidance;
- The applicant be aware of the additional information provided by the EA regarding drainage and waste to be taken off site;
- A wastewater grease trap should be provided on the kitchen waste pipe or drain;
- The applicant be encouraged to implement a ventilation system for the removal and treatment of cooking odours;
- The school to encourage parents to switch off their engines if stationary to avoid pollution from idling engines;
- The applicants are requested to investigate the possible provision of a cycle way/footpath crossing over Knowle Road in the future.

Case Officer: Helen Edwards

Tel. no: 03000 413366

Background Documents: see section heading
