

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 two storey building, kitchen and toilet extension and internal alterations to existing building; fenced hard games court and six additional parking spaces at Craylands Primary School, Craylands Road, Swanscombe – DA/16/01413/CPO (KCC/DA/0211/2016)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 18th January 2017.

Application by Kent County Council Property and Infrastructure Support for a new two storey building to provide eight classrooms, two group rooms and ancillary accommodation; kitchen extension, toilet extension and internal alterations to existing building; new fenced hard games court; and alterations to the car park to provide six additional spaces to facilitate an increase from 1FE to 2FE at Craylands Primary School, Craylands Lane, Swanscombe, Kent, DA10 0LP – DA/16/01413/CPO (KCC/DA/0211/2016)

Recommendation: 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: Mr Peter Harman

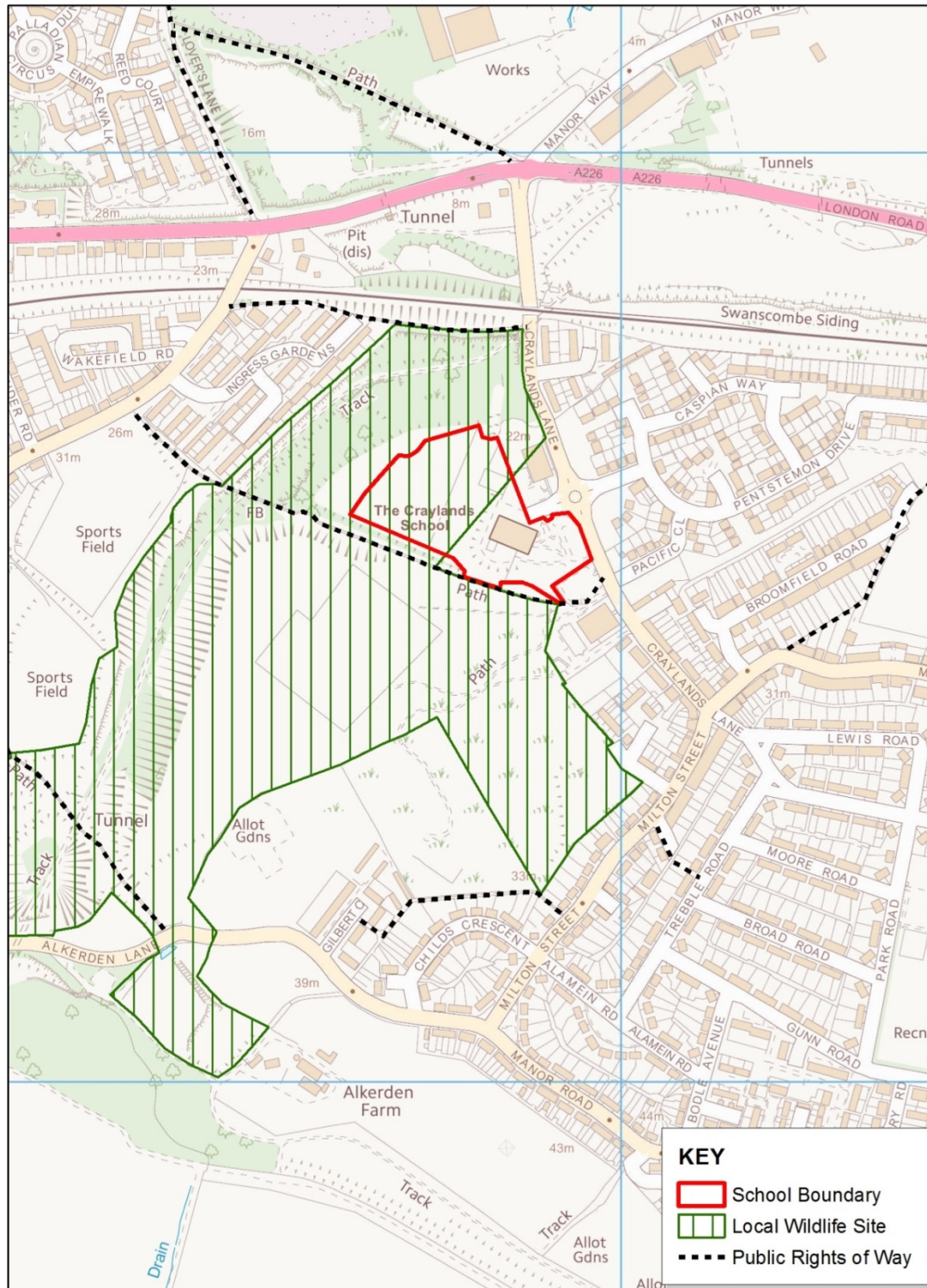
Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. Craylands Primary School is located in Swanscombe, on the western side of Craylands Lane. Immediately to the north of the School is the Springfield Day Nursery and to the south the Swanscombe Centre (leisure centre). To the south-west of the school and behind the nursery and leisure centre is designated open space which forms part of the Swanscombe Heritage Park. On the opposite side of Craylands Lane, to the east of the school is residential development. The school and nursery are accessed from a mini roundabout on Craylands Lane, with the western arm of the roundabout serving these two facilities only. The school car park is located at the front of the school, alongside the main road, with the school being set further away from the road. There is a second access into the school car park from Craylands Lane and pedestrian access can either be gained from the roundabout spur or the Craylands Lane access, which is near the Swanscombe Centre.
2. The school itself is a single storey building with buff coloured brickwork and a standing seam curved roof. There are two hard surfaced playgrounds, one either side of the building and the playing field is located to the west of the school backing onto the open space. There is an existing fenced hard ball court located to the north of the school, sitting behind the nursery, and to the south are two 2-bay modular classrooms (4 classrooms in total) which have been on site since permission was granted in 2005, and which were given a further consent in 2012, allowing them to be retained until September 2017.

Two storey building, kitchen and toilet extension, internal alterations, new fenced hard games court and 6 new parking spaces at Craylands Primary School – DA/16/01413/CPO (KCC/DA/0211/2016)

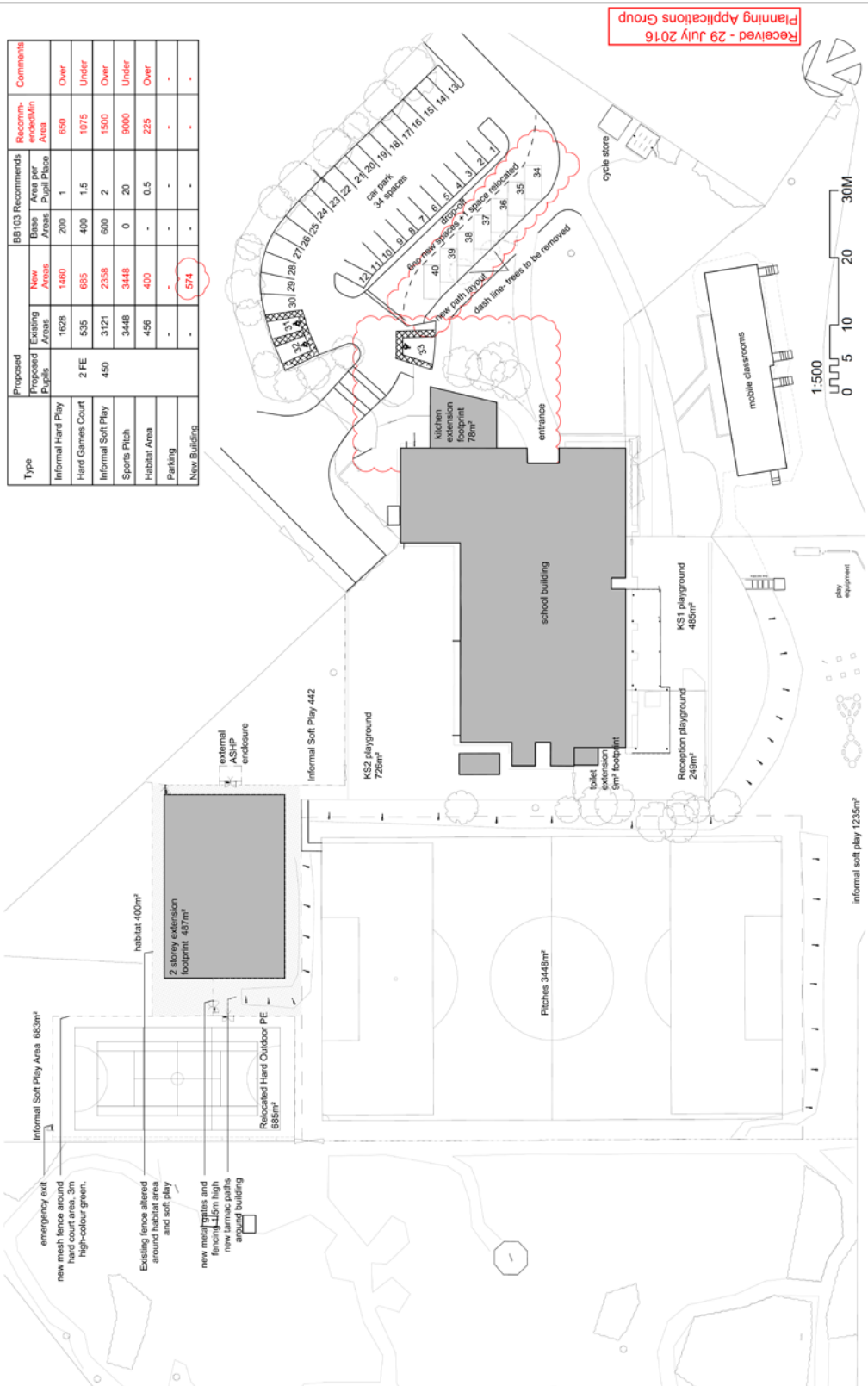
General Location Plan



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Ordnance Survey 100019238

Two storey building, kitchen and toilet extension, internal alterations, new fenced hard games court and 6 new parking spaces at Craylands Primary School – DA/16/01413/CPO (KCC/DA/0211/2016)

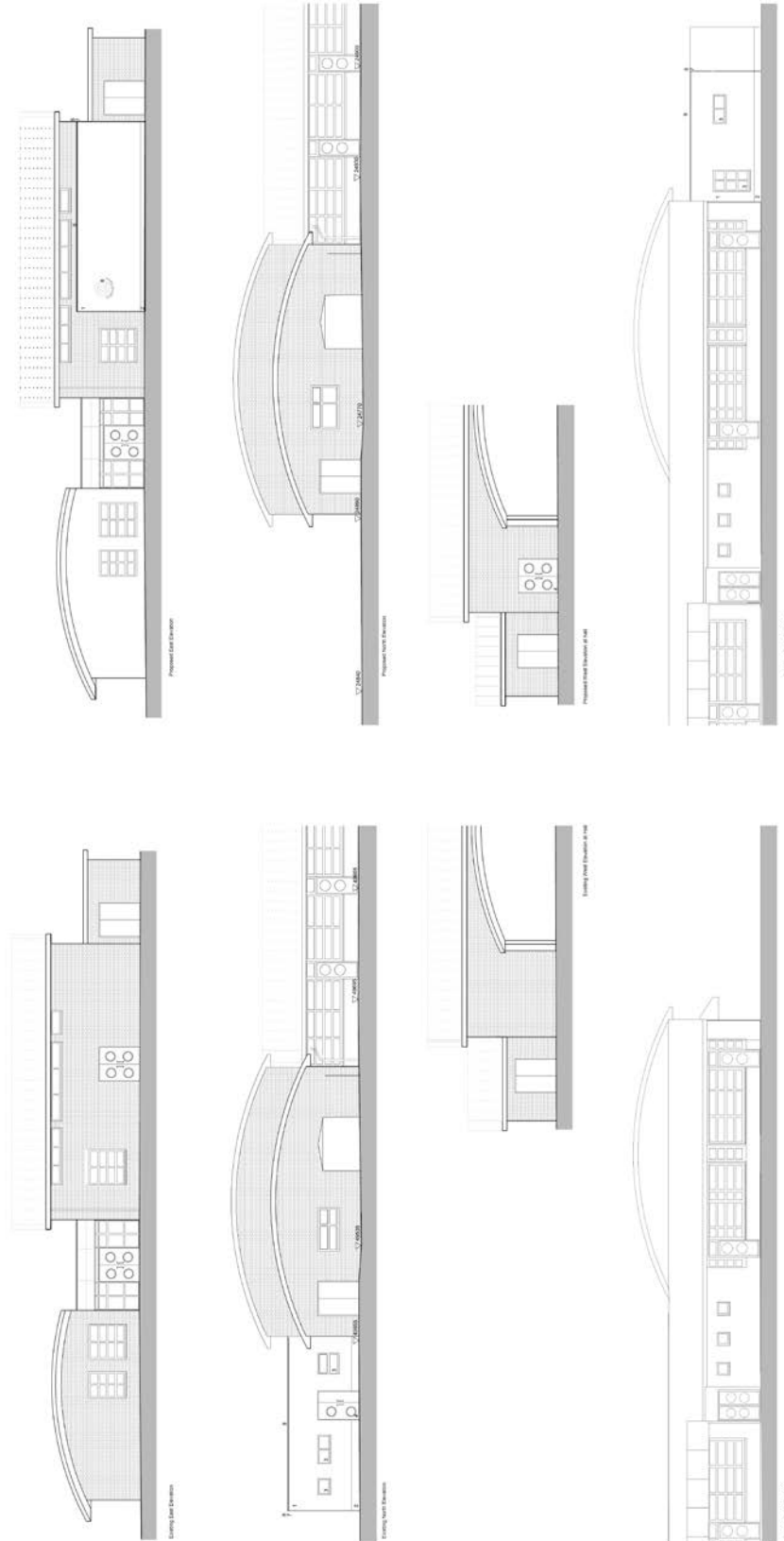
Site Location Plan



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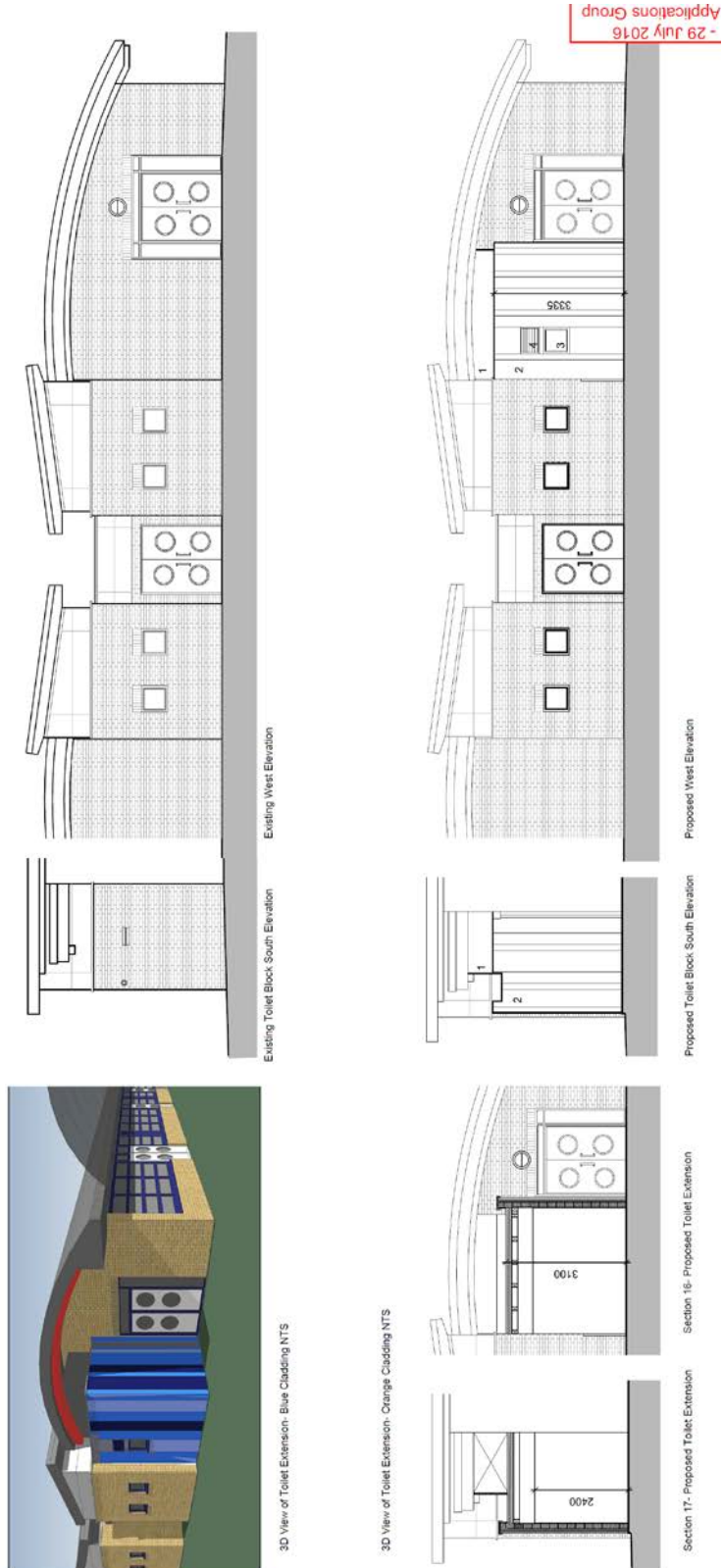
Proposed Elevations of New Kitchen Extension

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Two storey building, kitchen and toilet extension, internal alterations, new fenced hard games court and 6 new parking spaces at Craylands Primary School – DA/16/01413/CPO (KCC/DA/0211/2016)

Proposed Elevations of Toilet Extension



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Visual Images of Proposed Development



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Background

3. This application has been submitted in order to facilitate an expansion of Craylands Primary School from a 1FE school to a 2FE school as part of the County's Basic Needs Project.
4. The applicants state that the Swanscombe and Greenhithe urban areas have seen significant housing growth over the last ten years, with the residential development known as Ingress Park being largely finished and housing now taking place on the Ebbsfleet Garden City site. In addition Dartford experiences inward migration from both London and other parts of Kent, and from economic migrants. Furthermore birth rates remain high and are forecast to continue at this high rate. There is therefore an increased demand for primary school places in the area, and without the proposed expansion to this School, the applicants suggest that the County Authority would fail to meet its statutory obligation to provide sufficient school places for the Swanscombe and Greenhithe urban areas.

Recent Site History

5. There have been a number of planning applications at the site including the expansion to the original car park in 2002; the erection of a shade canopy and workshop and replacement of the perimeter fence in 2004; the installation of two two-bay mobile classroom units on site in 2005; and the renewal in 2012 of that planning permission to retain the mobiles until September 2017. All of the applications were approved.

Proposal

6. The proposed development is for the construction of a new stand-alone two storey classroom block to be built, which would facilitate an increase in the school roll from a 1FE school to a 2FE school. The building would be located where the current ball court is situated, and would have a rectangular footprint providing 8 classrooms in total, 4 on each floor along with the necessary toilets, storage and plant facilities required. There would be stairs at either end of the building and a lift at the eastern end. The building would be constructed from buff coloured bricks with a traditional pitched roof, utilising the same standing seam materials to match the existing school. PV panels would be sited on the southern roof slope. The windows and doors would be powder coated, double glazed units with louvres and inset panels as shown on the drawings. The existing ball court would be relocated to the west of this new building on the area currently used as informal soft play with some existing play equipment and a canopy/seating area. The ball court would effectively be rotated through 90 degrees from its current orientation but would otherwise be similar in layout to existing and again enclosed with a 3m high green mesh fence.
7. Two small extensions are also proposed for the existing school. The first would be a new toilet block located on the western end of the existing school for use with one of the reception classes. This would be a small rectangular addition which would be sited over one corner of the reception play area currently used for storage. It would have a flat roof with blue cladding for the elevations. The kitchen is also proposed to be extended, which would involve an addition to the front elevation of the school, which again would have a flat roof, with the walls rendered in a blue colour to complement the window

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colour scheme of the school. This extension would allow an internal rearrangement to enlarge the actual hall itself to reflect the space required for the increased school roll.

8. Finally the drop off area of the car park is proposed to be altered to provide 6 new spaces, with a slight alteration to the footpaths to the front of the school to accommodate this.

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.

Paragraph 74 of the NPPF is also relevant to the consideration of this application, it states that:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless

- *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or 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 quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*

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- *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.*

(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.

(iii) The adopted **1995 Dartford Borough Council Local Plan (Saved Policies September 2011)**:

Policy B1 Development proposals should be appropriate for the location and should not have a detrimental amenity impact on the local area. A high standard of design should be implemented in proposals with layout, materials, adequate infrastructure, access and parking taken into consideration

Policy S6 Development proposals should conserve and improve the existing built environment and a high quality and standard of design shall be achieved in new development.

Policy RT17 Land to the west of Craylands Lane, Swanscombe will be safeguarded for open space and leisure purposes, and appropriate recreational development will be encouraged. Any proposals must pay due regard to the nature conservation interest in this area.

Policy T19 Development proposals should be appropriately related to the highway network and not generate volumes of traffic in excess of the capacity of the highway network.

Policy T23 Development proposals should include adequate off-street parking facilities.

Policy T27 Development proposals shall make adequate provision for pedestrians.

(iv) **Dartford Borough Core Strategy (2011)**

Policy CS21 Community Services: Ensure the effective provision of community services.

Policy CS22 Sport Recreation and Culture Facilities: Seeks to extend sports, cultural and recreational facilities in the Borough and protect existing facilities unless demonstrated that the facility is no longer needed or an equivalent replacement facility is provided elsewhere.

Policy CS15 Managing Transport Demand: Pledges support for minimising the need to travel and minimising car use, whilst making effective use of the transport network. Travel plans will be required for all significant traffic generating development to ensure more sustainable modes of transport are pursued. Kent County Council's parking standards will be applied.

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(v) **Dartford Development Policies Plan (December 2015)** (This document was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in June 2016 and the 'Examination in Public' hearings commenced on 18th October 2016. The Proposed Modifications consultation is due to commence shortly, with the plan expected to be adopted by Dartford BC in early 2017.)

Policy DP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development: States that the Plan is written in accordance with national objectives to deliver sustainable development. A positive approach to considering development proposals will be had, reflecting the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF and the development needs of the Borough set out in the Core Strategy.

Policy DP2 Good Design in Dartford: Development will only be permitted where it satisfies the locally specific criteria for good design in the Borough by (a) reinforcing and enhancing localities to create high quality places, (b) ensuring heritage assets are retained, re-used and respected, (c) facilitating a sense of place through a mix of uses and careful design, (d) providing clear pedestrian and cycle linkages and permeability, active frontages and a mix of buildings and spaces. Provides further advice about determining planning applications in relation to scale, massing, form, materials, Conservation Areas and areas of heritage sensitivity, inclusive, safe and accessible places, management of natural resources and flood alleviation, and appropriate signage and advertisements.

Policy DP3 Transport Impacts of Development: Development will only be permitted where it is appropriately located and makes suitable provision to minimise and manage the arising transport impacts, in line with Core Strategy Policies. Localised residual impacts on the highway network should be addressed by well-designed off site-transport measures and adverse impacts on residential amenity or the environment must be minimised. Development will not be permitted where the localised residual impacts from the development, on its own or in combination with other planned development in the area, result in severe impacts on one or more of the following: (a) road traffic congestion and air quality (b) safety of pedestrians, cyclist and other road users and (c) excessive pressure for on-street parking.

Policy DP5 Environmental and Amenity Protection: Development will only be permitted where it does not result in unacceptable material impacts, and consideration must be given to potential amenity/safety factors such as traffic, access and parking, anti-social behaviour and littering, and intensity of use (amongst other matters).

Policy DP24 Open Space: Development on playing fields, sports pitches and any land shown on the Policies Map as Borough Open Space will not be permitted unless it is clearly demonstrated that development is limited to a small proportion of the land and the proposal supports or

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enhances this existing space in its primary function; or where the proposal results in a significant loss of open space or sports pitches, replacement provision will be delivered within accessible walking distance of the site, unless it can be demonstrated that there is a surplus in existing and future requirements for sports and recreation facilities in the locality and Borough.

Policy DP25 Nature Conservation and Enhancement: Development located within close proximity to designated sites, or with likely effects on them, should demonstrate that the proposal will not adversely impact on the features of the site that define its value or ecological pathways to the site.

Consultations

10. **Dartford Borough Council** raise an objection to the scheme on the basis of the loss of playing field/open space; the austere design of the teaching block which would be at odds with the design of the school and adjacent nursery; the unsympathetic appearance of the kitchen extension; the lack of parking spaces which would not meet Dartford's parking standard's and the likely impact of congestion and highway safety issues on surrounding roads as a result of the increase in pupil numbers; and an increase in on street parking demand.

Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council sought confirmation that the current 'dropping off' provision would be adequate for the proposed increase in facilities.

KCC Highways and Transportation Officer has some concerns over the additional local congestion and parking issues that this development is likely to create, however they conclude that it will not result in conditions that could be described as 'a severe impact on cogestion and safety'. With the application of appropriate planning conditions and a proactive input from the School to improve sustainable travel to and from school by pupils and staff, the impact of the expansion can be addressed.

Sport England objects to the application as they do not consider the scheme to accord with any of the exceptions in Sport England's playing fields policy or paragraph 74 of the NPPF. Further justification was received from the Applicant, and sent to Sport England for their consideration, but they have maintained their objection.

The Environment Agency raise no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions relating to contamination, the infiltration of surface water into the ground, the use of piling and informatives regarding fuel, oil and chemical storage on site.

KCC Sustainable Drainage Officer raises no objection subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the submission of a detailed sustainable surface water drainage strategy and no infiltration of surface water into the ground without express consent from the County Planning Authority and the EA.

KCC School Travel Planner has considered the submitted travel plan and offered suggestions for additional actions and targets to encourage more sustainable transport patterns.

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Local Member

11. The local County Member, Mr Peter Harman, was notified of the application on 31st August 2016.

Publicity

12. This application was publicised by the posting of a site notice outside the school and the individual notification of 11 residential properties surrounding the site, the adjacent Springfield Lodge Day Nursery and The Swanscombe Centre.

Representations

13. No letters of representation were received in response to the publicity for this application. The application is being reported to Planning Applications Committee as a result of the objections received from Sport England and Dartford Borough Council.

Discussion

14. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 10 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. In my opinion, the key material planning considerations in this particular case are the siting and design of the proposed new building and extensions to the existing school (along with sustainability considerations); the highway and transportation implications of the school expansion from 1FE to 2FE, and the proposed car park extension; the loss of some existing playing field land and the objection received from Sport England; and other matters including any impact on the local wildlife site, contamination and construction issues.

Siting and Design of Building

15. The proposed classroom block would be a traditional rectangular building which facilitates a practical layout of classrooms arranged along a central corridor. The design is similar to those of other stand-alone 1 FE extensions that have been approved at other schools over the past 2 years or so. The design is intentionally simple but makes reference to the existing school building through its choice of materials including the yellow stock brickwork and the standing seam roof. The two storey building would be seen in relation more to the adjoining nursery than the existing school, due to its proposed siting. Whilst the existing school has a curved standing seam roof, the nursery has a monopitch roof form. A monopitch design would be impractical on the proposed building due to its two storey design (the nursery is a single storey building) as it would make the building look disproportionately tall. Instead the architects have proposed a traditional pitched roof with a central ridge, which reflects the pitch of the nursery building (rather than curve of the school) and also the architecture of the surrounding residential development. Whilst Dartford Borough Council's comments are noted, it is considered that the design would be acceptable given its relationship to the

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nearby nursery and the wider residential area. It is accepted that the roof design would not match the original school, but this in itself does not make the design unacceptable, and the ‘nod’ to the original school achieved through the material choices, I consider is sufficient to tie the two structures together.

16. The two smaller extensions are both proposed with flat roofs, and coloured rendered panels. The small extension at the rear of the school would provide additional toilets for the reception classes and would be sited on a corner of the enclosed outdoor reception play area, which at the time of visiting was being used for storage. This would be a very small addition to the overall school building, which would not result in the loss of any useful play space. The mixed blue rendered panels would pick up the colour running through the external windows of the original school, and add a splash of colour to the building. The kitchen extension would be in a more prominent position at the front of the school, but would be of a similar design with a flat roof and blue render, and would have the school logo added to the front elevation. In response to Dartford Borough Council’s concerns about the flat roof design the Architects advised that a contrasting design was considered appropriate to create a focus for the entrance to the school, which at present is recessed between the two curved roof elements. The flat roof design allows a parapet to be created to hide the required kitchen extract ducts, which would not be achievable with a curved roof. Overall it is considered that the design of the smaller additions would be acceptable, despite Dartford Borough Council’s concerns.
17. The school site is large enough to accommodate this additional building without making the site seem overcrowded or cramped. The building would be 23m (75 feet) away from the nearby nursery at its closest point, but orientated at an angle therefore the bulk of the building would project away from the nursery. The nursery car park would lie between the two buildings and this distance and orientation would mean that the new building would not cause any issues with overshadowing or being overbearing on the users of the nursery. The building would be visible from the main road, due to the open nature of the site in this area by the spur road from the mini roundabout, however it would be seen in the context of the other educational buildings and would be set back considerably from the road. Notwithstanding the objections received from Dartford BC and Sport England regarding the loss of playing fields, which is discussed in detail below, the siting of the extension would be in such a location that it would not have any adverse impact on the street scene, the neighbouring nursery or the existing school, and in my opinion is acceptable from this point of view.
18. It is therefore considered that the design and siting of the new building and smaller extensions would be acceptable and the development would be in accordance with Policies B1 and S6 of the adopted Local Plan and Policies DP1 and DP2 of the draft Dartford Development Policies Plan.

Sustainability

19. The NPPF places a presumption in favour of development that is sustainable and Policy DP1 of the Dartford Development Policies Plan reiterates this advice at the local level. The Design and Access Statement provides details of the sustainability measures to be used in the development, which would include natural ventilation to reduce energy consumption; good levels of daylight to reduce the need for artificial lighting; the use of dual flush toilets, efficient taps and low water use appliances to reduce water use; and a range of low and zero carbon technologies to meet carbon targets defined by Building

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Regulations. In addition the proposed two storey building has indicated an area for photo voltaic panels on the southern roof slope. It is considered that these measures would ensure the development complies with the aims of the sustainability policies.

Highways and Transportation Implications of School Expansion

20. This planning application seeks to provide the necessary accommodation to expand the school roll from a 1FE school to a 2FE school accommodating a maximum of 420 children. The number of staff is proposed to increase from 47 to 61. The application was supported by the submission of a Transport Assessment carried out by DHA Transport. The Highways and Transportation Officer notes that from a highways perspective the primary issue of such an expansion is parking. At the present time when parents collect their children at the end of the day some park where space allows on Craylands Lane, however, the majority park in the Swanscombe Centre car park which has 50 parking spaces. Although the capacity of this car park is sufficient for the existing school roll, if the school were to be doubled in size there is likely to be an increase in parking on surrounding residential roads such as Pentstemon Drive and Caspian Way, and there are likely to be associated amenity issues with this such as parking with two wheels on the footpaths. The proposed additional 6 spaces to be provided on the school site would not be sufficient to address any such parent parking shortfall, and furthermore the school parking spaces are used for staff parking only.
21. Although the Highway Authority has concerns over the additional local congestion and parking issues that this development is likely to create, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 32 states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. That can only be judged on a case by case basis taking into account all material factors. The Highways and Transportation Officer has considered the Transport Assessment and the conditions on the local highway network, and concludes that although this shows that traffic and parking is likely to be worsened, it would not result in conditions that could be described as 'a severe impact on congestion or safety'.
22. The Highways and Transportation Officer further suggests that with the application of appropriate planning conditions and a proactive input from the school to improve sustainable travel to and from the school by both pupils and staff, the impact of the extension can be addressed. The careful production, monitoring and revision of the School Travel Plan can help this considerably and a condition requiring its submission prior to occupation of the new building is proposed, along with the subsequent monitoring and updating of the plan through the 'Jambusters' system, with the results to be published on the School website.
23. Dartford Borough Council have raised an objection on the grounds that the scheme would not accord with its parking standards, which for this number of additional pupils and staff would require an additional 18 spaces - 14 for staff and 4 for pupils, visitors, and clients. The school has limited scope to provide additional parking on site, a situation replicated in many other schools which have expanded in the County. If the County Planning Authority were to apply the parking standards for school expansions strictly, many would not be able to be accommodated, yet there are still children who require school places. There needs to be a balanced approach to the application of these standards and in this instance the school are providing an additional 6 spaces to

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the front of the school, for staff parking when the drop off facility is not in use – i.e. for part time staff that are only at school during the middle of the day.

24. Considering the off-site highway aspects of the proposed development as a whole, it is to be borne in mind that primary schools generate a level of localised traffic congestion and competition for on-street parking space. In most cases this is a short lived nuisance and irritation rather than a serious risk to road safety. Moreover, it only occurs on days when the school is open, compared to streets that are close to shops, offices, railway stations etc., so the level of nuisance is minimal compared to many other residential areas. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that these can cause friction between residents and school parents over on-street parking, but the public highway is there to be used and it is not the sole preserve of any one category of highway user. The key to minimising traffic nuisance and avoiding safety risks is sound management of the available facilities and in this instance these are best pursued through the School Travel Plan.
25. It is considered that the development would accord with the aims of the NPPF and Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy.

Loss of Playing Field Land

26. The proposed new classroom building would be sited on the footprint of the existing fenced games court, and this facility would be replaced on an area of soft informal play space which lies in the northern corner of the existing site. This area of informal soft play is of a gradient which the applicant's state makes it unusable for a formal playing pitch due to its sloping layout. The gradient (demonstrated by the topographical survey) has a fall of 2.1m (6.8 feet) across the 40m (131 feet) length of grassed area, which results in a gradient of 1 in 19. A sports use generally requires a gradient of 1 in 100. The replacement MUGA would be in accordance with the guidance given by Sport England for such facilities (and would be fenced), and would therefore create a slight increase in hard games provision, as it would be slightly bigger than the existing games court which does not comply with the Sport England standards. The new MUGA and the proposed classroom block would be sited away from the area of playing field which is formally set out as a playing pitch and this would be retained without impact.
27. Despite being informed of the issue with the gradient of the land where the replacement MUGA would be sited, Sport England have maintained their objection to the scheme, stating that it would still involve the loss of an existing area of playing field, and would therefore not comply with any of the exceptions of their Playing Fields Policy or paragraph 74 of the NPPF.
28. The applicants have advised of the options considered for the siting of the proposed building, in order for the school to run effectively. By siting the building on the southern side of the school, the Key Stage 1 playground would have been divided up in an impractical and unusable way, or resulted in overshadowing of the existing classrooms. Locating it to the west of the school would have resulted in a severe impact on the large sports pitch which forms the main area of playing pitches for the school. The school did not want to build on the existing playground to the north of the school as this is directly accessed from the classrooms and intensively used. By proposing the new building on the existing hard games court, the playground would be able to be accessed by children in both the existing school and those being taught in the new building. Siting the

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building where the new MUGA is being proposed would have resulted in the same objection by Sport England, but in addition to this there is a gas line running below it so it would not be practical to build over it with a two storey building.

29. Whilst the provision of the new MUGA on the area of existing informal play space would result in the loss of this facility, the school is fortunate in that it has a significant amount of informal play space on site. Even taking account of the loss of the area for the proposed games court, an overall area of 2358m² (25,381 sq feet) of soft play space would be retained on site, which far exceeds the recommended area for a 2FE school of 1500m² (16,145 sq feet).
30. In my opinion, although there is a maintained objection by Sport England, the proposed extension has been sited in the most appropriate location for the effective running of the school. It is acknowledged that it would result in the loss of some informal play space, but sufficient space would be retained on the site as a whole, and the applicants have demonstrated that the area to be lost could not practically be used as a playing pitch due to its gradient. It is considered that this proposal should be considered in a holistic and broader context rather than inflexibly adhering to policy wording, however if Members are minded to permit the proposals, the application would need to be referred to the Secretary of State.

Other Matters

Ecology

31. The school playing fields lie at the edge of the Local Wildlife Site as designated in the Development Policies Plan document. This area is protected through policy DP25 of this document, relating to nature conservation and enhancement; however the proposed development would not encroach outside of the already developed school boundaries, and would therefore not have any direct impact upon the wider wildlife site. The application was supported by the submission of an Ecological Appraisal which considered the impact of the proposed development on the onsite habitat areas, which include a pond and some amenity grassland, which lie to the north of the proposed new classroom block. The proposals and the appraisal have been considered by the County's Biodiversity Team.
32. The pond has a confirmed presence of Great Crested Newts and the appraisal has considered the impact of the development on this protected species. The pond itself would not be affected, and the majority of the school site does not provide suitable habitat for Great Crested Newts. The appraisal states that it is likely that the newts would disperse into the woodland approximately 35m (115 feet) north of the pond, which provides high quality Great Crested Newt habitat. The Biodiversity Team have confirmed they are satisfied with the conclusions of the report which states that the proposed development would not result in any obstruction of connectivity between the pond and terrestrial habitats. In order to ensure that the recommendations given in the Ecological Appraisal are followed, it is suggested that a condition be imposed, should permission be given, which requires the submission of a detailed mitigation strategy.
33. Two trees and some ornamental planting would be removed to accommodate the proposed development, which could provide suitable breeding bird habitats. Given that all breeding birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the removal of

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these trees and shrubs must be carried out outside of the breeding season and if this is not possible then the site would need to be examined by an ecologist prior to works commencing. An informative to this effect can be added should permission be given. The agent has confirmed that there is no suitability for the presence of any bats on site, but an informative is suggested to ensure that the applicants are aware of the Bat Conservation Trust's guidance regarding bats and lighting.

34. In order to ensure that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments are encouraged, as set out in the NPPF, the Ecological Appraisal included enhancement recommendations relating to native mixed species planting. The Biodiversity Team have suggested that additional enhancement measures could also be incorporated on site (for example further ponds, hibernacula for reptiles and amphibians, and bat and bird boxes) therefore a condition is suggested to require the applicants to submit details of these, if permission is granted.

Contamination

35. The application was supported by the submission of a Preliminary Ground Contamination Risk Assessment, a Combined Geotechnical and Quantitative Ground Contamination Risk Assessment, and Geo-Environmental Data and Historical Maps, which have been considered by the Environment Agency. They have advised that they have no objection to the proposed development relating to contamination, but request conditions be imposed on any consent given relating to contamination, the infiltration of surface water into the ground, the use of piling and informatives regarding fuel, oil and chemical storage on site.

Lighting

36. The proposals do not include any lighting for the proposed new MUGA. In order to retain control over any potential floodlighting (particularly given its proximity to the wildlife site), a condition has been suggested which would require the School to apply for permission for any lighting they may wish to install in the future.

Construction Matters

37. A condition requiring the submission of a full Construction Management Strategy, prior to commencement of development has been requested by the Highways and Transportation Officer and is considered appropriate. This would need to include, amongst other matters, times of access to the site (to avoid school peak times), operative parking, wheel washing facilities and delivery vehicle unloading and turning.

Conclusion

38. In my view the key determining factors for this proposal are the planning policy aspects in relation to the highways and transport related issues, the siting and design of the new building and extensions, and the objection received from Sport England regarding loss of playing field land. In addition weight should also be given to the NPPF's clear policy support for ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places be available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, and the need to create, expand or alter schools. Subject to the imposition of the conditions suggested below I consider that the development would not give rise to any demonstrable harm as explained in the

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discussion above, would result in a sustainable form of development, and would meet the aims of the NPPF in relation to the guidance for school provision.

Recommendation

39. I RECOMMEND that the application BE REFERRED to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and SUBJECT TO his decision, 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;
- The submission of a revised School Travel Plan prior to occupation of the new school and its ongoing review via the ‘Jambusters’ system for 5 years, with monitoring results posted on the school’s website;
- The submission of a Construction Management Plan, providing details of (amongst other matters) times of access to the site (to avoid school peak times), operative parking, wheel washing and delivery vehicle unloading and turning;
- The provision of the parking and drop off spaces shown on the site layout prior to occupation, and their permanent retention thereafter;
- That any lighting of the MUGA shall not be permitted without the written consent of the County Planning Authority;
- The submission of a detailed mitigation strategy for the protection of Great Crested Newts during construction;
- The submission of a scheme of ecological enhancements to supplement those proposed in the Ecological Appraisal;
- The submission of a detailed surface water strategy to be submitted and approved in writing prior to commencement of construction;
- No infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground without the approval of the County Planning Authority in consultation with the Environment Agency;
- No development to commence until a scheme is agreed in writing regarding a preliminary risk assessment, site investigation and verification plan relating to potential contamination;
- That the site may not be occupied until a verification report has been approved detailing any remediation work required;
- If contamination is found during development then construction shall cease until a remediation strategy has been agreed with the County Planning Authority;
- No piling or foundation designs using penetrative methods without the approval of the County Planning Authority in consultation with the Environment Agency;
- The submission of a native species landscape scheme and the requirement for it to be planted in the first planting season following completion of development.

40. 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;

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- The development should take account of the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bats and Lighting in the UK' guidance;
- To ensure that works to trees are carried out outside of the breeding bird season and if this is not possible that an ecologist examines the site prior to works commencing;
- To ensure that all precautions are taken to avoid discharges and spills into the ground during and after construction.

Case Officer: Helen Edwards

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Background Documents: see section heading