

App.No: 150534 (CCC)	Decision Due Date: 10 July 2015	Ward: Old Town
Officer: Richard Elder	Site visit date: Previous Consultation Application	Type: County Council
Site Notice(s) Expiry date: Undertaken by ESCC Neighbour Con Expiry: Undertaken by ESCC Press Notice(s): Undertaken by ESCC		
Over 8/13 week reason: N/A given ESCC County Council Consultation		
Location: The Cavendish School, Eldon Road, Eastbourne		
Proposal: ESCC Re-Consultation to Cavendish School		
Applicant: East Sussex County Council		
Recommendation: No objections		

Executive Summary:

East Sussex County Council be advised that Eastbourne Borough Council do not wish to raise any objections to the proposal.

Since the application was last considered by the Planning Committee in November 2014 the applicant has carried out further traffic analysis including survey work in Eldon Road, Willingdon Road and Cobbold Avenue.

The amendments to the scheme now before Members seeks to change the proposed access arrangements to and within the site with the main change being a one-way system from Cobbold Avenue to Eldon Road for Primary School related vehicles only.

The existing grounds maintenance access from Cobbold Avenue would, as originally proposed, provide access to staff car parking although capacity is now reduced from 18 to 10 spaces. A turning area for staff / service vehicles is also proposed.

In addition Cobbold Avenue is now proposed to provide entry to the Kiss & Drop circulation. The internal road would provide for occasional servicing and emergency access to the rear of the proposed new School but is now also proposed to continue, one-way, southwards adjacent to the site boundary shared with nos. 2A and 4 Eldon Road before turning westwards into the designated Kiss & Drop 'zone' along the Eldon Road frontage. This zone now proposes 15 drop-off spaces (previously 10) and 20 parking spaces (previously 22).

Vehicles would leave the site via the existing access from Eldon Road which is to be widened in order to allow for access and egress for vehicles using the existing secondary School and as the main service entrance for the proposed Primary School.

The reversal of the flow in the Kiss & Drop arrangement now means the omission of the originally proposed vehicular exit onto Eldon Road and, in turn, no requirement to fell street Elm trees to provide adequate visibility.

Another strand of the amended proposals is to change the phasing of the Eldon Road/Willingdon Road/Rodmill Drive staggered junction from 3 to 2 phases and to alter its layout slightly with the intention of improving its operation by reducing queuing times and maintaining pedestrian access.

The final main amendment is the inclusion of an electricity sub-station along the Eldon road frontage to the west of the existing entrance.

In all other respects the application remains the same as previously considered at your November committee

It is accepted and acknowledged that there is an identified need for this accommodation within Eastbourne and it is accepted that ESCC have undertaken a thorough audit of available/potential sites to meet/mitigate this need. In this regard it is considered that this site is the only one available and deliverable within the time frames required.

Notwithstanding this it is considered that the clear emphasis in the NPPF on the provision of new school places, and the fact that the loss of playing field will be replaced by alternative provision in the form of artificial sports pitches, means that the principle of development is acceptable.

With regard to design, whilst the aesthetic design of the proposed school is not of particularly high quality, it is acknowledged that its role as a school and budgetary constraints may not facilitate outstanding design but it is considered that its functional appearance, use of quality materials and appropriate siting would not adversely affect visual amenity or the streetscene in this location. Similarly the location, siting, scale and bulk of the proposed development would not give rise to any material impacts upon the occupiers of nearby properties/plots.

The proposed amendments relating to the access and parking arrangements appear to have overcome/mitigated the impacts from the previous scheme and now there should be less impacts upon the highway network and the high amenity value street tree have now been secured. In this regard the amendments are seen as a positive benefit.

It is recommended that ESCC use appropriate conditions to control the access and the wider amenity issues.

Planning Status:

Predominantly residential area.

Relevant Planning Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Paragraph 72 Importance of school places in locations and number to meet the local demands

Paragraph 74 Retention of open space

Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 Policies

B1 Spatial Development Strategy and Distribution

B2 Creating Sustainable Neighbourhoods

C5 Ocklynge & Rodmill Neighbourhood Policy

D7 Community Sports and Health

D10a Design

E1 Infrastructure Delivery

Eastbourne Borough Plan Saved Policies 2007

UHT1 Design of New Development

UHT4 Visual Amenity

H09 Conversions and Change of Use

HO20 Residential Amenity

UHT15 Conservation Area

TR10 Safe Routes to School

TR11 Car Parking

NE28 Environmental Amenity

LCF16 Criteria for New Schools

LCF18 Extension of Education Establishments

Site Description:

Cavendish Secondary School is a 2 storey substantial school building (constructed as Eastbourne High School grammar school for girls) located on the north side of Eldon Road in the Old Town part of Eastbourne on a site which slopes steeply from south to north and marginally less steeply from west to east.

The campus is set in 4.425 hectares and includes the main school building from 1939, with extensions from 1979, 1983, 1993 and 1996; green playing fields as well as hard and soft landscaping. The campus site is terraced to accommodate the buildings and sports facilities on even ground, with a vehicular access snaking all the way around the building, except for a small section at the western end. The site is accessed from Eldon Road by car and pedestrian with a second vehicle entrance from Cobbold Avenue.

The school is situated within a predominately residential area of detached and semi-detached 2 storey houses, and is located approximately 1.3 miles from the Eastbourne mainline train station via Victoria Drive.

A contemporary church building is located opposite on the south side of Eldon Road.

Relevant Planning History:

EB/1978/0520

Erection of single-storey craft block (Phase 1).

Resolved: No objections. 1978-11-07

EB/1979/0384

Extension to existing School in the form of a detached craft and teaching block.
Resolved: No objections, concern expressed. 1979-08-29

EB/1990/0376

Erection of a two-storey building linked to existing sports hall, to provide changing rooms and sports facilities on the ground floor and conference/ display area on the first floor, and formation of car-parking area fronting Eldon road. Granted, subject to conditions.
1990-09-10

EB/1991/0393

Erection of two-storey and single-storey extensions to School, in-filling of 2 light wells and formation of 5 additional car-parking spaces.
Resolved: No objections. 1991-11-05

EB/1993/0256

Approval of reserved matters for the erection of a two-storey building, linked to existing sports hall, providing sports facilities and changing rooms, with conference and exhibition facilities on the first floor.
Granted, subject to conditions.
1993-09-14

940605

Erection of a two-storey sports hall and amenities building, linked to existing sports hall, with multi-purpose/exhibition facilities on the first floor.
Planning Permission Approved conditionally 17/11/1994

950063

Retention of a single mobile classroom unit.
County Council County Council – Objection 23/04/1995

950324

Provision of a 2.4 metres high wire mesh enclosure to house approximately 50 cycles.
Planning Permission County Council – Objection 21/07/1995

991174

Provision of a base transceiver station (six antennae and four dishes with ancillary equipment) on the roof of Cavendish School.
Prior Notification (telecoms) 21/03/1999

030021

Retention of a single mobile classroom unit.
County Council - No Objection 15/02/2003

030257

Extension of two science laboratories at first floor, new covered access and store on ground floor. Removal of open fire escape, and replacement with new enclosed staircase.
County Council - No Objection 20/06/2003

100347

Formation of porch and ramp to main entrance, re-configuration of vehicle parking and circulation area. County Council – Objection 14/07/2010

110383

Conversion of existing double garage to classrooms

County Council - No Objection 25/07/2011

130458

Erection of steel mesh fence

2m wall to 3.0m wall with mesh fence, including replacement 3.0m high gates. County Council – Objection 02/07/2013

Proposed development:

The application involves the construction of a two storey (plus basement) primary school building of approximately 2000m² gross internal area with associated external hard and soft landscaping works. The works will also include the refurbishment of approximately 620m² existing accommodation in the basement of the existing Secondary School.

A feasibility study was undertaken in 2014 to assess the potential options for providing a 2 form entry (2FE) primary school on the Cavendish site and investigating how a nursery could also be provided.

The preferred option is an all-through school to make best use of the current building so that facilities can be shared to enable more efficient / effective use of space avoiding duplication where possible. The proposed accommodation will provide much needed primary school places for children in Eastbourne.

Housing data provided by Eastbourne Borough Council shows that Town Centre, Meads, Upperton and Seaside will see the greatest housing growth in the period to 2027. With the exception of Seaside all these areas would be attracted to a new school at Cavendish.

The proposed two storey building would be sited directly adjacent to the western side of the existing school at an elevated level (due to the sloping site) on an area currently used for playing fields. The new school building would be linked to the existing school building via a basement and ground floor link to facilitate shared facilities between the schools.

The basement would primarily accommodate the link between the 2 schools to providing internal access to the existing schools canteen, the ground floor would provide the main hall, classrooms and nursery while the first floor would provide mainly classrooms only. There will be an open, double height space above the main entrance. The area surrounding the building would be designated as play areas and landscaped accordingly.

Addressing the loss of playing field area, 2 x 3G multi use pitches would be provided on half of the existing hard play area to the east of the site and a new 'games court' would replace 2 tennis courts to the north side of the site adjacent to Cobbold Avenue. The remaining areas of playing fields/areas would remain the same.

Vehicular access to the site has been amended from the previous consultation and now proposes an 'in out' arrange with internal site controls. The 'in' to the site for the 'kiss

and drop' would be from Cobbold Road and the 'out would be onto Eldon Road. (The specifics of the arrangement have been summarised in the Executive Summary above)

The projected increase in pupils on the entire site from 2015 to 2023 would be approximately 200 pupils due to the projected reduction in pupil numbers as a consequence of the Gildredge House Free School.

With regards additional staff employed, the submitted application form states that there are 100 existing staff and 50 proposed staff (150 in total) but no indication as to the split between full/part-time.

Consultations & Neighbour Representations: This was undertaken by ESCC and to at the time of writing no responses have been directly received by EBC. Any representations received after the production of this report will be orally reported to Planning Committee.

Appraisal:

Principle of development:

The application site is located within the Ocklynge & Rodmill neighbourhood as identified in the Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan 2006-2027 (adopted 2013). The neighbourhood vision for Ocklynge & Rodmill states: Ocklynge & Rodmill will increase its level of sustainability by improving access to services and facilities and making the neighbourhood friendlier for pedestrians and cyclists, whilst continuing to promote access to open spaces and creating a more inclusive community.

Core Strategy Policy C5: Ocklynge & Rodmill Neighbourhood Policy states that the vision for Ocklynge & Rodmill neighbourhood will be promoted by a number of measures including: increasing the provision of local community and health facilities; creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment through public realm improvements; protecting important greenspaces across and adjacent to the neighbourhood; and promoting the provision of safe walking and cycling routes.

The Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan identifies that schools are vital community facilities, and that there is a demand of additional school places up to 2027, the delivery of which will be directed through the Infrastructure delivery policy. Core Strategy Policy E1: Infrastructure Delivery states that the Council will work closely with public agencies, utility companies and infrastructure providers to ensure that the necessary infrastructure to support future housing and employment development is available, and that the strategic infrastructure requirements will be set out in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (October 2014) recognises that:

- There is a need for additional 'early years' provision and where possible new nursery facilities should be located on the same site as existing or new build primary schools; and
- There is an identified shortfall of up to 6 forms of entry across Eastbourne over the Core Strategy period, which equates to 180 school entry places.

There are two local policy issues relating to this application: the expansion of educational provision of the site, and the loss of part of the school playing field.

Firstly, it is recognised that paragraph 72 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It also states that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and
- work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

The site is identified on the Policies Map as being part of the designation for Borough Plan Policy LCF18: Extension of Educational Establishments. This policy states that planning permission will be granted for additional education facilities within sites identified for educational use, provided that:

- a) the development has no significant detrimental effect on residential, visual or environmental amenity (see Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE28);
- b) the development is acceptable in terms of siting, scale and materials, and appropriate landscaping is provided (see Policy UHT1);
- c) the development has good, safe and secure access by public transport, on foot and by bicycle, where access is considered to be inadequate a travel plan and the development of safe routes to school will be required (see Policies TR3 and TR10);
- d) appropriate provision is made for access by people with disabilities and with mobility problems.

In addition, Borough Plan Policy LCF16: Criteria for New Schools states that planning permission will be granted for new schools where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is a need for such a facility, provided that:

- a) the development has no significant detrimental effect on environmental, residential or visual amenity (see Policies NE28, HO20 and UHT4);
- b) the scheme is acceptable in design terms (see Policy UHT1 a), b) and g));
- c) the development has good, safe and secure access by public transport, on foot and by bicycle, where access is considered to be inadequate a travel plan and the development of safe routes to school will be required (see Policies TR3 and TR10);
- d) appropriate provision is made for access by people with disabilities and those with mobility problems;
- e) where appropriate sports facilities should be designed with future dual use in mind, including independent access to changing and indoor sports facilities.

The revisions to the scheme in terms of accessibility and parking (kiss and drop) are considered to have overcome/mitigated the previous concerns and are deemed appropriate and acceptable and unlikely to give rise to any substantive harm to the local highway network. In terms of NPPF Members are aware that the schemes can only be resisted on highways related grounds when there is a demonstrable 'severe' impact.

The application will result in the loss of part of the school playing field in the south east corner of the site to accommodate the new primary school. Paragraph 74 of the NPPF states that existing open space, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: the open space is surplus to requirements; the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision; or the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision.

In addition to this, Core Strategy Policy D7: Community, Sports and Health states that the loss of any community, sports or health facilities will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer required to meet current needs, or where alternative and improved provision can be made elsewhere in Eastbourne that is accessible to local people.

The application proposes the provision of two new 3G (artificial) sports pitches, although it appears that these are located on existing playgrounds. Whilst these do not provide the equivalent quantity of playing field loss, they do provide a significantly higher quality of playing field that can be used all year round, as opposed to the grass pitches that may be unusable during parts of the winter.

The NPPF is clear that great weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools in order to ensure that a sufficient choice of school places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, which is significant in determining the application.

However, it also recognises that local planning authorities and school promoters should work together to identify and resolve key planning issues. Despite on-going discussions on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan relating to overall school provision in Eastbourne, East Sussex County Council did not engage with Eastbourne Borough Council on the specific site and the key planning issues before the application was submitted.

Although the application will result in the loss of part of the school playing field, replacement provision will be made by the provision of new artificial sports pitches that will be available all year round, and therefore this could be considered a suitable replacement.

Impact of proposed development on amenity of adjoining occupiers and surrounding area:

Policies LCF16 and LCF18 of the Eastbourne Local Plan (Extension of Educational Establishments) states that planning permission will be granted for additional education facilities within sites identified for educational use, provided that the development has no significant detrimental effect on residential, visual or environmental amenity.

Policy B2 of the Eastbourne Core Strategy seeks to protect the residential and environmental amenity of existing and future residents.

The nearest residential properties to the proposed school building would be nos. 2a and 4 Eldon Road. The nearest part of the school building would be 25 metres to the rear garden boundary of no.2a Eldon Road and 26.7 metres to the rear garden boundary of no.4 Eldon Road. Given the pattern of development in the area, this distance is considered to be appropriate. The 2 storey height of the school, which would be at a lower level than these properties due to the sloping site, would not appear significantly dominating or unneighbourly in views to the west and the provision of a flat roof to the school would keep height and bulk to a minimum.

Due to the distance between the proposed school building and the nearest residential property and the siting of the building at a lower level, it is considered that the height,

scale and bulk of the proposed building would not result in any significant loss of sunlight, daylight or outlook to surrounding residential properties.

With regard to any potential noise impact, there are several play areas proposed around the southern, eastern and northern sides of the building. These may have an adverse noise impact from children playing during break and lunch times and an increase intensification of play areas in comparison to the existing playing field. As such, it is considered that ESCC may choose to impose conditions to control this issue.

The provision/use of the access points for relatively short periods of the day may give rise to a degree of noise impacts, this loss of amenity is not considered sufficient to warrant or sustain a planning objection to the proposal. Notwithstanding this though ESCC may choose to impose conditions to control the timings of access issues and parking times.

With regards the use of the sports pitches, it is considered that an informative is necessary to be included on any permission that provision of floodlights would require a separate planning application.

As such, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely impact on surrounding residential amenity and would accord with Policies LCF16 and LCF18 of the Eastbourne Local Plan and Policy B2 of the Eastbourne Core Strategy.

Design and Siting:

Policy LCF18 of the Eastbourne Local Plan (Extension of Educational Establishments) states that planning permission will be granted for additional education facilities within sites identified for educational use, provided that the development is acceptable in terms of siting, scale and materials, and appropriate landscaping is provided.

Policy UHT1 of the Eastbourne Local Plan states that proposals will be required to harmonise with the appearance and character of the local area and be appropriate in scale, form, materials (preferably locally sourced), setting, alignment and layout. Policy UHT4 states that proposals which have an unacceptable detrimental impact on visual amenity will be refused.

Policy D10a of the Eastbourne Core Strategy requires new development to make a positive contribution to the townscape and urban heritage.

The siting of the proposed school to the east of the existing building fronting Eldon Road would appear to be the most appropriate area within the site for the new school given the topography constraints of the site, maintaining the existing building line of the existing school building and utilising the existing main vehicular entrance to the school.

The aesthetic design of the proposed new school has been kept simple and clean to enhance the schemes sense of place and individual identity and to contrast appropriately with the 1930's appearance of the existing school utilising mostly traditional materials referenced in the local vernacular. The main face materials would include brick and grey metal standing seam cladding.

The design appears functional in appearance with no real noteworthy innovative or original features. However, given its role as a new school where development budget is usually a constraint, paragraph 61 of the NPPF recognises that securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations where connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment may compensate for its relatively ordinary visual appearance. It is considered, therefore, that the proposed siting and design of the new school is appropriate in this location and would sit comfortably within the streetscene next to the existing school building on this relatively large site.

As such, it is considered that the proposal would accord with Policies LCF18, UHT1 and UHT4 of the Eastbourne Local Plan and Policies B2 and D10a of the Eastbourne Core Strategy.

Impacts on trees:

Policy NE28 of the Eastbourne Local Plan states that development proposals will be judged on their effect on environmental amenity.

The redesign of the proposal with the amended access/parking arrangements has meant that all street trees can now be retained.

Highway and Parking Considerations:

Policy TR11 of the Eastbourne Local plan states that new development must comply with approved maximum car parking standards as set out in the East Sussex County Council Highways SPG parking standards.

Borough Plan Policies LCF16 and LCF18 state that planning permission will be granted for new schools where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is a need for such a facility, provided that:

- c) the development has good, safe and secure access by public transport, on foot and by bicycle, where access is considered to be inadequate a travel plan and the development of safe routes to school will be required (see Policies TR3 and TR10);
- d) appropriate provision is made for access by people with disabilities and those with mobility problems.

The scheme has now been amended and now provides what is considered to be an appropriate form of access and parking regime that would meet the operational needs/requirements and would not give rise to any material impacts upon the local highway network.

Human Rights Implications:

The impacts of the proposal have been assessed as part of the application process. Consultation with the community has been undertaken by ESCC and the impact on local people is set out above. The human rights considerations have been taken into account fully in balancing the planning issues; and furthermore the proposals will not result in any breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

Conclusion:

The amendments/revisions to the scheme have overcome/mitigated the concerns with the original proposal and therefore the scheme is considered to be acceptable.

Recommendation:

No objection is raised in principle to the provision of a new school.

East Sussex County Council be advised that EBC do not object to the proposal and request that they look to secure appropriate planning conditions to mitigate noise and access issues.