

<p>Reference: 21/01309/FUL</p>	<p>Site: Land adjacent Blackshots Stadium and Stanford Road Grays Essex.</p>
<p>Ward: Little Thurrock Blackshots</p>	<p>Proposal: Development of a new secondary school with associated sports facilities, access, parking, highway improvements, landscaping and ancillary works</p>

Plan Number(s):		
Reference	Name	Received
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0901	Landscaping	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0902	Site Layout	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0904	Strategic Levels and Edges	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0905	Fencing Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0906	Landscaping	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0907	Hard Landscaping	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0921	Hard Landscaping	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0910	Tree Protection and Removal Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0911	Indicative Pitch Provision	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0912	Access and Circulation	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0942	Bin Stores	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0943	MUGA Courts	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-01-DR-A-00-0101-PL01	Proposed First Floor Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-01-DR-A-00-0711-PL01	First Floor Circulation Signage	26th July 2021

FS0718-STL-XX-01-DR-A-00-0721-PL01	First Floor Access Security Strategy	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-02-DR-A-00-0102-PL01	Proposed Second Floor Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-EL-DR-A-00-0200-PL01	Proposed Elevations	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-02-DR-A-00-0712-PL01	Second Floor Circulation Signage	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-02-DR-A-00-0722-PL01	Second Floor Access Security Strategy	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-EL-DR-A-00-0200-PL01	Proposed External Elevations	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-EL-DR-A-00-0201-PL01	Proposed External Elevations	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-GF-DR-A-00-0100-PL01	Proposed Ground Floor Plans	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-GF-DR-A-00-0710-PL01	Ground Floor Circulation Signage	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-GF-DR-A-00-0720-PL01	Ground Floor Access Security Strategy	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-RF-DR-A-00-0103-PL01	Roof Plans	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-0300-PL01	Sections	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-0301-PL01	Sections	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-0302-PL01	Sections	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-0303-PL01	Sections	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-0800-PL01	Sections	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-0801-PL01	Sections	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0700-PL01	Construction Phasing Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0900-PL01	Site Location Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0901-PL01	Proposed Parking Block Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0910-PL01	Existing Site Layout	26th July 2021

FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0911-PL01	Proposed Site Layout	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-SH-A-00-0400-PL01	External Finishes Schedule	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0600-PL01	Internal Views	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0600-PL01	Internal Views 01	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0601-PL01	Internal Views 02	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0602-PL01	External Views 01	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0603-PL01	External Views 02	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0604-PL01	External Views 03	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0605-PL01	External Views 05	26th July 2021
FS0718-WLK-00-XX-DR-E-00-6301	Proposed External Lighting Layout	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-0901	Landscape General	7 TH October 2021
FS0718-ATL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0908 p07	William Edwards School Sport Facility Enhancement	15 th October 2021

The application is also accompanied by:

Cover Letter dated 16th July 2021

Design and Access Statement

Planning Statement, dated July 2021

Delivery and Servicing Plan (ref. 2550/1180 Doc. D004 Ver 1.0) dated July 2021

External Lighting Impact Assessment Report (ref. FS0718-WLK-00-ZZ-RP-E-00-0001, rev. P02)

Alternative Site Search, dated July 2021

Arboricultural Method Statement for Enabling and Construction Phases of Work (ref. 20-1734.06) dated July 2021

Arboricultural Impact Assessment (ref. 20-1734.06) dated July 2021

Air Quality Assessment, (ref. FS0718-CNS-XX-XX-RP-Y-00-0010, rev. C) dated 6th July 2021

Environmental Noise Report (ref. FS0718-CBS-ZZ-XX-RP-Y-00-0002, rev. P01) dated 12th July 2021

BREEAM Pre-Assessment Report (ref. 21-8096) dated July 2021

Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment (ref. JAG/CD/433452-Rp001-Rev A) dated June 2021

Response to SUDs Queries, (ref. JAG/CD/43452-Lt003) dated 1st October 2021

Phase II Geo-Environmental Assessment Report (ref JMS/ST/44565-Rp-002 Rev A) dated 17th December 2020
 Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (ref. LP3452E-DBA-v1.4) dated July 2021
 Energy Statement (ref. FS0718-WLK-00-ZZ-RP-ME-00-0004, rev. P03) dated November 2020
 Socio Economic Report, dated July 2021
 Reptile Survey Report (ref. 20-1734.05) dated July 2021
 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (ref. 20-1734.05) dated November 2020
 Sports Provision Statement, dated July 2021
 Sports Provision Statement 2, dated July 2021
 Community Use Agreement – Key Principle Terms (October 2021)
 Statement of Community Involvement, dated July 2021
 Transport Assessment (ref. 2550/1190 Doc. D002 Ver.2.0) dated July 2021
 Transport Assessment Part 2
 Travel Plan, July 2021 v1.5
 Full Construction Logistics Plan (ref. 2550/1190 doc D005 Ver. 01) dated July 2021
 Transport Assessment Appendix J Treetops Signalised Junction (ref. 388522-MMD-BZ-XX-RP-D-02), dated 16th July 2021
 Technical Note in response to Highways, dated 28th September 2021

Applicant:

Caledonian Modular Ltd
 on behalf of Department for Education

Validated:

20 July 2021

Date of expiry:

30 November 2021

(Extension of Time as Agreed)

Recommendation: APPROVE, subject to Conditions:

1.0 BRIEF SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application is submitted on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE), to erect a purpose built secondary school for use by Orsett Heath Academy.
- 1.2 By way of background, the future growth of school places in the Borough is forecast by the Thurrock Pupil Place Plan 2020-2024 ('the PPP') and the application site is located within the Central Secondary School Area ('Central SSA'). As of 2019 the Central SSA was 4,745 pupils and under projections for September 2024 Thurrock has an indicated admissions growth of 5,342, a growth of 597 pupils over 5 years within the Central Area. Furthermore, pupil admissions will exceed the Published Admission Number and the number of pupil places available in the Central SSA.
- 1.3 In order to address the projected requirement for school places, the provision of two new Free Schools have been agreed with the Education Funding Agency; one being the Thames Park School (currently under construction) and the other, Orsett Heath

Academy; both are identified in the Education Support Strategy 2019-2022 document. Thames Park School was granted permission in May this year, and the first phase of the Orsett Heath Academy was granted permission to operate from the Thurrock Rugby Club site in February 2019 and the school opened in September 2020. The Orsett Heath Academy is run by the South West Essex Community Education Trust (SWECET), the same Trust leadership team as William Edwards School.

- 1.4 There is a pressing need to relocate existing teachers and pupils out of the temporary location into a purpose built and suitable teaching environment. The urgency for new for pupil places within the Central SSA is evident and the permanent base for the Orsett Heath Academy has been developed as a direct response to this need. Subject to planning permission, the school would plan to open its permanent site in the academic year 2022/23.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The table below summarises some of the main points of detail contained within the development proposal:

Site Area	8.8 ha
Floorspace	8,678 sq.m
Building Height(s)	Overall maximum height of 14.4 metres, comprising: three storey Teaching Block at 11.4 metres; two storey Sports Hall at 7.5 metres, and a single storey Activity Studio at 3.75 metres
Parking Spaces Provision	168 (including 8 disabled accessible spaces) car parking spaces / 420 cycle parking spaces
Soft Landscaping	3,274 sq.m
Sports Pitches	44,825 sq.m
Pupil / Staff numbers	1,200 pupils / 100 staff (FTE)

- 2.2 This application proposes a new 8 form entry secondary school to provide 1,200 places to school years 7 – 11. A VIth form for years 12 – 13 is not proposed.
- 2.3 As set out in the ‘Site Description’ below the proposals involve land located on both the northern and southern sides of Stanford Road (A1013). A J-shaped building would comprise a single teaching block (c.8,678 sq.m floorspace), providing three floors of accommodation, which would be located on the northern and central part of the northern site. A sports hall would be attached to the north western part (rear) of the main teaching block and an activity studio would be located to the south eastern

side of the main block. A hardsurfaced car park would be located at the eastern end of the northern site. Three hardsurfaced Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA) would be located adjacent to the western end of the northern site. Sports pitches would be provided to the northern half of the site and to the southern half of the site south of Stanford Road. A single vehicle access to the site would be provided from the eastern end of the site north of Stanford Road from a new four arm signalised junction that is proposed to be installed by Thurrock Council.

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The application site comprises two parcels of land north and south of Stanford Road which are currently designated as open space and playing fields. The application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is located in Flood Risk Zone 1 (low risk). The application site appears as a reverse L-shaped site and is divided by Stanford Road. The eastern end of the application site parallel with Stanford Road includes a narrow strip of land identified as being required for the Lower Thames Crossing project (future application for a Development Consent Order) currently under consultation. The Blackshots Leisure Centre and King George’s Recreation Ground and the Thurrock Rugby Club are situated to the immediate north of the site. Allotments are to the northwest, Stanford Road is to the south and residential development to the west and south.

3.2 The application site south of Stanford Road comprises a parcel of overgrown, Green Belt land which is bound to the west and south by residential dwellings. To the south-east lies Treetops School and to the east, an access track leading to Treetops School with agricultural fields beyond. Informal pedestrian access into both northern and southern parts of the application site is taken from Stanford Road. There is no vehicle access into the application site at present. All of the application site is within the ‘Impact Risk Zones’ drawn around the Hangman’s Wood and Deneholes SSSI located a short distance to the south-west of the site.

4.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

Application Reference	Description	Decision
66/00616/FUL	Extension to recreation ground	Approved
76/01030/FUL	Rugby pitches, clubhouse and 'A' Detailed plans and 'B' Revised layout	Approved
81/00221/TBC	Use of land for public open space	Approved
17/00341/FUL	New artificial grass pitch with associated pitch perimeter and gated entrances. Installation of new hardstanding areas with team shelters, a new maintenance storage	Approved

	container and the installation of a new flood lighting system to replace existing floodlights	
18/00164/FUL	Retention of two trailer / caravan buildings for a temporary three year period for use as player's accommodation.	Refused
18/01709/FUL	Construction of new school building, extensions and alterations to existing rugby clubhouse and external works including parking, landscaping and play surface [rev]	Approved (and implemented)
19/30128/PMAJ	Development of an 8 form-entry secondary school (1200 pupils) at the site	Advice Given
20/30147/PMAJ	Development of an 8 form-entry secondary school (1200 pupils) at the site	Advice Given
21/01163/SCR	Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 - Request for a screening opinion for the construction of an 8-form-of-entry (1200 pupils) secondary school, total 8678 sqm GIA together with sports facilities, access, parking, highway improvements, landscaping and ancillary works at the application site.	EIA Not Required

5.0 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 PUBLICITY:

This application has been advertised by way of individual neighbour notification letters, press advert and public site notices which have been displayed nearby.

The application has been advertised as a departure from the Development Plan and as a major development.

79 comments have been received, which are summarised below:

Objections (28 no.)

- Access to the site;
- Additional traffic;
- Environmental pollution;
- Involves loss of Green Belt;
- Wildlife impacts;
- Parking concerns;

- Litter and smells;
- Possible excessive noise;
- Amenity impacts;
- Overlooking;
- Poor location;
- Concerns regarding access restriction;
- Concerns with the location of the pupil / pedestrian access;
- Traffic congestion would result from the scheme;
- Concerns with air quality resulting from additional traffic;
- Concerns with the impacts of construction;
- Concerns regarding impacts to Lower Thames Crossing;
- Concerns about right of easement over the site;
- Concerns about right of access from a private right of way;
- Concerns regarding house values.

Comments for Support (51 no.)

- School is greatly needed for local students;
- Creating jobs;
- New landscaping;
- Much needed facility;
- Good and modern design;
- Good to have pedestrian and cycle access to a local school;
- Ample parking and proposed;
- Improved access;
- Looking forward to the submission coming forward to provide education for Thurrock children;
- Much needed sports facilities for school and community;
- Raise educational standards and achievements in the area;
- Add value to the surrounding area; and
- Supports needs of local children.

5.2 CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Detailed below is a summary of the consultation responses received. The full version of each consultation response can be viewed on the Council's website via public access at the following link: www.thurrock.gov.uk/planning

5.3 ANGLIAN WATER:

Informative recommended.

5.4 BRITISH PIPELINE ASSOCIATION:

No objections

5.5 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT:

No objections, subject to an improved footway and appropriate lighting from Stanford Road to the school.

5.6 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL (ARCHAEOLOGY):

No objection, subject to two pre-commencement conditions.

5.7 CADENT GAS:

Suggested informative regarding nearby assets.

5.8 EDUCATION:

Support the application.

5.9 EMERGENCY PLANNING:

No objection.

5.10 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY:

No comments to make.

5.11 ESSEX POLICE:

Offer recommendations regarding fencing, lighting and Secured by Design.

5.12 ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER:

No comments received.

5.13 FLOOD RISK MANAGER:

No objection, subject to condition addressing surface water drainage.

5.14 HIGHWAYS:

Further Information Required

5.15 TRAVEL PLAN:

No objections subject to condition

5.16 LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGY ADVISOR:

No Objections, subject to conditions and Natural England comments relating to bat survey.

5.17 NATURAL ENGLAND

Raised concerns about impact of proposal upon bat flight paths.

5.18 NATIONAL HIGHWAYS:

No objections

5.19 PUBLIC HEALTH:

Comments and observations raised in relation the following;

- Highways and access
- Air Quality Assessment
- Classroom air quality
- Exterior environment
- Security
- Sport England
- Sustainable Design

5.20 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER:

No objections subject to conditions including Noise Mitigation Plan and CEMP.

5.21 SPORT ENGLAND:

No objections, subject to conditions.

5.22 SPORT AND LEISURE:

No objections subject to conditions including Community Use Agreement

6.0 POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The revised NPPF was published on 20th July 2021. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies. Paragraph 2 of the NPPF confirms the tests in s.38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and s.70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and that the Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions. The following chapter headings and content of the NPPF are particularly relevant to the consideration of the current proposals:

- 2. Achieving sustainable development;
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities;
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport;
- 12. Achieving well-designed places;
- 13. Protecting Green Belt land.; and
- 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.

6.2 Planning Policy Guidance

In March 2014 the former Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched its planning practice guidance web-based resource. This was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which includes a list of the previous planning policy guidance documents cancelled when the NPPF was launched. NPPG contains a range of subject areas, with each area containing several sub-topics. Those of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application include:

- Climate change;
- Design: process and tools;
- Determining a planning application;
- Flood Risk and Coastal Change;
- Green Belt;
- Healthy and safe communities;
- Land affected by contamination; Noise;
- Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space;
- Renewable and low carbon energy;
- Transport evidence bases in plan making and decision taking;
- Travel plans, transport assessments and statements in decision-taking; and
- Use of Planning Conditions

The policy statement 'Planning for schools development' (2011) is also relevant.

6.3 Local Planning Policy Thurrock Local Development Framework (2015)

The statutory development plan for Thurrock is the 'Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (as amended)' which was adopted in 2015. The following adopted Core Strategy policies would apply to any future planning application:

Spatial Policies:

CSSP3 (Sustainable Infrastructure)

CSSP4 (Sustainable Green Belt)

CSSP5 (Sustainable Greengrid)

Thematic Policies:

CSTP9 (Well-being: Leisure and Sports)

CSTP10 (Community Facilities)

CSTP12 (Education and Learning)

CSTP14 (Transport in the Thurrock Urban Area: Purfleet to Tilbury)

CSTP19 (Biodiversity)

CSTP20 (Open Space)

CSTP22 (Thurrock Design)

CSTP25 (Addressing Climate Change)

CSTP26 (Renewable or Low-Carbon Energy Generation)

CSTP27 (Management and Reduction of Flood Risk)

Policies for the Management of Development:

PMD1 (Minimising Pollution and Impacts on Amenity)

PMD2 (Design and Layout)

PMD5 (Open Space, Outdoor Sports and Recreational Facilities)

PMD6 (Development in the Green Belt)

PMD7 (Biodiversity, Geological Conservation and Development)

PMD8 (Parking Standards)

PMD9 (Road Network Hierarchy)

PMD10 (Transport Assessments and Travel Plans)

PMD12 (Sustainable Buildings)

PMD13 (Decentralised, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation)

PMD14 (Carbon Neutral Development)

PMD15 (Flood Risk Assessment)

6.4 Thurrock Local Plan

In February 2014 the Council embarked on the preparation of a new Local Plan for the Borough. Between February and April 2016 the Council consulted formally on an Issues and Options (Stage 1) document and simultaneously undertook a 'Call for Sites' exercise. In December 2018 the Council began consultation on an Issues and Options (Stage 2 Spatial Options and Sites) document, this consultation has now closed and the responses have been considered and reported to Council. On 23 October 2019 the Council agreed the publication of the Issues and Options 2 Report of Consultation on the Council's website and agreed the approach to preparing a new Local Plan.

6.5 Thurrock Design Strategy

In March 2017 the Council launched the Thurrock Design Strategy. The Design Strategy sets out the main design principles to be used by applicants for all new development in Thurrock. The Design Strategy is a supplementary planning document (SPD) which supports policies in the adopted Core Strategy.

7.0 **ASSESSMENT**

Procedure:

7.1 With reference to procedure, this application has been advertised (inter-alia) as being a departure from the Development Plan. Should the Planning Committee resolve to grant planning permission, the application will first need to be referred to the Secretary of State under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009. The reason for the referral as a departure relates to the provision of a building where the floorspace to be created exceeds 1,000 sq.m and the scale and nature of the development would have a significant impact on the openness of the GB and therefore the application will need to be referred under paragraph 4 of the Direction (i.e. Green Belt development). The Direction allows the Secretary of State a period of 21 days within which to 'Call-In' the application for determination via a public inquiry. In reaching a decision as to whether to call-in an application, the Secretary of State will be guided by the published policy for calling in planning applications and relevant planning policies.

7.2 The assessment below covers the following areas:

- I. Principle of the Development
- II. Design, Layout and Impact upon the Surrounding Area

- III. Traffic Impact, Access and Car Parking
- IV. Landscape & Ecology
- V. Impact to Amenity, Including Neighbour Amenity
- VI. Sports Facilities
- VII. Drainage
- VIII. Contamination
- IX. Energy & Sustainability
- X. Other Matters

I. PRINCIPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 7.3 Core Strategy policy CSSP3 (Sustainable Infrastructure) identifies a list of Key Strategic Infrastructure Projects which are essential to the delivery of the Core Strategy, including (under the heading of “Secondary Education”) “new build, refurbishment and expansion of existing mainstream secondary schools”. This policy therefore identifies the general need for new build secondary schools as items of key infrastructure.
- 7.4 Core Strategy policy CSTP12 (Education and Learning) sets out a general approach which includes:
- the Council’s objective and priority to maximise the benefit of investment in buildings, grounds and ICT, to achieve educational transformation;
 - the provision of pre-school, primary school, high school, further education and special education facilities meets current and future needs.
- 7.5 Under the heading of ‘Secondary Education’ CSTP12 goes on to state that, *“To meet the educational, training and community needs of young people and their families for the period of this plan, the Council is committed to replace and improve mainstream secondary school provision and will work with partners to identify and/or confirm sites of an appropriate size and location for schools”*.
- 7.6 Hence in general terms, Core Strategy policies support the provision of education facilities, including new build schools. Paragraph 95 of the NPPF is also relevant and states that: *‘It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. 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 through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications;*
- work with schools promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted’.*

7.7 Although not a part of either the NPPF or PPG, the national policy paper “Planning for Schools Development” (2011) is relevant to this application. This paper sets out a commitment to support the development and delivery of state-funded schools through the planning system. Furthermore the policy paper refers to the Government’s belief that the planning system should operate in a “positive manner” when dealing with proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of state funded schools. Finally, the policy paper sets out the following principles:

- there should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools, as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework;
- local authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state-funded schools in their planning decisions;
- local authorities should make full use of their planning powers to support state funded schools applications;
- local authorities should only impose conditions that clearly and demonstrably meet the tests set out in Circular 11/95;
- local authorities should ensure that the process for submitting and determining state-funded schools’ applications is as streamlined as possible;
- a refusal of any application for a state-funded school, or the imposition of conditions, will have to be clearly justified by the local planning authority;
- appeals against any refusals of planning permission for state-funded schools should be treated as a priority; and
- where a local planning authority refuses planning permission for a state-funded school, the Secretary of State will consider carefully whether to recover for his own determination appeals against the refusal of planning permission.

7.8 The key issues to consider when assessing the principle of development on this site is the impact upon the Green Belt and the need for education provision within the

Borough.

- 7.9 The site is comprises grassland, open space and playing fields open to public use. The site is bounded by trees and shrubs and is divided by Stanford Road. The site is identified on the LDF Core Strategy Proposals Map as within the Green Belt where policies CSSP4 (Sustainable Green Belt), PMD6 (Development in the Green Belt) apply, but also where policy CSTP20 (Open Space) is also relevant.
- 7.10 Policy CSSP4 (Sustainable Green Belt) identifies that the Council will, 'maintain the purpose function and open character of the Green Belt in Thurrock', and Policy PMD6 (Development in the Green Belt) states that the Council will 'maintain, protect and enhance the open character of the Green Belt in Thurrock'. The proposal is not identified in any of the sections of policy CSSP4 (Sustainable Green Belt) and would not fall within any of the categories for appropriate development within policy PMD6 (Development in the Green Belt). These policies aim to prevent urban sprawl and maintain the essential characteristics of the openness and permanence of the Green Belt.
- 7.11 In assessing the impact upon the Green Belt with regard to the Core Strategy and NPPF policies, consideration needs to be given to the following key questions:
1. Whether the proposals constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
 2. The effect of the proposals on the open nature of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it; and
 3. Whether the harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify inappropriate development.
1. Whether the proposals constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
- 7.12 Paragraph 147 of the NPPF makes it clear that 'inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances'. Paragraph 149 goes on to state that: 'A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:
- (a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
 - (b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

- (c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- (d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- (e) limited infilling in villages;
- (f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- (g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority’.

7.13 The applicant’s Planning Statement submitted refers to Paragraph 99 of the NPPF which outlines the Government’s approach to open space and states, “existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built upon unless:

- a) As assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) The loss resulting from the propose development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.”

While the above extract is accepted, the wording of paragraph 149(b) stipulates that ‘the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it..’.

7.14 The proposed development involves a new school including a teaching block, sports hall and large areas of hardstanding to support the outdoor sports facilities and provide car parking and circulation routes. A number outdoor sports facilities would be provided, including a three court Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), an Artificial

Grass Pitch (AGP), 1 no. senior grass rugby pitch and 4 no. youth football pitches (and 6 no. youth rugby pitches would be provided on Blackshots Recreation Ground); however, these are integral the proposed for the use as a school. That is, the educational use (as an 8 form entry secondary school) which generates the need for accompanying sports facilities. A new school building totalling 8,678 sq.m. floorspace clearly does not fall within any of the exceptions above and is inappropriate development. Notwithstanding the NPPF outdoor provisions the outdoor facilities forming part of the current application, while occupying a large proportion of the site, do not, preserve the openness character of the Green Belt by virtue of the hardstanding, car park and fencing proposed around the perimeter of the site and around the MUGA courts and AGP.

- 7.15 As the site comprises open playing fields, the site is not considered to fall within the NPPF's definition of Previously Developed Land and does not fall within any of the exceptions for the construction of new buildings as set out in Paragraph 149 of the NPPF and within policy PMD6.
- 7.16 The proposals would, therefore, constitute inappropriate development, which is by definition harmful to openness.

2. The effect of the proposals on the open nature of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it;

- 7.17 The analysis in the paragraphs above concludes that the proposal constitutes inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt (NPPF para. 147). However, it is also necessary to consider whether there is any other harm (NPPF para. 148).
- 7.18 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open: the essential characteristics of Green Belt being described as its openness and its permanence. The proposals would comprise a substantial amount of new built development and sporting facilities across the site, which is currently open.
- 7.19 Advice published in NPPG (July 2019) addresses the role of the Green Belt in the planning system and, with reference to openness, cites the following matters to be taken into account when assessing impact:
- openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects;
 - the duration of the development, and its remediability; and
 - the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation
- 7.20 In terms of NPPG, it is considered that the proposed development would have a

detrimental impact on both the spatial and visual aspects of openness, i.e. an impact as a result of the footprint of development and building volumes. With regard to the visual impact on the Green Belt assessment of openness, the quantum of development proposed would undoubtedly harm the visual character of the site. In light of the above, given that the site is located in an open and exposed position, bordered by Stanford Road and visible from the Blackshots Stadium, the development of the site as proposed would clearly harm the visual component of openness. The applicant has not sought a temporary planning permission and it must be assumed that the design-life of the development would be a number of decades. The intended permanency of the development would therefore impact upon openness. Finally, the development would generate traffic movements associated with a school development and considered this activity would also impact negatively on the openness of the Green Belt. It is therefore considered that the amount and scale of the development proposed would significantly reduce the openness of the site. As a consequence, the loss of openness, which is contrary to the NPPF, should be accorded substantial weight in the consideration of this application.

7.21 Paragraph 138 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes which the Green Belt serves. In terms of whether the planning application would cause harm to the five purposes of the Green Belt, these are considered below:

a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

7.22 The NPPF does not provide a definition of the term 'large built-up areas' but the site is located on the fringes of the built up area around Grays, which represents the largest built-up area within the Borough. The proposal would extend further into the Green Belt than the existing built up area. However, the site is somewhat separated from the built-up area by the local road network and nearby areas of open land. As a result of these circumstances it is considered it would have limited impact in terms of the unrestricted sprawl of this built up area into the Green Belt, nevertheless some harm to this purpose would occur.

b) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;

7.23 The site is located on the immediate fringes of Grays and some distance from Chadwell St Mary; the site is somewhat disconnected from Chadwell St Mary principally by the existing road network. While the proposal would increase the built form in the area between these urban areas it is considered that the proposal would not result in towns merging into one another to any significant degree.

c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

7.24 The site currently comprises open space and playing fields. Current views across the site contribute towards the countryside setting and mark the beginning of

relatively open countryside beyond the urban area of Grays linking to the open areas of land to the east and north of Stanford Road. The detailed plans show that a significant built form will be introduced on the most prominent part of the site. The introduction of a significant level of built form within this area would result in encroachment into the countryside. As a result the proposal would conflict with this purpose of including land within the Green Belt.

d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;

7.25 As there are no historic towns in the immediate vicinity of the site, the proposals would not conflict with this defined purpose of the Green Belt.

e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

7.26 The site is located on the fringes of the urban area and therefore the granting of permission outside of this area would not encourage urban regeneration. Therefore the proposal would conflict with this purpose of including land within the Green Belt, albeit the Applicant's site selection is considered below.

7.27 Based upon the above tests from paragraph 138 of the NPPF the proposal would be contrary to purposes c and e with some limited impact on purpose a. The proposal would result in harm to some of the purposes of including land in the Green Belt, and harm to the openness of the Green Belt in addition to the definitional harm by reason of its inappropriateness. Reference to "any other harm" (NPPF para. 148), that is non-Green Belt harm, is referred to in the paragraphs below.

3. Whether the harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify inappropriate development.

7.28 Paragraph 147 makes it clear that 'inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in 'Very Special Circumstances'. Paragraph 148 of the NPPF then states 'when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations'.

7.29 Neither the NPPF nor the Core Strategy provide guidance as to what can comprise 'Very Special Circumstances', either singly or in combination. However, some interpretation of very special circumstances has been provided by the Courts. The rarity or uniqueness of a factor may make it very special, but it has also been held

that the aggregation of commonplace factors could combine to create very special circumstances (i.e. 'very special' is not necessarily to be interpreted as the converse of 'commonplace'). The demonstration of very special circumstances is a 'high' test and the circumstances which are relied upon must be genuinely 'very special'. In considering whether 'very special circumstances' exist, factors put forward by an applicant which are generic or capable of being easily replicated on other sites, could be used on different sites leading to a decrease in the openness of the Green Belt. The provisions of very special circumstances which are specific and not easily replicable may help to reduce the risk of such a precedent being created. Mitigation measures designed to reduce the impact of a proposal are generally not capable of being 'Very Special Circumstances' (VSC). Ultimately, whether any particular combination of factors amounts to very special circumstances will be a matter of planning judgment for the decision-taker.

7.30 The Planning Statement submitted to accompany the application sets out the applicant's case for VSC under the following main headings:

a) Identified Need and Provision of High Quality Secondary Education and Planning History

b) Lack of Alternative Sites

c) Established School

d) Socio-Economic Benefits to the Wider Community

e) Long Term Legacy Use

7.31 The detail of the applicant's case under these headings and consideration of the matters raised is provided in the paragraphs below.

a) Identified Need and Provision of High Quality Secondary Education and Planning History

Consideration

7.32 The Planning Statement outlines the fact that whilst Orsett Heath Academy's non-permanent location at the Thurrock Rugby Club is suitable for meeting current demand, it can only accommodate a maximum of 240 pupils. It is therefore critical that Orsett Heath Academy can move to its permanent site as soon as possible to ensure that the school can cater for the projected identified need within the Borough. The applicant states that an assessment of current state secondary school provision

identifies that there are 13 secondary schools open within Thurrock Borough as of July 2021. This includes both Thames Park School and Orsett Heath Academy which have been operating from temporary accommodation since September 2020. The application site is within the Central Secondary School Area (Central SSA), where there is a projected growth of 597 pupils over 5 years from 2109. This application, submitted on behalf of the Department for Education, is a direct response to the specific need for school places within the Central SSA.

- 7.33 This specific need is two-fold; firstly, because Orsett Heath Academy has been open since September 2020 (following the grant of planning permission under ref. 18/01709/FUL whereby significant weight was afforded to the lack of secondary education provision) and where staff and students are currently operating from a non-permanent location. Secondly, there is also a short/medium need as the projected growth of pupils within the Central SSA is likely to incrementally exceed the Published Admissions Number and the proposal seeks to address these specific needs.
- 7.34 Consequently, as the Orsett Heath Academy has an immediate and projected need for permanent long term and purpose built accommodation, paired with the projected published admissions numbers over the next 5 years within the Central SSA, it is understood and acknowledged that there is a need for pupil places within this area of Grays. There is sufficient compelling evidence to demonstrate there is a quantitative need for pupil places in the area. Although not part of the NPPF, the policy statement 'Planning for schools development' (2011) sets out a "presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools". Significant positive weight is afforded to this factor in the balance of Green Belt considerations.

b) Lack of Alternative Sites

- 7.35 The applicant has submitted an Alternative Sites Search alongside its case for VSC. The applicant searched for sites within a 5km radius of the existing school at the rugby club. A total of 26 sites were identified, in and around the Borough, some of which are existing school sites, other Green Belt sites, other agricultural sites which are not within the Green Belt and other sites that have a number of constraints.
- 7.36 The applicant concludes that, 'only one site was deemed a suitable option for the proposals school, located to the north and south of Stanford Road. This is the preferred site due to its location, site characteristics, value for money and timescale for delivery.'

Consideration

- 7.37 The assessment and methodology adopted by the applicant have been deemed sufficiently robust in pre-application discussions and adequately demonstrate the site

is available and sequentially preferable. Although the proposals would result in some harm to purpose e. of the Green Belt, the applicant's analysis shows that there are no available sites within the built-up area. In conjunction with the needs analysis discussed in part (a) above, this factor is also afforded significant positive weight.

c) Established School

7.38 Orsett Heath Academy was established in temporary accommodation at Thurrock Rugby Football Club in September 2020 and has been in operation for one academic year. Part of the decision to locate the temporary accommodation for the school at the Rugby Club was linked to the aspiration that the application site would be developed for the school's permanent accommodation in due course and therefore there would be a close relationship, both in location terms and wider legacy/long-term use, between the two sites.

7.39 Furthermore, the applicant goes on to explain that on the basis that once the Orsett Heath Academy move into their permanent accommodation, it is proposed that the school's temporary accommodation at Thurrock Rugby Football Club will be redeveloped to provide specialist sports-science and performance analysis suites with the latest technology, to be known as 'Thurrock Institute of Sport'. This facility will be jointly used by Thurrock Rugby Football Club and the Orsett Heath Academy, with the school using such facilities to help with the development of their sports aptitude pupils and for pupils taking GCSE Physical Education, for example.

Consideration

7.40 The matter of the established school, its connections with the Rugby Club and the applicant's aspirations in providing high quality education facilities is one of the Council's key objectives. It is considered that this factor should be given significant positive weight in the determination of the application as a very special circumstance.

d) Socio-Economic Benefits to the Wider Community

7.41 As was noted under the planning permission granted for the temporary accommodation for the Orsett Heath Academy, the submitted Planning Statement notes that the Trust, SWECET, has a well-established relationship with the Thurrock Rugby Football Club. Since the school has opened, the applicant states that this relationship has deepened with pupils in the first September 2020 intake participating in extra-curricular activities ran by the school, Thurrock Rugby Football Club and other local organisations. The proposed development, including the provision of the rugby and football sports pitches, will continue the strong ties with Thurrock Rugby Football Club but also provide opportunities to foster new and stronger bonds with other local organisations including Thurrock Harriers, Grays Athletic Football Club

and other local community groups. Such bonds will be developed through the provision of facilities within the proposed development which will be accessible to the local community outside of school hours.

Consideration

- 7.42 Public health and outdoor sport are an important corporate priorities. The Council's Active Place Strategy (adopted Jan 2021) advises that the Council should be encouraging further sports facilities and community use agreements. The proximity of the school and the Thurrock Rugby Football Club would allow improved links between the two and would potentially support wider objectives to increase public health and reduce obesity (subject to a suitable community use agreement). Moderate positive weight should be attached to these health benefits.

e) Long Term Legacy Use

- 7.43 The applicant states that *'Orsett Heath Academy selects 10% of its intake on sporting aptitude, and as such the delivery of new high-quality sporting facilities as part of the proposed development will ensure that those with sporting aptitude are provided with state-of-the-art facilities to grow, develop and achieve their sporting targets.'*
- 7.44 The applicant contends that the high-quality sporting facilities will enable Orsett Heath Academy to deliver its *'Learning Through Sport'* curriculum at the site. The Planning Statement advises there is a well-established, award winning Year 8 and 9 curriculum developed at the same Trust's -ran William Edwards School that uses sport as a vehicle to improve literacy. It is considered that young athletes and those with a particular aptitude and interest in sport will be drawn from throughout Thurrock to this unique provision and benefit from the partnership arrangements between SWECET, Thurrock Rugby Football Club and Thurrock Harriers.
- 7.45 The applicant considers the development should also be assessed in light of the recently approved Thurrock Open Space Strategy which states, *'Blackshots Leisure Centre is beyond its anticipated life span and needs to be replaced. There is an opportunity to develop a larger scale, strategically important sports facility to serve the needs of the Grays community and, concurrently, consider development of the wider adjacent park. Orsett Heath Academy is due to open in 2022 on the same site. In addition, an interim academy is being built adjacent to Thurrock Rugby Football Club, also on King George's Field.'*
- 7.46 The Thurrock Open Space Strategy goes on to state, *'This combination of options provides a 'window of opportunity' for a full master planning exercise; taking account of education, leisure, physical activity, wellbeing and cultural needs.'* The applicant therefore considers that the proposed development therefore plays a key role in

contributing to, and supporting, the wider sporting masterplan for the immediate area surrounding the site.

Consideration

- 7.47 The proposed long term use of the site has the potential to provide a flagship development for the Borough. It would ensure positive educational benefits and health benefits and provide aspirational opportunities for young people in the Borough. This matter should be afforded significant weight in the consideration of the application. This factor was previously presented by the applicant in support of the temporary facilities and the assessment and weight given is consistent with the weight that Members afforded this previously.
- 7.48 Under the heading of Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities, paragraph 94(a) of the NPPF states: *'It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. 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 through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications'*.
- 7.49 Policy CSTP12 (Education and Learning) is the relevant policy and it has already been established that the principle of a new build schools is acceptable. The Council is committed to replace and improve mainstream secondary school provision and work with partners to identify appropriate locations within the Borough. After sequential testing of sites, the applicant's findings suggest the application site is the most appropriate site, being located directly adjacent to the existing school and Rugby Club.
- 7.50 The Government's policy statement from 2011 'Planning for schools development: statement', while not forming part of the NPPF or NPPG, is also relevant to this proposal. This statement includes the following principles for the planning system:
- there should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools, as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework;
 - local authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state-funded schools in their planning decisions;
 - local authorities should make full use of their planning powers to support state funded schools applications;

- local authorities should only impose conditions that clearly and demonstrably meet the tests set out in Circular 11/95; and
- a refusal of any application for state-funded school, or the imposition of conditions, will have to be clearly justified by the local planning authority.

7.51 As the site is located in the Green Belt it is not considered that the positive approach encouraged by national policy (above) would necessarily supersede the protection afforded to the Green Belt elsewhere within national planning policies. Therefore, it is still necessary to consider both the harm and benefits of the proposal and undertake a balancing exercise. Nevertheless, it is considered that local and national planning policies supporting the delivery of additional facilities for this new school can be afforded positive weight in the balance of Green Belt considerations.

Strategic Green Belt Assessment (2019)

7.52 The applicant references *'The Thurrock Strategic Green Belt Assessment Stages 1a and 1b (January 2019) within the Planning Statement. The Thurrock Strategic Green Belt Assessment Stages 1a and 1b was produced by the Council in January 2019 and forms part of the suite of documents supporting the new Local Plan. This document identifies strategic parcels of land within the Green Belt in terms of their 'contribution' to three of the five Green Belt purposes. The site is identified as forming part of strategic parcel no. 27 and paragraph 5.1.9 specifically refers to Parcel 27 in the context of the Lower Thames Crossing development and notes that, 'The boundary of the town is poorly defined and the LTC would provide a more appropriate long-term Green Belt boundary in this particular location'.*

7.53 Paragraph 6.1.2 goes on to state that whilst Parcel 27 is assessed as having major importance contributing to the first purpose of the Green Belt, *'development within a parcel that has a very defined boundary is unlikely to constitute 'unrestricted sprawl' as it would be contained within a clearly defined limit (for example, parcel 27)'.*

Consideration

7.54 The Thurrock Local Plan Issues & Options (Stage 2) consultation refers to the Thurrock Green Belt Assessment Stages 1a and 1b as a technical document that does not specifically identify any sites or broad areas of Green Belt for development, given that any decision on the need to amend the boundary of the Green Belt in Thurrock must be taken as part of the wider plan-making and evidence development process. Consequently, the applicant's conclusions of the Green Belt Assessment have only very limited weight in the consideration of this case.

Other Harm

- 7.55 The application site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and, consistent with its use as playing fields and pitches, the site topography is relatively flat but has a gradual slope at its southern and northern extremities of approximately 1 metre and the total variation from south to north is approximately 2 metres. The site is located in Flood Risk Zone 1. The application site appears as a reverse L-shaped site and is divided by Stanford Road.
- 7.56 In terms of layout, the built form would be concentrated towards the northern half of the site with the eastern corner allocated as a car park for 168 vehicles, with a new access road directly from Stanford Road. The building will front the application site oriented parallel to Stanford Road and be located relatively close to Stanford Road.
- 7.57 West of the teaching block, is a proposed three court multi-use games area (MUGA). Footpaths would lead from the teaching block to both Stanford Road and a pedestrian access from King George's Field and Blackshots Lane beyond. Rugby pitches would be provided immediately north of the building providing both a full size rugby pitch and an Artificial Grass Pitch. The southern parcel of the site contains the natural turf fields and would provide football pitches alongside an improved vehicle access way leading south to the Treetops School. 2.4 metre high weldmesh fencing is proposed around the entire site along with 3 metre weldmesh fencing around MUGA courts and the all-weather sport pitch, but with no fencing proposed for the natural turf pitches.
- 7.58 The applicant acknowledges the nature of the proposal would result in change within the wider landscape but considers that the siting of the building to the south west of the application site helps reduce its encroachment into the more open areas of Green Belt in the site. The applicant considers the positioning of the building minimises the intrusion into the Green Belt as far as possible and ensuring the main built form would not protrude beyond that of the existing built development along Stanford Road.
- 7.59 It is considered that the proposal would result in harm to this open landscaped setting by way of a loss of openness. This harm needs to be considered in the context of "any other harm" in addition to Green Belt harm (paragraph 144). Notwithstanding this, the above Green Belt assessment has identified that the applicant has advanced factors which could combine to clearly outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt such that Very Special Circumstances could exist and, for these reasons, it is considered that these outweigh the harm to the openness of the landscape.

Green Belt Conclusions

- 7.60 It is clear that the proposals comprise inappropriate development. Consequently, the development would be harmful in principle and reduce the openness of the Green

Belt. Furthermore it is considered that the proposals would harm the openness of the Green Belt in terms of both the spatial and visual aspects of openness and would cause some harm to the role which the site plays in fulfilling the purposes for including land within the Green Belt. In accordance with policy, substantial weight should be attached to this harm. With reference to the applicant’s case for Very Special Circumstances, an assessment of the factors promoted is provided in the analysis above, and a summary of the weight which should be placed on various Green Belt considerations is provided in the table below:

Summary of Green Belt Harm and Very Special Circumstances			
Harm	Weight	Factors Promoted as Very Special Circumstances	Weight
Inappropriate Development	Substantial	Identified Need and Provision of High Quality Secondary Education and Planning History	Significant Weight
Reduction in the openness of the Green Belt		Lack of Alternative Sites	Significant Weight
		Established School	Significant Weight
		Socio-Economic Benefits to the Wider Community	Moderate Weight
		Long Term Legacy Use	Significant Weight
		Strategic Green Belt Assessment	Very Limited Weight

7.61 Within the table above, the factors promoted by the applicant can be assessed as attracting varying degrees of ‘positive’ weight in the balanced of considerations. As ever, in reaching a conclusion on the Green Belt issues, a judgement as to balance between the harm and whether the harm is clearly outweighed must be reached. In this case there is harm to the Green Belt with reference to inappropriate development, loss of openness and conflict with a number of Green Belt purposes. Consideration should also be given to the other harm arising from the proposal when undertaking the Green Belt balancing exercise. A number of factors have been promoted by the applicant as comprising the ‘very special circumstances’ required to justify inappropriate development and it is for the Committee to judge:

- i) The weight to be attributed to these factors;
- ii) Whether the factors are genuinely 'very special' (i.e. site specific) or whether the accumulation of generic factors combine at this location to comprise 'very special circumstances'.

7.62 Taking into account all Green Belt considerations, Officers are of the opinion that in this case the identified harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by the accumulation of factors described above, so as to amount to very special circumstances justifying inappropriate development.

II. DESIGN, LAYOUT AND IMPACT UPON THE SURROUNDING AREA

7.63 With respect to the layout of the site, Policy CSTP20 (Open Space) states that the Council will seek to ensure that a diverse range of accessible public open spaces, including natural and equipped play and recreational spaces is provided and maintained to meet the needs of the local community. The same policy goes on to state that wherever possible, open spaces should be identified, planned, designed and managed as areas that can perform multiple functions. As the proposals seek to continue the provision of playing fields, sports pitches and a MUGA available for community use, in addition to the development of a new school, it is not considered likely that a recommendation to refuse the proposals based upon the application conflicting specifically with the objectives and aims of CSTP20 (Open Space) would be sustainable.

7.64 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states; '*In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings*' It is notable that proposed amendments to the NPPF seek to improve the design of new development, in response to the findings of the 'Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission'.

7.65 PMD2 of the Core Strategy states; '*The Council requires all design proposals to respond to the sensitivity of the site and its surroundings, to optimize the potential of the site to accommodate development, to fully investigate the magnitude of change that would result from the proposals, and mitigate against negative impacts*'.

7.66 Prior to the submission of the planning application, the applicant sought pre-application advice which was put before the Thurrock Design Review Panel. The panel considered the scheme could be improved in various areas, including the internal and external layout, and the overall sense of place at the site.

- 7.67 The design has evolved since the advice given at pre-application stage and following the Thurrock Design Review Panel and it is considered that many of the key concerns relating to the scheme have been addressed.
- 7.68 In regards to the massing and layout, the applicant has sought to ensure that the proposed development would provide the optimum teaching environment for staff, students and community groups, whilst being condensed and clustered with a low impact to the surroundings. The external appearance of the school building would be a flat roof modular designed building which would be three storeys in height for the main teaching element, two storeys for the sports hall and single storey for the activity studio. With regards to materials, traditional brickwork would be used across the ground floor grounding the building with a dark coloured brick to contrast against the upper floors. Timber cladding is proposed above the brickwork across the majority of the building with a high quality finish. Feature metal cladding panels are also proposed to be used in strategic locations to highlight entrances and to book-end the edges of the building. This attractive finish would also tie in with the Orsett Heath Academy building at the Thurrock Rugby Football Club site. The proposed range of materials were considered by the Thurrock Design Review Panel and it was confirmed by panel members that they supported a modest pallet choice of materials but considered the façade could be calmer. These comments have been taken on board and the proposal comprises one primary material and two supporting materials. Whilst overall the comments from the Thurrock Design Review Panel have been taken on board, it is considered that the detailed design and external appearance of the proposed buildings would not help create a unique character for the school in this location.
- 7.69 The overall design approach is an important factor to consider as the school environment would also be experienced by the wider public, through a Community Use Agreement and will be an important civic space.
- 7.70 Members of the Committee are reminded that the Council adopted the Thurrock Design Strategy in 2017. The key aims of this strategy are to ensure that new development is of the highest possible quality and responds to the local context. The policies referenced above in the NPPF and Core Strategy above are also relevant and emphasise the importance of good design. It is considered and perhaps a missed opportunity that the external appearance seeks to respond to the generic modern methods of construction formula of buildings rather than adopting a bespoke design. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the applicant is working within budget constraints and tight timeframe for delivering the school.
- 7.71 There is perhaps a tension between paragraph 130 of the NPPF which aims to ensure that developments, inter-alia, “will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development ... are

visually attractive as a result of good architecture ... are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting ... establish or maintain a strong sense of place” and the more standardised approach to new school design stipulated by the modern methods of construction approach.

- 7.72 Nevertheless, there are clearly design, timeframe and budget constraints associated with the delivery of new school buildings, although these constraints arguably run contrary to some elements of the NPPF. On balance, given the pressing need for school places and government guidance in relation to construction of new schools the design can be accepted.

III. TRAFFIC IMPACT, ACCESS & CAR PARKING

- 7.73 The planning application is accompanied by a Travel Plan (July 2021), a Transport Assessment (TA) (July 2021), a TA Assessment Part 2 (July 2021), a Transport Assessment Appendix J Treetops Signalised Junction (16th July 2021) and a Technical Note in response to Highways, dated 28th September 2021 submitted in response to comments received from the Council’s Highways Officers.

- 7.74 There is no existing vehicle access to the proposed northern application site at present. The proposed development seeks to take vehicular access via an arm of a proposed signalised junction onto Stanford Road. Whilst the junction has been included for completeness as part of this planning application, the signalised junction and associated highways works are to be delivered separately by Thurrock Council and highways consent has previously been granted for these works to provide this signalised junction.

- 7.75 The access would be the sole vehicular access serving the development, with several pedestrian and cycle path routes providing further regular access for students and staff from the west, south and north. The new vehicular access would be a left-in, left-out arrangement and lead to the main car park for the site and include a one way system. Pedestrian accesses would also be located on Stanford Road frontage adjacent to the vehicular access linking to a pedestrian crossing on Stanford Road.

- 7.76 The applicant’s TA and transport data submitted indicates that an extensive assessment has been carried out in relation to the potential impact of the school expansion and the relocation into permanent accommodation on the site. Travel survey data collected from the school along with an assessment of the existing catchment postcodes was used to estimate travel demand and traffic distribution for both pupils and staff. This information was used to feed into the development of off-site junction modelling at three upstream/downstream junctions as was requested by Thurrock Highways during pre-application discussions and which were informed by

manual traffic counts and queue length surveys. The traffic modelling assessments undertaken demonstrate that all junctions are predicted to perform within available capacity, with only one arm of the Lodge Lane - Southend Road traffic signal junction tipping just over 90% degree of saturation in one peak period assessed. A full report prepared by Mott McDonald on behalf of Thurrock Highways sets out all modelling scenarios for the future implementation of the Stanford Road new signalised junction which demonstrates that with the introduction of double cycling of the signals (allowing one use of the pedestrian phase in every two cycles in the AM peak), the junction is predicted to operate within acceptable thresholds.

7.77 These works are considered to be essential in order to achieve safe access into the site for vehicle users, pedestrians and cyclists. All works associated with the installation of the signalised junction will be carried out by Thurrock Council given that the Highway Authority has granted consent for these works. It is anticipated the works will commence early in the New Year.

7.78 The Highways Officer has indicated that effective management of the children crossing to the sports facilities will need to be included in any school travel plan, along with community uses. The package of measures submitted by the applicant are not considered to go far enough to fully deal with the highway concerns for this site and the Highway Officer has recommended a commitment to highways improvements should be secured. The applicant has therefore agreed to provide the following:

- Financial contribution of £20,000 towards highway improvements to parking controls in the vicinity of the development site.
- Implementation of an improved footway cycleway on the northern side of Stanford Road to link the existing Pegasus Crossing to one of the proposed pedestrian accesses to the school on the west side of the site.
- Access rights for pick up and drop off of school transport and drop-off and pick up for car borne trips to the site within the car park facility.
- Creation and annual review of an employee and pupil travel plan via the Mode Shift STARS travel plan monitoring system (or similar approved Local Authority system). A Travel Plan to include the community use should also be provided.
- Car park management strategy for both the school operation and community use.

7.79 These works are considered to be essential in order to achieve safe access into the site for vehicle users, pedestrians and cyclists. As the measures listed above involve works within the public highway (on land outside of the applicant's control), and as

there is no highway agreement in place (s278) a planning mechanism is required. Similarly, the suggested £20,000 financial contribution for parking controls locally will need to be secured via a planning mechanism, while a Grampian condition will be imposed in regard to the works to Stanford Road.

- 7.80 Car parking for the proposed new school would be located at the eastern end of the site within the main car park. The proposal would seek to provide 168 parking spaces including 8 disabled accessible spaces. 420 cycle parking spaces would be provided.
- 7.81 The Council's draft Parking Standards and Good Practice document (March 2012) suggests a maximum car parking provision of 1 space per 15 pupils for secondary schools. Therefore, based on 1,200 pupils at the site (30 pupils per class / 8 classes per school year / 5 school years) the maximum car parking provision should be 80 spaces. Car parking is therefore over-provided at the site. Although there may be an understandable wish to increase car parking in order to avoid any possibility of overspill parking onto adjoining streets, this factor must be balanced against local and national policies aimed at promoting sustainable transport and the impact on the Green Belt.
- 7.82 Being located in Grays, it is considered that the site is well-served by bus routes. Bus stops are conveniently located on Stanford Road close to the footbridge over Stanford Road where route nos.100, 5A and 5B serving Basildon and Pitsea stop respectively. The 100 is every 20 minutes and the 5A and 5B about every 30 minutes. On the south side of Stanford Road there is a bus stop serving routes 100, the 5A and 5B. The 100 is to Lakeside, the 5A and 5B are to Pitsea. Route 475 which visits both bus stops on Stanford Road is a morning and afternoon service on school days only serving Brentwood County High School via a number of stops in the Borough. In King Edward Drive, routes 5A and 5B go towards Pitsea and Grays every 30 minutes. Both bus stops are near the junction of King Edward Drive and Stanford Road and all 4 bus stops are in a reasonable walking distance of the school. In this context of reasonable availability of public transport links, it is surprising that the car parking provision proposed is so far in excess of the Council's standards; however, as previously mentioned, the location of the site off Stanford Road and the importance of the development not resulting in any parking or stopping on the highway from parents dropping off or picking up is relevant to the consideration of this application and therefore the number of parking spaces proposed at this site. Subject to planning conditions, including the management of the car park, the level of parking on the site is considered acceptable.
- 7.83 With regard to proposed cycle parking, covered spaces for 420 cycles is proposed. The Council's draft Parking Standards and Good Practice document (March 2012) suggests provision of a minimum of 1 space per 5 staff plus 1 space per 3 pupils.

The proposals therefore comply with the required standards. The Highways Officer has recommended that the applicant implements an improved footway cycleway on the northern side of Stanford Road to link the existing Pegasus Crossing to one of the proposed pedestrian accesses to the school on the west side of the site. The applicant has agreed to these works as part of the proposals.

- 7.84 Linked to the above, a number of planning conditions and obligations have been recommended by the Highways Officer in order to mitigate any impact on the highway network. Subject to these requirements, no objection is raised by the Council's Highway Officer. The Council's Travel Plan Officer also raises no objections subject to a condition to secure the Travel Plan submitted with the application.
- 7.85 The applicant's submitted Construction Management Plan details how the construction phase of the development of the site will be made secure and what appropriate traffic management will be put in place. In relation to the specific highway elements, given the imminent construction of the new signalised junction works, close collaboration with the Highways Authority will take place.
- 7.86 In addition, given the application site includes the Lower Thames Crossing boundary 'strip' running along the southern edge of the eastern end of Stanford Road, National Highways has been consulted in respect of any impacts on the Lower Thames Crossing works. National Highways has raised no objections to the proposals and it is not anticipated that the proposals would impact upon any future works associated with the Lower Thames Crossing.
- 7.87 In conclusion under this heading, subject to conditions and the planning mechanism to secure the mitigations, it is considered that the proposals are acceptable and would be supported by an acceptable and robust Travel Plan. The residual impact of the development on the road network would therefore be considered acceptable and comply with Policies PMD2, PMD8 and PMD9.

IV. LANDSCAPE & ECOLOGY

Visual and Landscape Impact

- 7.88 The applicant has submitted detailed Soft Landscape, Hard Landscape and Tree Protection and Removal Plans detailing the proposed landscape changes resulting from the proposals. It is notable that the application site contains trees and vegetation along the majority of its boundaries. Existing mature trees to the northern, western and southern boundaries of the application (northern) site will be partly retained as part of the proposals. Trees will also be retained along the western boundary of the application (southern) site.
- 7.89 Some existing trees will be removed along the northern boundary of the southern

half of the site to help enable the creation of the Council's signalised junction along with a safe crossing area for students waiting to cross the road. Similarly, a number of trees will be removed at the far eastern corner of the site on its northern half, to enable the creation of the vehicle access into the site.

- 7.90 In addition to the retained trees and vegetation to the south western and southern boundaries of the site alongside Stanford Road, new wildflower planting will be provided towards the south-west corner of the site. The proposals will also be bolstered by new shrub planting and native-trees within the car park, helping to break-up the site and proposed hardstanding. New grass seed will be incorporated throughout the proposed development, and will facilitate the provision of a grass amphitheatre for drama and teaching towards the south-west of the school building.
- 7.91 Hard landscaped spaces will be formed to provide space for informal and social interaction. The car parking area will be softened using interspersed trees and planting, breaking-up the appearance of this hard-surfaced area. Wherever possible the existing boundary vegetation has been shown as being retained to maintain the feel of an established campus setting and also maintain a visual and acoustic screen from residential neighbours and surrounding roads.
- 7.92 The Council's Landscape and Ecology Advisor has been consulted and in relation to landscape impacts has advised that the proposals would not result in significant adverse landscape impacts. The Landscape and Ecology Advisor also states that the wildflower planting proposed has the potential for biodiversity net gain at the site (as required by para.174 of the NPPF), but will require appropriate management over time, and a landscape management plan condition for the effective management of the extensive proposed wildflower grassland other landscape elements. While soft landscape plans have been supplied with the current application, the Landscape and Ecology Advisor comments that due to the site layout, with the car park area fronting the site and location of the school building there would be little opportunity to help mitigate the visual harm caused by the three storey development. The Landscape Advisor also comments that the layout of the scheme will not extend the building line beyond that of the existing residential development on Stanford Road. This will help lessen the effects on the character of this Green Belt location.
- 7.93 Taking this matter in full consideration there are existing buildings nearby on the adjacent site Blackshots Stadium site, as well as the nearby Thurrock Rugby Football Club site being used as the Orsett Heath Academy School, in addition to the nearby residential development south of the Stanford Road. While the visual impacts on the area are noted these are, however, balanced against the identified need for new school places. Consequently, the landscape proposals would be considered acceptable subject to suitably worded planning conditions relating to landscape provision and a landscape management plan.

Ecology

- 7.94 Given that Hangman's Wood and Deneholes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lie to the south-west of the application site and Stanford Road, Natural England has been consulted on the proposals.
- 7.95 The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) considers that the site is separated into two parts; the northern portion, comprising of sport pitches separated from Stanford Road and with some broadleaved plantation woodland both within and beyond the boundary, and the southern portion, comprising poor semi-improved grassland with dense scrub and occasional scattered broadleaved trees along the eastern boundary. The PEA concludes that the woodland, scattered trees and dense scrub offer opportunities for nesting birds, whilst these features also provide linear commuting and foraging corridors for bats, however, no roosting opportunities were identified on the site. The PEA also found that the southern portion of the site comprising grassland field and is also considered to offer some suitable foraging and cover for reptile species, and also lies within a badger territory, with a latrine present, and would provide foraging, and the remainder offers foraging habitat and sett digging opportunities, with links to arable beyond the north-eastern boundary.
- 7.96 Natural England was in broad agreement with the conclusions drawn from the PEA, however, it did request further bat survey work be undertaken in order to be ascertain that the proposed development would in no way be harmful in relation to bat linear commuting routes. At the time of drafting this report, the applicant was undertaking that additional bat survey work and it is anticipated that the results will have been submitted and Natural England is re-consulted and Members will be updated at the Planning Committee.
- 7.97 In regard to ecology, the Landscape and Ecology Advisor has commented that they agree with Natural England that further bat survey work is required to provide more detailed mitigation. As a consequence, an appropriate ecological method statement is required to detail how these species will be protected during the construction phase of the development. This can be secured by a suitably worded planning conditions prior to commencement.

V. IMPACT TO AMENITY, INCLUDING NEIGHBOUR AMENITY

Air Quality

- 7.98 The Public Health team have made comments advising that air quality should be taken into account due to the immediate locality of children and staff at the site due to the proximity of the Lower Thames Crossing route with the potential for providing

new sources of air pollution. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has made no adverse comments in relation to air quality implications for the proposed development.

- 7.99 In relation to specific implications for this site, the Lower Thames Crossing is still at the consultation stage with no confirmed final route yet agreed. The Lower Thames Crossing application will be supported by an air quality assessment. Furthermore, the site is not within an Air Quality Management Area, and as there are no objections from the Environmental Health Officer, there no objections raised under this heading.

Noise

- 7.100 The applicant has submitted an Environmental Noise Report dated 12 July 2021 along with follow up comments for the Environmental Health Officer. The Environmental Health Officer advises that the internal ambient noise levels in the school is satisfactory as assessed in the Noise Report. The Officer advises that they are satisfied the acceptable noise levels will be met if the ventilation strategy and glazing unit specification is implemented as is detailed in the noise Report.
- 7.101 The Environmental Health Officer also advises that any external plant should be selected and designed such that the cumulative plant noise does not exceed the existing representative background noise level at the nearest noise sensitive receptor. This should be required by condition.
- 7.102 In terms of the noise generated from the school, the Environmental Health Officer agrees with the findings of the Noise Report in relation to the development on the northern portion of the site. In relation to the proposed southern sports pitches, the Officer advise that it is likely that these pitches may be used at weekends and evenings where the road traffic noise is likely to be lower that the weekday daytime measurement in the assessment. The amenity of the residents close to the southern sports pitches could potentially be adversely affected by noise. The Officer has therefore recommended that a Noise Management Plan is required to control site activities in this case. Subject to condition, it is considered that the building and outdoor pitches and play areas are of a sufficient distance from noise sensitive receptors so that they are unlikely to have any adverse impact.
- 7.103 In conclusion, while it is noted there is a slight discrepancy between the recommendations in terms of air quality and noise from Public Health and the Environmental Health Officer, subject to the in-built mitigation measures promoted by the design of the scheme there are no objections to the proposals.

Neighbour Amenity

- 7.104 The closest neighbours to the application site are those living on the south side of

Stanford Road which face the application site and proposed school building, and those living on Masefield Road and Buxton Road whose properties back on to the proposed southern sports pitches.

- 7.105 At its closest point, the proposed development of the school building would be located approximately 55 metres away from the nearest residential properties along Stanford Road. The key boundaries of the site are populated with trees and other vegetation which further assists in protecting amenity. The existing mature trees to the northern, western and southern boundaries of the site will be retained and the existing tree vegetation along Stanford Road allows the proposal to be relatively obscured. In light of these distances it is considered that the proposed building would not result in loss of light, privacy or outlook for these residential receptors.
- 7.106 Turning to the use of the sports pitches including those to the southern side of the site, the applicant's Planning Statement states that noise impacts have been fully assessed and considered (and are assessed earlier in this report). These pitches will be used by the school during the school day as well as the local community. A level of noise would be generated by children using these pitches, however, this is commonplace for residential properties adjacent to school locations and indeed given the existing use of the site as playing fields and open space the level of noise would not be considered unacceptable.
- 7.107 It is also recognised that local residents generally living in the immediate area would be impacted by the construction of the proposal given its location in relation to residential development. In regard to the comments received regarding the construction works at the site, matters relating to hours of work, dust control, noise vibration management and wheel washing, the Environmental Health Officer is satisfied that these had been adequately addressed within the submitted Construction Management Plan submitted which will be secured via suitable condition.
- 7.108 With respect to impacts upon neighbour amenity the proposals are considered to comply with Policy PMD1.

VI. SPORTS FACILITIES

7.109 The proposals include the following:

- a sports hall, located to the north- western side of the teaching block, providing the sports hall (and main hall), drama studio and PE stores;
- an activity studio to the north-eastern corner of the new building, including a fitness studio, changing rooms and PE stores;

- an Artificial Grass Pitch, located to the north of the main building, for both rugby and football use;
- a Multi-Use Games Area comprising of three courts to the western end of the site;
- 1 no. senior grass rugby pitch;
- 6 no. youth rugby pitches (provided on Blackshots Recreation Ground); and,
- 4 no. youth football pitches

7.110 Sports pitches are proposed to be provided in three broad areas: at the northern part of the application site where the Orsett Heath Academy school is proposed; at the southern part of the application site on the 'Treetops side; and at the Blackshots Recreation Ground, which lies outside of the application site.

7.111 The planning history and the permission granted at the Thurrock Rugby Football Club for the initial phase of the Orsett Heath Academy is most relevant to the understanding of the sports pitch provision for the proposals. The existing Orsett Heath Academy has three pitches provided on land owned and controlled by the Thurrock Rugby Football Club. There are also several other pitches that the existing school has use of, and access to, which lie within the application site. Those pitches (which fall within the application site) would be temporarily lost should the proposals be approved, however, a phasing plan is proposed whereby there would be no loss in sports pitch provision during the construction phase of the proposals.

7.112 Part of this phasing includes the provision of sports pitches at Blackshots Recreation Ground, lying outside of the application site. This land is owned and controlled by the Council and is used as informal playing fields and pitches. Separate to, but relevant to this application, a licence has been agreed between the Council, the applicant and Thurrock Rugby Football Club in relation to the use, maintenance and delivery of the Blackshots area pitches. Sport England has requested a planning condition relating to the provision, delivery and maintenance of these specific pitches prior to commencement of the development in order that there would be no loss of sports provision. Whilst the pitches proposed at the Blackshots Recreation Ground fall outside the application site, their direct relevance to the overall proposals and the Council's landownership and control of the site provides an opportunity to secure the provision of these pitches via a suitably worded Grampian condition. The applicant has agreed to pay for the Council for the provision and maintenance of these pitches at Blackshots for this interim period. This payment will also be secured via planning mechanism.

7.113 Sport England has been engaged in detailed discussions with the applicant and the

Council during the pre-application stage, and has made detailed comments in relation to each of the facilities provided. Sport England raises no objection subject to a number of conditions, these will be summarised and discussed below.

7.114 With regards to the 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP), the AGP would provide an all-weather pitch facility that could be used for meeting the school's curricular and extra-curricular PE and sport needs and offer continuity of facility provision when natural turf pitches are unavailable due to ground conditions. The AGP would offer significant benefits to Thurrock RFC as it could be used for meeting the club's training needs as well as matches and would reduce the level of overplay on the club's grass pitches. Detailed conditions have been requested by Sport England to ensure the design specifications, maintenance and delivery of the AGP which have been included.

7.115 The proposed sports pitches broadly accord with Sport England guidance, however, detailed conditions, including some pre-commencement conditions, will be required to ensure their suitable delivery, maintenance and delivery and relevant conditions have been included.

7.116 Subject to conditions, Sport England have no objections to the location or details relating to the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP), the grass pitches and the Multi-Use Games Areas.

7.117 The proposals include a Community Use Agreement relating to both the indoor and outdoor sports facilities proposed. Following dialogue with the Council and Sport England, the applicant has provided a list of key principles for the proposed Community Use Agreement. In light of the above, and subject to the suggested conditions, the proposals will be consistent with CSTP9 of the Core Strategy.

VII. DRAINAGE

7.118 The application site is located in the low risk Flood Zone 1. The Environment Agency has confirmed it has no comments to make in regard to the application. In terms of 'Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification' within NPPG (Paragraph: 066 Reference ID: 7-066-20140306) educational establishments are defined as 'more vulnerable'. However, the associated Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification (Table 3) describes 'more vulnerable' uses as in Flood Zone 1 as 'appropriate'. Accordingly the proposed building on the site are 'appropriate' and as they are to be located within the lowest risk flood zone (Zone 1) a sequential test is not required.

7.119 The far south western corner of the site is at some risk from surface water flooding. The Council's Flood Risk Manager has made some comments on the applicant's submitted Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment and further information has been

provided by the applicant. The Flood Risk Manager has confirmed they have no objections subject to conditions to ensure suitable and adequate surface water drainage will occur as detailed in the consultant's response.

7.120 With respect to surface water drainage, subject to conditions, it is considered that the proposals will comply with Core Strategy Policies CSTP25, CSTP27 and PMD15.

VIII. CONTAMINATION

7.121 The applicant has submitted a Phase II Geo-Environmental Assessment Report in relation to the sports pitch provisions at the site. The Environmental Health Officer is in agreement with the findings and has advised that subject to a condition relating to the required remediation strategy there would be no objections in relation to contamination.

IX. ENERGY & SUSTAINABILITY

7.122 Policies PMD12 and PMD13 are applicable to the proposals and require the achievement of a BREEAM 'Outstanding' rating and that 20% of the energy requirements of the development are generated through decentralised, renewable or low carbon means. Both of these sustainability requirements may be relaxed where it can be adequately demonstrated, by way of viability assessment, that compliance with the policy requirements renders the proposals unviable.

7.123 The applicant has confirmed that the scheme will expect to meet a minimum BREEAM 'Very Good' rating as it is economically unviable to achieve anything higher in this case. In light of the strong national policy support for new school provision, the budget constraints and the timetable within which the applicant is working it would be difficult to object to the development on this basis. Although, it is of course disappointing that a prominent 'civic' building which will have wider public use does not meet the highest standards for environmental sustainability. Notwithstanding, a planning condition is justified to ensure that the "Very Good" target is met.

7.124 The applicant's Energy Statement highlights that Air Source Heat Pumps would be a viable solution to both providing the hot water services whilst also saving energy for the proposals and has been recommended as the main focus of energy saving. Additionally, the building fabric has been designed to be thermally efficient in order to be as lean as possible in terms of emission rate. Particular care has been taken with regard to glazing to ensure that overheating does not occur. Overall, the inclusion of Air Source Heat Pumps into the project would reduce domestic hot water services energy usage significantly and result in the proposals providing 44% of the predicted building energy usage which would comply with Policies PMD12 and PDM13. The energy usage and BREEAM rating will both be secured by suitable planning condition.

X. OTHER MATTERS

7.125 The Council's Archaeological Advisor has been consulted on this application and commented that the area north of the A1013 is shown in the desk based assessment to have potential archaeological features present from the geophysical survey. As a consequence of the Advisor's comments, a number of conditions have been recommended will be necessary prior to the commencement of development.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR APPROVAL

- 8.1 The application proposes an 8 form entry secondary school comprising a main building proving the teaching block, sports hall and activity studio with associated changing room facilities. A number of outdoor sports pitches are also proposed and these include an artificial grass pitch (AGP), and three Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) courts.
- 8.2 The site is located within the Green Belt and the proposals comprise inappropriate development. Consequently, there would be definitional harm to the Green Belt, as well as harm by way of loss of openness and harm to a number of purposes which the Green Belt serves. Substantial weight should be attached to this harm. The applicant has set out factors which they consider to clearly outweigh the identified harm such that very special circumstances exist to justify the inappropriate development. Consideration of these factors is set out above and it is concluded that a case for very special circumstances exists.
- 8.3 The proposals would provide a new secondary school and associated sports facilities. The planning application has been submitted in response to a clear need and demand for additional school places in this central area of the Borough. The provision of a new secondary school is supported by both local and national planning policies with respect to education provision. The majority if not all of the design and layout comments made by the Thurrock Design Review Panel have been addressed. The applicant is making an over-provision of car parking and is also limited to an extent by both budget constraints and national baseline designs for new school buildings. There is perhaps a tension between adherence to these baseline designs and the aspirations of both the NPPF and local guidance to achieve high quality design which responds to local context. Nonetheless, it is also acknowledged that the proposal would fully comply with the Council's energy and sustainability requirements and the development would provide the school places needed and be of significant wider public benefit.

8.4 Other matters of detail are also considered to be acceptable.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

APPROVE, subject to Referral to the Secretary of State, and subject to the application not being ‘Called In’, and subject to the following planning conditions:

TIME LIMIT

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91(1) of The Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

APPROVED PLANS

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Plan Number(s):		
Reference	Name	Received
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0901	Landscaping	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0902	Site Layout	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0904	Strategic Levels and Edges	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0905	Fencing Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0906	Landscaping	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0907	Hard Landscaping	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0921	Hard Landscaping	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0910	Tree Protection and Removal Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-	Indicative Pitch Provision	26th July 2021

0911		
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0912	Access and Circulation	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0942	Bin Stores	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0943	MUGA Courts	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-01-DR-A-00-0101-PL01	Proposed First Floor Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-01-DR-A-00-0711-PL01	First Floor Circulation Signage	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-01-DR-A-00-0721-PL01	First Floor Access Security Strategy	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-02-DR-A-00-0102-PL01	Proposed Second Floor Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-EL-DR-A-00-0200-PL01	Proposed Elevations	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-02-DR-A-00-0712-PL01	Second Floor Circulation Signage	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-02-DR-A-00-0722-PL01	Second Floor Access Security Strategy	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-EL-DR-A-00-0200-PL01	Proposed External Elevations	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-EL-DR-A-00-0201-PL01	Proposed External Elevations	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-GF-DR-A-00-0100-PL01	Proposed Ground Floor Plans	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-GF-DR-A-00-0710-PL01	Ground Floor Circulation Signage	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-GF-DR-A-00-0720-PL01	Ground Floor Access Security Strategy	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-RF-DR-A-00-0103-PL01	Roof Plans	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-0300-PL01	Sections	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-0301-PL01	Sections	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-0302-PL01	Sections	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-0303-PL01	Sections	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-	Sections	26th July 2021

0800-PL01		
FS0718-STL-XX-SE-DR-A-00-0801-PL01	Sections	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0700-PL01	Construction Phasing Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0900-PL01	Site Location Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0901-PL01	Proposed Parking Block Plan	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0910-PL01	Existing Site Layout	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0911-PL01	Proposed Site Layout	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-SH-A-00-0400-PL01	External Finishes Schedule	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0600-PL01	Internal Views	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0600-PL01	Internal Views 01	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0601-PL01	Internal Views 02	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0602-PL01	External Views 01	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0603-PL01	External Views 02	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0604-PL01	External Views 03	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0605-PL01	External Views 05	26th July 2021
FS0718-WLK-00-XX-DR-E-00-6301	Proposed External Lighting Layout	26th July 2021
FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-0901	Landscape General	7 TH October 2021
FS0718-ATL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0908 p07	William Edwards School Sport Facility Enhancement	15 th October 2021

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the details as approved with regard to policies PMD1 and PMD2 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (2015).

OFF-SITE HIGHWAY MITIGATION

3. Not to commence any part of the development until a section 106 (or other suitable mechanism, if any) is in place to secure payment of a financial contribution of £20,000 (index linked) to be paid to the Council to enable the local Highways Authority to amend parking controls locally prior to the first use or operation of the development.

Reason: In the interests of highway and pedestrian safety and amenity in accordance with policies PMD2 and PMD9 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015] and to enable the planning permission to be issued prior to the granting of a lease of the site to the DfE.

OFF-SITE PITCH MITIGATION

4. Not to commence any part of the development until a section 106 (or other suitable mechanism, if any) is in place to secure the maintenance (which may include a sum of money) of the sports pitches at Blackshots until the end of 2023.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory quantity, quality and accessibility of compensatory sports pitch provision which secures a continuity of use and to accord with Development Plan Policy PMD5 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015] and to enable the planning permission to be issued prior to the granting of a lease of the site to the DfE.

ELECTRICAL CHARGING POINTS

5. Prior to the first opening of the school, details of measures to ensure that 20% of all car parking spaces are capable of accommodating electric vehicle charging points shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be operated in accordance with the agreed measures which shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity in accordance with policies PMD2 and PMD9 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

ROAD LAYOUT, PARKING AND CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

6. No development above ground level shall commence until details of the layout, dimensions and construction specification of the proposed revised road layout, parking and construction details including footways, loading, parking and turning areas and crossing facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Prior to the first operation of the school development, the agreed road layout, footways and parking areas shall be laid out, constructed and surface finished in accordance with the details as approved.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity in accordance with policies PMD2 and PMD9 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

SITE ACCESS DETAILS

7. No development above ground level shall commence until details of the layout, dimensions and construction specification of the proposed access to the highway including the junction arrangement have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Prior to the first operation of the school development, the access shall be laid out, constructed and surface finished in accordance with the details as approved.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity in accordance with policies PMD2 and PMD9 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

OFF-SITE HIGHWAYS WORKS

8. The development authorised by this permission shall not begin operation until the works shown on the drawing no FS01718-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0901 Rev. PL01 Proposed Block Plan have been completed in accordance with those drawings and have been certified in writing as complete by or on behalf of the local planning authority

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity in accordance with policies PMD2 and PMD9 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

OFF-SITE PROVISION OF FOOTWAY/CYCLEWAY

9. The development authorised by this permission shall not begin operation until details (including plans drawings and specification) have been submitted to the Highway Authority for written approval of the provision of a cycleway and footway on the northern side of Stanford Road to link the existing Pegasus Crossing to one of the proposed pedestrian accesses to the school on the west side of the site. The provision of the cycleway and footway, as approved in writing, shall then be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the operation of the development and thereafter retained.

Reason: In the interests of highway and pedestrian safety and amenity in accordance with policies PMD2 and PMD9 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core

Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

TRAVEL PLAN

10. Prior to the to the first operation of the school buildings hereby permitted, a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority. The Travel Plan shall include the Mode Shift STARS Travel Plan process and detail specific measures to reduce the number of journeys made by car to the school buildings hereby permitted and shall include specific details of the operation and management of the proposed measures. The commitments explicitly stated in the Travel Plan shall be binding on the applicants or their successors in title. The measures shall be implemented upon the first operational use of the building hereby permitted and shall be permanently kept in place unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority. Upon written request, the applicant or their successors in title shall provide the local planning authority with written details of how the agreed measures contained in the Travel Plan are being undertaken at any given time.

Reason: To reduce reliance on the use of private cars, in the interests of sustainability, highway safety and amenity in accordance with Policy PMD10 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015]

CAR PARK MANAGEMENT

11. Prior to the first use or operation of vehicle parking areas, as demonstrated on the vehicle access and circulation plans as shown on drawing numbers Proposed Site Plan, FS0718 –STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-00-0911 Rev PL01, Access and Circulation Plan FS0718- STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0911 Rev. P03 and in the Delivery and Servicing Plan ref. 2550/1180 Doc. D004, Ver. 1.0 July 2021 a written scheme for the management of those areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall, in particular, include measures for the restriction of unauthorised car parking, details of management of community use activities and details of monitoring and reporting measures to the local planning authority, including the feasibility of remedial measures to be agreed with the local planning authority in the event of overspill car parking onto the surrounding highways network. The approved scheme shall be operated on the first use or operation of the vehicle parking areas and maintained during the operation of the school thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure that adequate car parking provision is available in accordance with policies PMD8 and PMD9 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as

amended 2015).

CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (CEMP)

12. Notwithstanding the measures contained within the submitted Construction Logistics Plan (Project no. 2550/1190 Doc D005, Ver. 1.0 Dated July 2021), prior to the commencement of demolition, remediation or development a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall include, but not limited to, details of:

- (a) Hours and duration of works on site
- (b) Wheel washing and sheeting of vehicles transporting aggregates on to or off of the site
- (c) Details of construction access
- (d) Details of temporary hard standing
- (e) Details of temporary hoarding
- (f) Water management including waste water and surface water drainage
- (g) Road condition surveys before demolition and after construction is completed; with assurances that any degradation of existing surfaces will be remediated as part of the development proposals. Extents of road condition surveys to be agreed as part of this CEMP
- (h) Details of method to control wind-blown dust
- (i) details of the temporary construction related impacts on Thurrock Rugby Football Club's site, including details of the route for construction vehicles, the time periods that vehicles will require access, safety measures to protect users of the rugby club, car park restoration proposals and the duration of the arrangements.

All works and development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved CEMP and the measures contained therein.

Reason: In order to minimise any adverse impacts arising from the construction of the development in accordance with policy PMD1 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

HOURS OF CONSTRUCTION

13. Notwithstanding the submitted Construction Logistics Plan ((Project no. 2550/1190 Doc D005, Ver. 1.0 Dated July 2021) and Condition 12, no construction or demolition shall take place excepting between the following hours: 08:00 to 18:00 Hours, Mondays to Fridays; 08:00 to 13:00 Hours, Saturdays; and no working on Sundays

or Public Holidays. If impact piling is required it shall only be carried out during the following times: 09:00 to 18:00 Hours, Mondays to Fridays; 09:00 to 13:00 Hours, Saturdays; and not at all on Sundays or Public Holidays.

Reason: In order to minimise any adverse impacts arising from the construction of the development in accordance with policy PMD1 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

NOISE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

14. The measures contained within the Environmental Noise Report dated 12 July 2021 which forms part of this planning permission, shall be implemented and in place prior to the first occupation of the development and shall be retained and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: In order to minimise any adverse impacts arising from the construction of the development in accordance with policy PMD1 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

EXTERNAL PLANT NOISE

15. Notwithstanding the permission hereby granted, any external plant proposed should be selected and designed such that the cumulative plant noise does not exceed the existing representative background noise level at the nearest noise sensitive receptor as detailed in the Environmental Noise Report dated 12 July 2021, which forms part of this planning permission, and shall be implemented during the lifetime of this development.

Reason: In order to minimise any adverse impacts arising from the construction of the development in accordance with policy PMD1 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

NOISE MANAGEMENT PLAN

16. Notwithstanding the permission hereby granted, prior to the operational use of the southern sports pitches located south of Stanford Road, a Noise Management Plan shall be submitted and approved by the local planning authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In order to minimise any adverse impacts arising from the construction of the development in accordance with policy PMD1 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

SITE LEVELS

17. No development shall commence until details of existing and finished site levels, finished external surface levels, and the finished floor level of the buildings and sports facilities hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and in the interests of visual amenity of the area in accordance with policies PMD1 and PMD2 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (2015).

ECOLOGICAL METHOD STATEMENT

18. Prior to commencement of development, an Ecological Method Statement, including details of how Nesting Birds and Reptiles are to be protected, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Ecological Method Statement shall be implemented in accordance with the details as approved from the commencement of development and retained thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning.

Reason: In order to ensure that the interests of ecology and biodiversity or protected species are addressed in accordance with policy PMD7 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (2015).

REPTILES

19. The construction and operation of the development shall be undertaken in accordance with the mitigation and enhancement measures referred to by the submitted Reptile Survey Report ref. Delta-Simons Project No. 20-1734.05 dated July 2021, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In order to ensure that the interests of ecology and biodiversity or protected species are addressed in accordance with policy PMD7 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (2015).

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN

20. Prior to the first opening of the school a landscape management plan, including management responsibilities, maintenance schedules for the upkeep of all landscaped areas, including management of the wildflower grassland, shall be

submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan shall be implemented in accordance with the details as approved from first opening of the school and retained thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: To secure appropriate landscaping of the site in the interests of visual amenity and the character of the area in accordance with policies CSTP18 and PMD2 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (2015).

LANDSCAPE PLANS

21. The development hereby permitted shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the following plans: Soft Landscape Plan FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0906 Rev. P03; Hard Landscape Plan FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0907 Rev. P03 and Landscape General Arrangement FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0901 Rev. P07 prior to the first operational use of the development and maintained and operated thereafter in accordance with the approved Landscape Management Plan.

Reason: To secure appropriate landscaping of the site in the interests of visual amenity and the character of the area in accordance with policies CSTP18 and PMD2 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (2015).

FLOOD RISK AND SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE STRATEGY

22. No development shall commence until an surface water drainage strategy, in line with the principles mentioned in the planning application consultation comments from the Flood Risk Manager (dated 11th October 2021), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter the surface water drainage system(s) shall be constructed in accordance with the approved strategy and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the incorporation of an appropriate drainage scheme and to avoid pollution of water environment and minimise flood risk in accordance with policies PMD1 and PMD15 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended 2015).

BLACKSHOTS RECREATION GROUND – THURROCK RUGBY CLUB LICENCE

23. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a licence for Thurrock Rugby Club's use of the sports pitches on the Blackshots Recreation Ground shall be completed in accordance with the 'Licence to Occupy relating to land

at Blackshots Recreation Ground between Thurrock Borough Council and Thurrock Rugby Football Club'. A copy of the completed licence shall be provided to the Council and the completed licence shall be complied with in full with effect from the commencement of development.

Reason: To ensure sufficient benefit of the development to sport and to provide adequate security of tenure for the users of the playing field and to accord with Development Plan Policy PMD5 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

BLACKSHOTS PITCHES PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE

24. The sports pitches on the Blackshots fields shall be laid out and provided in accordance with the details set out in the planning application, supporting Sports Provision Statement Appendix 13 and drawing Blackshots Pitch Layout ref. FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0912 Rev. P03 and made available for use prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted. The sports pitches shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the maintenance programme set out in the 'Orsett Heath Academy Maintenance Recommendations' (prepared by Agrostis Sports Surface Consulting) 9 June 2021 unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority following consultation with Sport England

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory quantity, quality and accessibility of compensatory sports pitch provision which secures a continuity of use and to accord with Development Plan Policy PMD5 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

25. No development shall commence on the artificial grass pitch hereby permitted until the design specifications of the Artificial Grass Pitch, including details of surfacing, construction cross-section, line marking and fencing together with a maintenance programme for the Artificial Grass Pitch have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority [after consultation with Sport England]. The Artificial Grass Pitch shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details and shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved maintenance programme.

Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to accord with Development Plan Policy PMD5 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH CERTIFICATION

26. Use of the artificial grass pitch hereby permitted shall not commence until:
- (a) certification that the Artificial Grass Pitch hereby permitted has met the FIFA Quality accreditation (or equivalent International Artificial Turf Standard (IATS)) and World Rugby Regulation 22 specification; and
 - (b) confirmation that the facility has been registered on the Football Association's Register of Football Turf Pitches;
- have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable, provides sporting benefits and to accord with Development Plan Policy PMD5 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015

ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH PHASING AND DELIVERY

27. The artificial grass pitch hereby permitted shall be provided in accordance with the details set out in the planning application and those details agreed in accordance with Condition 26, and made available for use prior to first occupation of the development.

Reason: To ensure sufficient benefit of the development to sport and to accord with Development Plan Policy PMD5 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015.

SOUTH OF STANFORD ROAD PLAYING FIELD CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

28. Prior to commencement of the reinstatement works to the playing field to the south of Stanford Road, a contractor's specification for the works prepared in accordance with the approved 'Orsett Heath Feasibility Study (prepared by Agrostis Sports Surface Consulting), dated 25 October 2020), which includes a construction programme, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority [after consultation with Sport England]. The playing field reinstatement works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved specification and implementation programme and shall be made available for use prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted and thereafter.

Reason: To ensure sufficient benefit of the development of sport and to ensure that the playing field is prepared to an adequate standard and is fit for purposes and to accord with policies CSTP9, CSPT10 and PMD5 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended 2015).

NATURAL TURF PITCH MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

29. From first occupation of the development, the natural turf playing fields on the application site shall be maintained fully in accordance with the 'Orsett Heath Academy Maintenance Recommendations' (prepared by Agrostis Sports Surface Consulting) 9 June 2021 unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority following consultation with Sport England.

Reason: To ensure that the maintenance of the playing fields is satisfactory, provides sporting benefits and is fit for purposes and to accord with policies CSTP9, CSPT10 and PMD5 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended 2015).

INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

30. No use of the indoor sports hall shall commence until details of the design and layout of the sports hall including line markings, flooring and lighting specifications have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England. The development shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the indoor sports facilities is to an adequate standard and is fit for purposes and to accord with policies CSTP9, CSPT10 and PMD5 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended 2015)

MULTI USE GAMES AREAS (MUGA)

31. No development of the multi-use games areas hereby approved shall commence until details of the multi-use games area specifications including the surfacing, fencing and line markings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England. The multi-use games areas shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable in accordance with policies CSTP9, CSTP10 and PMD5 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended 2015).

COMMUNITY USE AGREEMENT

32. Prior to first occupation of the development, a community use agreement prepared in accordance with the 'Orsett Heath Academy - Community Use Principles

Document' (October 2021) and in consultation with Sport England shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement has been provided to the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply to the artificial grass pitch, natural turf playing pitches, sports hall, fitness studio, activity studio, multi-use games area and the supporting ancillary facilities as a minimum and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review, and anything else which the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England considers necessary in order to secure the effective community use of the facilities. The development shall not be used at any time other than in strict compliance with the approved agreement.

Reason: To secure well managed, safe community access to the sports and other community facilities and to ensure sufficient benefits to the development in accordance with policies CSTP9, CSTP10 and PMD5 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended 2015).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

33. No development of the northern parcel of land north of Stanford Road, including preliminary groundworks, shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The agreed archaeological work shall then be carried out prior to the commencement of development to the northern parcel of land.

Reason: To ensure that investigation and recording of any remains takes place prior to commencement of development in accordance with Policy PMD4 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

POST EXCAVATION ANALYSIS

34. Following completion of the archaeological fieldwork, the applicant will submit to the local planning authority a post-excavation assessment (within six months of the completion date, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the planning authority), which will result in the completion of post-excavation analysis, preparation of a full site archive and report ready for deposition at the local museum, and submission of a publication report.

Reason: To ensure appropriate assessment of the archaeological implications of the

development and the subsequent mitigation of adverse impacts in accordance with Policy PMD4 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

SITE REMEDIATION SCHEME

35. No development shall commence, other than that required to carry out remediation, until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until the measures set out in the approved scheme have been implemented, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with policy PMD1 of the adopted Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

VERIFICATION OR VALIDATION REPORT

36. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme from Condition 35, a verification or validation report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out shall be submitted to and approved in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with policy PMD1 of the adopted Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

BOUNDARY TREATMENTS

37. The fences and other boundary treatments as shown on drawing nos FS0718-STL-EX-ZZ-DR-L-00-0905; FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0602-PL01; FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0603-PL01; FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0604-PL01 and FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ-VS-A-00-0605-PL01 of the development hereby permitted shall be implemented as detailed within the application. The fences and other boundary treatments as approved shall be completed prior to the first use or operation of the development and shall be retained and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the proposed development is integrated with its surroundings in accordance with policy PMD1, PMD2 and PMD6 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

MATERIALS AND EXTERNAL FINISHES

38. The external materials/finishes to be used on the external surfaces of the development, as indicated in External Finishes Schedule ref FS0718-STL-XX-ZZ_SH-A-00-0400-PL01, hereby permitted shall be implemented as detailed within the application.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the proposed development is integrated with its surroundings in accordance with policy PMD1 and PMD2 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

EXTERNAL LIGHTING

39. The lighting proposed for the development shall be carried out in accordance with Proposed External Lighting Layout ref. FS0718-WLK-00-XX-DR-E-00-6301. The lighting shall be installed in accordance with the agreed details prior to first use or operation of the development and retained and maintained thereafter in the agreed form, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and residential amenity and to ensure that the development can be integrated within its immediate surroundings in accordance with Policies PMD1 and PMD2 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended 2015).

BREEAM

40. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority, the development hereby permitted shall be built to the "Very Good" Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating. Within three months of the

first use or operation of the development a copy of the Post Construction Completion Certificate for the building verifying that the "Very Good" BREEAM rating has been achieved shall be submitted to the local planning authority.

Reason: In order to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the interests of sustainable development, as required by policy PMD12 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended 2015).

RENEWABLE ENERGY

41. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority, prior to the construction above ground level of any of the buildings, details of measures to demonstrate that the development will achieve the generation of at least 20% of its energy needs through the use of decentralised, renewable or low carbon technologies shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved measures shall be implemented and operational upon the first use or operation of the development and shall thereafter be retained in the agreed form.

Reason: To ensure that development takes place in an environmentally sensitive way in accordance with policy PMD13 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended 2015).

Informatives:-

- 1 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Positive and Proactive Statement:

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 2 Highway Works

Any works, which are required within the limits of the highway reserve, require the permission of the Highway Authority and must be carried out under the supervision of that Authority's staff. The Applicant is therefore advised to contact the Authority at the address shown below before undertaking such works. Chief Highways Engineer, Highways Department, Thurrock Council, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays Thurrock, Essex. RM17 6SL.

3 Sport England Informative 1:

The applicant is advised that the design and layout of the Artificial Grass Pitch should comply with the Rugby Football Union's 'Essential Guide – Artificial Grass Pitches and the Football Association's Guide to 3G Football Turf Pitches Design Principles and Layouts.

4 Sport England Informative 2:

The applicant is advised that the pitch should be tested every three years by an accredited testing laboratory in order to achieve and maintain FIFA Quality and every two years to meet World Rugby Regulation 22 accreditation.

5 Anglian Water

The applicant's attention is drawn to advice and guidance in the response from Anglian Water dated 7th August 2021 in relation to its assets within or close to the development boundary.

Important Information

1. This notice relates only to the requirements for planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). You may require consent from other statutory regulators before commencing with this development. **In particular you may require permission under the Building regulations. You must therefore contact the Building Control Division at this Council as soon as possible**
2. The applicant is reminded that under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (section 1) it is an offence to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while the nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. Trees and scrub are likely to contain nesting birds between 1 March and 31 July. Any trees and scrub present on the application site should be assumed to contain nesting birds between the above dates unless survey has shown it is absolutely certain that nesting birds are not present. The RSPB publish a booklet "Wild Bird and the Law". English Nature also produce Guidance Notes relating to Local Planning and Wildlife Law – both of which are useful.

Documents:

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online:

www.thurrock.gov.uk/planning

