

Agenda Item 5.1

Planning and EP Committee 12 June 2018

Application Ref:	18/00251/R3FUL
Proposal:	Creation of a sports pitch and running track, a mobile classroom, changing facilities and WCs including perimeter fence and associated soft landscaping
Site:	Recreation Ground, Thorpe Lea Road, Peterborough,
Applicant:	Mr Brian Howard, Peterborough City Council
Agent:	Mr Jonathon Green, NPS Property Consultants Ltd
Referred by:	Councillor Dowson
Reason:	Need for the development (why other sites have not been considered), positioning of the proposal and concerns regarding future development
Site visit:	21.03.2018
Case officer:	Mrs Louise Simmonds
Telephone No.	01733 454439
E-Mail:	louise.simmonds@peterborough.gov.uk
Recommendation:	GRANT subject to conditions

1 **Description of the site and surroundings and Summary of the proposal**

Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises a parcel of land which forms part of the wider Thorpe Lea Meadows public open space (POS)/recreation ground. The area extends to some 0.73 hectares and comprises relatively flat grassed open recreation space which is currently informally set out as playing field, with 2no. goal posts running east-west. There are no formal pitch markings.

Within the wider public open space, there is a public footpath positioned centrally which intersects the site running north-south. To the western portion, is an area of biodiversity grassland with informal cut grass paths albeit the City Council's Public Open Space Team has recently begun removal of this biodiversity area to revert this portion back to open grassed recreation space.

To the north, south and east of the wider POS are mature tree/shrub belts with residential dwellings along Thorpe Lea Road and Vermont Grove further to the north. There is also an open watercourse/ditch running along the north-western boundary of the site. Further to the south is a foot/cycleway which runs east-west along the banks of the Rive Nene connecting the City Centre (to the east) with Orton Mere and Ferry Meadows (to the west).

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission to change the use of the land from public open space to an enclosed sports pitch and running track for use by West Town Primary School (located some 300 metres to the north of the application site). The proposal also includes the installation of a temporary mobile building to include classroom, changing facilities and toilets, and the erection of 2.4 metre high weldmesh security fencing. It is also proposed for the existing goal posts present within the site to be relocated further to the east, still within the wider POS but outside the boundary of the proposed playing fields.

It should be noted that the scheme has been amended from that which was originally submitted to

increase the height of the fencing (previously 1.8 metres), correct a discrepancy with the red line boundary and identify where the existing goal posts are to be relocated to.

2 Planning History

No relevant planning history.

3 Planning Policy

Decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Section 7 - Good Design

Development should add to the overall quality of the area; establish a strong sense of place; optimise the site potential; create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses; support local facilities and transport networks; respond to local character and history while not discouraging appropriate innovation; create safe and accessible environments which are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Planning permission should be refused for development of poor design.

Section 8 - Safe and Accessible Environments

Development should aim to promote mixed use developments, the creation of strong neighbouring centres and active frontages; provide safe and accessible environments with clear and legible pedestrian routes and high quality public space.

Section 8 - School Development

Great weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

Section 8 - Open Space

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings/land (including playing fields) should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows the open space is surplus to requirements; the open space would be replaced by an equivalent or better provision; or the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011)

CS14 - Transport

Promotes a reduction in the need to travel, sustainable transport, the Council's UK Environment Capital aspirations and development which would improve the quality of environments for residents.

CS16 - Urban Design and the Public Realm

Design should be of high quality, appropriate to the site and area, improve the public realm, address vulnerability to crime, be accessible to all users and not result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residents.

CS19 - Open Space and Green Infrastructure

New residential development should make provision for/improve public green space, sports and play facilities. Loss of open space will only be permitted if no deficiency would result.

CS21 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Development should conserve and enhance biodiversity/ geological interests unless no alternative sites are available and there are demonstrable reasons for the development.

CS22 - Flood Risk

Development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 will only be permitted if specific criteria are met. Sustainable drainage systems should be used where appropriate.

Peterborough Site Allocations DPD (2012)

SA15 - Safeguarded Land for Future Key Infrastructure

Permission will only be granted on these sites for development which does not threaten or hinder the implementation of the identified infrastructure project.

Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012)

PP02 - Design Quality

Permission will only be granted for development which makes a positive contribution to the built and natural environment; does not have a detrimental effect on the character of the area; is sufficiently robust to withstand/adapt to climate change; and is designed for longevity.

PP03 - Impacts of New Development

Permission will not be granted for development which would result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, public and/or private green space or natural daylight; be overbearing or cause noise or other disturbance, odour or other pollution; fail to minimise opportunities for crime and disorder.

PP12 - The Transport Implications of Development

Permission will only be granted if appropriate provision has been made for safe access by all user groups and there would not be any unacceptable impact on the transportation network including highway safety.

PP13 - Parking Standards

Permission will only be granted if appropriate parking provision for all modes of transport is made in accordance with standards.

PP15 - Nene Valley

Development which safeguards and enhances recreation or which would bring landscape, nature conservation, heritage, cultural or amenity benefits will be supported. Development which would increase flood risk or compromise flood defences will not be permitted.

PP16 - The Landscaping and Biodiversity Implications of Development

Permission will only be granted for development which makes provision for the retention of trees and natural features which contribute significantly to the local landscape or biodiversity.

PP19 - Habitats and Species of Principal Importance

Permission will not be granted for development which would cause demonstrable harm to a habitat or species unless the need for, and benefits of it, outweigh the harm. Development likely to have an impact should include measures to maintain and, if possible, enhance the status of the habitat or species.

PP20 - Development on Land affected by Contamination

Development must take into account the potential environmental impacts arising from the development itself and any former use of the site. If it cannot be established that the site can be safely developed with no significant future impacts on users or ground/surface waters, permission will be refused.

Peterborough City Centre DPD (2014)

PCC04A - Railway Station Policy Area (a) General principles

The Council will support high quality mixed-use developments which create an attractive and legible gateway into the rest of the City Centre. All development must ensure that on-site drainage and surface water flood risk is addressed.

Peterborough Local Plan 2016 to 2036 (Submission)

This document sets out the planning policies against which development will be assessed. It will bring together all the current Development Plan Documents into a single document. Consultation on this Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan took place in January and February 2018. The Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 26 March 2018 who will appoint a Planning Inspector to examine the Local Plan to establish whether it is 'sound', taking all the representations into consideration.

Paragraph 216 of the National Planning states that decision makers may give weight to relevant policies in an emerging plan according to:-

- the stage of the Plan (the more advanced the plan, the more weight which can be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the policies; and
- the degree of consistency between emerging policies and the framework.

The policies can be used alongside adopted policies in the decision making process, especially where the plan contains new policies. The amount of weight to be given to the emerging plan policies is a matter for the decision maker. At this final stage the weight to be given to the emerging plan is more substantial than at the earlier stages although the 'starting point' for decision making remains the adopted Local Plan.

LP07 - Health and Wellbeing

Development should promote, support and enhance the health and wellbeing of the community. Proposals for new health facilities should relate well to public transport services, walking/cycling routes and be accessible to all sectors of the community.

LP13 - Transport

a) New development should ensure that appropriate provision is made for the transport needs that it will create including reducing the need to travel by car, prioritisation of bus use, improved walking and cycling routes and facilities.

b) The Transport Implications of Development- Permission will only be granted where appropriate provision has been made for safe access for all user groups and subject to appropriate mitigation.

c) Parking Standards- permission will only be granted if appropriate parking provision for all modes of transport is made in accordance with standards.

LP16 - Urban Design and the Public Realm

Development proposals would contribute positively to the character and distinctiveness of the area. They should make effective and efficient use of land and buildings, be durable and flexible, use appropriate high quality materials, maximise pedestrian permeability and legibility, improve the public realm, address vulnerability to crime, and be accessible to all.

LP17 - Amenity Provision

a) Amenity of Existing Occupiers - Permission will not be granted for development which would result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, public and/or private green space or natural daylight; be overbearing or cause noise or other disturbance, odour or other pollution; fail to minimise opportunities for crime and disorder.

LP23 - Local Green Space, Protected Green Space and Existing Open Space

Local Green Space will be protected in line with the NPPF. Development will only be permitted if in addition to the requirements of the NPPF there would be no significant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding areas, ecology and heritage assets.

LP24 - Nene Valley

Within the Nene Valley area the council will support development that will safeguard and enhance

recreation and/or bring landscape, nature conservation, heritage, cultural or amenity benefits. The proposal would need to be appropriate in terms of use, scale and character. Development which would increase flood risk or compromise the performance of flood defences will not be permitted.

LP28 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Part 2: Habitats and Geodiversity in Development

All proposals should conserve and enhance avoiding a negative impact on biodiversity and geodiversity.

Part 3: Mitigation of Potential Adverse Impacts of Development

Development should avoid adverse impact as the first principle. Where such impacts are unavoidable they must be adequately and appropriately mitigated. Compensation will be required as a last resort.

LP29 - Trees and Woodland

Proposals should be prepared based upon the overriding principle that existing tree and woodland cover is maintained. Opportunities for expanding woodland should be actively considered.

Proposals which would result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and or the loss of veteran trees will be refused unless there are exceptional benefits which outweigh the loss. Where a proposal would result in the loss or deterioration of a tree covered by a Tree Preservation Order permission will be refused unless there is no net loss of amenity value or the need for and benefits of the development outweigh the loss. Where appropriate mitigation planting will be required.

LP32 - Flood and Water Management

Proposals should adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management in line with the NPPF and council's Flood and Water Management SPD.. Sustainable drainage systems should be used where appropriate. Development proposals should also protect the water environment.

LP33 - Development on Land Affected by Contamination

Development must take into account the potential environmental impacts arising from the development itself and any former use of the site. If it cannot be established that the site can be safely developed with no significant future impacts on users or ground/surface waters, permission will be refused.

LP47 - Railway Station Policy Area

General: The council will support and encourage high quality mixed use development which create an attractive and legible gateway into the rest of the city centre.

4 Consultations/Representations

Inland Waterways Association

No comments received.

PCC Landscape Technician (Public Open Space) (22.05.18)

No objections - The 'biodiversity' area to the west of the site has not achieved the desired biodiversity and as such, will be brought back into recreational use by PCC. Therefore to mitigate the impact of the current proposal, two new goalposts should be installed by the Applicant on this western area for use by the public. Clarification is still required as to the planting outside the proposed fence line as it would be preferred for the Open Spaces Team to maintain this subject to a commuted sum, rather than maintenance by the school as proposed.

Police Architectural Liaison Officer (PALO) (17.05.18)

No objections - Happy to support the increased fence height as this will be a good security measure for the site.

Sport England (29.03.18)

No objections - The proposal relates to the creation of a sports pitch and ancillary facilities for West

Town Primary School. The school has no on-site playing field provision and therefore the use of this site for sports provision will be of benefit in terms of delivery of games/OPE lessons, as well as providing a pitch for formal football matches and a running track for summer sports and events. The proposal will only affect part of the existing informal recreation site, and the public will still have access to the remainder of Thorpe Lea Meadows for informal recreation, dog walking etc.

This is considered to meet exception 5 of Sport England's policy, in that the development constitutes an outdoor sports facility where the benefits of the development of sport outweigh any detriment caused by the loss of the existing playing field area (given it has not previously been used for formal sports pitch use). Request a condition to secure a detailed assessment of ground conditions and how the playing fields will be constructed/cultivated to ensure that they are of an adequate standard.

PCC Tree Officer (23.05.18)

No objections - The proposal will not directly affect the off-site trees/vegetation along the southern boundary however the playing field may be hampered by this owing to 'suckers' from the White Poplar trees and growth of the vegetation. It is recommended that a root deflector be installed along the entire length of the southern boundary to prevent pressure to poison the suckers which would kill the parent trees. In addition, ideally the running track should be moved further north to prevent shade and 'slippier' running conditions. Maintenance to the southern boundary vegetation will be hampered by the proximity of the fence. Blackthorn particularly is likely to creep through if unmaintained.

The Wildlife Trusts (Cambridgeshire)

No comments received.

PCC Wildlife Officer (20.03.18)

No objections - Pleased to note that the application has been accompanied by a Phase 1 Habitat Survey. Should there be the need to remove any of the surrounding trees/shrubs, the standard bird nesting informative should be attached. Small gaps should be retained underneath the proposed fencing to allow the area to continue to be used by small mammals. The details of the mitigating landscaping appear broadly acceptable.

Local Residents/Interested Parties

Initial consultations: 102
Total number of responses: 53
Total number of objections:
Total number in support:

Two rounds of public consultation have taken place on the application proposal – the first in relation to the original submission and the second on the revisions.

Round One

26no. objection letters were received from local residents raising the following concerns:

Pre-application meetings

- The proposal now includes changing facilities within a temporary building which is a change to the plans presented previously to residents.
- Insufficient notice was given of the pre-application meetings, particularly to the Thorpe Gate Residents Association who could only notify approximately 40 of the 500 or so properties that would be affected. The results of this exercise are therefore not a fair representation.

Crime/anti-social behaviour

- Understand that the facilities will only be used by the school and will specifically exclude community groups. This is understood but think that it will cause problems with people breaking into the area.

- The residents do a magnificent job litter picking and keeping the area beautiful but there is a lot of anti-social behaviour. This development could be a great temptation for some and would need to be well-secured.
- There have been issues in the past with travellers trespassing and parking for days. The entrance therefore needs to be made more secure and inaccessible.
- There used to be a changing room building on the land but this was demolished by the Council due to vandalism, graffiti and anti-social behaviour. Are the school going to pay for CCTV coverage of the area/buildings? This will need to be monitored 24/7 so that the Police can attend any incidents. If it is not monitored, crime will go unchecked.
- Fencing does not keep people out of areas as they can easily be broken into.
- Is this site really safe for children to use? Residents no longer feel safe using the area as there are no Police patrols.

Public Open Space matters

- The proposal will result in the loss of a long-standing and well-used recreational facility for local residents and the general public.
- It's not just about residents whose properties back onto the public area, but the number of local people who live in the Thorpe Gate area and use the field especially in the summer holidays. If it is fenced off and locked up so that only the Academy can use it, it is unfair to locals. More so when the Academy will not even be using it and nobody else will be allowed to either.
- The proposed layout will create a pocket of land to the eastern end of the area which will become virtually inaccessible and heavily discourage recreational use.
- The existing goal posts must be reinstated in the open area to the east of this application site.
- There must be sufficient room for the grass cutter to get into the public area to keep the grass in a useable state.
- What facilities will be made available to the local children out of school hours and for the community? The only other green playing space is a small swing and slide area off Kirkwood Close which is only suitable for toddlers and much younger children. An alternative space for the community needs to be offered.
- This seems like a good use of the area however it is a loss of amenity for many residents in the wider area, many of whom may not have been adequately informed or consulted. I (resident of Riverside Gardens) would urge the Council to give something back to the community by opening up the new facilities to the public when they are not in use by the school, especially during the summer holidays when the field is used the most.
- There will be more facilities living locally as houses on the former hospital site are built, so more green space is needed for recreation not less.

Design and visual amenity

- The proposal will create a hard and visually unappealing steel security barrier, in excess of 2 metres high, to the eastern length of the existing footpath between Vermont Grove and the river.

Neighbour amenity

- A 2 metre fence will have a tremendous impact on the quiet sanctuary space enjoyed by animals, dog walkers, ramblers, ball games and families. In fact anyone who needs a chill out time away from the stresses of modern life.
- The proposal will bring increased levels of noise, traffic, litter, etc.
- This fenced development will be an eyesore on an otherwise beautiful area of greenery.
- The proposal would not just increase noise, it would introduce a brand new type of noise to the area. Many have chosen to live here for the quietness associated with living near the river or parks. A children's playing field will completely ruin this on every day that it is used.

Highway matters

- Concerned for the safety of the children walking down Thorpe Lea Road. Cars park partly on the pavement and some vehicles travel well above the speed limit. A 20mph restriction is necessary.

- West Town Academy already causes huge problems with the parents parking illegally, regularly preventing me from getting home and blocking the road (resident of Thorpe Road).
- Thorpe Lea Road is already congested and this will add to that by increasing the amount of through traffic by foot and vehicle.
- Where will parents/carers/teaching staff park on a road that is already over spilling with parked cars?
- Limited parking in the area could create problems when the site is used for events open to parents such as sports days.

Ecology

- The area is home to a lot of wildlife and they need space to roam.

Lack of public consultation

- During pre-application meetings, residents were promised that there would be further consultations with residents before any action was agreed. Residents have not had the opportunity to raise concerns. The majority of our [the Resident's Association] residents will find that the field they use for leisure pursuits will be denied to them entirely, especially during the long summer holidays when not in use by the school either. They will have no idea that this will happen as there has been no communication about it.

Flood risk

- The river regularly overflows nearby and in 1998 was extremely bad, affecting my property and that of many neighbours (Thorpe Lea Road).

Other matters

- The proposal should be moved east, further into the available space, making it less noticeable within the current undisturbed environment. This will also free up/make the area more accessible for use.
- Please consider reinstating the field which has recently been allowed to grow wild to a level suitable for recreational use (immediately to the west of the site).
- Why was the Primary School not built with a playing field on its site?
- Why should a classroom be built on the site when outdoor classrooms are fashionable?
- The unbuilt land adjacent to the school should be used as there is plenty left or the old playing fields should be re-vamped.
- The proposal will set an undesirable precedent.
- Once the Council develops this land, then what will be the next green space swallowed by another project in the area?
- Who will and how will the area be maintained/secured during the periods when not in use?
- At present, the bushes around the site have people sleeping rough and drug users leaving needles/other items. Are the Council going to clear these bushes in case the children stray into them and get hurt?
- Why does the school need the playing field? If it is vital, why was this not considered when allowing the school to be built in the first place?

In addition, 1no. neutral representation was received (raising neither objection nor support) and 6no. letters of support were received as follows:

- We, as local residents, greatly appreciate that we are lucky enough to enjoy the open fields and access to the rowing course all year long. It would seem logical that local school children should also be able to use these facilities during school hours with appropriate changing facilities.
- The plans can only be good for the children.
- A comment from the Resident's Association about the loss of amenity intimates that the whole of the area will be lost for the general public. Looking at the plans, this is not the case. It has already been requested that the goal posts are relocated on the eastern part of the field.
- The usage of the area was never going to be each day during term time so it should not be very noisy. Whatever noise there is will not carry on after say 3.30pm.

- As far as car parking is concerned, the school have said that when necessary, they will provide extra parking on the school grounds.
- Visual impact talks about the view from the cycle path towards the Cathedral but I (resident of Thorpe Lea Road) would question how many people walking along this path actually look around.
- I (resident of Walnut Mews) think it is essential that children have access to good quality sports facilities and are encouraged to be active and have an outlet for their energy.
- It is a shame that a sports facility was not part of the original planning for the school but glad that this is being addressed as it can only improve the school.
- As a child, I (resident of Kirkwood Close) had no access to green field playing areas and felt deprived as a consequence. It is important that children have a safe play and sports area, with all possible amenities.
- Whilst I (resident of Kirkwood Close) would be strongly opposed to this application being used as the “thin end of the wedge” to further building in the Thorpe Meadow area, at present this land is essentially only being used as a ‘dogs toilet’.
- This is a very positive development. With the degradation of playing fields, to have a new one for the use of primary age children is wonderful.

Round Two

19 no. further objection letters have been received during this second consultation period, many from local residents who have previously commented. The above objections remain and only those comments which are additional are set out below:

- There are a number of rabbits which frequently make holes in the playing field. It is concerning that, if there is no suggestion to remove the rabbits, children using this area in a competitive way will run the risk of various injuries.
- The introduction of a temporary building which will probably need to have mesh shutters at the windows will further degrade the area.
- This is going to be underused, under-occupied and under-policed. It will very soon become evident that it is unworkable and I (resident of Church Lane, Werrington) am sure that it will eventually be abandoned and left to rot.
- The revised proposal to relocate the goal posts to the east of the facility is not acceptable. It was understood that this would be for dog walkers and other public wishing to use this space for picnics etc. Why has the western side not been considered? It would make more sense to relocate the goal posts to this western side and leave the eastern side for more informal enjoyment.
- There are always pairs of green woodpeckers, foxes and vast amounts of other wildlife that use this field.
- A 2.4 metre fence will destroy the whole ambience of this quiet area used extensively by city dwellers to chill out.
- Consideration should be given to using/upgrading the old playing field on Alderman’s Drive.
- Not all schools require playing fields. There are many urban and inner city schools across the country, and in Peterborough, that have managed very well without any or an exclusive sports field.
- An unfortunate thing to consider – would there be ‘voyeurs’ watching the young children?
- How will be parking be accommodated in this residents permit area?
- What will happen with the pipes freeze during very cold weather?
- Why are a school’s interests considered more important than those of the residents of Thorpe Gate?
- Councillor Dowson tells us (Residents Association) that he was assured some years ago that this area, which is actually flood plain, would never be built on.

Councillor Dowson has also raised objection to the proposal as follows:

- Why is Angus Court green sports field not being considered?
- Has consideration been given to moving the proposed playing field?
- Why is the pavilion only a temporary one?

- Can we include a covenant stopping any future development, especially car parking?
- Why was there no planning for a playing field in the hospital development plans?
- I am concerned that there may be planning creep. Any guarantees against this?

3 no. further letters of support have been received as follows (only those comments not previously raised are set out):

- There will be little change to the area being part of the Green Lung; it will remain mainly as a field.
- There is ample space nearby for the leisure activities listed in the newsletter from Thorpe Road Residents Association.
- A new set of traffic lights near the school will make crossing the road easy, and the few minutes it would be used by school children would cause little delay.
- Parking will apply wherever a sports ground is sited.
- There is much publicity about, even young, children becoming unhealthily obese. A playing field and the walk to/from the site would be a small step to help prevent such problems.
- There is an area of semi-derelict land between the end of River Lane (where there is a gate) and the river, about which there has been some publicity regarding its conversion to a sensory garden. Nothing has materialised, could it be used as a pleasant garden/small park?
- The playing field should be larger than planned to prevent the running track from overlapping with the football pitch.
- A new community playing field should be created on the western field of the meadow site.

5 Assessment of the planning issues

The main considerations are:

- Principle of development
- Design and impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area
- Neighbour amenity
- Access and highway implications
- Trees and ecology
- Flood risk
- Contamination

a) Principle of development

Need

Paragraph 72 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) requires that Local Planning Authorities give great weight to the need to expand or alter schools. Officers consider that this also includes the provision of outdoor games/PE space which is the subject of the current application. The proposal seeks to provide new playing field/running track facilities for the West Town Primary School which relocated to its new site at the junction of Thorpe Road/Midland Road (some 300 metres to the north of the current application site) in September 2016. The school presently has remote playing fields, located off Angus Court to the north-west of the main school site. These playing fields are situated approximately 1km (walking distance) from the main school site.

The proposed playing fields would be located considerably closer, some 300 metres from the main school site and with better pedestrian connectivity given the signalised pedestrian crossing to Thorpe Road. The relocation of the playing fields as proposed would therefore represent a betterment in terms of school facilities, and would significantly reduce the time taken for staff/pupils to access outdoor games/PE lessons.

On this basis, and in line with paragraph 72 of the NPPF, this benefit of improved school facilities must be afforded great weight.

Loss of public open space

As detailed in Section 1 above, the application site presently comprises a parcel of a wider area of Public Open Space (POS). The proposal seeks to fence off this area for use as playing field by the West Town Primary School, with no community or public access. Accordingly, the proposal represents a loss of POS.

Policy CS18 of the adopted Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011), emerging Policy LP23 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version) (which may be afforded some weight at this time) and paragraph 74 of the NPPF seek to protect and retain existing areas of open space as they are acknowledged as being vital to the quality of the environment serving communities. The NPPF states that existing playing fields (such as the current application site) should not be built upon unless: it can clearly be shown that the land is surplus to requirements; the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, in a suitable location; or that the development is for alternative sports/recreation provision, the needs of which outweigh the loss. Emerging Policy LP23 also requires that: the open space not make an important contribution to the green infrastructure network; and that the proposal can be accommodated without causing significant detrimental impact in terms of character/appearance of the area, ecology or heritage assets.

The application site is located within Central Ward which, from the data contained within the Peterborough Open Space Update 2016, is shown to have a surplus of some 8.62 hectares of 'neighbourhood parks' (the category within which the POS subject to this application falls within). It should be noted that Central Ward covers a significant geographical area, and is divided into distinct areas which are not well-related in terms of the ability of residents to use all of the available POS within the ward. Furthermore, it should be noted that the figure has altered significantly as a result of the ward boundary changes in 2016, whereby the area of the application site moved from West to Central Ward. Accordingly, Officers consider that this wider figure cannot necessarily be considered as being a true reflection of POS provision for the locality of this application site.

In light of this, Officers have conducted a review of POS within the immediate locality of the application site which also includes POS outside Central Ward but immediately adjacent. Within this area, the public open space, in a linear form along the northern bank of the river and extending to Orton Mere and Ferry Meadows, is substantial and offers a significant benefit not only to the local population, but also the wider City. Given the relatively vast scale of this POS, it is considered that the proposed loss is not substantial and would not significantly harm the overall provision of POS within the area.

Additionally, as detailed in Section 1 above, the City Council's Public Open Space Team has recently undertaken a review of the use of POS within the wider application site and determined that the 'biodiversity' grassland area has not achieved the desired aims. As such, works are presently ongoing to revert this area back to grassed amenity area similar to that which would be lost as a result of the current proposal. This change to the way the POS is laid out, is considered to be mitigation for the loss that would result from the current proposal, as within the immediate locality recreation space and informal sports pitches which are publicly available would be maintained. Whilst the Applicant is proposing to relocate goal posts to the eastern portion of the POS, Officers instead consider that it would be more beneficial to relocate these goal posts within the western area in an east-west alignment. As this land is included within the blue line of the application site, this alternative mitigation could be secured by condition.

It should also be noted that Sport England is the statutory consultee in respect of developments relating to playing fields and, for the purposes of determining this application, it is their professional comments/position which must be given the most weight. Specifically, Sport England has advised that the proposal would meet with their own exception policy given that the development would be of wider benefit to sport which outweighs the detriment caused by the loss of the existing playing field area.

Taking all of the above into account and on balance, Officers consider that the degree of harm arising from the loss of the existing POS can be mitigated to a sufficient degree whereby it is outweighed by the benefit arising from improved school facilities (as set out above).

It is noted that several objectors have raised concern that the proposed facilities would only be in use for part of the year, during term time and school hours (given no community use is proposed). This is, in their view, an unfair loss to the local community who use the POS all year round. Whilst these concerns are noted, Officers do not consider that the amount of time that the school would use the facilities alters the weight that should be attached to the benefit arising from improved school facilities. Furthermore, replacement amenity provision is being made for local residents through the reversion of the adjacent western land to grassed recreation space outside the confines of this application.

b) Design and impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area

The proposal seeks to enclose the entire playing field/running track with 2.4 metre high green weldmesh fencing associated gates. It is acknowledged that the height, size and scale of this fencing would be considerable in the context of the surrounding public open space, and would appear very different from the current open nature of the area. However, the proposal does seek to minimise the impact of this fencing through substantial planting around the boundaries of the site, including a mix of native trees and shrubs. Once mature, it is considered that this planting would sufficiently screen the fencing and result in a less harsh/stark appearance to the locality.

The exact details of the planting are not set out at this stage and therefore Officers consider it necessary to secure planting plans by condition. Furthermore, to ensure that the landscaping successfully establishes, and is maintained in the long-term (the Applicant advises by the school/Academy Trust and not the Council), a condition to secure a landscape management plan is considered necessary.

It is noted that several objections have been received from local residents with regards to the height of the fencing proposed which may consider to be unnecessary and against the pre-application discussions that took place. The application scheme originally proposed 1.8 metre high fencing however Officers considered that this would not acceptably reduce the opportunity for unauthorised access and crime/vandalism/anti-social behaviour and it was therefore increased in height to 2.4 metres. Such a height is commonplace in many developments as it effective at preventing unauthorised access and supported by the Police in this regard.

It is also noted that many local residents have raised concerns with regards to current crime/anti-social behaviour within the POS including rough sleeping and drug taking. It is not considered that the proposed development would significantly alter or increase the opportunities for such crime/anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, it is noted that the Police Architectural Liaison Officer has not raised any objections in this regard.

With regards to the proposed mobile building, this is proposed to be of a temporary nature given that it would be a cabin. Over time, these buildings can weather and become rundown, harmful to the overall visual amenity of areas. As such, this building is proposed only on a temporary basis to ensure that when it does become rundown, it can be replaced. Accordingly, Officers consider that a temporary consent for this element of the proposal would be prudent.

On the basis of the above, it is not considered that the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the character, appearance or visual amenity of the surrounding area and would not pose an unacceptable risk in terms of crime or anti-social behaviour. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011), Policy PP2 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policy LP16 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version).

c) Neighbour amenity

It is proposed for the playing field/running track to be solely used by the West Town Primary School and would mainly be used during normal school hours in term-time. The proposal does not seek to allow for community use outside these school hours (i.e. in the evenings or at weekends) albeit there may be school-run after-school clubs which use the facilities. In light of this relatively limited use, the impact arising from the development in terms of noise/general disturbance would only occur during the daytime and would not take place during those times at which local residents would reasonably expect a quiet level of amenity (weekends and evenings). Furthermore, as the playing field would not be lit, it would only be used as the POS is presently, during daylight hours and periods of clement weather. Therefore there would not be any significant intensification of the use of the site from the current lawful use as POS.

It is noted that an objector has raised concern with regards to the proposal to re-provide the public goal posts (to the eastern area of the POS) in a north-south alignment which they fear would result in balls being hit into residential gardens. However as the Council is currently reverting the western portion of the wider POS to recreation space, Officers consider it to be more beneficial to place the public goal posts there in an east-west alignment. This would therefore reduce the potential for impact to local residents from stray balls.

d) Access and highway implications

The proposal seeks to provide a vehicular access to the site from the north, off Vermont Grove/Thorpe Lea Road however this is only for emergency and maintenance vehicles (as at present), and will not be used by general traffic. Children and staff will access the remote playing field/running track on-foot, crossing Thorpe Road via the signalised pedestrian crossing and walking down Thorpe Lea Road. This vehicular access can be restricted by condition for sole use by emergency vehicles and this will ensure that no undue impact results to the surrounding public highway network in terms of increased traffic and parking.

It is acknowledged that some local residents have expressed concern with regards to the potential for parking congestion created by parents visiting the playing fields to watch children, particularly on sports days. Such incidents would be only very occasional, perhaps only once or twice per year as the proposal seeks for children to walk to/from the playing fields back to the main school site to the north. Furthermore, no community use is proposed which would further restrict the demand for parking within the locality and on-street parking within the area is restricted by virtue of residents permits. Therefore it is not considered that the proposal would result in significant and undue levels of increased parking congestion within the surrounding area. Furthermore, Officers do not consider that occasional use which would generate parking demand from parents could be used as a reason to refuse this application (given the limited extent of impact across the year)

It is also noted that concerns have been raised by local residents in terms of the safety of school children walking to/from the site. The school, both at its current location and former location, has always had remote playing fields which require pupils and staff to walk. The current proposal would be no different and it is not considered that an unacceptable safety risk would be posed to the school children.

Taking the above into account, it is not considered that the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact to the safety of users of the public highway and is therefore in accordance with Policy PP12 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policy LP13 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2016 (Submission Version).

e) Trees and ecology

As detailed in Section 1 above, the POS subject to this application is bound by mature tree and shrub belts which are within the ownership of, and maintained by, the Council. Whilst the application has been accompanied by a Tree Survey, the Council's Tree Officer has advised that it does not provide significant comment upon the relationship of these trees to the proposal. Nonetheless, he has raised no objections. The trees to the north and east of the site are set a sufficient distance away from the proposal as to not be impacted upon either directly or indirectly.

It is noted that local residents have queried whether these trees will be pruned at all before the development commences and Officers do not believe that this is necessary.

The main impact arising from the proposal in terms of trees relates to the southern boundary, as the playing field (and associated fencing) would be in relatively close proximity. The trees within this area are White Poplar, which can produce 'sucker' plants at a considerable distance from the main tree. The Tree Officer has advised that there is no easy way to remove these, and poisoning would kill the main tree. As such, the proposal poses a risk to the loss of these trees. However, to avoid this, the Tree Officer recommends that a root deflector/barrier be installed along the entire southern boundary as this will prevent these 'suckers' from being able to establish within the development. This would therefore remove the risk to the trees, which are of key amenity value within the locality and on this basis, Officers consider that a condition to secure such deflectors is necessary.

In addition to this, the Tree Officer has commented that the proposal would likely be subject to ongoing maintenance issues given the future growth of the southern shelter belt. However this is not a matter on which the current application could be resisted as maintenance would continue to be provided by the City Council for this shelter belt and it would not be at undue risk of removal.

With regards to ecology, the City Council's Wildlife Officer has raised no objections. As no trees are proposed for removal, comments regarding impact to wild nesting birds are not of relevance. However it is noted that he has requested that the fencing be designed to ensure that gaps for small mammals (such as hedgehogs) be provided to ensure they continue to be able to use the area. This is considered reasonable and necessary to ensure no loss of biodiversity within the site. It is proposed to condition this requirement, as Officers would wish to see the design for these gaps to ensure that there is no conflict in terms of crime/security issues.

Taking the above into account, it is considered that the proposal would not pose an unacceptable risk to trees/landscape features of key amenity value within the locality or to biodiversity. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy Cs21 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011), Policy PP16 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policies LP28 and LP29 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2016 (Submission Version) which may be afforded weight at this time.

f) Flood risk

The southern half of the application site is located within Flood Zone 2 and is therefore at risk from flooding, whilst the remainder of the site lies within Flood Zone 1. However, as the proposal does not result in an alteration to the flood risk vulnerability classification, there is no requirement for the application to be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. This is because the proposal will not alter how vulnerable the use of the site is to flooding incidents and nor will it alter how/where the flooding takes place.

It is noted that many residents have commented that the site has been subject to assurances that it would not be developed owing to flooding issues. Officers believe that this relates to the allocation of the application site (under the provisions of Policy SA15.5 of the Peterborough Site Allocations DPD) as a 'Water Management Zone', to be safeguarded for the management of flooding through attenuation. However, through the replacement emerging Local Plan, this safeguarding allocation has been removed as it is no longer needed. Whilst this document is not yet fully adopted, it does represent the most up-to-date baseline in terms of whether the land is needed for attenuation and therefore, as it has been removed, it is not considered that the site is required any longer for this purpose.

On this basis, it is not considered that the proposal would be at unacceptable risk from flooding and would not increase the flood risk elsewhere, in accordance with Policy CS22 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and emerging Policy LP32 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2016 (Submission Version) which may be afforded weight at this time.

g) Contamination

The application has been accompanied by a Ground Investigation Report. Whilst this highlights the presence of PFA (pulverised fuel ash) and asbestos, given the minimal groundworks and lack of permanent building on the site (i.e. one with foundations), these do not pose a risk to the end users, human health or controlled waters. Accordingly, no scheme of remediation is required. Whilst no formal written comments have been received from the City Council's Pollution Control Officer in this regard, aural confirmation has been provided to advise that this is accepted.

h) Other matters

In response to those objections raised but not discussed above:

Availability of alternative sites/lack of facilities within the main school site – This planning application may only consider the proposal as submitted, and the availability (or otherwise) of alternative sites cannot be considered. With regards to the development of the main school site, the land secured as part of the outline permission for the redevelopment of the former hospital was carefully considered in the context of the visibility and overall deliverability of the entire development area and additional land for a playing field could not be secured at that time.

Precedent – All developments must be considered on their own merits and therefore any future development which requires planning permission will be considered in line with the policies in force at that time. This application will not 'pave the way' for future developments on POS within the area.

6 Conclusions

Subject to the imposition of the attached conditions, the proposal is acceptable having been assessed in the light of all material considerations, including weighing against relevant policies of the development plan and specifically:

- The proposal would represent improved sports education facilities for pupils of West Town Primary School which should be afforded great weight, in accordance with paragraph 72 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012);
- Whilst the proposal would represent the loss of existing public open space (POS), it is not considered that this would result in an unacceptable deficiency for the local area and mitigation may be secured through the provision of goal posts to the west of the site, on an area of POS already being reverted to recreation space, in accordance with Policy CS18 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011), emerging Policy LP23 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version) and paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012);
- The proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupants, in accordance with Policy Cs16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (12011), Policy PP3 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policy LP17 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version);
- No undue impact to the safety of the surrounding public highway network or its users would result, in accordance with Policy PP12 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policy LP13 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version);
- The proposal would not pose an unacceptable risk to trees or landscape features of key amenity value to the surrounding area, in accordance with Policy PP16 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policy LP29 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version);
- the proposal would not harm biodiversity within the site, in accordance with Policy CS21 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011), Policy PP16 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policy LP28 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version);
- The proposal would not be at unacceptable risk from, or result in increased flood risk, in accordance with Policy CS22 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and emerging Policy LP32 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version); and
- The site would not be at risk from contamination such that it would pose a risk to human health

or controlled waters, in accordance with Policy PP20 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policy LP33 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version).

7 Recommendation

The Director of Growth and Regeneration recommends that Planning Permission (Regulation 3) is **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

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

Reason: In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- C 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings:

- Site Location Plan (drawing number 18-8-1017-DR-001 Revision P4);
- Proposed Site Plan (drawing number 18-8-1017-DR-800 Revision P6);
- Proposed Indicative Temporary Mobile Classroom Floor Plan (drawing number 18-8-1017-DR-801 Revision P1);
- Proposed Temporary Mobile Classroom Elevations (drawing number 18-8-1017-DR-802 Revision P1); and
- Proposed Boundary Treatment Elevation (drawing number 18-8-1017-DR-803 Revision P2).

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- C 3 The development hereby permitted shall solely be used by West Town Primary School and shall not be open for use by members of the general public, external sports or community groups.

Reason: The site is not capable of accommodating the parking demand generated by public use and to prevent unacceptable harm from arising to the amenities of neighbouring occupants, in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011), Policies PP3 and PP12 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policies LP 13 and 17 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2016 (Submission Version).

- C 4 The vehicular access from Vermont Grove/Thorpe Lea Road shown on drawing number 18-8-1017-DR-800 Revision P6 'Proposed Site Plan' shall not be used by anything other than pedestrians, cyclists, emergency vehicles or vehicles required for the purpose of maintaining the site or wider Thorpe Meadows public open space.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to preserve the amenities of neighbouring occupants, in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011), Policies PP3 and PP12 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policies LP 13 and 17 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2016 (Submission Version).

- C 5 Notwithstanding the submitted drawings and prior to first use of the development hereby permitted, a scheme for the soft landscaping of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the following:

- Planting plans including species, numbers, size and density of planting;

- An implementation programme; and
- A Landscape Management/Maintenance Plan.

The approved landscaping scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved implementation programme and shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved Landscape Management/ Maintenance Plan in perpetuity.

Any trees, shrubs or hedges forming part of the approved landscaping scheme that die, are removed or become diseased within five years of the implementation of the landscaping scheme shall be replaced during the next available planting season by the developers, or their successors in title with an equivalent size, number and species to those being replaced. Any replacement trees, shrubs or hedgerows dying within five years of planting shall themselves be replaced with an equivalent size, number and species.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and then enhancement of biodiversity, in accordance with Policies CS16 and CS21 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011), Policies PP2 and PP16 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policies LP16 and LP28 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version).

C 6 No development shall take place until the following details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with Sport England:

- a) A detailed assessment of ground conditions (including drainage and topography) of the land to be used as playing field, which identifies constraints which could adversely affect playing field quality; and
- b) Where the results of the assessment to be carried out pursuant to part (a) identify constraints which could adversely affect playing field quality, a detailed scheme to address any such constraints. The scheme shall include a written specification of the proposed soils structure, proposed drainage, cultivation and other operations associated with grass and sports turf establishment, and a programme of implementation.

The approved details shall be carried out in full and in accordance with the programme of implementation. The land shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the scheme and made available for playing field use in accordance with the scheme.

Reason: To ensure that the playing field is prepared to an adequate standard and is fit for purpose, in accordance with Policy CS18 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011), emerging Policy LP23 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version) and paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). This is a pre-commencement condition as the quality of the playing field needs to be secured prior to any ground preparation works taking place.

C 7 No development shall take place until details of a root deflector/barrier along the entire southern boundary of the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The root deflector/barrier shall be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to the pitches being laid out and the fencing installed and retained in perpetuity.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not pose an unacceptable risk to neighbouring trees which are considered to be of key amenity value to the surrounding area, in accordance with Policy PP16 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policy LP29 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version). This is a pre-commencement condition as the root deflector/barrier needs to be installed at the time of groundworks.

C 8 The mobile classroom building hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition no later than 5 years from its first use, in accordance with a scheme of

work submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme of work shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority at least 3 months prior to the expiry of the date (as above) for the restoration of the site.

Reason: In order to reinstate the original use of the land or site and preserve the amenity of the area, in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011), Policy PP2 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policy LP16 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version).

- C9 Prior to the installation of the fencing details of measures to allow connectivity for mammals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The fencing shall therefore after be installed in accordance with the approved details and the measures thereafter retained whilst the fencing remains in situ.

Reason: In order to protect the ecological interests of the site in accordance with Policy PP16 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012) and emerging Policy LP29 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version).

- C 10 Prior to first use of the development hereby permitted, a pair of goal posts for use by members of the public shall be installed on the parcel of public open space immediately to the west of the application site, in accordance with details first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To secure adequate alternative public recreation use within the wider public open space, in accordance with Policy CS18 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011), emerging Policy LP23 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036 (Submission Version) and paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

Copy to Cllrs Hussain, Iqbal and Jamil