

Case Number	22/01731/FUL (Formerly 11214548)
Application Type	Full Planning Application
Proposal	Erection of a 3-storey block to form additional classrooms
Location	Silverdale School Bents Crescent Sheffield S11 9QH
Date Received	03/05/2022
Team	City Centre and Major Projects
Applicant/Agent	Nineteen47
Recommendation	Grant Conditionally Subject to Secretary of State

Time limit for Commencement of Development

1. The development shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act.

Approved/Refused Plan(s)

2. The development must be carried out in complete accordance with the following approved documents:
Location Plan - 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-00100 - Rev P02 - published 03.05.2022
Proposed Site Plan - 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-10100 - Rev P03 - published 03.05.2022
Proposed Ground Floor Plan - 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-20100 - Rev P04 - published 03.05.2022
Proposed First Floor Plan - 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-20101 - Rev P02 - published 03.05.2022
Proposed Second Floor Plan - 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-20102 - Rev P01 - published 03.05.2022
Proposed Roof Plan - 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-10100 - Rev P01 - published 03.05.2022
Proposed Elevations - 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-20200 - Rev P05 - amended 29.07.2022
Proposed Site Sections - 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-20300 - Rev P03 - amended 01.08.2022
Landscape Proposals (Sheet 3) - 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-10113 - Rev P01 - amended 22.07.2022, published 25.07.2022

Landscape Proposals - 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-10112 - Rev P01 - published 18.07.2022

Tree Report - Rev 4 - Jo Ryan Arboriculture Urban Greening - amended 22.07.2022, published 25.07.2022

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment - Project No: 21-2664.02 - amended 22.07.2022, published 25.07.2022

Reason: In order to define the permission.

Pre Commencement Condition(s) – ('true conditions precedent' – see notes for definition)

3. No development shall commence until full details of the proposed surface water drainage design, including calculations and appropriate model results, have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include the arrangements and details for surface water infrastructure management for the lifetime of the development. The scheme shall detail phasing of the development and phasing of drainage provision, where appropriate. The scheme should be achieved by sustainable drainage methods whereby the management of water quantity and quality are provided. Should the design not include sustainable methods evidence must be provided to show why these methods are not feasible for this site. The surface water drainage scheme and its management shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details. No part of a phase shall be brought into use until the drainage works approved for that part have been completed.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable development. Given that drainage works are one of the first elements of site infrastructure that must be installed, it is essential that this condition is complied with before the development commences in order to ensure that the proposed drainage system will be fit for purpose.

4. No development shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall assist in ensuring that all site activities are planned and managed so as to prevent nuisance and minimise disamenity at nearby sensitive uses, and will document controls and procedures designed to ensure compliance with relevant best practice and guidance in relation to noise, vibration, dust, air quality and pollution control measures.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and occupiers of adjoining property.

5. No development shall commence until a detailed Landscape and Ecological Management and Monitoring Plan (LEMMP), based on the indicative measures set out in the approved landscape proposals (drawing no. 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-10112 - Rev P01) and biodiversity net gain assessment (Project No: 21-2664.02 - amended 22 July 2022, published 25 July 2022), including short, medium and long term aims and objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all distinct areas, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The LEMMP should include:

- A topographical survey showing levels, services, boundary features, structures, trees and other relevant information;
- Topsoil specification and depths;

- An accurate planting schedule and planting plan at 1:200 or 1:100 scale;
- A comprehensive list of species and stock specification;
- Details of planting densities and spacings;
- Individual locations of specimen trees and shrubs;
- Areas of grass/wildflowers including seed mix and sowing rates;
- A maintenance and monitoring schedule to ensure the successful establishment of the scheme;
- Hard landscaping details to include levels (both proposed and existing on the same plan), surfacing materials, walls, fencing and external furniture;
- Findings from further pre-felling bat surveys of relevant trees as recommended in the Ecological Impact Assessment (Delta-Simons, project no. 21-2664.02) and recommendations for any required mitigation;
- Proposals for habitat boxes for birds and bats;
- A wildlife-sensitive lighting scheme; and
- Details of green roofs, sustainable drainage systems and other biodiversity measures.

The LEMMP shall be fully implemented as approved within 3 months of the approved building being brought into use, with the Local Planning Authority being notified of completion in writing, and shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved maintenance and monitoring schedule.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the biodiversity of the site, it is essential that this condition is complied with before any other works on site commence given that damage to existing habitats is irreversible.

6. No development shall commence until full details of measures to protect the existing trees, shrubs and hedges to be retained have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved measures have thereafter been implemented. These measures shall include a construction methodology statement and plan showing accurate root protection areas and the location and details of protective fencing and signs. Protection of trees shall be in accordance with BS 5837: 2012 (or its replacement) and the protected areas shall not be disturbed, compacted or used for any type of storage or fire, nor shall the retained trees, shrubs or hedge be damaged in any way. The Local Planning Authority shall be notified in writing when the protection measures are in place and the protection shall not be removed until the completion of the development.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the identified trees on site. It is essential that this condition is complied with before any other works on site commence given that damage to trees is irreversible.

Other Pre-Commencement, Pre-Occupancy and other Stage of Development Condition(s)

7. Renewable energy shall be provided in the form of solar photovoltaic panels and an air source heat pump in accordance with the measures set out in the Energy and Environmental Statement (prepared by Gate & Bar, published 3 May 2022). In the event that the solar panels and/or air source heat pump are no longer proposed, alternative details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development, identifying how a minimum of 10% of the predicted energy needs of the completed development will be obtained from decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy, or an alternative fabric first approach to offset an equivalent

amount of energy. Any agreed renewable or low carbon energy equipment, connection to decentralised or low carbon energy sources, or agreed measures to achieve the alternative fabric first approach, shall have been installed/incorporated before any part of the development is occupied, and a report shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate that the agreed measures have been installed/incorporated prior to occupation. Thereafter the agreed equipment, connection or measures shall be retained in use and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In order to ensure that new development makes energy savings in the interests of mitigating the effects of climate change and given that such works could be one of the first elements of site infrastructure that must be installed it is essential that this condition is complied with before the development commences.

8. No above ground works shall commence until the highway improvements listed below have either:

- a) been carried out; or

- b) details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority of arrangements which have been entered into which will secure that such improvement works will be carried out within three months of completion of the construction of the new school building.

Highways Improvements:

- Promotion of a Traffic Regulation Order (waiting restrictions) in the vicinity of the development site, subject to the usual procedures, including the provision of any associated lining/signing.

Reason: To enable the above-mentioned highways to accommodate the increase in traffic, which, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, will be generated by the development, and in the interests of protecting the free and safe flow of traffic on the public highway.

9. The measures set out in the submitted Travel Plan (Vectos, Job No. VN222183, Issue 3, 22/04/2022, published 3 May 2022) shall be implemented in full upon the building being brought into use. Monitoring of progress against the aims put forward in the Travel Plan shall be undertaken, and progress reports detailing modal shifts in staff and student travel patterns shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority at intervals of one, three and five years following the first occupation of the building hereby approved, for written approval of actions consequently proposed.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable transport and to monitor the impact of the development upon traffic in the local area.

10. The teaching block hereby approved shall not be brought into use unless and until the 10 new parking spaces as shown on the approved landscape proposals plan (Drawing no. 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-10113 - Rev P01) have been marked out and brought into use in accordance with the approved plan. The parking spaces shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the facilities are supported by sufficient off-street parking.

11. The teaching block hereby approved shall not be brought into use until the step-free access route has been implemented in accordance with the approved plans as set out in condition 2 of this permission. The step-free access routes shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure inclusive access to the building for all site users.

12. The render, brickwork, coloured spandrel panels and glazing to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby approved shall match the existing school building in colour, finish, material specification and fixing method, unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority. The grey spandrel panels as shown in the approved elevations (amended 29 July 2022) shall be finished in RAL 7024 colour unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development.

13. No externally mounted plant or equipment for heating, cooling or ventilation purposes, nor grilles, ducts, vents for similar internal equipment, shall be fitted to the building unless the scheme of sound insulation measures designed to meet the rating levels presented in the APM Acoustics Noise Impact Assessment (Project No: 1642021, dated 23/02/2022) has been implemented and the noise mitigation measures thereafter retained in accordance with the details submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent noise disturbance to site users and neighbouring residents, in accordance with policy GE24 of the Unitary Development Plan.

14. Prior to the installation of any commercial kitchen fume extraction system, full details, including a scheme of works to protect the occupiers of adjacent dwellings from odour and noise, shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

- a) Drawings showing the location of the external flue ducting and termination, which should include a low resistance cowl.
- b) Acoustic emissions data for the system.
- c) Details of any filters or other odour abatement equipment.
- d) Details of the system's required cleaning and maintenance schedule.

The approved equipment shall then be installed, operated, retained and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To prevent disturbance through odours, fumes and noise to neighbouring residents.

15. The proposed green/biodiverse roof (vegetated roof surface) as shown on the approved roof plan (ref. 045-ASA-01-00-DR-A-10100 - Rev P01) shall be installed on the roof of the new building in the location shown on the approved plan. Details of the specification and maintenance regime, including a planting schedule and planting system with minimum 80mm substrate depth, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to foundation works commencing on site. The green/biodiverse roof shall be

installed prior to the use of the building commencing and thereafter retained, with the Local Planning Authority notified in writing upon completion of the green roof. The green/biodiverse roof shall be maintained for the lifetime of the development, and any failures during the lifetime of the building shall be replaced.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity.

Other Compliance Conditions

16. Surface water discharge from the completed development site shall be restricted to a maximum flow rate of 1.0 litres per second.

Reason: In order to mitigate against the risk of flooding.

Attention is Drawn to the Following Directives:

1. The Local Planning Authority has dealt with the planning application in a positive and proactive manner and sought solutions to problems where necessary in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The developer's attention is drawn to the consultation response from Northern Powergrid, published 24 May 2022, and the guidance relating to necessary precautions when undertaking works near apparatus.

The response can be viewed in the document list by searching for planning application 22/01731/FUL on Sheffield City Council's Public Access website.

3. The developer's attention is drawn to the consultation response from South Yorkshire Police, published 25 May 2022, and the guidance relating to recommended security standards for the approved building.

The response can be viewed in the document list by searching for planning application 22/01731/FUL on Sheffield City Council's Public Access website.

4. Cadent Gas Ltd own and operate the gas infrastructure within the area of the development. There may be a legal interest (easements and other rights) in the land that restrict activity in proximity to Cadent assets in private land. The applicant must ensure that the proposed works do not infringe on legal rights of access and or restrictive covenants that exist.

If buildings or structures are proposed directly above the apparatus the development may only take place following diversion of the apparatus. The applicant should apply online to have apparatus diverted in advance of any works, by visiting cadentgas.com/diversions

Prior to carrying out works, including the construction of access points, please register on www.linesearchbeforeudig.co.uk to submit details of the planned works for review, ensuring requirements are adhered to.

5. Should a connection/modification be proposed to a nearby/onsite watercourse, a

consent application under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 for Works on an Ordinary Watercourse may be required. This will have to be submitted to the Lead Local Flood Authority. There is no cost for an application.

6. Any felling / pruning / clearance of trees and vegetation should avoid the bird nesting season (March 1st - August 31st), unless a nesting bird check has been carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist. All wild birds, their active nests, eggs and young are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

Good practice precautionary measures for badgers, reptiles and amphibians should be followed as per the consultant's recommendations in the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Existing log habitat piles should be dismantled carefully by hand, under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist, as there may be resident hedgehogs or amphibians present. These habitat piles should be relocated within areas designated for habitat creation or enhancement.

7. The applicant should install any external lighting to the site to meet the guidance provided by the Institution of Lighting Professionals in their document GN01: 2011 "Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light". This is to prevent lighting causing disamenity to neighbours. The Guidance Notes are available for free download from the 'resource' pages of the Institute of Lighting Professionals' website.
8. The required CEMP should cover all phases of demolition, site clearance, groundworks and above ground level construction. The content of the CEMP should include, as a minimum:

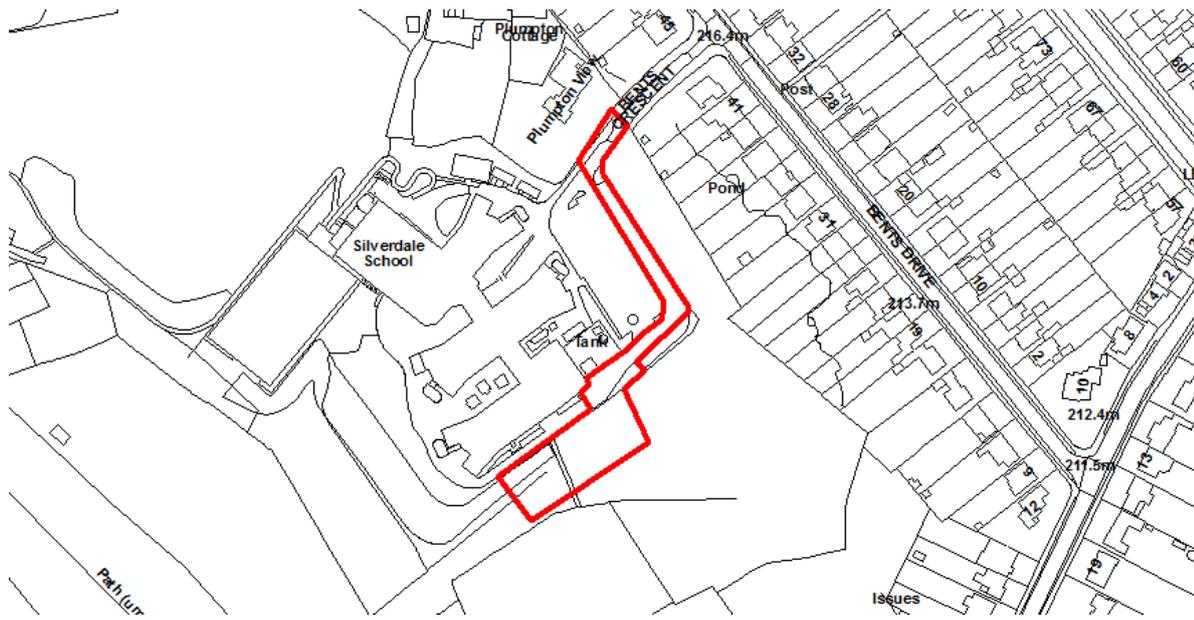
- Reference to permitted standard hours of working (0730 to 1800 Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1300 Saturday, no working on Sundays or Public Holidays).
- Prior consultation procedure (EPS & LPA) for extraordinary working hours arrangements.
- A communications strategy for principal sensitive parties close to the site.
- Management and control proposals, including delegation of responsibilities for monitoring and response to issues identified/notified, for noise (including welfare provisions and associated generators, in addition to construction/demolition activities), vibration and dust (including wheel-washing/highway sweeping and details of water supply arrangements)
- A consideration of site-suitable piling techniques in terms of off-site impacts, where appropriate.
- A noise impact assessment - this should identify principal phases of the site preparation and construction works, and propose suitable mitigation measures in relation to noisy processes and/or equipment.
- Details of site access & egress for construction traffic and deliveries.
- A consideration of potential lighting impacts for any overnight security lighting.

Further advice in relation to CEMP requirements can be obtained from SCC Environmental Protection Service; Commercial Team, Fifth Floor (North), Howden House, 1 Union Street, Sheffield, S1 2SH: Tel. (0114) 2734651, or by email at eps.commercial@sheffield.gov.uk.

9. The developer is advised that, in the event that any unexpected contamination or

deep made ground is encountered at any stage of the development process, the Local Planning Authority should be notified immediately. This will enable consultation with the Environmental Protection Service to ensure that the site is developed appropriately for its intended use. Any necessary remedial measures will need to be identified and subsequently agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Site Location



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LOCATION AND PROPOSAL

The application site falls within the grounds of the existing Silverdale School in the Bents Green area. The school site is an irregularly shaped parcel of land, being approximately 9.3 hectares in total area and sloping upwards towards the west. Silverdale is a comprehensive co-educational school, covering ages 11-18 with an integrated sixth form.

The existing school building is positioned centrally within the site, having been constructed in the late 2000s to replace an older 1950s school building which was located further to the north where a running track is now positioned. Additional fields and sports pitches are located north of the track, with a multi-use games area (MUGA) immediately adjacent to the south. The sports facilities are all located on higher land than the school building. To the south of the existing building are heavily vegetated areas including mature tree cover.

The school building is designed with a central spine from which several classroom clusters and a sports hall project, being typical of modern schools constructed under the era's Building Schools for the Future programme. The building is a maximum of three storeys in height, with flat green roofs. The dominant building materials are grey-blue brick at ground floor level with white render above, and fenestration with a horizontal emphasis, interspersed with yellow, orange and red spandrel panels. The central spine is also served by extensive glazed curtain walling, and there are also timber elements including external stairways.

The sole vehicular access is from Bents Crescent, a small road perpendicular to Bents Drive and a car park is located immediately to the front of the school. Bents Drive is a residential street characterised by large detached and semi-detached properties with private driveways and large gardens. On-street parking is unrestricted on both sides, adjacent to the grass verges in between the numerous dropped crossings serving the residential driveways.

The school is located within the Green Belt and is in Flood Zone 1 (low risk of flooding). In addition to the dwellings on Bents Drive, the grounds are also adjacent to residential properties on Ringinglow Road to the north, and Broad Elms Drive and Whirlow Elms Chase to the south. To the west, open fields continue the extent of the Green Belt, steadily sloping upwards to the Peak District.

The application site comprises approximately 0.25 hectares of the school grounds, being a rectangular patch of grassed land with some mature trees and vegetation immediately to the south of the school building, together with the approach through the car park. The proposal is for a new three-storey teaching block with a raised hard surfaced social area and ramped access to the front. The building would be rectangular in plan, finished in bricks, render and spandrel panels to match the existing building. The building would have a gross internal floorspace of 2295 square metres, accommodating sixth form social, dining and study areas as well as additional classrooms, art rooms and computer rooms for general teaching, together with ancillary toilets and staff office accommodation. The flat roof would accommodate solar panels and a green sedum roof system.

This application is being presented to Planning and Highways Committee due to significant public interest in the proposal, with a high volume of objections contrary to the officer's recommendation.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The replacement school was granted outline planning permission in 2005, with a later full planning permission in 2006. Applications in recent years have secured permission for additional temporary classrooms to accommodate additional pupil demand. A complete recent planning history is set out below:

- 05/01198/RG3
Erection of replacement school (Outline Application under Reg 3 - 1992)
Granted Conditionally 31.08.2005

- 06/02734/FUL
Erection of replacement secondary school with ancillary sports facilities and car parking accommodation
Granted Conditionally 19.12.2006

- 08/02694/COND; 08/05169/COND; 08/05395/COND; 08/05531/COND; 09/00212/COND
Various applications for the approval of details reserved to condition under 06/02734/FUL

- 07/03835/FUL
Provision of sports facilities and associated access (amended plans received 10/11/08, 21/11/2008 and 16/12/08)
Granted Conditionally 06.01.2009

- 09/00840/COND; 09/01032/COND; 09/01589/COND
Various applications for the approval of details reserved to condition under 07/03835/FUL

- 08/04729/FUL
Provision of soft play area (As amended 16/12/08)
Granted Conditionally 20.01.2009

- 09/00307/FUL
Siting of external CCTV cameras
Granted Conditionally 03.04.2009

- 09/00863/FUL
Erection of canopy
Granted Conditionally 15.06.2009

- 16/01358/FUL
Siting of temporary unit for use as two classrooms with associated storage
Granted Conditionally 15.06.2016

- 16/01358/COND1
Approval of details reserved to condition under 16/01358/FUL

- 18/00124/FUL
Application to extend the time limit for the provision of 2x temporary classrooms until 2021 (Application under Section 73 to vary condition No. 1 (time limit) as

imposed by planning permission No. 16/01358/FUL
Granted Conditionally 09.03.2018

- 20/02216/FUL
Application to allow the retention of the approved structure until August 2025 (Application under Section 73 to vary condition 1 (Timescale for the removal of the structure) imposed by planning permission 18/00124/FUL - Application to extend the time limit for the provision of 2x temporary classrooms until 2021 (Application under Section 73 to vary condition No. 1 (time limit) as imposed by planning permission No. 16/01358/FUL - Siting of temporary unit for use as two classrooms with associated storage)
Granted Conditionally 20.11.2020

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been advertised in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Neighbour consultation letters were sent out to neighbouring premises with an adjoining boundary. Notices were displayed around the site location. A press notice was displayed in the Sheffield Telegraph.

Notifications have also been provided to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Applications for public service infrastructure development notification) (England) Direction 2021.

At the time of writing, Sheffield City Council has received 21 objections and two neutral representations from members of the public, and an additional objection from Sheffield Wildlife Trust.

The representations received to date are summarised as follows:

Parking and Highway Safety

- The school has already exceeded safe limits for a restricted access from the narrow highway of Bents Drive
- Parents, staff and students park inconsiderately
- Access for delivery and emergency vehicles is impossible
- Additional parking should be provided on site
- Some sports pitches could be lost to accommodate new parking
- The car park should be modified to allow coaches to access the front entrance
- The expansion would worsen local parking and traffic issues
- The number of students driving to school or being dropped off is increasing
- School traffic is dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists
- Parking on Bents Drive and Ringinglow Road is at full capacity on school days
- Residential driveways get blocked by school traffic/parking
- Alternative access routes or parking restrictions on Bents Drive should be implemented
- Construction traffic would be disruptive
- It is not clear whether public transport services and local shops can cope with larger numbers of students

- Increased sixth form numbers will worsen the parking situation as these students may drive from outside the area
- Special educational needs (SEN) students may find it difficult to use public transport
- Staff park on Bents Drive because the car park cannot accommodate them
- The traffic census was only carried out on one day, and is not representative of the situation as a whole
- Surveys should be undertaken over a number of days and weeks
- Wider vehicles have to perform unsafe manoeuvres because of cars parked on both sides of Bents Drive
- Pupils living south of Ecclesall Road South are likely to be driven to school as there is no direct bus route
- Drop-off times are chaotic
- The school has no jurisdiction over the behaviour of pupils and parents
- Irresponsible parking is spreading to Muskoka Drive and Barnet Road
- Grass verges on Muskoka Drive are an eyesore due to the parking of cars
- The school and Council should note that High Storrs School's extension has enough off-road parking for staff
- Bents Drive is too narrow to cope with a large school
- Traffic is unmanageable due to the school combined with commuters into Sheffield on Ringinglow Road
- It is only a matter of time before a serious accident occurs
- On wet days, the number of vehicle journeys increases dramatically
- The Travel Plan is aspirational and not realistic
- A proposal for spaces in the Hammer & Pincers car park is an annually renewable contract, with no guarantee that the provision would continue
- The site is not served by tram or train
- It is unrealistic to expect staff and students to cycle or to walk from long distances due to the steep climb from the city centre and the Sheaf and Porter Brook river valleys
- Drop-off traffic begins earlier than surveyed in the Transport Assessment
- Surveys undertaken by neighbours show much higher figures for traffic movements
- The original school was built in 1957 to safely accommodate 600 pupils, and is now outsized for the surrounding highways
- Construction traffic times should be limited
- The expanding catchment of the school is not reducing commuter journeys, so goes against the Council's Green Strategy
- Advice to avoid idling is ignored, and increased traffic will worsen air quality
- Parents speed along the road

Issues relating to highway safety, parking and traffic are assessed in full within the Planning Appraisal below.

Flooding and Drainage

- The SuDS statement lacks clarity and precision
- Full surveys of scrubland, from where maps show the course of a stream issuing, have not been undertaken
- The stream frequently floods properties bordering the scrubland, and interference with the level of discharge into the area will exacerbate the problematic situation
- The drainage plan shows new surface water being discharged via an existing stream which follows a direct line to a culvert, which now appears to be blocked and should be maintained

- Rainfall run-off will be increased and will worsen flooding issues
- During times of high rainfall, water flows away from the road and towards properties rather than into the drains
- Cutting down trees will increase flood risk
- The rebuilt school has altered the water table, and there do not appear to be suitable measures to mitigate increased flood risk

Issues relating to flooding and drainage are assessed in full within the Planning Appraisal below.

Ecology, Trees and Wildlife

Residents:

- The site is wild land that is home to badgers, bats, birds and insects, as well as ancient oaks
- Green spaces should be prioritised over buildings for the health and well-being of young people
- The proposal would have a detrimental impact on wildlife, in particular badgers
- The proposal will damage the wildlife area known as 'The Roughs'
- Trees would need to be felled to accommodate the development
- The Biodiversity Net Gain assessment indicates a 17.78% biodiversity loss, which is hard to justify
- Historically important habitat would be lost
- Greenfield sites should not be developed
- The mature woodland supports a whole ecosystem which would be removed
- Whatever enhancement measures are put in place can never replicate what nature itself has created

Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust:

- The application as submitted will result in a biodiversity net loss
- Several mature category A and B trees would be removed
- The green roof and compensatory planting are supported, but the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, mitigate, compensate) has not been followed
- The arboricultural reports recommend a planting ratio of at least 2:1, but the landscaping plan doesn't show enough trees to achieve this
- A 30-year management and monitoring plan is required

Issues relating to ecology, trees, wildlife and landscaping are assessed in full within the Planning Appraisal below.

Green Belt

- The proposal is on Green Belt land where residents were assured there would be no further development
- The present school is already 30% larger than the previous footprint
- No other new building on Green Belt land would be supported
- Damage to Green Belt land is not justified
- The proposal represents overdevelopment of the Green Belt

The principle of developing Green Belt land is assessed in full within the Planning Appraisal below.

Visual Impact

- The visual impact may be small from some roads but this is not the case for all neighbours
- The bright and colourful cladding is not in keeping with the character of the area
- Trees only provide screening during summer months
- A darker, more muted colour scheme would be more sympathetic
- The existing building is a blot on the landscape and to match its colours would be a travesty

The design of the scheme is assessed in full within the Planning Appraisal below.

Need for Increased Capacity

- It has not been proven that an increase in capacity is needed
- The area does not need a school expansion
- The area is already well developed for schools
- The Council should invest in other areas where the school offer is poorer
- Schools are transforming the area into a homogenous neighbourhood for families with children, but we need diversity
- Employment for 15 additional teachers is supported, but not at this site

The need for additional places at Silverdale School is considered as part of the assessment of the principle of developing Green Belt land, within the Planning Appraisal below.

Residential Amenity

- The new building would overlook garden areas.

Residential amenity and privacy are discussed within the Planning Appraisal below.

Comments Not Related to Material Planning Considerations

- Previous assurances given to residents by the school have been ignored
- Lights in the car park are on even when there is no activity
- Residents were told that the height of trees between the school and residential gardens would be controlled
- A previous application for expansion in 2018 was refused
- The school is not considering local residents
- Residents pay high levels of council tax
- Silverdale is a large business, not just a school
- The location plan is incorrect and does not show the dwellings on Whirlow Elms Chase or the levels and dimensions from the school to these dwellings.

The above non-material issues are not considered in the planning assessment, as they are not related to planning matters or to the specific scheme under consideration.

The management of relationships between Silverdale School and local residents, including any previous promises or assurances made, is not a planning matter, as this is the responsibility of the school. The operation of lighting and maintenance of trees is also the school's responsibility, and the school's business model is also not reasonably related to the planning proposal.

This application is assessed on its own merits according to the current national and local policy context. Previous applications can be relevant, but records show that no planning application for the permanent expansion of Silverdale School was submitted or refused in 2018 as suggested by residents.

It is correct that the location plan is outdated in not showing the dwellings on Whirlow Elms Chase, which were constructed around the late 2000s. However, given that the proposed new building would be in excess of 50 metres away from the nearest residential boundary on Whirlow Elms Chase and is consequently unlikely to cause overlooking or overshadowing, it is not considered that this error prevents officers from undertaking a suitably thorough assessment. There is no requirement for drawings to show topographical information well outside the application site, nor to annotate specific measurements when the plans are to scale.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Policy Context

National policies are contained in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF). The following sections of the NPPF are considered to be relevant:

- Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development
- Chapter 4: Decision-making
- Chapter 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Chapter 9: Promoting sustainable transport
- Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 13: Protecting Green Belt Land
- Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Further national policies can be found in the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the National Design Guide (2019).

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for Sheffield comprises the Sheffield Core Strategy (adopted March 2009) (formerly called the Sheffield Development Framework Core Strategy) and 'saved' policies from the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (1998) (UDP).

The site is identified on the UDP Proposals Map as being within the Green Belt.

The application of Sheffield's development plan policies must take account of paragraph 11 of the NPPF, which provides that when making decisions, a presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied, and that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date (including where they are inconsistent with the NPPF or where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites), planning permission should be granted unless:

- i) the application of policies in the NPPF which relate to protection of certain areas or assets of particular importance which are identified in the NPPF as such (for example SSSIs, Green Belt, certain heritage assets and areas at risk of flooding) provide a clear reason for refusal; or

- ii) any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 219 of the NPPF states that existing policies in a development plan should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the NPPF and that due weight should be given to existing policies in a development plan, according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF. The appropriate level of weight afforded to Sheffield's relevant development plan policies is set out below, based on their degree of conformity with the provisions of the NPPF.

The following Core Strategy policies are relevant in this case:

- CS43: Schools (significant weight to relevant sections)
- CS53: Management of Demand for Travel (significant weight)
- CS63: Responses to Climate Change (significant weight)
- CS64: Climate Change, Resources and Sustainable Design of Developments (significant weight)
- CS65: Renewable Energy and Carbon Reduction (significant weight)
- CS67: Flood Risk Management (significant weight)
- CS71: Protecting the Green Belt (significant weight)
- CS74: Design Principles (significant weight)

The following UDP policies are relevant:

- BE5: Building Siting and Design (significant weight)
- BE6: Landscape Design (significant weight)
- BE9: Design for Vehicles (moderate weight)
- GE1: Development in the Green Belt (significant weight)
- GE3: New Building in the Green Belt (significant weight)
- GE4: Development and the Green Belt Environment (moderate weight)
- GE10: Green Network (significant weight)
- GE15: Trees and Woodland (moderate weight)
- GE23: Air Pollution (significant weight)
- GE24: Noise Pollution (significant weight)
- GE25: Contaminated Land (significant weight)
- CF1: Provision of Community Facilities (moderate weight)
- T21: Car Parking (moderate weight)
- T28: Transport Infrastructure and Development (significant weight)

The following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and guidance documents also represent material planning considerations:

- Climate Change and Design SPD

Planning Appraisal

The key planning considerations in this case are as follows:

- Green Belt Land Use
- Design and Visual Impact
- Residential Amenity and Noise
- Ecology, Trees and Landscaping

- Highway Safety, Access and Parking
- Drainage and Flood Risk
- Energy and Sustainability
- Pollution and Land Contamination
- Archaeology

Green Belt Land Use

The application site is located in the South Yorkshire Green Belt. Paragraph 137 of the NPPF sets out that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence, with paragraph 138 identifying their five key purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Paragraph 147 states that “inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”.

Paragraph 149 regards the construction of new buildings as inappropriate except in seven listed circumstances. Schools are not mentioned amongst these exceptions.

Policy GE3 of the UDP broadly aligns with the above sections of the NPPF, stating:

In the Green Belt, the construction of new buildings will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances, for purposes other than agriculture, forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, cemeteries, and other uses which would comply with Policy GE1.

Policy GE1 states that development in the Green Belt will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances, where it would:

- a) lead to unrestricted growth of the built-up area; or
- b) contribute towards merging of existing settlements; or
- c) lead to encroachment of urban development into the countryside; or
- d) compromise urban regeneration.

These scenarios each represent a threat to one of the key purposes of the Green Belt, similarly to their wording in paragraph 138 of the NPPF, with the exception of the setting and special character of historic towns, which is not mentioned in policy GE1. As the new teaching block would be located within the existing school grounds and would not establish a new use, thereby avoiding any unrestricted growth, coalescence or encroachment, the proposal is not considered to threaten these fundamental purposes of the Green Belt.

Nonetheless, the NPPF is explicitly restrictive in identifying most new buildings as “inappropriate development”, and despite not representing a direct breach of policy GE1, the proposal for a new school building is considered to represent “inappropriate development” by default when assessed against national policy. As such, it falls to consider whether “very special circumstances” exist to justify this inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In the case of this application, the assessment of “very special circumstances” rests on a consideration of the need for the expansion of the school based on demand for school places.

Paragraph 95 of the NPPF highlights the importance of a sufficient choice of school places, and states that local planning authorities should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools. Policy CS43 of the Core Strategy supports (a) the redevelopment and refurbishment of all secondary schools, and (d) expansion of schools. Policy CF1 of the UDP supports the provision of community facilities, particularly where they would (b) be located where there is a shortage. This policy has only moderate weight as it does not refer to widening choice in the same way as the NPPF wording, but taken together with the NPPF and Core Strategy, there clearly exists strong policy support for expanding school places.

Forecasts for pupil numbers have been shared by the Council’s Education & Childcare Commissioning Team, who have provided comments strongly supporting the proposal. These forecasts are calculated by taking snapshot child health data from GP registrations in the autumn of each year, broken down by age and postcode, to ascertain the average percentage population change. School census data is then used to calculate the average take-up percentage, which is applied to forecast population statistics to calculate the expected size of future cohorts. Data from the Office for National Statistics is also added to give a longer-term forecast.

Forecasts show an expected deficit of between 195-210 secondary school places in Sheffield in the 2023/24 academic year. The city-wide demand is largely driven by a 25% increase in births between 2002 and 2012, with this population increase now coming through to the secondary sector. School places have been at or near full capacity since 2018/19.

After the 2023/24 peak, city-wide demand for school places is expected to fall, as birth rates are generally seen to increase and decrease in cyclical patterns through the decades. However, demand is still forecast to remain high in future years in the south-west of the city. Detailed forecasts for each school take into account preferencing data and inward and outward migration, including both UK- and city-wide migration and more localised movements into areas of growing popularity within the city. The south-west area shows the greatest level of both acute and sustained demand in the whole city, with an estimated shortage of 96 secondary school places in 2023/24 and demand continuing to exceed current capacity until 2027/28.

It is proposed to cater for this city-wide and localised demand by both accommodating temporary increases in schools across Sheffield to meet the 2023/24 peak, and creating a total of 535 new school places through permanent expansions across King Ecgbert and Silverdale schools in the south-west of the city. These expansions would accommodate projected future demand across all year groups, as well as additional sixth form and special educational needs (SEN) provision. The net number of new places to be created at Silverdale School would be 263, with 122 new places provided at King Ecgbert. The King Ecgbert proposal is assessed separately under application 22/01728/RG3.

Whilst the expansion at King Egbert School consists of a new sixth form block to free up capacity for lower years within the existing building, the proposal at Silverdale is for a new teaching block to cater for all years. The proposed Silverdale expansion would provide the majority of the new permanent school places in the south of the city, so is of critical importance for education provision. If schools cannot expand to meet demand, the Council risks breaching its statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places under the Education Act 1996. This need for school places must be given great weight under the provisions of paragraph 95 of the NPPF.

As set out above, a need for school places has been clearly identified. However, this need alone is not considered to represent “very special circumstances”, as it must also be demonstrated why the majority of the demand should be accommodated on Green Belt land at Silverdale School, rather than through expanding other schools in the area or developing a new school site.

At the case officer’s request, justification for the selection of the King Egbert and Silverdale sites, and the discounting of alternative options, has been shared by the Education & Childcare Commissioning Team. In addition to the two selected schools, six alternative schools in the south-west of the city have been considered for expansion, and have been discounted for the following reasons:

- High Storrs School is also located in the Green Belt. The remaining land within the school boundaries is demarcated as playing fields, and the main building is Grade II listed, representing two additional constraints to development which do not apply to the Silverdale site. The school has also been expanded significantly in 2009, and an application for another single-storey extension was approved in 2014.
- Mercia School is recently completed and was constructed on a designated Open Space Area in 2018. The school requires time to establish, and expansion so soon after opening would not be possible.
- King Edward VII School operates as a split site. The lower school site caters for years 7-9, and the upper school caters for years 10-13. The upcoming larger intake groups will need to move from the lower school to the upper school in year 10, and so both sites would need to be extended to represent a sustainable option. The upper school is a Grade II* listed building within a constrained site, with a large number of protected trees and limited space for expansion.
- Tapton Secondary School has been subject to two extensions in the last 10 years and there is significant protected tree cover. The site is also in a designated Open Space area. Compared to Silverdale, there is very limited space for further expansion.
- The University Technical College (UTC) in the city centre is a specialist academy with a technology focus, and only caters for years 9-12 so could not accommodate the upcoming increase in year 7 students. The building occupies the entire site and there is no scope for upward expansion due to the sports facilities on the roof.
- Notre Dame High School is a faith school with a city-wide catchment based on religion, so is not appropriate for meeting general demand. The site is

constrained in terms of available land, is within a Conservation Area and contains listed buildings.

An entirely new school is also considered not to be an appropriate option – whilst demand in the south-west of the city is sustained until the end of the decade, it is then predicted to fall, and the introduction of a new school could therefore lead to a future surplus of places, being an unsustainable option. Furthermore, the current approach to establishing new schools as set out in national legislation is through a ‘free school presumption’ process involving academy providers, with lengthy timescales on top of the need to find a suitable site for development. It would not be possible to complete this process in time to meet the city-wide peak demand year of 2023/24, and so opting for a new site over expansion would likely result in the Council breaching its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places under the Education Act 1996.

In summary, the expansion of both King Egbert School and Silverdale School is essential to meet projected demand for secondary school places: a matter which must be afforded great weight under paragraph 95 of the NPPF. Other options to provide additional places have been explored and discounted, and failure to provide sufficient places would leave the Council in breach of statutory duties, threatening the education of children in the city. Overall, the urgency of this situation is considered to represent “very special circumstances” which would serve to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 147 of the NPPF. As such, the principle of the development is acceptable, subject to detailed consideration of the matters set out below.

Design and Visual Impact

Policy CS74 of the Core Strategy sets out design principles for new development, including taking advantage of topography and townscape character, and contributing to place-making. Policy BE5 of the UDP also puts forward design policy, including requiring new buildings to complement the scale, form and architectural style of surrounding buildings. These policies are considered to accord with the design principles in paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

Policy GE4 of the UDP states that the scale and character of Green Belt development should be in keeping with the area and, wherever possible, conserve and enhance the landscape and natural environment. This policy has moderate weight, as chapter 13 of the NPPF uses the language of “openness” in terms of Green Belt impact, rather than character. Paragraph 174(b) of the NPPF is also relevant, requiring decisions to recognise the “intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside”.

The proposed teaching block would not appear prominent in views from Bents Drive, as it would not be close to the school site entrance and would sit behind existing dwellings and vegetation. Similarly, the school is significantly set back behind properties on Ringinglow Road and Broad Elms Lane, and the new building would not be readily visible from these surrounding streets.

To the west of the site is open countryside, and a Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been prepared by Weddle Landscape Design to assess the impact on the surrounding landscape. The Appraisal concludes that due to the established vegetation and sloping topography, the site is visually contained and only seen from two limited locations: a short length of the elevated public footpath to the south-west, and a limited view from Whirlow Elms Chase (the cul-de-sac to the south). From the wider Green Belt, there are limited views of the school. It is stated that the magnitude of the new building’s visual

effect would be difficult to discern in the context of the adjacent existing building and with the tree belt to the south-west retained. Overall, there would be a negligible adverse impact on completion, reducing to a neutral effect by year 15, once the proposed additional landscaping has matured.

From the case officer's site visit, it is considered that the conclusions of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal can be supported. The Landscape Officer also agrees that the Appraisal successfully illustrates the small visual impact of the development. In terms of Green Belt impact, the greatest potential for harm is in views from the public footpath up the hill to the south-west, yet the boundary vegetation and falling topography heavily curtail views of the existing school. The new building would be positioned in close proximity to the existing building, and so would not represent any further discernible visual encroachment.

In terms of architectural approach, the building would closely match the style and materials of the existing school. Some objectors have commented that the brightly coloured spandrel panels draw attention to the building, and that the new block should instead be camouflaged with a more muted scheme. Officers have similarly suggested that, due to the block being a standalone building without internal connections, a contrasting visual approach with a different colour scheme might be preferable. However, the applicant has not wished to change the design, wishing to achieve coherence and consistency across the school site.

On balance, given the limited views and the fact that the new building would be viewed in the context of the existing, the bright coloured panels are considered to be acceptable, and would not result in an adverse visual impact. It is only from rear windows of properties on Whirlow Elms Chase that the coloured panels on the south-east elevation would be visible, and these views would be limited other than during winter months when surrounding trees are bare. Planning frameworks do not include provisions to protect specific views from residential properties, and as there would be little visibility from public routes or from the wider Green Belt, the materiality is not considered to be harmful in design terms. The only element not matching the main school building would be a small number of dark grey spandrel panels, which would not detract from the overall design.

The front (north-east-facing) elevation of the block has been amended at officers' request, to provide coloured panels in a vertical layout to highlight the limited amount of fenestration on this elevation and add architectural interest, as the original design lacked animation due to its mainly blank render frontage. The amended design is considered to be acceptable and in keeping with the appearance of immediately adjacent built form within the school site, with no adverse impact on the character of the area or the openness of the Green Belt.

Residential Amenity and Noise

Paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF requires developments to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Living standards, including daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and space standards, are therefore key considerations in the planning assessment. Policy GE24 of the UDP also states that development must not create noise levels which would cause a nuisance, nor locate sensitive uses and sources of noise pollution close together.

The proposed teaching block would be located in excess of 50 metres from the nearest dwellings on Whirlow Elms Chase, and 70 metres from the rear boundaries of

properties on Bents Drive. As such, it is considered that there is no potential for any overlooking or overshadowing to neighbouring residents.

As the new building and adjacent external social area would be positioned reasonably far from the nearest neighbours, noise from the additional students is not considered to represent a cause for concern, and is unlikely to be discernible above existing pupil noise. Furthermore, pupil noise will naturally be limited to daytime hours only, and concerns about noise generation have not been a recurring theme in objections received from neighbouring residents.

A Noise Impact Assessment by JPM Acoustics has been submitted to assess background levels and set out recommendations for noise emissions from externally mounted plant. The Environmental Protection Officer considers that recommended plant noise rating levels of no more than 38dB during the daytime and 31dB during the night at the nearest noise sensitive receptors are reasonable, and sound insulation measures to achieve these measures can be secured through condition. Details of kitchen extraction and a Construction Environmental Management Plan can also be secured through condition, and a directive relating to best practice for external lighting can be included on the decision notice.

Overall, the proposal would ensure an acceptable standard of residential amenity for neighbouring residents.

Ecology, Trees and Landscaping

Policy BE6 of the UDP requires good quality landscape design in new developments, including promoting nature conservation and the use of native species. Policy GE10 states that green corridors and green links will be protected from ecological damage and enhanced by encouraging development which increases wildlife and recreation value. Policy GE15 encourages the protection of trees and woodland, including by planting, managing and establishing new trees and woodland; requiring developers to retain existing mature trees and hedgerows and replace any trees which are lost; and not permitting development which would damage existing mature and ancient woodlands.

Policy GE15 includes reference to outdated South Yorkshire Forest proposals, and adopts a less strategic approach than the NPPF in relation to habitats and biodiversity, so is afforded only moderate weight. Policies BE6 and GE10 remain in full conformity with the NPPF and are afforded significant weight. In addition, paragraph 174(d) requires planning decisions to provide net gains for biodiversity. Overall, national and local policies place a strong requirement on new developments for ecological protection and enhancement, including through good landscaping.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Ecological Impact Assessment, Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Report and Landscape Plan were submitted with the application. The assessments found no predicted impacts on designated sites and no protected species present on the site, although there would be a significant loss of habitats, being mainly amenity grassland with extensive trees and scrub. The Biodiversity Officer has highlighted that the site surveys were carried out at a sub-optimal time of year, but is content that this did not represent a significant constraint to the overall assessment in this case. The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment initially submitted indicated a 92% loss of on-site habitats, with a total net loss of 17.78% taking into account off-site compensation through tree planting in the wider grounds, native landscaping, and a green roof.

An overall net loss of 17.78% is considered to be contrary to the requirement for biodiversity net gain in paragraph 174 of the NPPF. The Biodiversity Officer and case officer raised significant concerns over ecological impact, and requested wider-ranging enhancement proposals to achieve at least a 10% net gain, as will be introduced as a future legal requirement through the Environment Act. A new Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Landscape Plan have now been provided, including fully disclosed calculations using the up-to-date DEFRA biodiversity metric. Through a substantial increase in off-site tree and scrub planting within the wider grounds, the calculations show that it is possible to deliver a 67.96% biodiversity net gain, being well in excess of policy requirements.

The Biodiversity Officer is content with the amended proposals, and a detailed Landscape and Ecology Management and Monitoring Plan (LEMMP) including enhancements on the wider school site can be secured through a negatively worded condition, to ensure that the improvements set out in the proposal are delivered and maintained. Directives on the decision notice can be used to advise as to good practice in relation to undertaking works outside the bird nesting season; precautionary measures for badgers, reptiles and amphibians; and the sensitive dismantling of existing log habitat piles.

The Landscape Officer considers that the amended landscaping proposals, with a wider extent of tree planting, are acceptable on an indicative basis, with finer detail being secured through the LEMMP condition. It is recommended that the final detailed plan affords greater attention to the transition between hardstanding and planting, particularly in terms of the hard landscaping of the external social space. A separate condition can ensure that the local planning authority is able to assess the final specification of the green roof, and a Tree Protection Plan for the retained trees can also be secured through condition. Trees to be retained now include the sycamore indicated as T12 on the plan, which was initially proposed for felling. This was considered by the Landscape Officer to be unnecessary, with T12 contributing to the visual buffer, and so has now been secured for retention. The Landscape Officer had also requested that two additional trees from oak group G7 be retained, but has accepted that this will not be possible due to operational requirements for the contractor compound during the construction stage. The extent of wider tree planting and ecological enhancement will more than compensate for this loss.

Overall, the proposal would deliver environmental improvements including net gains for biodiversity, and the development is acceptable in terms of ecology and landscaping.

Highway Safety, Access and Parking

Policy CS53 of the Core Strategy requires travel demand to be managed to meet the needs of different areas of the city, including promoting public and active transport, implementing Travel Plans, and applying parking standards. Policy BE9 of the UDP requires developments to provide a safe, efficient and environmentally acceptable site layout, including a clear definition of vehicle access and exit, adequate manoeuvring and parking space (including for service and emergency vehicles and for people with disabilities) and adequate safeguards from traffic fumes, noise or risk of accident. These policies are both afforded moderate weight, as the latest NPPF at paragraph 105 goes further in seeking to actively limit travel demand.

Policy T28 of the UDP states that new development which would generate high levels of travel will be permitted only where it could be served adequately by existing or

additional/extended public transport and by the existing highway network, and development will be promoted where its location would reduce the need for car travel, being in conformity with the spirit of the NPPF. The UDP parking guidelines promoted in policy T21 have been superseded by parking guidelines in the Council's Highway Development and Adoptions information sheets. These parking guidelines do not include any specific requirements for schools.

There exists only one vehicular access to the school, from Bents Crescent via Bents Drive. The proposal involves no change to the existing access arrangements. Nonetheless, concerns over parking and traffic, with associated highway safety issues, emerged as the most frequent theme in objections to this planning application. It is acknowledged that Silverdale School is accessed from a suburban residential street, and that opportunities to expand parking facilities within the site are severely constrained due to the topography of the site, the need to protect existing playing fields, and the desire to prevent further encroachment into the Green Belt or into areas of high ecological value.

A Transport Assessment (TA) has been undertaken by Vectos. The TA analyses accident data in the area, identifying seven personal injury collisions within the most recent available five-year period covering from January 2016 to December 2020. This accident rate of approximately one every eight to nine months is comparable with other similar roads and junctions, as well as with the vicinity of other schools in Sheffield. No accidents were recorded on Bents Drive around the school site access. The existing car park has 111 parking spaces in total. The TA includes a parking and vehicle movement survey undertaken on a single day in February 2022. The survey suggests that a total of 44 parallel parking spaces are available on Bents Drive, with a maximum of 31 being occupied during the morning surveys and 29 occupied during the afternoon surveys, meaning that between 13 and 15 parking spaces were still available at the busiest times. Bents Road, being parallel to Bents Drive, was also surveyed and was found to have between 50 and 54 spaces available at peak times. From surveys of drop-offs and collections, it is suggested that approximately 76 drop-offs took place around the start of the school day, and 32 pick-ups occurred at the end of the day. Drop-offs and pick-ups are observed to be staggered during the surveyed periods, with a maximum of seven two-way trips in the morning and four in the afternoon.

The proposal will increase the total capacity (above the 2016 temporary expansion) by 263 students, representing an increase in student numbers of approximately 19%. Based on findings from the February survey, the TA suggests that the additional student numbers would generate approximately 16 two-way trips during the morning peak, and 12 two-way trips during the afternoon/evening peak (including the end of the day and after extra-curricular clubs). Using an alternative assessment method based on data collected on the current modal split of students' travel patterns, as well as estimated levels of car sharing based on Department for Transport methodology, the TA suggests that 45 two-way trips would be generated at the beginning and end of the school day. The TA claims that the estimate based on direct traffic observations is more representative than the forecast based on modal split data, and highlights that no movements would take place during the traditional evening rush hour of 17:00-18:00. The additional trips are anticipated to follow the same staggered pattern as the existing trips, and so the TA concludes that there is capacity on the road for additional vehicular movements. Furthermore, a Travel Plan sets out targets for reducing car travel and increasing the modal share of public transport, cycling and walking.

Despite the Transport Assessment's conclusions that the highway has capacity for an increase in student numbers, representations from local residents suggest that school

traffic and parking on Bents Drive is already putting a strain on the network and causing disturbance to neighbours. Many residents are concerned that a further increase will amount to a real highway safety issue. Representations highlight that a survey on a single day may not provide a sufficiently reliable picture of vehicular movements, including in varying weather conditions and at different stages in the school calendar, and residents have even carried out their own surveys which they consider to paint a graver picture of the extent of school traffic.

Officers do consider that evidence suggests that there is some adverse impact on the operation of the highway, albeit in the short term. The TA is, to some extent, flawed in carrying out a survey on only one day, and in selectively suggesting that the forecasting method generating the lowest estimate for the proposal's trip generation is the most representative, with little justification for this assertion. There are also questionable assumptions in the TA, such as the statement that residential and educational uses are complementary. This does not account for the increase in flexible working patterns and home working as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, or for the fact that during the morning peak, commuting residents may set off for work at a similar time to the earliest school drop-offs. Nonetheless, the TA does contain some extensive detail and its findings cannot be entirely dismissed.

Overall, the Highways Officer considers that as the school does not allow drop-offs or collections within the site, better management of arrivals and departures on the highway is required. It is apparent that on occasion, vehicles may park on both sides of Bents Drive, impeding passage. An increase in school numbers could worsen the situation. It is therefore suggested that waiting restrictions on the south-west side of Bents Drive could lead to better traffic management and eliminate risks to the safe flow of traffic. Waiting restrictions would apply to all highway users, but could be limited to peak drop-off and pick-up times so as not to cause problems during the rest of the day. Furthermore, almost all dwellings on Bents Drive benefit from off-street parking, so it is considered unlikely that such a solution would lead to residents struggling to park. It is acknowledged that limitations on Bents Drive could lead to drop-off activity spreading further to the surrounding streets. However, the TA suggests that there is sufficient capacity on streets such as Bents Road, and a minor increase in traffic to other streets would not constitute a highway safety issue, whereas waiting restrictions on Bents Drive would have clear benefits in preventing unsafe blockages.

Representations submitted to the Council suggest that SEN students may not be able to travel independently to school, and so amongst these students the modal split would likely be skewed further towards drop-offs and pick-ups. The school has not yet been able to confirm whether a minibus service for SEN pupils will be available, or whether they will instead arrive by their own means. However, the SEN provision is likely to be predominantly for mainstream students with additional needs, and not profound disabilities. As such, it is likely that some SEN pupils would still be able to travel independently. Even if all SEN pupils required parent/carer drop-offs, the anticipated 30 additional SEN places represent only a small proportion of the additional student numbers and would be unlikely to create an additional highway capacity or safety issue.

The imposition of waiting restrictions would require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), the delivery of which would require a separate process, including public consultation, outside of the planning system. As such, the best way to secure the restrictions would be through the imposition of a condition requiring the developer to promote the Traffic Regulation Order to support the development. The condition would prevent above ground works from commencing until the matter of highway improvements is resolved, with arrangements having been entered into to secure the restrictions. Subject to this

condition, the increase in school traffic can be accepted.

In terms of staff parking, based on the existing modal split of staff transport methods (with 67.4% currently driving alone to work), the TA forecasts that the expansion would generate a need for 10 additional parking spaces, based on a requirement for 15 new staff members. The TA suggests that 10 spaces at the Hammer and Pincers public house, at the junction of Bents Drive and Ringinglow Road, could be secured for use by school staff. However, this would be an impermanent agreement reviewed on an annual basis, and the land is in separate ownership outside the application site boundary. Such a proposal would therefore have no legal standing, and the availability of these spaces for staff use could not be guaranteed. Staff could also be unlikely to consider these spaces sufficiently convenient, as they may have teaching materials to unload from their vehicles. The local planning authority does not consider that the Hammer and Pincers proposal should be considered as part of any parking solution.

The Highways Officer has stated that the proposal should only be supported if additional on-site parking can be provided to accommodate the additional staff parking demand as a minimum. Consequently, amended plans have now been provided which show 10 additional spaces on the site of the existing cycle shelters, which would be relocated to the site of the temporary classrooms intended to be removed following the construction of the new permanent teaching block. These spaces would not be accessible during core school hours, as the relevant area of the site is predominantly a pedestrian route for students, with moveable bollards preventing vehicular access. However, the bollards would be removed to allow staff to arrive and park before the beginning of the school day and then in the afternoon after most pupils have gone home.

The restricted access to the parking spaces does not represent a perfect solution, but the proposal does prevent an additional 10 cars being parked on Bents Drive, and the parking provision will adequately meet the needs of certain staff members. Due to the topographical constraints of the site, there is no preferable realistic alternative. Vehicle tracking has been provided to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Highways Officer that cars will be able to safely manoeuvre into and out of the spaces at the closest points to the building. As the spaces are located within the school grounds but outside of the application site boundary, they can be secured through a negatively worded condition.

Some residents have raised concerns over increased parking demand from additional sixth form students who may begin driving themselves to school, and the TA does not provide any real assessment of this impact. Nonetheless, the proposal is for an increase in capacity across the entire school, and this is not disproportionately skewed towards sixth form expansion. Only 23% of the additional pupil numbers would be within the sixth form, and although the modal split amongst this group has not been separately assessed, it is unlikely that the proportion of drivers would be significantly higher as not all sixth form students will have passed their driving tests as well as having access to a vehicle. With additional staff cars accommodated through the new parking spaces, it is considered that the surrounding streets are likely to have capacity for a small number of additional parked vehicles belonging to sixth form students.

In terms of cycle parking, there are currently 120 covered cycle parking spaces distributed in six shelters, each with 10 stands capable of accommodating one bicycle on either side. Four of the existing shelters would be relocated to the current site of the temporary classrooms to make way for the new staff car parking spaces. The total cycle parking capacity would not be increased, but is stated to be operating well below capacity. The Council's cycle parking guidelines do not include specific standards for

school provision, and given the location of the site near several steeply sloping roads, it is not considered necessary to insist upon additional cycle parking spaces. Step-free ramped access to the building is shown on the plans and elevations, and this is considered by the Access Officer to represent appropriate disabled access, the provision of which can be secured through condition.

Overall, whilst it is acknowledged that the increased capacity of the school would have some adverse impact on traffic and parking in the area and on Bents Drive in particular, it is considered that the imposition of waiting restrictions at peak times and the delivery of 10 new staff parking spaces within the school grounds can provide suitable mitigation. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Based on the findings of the Transport Assessment and with additional measures secured, it is considered that obstructions to the free and safe flow of traffic can be avoided, and so there would be no severe or unacceptable impact on highway safety. As such, and being mindful of the acute need to secure additional school places, it is concluded that there would be no grounds for refusal on grounds of parking demand or traffic generation.

Drainage and Flood Risk

Policy CS67 of the Core Strategy sets out the Council's flood risk management policies, including limiting surface water run-off and promoting sustainable drainage. This policy is considered to be broadly in conformity with the NPPF, although the NPPF also sets out requirements for sequential and exception tests to direct developments to areas of lower flood risk. In this case, the application site is in Flood Zone 1 as set out on the Environment Agency's flood mapping, being at a low risk of flooding.

A Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) Statement by Gate & Bar has been provided, setting out drainage proposals including below ground attenuation with a final discharge point to either an identified wetland area or the local mains systems, following further site investigations and detailed design.

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have examined the outline drainage proposals, highlighting that an existing watercourse crosses the school site, which should be properly surveyed as part of the detailed drainage design and could be practical as a discharge option. The surface water discharge rate needs to be suitably controlled to no more than 1.0l/s, to avoid increasing flood risk downstream. Flows generated by up to 1 in 100-year storm events with 40% allowance for climate change should be managed within the site. Additional SuDS features are recommended, such as water attenuation within the green roof, permeable paving and dry swales or bioretention.

A pre-commencement condition is required to secure full drainage details before development begins, which will necessarily involve detailed surveys of the watercourse, identifying which option for the final discharge point has been chosen, and setting out how the discharge rate will be limited. Through the condition discharge process, it can be ensured that the drainage system will not cause or exacerbate local flooding issues as raised by objectors. Subject to conditions, the LLFA have no objections and the proposal is acceptable in terms of drainage and flood risk.

Energy and Sustainability

Policy CS63 of the Core Strategy sets out the Council's responses to climate change,

including (d) designing developments to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions, and (e) promoting developments that generate renewable energy. Policy CS64 requires new buildings to be designed to reduce emissions and function in a changing climate, and to use resources sustainably.

Policy CS65 requires all significant developments to (a) provide a minimum of 10% of their predicted energy needs from decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy and (b) reduce the developments overall predicted carbon dioxide emissions by 20%. However, the Climate Change and Design SPD assesses this requirement to be unviable in the wake of changes to Part L of the Building Regulations, and so only requirement (a) of policy CS65 applies.

An Energy and Environmental Statement by Gate & Bar has been provided, demonstrating that carbon emissions would be reduced by 22% through the installation of 260 square metres of solar photovoltaic panels as well as air source heat pumps. It is calculated that 48% of the total power requirement would be provided from renewable sources. The building would have no mains gas connections, operating with electrical power only. Off-site construction methods would also minimise waste reduction, and increased air tightness would reduce energy demand.

The renewable energy and carbon reduction measures as described, or an alternative carbon reduction method, can be secured through condition, including a requirement for the developer to submit evidence of implementation. Subject to this condition, it is considered that the proposal would represent environmentally sustainable and energy efficient development in accordance with the policies set out in the Core Strategy.

Pollution and Land Contamination

Policy GE23 of the UDP states that development should not be located where sensitive uses would be adversely affected by sources of air pollution. In this case, the only potential source of air pollution would be additional vehicle movements generated by the expansion of the school. As discussed above, a condition can be used to secure the promotion of waiting restrictions on the south side of Bents Drive, which would be expected to result in the better management of traffic at peak times at the beginning and end of the school day. This improved traffic management would be expected to prevent any worsening of air quality conditions on the street, or even lead to an improvement on the current situation. As such, the proposal is not considered to result in an unacceptable increase in air pollution.

Policy GE25 states that where contaminated land is identified, development will not be permitted on, or next to, the affected land unless the contamination problems can be effectively treated. A Phase I land contamination desktop study, Phase II site investigation report and ground gas risk assessment report have been provided and are considered satisfactory by the Environmental Protection Officer. No remediation measures are deemed necessary, but a directive can be included on the decision notice to advise that the local planning authority should be notified if any unexpected contamination is found during development works.

Archaeology

Policy BE22 of the UDP states that sites of archaeological interest will be preserved, protected and enhanced. Development will not normally be allowed which would damage or destroy significant archaeological sites. Where disturbance of an archaeological site is unavoidable, the development will be permitted only if an

adequate archaeological record of the site is made.

South Yorkshire Archaeology Service have confirmed that there are no concerns about disturbance to archaeological remains in this case. Monitoring of previous ground investigation works on the school site confirmed that there is low potential for archaeological evidence to survive, as a result of substantial landscaping associated with the construction of the replacement school. No investigation is required.

RESPONSE TO REPRESENTATIONS

All matters raised by members of the public have been addressed in the above Planning Appraisal. Representations relating to non-material considerations have been discussed and responded to in the Summary of Representations section of this report.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The proposed teaching block would allow for increased capacity at Silverdale School, catering for identified high demand for school places and bringing important social benefits to the south-west of the city. Due to the acute need for additional school places and having discounted alternative options for meeting this need, the principle of the development is concluded to be acceptable, as very special circumstances have been demonstrated which would justify otherwise inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The proposal as submitted raises no concerns in relation to residential amenity, drainage, energy efficiency, land contamination, or archaeological disturbance, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions. Through cooperation between Council officers and the applicant, and through the drafting of suitable conditions, matters of design quality, biodiversity, parking and highway safety have been satisfactorily resolved.

In summary, the proposal represents sustainable development in accordance with national and local planning policies when considered as a whole, and it is therefore considered that planning permission should be granted subject to the listed conditions.

Under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2021, if the local planning authority does not propose to refuse permission for inappropriate development in the Green Belt, where this consists of the construction a building providing over 1000 square metres of floor space, the local planning authority is required to notify the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Planning permission must not be granted until the expiry of a period of 21 days beginning with the date on which the Secretary of State confirms receipt of the local planning authority's recommendation and required supplementary documents.

As such, the officer's recommendation is that members be 'minded to grant' planning permission, subject to no objections being received from the Secretary of State.