



Solihull Council

**BUILDING DESIGN**  
STUDIO

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Date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Our Ref. 17011-BDS-XX-XX-CO-T-9050-S4-P01

Dear Matt,

**Re: Cheswick Green Primary School –Additional 1FE Expansion to form a 2FE entry Primary School with extended site boundary, increase in onsite staff and visitor parking and a MUGA facility**

**Planning Application: PL/2021/01418/PPFL**

In response to the Planning objection report submitted by the Cheswick Green Parish Council on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021, please see below further information and clarification to their objections as stated within their report.

The following responses have been compiled to address the key listed principle issues (pg 14 of the RTPI Report) relevant to the application:

**1.0** Whether the proposed development is appropriate in the Green Belt.

*1.01 The extension of the school building*

1.02 The expansion of the school over time has resulted in a combination of permanent and temporary solutions to meet the educational demands on the school over the years in line with the growing community in Cheswick Green and as a product of the infrastructure requirements necessary to support existing and new communities from within Cheswick Green and neighbouring residential sites such as Blythe Valley. Over the years, there has been a need to provide new and improved educational facilities resulting in the school having various extensions to accommodate these changes. This proposal seeks to support the LEA in delivering future school places.



- 1.03 The proposed additions are a necessary progression to assist the statutory obligation on SMBC to deliver the educational curriculum through these new school places. This proposal seeks to ensure that the families moving into the Blythe Valley Park and Cheswick Place housing developments have access to a local school place.
- 1.04 The proposal in turn, has been designed in a sensitive manner to compliment the current school in terms of design, layout, and continued use. It is in context and well within the built-up nature of the surrounding settlement line which extends beyond the schools' existing boundary and in this regard, it should be seen as a proportionate response to the needs of additional school places which in turn support sustainable residential communities.
- 1.05 *RTPI Report ref: Green Belt policy is clear that extensions to a building in the Green Belt must be assessed over the size of the original building.*
- 1.06 Within the RTPI report, the description of the proposed development refers to the existing and proposed amount of floor space within the school building (16305m<sup>2</sup> existing and 19828m<sup>2</sup> proposed)
- 1.07 This is incorrect insofar as the above sqm refers to the increase in the site area and **not** the building area. The current 1FE school has a total GIFA (Gross Internal Floor Area) of circa 1781sqm. A typical 2FE school would require a GIFA range between 2195sqm and 2425sqm when compared to current BB103 Guidance. The current proposal has a total GIFA of 2,374 m<sup>2</sup> (an additional GIFA of 593sqm) in line with current BB103 spatial range area guidance.
- 1.08 The original school's external footprint was circa 1365m<sup>2</sup>. The current 1FE external footprint of the school is 1840m<sup>2</sup>, which takes into consideration the cumulative historical extensions made to the school to facilitate the intake of children and their needs over the years. The proposal will add approximately 640m<sup>2</sup> to the current external footprint to change the school from a 1FE to a 2FE. The proposed total external area of the school will be circa 2480m<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.09 The proposed extensions would be an additional 35% increase to the current layout to a 2FE school.
- 1.10 Prior to planning submission, a pre- planning application was submitted and formerly registered on the 28.01.2021 to gain input from the LPA on the proposal from a planning perspective. The following advice was received from the LPA with reference to Green Belt extensions on the 10.03.2021.

*'it is considered that there is scope for enabling the proposals in Green Belt terms, particularly in the context of the built-up nature of the settlement. However, any planning application coming forward will need to address the Green Belt policies detailed above (reference made to NPPF paragraphs 145c & e)*



- 1.11 *RTPI Report ref: The extension of the school boundary*
- 1.12 Sport England as a statutory consultee will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all/part of a playing field, unless one or more of the five exceptions stated in its policy apply. In terms of mitigation against the loss of playing fields to meet one or more of their five specific exceptions the school site curtilage was extended. In conclusion Sport England do not wish to raise an objection to this application as it broadly covered by their exception E4 of its playing fields policy and will be subject to a condition over the permitted development rights during construction and pitch construction.
- 1.13 For clarification, the use of the adjacent field will provide a temporary means to access to the school site from the East during the construction period. The LPA have advised that this will fall under Schedule 2 Part 4 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) and sets out the following provision:
- “Class A – temporary buildings and structures: Permitted development*
- A. The provision on land of buildings, moveable structures, works, plant or machinery required temporarily in connection with and for the duration of operations being or to be carried out on, in, under or over that land or on land adjoining that land.*
- Development not permitted*
- A.1 Development is not permitted by Class A if—*
- the operations referred to are mining operations, or*
  - planning permission is required for those operations but is not granted or deemed to be granted.*
- Conditions:*
- A.2 Development is permitted by Class A subject to the conditions that, when the operations have been carried out—*
- any building, structure, works, plant, or machinery permitted by Class A is removed, and any adjoining land on which development permitted by Class A has been carried out is, as soon as reasonably practicable, reinstated to its condition before that development was carried out”.*
- The use of an area of land adjoining the school for construction purposes associated with the school (including a haul road for construction traffic) would fall under Class A and, subject to conditions, constitute permitted development. Planning permission would not therefore be required for a temporary access route for construction traffic. The current application includes the adjacent site for temporary use of the field for the duration of the construction period only.*
- 1.14 The proposal does not include any built development on the extended portion of the site within the designated Green Belt, other than a secure boundary fence and proposed perimeter landscaping.
- 1.15 The principle of extending the school boundary into the Green Belt to provide grassed sports pitches / playing fields for outdoor sport / recreation would not harm the openness of the Green



Belt or conflict with the purposes of including land within it. However, careful consideration will be given to any associated infrastructure (i.e. paths, fencing, boundary treatments etc.) which will be suitably designed to preserve the openness of the Green Belt. It is acknowledged that a new boundary treatment will be needed to secure the site. In this regard, the proposal will be underpinned by a robust landscape strategy which provides suitable landscaping on the boundary to minimise the impact of the new boundary treatment on the Green Belt. Advice and engagement with the Council's Landscape Architect and Ecologist will therefore be sought. Reference to the Landscaping fencing and boundary planting to secure the extended school grounds is indicated as part of the current proposals.

- 1.16 The proposal is also in line with Paragraph 149 (b) 2021 Edition of the Framework which advises that the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt as long as they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. No permanent developments have been indicated on the proposed site plan within the extended curtilage of the school boundary, therefore it stands to reason the extension of the school boundary will not have a harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 1.17 The extended school curtilage will also enable a temporary safe route for site traffic and for a contractor to establish a site compound. As stated, this temporary arrangement would be for the duration of the construction period. After completion, the temporary routes are to be re-instated back to their original condition.
- 1.18 Whether Very Special Circumstances (VSC) exist to support the development
- 1.19 The statutory process required to expand Cheswick Green Primary School has been considered by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children, Education & Skills on both 11 January 2021 and 29 March 2021. At both of these decision sessions CPH gave careful consideration to the outcome of the consultation processes that had been held, which included the response of Cheswick Green Parish Council, and their considerations around alternative options. Having considered all of the responses made and considering the expansion of Cheswick Green Primary School against the statutory Decision Makers guidance, the Cabinet Member approved the expansion of Cheswick Green Primary School.
- 1.20 The CPH report of 11 January and 29 March outline the reasons why a new school, either in Blythe Valley Park or in Hockley Heath is not a deliverable alternative. In particular the report of 29 March states The 750 dwellings for Blythe Valley Park will not yield sufficient pupils to sustain a new one-form entry school on the site. The report goes on to state, 'The suggestion to include Hockley Heath Primary School in a proposal to create a new school, raises similar issues to the proposal to expand Cheswick Green Primary School. If the new school were located in Hockley Heath then the pupils living in Blythe Valley would have to travel to Hockley Heath village. If the



new school were located in Blythe Valley, then a local village school would be removed from the heart of Hockley Heath village and families that can currently access the school on foot would no longer be able to do so'.

- 1.21 The delivery of any new school would take 3 to 5 years, so even if this was considered a deliverable option the places would not be delivered in time for the Council to meet its statutory duty with regards to school places.
- 1.22 It is important to note that the S106 funding is insufficient to provide a new school and that the S106 agreement names Cheswick Green Primary School as the school where places will be provided to meet the needs of BVP development and therefore the recipient of the S106 funding. Cheswick Green Primary School is the catchment area school for the development. This was considered as part of the Planning Application for Blythe Valley Park application in 2016.
- 1.23 Alternatively, the Parish Council is suggesting that the pupils from Blythe Valley Park are 'shared out' across three schools. The CPH report of 11 January does address this specific issue. Paragraphs 4.7 to 4.10 of the report state Parental preference and admissions criteria are the key drivers with regards to the allocation of school places. It is not within the gift of the Council to 'share' the pupils out across a number of schools as places have to be allocated within strict criteria order and taking account of parental preference. All properties in Solihull are located within a primary and secondary school catchment area. The catchment area system is designed to provide reassurance to families that they have a high priority at a local school should they express a preference for it. The Blythe Valley development sits within the catchment area of Cheswick Green Primary School because this is the closest school. If pupils living in Blythe Valley cannot access a school place at Cheswick Green Primary School they do not have a high priority at any other school based on their home location. This approach would put families living in Blythe Valley Park at a disadvantage when applying for a primary school place. Families could find themselves unable to access a local place and then having to accept a place some considerable distance from home, after all other places have been offered. This will have further implications for the School transport budget.
- 1.24 The extension of the site curtilage extends into the Green Belt just beyond the principle settlement line, however the harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt remains unchanged. Furthermore, to the north east of the site the line of settlement continues along Creynolds Lane therefore by default this to naturally extends beyond the settlement line.
- 1.25 Parking and Highways Matters
- 1.26 In response to the above, the client has engaged the services of Traffic and Highways consultants PJA, to prepare a formal response on the issues identified within the RTPI report and the Pell Frischmann review of the submitted travel information. Please refer to the PJA report reference:



05214\_CGPC Response Technical Note, which sets out the Traffic and Highways mitigation measures to support the proposed school development and addresses the concerns raised.

1.27 Other matters

1.28 WSP were commissioned by SMBC to assess the site for flood risk. The Flood Risk Assessment (report reference: CGR-WSP-XX-XX-RP-0500 Rv2) was undertaken to accompany the full planning application for the proposed development at Cheswick Green Primary School in accordance with the guidelines set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in February 2019 along with other relevant local and national guidance including CIRIA C624 Development and Flood Risk.

1.29 Below is an extract from the report's executive summary, tabulating a general overview of the flood risk across the site and mitigation measures to be adopted following local stakeholder engagement.

1.30

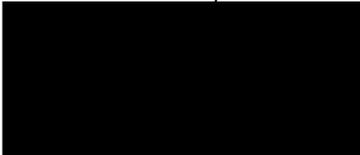
Item	Overview
Site Location	The site is located at the existing Cheswick Green Primary School. Address: Cheswick Way, Shirley, Cheswick Green, Solihull, B90 4HG.
Development Proposals	Development of 5 additional class bases and an additional reception class base with changes to the external landscape for play areas and a multi-use gym area. Additional staff car parking will also be developed and future provision of site access and additional parking on land to the east of the School.
Environment Agency Flood Zone(s)	The site has been identified to lie wholly within Flood Zone 1.
Vulnerability Classification(s)	'More Vulnerable' – Educational Establishment
Fluvial Flood Risk	Due to the sites location within Flood Zone 1 there is assumed to be low risk of fluvial flooding.
Tidal Flood Risk	Very Low risk of tidal flooding due to the inland location of the site.
Surface Water Flood Risk	Low risk of surface water flooding.
Groundwater Flood Risk	Low risk of groundwater flooding.
Sewer Flood Risk	Low risk of sewer flooding.
Artificial Flood Risk	Low risk of flooding from artificial sources.
Storm Drainage	Surface water will be managed through a network of a shallow swale and a shallow basin before discharging into the existing surface water infrastructure on site or existing Severn Trent Water surface water sewers in Cheswick Way.



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We trust the responses provided are acceptable to formally address the main principles of concerns raised by the Cheswick Green Parish Council. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further clarification or information.

Yours faithfully



Sandeep Magar  
RIBA