

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

10 January 2018

AUTHOR/S: Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

Application Number:	S/2942/17/FL
Parish:	Hauxton
Proposal:	Construction of new village hall and associated soft landscaping and car parking
Site address:	Recreation Ground, Church Road, Hauxton
Applicant(s):	Hauxton Parish Council
Recommendation:	Approve subject to conditions
Key material considerations:	Green Belt, Important Countryside Frontage, Setting of Listed Building, Neighbouring amenity, Highway safety, Trees, Ecology.
Committee Site Visit:	Yes
Departure Application:	Yes - Advertised as a departure on 18 October 2016
Presenting Officer:	Dan Smith
Application brought to Committee because:	The application is a Departure from policy and significant local interest
Date by which decision due:	15 January 2018

Executive Summary

1. The application is for the provision of a new village hall in Hauxton. The application has been amended at the request of officers to reduce the scale of the building and locate it further from neighbouring properties. Additional transport, ecology and acoustic assessment has also been provided. The proposed site is subject to a number of constraints including its Green Belt location.
2. The proposal is considered to be inappropriate development by definition, but it is considered that sufficient very special circumstances exist to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. The other impacts of the development are considered acceptable subject to conditions, including a restriction on hours of use and the level of amplified music. On that basis, the officer recommendation is approval. The

application has been made by Hauxton Parish Council and is supported by the local District Councillor and has been subject to a significant number of representations from local residents both in support of and objection to the proposed development. The application has been referred to the Planning Committee by officers with the support of the chair of Planning Committee due to the amount of local interest and because both the Parish Council and the District Councillor have been involved in the preparation of the application.

Relevant Planning History

3. S/1078/17/FL - Planning application submitted and later withdrawn for a new village hall on the recreation ground to the West of the current proposed location.

S/2398/14/FL - Planning application submitted and later withdrawn for extensions to the existing village hall further to the East on Church Street.

C/0911/64 - Planning permission granted for a vehicle access to serve the recreation ground.

C/0595/63 - Planning permission granted to use the site as public open space.

Planning Policy

4. **National Planning Policy Framework**

National Planning Policy Guidance

Local Development Framework Core Strategy DPD (January 2007)

5. ST/1 – Green Belt

6. **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD (July 2007)**

DP/1 Sustainable Development

DP/2 Design of New Development

DP/3 Development Criteria

DP/7 Development Frameworks

GB/1 Development in the Green Belt

GB/2 Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt

GB/5 Recreation in the Green Belt

SF/9 Protection of Existing Recreation Areas

NE/1 Energy Efficiency

NE/4 Landscape Character Areas

NE/6 Biodiversity

NE/9 Water and Drainage Infrastructure

NE/10 Foul Drainage - Alternative Drainage Systems

NE/14 Lighting Proposals

NE/15 Noise Pollution

NE/16 Emissions

CH/4 Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building

CH/7 Important Countryside Frontages

TR/1 Planning for More Sustainable Travel

TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards

TR/3 Mitigating Travel Impact

TR/4 Non-motorised Modes

Development Affecting Conservation Areas - adopted 15 January 2009

Open Space in New Developments - adopted 15 January 2009

Public Art - adopted 15 January 2009
Trees & Development Sites - adopted 15 January 2009
Biodiversity - adopted 2 July 2009
District Design Guide - adopted 2 March 2010
Landscape in New Developments - adopted 2 March 2010
Health Impact Assessment - adopted 8 March 2011
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water - adopted November 2016

7. **Draft Local Plan (Submitted July 2013)**

S/1 Vision
S/2 Objectives of the Local Plan
S/3 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
S/4 Cambridge Green Belt
S/7 Development Frameworks
CC/1 Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change
CC/4 Sustainable Design and Construction
CC/8 Sustainable Drainage Systems
HQ/1 Design Principles
HQ/2 Public Art and New Development
NH/2 Protecting and enhancing Landscape Character
NH/4 Biodiversity
NH/8 Mitigating the Impact of Development in and adjoining the Green Belt
NH/10 Recreation in the Green Belt
NH/12 Local Green Space NH/13 Important Countryside Frontage
NH/14 Heritage Assets
SC/10 Lighting Proposals
SC/11 Noise Pollution
SC/13 Air Quality
SC/15 Odour and other fugitive emissions to air
TI/2 Planning for Sustainable Travel
TI/3 Parking Provision

Consultations

8. **Hauxton Parish Council** - recommends approval.
9. **Local Highways Authority (LHA)** - initially objected on the grounds that the applicant had not used the data from the use of the existing hall in its Transport Statement and requested that this existing data be added to the base data to enable proper assessment of the TRICS data. On the basis of the additional transport information provided by the applicant, the LHA states that its objection has been overcome and it requests conditions relating to the provision of pedestrian visibility splays at the access points, drainage and surfacing of the accesses, provision of dimensions of parking and reversing spaces and the submission of a Construction Traffic Management Plan.
10. **SCDC Environmental Health Officer (EHO)** - notes the potential for the hall to cause noise nuisance from extraction and air conditioning units and from late night and noisy uses of the hall and the need to mitigate cooking odours through adequate extraction. Considers the noise impact assessment report to be acceptable but in order to acceptably mitigate the impact of the hall on the amenity of residents, conditions are required in respect of time restrictions on the use of the site, the operation of evening events with all doors closed, the submission of a detailed noise management plan providing details of how noise would be regulated, managed and enforced and further details of extraction systems and air

conditioning units to ensure they of adequate specification and sufficiently quiet so as not to cause nuisance to neighbours.

11. **SCDC Sustainable Drainage Engineer** - supports the application subject to conditions relating to surface and foul water drainage.
12. **SCDC Ecology Officer** - initially issued a holding objection on the basis that insufficient information had been submitted in respect of the impact of the development on Great Crested Newts (GCN), bats and badgers. On the basis of the additional ecological information provided by the applicant, the Ecology Officer has removed his holding objection and states that the application has now considered the ecological impacts onsite and on adjacent land and has recommended adequate mitigation against harm to ecological interests. Conditions are recommended to secure the mitigation strategy for GCN and the submission of a scheme for biodiversity enhancement including provision of new wildflower meadow, a sympathetic external lighting scheme and the incorporation of bird and bat boxes within the development.
13. **SCDC Trees Officer** - does not object to the proposed development subject to conditions requiring the submission and implementation of a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Strategy prior to commencement of works.
14. **SCDC Landscapes Officer** - does not object to the proposed development and recommends conditions requiring the submission and implementation of a scheme of hard and soft landscaping.
15. **Anglian Water** - notes it has assets close to or crossing the site and requests an informative detailing the need for accommodation within the layout or diversion of the assets be attached to any decision notice. It states there is capacity within the foul sewerage network and wastewater treatment facility to accommodate the development. It notes that consents may be required if surface, foul or trade effluent disposal requires connection to its assets.
16. **Cllr Lockwood (Local Member)** - supports the proposed development and states the hall would benefit the vast majority of the village and serve as a central social hub for the village for many years to come.
17. **Hauxton Primary School (Headteacher)** - supports the application on grounds that it would provide a focal point for community events for more groups and that the existing hall is unsuitable for events such as fetes and sports activities.
18. **Cambridge Past, Present and Future** - offers qualified support to the proposed development. It notes the issues which it considers need to be assessed and mitigated including: Green Belt impact and need for very special circumstances; impact on important countryside frontage, impact on listed buildings, residential amenity, building design and location, parking provision and access, landscape and ecology impact, use of the cafe. It also comments on the future of the existing village hall and the potential for a covenant to exist on the recreation ground.

Representations

19. Representations have been received from 62 members of the public, with 17 objecting to the proposed development, 44 supporting it and one which did not express a strong view. Three petitions have also been received with a total of 80

names given in opposition to the proposed development and 148 in support. Some of the people named on the petitions have also provided separate representations.

20. The reasons given in objection to the proposed development were:
 - Harmful impact on neighbours including through noise, light pollution, odour, loss of privacy, visual intrusion and overshadowing;
 - Impact on the Green Belt including openness and character;
 - The potential for alternative, better located sites including extension of the existing village hall;
 - Lack of justification or need for new building;
 - Excessive scale of the proposed building;
 - Loss of open space on the recreation ground;
 - Impact on visual amenity including the important countryside frontage;
 - Harm to the setting of the listed building opposite the site;
 - Harm to the character and tranquility of the recreation ground;
 - Highway and pedestrian safety;
 - Parking provision including concerns regarding surfacing;
 - Lack of surveillance and potential for vandalism and anti-social behaviour;
 - Impact on trees;
 - Loss of wildflower meadow;
 - Harm to ecology;
21. Concerns were also expressed regarding the stress caused to neighbours, the presence of a restrictive covenant on the land, the lack of a business plan for the village hall, the ongoing maintenance costs and the potential for the building to be underused or stand empty.
22. The reasons given in support of the proposed development were:
 - The lack of existing facilities and the need for a new hall;
 - The lack of alternative suitable sites;
 - The community benefits of the proposal;
 - An improved location for the village hall;
 - The increased use of a currently underused recreation ground;
 - Meeting the needs of a growing village;
 - Wide range of possible uses.
23. Other benefits were also expressed regarding the high costs of running and maintaining the existing hall, increased revenue for the village from hiring the new hall and the location of the building next to the green space and the playground.

The site and surroundings

24. The application site is the recreation ground at Hauxton. The recreation ground is excluded from the Development Framework of Hauxton and is in the countryside and Cambridge Green Belt. Its frontage on Church Road, where there is an existing parking and turning area is designated an Important Countryside Frontage (ICF) under policy CH/4. Opposite the frontage of the site, No. 32 Church Road is a grade II listed building. Residential dwellings on both sides of the frontage back onto the recreation ground as do those dwellings to the East of the recreation ground. The recreation ground has a children's play area close to its western boundary and areas of wildflower meadow as well as seven protected trees, four limes and a birch close to the frontage and two hornbeams within the site towards the Eastern boundary. There is a tree belt to the South of the recreation ground which limits views into and out of the site from the wider countryside. The existing

village hall is located along Church Road to the East in the former village school building.

The proposal

25. The application seeks full planning permission for a new village hall on the recreation ground to the South of the residential properties which front Church Road. It also seeks an extended parking area on the frontage and associated hard and soft landscaping in the surrounds.
26. The proposed development has been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy Guidance and the local planning policies listed above.

Development within the Green Belt

27. The site is located within the Cambridge Green Belt and significant weight is given to Section 9 of the NPPF that relates to the Green Belt as well as local Green Belt policies. Paragraph 87 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 89 states that Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt as inappropriate development and the construction of the village hall is not considered to fall within the exceptions to inappropriate development listed in that paragraph.
28. As a result, the proposed development must be considered inappropriate development within the Green Belt and, per paragraph 88, should only be approved where very special circumstances clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.

Impact on the openness and character of the Green Belt

29. The location of the building has been changed from the previous application, which saw it located directly behind the open street frontage, to being located further back into the site behind the existing residential properties fronting Church Road. This is considered to have reduced the impact on openness as it has taken the building out of the primary view of the site from the road and placed it in a more secluded location which does not extend further out into the Green Belt than necessary. The scale of the building has also been reduced at the request of planning officers during the current application process in an attempt to minimise the impact on the openness of the area and to provide only that accommodation which is needed by the community.
30. Nonetheless, the siting of the village hall in the currently open area of the Green Belt would cause some harm to the Green Belt through a loss of openness as it would occupy land which is currently open. The tree belt to the South of the site means that views through the site to the wider Green Belt are very limited and the proposed building would therefore not have a significant impact on more wide ranging views.
31. The impact on the character of the Green Belt would be to introduce a single storey building with a relatively large footprint into what is currently a relatively undeveloped site characterised by open grassed areas, limited tree planting within the site, boundary hedging and wildflower meadow areas. The new hall would

change this character, however it would provide a village hall building which is associated with village open space.

Impact on visual amenity, the important countryside frontage and the setting of the listed building

32. The building would result in built development on the currently undeveloped recreation ground and it is accepted that this would materially change the character and appearance of the recreation ground. However, the siting of community buildings, such as village halls, on or adjacent to recreation grounds is a common feature in many villages and it is not considered that the provision of the village hall in the proposed location is visually at odds with the nature of the recreation ground. It is therefore considered that the siting of the building on the recreation ground would not, in principle, cause harm to the visual amenity of the area.
33. The building itself is considered to be well designed with a limited height and bulk and with a simple, high quality contemporary appearance. The materials used for the external surfaces of the buildings as well as details of windows, doors and the covered roof area would be controlled by condition to ensure a high quality finish. It is located away from the entrance to limit the impact on the openness of the frontage and, while the entrance elevation would be visible from the street, the building would not be unduly prominent when viewed from outside the site. From within the recreation ground, the building would become a prominent part of the recreation ground and would front onto the relocated children's playground creating a focal point for the recreation ground.
34. Given the limited height and good design of the building, the relationship of the community building to the use of the recreation ground and the fact that village halls are buildings which are commonly located on or next to recreation grounds or other areas of public open space, it is not considered that the building would cause any significant harm to the visual amenity of the area.
35. The extension of the car park is discussed below in terms of its impact on the frontage, but additional limited car parking on the land is not considered to cause any significant harm to the visual amenity of the area generally.
36. The frontage of the site is designated as an ICF. ICFs are designated where land with a strong countryside character either penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area providing a connection with the rural area or provides an important rural break between two nearby detached parts of a village framework. The previous location for the village hall would have been situated directly behind the ICF and it was considered that both the Green Belt impact and the impact on the ICF were too great. The location of the hall proposed in the current application is away from the ICF and would not occupy land directly behind the frontage. This would retain the open connection with the recreation ground. The extended parking area would result in the potential for additional cars to be parked behind the frontage, however this is not considered to result in a further loss of openness which would impact on the important break in the built development along the frontage nor cause significant harm to the established character of the area in terms of the connection of the street with the open land behind. On that basis the impact of the development on the ICF is considered acceptable.
37. In terms of the impact of the development on the listed building opposite the frontage, the building itself is now located in an area where it would not be

prominent in views from or of the listed building and is not considered to have any significant impact on its setting. The extended parking area on the frontage is within the setting of the listed building, however considering the existing use of the area for parking, it is not considered that the changes to the surfacing of the area or the additional parking of cars would cause any significant harm to the setting of the listed building.

38. On the basis of the above, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on the visual amenity of the area, the important countryside frontage and the setting of the listed building, in accordance with policies DP/2, DP/3, CH/4 and CH/7.

Neighbouring amenity

39. The proposed development has the potential to impact on residents of neighbouring properties in the following ways: from the physical impact of the proposed building, from noise, light and odour nuisance associated with the use of the building and from noise and light nuisance associated with the use of the car parking area.

Physical impact of the building

40. Although relatively large in floor area, the proposed building would only be approximately 4.5 metres high. Set a minimum of 6.5 metres from the rear boundaries of the properties to the North, it is not considered that it would cause any significant loss of light or overshadowing of the properties. While it is accepted that it would change the outlook of some neighbouring properties where boundary treatments allow views over the recreation ground, it is not considered that it would cause a level of visual intrusion to any neighbouring properties which would result in harm to the enjoyment of their rooms or gardens.
41. There are no significant windows in the North elevation of the building and it is not considered that there would be any overlooking or loss of privacy to those neighbouring dwellings, particularly as the outside use of the hall would be focused towards the recreation ground and away from neighbouring residential properties. The windows and doors in the side elevations of the proposed hall would be a minimum of almost 30 metres from the boundary of the site and are not considered to result in any significant overlooking of the neighbouring properties on either side, particularly given the boundary treatments already in place.

Noise, light and odour nuisance from the use of the building

42. The proposed use of the building as a village hall has the potential to cause noise from activities taking place in an around the hall and from plant and extraction systems necessary to heat, cool and provide extraction and ventilation to the hall.
43. The use of the hall would be both during daytime hours and in the evenings and, notwithstanding the slight adjustments made to the location of the hall, would have the potential to cause noise disturbance to the occupants of neighbouring properties. The submitted noise assessment has identified the background noise levels of the site and has modelled the impact of an event using amplified music which it considers to be a 'worst case scenario' in terms of noise generating activities that would take place in the hall. It concludes that subject to acoustically upgraded glazing, the impact of such an event would not cause harm to the neighbouring dwellings or their gardens as the existing background noise levels

would not be noticeably exceeded. Other less noisy events would have a significantly lower noise impact than the modelled 'worst case scenario'.

44. The Council's Environmental Health Officer is generally in agreement with the conclusions of the report that the noise impact of the use of the hall could be mitigated to acceptable levels. However, it is considered that constraints on the hours of operation of the building, the arrangements for evening events and other noise mitigation measures are required. The EHO has recommended that the building should not be used later than 10pm on any day of the week, in order to ensure that night time noise levels are not exceeded and do not impact on the amenity of neighbours. In particular this is necessary to avoid people leaving the village hall late and causing disruption through external noise and vehicle movements which are harder to mitigate.
45. The EHO has also recommended that any evening events should be conducted with all doors and windows closed, to ensure the sound mitigating properties of the building are not compromised by sound escaping from openings in the building. However, it is considered that the potential for noise nuisance in the evening from events where no amplification is used is relatively limited. Similarly, the potential for daytime events to cause nuisance where amplification is used exists. It is therefore considered reasonable and necessary to ensure that events which rely on amplified speech or music take place with the doors and windows of the building shut. Conditions would therefore be applied requiring the use of the hall to cease no later than 10pm each day and for any events using amplification to take place with all doors and windows closed. The EHO notes that air conditioning sufficient to cool the building in summer, so that doors and windows do not need to be opened will need to be specified.
46. The submitted noise report recommends a Noise Management Plan be entered into which details the practical measures which users of the hall will take to mitigate the noise impact of the building. The EHO agrees that such a plan is necessary and requests that it contains details of how noise will be regulated and managed within the property, the identification of the responsible person who will enforce the necessary measures, the agreement of noise levels for limiters on amplified music or speech, other noise mitigation and the use of automatic door closers. It is also considered necessary to require details of the insulation of the building and glazing to ensure a sufficiently high level of acoustic insulation is provided.
47. On the basis of the above, it is considered that the noise impact of the proposed use of the hall on the amenity of neighbours is within acceptable limits and would not cause any significant harm to the use or enjoyment of their residences.
48. No details have been provided in respect of the plant and extraction systems which will be required to service the building. However the submitted noise assessment states that the noise created by such plant would be able to be mitigated so that it did not cause harm to neighbouring properties. The Council's Environmental Health Officer agrees with this conclusion and notes that the plant and extracts would likely need to be located to the South West side of the building so that it would be furthest away from neighbouring properties. A condition would be applied to any permission to ensure the adequate noise mitigation of plant and on that basis the impact on the amenity of residents from noise from plant is considered to be acceptable.

49. Given the presence of only a single window in the North elevation of the hall, which would serve a WC, a very limited amount of light would escape the building in the direction of the nearest residential properties. It is not considered that this would harm the amenity of the nearest neighbours. Although there are more openings in the side elevations of the hall, the distance of these windows from the neighbouring properties on either side means that the impact of light spill from those windows on the amenity of the residents of those neighbouring properties would be minimal. The presence of a new building in community use on a currently undeveloped recreation ground would clearly result in some additional general lighting in the area, however it is not considered that the additional level of light in the area would be sufficient to cause any significant harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents. External lighting would be controlled by condition giving the Local Planning Authority the ability to control the location and intensity of any external lighting and the ability to limit the impact from such lighting on neighbouring properties.
50. The catering facilities provided by the building would give rise to the potential for odour nuisance to be caused to neighbouring properties, however appropriate filtering and extraction of odours would be achievable and the details of the equipment would be required by condition to ensure neighbouring properties are not affected by odour emissions from the hall.

Noise and light nuisance from the use of the car park

51. While the design of the building can be used to mitigate much of the noise associated with the use of the building, the noise associated with the use of the car park from cars manoeuvring, car doors being shut and conversations of people accessing the car park is difficult to mitigate through physical barriers. It is therefore likely that the increased use of the car park which would result from the use of the village hall would result in noise which would be noticeable to occupants of neighbouring properties. During the daytime, this noise would not be unusual for a recreation ground where people can already come and go and there is a general level of activity, however in the evenings the noise would be more noticeable and potentially more disruptive.
52. However, the restrictions on times of use proposed above would mean that noise from the car park would not extend late into the night and other noise management options, such as signage reminding people to leave the building quietly, would minimise disturbance to neighbouring residents from use of the car park and on balance, it is not considered that the harm caused by the intensified use of the extended car parking area would be significant.
53. Nuisance caused by headlights of cars accessing and manoeuvring within the parking area has been considered, however given the boundary treatments of the neighbouring properties on both sides and opposite. External lighting of the car park and pathways would be controlled by condition and would be expected to be low level, giving the Local Planning Authority the ability to control the lighting impact of the extended parking area and new pathways.
54. On the basis of the above, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on the residential amenity of neighbours, in accordance with policies DP/3, NE/14, NE/15 and NE/16.

Loss of public open space

55. The use of part of the recreation ground for a building would result in the loss of an element of the open space provided on the recreation ground. However, the building would serve as a focal point for the community and provide a base from which the remaining open space on the recreation ground could be enjoyed. The increased opportunities the building would provide for local people to use and enjoy the recreation ground is considered to enhance the remaining open space and more than compensate for the loss of a portion of the recreation ground.

Transport, parking and highway safety

56. The Local Highways Authority initially issued a holding objection on the basis that the submitted transport information had used modelled rather than actual existing trips as the basis of its assessment. The applicant has since provided additional information in respect of the transport implications of the development including a survey of existing trip data and parking requirements.
57. The proposed parking area would provide 20 car parking spaces accessed via an in-out access. The Council's adopted parking standards give a maximum parking provision figure of one space per 8m², which given the floor area of the proposed hall would equate to a maximum of 50 spaces. The provision of 20 spaces is therefore significantly below that maximum. Given the relatively central location of the site in the village and the community focused events which the hall would house, it is likely that most events undertaken at the hall would result in a large proportion of attendees walking or cycling to the site. Furthermore, the Parish Council's submitted schedule of events it wishes to run, indicates that many would not attract significantly more than 20 attendees, meaning that the parking provision would be adequate even if all attendees drove independently to the hall.
58. Those events which would attract significantly larger numbers of attendees would be relatively infrequent according to the proposed schedule of events and would benefit from the central location and ability of most villagers to walk or cycle to the site, however there may be occasions where more vehicles are brought to the site than can be accommodated in the parking area. In those instances, vehicles would have to park on the street. This is not a significantly different arrangement to the present situation at the existing village hall where parking is even more constrained and where surplus vehicles have to park on the street. The Local Highways Authority has not expressed any concern in respect of the impact of on street car parking on highway safety, on the occasions where the size of the event means that not all cars can be accommodated within the car park.
59. Clearly there is a balance to be struck between the provision of parking and the impact of that parking on the visual amenity of the area under the character of the Green Belt. Taking all of the above into account, the proposed car park is considered to strike an appropriate balance, being both an adequate provision of parking facilities for most circumstances and of a scale which would not cause significant visual harm to the character of the area.
60. The LHA has requested conditions relating to the provision of pedestrian visibility splays, drainage and surfacing of the access and parking areas and the provision of a Construction Traffic Management Plan. On the basis of the above, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its parking provision and its impact on highway safety in accordance with policies DP/1, DP/2, DP/3, TR/1 and TR/2.

Trees

61. The proposed building and associated car parking would not necessitate the loss of any of the protected trees on site. The submitted arboricultural survey shows that the village hall itself would not be located within the root protection area of any of the trees. Pavement associated with the car park extension would extend within the root protection areas of two of the protected Lime trees, however a no dig construction would be utilised ensuring that the tree root system would not be damaged. The Council's Trees Officer is content that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on trees and the requested conditions in respect of the implementation of appropriate tree protection measures during construction, including protective fencing, would ensure no trees were damaged during construction.
62. On that basis, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on trees in accordance with policy NE/6.

Ecology

63. The siting of the proposed hall is such that an existing area of wildflower meadow would be lost, however the applicant is proposing that a further area of wildflower meadow is created on the Western boundary of the site, once the play area has been relocated in front of the new hall. On that basis, the scheme proposes adequate mitigation for the loss of wildflower meadow and the habitat it provides.
64. The Council's Ecology Officer requested that further assessment of the site be undertaken in terms of its potential for loss of habitat for Great Crested Newts and the fact that the impact on bats and badgers had not been assessed. The applicant has since provided additional assessment in respect of the ecological habitat potential of the site and it is now considered that an appropriate level of assessment has been undertaken.
65. The updated preliminary ecological appraisal has recommended mitigation measures to ensure that the impact on GCN would be acceptable. The implementation of such mitigation would be required by condition. A scheme of ecological enhancement, which would include proposals for bat roost and bird nesting boxes, lighting and further details of the creation of the wildflower meadow, would be required by condition.
66. On that basis, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on the ecological interests of the site, in accordance with policy NE/6.

Drainage

67. The Council's Sustainable Drainage Engineer has considered the proposed development and is content that adequate surface and foul drainage could be provided. To ensure such drainage is provided, conditions would be applied to require drainage details to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. On that basis, the proposed development is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on drainage in accordance with policies NE/9 and NE/10.

Other matters

68. Some concern has been raised locally regarding the issue of a covenant on the land restricting the use of the land to that of use as a recreation ground, which might impact on the deliverability of the village hall. However, the Council's Legal

Officer has confirmed that the restrictive covenant has been varied to allow the land to be used as a recreation ground and village hall with associated car parking and landscaping for the benefit of the local community.

69. Some representations have raised concern regarding the location of the building and the potential for vandalism and antisocial behaviour associated with its location away from the street frontage. While there is a limited amount of natural surveillance of the site, it is accepted that the rear of the building would not benefit from significant surveillance, however it is considered that with an appropriate planting scheme and fencing where necessary, the opportunities for seclusion and anti-social behaviour can be reduced to a level which would not exceed those present for other similar buildings. Further security measures such as alarms and security cameras could also be considered, however the exact nature of these measures is considered to be a matter for the Parish Council on the basis of its experience once the building is in use.
70. The concerns expressed in respect of the lack of a business plan for the building and ongoing maintenance costs for the building are considered to be detailed matters for the Parish Council and do not affect the planning merits of the application. As detailed in the Green Belt section, it is considered that the application has provided sufficient evidence that the building would benefit the community and is needed for the village and the significant support for a new facility indicates that there is demand from local residents for such a building. The precise arrangements for funding, maintaining and the day to day running of the building are not considerations which have any significant bearing on the planning merits of the application.
71. Concern has also been raised regarding the impact of the application process on nearby residents. It is accepted that both the planning process and the construction process can be stressful for neighbouring residents. The conditions imposed on both the construction phase and the use of the building are designed to limit the stress and disruption the construction would cause and mitigate the impact of the use of the building to acceptable limits.

Very Special Circumstances case

72. As set out in paragraph 27 above, the proposed development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Officers have also identified some additional limited harm in terms of loss of openness. Other potential harm can be satisfactorily mitigated through the use of appropriately worded conditions.
73. The application should only be approved where “very special circumstances” exist that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and the other identified limited harm.
74. The question of need for a larger hall is considered to be significant factor in the consideration of whether there are very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh the Green Belt harm. The Parish Council has consulted local people via a questionnaire and this identified both a good level of existing demand for a community building as well as a significant demand for events and activities which would require a larger space than is available at the existing village hall. Many of the representations received in respect of the current application have also identified that the existing facilities are lacking.

75. Hauxton has seen significant growth in its residents in recent years due to new housing developments in the village, including at the former Bayer Cropscience site on the A10. The need for additional facilities was identified during those planning applications and contributions to community facilities including indoor community space was secured by planning obligations through section 106 agreements.
76. It is therefore considered that the need for a larger village hall has been made by the current application.
77. Several sites for a larger hall in the village have been considered, including the expansion of the existing village hall. While it is possible that the currently proposed site could offer such significant benefits compared to other sites that it would be preferable in spite of its Green Belt location, the lack of other suitable non-Green Belt sites would be a significant consideration in balancing the harm to the Green Belt against other considerations.
78. The applicant has therefore considered several other sites in Hauxton as potential sites for the village hall. The existing hall was considered for extension and the Parish Council made a planning application to extend it in 2014, however there were a number of significant concerns with the proposal including concern regarding parking provision and highway safety, impact on trees and the design of the extensions which were not resolved and ultimately led to the application being withdrawn by the applicant. The internal layout of the proposed extended hall was also compromised due to the constrained site and the need to location extensions to the rear to minimise visual impact on the Conservation Area.
79. Other sites within the village have been considered by the applicant, however several of these are also within the Green Belt and are therefore not preferable in sequential terms to the chosen location. Other sites were either discounted due to their relatively remote location out of the centre of the village or were unavailable or considered unsuitable for other reasons such as constrained access. The information contained within the application is considered to demonstrate that a significant number of other sites have been considered for the proposed village hall and that none are able to both deliver the necessary community facilities and have a lesser impact on the Green Belt than the current site. As a result, the use of the proposed site is considered to have been demonstrated to a level sufficient that it should be given significant weight in the Green Belt balance.
80. The proposed site also has other benefits which are significant considerations. The site is relatively centrally located within the established village meaning it is easily accessible to most residents via walking or cycling. It is also within a reasonable distance of the new development at the former Bayer site and this is considered likely to increase the engagement and cohesion between the village and the new development. The location of the village hall on the recreation ground itself would encourage and enable the use of the recreation ground for both general day-to-day outdoor activities and specific village events. The Parish Council is proposing to install a new children's play area close to the hall which would provide a focal point for parents and children and encourage a greater use of the recreation ground. Paragraph 81 of the NPPF encourages the beneficial use of the Green Belt for recreation and the proposals for a new village hall are considered to enhance the likely use of the recreation ground for that purpose.

Balance of harm verses other considerations

81. In accordance with the NPPF, substantial weight has been given to the harm caused to the Green Belt both by reason of inappropriateness and the other harm identified through the loss of openness of a portion of the Green Belt in this location. However, it is considered that the application has provided significant evidence for the need for an enlarged hall and the lack of other suitable sites locally. Furthermore, other significant benefits of the use of the proposed site, identified above, are considered to exist. On the basis of the community need, the lack of other suitable sites and the benefits that would be specific to the proposed site, the application is considered to have demonstrated that other considerations clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and the other identified harm.
82. It is therefore considered that very special circumstances exist to grant permission for the proposed development within the Green Belt.

Recommendation

83. Delegated approval subject to:

84. Conditions and Informatives

Planning conditions and Informatives as set out below, with the final wording of any amendments to these to be agreed in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair prior to the issuing of planning permission:

- a. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
(Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development which have not been acted upon.)
- b. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
1604-HVH-DR-1000 Rev PL1 - Site Location Plan
1604-HVH-DR-200 Rev PL2 - General Arrangement Plan
1604-HVH-DR-210 Rev PL3 - Site Plan
1604-HVH-DR-211 Rev PL2 - Localised Site Plan
1604-HVH-DR-220 Rev PL2 - Elevations
Applied Ecology Ltd Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Version 3.0 - November 2017
(Reason - To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)
- c. Notwithstanding the plans hereby approved, no development above base course level shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building, hereby permitted, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason - To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- d. Notwithstanding the plans hereby approved, no development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works and wildflower meadows, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local

Planning Authority. The details shall include specification of all proposed trees, hedges and shrub planting, which shall include details of species, density and size of stock.

(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- e. All hard and soft landscape works and wildflower meadow planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting of any tree that tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.
(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- f. Notwithstanding the plans hereby approved, no development shall take place until details of the surfacing of parking areas, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development. The details shall also include specification of all proposed trees, hedges and shrub planting, which shall include details of species, density and size of stock.
(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- g. Prior to the first use of the building, hereby permitted, pedestrian visibility splays of 2m x 2m shall be provided on each side of the both vehicular access points, measured from and along the highway boundary. Such splays shall be within the red line of the site and shall thereafter be maintained free from obstruction exceeding 0.6m above the level of the adopted public highway.
(Reason - In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy DP/3 of the Local Planning Framework 2007)
- h. The proposed access, footpath and parking areas, shown on approved drawing 1604-HVH-DR-211 Rev PL2, shall be constructed so that their falls and levels are such that no private water from the site drains across or onto the adopted public highway.
(Reason - In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy DP/3 of the Local Planning Framework 2007)
- i. No deliveries or construction works shall commence on site until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The principle areas of concern that shall be addressed are:
 - (i) Movements and control of muck away lorries (all loading and unloading shall be undertaken off the adopted highway)

- (ii) Contractor parking, for both phases all such parking shall be within the curtilage of the site and not on the street.
- (iii) Movements and control of all deliveries (all loading and unloading shall be undertaken off the adopted public highway.
- (iv) Control of dust, mud and debris, in relationship to the functioning of the adopted public highway.
(Reason - In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007)

- j. Prior to the first use of the building, hereby permitted, the vehicle access and parking areas shown on approved drawing 1604-HVH-DR-211 Rev PL2, shall be fully implemented and thereafter shall be used only for the purpose of vehicle access and parking.
(Reason - In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy DP/3 of the Local Planning Framework 2007)
- k. No development shall take place on the construction of the building, hereby permitted, until details of the insulation to be used; details of all doors and windows to be installed on the building; and details of the glazing of those doors and windows have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason - To ensure an appropriate level of noise attenuation in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.) Insulation details
- l. The building, hereby permitted, shall not be used between 22:00 hours and 7:00 hours.
(Reason - To safeguard the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring residential dwellings in accordance with policies DP/3 and NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007).
- m. Any use of the building, hereby permitted, where a means of amplification is used shall take place with all external doors and windows of the building closed.
(Reason - To safeguard the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring residential dwellings in accordance with policies DP/3 and NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007).
- n. Prior to the first use of the building, hereby permitted, a detailed Noise Management Plan giving details of how noise will be regulated, managed and enforced within and around the building, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The building will only be used in accordance with the approved Plan. The principle areas of concern that shall be addressed are:
 - (i) Details of noise level limiters for amplification equipment;
 - (ii) Details of automatic door closers;
 - (iii) Details of how and when neighbouring residents will be informed of upcoming functions and events;
 - (iv) Details of other measures to ensure the use of the building surrounds and car park minimise any noise and disturbance to neighbouring dwellings;
 - (v) Details of the person or persons responsible for the monitoring and enforcement of the Noise Management Plan.

(Reason - To protect the occupiers of adjoining dwellings from the effect of noise in accordance with policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- o. Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed scheme for the ventilation, heating, cooling and extraction of dust, odour and fumes from the building, hereby permitted, as well as any necessary noise attenuation of that plant, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the planning Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved scheme shall be fully implemented prior to the first use of the building. No power driven plant or equipment, including equipment for heating, ventilation and for the control or extraction of any odour, dust or fumes from the building(s) but excluding office equipment, shall be installed on site unless submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All plant and equipment on site shall be installed, operated and maintained in accordance with the approved details and the manufacturers instructions and shall comply with any agreed noise restrictions.

(Reason - To protect the occupiers of adjoining dwellings from the effect of noise, odour, dust or fumes in accordance with policies NE/15 and NE/16 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- p. No construction site machinery or plant shall be operated and no construction related deliveries taken at or despatched from the site except between the hours of 0800-1800 Monday to Friday, 0800-1300 Saturday and not at any time on Sundays or Bank or Public holidays.

(Reason - To protect the amenity of the locality, especially for people living and/or working nearby, in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- q. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance for adjoining residents in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- r. Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water drainage, incorporating sustainable drainage system (SuDS) principles, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be based on an assessment of the potential for disposing of the surface water associated the building, hereby permitted, by means of a sustainable drainage system in accordance with the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance, the results of which shall form part of the submitted scheme. The scheme shall be designed so that there is no surcharging for a 1 in 30 year event and no internal property flooding for a 1 in 100 year event + 40% allowance for climate change. The submitted details shall provide:

- a) information about the design storm period and intensity, the method employed to delay and control the surface water discharged from the site and the measures taken to prevent pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface waters;

- b) details of a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any

public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime.

The approved drainage scheme shall thereafter be constructed and completed prior to the first occupation of the building and shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved details and management and maintenance plan.

(Reason - To ensure a satisfactory method of surface water drainage and to prevent the increased risk of flooding in accordance with policies DP/1, NE/9 and NE/11 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- s. Prior to the commencement of any development, a detailed scheme for the provision and implementation of foul water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with an implementation programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - To ensure a satisfactory method of foul and surface water drainage in accordance with Policies NE/9 and NE/10 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- t. No deliveries, construction works or any works to existing trees shall commence on site until a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Authority. The submitted information shall include details of protective fencing, ground protection measures and method for installing services and shall comply with BS5837 and industry good practice. The measures detailed in the Tree Protection Strategy shall be fully implemented prior to any deliveries or construction works commencing and shall be retained in situ until all construction works have been completed.
(Reason - In the interests of the visual amenity of the area and the impact on trees on site in accordance with policies DP/2, DP/3 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007).
- u. No works of site clearance, delivery and development shall be carried out other than in strict accordance with the details contained in section 4 paragraphs 4.13-4.17 of the approved 'Applied Ecology Ltd Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Version 3.0 - November 2017'.
(Reason - To ensure the protection of species listed under schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Conservation Regulations 2010 (as amended) and in accordance with policy NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007).
- v. Prior to the commencement of the development, a scheme of biodiversity enhancement including a timetable for its implementation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include the provision of a new area of wildflower meadow and details of ongoing management, sympathetic external lighting scheme, and the incorporation of bat and bird roosting and nesting boxes within the new development. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved timetable unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - In the interests of the biodiversity of the site in accordance with policy NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007).

- w. No external lighting shall be provided or installed within the site other than in accordance with a scheme which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason -To minimise the effects of light pollution on neighbouring residents and in the interests of ecology in the surrounding area in accordance with Policies DP/3, NE/6 and NE/14 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Background Papers

85. Where the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -
- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
 - (b) on the Council's website; and
 - (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
86. The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD (adopted January 2007)
Planning File Ref: S/2942/17/FL

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