

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

7 December 2011

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager – Planning and Sustainable Communities

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**S/1898/11/CM – CAMBOURNE & CAXTON**  
**Erection of a Secondary School with Associated Access, Sports Facilities,**  
**Hard and Soft Landscaping, Car and Cycle Parking and Other Associated**  
**Infrastructure with Temporary Construction Access**  
**At Land West of Cambourne**  
**For Cambridgeshire County Council**

**Recommendation: No objections**

**Date for Determination: 26th October 2011**

**A. Update to the report**

1. The applicant's agent has, through a letter and accompanying documents, submitted to the County Planning Authority on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2011, a formal response to a range of planning issues, many of which were raised by statutory consultees and third parties. A number of the agent's responses address issues raised in the Committee report.

**Agenda report paragraph number 19 – Cambourne Parish Council request for more on-site car parking**

2. In response to the Parish's recommendation that on-site parking spaces should be increased from 50 to 75 spaces (minimum), the applicant's Highway Consultant has advised in writing that:  
  
"The car parking proposed at Cambourne Secondary School meets SCDC LDF DPD standards which are aimed at meeting the Council's aims of promoting sustainable travel. It is not considered that the development should exceed these maximum standards, particularly as this would serve to detract from the aims of the Cambourne Secondary School Travel Plan... Nevertheless, in order to address issues of peak parking for events and wider community use an appropriate access has been provided between the car park and formal hard play area [to act as an overflow parking area]."
3. The applicant's suggested approach to car parking flexibility is to be supported, as there clearly will be occasions where parking will be at a premium on-site. Given the site's relative isolation, there may also be scope to consider some limited increase in on-site parking provision, potentially through the use of non-hard surface / more green solutions such as grasscrete parking bays.
4. Accordingly, it is suggested that the following additional point be added to the Committee Report recommendation:

(m) Support be given to the provision of an access link between the proposed on-site car parking area and the formal hard play area to act as an overflow parking area to address peak parking for events and wider community use. Furthermore, consideration be given to a limited increase in on-site parking provision, potentially through the use of non-hard surface / more green solutions such as grasscrete parking bays.

**Agenda report paragraph number 75 – Open Space & Sports Provision**  
**Agenda report paragraph number 97 – Community Access**

5. The applicant's agent states with respect to community sports usage has responded:

"The community use of the school has been raised by Sport England regarding the use of the sports facilities and two planning conditions have been suggested... Cambourne is a new community and a number of new sports facilities have recently opened and these facilities have been planned and form part of the overall masterplan granted by South Cambridgeshire District Council, and are considered to offer the appropriate level of sports provision within the community. There has been concern that to offer further sports facilities would lead to additional competition that could leave these facilities unviable. The suggested planning conditions by Sport England are therefore not considered to be appropriate. Whilst we do not want to compete with the existing sporting facilities, if a major tournament or event was being held and the school facilities were required, there would be no objection to this and it could be discussed directly with the school."

6. The current recommendation to the County Council (recommendation (f)) is that this Council supports 'in principle' Sport England's suggestion that the school should make sporting facilities available to the public, but subject to limitations due to concerns over noise impact on out-of-hours use. It is considered that this recommendation should be retained.

7. With respect to wider community uses, the applicant's agent provides some written reassurances on this by stating that:

"It has always been the intention that the school buildings would be available for use by the community and would follow the current approach operated by Comberton that includes adult learning etc. The details would be agreed with the school and they would work with other providers within the area. The design of the building is such that community use may also occur during the day along with the normal school use, as various parts of the building can be used independently of others."

8. Recommendation (k) in the Committee Report seeks to establish a level of comfort on this matter and is considered to remain appropriate.

**Agenda report paragraphs 79-84 inclusive – Highways and Access**

9. The applicant's have responded to a number of detailed highway related issues raised by the County Planning Authority, following comments received by County Highways, the Parish Councils and local residents.

10. With respect to concerns raised over the potential use of Swansley Lane as a 'drop off' point for pupils, the applicant's Highway Consultants state:

“It is not considered appropriate at this stage to provide any further drop-off facilities in the neighbourhood surrounding the school site to address potential problems of drop-off which have not yet been realised, particularly as the school will grow one year of entry at a time and will start with just 150 students. Such a response would be against SCDC and CCC policies to promote sustainable travel and may attract more car trips to the school site than might have otherwise have been the case. It is also not possible at this stage to predict where such measures might be necessary.”

11. Notwithstanding the above, the applicant’s Highway Consultants accept that drop-offs in streets adjacent to school developments can be a problem for residents of those areas, and accordingly are now proposing that monitoring is included as part of a School Travel Plan. The form of monitoring will include a survey within 6 months of occupation of the school, followed by yearly monitoring of drop-offs in streets surrounding the school as part of the wider Travel Plan monitoring.

12. The Highway Consultants go on to advise that “...should these surveys show drop-off to be a problem in residential areas surrounding the school the following actions will be taken: (1) marketing to promote sustainable travel to the school and inform parents of the drop-off facility available on the school site; (2) promotion of walking and cycling routes to the school as part of curriculum work and also through school assemblies and the school’s website; and (3) should the level of drop-off in a particular residential area prevent normal traffic flow discussions will be held with the County Council on adopting a suitable measure to provide for these trips...”

13. With respect to increased pedestrian and cycle access to the proposed school and the need for safe and appropriate means of access through residential streets in Lower Cambourne, the Highway Consultants confirm that they are now proposing:

“...that a traffic management solution be implemented at the junction of School Lane and Swansley Lane to slow vehicle speeds and promote pedestrian movement. This will include a raised table treatment at the junction together with a new footway on the eastern side of Swansley Lane between School Lane and Sweeten Tree Way.”

14. With respect to the ‘desire line’ for children to use other routes to school such as the bridleway between Swansley Lane and the Business Park and options to upgrade these routes, the applicant’s Highway Consultants respond by stating that these were looked at but discounted them for environmental reasons. In their written response they advise that:

“From the initial conception Cambourne’s ethos has determined that other than where shown to be strictly necessary for safety purposes, all paths through the semi-natural landscape areas will be minimally engineered. This is intended firstly to protect the habitat for the increased number of species which the Biodiversity Management Plan has attracted to Cambourne, including many protected species and those considered to be of principal importance for biodiversity...All over engineering in wildlife habitats is deleterious to biodiversity; lighting disrupts normal behaviour of birds, bats and many invertebrates, and all hard surfacing removes feeding opportunities, produces a movement barrier to many species, and prevents

burrowing by both invertebrates and small mammals...As such it is not appropriate to promote these routes for use by students of Cambourne Secondary School.”

15. In addition to the above, the applicant's Highway Consultants confirm that they are not proposing that students use Sheepfold Lane and the vehicular access to the school to access the site; with no measures to provide for pedestrians along this route or crossing points across the Cambourne Road to serve such a route. Notwithstanding the above, they do advise that "...infrastructure improvements are proposed to the existing track which runs through the Country Park between Cambourne Lakes [improving access for students living in parts of Great Cambourne]. This will be upgraded to a Hoggin type material suitable for its setting. Dropped kerbs will also be provided at three locations in Cambourne...to improve existing walking and cycle routes in Cambourne for pupils, staff and the wider community.”
16. Notwithstanding the additional evidence provided by the applicant's, it is considered that recommendations (b) and (c) in the Committee Report should still be pursued, as there may be scope to upgrade bridleways which are suitable for their setting. There are still concerns that students will look to walk/cycle to the school via routes across Cambourne Road from the northern sections of Great Cambourne and Upper Cambourne.

**Agenda report paragraph number 87 – Biodiversity & Nature Conservation**

17. The applicant's agent has sought to provide comfort on the scheme's ability to protect existing badger setts and mitigate the impact on great crested newts (an outline of reasonable avoidance measures during development has been appended to the Agent's letter). The Agent has also confirmed that they are prepared to support the imposition of a planning condition requiring the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to the County Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works; as recommended by the County Ecologist (in liaison with SCDC Ecology).
18. Recommendation (e) in the Committee Report remains valid.

**Agenda report paragraph numbers 88 and 89 – Flood Risk & Drainage**

19. The County Planning Authority have requested that detailed surface water and foul water drainage schemes be submitted with the application rather than being addressed through condition discharging.
20. The applicant has now submitted a detailed surface water and foul water drainage scheme, which is subject to further consultation with the relevant Statutory Bodies. Subject to these details being deemed acceptable the County Planning Authority, following confirmation from the Statutory Bodies, conditions could be imposed requiring implementation in accordance with the agreed scheme.

**Summary**

21. It is recommended that the following additional point be added to the Committee Report recommendation:

- (m) Support be given to the provision of an access link between the proposed on-site car parking area and the formal hard play area to act as an overflow parking area to address peak parking for events and wider community use. Furthermore, consideration should be given to a limited increase in on-site parking provision, potentially through the use of non-hard surface/more green solutions such as grasscrete parking bays.

**Background Papers:** the following additional background papers were used in the preparation of this update report:

- 'Revised details and additional information' submitted by applicant on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2011.

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