

## Report for Resolution

**Report to** Planning Applications Committee  
**Date** 1 July 2010  
**Report of** Head of Planning Services  
**Subject** 10/00736/F: Hewett School, Cecil Road, Norwich NR1 2PL

**Item**  
**5(2)**

### SUMMARY

<b>Description:</b>	Construction of 2 No. hockey pitches with fencing, floodlighting, integrated access road/car park and landscaping.	
<b>Reason for consideration at Committee:</b>	Major Development and Objections	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approve, subject to not receiving objections from the Environment Agency that cannot be resolved, and subject to conditions.	
<b>Ward:</b>	Lakenham	
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mr Rob Parkinson	Senior Planning Officer (Development) 01603 212765
<b>Valid date:</b>	22nd April 2010	
<b>Applicant:</b>	Norwich Dragons Hockey Club	
<b>Agent:</b>	Dr Paul Hawkins	

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Site

##### Location and Context

1. The site is located within the grounds of The Hewett School and forms part of the playing fields in the south-east corner of the site, situated to the north side of Lakenham Road, part of the Outer Ring Road, close to the roundabout and Hall Road to the east. The school campus site is currently accessed off Cecil Road during the week and from Hall Road during evening and weekends.
2. Some residential properties face the site of the proposed development from the south side of Lakenham Road. To the east are natural grass football pitches and cricket pitch, to the north are the upper slopes of the school playing fields and the school buildings. To the west is the land proposed for development as a football centre comprising 10 mini-football pitches and associated fencing and landscaping, sports pavilion and ancillary lounge bar, and 93-space car park and associated access drive – these are all considered under application 10/00481/F also referred to this Committee.
3. This part of the playing field grounds is not in particularly good condition. The proposed site covers part of a disused cinder oval athletics track and small gravel car park and access track linking to Hall Road. A disused grassed pitch lies within the cinder running track. The remains of a sports pavilion stand at the north-east corner of the site.

4. The site is linked to the main body of the school by a footpath / single lane service route to the north. This also links to the west to provide access to the neighbouring Harford Manor School. A similar route used to exist east to Hall Road, but this connection has been extinguished, although the access point remains from the disused car park.

## **Constraints**

5. Within the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan, the school playing fields are defined as Urban Greenspace, under saved policy SR3. In addition: Lakenham Road forms part of the Major Road Network defined by saved policy TRA18; Cecil Road and Hall Road north of Cecil Road, the nearby Lakenham Way to the east, and the nearby Tuckswood Lane to the south, all form part of the Strategic Cycle Network and Green Links Network defined by saved policies TRA15 and SR12 respectively; and the Hall Road Retail Park is both an allocated retail area and employment area with extant but unimplemented planning permission for extensive redevelopment (saved Local Plan policies SHO18 and EMP4.3). Hall Road also contains a Local Centre Retail Area defined by saved policy SHO12 to the north of Cecil Road.

## **Topography**

6. This part of the school playing fields is atop a raised embankment area above Lakenham Road, forming part of the Lakenham Ridge, approximately 2m above the road level at its highest at the roundabout, being highly visible and prominent in views from the south and east as the urban form slopes towards the River Yare valley and city fringe.
7. The oval running track and athletics area within the track is within a sunken part of the playing fields. When viewed from the north, this area is within a plateau below the remainder of the school grounds further up the ridge but above the roadside embankment.

## **Recent relevant Planning History across the school grounds**

**04/00254/F** – Development of the playing fields to provide (1) David Lloyd tennis, sport and fitness club building with outdoor swimming pool and sports facilities, (2) children's nursery building, and (3) two-storey nursing home, with associated access and parking and landscaping. (Application Withdrawn August 2005)

**04/00310/CF3** - Erection of Sports Hall. (Approved 2004)

**10/00387/F** - Erection of a 15m x 7.5m polytunnel near southwest corner of Hewett School site. (Refused June 2010)

**10/00481/F** - Construction of a sports pavilion with ancillary bar (A4 Use Class) and 8 No. 5-a-side and 2 No. 7-a-side artificial grass sports pitches with lighting, together with associated car parking and landscaping (also referred to this Committee).

## **The Proposal**

8. To construct two full-sized synthetic hockey pitches, with tall containment boundary fencing and high level floodlighting, and integrated access drive and car park facility accessed off Hall Road. The proposal also envisages shared use of the pavilion proposed within the Goals Football Centre under application 10/00481/F, although this is not a pre-requisite to the implementation of the hockey pitches proposal, which would contain changing facilities, sports lounge bar and meeting rooms. Extensive landscaping, including bunding along the southern boundary, is also proposed within this application.
9. In the event of the Goals football centre application 10/00481/F also gaining planning

permission, this hockey pitch development would benefit from shared use of its 93-space car park accessed solely from a reinstated drive connected to Hall Road, with an area of overspill parking provided for users of the proposed Hockey facility, at the point of the car park closest to the hockey pitches.

10. By necessity this application also shows the same area used for an access drive and car parking, though the exact extent of the car parking would be curtailed to an extent to accommodate only the necessary requirements of the anticipated use.

## Representations Received

11. In partnership with the Hewett School, the Goals and Hockey proposals were advertised through pre-application public consultation.
12. This application was advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 7 letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below.

Issues Raised	See paragraph:
a) Increased <b>traffic volumes</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highways safety will be compromised by the access position;</li> <li>Traffic will increase in surrounding residential areas, especially to the north, causing noise and risk of accidents.</li> </ul>	40-46
b) <b>Noise</b> will increase from (i) traffic, (ii) users of the pitches and pavilion, and (iii) from amplified sound and users of the pavilion sports bar, which will all affect the amenity of residents in the area at all hours, disrupting local people late at night.	13, 33-36
c) <b>Car parking</b> will become full quickly and will overspill into neighbouring residential streets and be an inefficient use of land	44
d) <b>Floodlighting</b> as proposed is excessive and will cause disturbance to the amenity of nearby residents particularly so late at night and will disrupt the night sky and destroy the ambient character of the area.	13, 35-36
e) <b>Ecology</b> will be harmed by litter, noise, loss of habitat, lights.	49-52
f) <b>Loss of urban greenspace</b> should be avoided when this site is so visible and there is a shortage of open space in the area anyway.	30-32, 49-52
g) <b>Community use</b> : The scheme represents a lost opportunity to provide alternative community facilities for the area – in particular there is a shortage of informal open space in the area.	30-32
h) <b>Pitch management / maintenance</b> may not be adequate to control noise and prevent risks to health if astropitch surfaces are not cleaned.	33-36 Future cleansing of the site is not considered to be a material planning consideration.
i) Including a sports lounge <b>licensed bar</b> within the pavilion is an inappropriate use within school grounds and will cause excessive noise and disruption until at least 11pm.	The pavilion and bar is not part of this planning application.
j) There is <b>inadequate demonstration of demand</b> for the pitches which may leave it unused at the expense of losing urban greenspace.	23-32
k) <b>Flood risk</b> may increase as the pitches cannot drain as natural grass would do.	47-48 with verbal updates pending.

l) The cumulative effects of this application alongside the football centre application would cause considerable detriment to amenity.	33-36
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## Consultation Responses

13. **Environmental Health (Pollution Control)** – No objections were raised to this proposal on grounds of noise impact or floodlighting emissions because the pitches were sited sufficiently far from residents on Lakenham Road and is in a location where background noise levels are already quite high largely as a result of traffic movements. It should be noted that noise impact from the hockey pitch use is much less intensive than those arising from the proposed football centre due to the lower levels and frequency of activity, and the nature of the sport.
14. **Norfolk County Council Highways Authority** – Based on the merits of this proposal, there is considered insufficient information in support of the application to determine the impact of the proposal on the operation of the strategic highway network. In particular the parking provision relies on the proposed Goals football centre car park, which may not allow use of the car park for hockey users after 6pm on weekdays, and the alternative parking available to the hockey club would be at the Hewett School which is too far away. As a consequence the school would not be used in practice, in favour of patrons parking on the carriageway of Hall Road where it will interfere with highway safety and affect the free flow of traffic. The application should be refused.
15. **Sport England** - As statutory consultees for developments that affect land used as playing fields, the application has been considered against the Sport England policy “A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England” (1997). This aims to ensure there is no reduction in the quality of conveniently located quality playing fields to satisfy current and future demands, which includes specific exception criteria that should be met to justify developments that would lead to loss or prejudiced use of playing fields.
16. It is acknowledged that the playing fields may not be used currently and existing grass pitch provision to the north and west of the site will not be affected, but the siting of the pitches is so inextricably linked to the proposed adjacent football centre pitches and ancillary features that they must be considered together.
17. There is a strong case for the benefits to sport from the proposal, and Norfolk-wide studies show the need for two pitch sites to meet the needs of hockey and allow for better club development, as well as the Norwich City Open Space and Needs Assessment (December 2007) identifying the need for two synthetic turf pitches in Norwich, with the Hewett School being identified specifically as a suitable location to meet this need. This shortfall was identified before the closure of facilities at Pinebanks and Redmayne, so the need for new facilities will be even more acute now. In particular, the closure of Pinebanks caused a loss of a full-size synthetic turf pitch which created a specific pressing need for a hockey club location in Norwich to allow full club development and the addition of hockey to the curriculum of the Hewett School and neighbouring schools and local community.
18. Sport England therefore consider there to be strong arguments for the need for the pitches, and for the Hewett School to host them on site, along with there being operational benefits from working alongside the proposed football centre.
19. The detrimental impacts are limited to the redundant cinder athletics track and an under-used poor quality grass pitch; it is considered that the benefits outweigh these losses and will meet the exception criteria of the Sport England policy to justify loss of the playing field.

20. In the event that the adjacent football centre proposal is also approved, Sport England would wish to be assured that changing facilities will be available and able to accommodate hockey club users during the football centre's peak demand periods. In any case, conditions are requested for an approval of this application, relating to pitch construction specifications and lighting levels and operation, and agreement to allow community uses.
21. **Environment Agency** – Comments have not yet been received; the site is not in a flood risk area but is large enough in area to have required a flood risk assessment covering surface water. The consultation response will be provided at the meeting of the Planning Committee.

## **ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Relevant Planning Policies**

#### **Relevant National Planning Policies**

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development  
PPS1 Supplement – Planning for Climate Change  
PPS9 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation  
PPG13 – Parking  
PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation  
PPG24 – Planning and Noise  
PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk

#### **Relevant Strategic Regional Planning Policies**

##### **East of England Plan 2008**

SS1 - Achieving Sustainable Development  
SS6 – City and Town Centres  
T14 - Parking  
ENV3 - Biodiversity and Earth Heritage  
ENV7 - Quality in the Built Environment  
WM6 - Waste Management in Development  
NR1 - Norwich Key Centre for Development and Change

#### **Relevant Structure Plan Policies**

##### **Norfolk Structure Plan 1999**

T.2 - Transport - New Development

#### **Relevant Local Plan Policies**

##### **City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004**

NE4 – Street trees to be provided by developers  
NE8 - Management of features of wildlife importance and biodiversity  
NE9 - Comprehensive landscaping scheme and tree planting  
HBE12 - High quality of design in new developments  
HBE19 - Design for safety and security including minimising crime  
EP16 - Water conservation and sustainable drainage systems  
EP17 –Protection of watercourses from pollution from stored material, roads & car park  
EP18 - High standard of energy efficiency in new developments  
EP22 - High standard of amenity for residential occupiers  
SR1 – Minimum standards for provision of open space  
SR3 – Criteria for development of Urban Greenspace and Recreational Open Space  
SR5 – Allocation of specific areas for open space

SR6 – Dual use of facilities provided in educational and other establishments  
SR13 – Locational considerations for indoor sports facilities  
SR14 – Criteria for sports development  
TRA3 – Modal shift measures in support of NATS  
TRA5 - Approach to design for vehicle movement and special needs  
TRA6 - Parking standards - maxima  
TRA7 - Cycle parking standards  
TRA8 - Servicing provision  
TRA11 – Contributions for transport improvements in the wider area  
TRA12 – Travel Plans for employers and organisations in the city  
TRA14 - Enhancement of the pedestrian environment and safe pedestrian routes  
TRA18 - Major road network

### **Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance**

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (Adopted December 2006)  
Trees and Development (Adopted September 2007)  
Open Space and Play Provision (Adopted June 2006)  
Flood Risk and Development (Adopted June 2006)  
Transport Contributions (January 2006)

### **Other Material Policy Considerations**

Sport England policy: 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England' (1997).

## **Principle of Development**

### **Disposal of School Playing Fields**

22. The proposal is not a commercial form of development and hence is not required to undergo the process of gaining the Secretary of State's permission to dispose of the school asset under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended), which relevant Government Guidance (July 2007) makes clear should normally be obtained prior to planning permission being sought. The neighbouring proposed commercial Goals football centre has gained consent, part of which will require that scheme to contribute to the development of the hockey pitch scheme considered here.

### **Policy Considerations**

23. **National planning policy** - PPG17 sets out the objectives for preserving playing fields. The pre-cursor to proposing development on sports land is ensuring proposals are consistent with the findings of an up-to-date open space audit and needs assessment, because in general, there is a presumption against development on sports land. The Council has an up-to-date Open Space and Sports Facility Needs Assessment (December 2007) which has addressed these points. It is also necessary to bear in mind that whilst the school playing fields do provide some use, they are essentially private facilities and are not so freely-available as Public Open Space is.
24. The national policy does recognise that some sports land may be available for alternative use, acknowledging that development can remedy deficiencies in provision, providing the new facility remains accessible and at least equivalent in size, usefulness, attractiveness and quality, resulting in a qualitative improvement to open space and sports facilities. Development on playing fields should not generally be allowed in the absence of an up-to-date and robust assessment of need, unless the playing fields to be lost would be replaced by playing fields of better quantity and quality, or, if the replacement sports facility would benefit the development of sport sufficient to outweigh the detriment caused by the losing the existing playing field.

25. Potential locations for new sports facilities should ensure developments can promote non-car access; avoid significant loss of residential amenity or biodiversity; enhance the range of existing facilities; consider security and safety; use brownfield land in preference to greenfield sites; assess the impact on social inclusion, and consider recreational needs of visitors. Proposals should only be approved in highly accessible locations in or adjacent to town centres or in district or neighbourhood centres, and should not be allowed outside these locations if there is potential to undermine such defined centres or if they are not well served by public transport.

### **Assessment of need and demand**

26. The City Council's Open Space Needs Assessment (December 2007) reported a shortage of outdoor sports space in the South Norwich area, as existing facilities are below-average quality, suggesting there is scope to improve the area's quality of sports facility provision.
27. Based on a per-capita standard, the Needs Assessment found an overall need for up to 5 full-size synthetic turf pitches in the City. There are three currently available, so a specific shortfall of 2 full-size synthetic pitches exists in Norwich. Whilst all city residents can access existing centres within the recommended 20minutes driving time, general accessibility is considered relatively poor, being concentrated in the north-west.
28. The Hewett School is specifically identified within the Open Space Study as being a recommended location for new Synthetic Turf Pitch facilities, to fill a strategic gap in provision. The use of two full-size synthetic pitches in this proposal means that it can directly satisfy this particular type of need as identified in the 2007 assessment. At the time of the survey, the Needs Assessment found there to be an identified need by individual clubs for additional time at existing Synthetic Turf Pitch facilities, so there was a demand even before the closure of the Pinebanks facility in Thorpe St Andrew. The provision of additional hockey pitches at the Hewett School helps to recover the previous levels of outdoor sports provision in Norwich as seen last in 2007. Sport England endorse the proposal as being a means to satisfy the demand in the city, and point out that the applicant will be returning to the City after a short period of absence following the closure of their previous facility base at Pinebanks.
29. Overall, the proposal should ensure that the replacement sports facility will benefit the development of sport to an extent that outweighs the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field. The proposal will increase the useable area of sports facilities at the site, and will be more useable than the facilities it would replace. Although not a brownfield site, the location is nonetheless considered sustainable and accessible with good public transport links. The proposal will also complement the future Hall Road District Centre opposite the site, and will be close to facilities and a sizeable catchment population, and through landscaping can enhance the attractiveness, and biodiversity at the site.
30. **Local Plan Sports and Recreation Policy** – Saved Local Plan policies aim to control the loss of sports pitches and sporting facilities, whilst minimising the impacts of proposed sports development. Policy SR1 sets out targets for improving sport facility provision across the city, including improving the ratio of sports pitch area per 1000 population. Aside from demonstrating need, developments must provide a qualitative enhancement to community sports and leisure in order to justify the loss of existing facilities and urban greenspace and the erosion of the open character of the area, they should be appropriately located in sequential test terms.
31. The Hewett School grounds are defined as Urban Greenspace under policy SR3, allocated

for its significant amenity value, despite its limited public access. Loss of the urban greenspace will not be permitted unless an alternative facility of equivalent sporting value is provided and there is no overriding amenity or biodiversity interest that would be lost or damaged. Where there is no overriding amenity or biodiversity interest in retaining the site in its existing open form, development is evaluated for its contribution to the amenity of the local community, to biodiversity and qualitative improvements to remaining open space.

32. It is accepted that the existing cinder track and grass pitch are in disrepair and the scheme will provide replacement pitches of improved sporting and recreational value at the site, enhancing sports provision in this sector and the south of the city in general. The facility has been proposed in partnership with the school to provide school lesson use. Local Plan policy SR6 requires new development of sporting facilities to provide community group use in order to offset the loss of scarce open space and strengthen links to the local community. Proposals should only be permitted where adequate provision is made for use by the community and specific appropriate provision is made for groups with difficulties accessing recreational facilities. Planning conditions can be used to ensure a continued Community Use Agreement is in place to meet these objectives, as requested by Sport England.

## **Impact on Living Conditions**

### **Noise Disturbance**

33. There is concern over noise generated at the site, arising from shouting and ball impacts, and floodlighting effects being intrusive to local residents. The raised position of the site increases the likelihood of noise escaping from the facility, and floodlighting being more visible, so these are important concerns. However, noise is considered by Environmental Health as unlikely to be problematic, given that background noise levels are already relatively high due to the busy roads. Construction methods of the facility include using carpeted boards around the pitch to minimise the noise generated, the details of which will be required by condition.
34. It is worth noting that Environmental Health also considered the adjacent proposed football centre noise impacts (a more intense source of noise emissions) and found the impact experienced from that proposal likely to be only marginal when experienced outside the front of the properties, and unlikely to affect the experience felt at the rear or inside properties. Further, the football centre noise is lower than noise from traffic passing the site and would be drowned-out anyway for the majority of time. Background traffic noise is considered likely to increase anyway in the near future as the approved Hall Road District Centre becomes developed and includes more uses later into the night.

### **Lighting Disturbance**

35. The application includes proposals for 9no. 13m high-level post-mounted floodlights, and the application includes a Lighting Report which explains the use of a high lighting design standard with the floodlights positioned to minimise any potential overspill and containing 95% of the light onto the pitch surface. Set against the context of the existing bright street lighting, and with the benefit of the adjoining tree line barrier, the effects are not considered to be detrimental to amenity of residents or the character of the area. Conditions are proposed to ensure the floodlighting is (a) both maintained regularly, and (b) used only during active pitch sessions by ensuring floodlights around each individual pitch are turned off within 5 minutes of the end of the session to minimise spillage affecting residents or the night sky. Car park lighting details can also be established through condition.
36. Hours of use of the facility will also be controlled by condition to minimise the impacts from noise, lighting, and traffic. These are proposed as 22:30 Mon-Fri, 21:00 Sat, 19:00 Sun.



## **Design**

### **Layout**

37. At the east of the site, vehicular access is taken from Hall Road on the site of the existing gate. A short drive leads to the 93-space car park proposed as part of the adjoining Goals development. At the north-west corner of the car park the tarmac and block paving gives way to an unmarked overflow car park area in grasscrete, specifically set aside for the peak-use overflow of the hockey pitch users. Footpath access is also provided from the north of the car park site, to link with the school and to be wide enough to serve as an emergency access route for the hockey site. When the original plans were received, reservations were aired over the need for a full road to link to the school but this has since been removed from the Goals proposal; if that scheme is not given permission, it will be removed from this scheme through conditions to modify the car park layout and confirm landscaping.

### **Form**

38. The fencing surrounding the pitches is by necessity very tall, at 5m height. The impact of their visual appearance is somewhat lessened by using a black-fabric close netting at higher levels above pitch-side steel fencing. The lower level boundaries are partially hidden from views from the south by a proposed earth mound bund. This is considered acceptable within the context of the proposed landscape objectives for the whole of this part of the site. An additional spectator fence surrounding the facility but remaining within the grounds of the school is proposed up to 1.2m in height. The final details of all fences and landscaping, including hardstanding and soft landscaping planting specifications, will be confirmed through planning conditions. The development will also be partially sunk into the ground which will reduce the visual impact in views from the north.
39. It will be necessary to use conditions to ensure that the development takes place in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Implications Assessment and to ensure the specific form of construction is compatible with latest national sporting standards.

## **Transport and Access**

### **Transport Assessment**

40. Traffic volumes visiting this facility will for the most part be minimal as there is predicted to be a high rate of car sharing and local non-car access is promoted through the close cycle and walking links and decent (and improving) bus services passing the site. A travel plan will be agreed through condition to promote car sharing and reduce reliance on the car.
41. The traffic impact of the development is predominantly during off-peak hours of the day, and is considered to be negligible in impact on the strategic highways network. The additional traffic that the site will create in the peak hour is not sufficient to require specific highways improvements, nor provide financial contributions towards sustainable transport.
42. Regular public transport links are available direct to the site (bus numbers 17 and 17a) from the city centre, albeit in the evenings these are far less frequent, if present at all. It is likely that the frequency of services would improve subsequent to the development of the recently-permitted scheme for mixed use redevelopment and expansion of the Hall Road District Centre. As part of the permission, that scheme will also include junction and traffic flow improvements to the highways in the area, including providing shared pedestrian and cycle surface along Hall Road directly past this site, and financial contributions to improving

the standard of bus services in the immediate area.

### **Vehicular Access and Servicing**

43. In principle there is no objection to this proposal; there are only a limited number of locations in the City where such a facility can be located, given the fairly extensive of land required, and the use is not considered acceptable in the city centre in transport terms. The site layout and access are acceptable to planning transportation, provided that precise details of the access point and any gates are provided by planning condition.

### **Car Parking**

44. The application intends to share the car park resources of the adjoining Goals proposal, which shows spaces for 93 car parking spaces (including 5 disabled spaces), motorbike spaces and bicycle stands, which by necessity is significantly above the maximum car parking standards but is considered reasonable because the combined use of the site will therefore be much more intense than would be the case if it were laid out with normal sized pitches. Due to the greater numbers of people using the site there will be a need for overflow parking provision to be available during periods of use of the hockey pitches, in order to prevent 'fly-parking' in nearby residential area or even on Hall Road or Lakenham Road themselves. Use of the overspill area outside these hours can be controlled by condition to discourage unnecessary car trips amongst footballers. In the event of the Goals proposal not being approved, conditions will be used to revise the car parking layout and numbers needed accordingly. Parking shall be provided prior to use by condition.

### **Cycle Routes, Cycle Parking and Pedestrian Links**

45. Cycle links in the area are good with the strategic cycle network passing close to the site along Cecil Road and the Lakenham Way. Pedestrian access from the orth is possible through the school grounds, and can be used by those using busses along Ipswich Road. There is a sizeable residential catchment population in the area and it is reasonable to expect higher levels of walking, cycling and car-sharing amongst visitors.
46. Cycle parking shall be required by condition with the designs required to provide covered and secure storage in accordance with policy standards.

## **Environmental Issues**

### **Flood Risk and Groundwater Protection**

47. Flood risk - To be updated following receipt of the Environment Agency's comments.
48. The site is within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone which means there is potential to affect drinking water supplies unless pollution control measures are included. Accordingly, the surface water from parking areas and hardstanding shall be required by condition to pass through an oil interceptor, the details of which shall first be agreed.

## **Trees and Landscaping**

### **Landscaping, Ecology and Impact on Trees**

49. Most of the site is of poor ecological value but the development has the potential to enhance this through using an integrated landscape scheme that includes extensive replacement planting to significantly enhance the existing tree belts to the south and north of the site, particularly along Lakenham Road. A successful landscape strategy is critical to the successful design of the site, as required by Local Plan policy NE9, so this will be required by condition on any permission. The landscaped nature of Hall Road and Lakenham Road as key traffic routes gives this part of the city an identifiable character, founded on its position adjacent to the wooded ridge. The Council has an aim to

strengthen the wooded ridge through Lakenham, so a significant massing of trees is required to enhance the visual link and offset any impacts from far-reaching views.

### **Replacement Planting**

50. By nature of the current use the playing fields are open and it is accepted that the proposal will alter the current streetscape. The proposal incorporates the existing bund running along the southern boundary of the site as well as adding an additional mound and providing substantial planting to screen much of the built form from overlooking residential properties, allowing the development to be largely sympathetically integrated into the landscape of Hall Road/Lakenham Road. The landscaping will offer less screening of the development from the north but the proposals are nevertheless considered appropriate and acceptable. It is suggested that a planting specification be agreed through planning condition to confirm species, density, protection during growth, and continued maintenance all around the site.

### **Loss and Preservation of Trees**

51. The trees in this part of the grounds are more defined and provide a greener setting than the area to the east, with established rows to the north and south. The proposal is sited sufficiently far south of the east-west tree belt along the line of the Hewett School path, and far enough north from the tree belt along Lakenham Road to avoid damage to the existing trees, subject to the development being constructed in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Implications Assessment and a pre-development meeting with Tree Officers.
52. In the event of the car park and access being provided independent of the Goals football centre, the scheme will be required to provide adequate replacement of street trees by condition. Overall, the scheme is considered to provide a qualitative improvement to the remaining open space by greatly enhancing the landscaped setting of the site and the adjacent wooded ridge, and improving local biodiversity, in accordance with national policy PPS9 and Local Plan policies SR3 and NE8.

### **Conclusions**

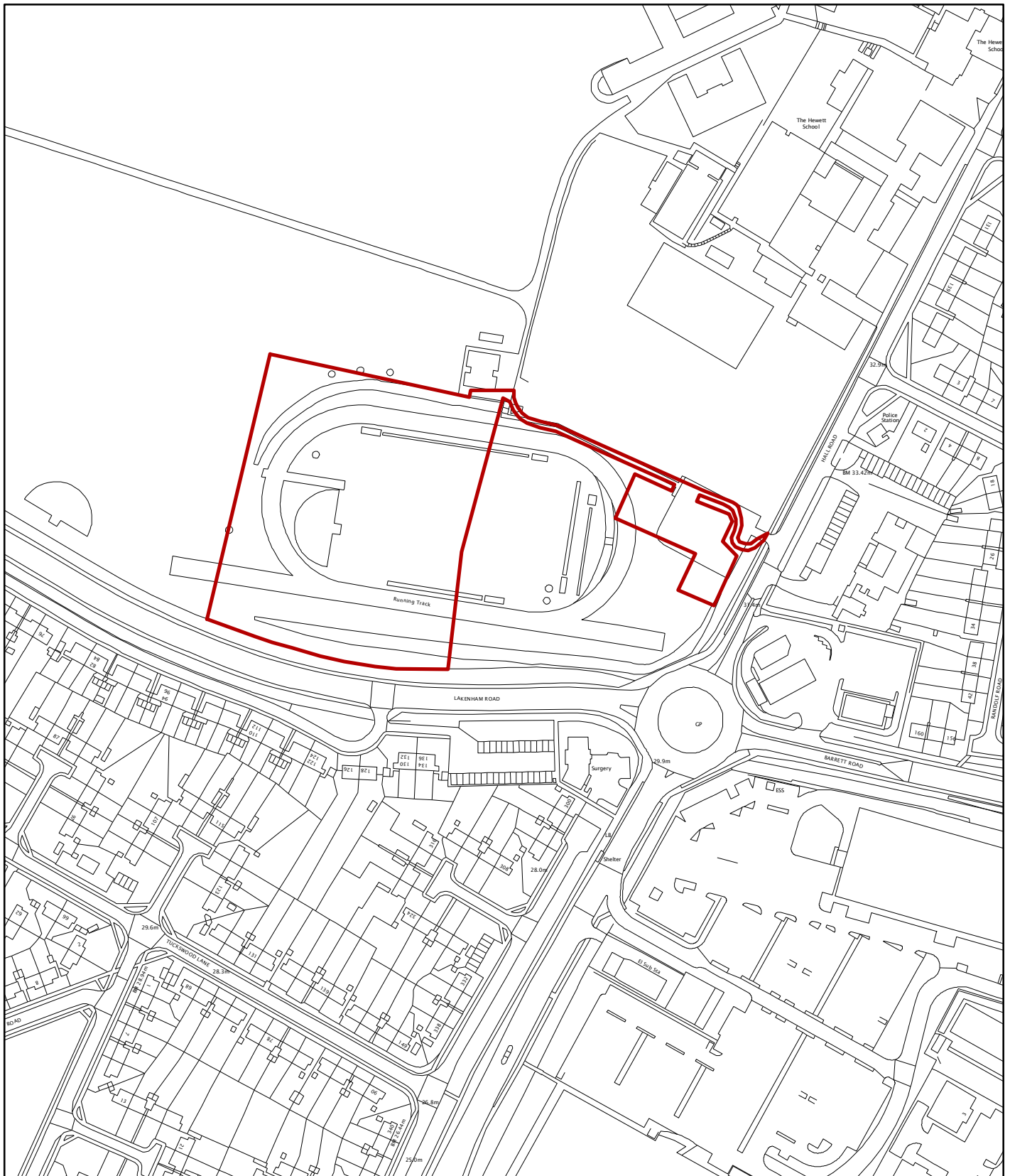
53. Although there is a reluctance to see the loss of urban greenspace in the City it is evident that the facility will fulfil an identified shortage of synthetic turf pitch and hockey club facilities in this part of the City, and is in line with the findings of the latest Open Space and Sporting Needs Assessment, as required by PPG17. The loss of the grass playing field is considered to have been overcome because the benefits of the new pitches are considered sufficient to outweigh the loss of both the playing field and the urban greenspace, and the proposal is therefore consistent with the criteria of national policy PPG17 and Local Plan policy SR3.
54. Subject to appropriate planning conditions, the proposal will provide a level of community use as required by Local Plan policy SR6, whilst contributing to sports enhancement targets in SR1. Although not in a sequentially-ideal location as endorsed by PPG17, the proposal does benefit from being on a public transport route and within excellent and improving local cycle and walking links. On balance the nature of the scheme and its transportation implications are considered of low significance and are acceptable to this location. Although the character of the area will change rather dramatically, the design and extensive comprehensive landscaping proposals are considered able to enhance the character of the setting and environment of the area, whilst ensuring minimal detrimental impacts to the amenity of nearby residents, as required by Local Plan policy SR14 and EP22.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Subject to not receiving objections from the Environment Agency which cannot be resolved by appropriate conditions, to approve Application No 10/00736/F: Hewett School, Cecil Road, Norwich, NR1 2PL, and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:

- a. Statutory time limit.
- b. Development in accordance with plans submitted
- c. Pitch construction details shall be agreed, in consultation with Sport England
- d. Noise reduction measures around the pitches shall be agreed and implemented
- e. A Community Use Scheme shall be agreed, to include use, access, management
- f. Flood risk measures being provided
- g. Groundwater protection measures being provided
- h. Highways access details to be agreed
- i. Floodlighting shall be maintained and installed with measures to ensure they are turned off when not in use; details to be agreed, consulted with Sport England
- j. Car park lighting details
- k. Landscaping scheme agreement and implementation – including boundary treatments, hardstanding areas, soft landscaping proposals and planting specifications (including street trees if necessary) and maintenance thereof.
- l. Trees protected and development to be in accordance with the Arboricultural Implications Assessment
- m. A pre-development site meeting shall be held with the Tree Officer
- n. Hours of use pitches restricted to 22:30 Mon-Fri, 21:00 Sat, 19:00 Sun.
- o. Car parking design and layout, provision, use and retention, including overspill parking details and management thereof
- p. Cycle parking design and provision
- q. Fencing details, materials and appearance to be agreed
- r. Travel plan agreement, implementation and monitoring

(Reasons for approval: The recommendation is made having had regard to the objectives of national policy and the requirements of the regional and local development plan, and all other material considerations. The development is considered to provide a valuable sporting facility that contributes to enhancing the participation of sport and fulfilling an identified shortage of synthetic turf pitches in the City and hockey club facilities in line with identified needs. Subject to the use of conditions, the development will provide an appropriate level of community participation and standard of facility sufficient to outweigh the loss of the existing playing fields and enhance the overall development of sport. The loss of urban greenspace at the site is considered acceptable given the enhanced sporting facilities proposed within the scheme, opportunities for comprehensive landscaping and replacement planting to enhance biodiversity. Whilst the location is outside the preferred sequential location for such facilities, the site is nevertheless considered adequately accessible and will encourage sustainable transport use as arising from existing and future cycle and walking links and the use of a travel plan. The development is not considered to lead to unacceptable impact on residential amenity, which will be further preserved by use of appropriate planning conditions. As such the development is consistent with national guidance PPG17, PPS1, PPS9, PPG13, PPG24 and PPS25, regional policies SS1, T14, ENV3 and ENV7 of the East of England Plan (May 2008), and saved policies NE4, NE8, NE9, HBE12, HBE19, EP16, EP17, EP22, SR1, SR3, SR6, SR14, TRA5, TRA6, TRA7, TRA8, TRA12 and TRA14 of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (November 2004).



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Planning Application No - 10/00736/F  
 Site Address - Hewett School, Cecil Road  
 Scale - 1:2,500



**NORWICH**  
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