

Report for Resolution

Report to Planning Applications Committee
Date 1 July, 2010
Report of Head of Planning Services
Subject 10/00481/F: Hewett School, Cecil Road, Norwich NR1 2PL

Item
5(1)

SUMMARY

Description:	Construction of a sports pavilion (D2 Use Class) 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.
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Major Development and Objections
Recommendation:	(1) Approve, subject to a satisfactory S106 legal agreement being agreed prior to 17 th September 2010; Or, (2) Refuse, if a Section 106 legal agreement is not agreed prior to 17 th September 2010. Note: an approval in the event of Sport England not removing their holding objection would necessitate referral to the Secretary of State (Go-East).
Ward:	Lakenham
Contact Officer:	Mr Rob Parkinson Senior Planning Officer (Development) 01603 212765
Valid date:	23 rd June, 2010 (re-validated following alterations to ownership certificates)
Applicant:	Goals Soccer Centres Plc
Agent:	Mark Jackson

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 at the north-east corner of the Lakenham Road/Hall Road roundabout. The site is bordered by Lakenham Road, part of the Outer Ring Road, to the south, the roundabout, and Hall Road to the east, redundant tennis courts and school buildings to the north, and school playing fields to the west. 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, a surgery and car park garages face the site of the proposed development from the south side of Lakenham Road. A petrol station, fast-food

restaurant, police station and employment premises face the site from the east, across from the east of Hall Road, and car parking for the Hall Road Retail Park warehouse units address the opposite (south-east) side of the roundabout.

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-west 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. The part of the school playing fields the subject of this application are situated atop a raised embankment area above Lakenham Road, forming part of the Lakenham Ridge. This elevated position is approximately 2m above the road level at the roundabout and provides a highly visible siting, 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.

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)

10/00736/F - Construction of 2 No. hockey pitches with fencing, floodlighting, integrated access road/car park and landscaping (also referred to this Committee).

The Proposal

8. To provide a sports pavilion with changing facilities, sports lounge bar and meeting rooms, to serve users of ten synthetic artificial grass sports pitches, predominantly for football use,

comprising 8no. 5-aside and 2no. 7-aside pitches. The facility would provide a 93-space car park for users of the Goals Soccer Centre (and users of the hockey pitches proposed adjacent to this site) accessed solely from a vehicular access off Hall Road. An area of overspill parking is also shown for users of the proposed Hockey facility, at the rear of the site. The football pitches would be surrounded by tall containment fencing and high level floodlighting. Extensive landscaping, including bunding, is also proposed, as well as a footpath link north to the school.

9. The application has changed its form twice since submission, using three different layouts. Initially, original submission of the application in March 2010 sited the pavilion parallel to Hall Road, with its pitches laid-out at an angle within 60m of Lakenham Road at the closest point to residential properties. The layout included a proposed full access road from Hall Road connecting all the way through to the existing single-width drive/path within the school grounds proper at the north-west corner of this application site.
10. These designs were revised (14th May) in response to comments received, which necessitated a further 21-day public consultation period. These removed the access road altogether, to provide only a short drive into the car park, and orientated the pavilion on an angle, to provide a gable elevation fronting the roundabout. Crucially, the layout changed the siting of the pitches to provide better pedestrian connection to the school, avoiding the need for pupils to walk through the car park. However, this left the pitches in a location closer and more parallel to the road, within 30m of the road at its closest point to residential properties. These revisions drew further concern from some consultees and neighbours; in particular, noise emissions were considered likely to have become more problematic, particularly in the absence of an updated noise assessment, and less room was available for meaningful landscaping.
11. Subsequent to these concerns the plans have again been revised (17th June) in an attempt to address the matters raised. The pavilion remains at an angle but the pitches have been set further back from Lakenham Road, still appearing parallel but being at least 45m away from the road opposite residential properties. This was supported by submission of a revised noise assessment and updated comprehensive landscaping plans. These revisions also included an overspill car parking area reserved for users of the proposed hockey pitches (application 10/00736/F).
12. It is considered that as the latest June 17th plans have lessened the impact of the 14th May scheme's layout on neighbours on Lakenham Road that a further public consultation period has not been necessary.
13. This report will briefly describe the initial proposals and their impact and how they were revised and the issues raised because this provides a context to the issues outstanding. The report finishes with descriptions of the latest submission of plans currently considered by Planning Committee and the issues created therein.

Representations Received

14. In partnership with the Hewett School, the Goals and Hockey proposals were promoted in summer 2009 through pre-application public consultation and as part of the Section 77 process (see paras 30-32).
15. This application was advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing on 31st March and objectors to the initial proposals were notified of revisions in writing on 17th May. 39 letters of representation have been

received citing the issues as summarised in the table below.

Issues Raised	See paragraphs:
a) Increased traffic volumes : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways safety will be compromised by the access position; • The transport assessment does not analyse the impacts on the Hall Road / Queens Road junction; • Traffic will increase in surrounding residential areas, especially to the north, causing noise and risk of accidents; 	85-91
b) Noise will increase from (i) traffic, (ii) users of the pitches and pavilion, and (iii) from amplified sound at the pavilion sports bar, which will all affect the amenity of residents in the area at all hours, disrupting local people late at night and on Sunday mornings.	64-67
c) Including a sports lounge licensed bar within the pavilion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is an inappropriate use within school grounds. • Is stated as being fundamental to the scheme's overall viability, which seems inappropriate to both a school site and the residential area. • Will cause excessive noise and disruption until at least 11pm. • Will also lead to outside drinking and extra noise problems. 	83-84
d) Car parking will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overspill into neighbouring residential streets. • Be over-provided, exceeding set parking standards, and being an inefficient use of land, will result in an over-reliance on the private car given the poor predictions for car-sharing rates. • Be so extensive it shows the centre won't cater to local people. 	87
e) Impact on school resources : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will detrimentally impact the school for short-term financial gain at the expense of long-term resource provision. • The car park is an inappropriate use of school playing fields. • Loss of the playing field is contrary to promoting sport amongst school pupils and will lead to an increase in child obesity. • Loss of the field exacerbates a shortage among local schools. • There is no need for the [previously proposed] full new road. 	30-63 generally. Financial implications for the school is not a material planning consideration
f) Loss of urban greenspace should be avoided when this site is so visible and there is a shortage of open space in the area anyway.	30-63
g) Insufficient demand for the facility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The loss of the playing field has not been justified adequately. • There is not enough demand for the facility and it may leave the site unused at the expense of a loss of urban greenspace. 	39-44
h) Community use : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme proposes inadequate facilities for school or community sports development. • It will be used very little by the surrounding communities. • 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. 	60-61
i) Floodlighting as proposed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is excessive and will cause disturbance to the amenity of nearby residents particularly so late at night. 	26, 68

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will disrupt the night sky and destroy the ambient character of the area. 	
j) Ecology will be harmed by litter, noise, loss of habitat, light.	77-82
k) Pitch management / maintenance may not be adequate to control noise and prevent risks to health if astropitch surfaces are not cleaned.	64-67. Future cleansing of the site is not considered to be a material planning consideration.
l) Flood risk may increase as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the pitches cannot drain as natural grass would do. • drains and sewers may not be able to cope. 	92
m) Groundwater may become contaminated.	93
n) Cycle parking is inadequate as proposed.	90

Consultation Responses

16. **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.
17. It is acknowledged that the playing fields may not be used currently. However, it is still considered necessary for the development “to demonstrate sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh detriment caused by the loss of the playing fields”. The loss of the cinder athletics track is acceptable given the poor state of repair and the requirement to use modern synthetic athletics facilities instead. However, it is considered possible to re-instate the grass pitch currently sited within the athletics track sufficient to allow its re-use, and for that reason the loss of the pitch should be resisted.
18. The proposed free and discounted school and community use of the pitches alongside its commercial operation is considered beneficial to the development of sport.
19. However, the loss of the grass pitch is considered detrimental to this part of Norwich. Despite the public use of the pitches being in decline recently - due to rising prices and poor changing accommodation - there is still considered to be a high demand for community grass pitch provision whilst grass pitches at other schools may be being lost.
20. Further, although the Norwich Open Space Assessment identifies a shortage of Synthetic Turf Pitches in this part of Norwich, it does not specify which particular types of Synthetic Turf Pitches would be needed to satisfy specific needs and functions of different sports; ultimately the Needs Assessment does not specifically demonstrate the strategic need for an additional facility of this kind in the Norwich area.
21. Following their own consultation with the Norfolk Football Association, Sport England consider that the application has not adequately demonstrated that demand for the facility would either: (i) be sufficient to avoid jeopardising the future of existing facilities; or (ii) avoid simply displacing customers of one facility to another, resulting in over-supply of facilities without leading to any net increase in sporting participation, at the expense of causing a loss of a grassed sports pitch.

22. There are already existing similar facilities at the Bowthorpe Park Football Development Centre (which is operated by the Norfolk Football Association) and the University of East Anglia. The Norfolk FA do not consider either centre to be operating at full capacity for small-sided adult football and there is concern that the market may be saturated already, which could cause demand to be displaced from either facility, resulting in potential harm to the long-term viability of existing centres.
23. Sport England acknowledge that commercial competition can not normally be a material planning consideration but in this instance consider it a necessary part of determining the application against their playing field exception policy. By extension, that includes determination against national planning policy PPG17, which requires proposals for sports facilities on playing fields to be assessed against whether the benefits to the development of sport are able to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field.
24. Sport England retain an objection to the scheme stands until such time as further information can demonstrate that a strategic demand exists for an additional centre to meet an identified need for this type of additional facility, in order to meet the exception test of the Sport England playing fields policy.
25. **Environment Agency** – There were initial objections to the scheme based on a lack of information concerning surface run-off, soakaway storage and infiltration capacity. A revised Flood Risk Assessment was submitted which addressed these points, demonstrating the ground conditions are suitable for infiltration using two soakaways. The Environment Agency now have no objection to the scheme and recommend conditions.
26. **Environmental Health (Pollution Control)** – Initially, no objections to noise impact or floodlighting emissions were raised because the football pitches were sited 60m from Lakenham Road and at the junction of two busy roads, where ambient background noise levels and traffic movements are already quite high. Noise levels generated by the development would be within reasonable limits; although residents nearby would still hear occasional noise, these should not be intrusive. Noise dampening will be assisted by the construction of bunding, particularly for the residents on Lakenham Road. Flood-lighting appears to have been well designed and overspill into the surrounding area has been minimised and is unlikely to spill much beyond the development, let alone affect residential properties.
27. Noise concerns did arise when the pitches were re-sited significantly closer to residential properties [30m] and there was far greater risk of noise nuisance, particularly as the noise is intrusive in its general nature due to high levels of human voice and impact noise. However a formal assessment wasn't possible without an updated noise assessment.
28. As plans were revised again, taking the pitches further away from the road, a revised noise assessment was submitted on 21st June. The comments of the Environmental Health Officer were received as below:

“Properties around the site are already subjected to reasonably high levels of noise due to the adjacent major roads, and the noise levels from the proposed site are predicted to be lower than the ambient noise levels. The acoustic report supplied ... has identified 4 measurement points to represent the nearest affected premises, one of which is the Tuckswood Surgery, which I have disregarded as unlikely to be greatly affected by the proposed development which is likely to generate the highest levels of noise at the evening and weekends, when the surgery is closed. Of the 3 remaining measurement points the most vulnerable is 130-132 Lakenham Road.

Table 7.1 (in para 7.1) indicates that the noise emitted from the site and received at the Lakenham Road point falls within the World Health Organisation Guidelines, which is in fact not correct. The guidelines give two values:-

Noise levels (outside)	Critical Health Effects
55db LAeq	Serious annoyance, daytime and evening
50dB LAeq	Moderate annoyance, daytime and evening

The predicted figure outside the Lakenham Road address is 52dB LAeq, which obviously falls between the two figures above, although this is still lower than the existing traffic noise, and also is at the front of the residential premises, but it is far more likely that it is the rear gardens that would be actually in use for recreation, where noise levels are likely to be lower.

Para. 7.2 of the acoustic report provides a BS4142 assessment, which is a method for rating whether industrial noise from a given source is likely to cause complaints. Although generally used for industrial noise, it is a valid assessment method under these circumstances, as it compares an underlying existing noise level with the proposed additional noise, to give an indication of the likelihood of complaints.

Table 7.2 indicates that the noise from the site is likely to cause complaints in Lakenham Road and be of marginal significance in Abbot Road. However the figures used in the prediction are worst case figures that use the background noise figures from later in the evening at about 11pm. Earlier in the evening the background levels are higher which would reduce the gap between them and the additional noise from the site, reducing the likelihood of complaints.

From all the data available I would conclude that the noise from the site is likely to be audible to the nearest residents at some times of day, particularly towards the end of the evening and the noise that is generated, i.e. shouting, whistle blowing, impact noise of the balls hitting the pitch edges, could be more intrusive than a more steady industrial type noise. However, there are high levels of existing traffic noise, that in the main are likely to mask the pitch noise, which may only be audible during lulls in traffic. It would be useful to reduce the pitches available towards the end of the evening, in order to reduce the noise impact as the background noise levels drop.

The acoustic report also provides additional information regarding the predicted impact on noise levels should a barrier be installed. A 3 metre barrier would only provide an additional reduction of 1.2dB to the most affected residents in Lakenham Road, which would not be perceptible to the human ear."

29. **Norfolk County Council Highways Authority** – No objections given there will be no material impact on the strategic highway at peak hour periods. The access drive is smaller than usually required but the movement of service vehicles and coaches would only be occasional and is not considered problematic. Conditions are suggested for any approval.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

Relevant National Planning Policies

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS1 Supplement – Planning for Climate Change
PPS4 – Sustainable Economic Growth
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

- National Government Guidance: The Protection of School Playing Fields and Land for Academies (July 2007), concerning Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended in 2006).
- Sport England policy: 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England' (1997).

Principle of Development

Disposal of School Playing Fields

30. The proposal represents a form of development requiring prior consent for the school asset to be disposed of in such a manner; a procedure requiring the Secretary of State's permission under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended in 2006), which relevant Government Guidance (July 2007) makes clear should be obtained prior to planning permission being sought. In general, there is a presumption against disposal of school playing fields and their change of use away from educational purposes. Whilst this procedure is not a planning concern, it is a pertinent material consideration.
31. This process has been followed, and approval from the Secretary of State for the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) was granted on 15th February 2010. In this instance the DCSF has determined the land covered by the planning application site to be surplus to the grass playing field requirements of the school.
32. Of particular note is the requirement from the Secretary of State for any proceeds from the disposal of the land to be used towards specific projects to improve or enhance sports or educational facilities at the school. The S.77 consent is therefore given on the proviso that the school will also refurbish its gyms and netball pitches, provide a school sports activity news network, develop a PE ICT area, and also contribute towards the hockey pitch provision (currently proposed within planning application 10/00736/F).

Planning Policy

33. **National planning policy** - PPG17 sets out the objectives for preserving and promoting open space, playing fields and sports facilities. 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 as para 10 sets out: "Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the...land to be surplus to requirements. For open space, 'surplus to requirements' should include consideration of all the functions that open space can perform." 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.
34. The national policy does recognise that not all open space and sports facilities are of equal merit, and some may be available for alternative use, and states that facilities of higher quality should be protected in local planning policy.
35. PPG17 acknowledges that development on sports facilities provides opportunity to remedy deficiencies in provision, or exchange the use of one site for another to substitute

any loss of open space, providing the new facility remains accessible to users and at least equivalent in size, usefulness, attractiveness and quality, resulting in a qualitative improvement to open space and sports facilities.

36. As regards development specifically on playing fields, the policy makes clear that proposals should not generally be allowed in the absence of an up-to-date and robust assessment of need, unless: the scheme will only affect land that can't be used as playing fields; or, if 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 loss of the playing field. These issues have also been considered by Sport England in their response (see para. 16-24).
37. In assessing the merits of potential locations for new sports facilities, local plans should in this instance: 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.
38. Policy recognises the facility will make intensive use of land and attract large numbers of visits, and in the interests of sustainability (as described in national policy PPS1) such 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

39. The City Council has undertaken an Open Space Needs Assessment (December 2007) in accordance with the requirements of PPG17, which considers the city's sporting facilities across four sub-areas. The findings reported a shortage of outdoor sports space in this South Sub-Area, with facilities being of a below-average quality, suggesting there is scope for improvements to the area's qualitative sports facility provision.
40. The December 2007 assessment calculated football pitch demand based on Sport England's methodology 'Towards an Level Playing Field'. It found a demand across Norwich for 13 new mini-football pitches in order to meet current demand alone, although these are not specified as needing to be natural grass or synthetic turf.
41. Synthetic turf pitches do provide for a specific niche in sporting facilities, so the Needs Assessment report also looked at this area specifically, against the accepted standard of providing at least 1no. full-size Synthetic Turf Pitch available for community use per 30,000 population with no more than 20minute trip time between pitches. Based on that 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 20mins driving time, general accessibility is considered relatively poor, being concentrated in the north-west.
42. The Hewett School is then 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 absence of full-size synthetic pitches in this proposal means that it can not be said to satisfy this particular type of need as identified in the 2007 assessment, but the 10 mini-pitches proposed are consistent with fulfilling the overall shortage of mini-football pitches (13 are identified as being required).

43. Sport England accepts that a strategic need exists for the facility. However, it retains a concern that the scheme hasn't proven that complete demand exists for the scheme to further the development of sport. It considers that further evidence is needed to demonstrate the proposal will not jeopardise the overall sports participation in Norwich by leading to an oversupply of facilities without meeting an identified demand.
44. The applicant has sought to address those concerns through successive reports that aim to demonstrate a latent or untapped demand and set out the case for the centre being successful whilst avoiding harm to the viability of existing facilities in the area. These reports are considered by Sport England to present a strong case for the need for additional facilities, and the Hewett School being an appropriate location. However, there remains some unresolved issues with the demand assessment because it is not immediately clear how such a scheme would avoid displacing participation and fail to provide a future net-increase in participation. For this reason Sport England maintained its objection as at 17th June, when a further revised study was submitted for their review, comments on which should be provided at the Committee meeting.

Consideration against national sporting and planning policy

45. Overall, the proposal is considered to be broadly consistent with national sporting policy. Despite not satisfying every need for synthetic turf pitches as identified in the findings of the Open Space Needs Assessment (December 2007), the proposal is able to address some of the City-wide shortages in mini-pitch provision and a general shortage of sports facilities in the South City area.
46. Additionally, in compensating for the loss of the existing grass playing field, 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.
47. Although Sport England does not consider this aspect to have been satisfied yet, it is considered that some degree of pragmatism is needed in such a scenario. The objections to the scheme are based to a degree on concerns of commercial competition (with the Norfolk FA Football Development Centre), and technicalities within the applicant's demand assessment. Sport England recommend the demand assessment should be revised and:
- the applicant actually includes surveys of full-size pitch facilities outside Norwich which also happen to make provision for small sided football.
 - however, this is actually considered onerous as the Needs Assessment already finds a demand for mini-pitches in the city which can be met by the proposal.
 - in considering the potential for latent demand, the surveys of existing facilities in the catchment area should be revised to look at current use rates and consider if they already operate at capacity.
 - however, this is also considered unnecessary given that the Needs Assessment has already found a demand for these mini-pitches.
 - Surveys should also consider the implications of the current pending planning proposal for additional small-sided synthetic turf football pitches at the U.E.A. (application reference 10/00696/F).
 - however, this is not only an unresolved application for 3x small-sided pitches, but it would also actually work with the Hewett School 10x pitch proposals to satisfy the demand identified in the Needs Assessment.

- Pricing policies for the development should be disclosed to show if it is proposed to reach different markets within the demographic.
 - however, this is not only considered unnecessary, but the applicant's proposals include a commitment to ensuring the continued provision of discounted or free community and school use across the age ranges, which can be required by legal agreement as part of any planning permission (see paragraphs 60-61).
- The application demand assessment has used Cheltenham as a comparison site to Norwich to understand the potential ratio of supply and demand based on numbers of small-sided pitches per capita population; this is said to provide a misleading verdict as the survey is based on full-size multi-use Synthetic Turf Pitch provision in Cheltenham rather than small-sided football pitches as proposed in Norwich, which might change the assessment of theoretical demand for the proposal in Norwich. It is recommended that such a benchmarking exercise instead uses an average supply figure from across all local authorities to establish a more realistic indicator of local latent demand.
 - however, whilst it would be worthwhile to provide a like-for-like comparison survey in order to produce more accurate outcomes, it is considered sufficient that there is already an unmet need identified for such small-sided football pitches in the area. Nevertheless the application has since considered the supply-demand balance surrounding a small-sided pitch facility at Northampton, within a catchment with population and characteristics similar to Norwich; these revised assessment results have been sent to Sport England and comments will be updated at the Committee meeting.

48. In considering the loss of the grass playing field in accordance with PPG17, the assessment of supply and demand is nevertheless only one part of considering whether there will be a net-improvement to the benefit of sports development overall. It should be remembered that the existing Hewett School pitches are not formal public open space and hence are not readily-available; as stated in the Local Plan (para 10.15), school playing fields are excluded from definition as "formal open space" as they are unavailable or unsuited for regular youth and adult hire. However, the application proposes to provide almost-daily community and school use sessions at subsidised or free rates (see paragraphs 60-61), which is considered more than sufficient to result in an overall net-increase in football participation. In addition, it is understood that the pitches allow for some degree of non-football sports use; altogether the proposal is considered able to contribute to sports development over and above any impacts that might be felt following the loss of the existing grass pitch.

49. As regards the possibilities for alternative use of the playing field, it is unlikely that the DCSF or the School would consider an alternative type of urban greenspace provision on this site unless a considerable benefit to the school could be generated. The other types of urban greenspace outlined in PPG17 are unlikely to deliver the range of benefits to the school or community sports development, and if this proposal did not proceed the site is likely to remain in its current underused state.

50. Overall, it is also considered that 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, being close to facilities and a sizeable catchment population which can be served by the leisure and recreation offer of the facility. The design of the proposal is discussed below (para. 71-82), but in summary is considered able to offer an overall enhancement to the attractiveness and quality of the sports

facilities at the site, whilst enhancing biodiversity

51. Other national planning policies require enhancement of biodiversity (PPS9), providing a high quality of design with sound environmental performance (PPS1), minimising the need for parking within local standards and using sustainable locations (PPS1, PPG13), minimising the affects of noise (PPG24), and ensuring there is no increased surface water flood risk (PPS25). These issues are discussed in further detail throughout the report.
52. **Local Plan Sports and Recreation Policy** – Saved Local Plan policies aim to control the loss of sports pitches and sporting facilities, whilst shaping the designs and minimising the impacts of proposed developments. Policy SR1 sets out targets for improving sport facility provision across the city, including raising the standard to 1.2 hectares of sports pitches per 1000 population by 2011. As the Local Plan makes clear (para 10.15), the proposed facility would help to address the shortage of land used for sport and available for hire by the general youth or adult public on a regular basis, which is taken to form part of the current deficit of formal open space in the city.
53. Aside from demonstrating need, the key policy tests to be addressed are (a) whether a qualitative enhancement to community sports and leisure facilities is provided to justify the loss of existing facilities and urban greenspace and the erosion of the open character of the area, and (b) whether it is appropriately located in sequential test terms to avoid impacting on sites and facilities better located.
54. The Hewett School grounds are defined as Urban Greenspace under policy SR3, allocated for its significant amenity value, despite its limited public access. As this policy makes clear, the loss of existing sports pitches 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 to a qualitative improvement to any remaining open space.
55. As discussed previously, it is accepted that the existing cinder track and pitches are in disrepair and the Goals proposal will provide an alternative facility of improved sporting and recreational value at the site, enhancing sports provision in this sector and the south of the city in general. It is also considered to provide enhanced community amenity through improved community use and access to recreation, which will be required by legal agreement as part of any approved proposal (para. 60-61).
56. Local Plan policy SR13 requires, in its first part, that a sequential approach be undertaken towards site location, to show that no sites are available in more accessible locations. In order of preference, the policy directs “major traffic generating” sports development facilities towards the city centre, before district centres or sub-regional sports centres. Outside such defined locations, ‘sites which form part of an existing focus for community activities accessible by public transport’ should be promoted before as a last resort ‘other locations in the urban area’ are suggested. ‘Major traffic generating’ facilities are those leading to over 100 peak hour traffic movements or over 1000 movements over 24 hours. The proposal would not exceed these limits, though PPG17 still requires a sequential approach to justify the proposed location.
57. The applicant has regrettably not conducted a sequential test to support the proposed location. Whilst it may be argued that the School offers some degree of community activity already it is still not a sequentially-ideal location. Bus services are limited in the evening

(see para 86), at peak-use periods for the facility, although this might be expected to improve when the nearby Hall Road District Centre is developed more fully.

58. However, in general, under the second part of policy SR13, proposals for major traffic generating schemes in locations outside of the sequential order of preference may still be acceptable when proposed outside defined centres, if the criteria listed below are satisfied.
- (i) There is an identified need for such a facility; and,
 - (ii) The proposal is predominantly for outdoor sport; and,
 - (iii) There are overriding community, amenity and noise reasons for an out of centre location; and
 - (iv) There is no significant impact on existing facilities within defined centres or existing community foci.

Although the Goals centre is not technically a major traffic generating facility, it can still be considered favourably against the above criteria.

59. Criteria (i) and (ii) have already been discussed and are seen to be met. As regards (iii) the needs assessment sets out that the development of sport in the community relies on localised shortages being rectified, as is the case in the south of the City. Whilst there are no amenity or noise reasons why the proposal should not instead be more centrally-located, that is not to say the scheme would cause an adverse impact to residential amenity in the area, but these are discussed below (para. 64-70). As regards (iv) Sport England in consultation with the Norfolk FA have expressed concern over the possible loss of displaced custom from the Bowthorpe Park Football Development Centre (see para.16-24), but this appears to be more in the context of not providing a net-increase in sports participation in light of the loss of the existing Hewett School grass pitch, rather than in terms of impact of the proposed scheme on the Football Development Centre as a community resource. It is considered that the application will rectify an identified shortage and as a result there will be no significant impact on existing facilities or community foci.

Arrangements for Community and School Use

60. The facility has been proposed in partnership with the school to include school lesson use. Local Plan policy SR6 requires new development of sporting facilities to provide community group use in order to offset future potential loss of scarce open space and strengthen links to the local community. The proposal should only be permitted if adequate provision is made for its use by the general public, including the local community and specific appropriate provision is made for groups with difficulties accessing recreational facilities.
61. The applicant has submitted a draft Unilateral Undertaking as a means to satisfy these requirements as part of the Section 106 planning obligations process. During school term time, it proposes to allow use by community groups, youth groups and recognised junior football clubs every day, free of charge before 5pm and at rates discounted by at least 30% between 5pm and 7pm. Schools across Norwich will also be able to use the facility free of charge between 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, and 9am-6pm at weekends. During school holidays, community use is slightly reduced but includes free weekend access. The provisions are considered generally acceptable and it is recommended that any approval of planning permission be subject to the satisfactory completion of the Undertaking sufficient to secure necessary ongoing community/school use along those lines proposed.

Summary of sporting policy conclusions

62. 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 such facilities in this part of the City, 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 scheme will generate benefits to the development of sport through an extensive schools- and community-access benefits package, both as part of this planning application and as part of the separate Section 77 school land disposal procedure. These benefits 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.

63. Subject to satisfactory agreement of planning obligations, the proposal is able to provide the community use required of the expectations set out in policy SR6, whilst contributing to sports enhancement targets in SR1. Although not in a sequentially-ideal location as endorsed by PPG17 and the objectives of SR13, the proposal does benefit from being on a public transport route and within excellent local cycle and walking links, which can be further improved by financial contributions to sustainable transport schemes. On balance the nature of the scheme and its transportation implications are considered 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.

Impact on Living Conditions

Noise Disturbance

64. The scheme has attracted concern over the possible noise generated at the site, arising from shouting and ball impacts, and floodlighting effects being intrusive to local residential conditions. 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.
65. Noise was not initially considered to be problematic by Environmental Health, who agreed with the findings of the Noise Impact Assessment submitted. In an area where the background ambient noise levels are already relatively high due to the busy roads, the landscape bunding will help to minimise noise leakage.
66. Since being located in the latest revised position 15m closer to residential properties, the impacts are noted to have worsened slightly for a few residential properties in the area. In summary, whilst background levels are fairly high the most intense cumulative periods of activity from the football centre would raise this level, to an extent that might be classified as causing moderate disturbance. However, it is important to note that Environmental Health comments confirm this impact would be experienced only outside the front of the properties and in practice it is 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 background noise 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.
67. Findings of the noise surveys confirm that the development would lead to an unavoidable but relatively small degree of loss of amenity for those neighbours closest the site, though this would not be at a level to cause health risks. Although it might be possible to install acoustic fencing along the southern edge of the site, this scenario was analysed in the study and actually found to have a very negligible effect that meant the sound dampening would not be noticed. As a result, it is considered preferable to avoid requiring including acoustic fencing and instead ensure the implementation of a sound landscaping plan,

which might otherwise be compromised.

Lighting Disturbance

68. The application includes proposals for 29no. 8m-high high-level post-mounted directional floodlights, and the application includes a Lighting Report which explains the use of 'dark sky' luminaries. These are of a high design standard and are positioned at the corners of the pitches to minimise any potential overspill, following Sport Council guidelines. The lighting was drawn closer to residential neighbours when the pitches were suggested to be sited further south, but they did not create any adverse impacts as a result, and the latest revised siting has only lessened those concerns. Light spill occurs only up to 10m from the pitches, where it is only at a level typical of ambient street lighting levels. 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 game (provided one does not follow afterwards), to minimise spillage affecting residents or the night sky and to deter non-reserved use that might cause unnecessary noise. Car park lighting is also proposed, the details of which can also be established through condition.

Overlooking, Loss of Privacy and Overshadowing

69. Despite the raised position of the site, the low profile of the building and the significant distance between it and nearby dwellings will avoid causing any loss of privacy, overlooking or overshadowing. The design is not of an overbearing nature, but any impact would be lessened by the landscaping proposed around the site.

70. Overall, the development is not considered to cause any detrimental impact to nearby residential amenity in the area, and subject to conditions the is considered to be minimal, as discussed below, in terms of transport, noise and lighting.

Design

Layout

71. 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 rectangular pavilion in the southeast corner, and the adjacent 93-space car park. 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. The pavilion is set back from the roundabout, orientated to present a side elevation to the street. The pavilion entrance is linked visually and physically to Hall Road by an angled path to Hall Road, set within an avenue of trees. Footpath access is also provided from the north of the site, to link with the school and proposed hockey pitches, which is wide enough to serve as an emergency access route for the hockey site.

72. The synthetic football pitches are arranged in a 4-4-2 formation in the west side of the site, laid parallel to the road; the 5-aside pitches are arranged in two east-west rows, with two 7-aside pitches to the north. Although not sunk into the ground, the proposal includes laying an L-shaped bund behind an existing mound, shaped around the south-west corner of the pitches. The centre operates by user access and egress through the pavilion and circulating through the pitches. Some viewing will be possible from the pavilion area and possibly from the bunding, though this would be less so than the walkway between the rows of pitches.

73. When the original plans were considered by the Norwich Design Quality Panel, reservations were aired over (a) the need for the full road, (b) the orientation initially being detached and poorly-related to either car park, pitches or roundabout, (c) unhelpful access

for school pupils using the centre, and (d) unmet potential in the design of the building. The building was also considered to be originally sited too close to the roundabout, so reducing the influence of any landscape setting. These have now been rectified.

Form, Height and Scale

74. The pavilion is a tall but single-storey building with stepped parapet roofs. It now has much improved connection to Hall Road with improved pedestrian priority and cycle links to both road and school. The legibility is improved to better relate with the car park and pitches, improving the experience of users and easing their flow around the site.
75. Being on a prominent corner seen in long views, and without a surrounding street scene to take reference from, the pavilion has an opportunity to be innovative and imposing in addressing the corner whilst fitting within an appropriate landscape setting. The elevations originally showed a striking, but heavy, dark glazed building with little fenestration. This was revised when it moved and became beige breeze brick and somewhat bland. The latest revision has proposed a contemporary unique and progressive appearance, with a mixture of jet black and beige cladding and dark glazing. Animated graphics are proposed on certain elevations, providing an appropriate addition that enlivens the facility's setting.
76. 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 black powder-coated metal pitch-side framework. The lower level boundaries are hidden from views south and south-west by the acoustic bund. This is considered acceptable within the context of the proposed landscape scheme. Conditions are proposed to confirm the final details of materials and external appearance of the pavilion and fencing.

Trees and Landscaping

Landscaping Scheme, Ecology and Impact on Trees

77. Most of the site is of poor ecological value but the development is accompanied by a landscape scheme that seeks extensive replacement planting to significantly enhance the existing cherry tree belt to the south of the site along Lakenham Road, and in doing so enhance ecological value at the site. A successful landscape strategy is critical to the successful design of the site, required by Local Plan policy NE9. 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.
78. 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. The proposed additional earth mounding may appear intrusive in the general flat plateau of the site, but it can be integrated better through planting proposals over and above those shown to date. The planting scheme proposes a fairly thickly-planted birch woodland, becoming thinner in front of the pavilion but supplemented with native ground cover. It is suggested that a planting specification can be agreed through planning condition to confirm species, density, protection during growth, and continued

maintenance all around the site.

79. The woodland planting is both native and very extensive, and acts as an effective foil to the dark building and fencing behind. Although the site currently offers an attractive open setting clearly visible from afar, there is little existing biodiversity value at the site, and the scheme will only enhance that aspect. 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.

Loss of Trees and Replacement Planting

80. In the course of providing the bell-mouth access to Hall Road, an established semi-mature oak Street Tree is proposed to be removed. This is normally resisted, but in this case any revisions to the access would become more problematic: narrowing the drive entrance enough to avoid tree damage cannot provide adequate safe access; moving the entrance further north only causes harm to other street trees; moving it so far south to avoid the tree causes conflict with the roundabout, compromising highways safety; and any alternative access from Lakenham Road would not be acceptable as a new junction on the Major Road Network.
81. In order to rectify the loss of the street tree, and to further enhance the street tree setting of Hall Road, financial contributions would be necessary to provide replacements in appropriate locations, in accordance with Local Plan policy NE4. This should be included in the content of the legal agreement.
82. In addition to the street tree loss, one existing tree would be removed from the north of the site. The tree is to be lost to the site of one of the pitches, but there is also reduced landscaping opportunity due to the Goals layout making allowance for the connection to the hockey pitch and the overspill car parking area. These losses are acceptable in the context of the extensive landscaping plan being provided, but it will be necessary to use conditions to ensure that the development takes place in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Implications Assessment. In the event that the hockey pitches proposed under application 10/00736/F are found unacceptable and refused, it is recommended to use landscaping conditions as part of this application to revert the overspill parking area to further the site's landscaped planting content.

Inclusion of a bar within the scheme

83. A bar at the site would normally be resisted by planning policy if it were a stand-alone facility made available for the public's general use; national policy PPS4 and local policy would direct such uses to the City centre or defined district or local centres. However, in practice these are not uncommon associated facilities found at such centres, and the A4 element is considered to be a use ancillary to the main D2 leisure use activity.
84. The bar may lead to some noise but this is considered minimal, being contained for the most part within the pavilion. It is not considered acceptable for the bar to operate independently at the site, so planning conditions are suggested appropriate to ensure it retains an ancillary function serving only those visitors and groups using the sports facility. Hours of use for the entire centre can also be restricted through planning condition to minimise its impact on neighbouring residential areas; the football pitches are proposed to be used until 11pm at the latest, and the centre can be required to cease use shortly afterwards, to close at 11:30pm.

Transport and Parking

85. In principle there is no objection to the 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.

Public Transport

86. 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.

Parking

87. The site includes 93 car parking spaces (including 5 disabled spaces), motorbike spaces, and bicycle stands. The proposed levels of car parking are significantly above the maximum levels contained in the City Council's car parking standards; however, in this particular case, variation from those standards is considered reasonable because the parking standards are based upon the expectation of pitches being of a substantially greater size than is proposed here. This site will therefore be much more intensely used than would be the case if it were laid out with normal sized pitches, and as a consequence will reasonably require higher levels of parking generally, due to the greater numbers of people using the site. The justification for the increase in levels over Local Plan standards is considered acceptable. Parking shall be required to be provided prior to use by condition.

Highway movements

88. The impact of the development is predominantly during off-peak hours of the day, and is considered to have only a marginal impact in the strategic highways network. The additional traffic that the site will create in the peak hour is not sufficient to require specific highways improvements, but does need the scheme to provide a financial contribution in accordance with Local Plan policy, towards sustainable transport initiatives to offset the increase in peak hour traffic movements. A contribution of £15,200 would be necessary, to be used on such projects as improving access to and along the Lakenham Way. This can be required by the accompanying legal agreement.

Cycling, cycle parking and walking access

89. 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 will be improved from the school, and can be used as is currently the case for 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.
90. Cycle parking on site was not originally shown at an adequate level, but has since been revised to show adequate provision. Cycle parking shall be required by condition to provide covered and secure storage.

Travel Plan

91. A travel plan has been submitted, to promote use of public transport, cycling and walking and car sharing. Its principles are acceptable, though the final details, implementation and monitoring should be required by conditions.

Environmental Issues

Flood Risk

92. The Environment Agency have removed their initial objection on the basis that revised flood risk assessment calculations show the ground conditions to be capable of natural drainage incorporating the two soakaways included in the site plan designs. It is recognised that synthetic pitches are not as permeable as natural grass, but the site drainage conditions are nonetheless able to accommodate for this loss. The development is acceptable provided that conditions are used to ensure construction in accordance with the flood risk assessment.

Foul Drainage and Groundwater

93. 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 to prevent this. 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.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

94. The proposal is not of a scale sufficient to require provision of 10% renewable energy from on-site sources, although it does need to demonstrate high levels of energy efficiency in accordance with policy EP18 of the Local Plan. The design of the pavilion optimises energy efficiency in lighting and appliance choice. The large flat roof design proposed using solar pipes to optimise natural light to the interior, and solar panels for use in hot water storage, whilst an air source heat pump is another possible addition for localised heating. Conditions will be used to confirm the use of the energy efficient measures and details of the solar panels, and to confirm details of any plant and machinery.

Planning Obligations

95. If the application is considered acceptable, any approval is recommended to be subject to completion of a legal agreement to secure the necessary community use along the principles described in paragraph 60-61 (as required by saved Local Plan policies SR3 and SR6, and endorsed by support from PPG17), and financial contributions of £15,200 to local sustainable transport improvements (as required by saved policy TRA11) and £1,315 for replacement street tree planting (as required by saved policy NE4).

Conclusions

96. Despite loss of the greenfield site, and the less sequentially-preferred location, this development is proposed in a location with acceptable public transport links and a range of cycling and walking links accessible to a large residential population. The existing playing fields are in a state of disrepair and the loss of the cinder athletics track and grass sports pitch is considered acceptable given that the scheme offers a valuable sporting resource with associated community and school use sufficient to outweigh the loss of the existing sports field and enhance the development of sport to the community, whilst helping to address an identified shortage of sporting facilities within the City.

97. The implications on the local and strategic highway network are considered acceptable given the low levels of peak-hour traffic movements, the enhancement to local sustainable transport measures and the implementation of a Travel Plan to reduce dependency on the car. Despite harm caused by increased noise affecting the amenity of some residents of the local area, on balance it is considered an acceptable form of development given that conditions can be used to minimise the impacts of lighting to an acceptable level, alongside the use of conditions to minimise the impact of the associated bar.
98. Incorporating a range of modern materials and a lively appearance to the facades, the development proposes a high standard of design appropriate to its surroundings that will enhance the character of the area. The changes to the open and flat nature of the landscape are considered acceptable within the context of a landscaping strategy that will greatly enhance the wooded ridge and biodiversity of the site, whilst minimising the visual impact of the proposed football pitches and associated floodlighting.
99. Subject to completion of a legal agreement - to secure replacement of street tree assets, provision of sustainable transport improvement contributions, and enhanced community and school use of the facilities - the development will meet the objectives of national and local sports development policy, whilst the use of appropriate planning conditions will ensure the development minimises its impact on the surrounding area and local residents, and compensate for the loss of urban greenspace at the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve Application No 10/00481/F: Hewett School, Cecil Road, Norwich, NR1 2PL, and grant planning permission, subject to:

- (1) the completion of a satisfactory S106 agreement by 17th September 2010, to include the provision of adequate community use of the development and financial contributions to street trees and sustainable transport improvements, and subject to the following conditions:
 1. Statutory time limit
 2. Development to be in accordance with plans submitted
 3. Development to be in accordance with the flood risk assessment May 2010, and shall direct surface run-off to soakaways or permeable paving
 4. Groundwater protection methods to be agreed and installed
 5. Any access gates will be subject to details being agreed in advance
 6. Floodlighting (a) maintenance schedules, and (b) methods for hours of operation
 7. Car park lighting details to be agreed
 8. No additional lighting to be provided except for those in the plans
 9. Landscaping, including boundary treatments, hardstanding, soft landscaping, planting specification and maintenance and management plan
 10. Materials and appearance of pavilion
 11. Materials and appearance of fencing
 12. Trees to be protected and development constructed in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Implications Assessment
 13. A pre-development site meeting shall be held with the Tree Officer
 14. The pavilion bar shall be used only as an ancillary function to the football centre
 15. Separate hours of use restrictions for the pitches and the pavilion, including bar
 16. Precise details of the access point to be agreed
 17. Car parking and access design and drainage to be agreed, retention
 18. Cycle parking stores design to be agreed and facility provided
 19. Travel plan details to be agreed, and monitored

20. Energy efficiency measures to be implemented and details of the solar panels shall be agreed and implemented
21. Plant and machinery details to be agreed

(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 mini-football pitches in the City in line with identified needs, and will provide a 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, comprehensive landscaping proposals, replacement planting and high standard of design of the pavilion building. 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. Although the nature of the activity at the site is recognised to cause some impact to the amenity of local residents, this is on balance considered to be an acceptable and minimal impact which can be further mitigated 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, ENV7 and WM6 of the East of England Plan (May 2008), and saved policies NE4, NE8, NE9, HBE12, HBE19, EP16, EP17, EP18, EP22, SR1, SR3, SR6, SR13, SR14, TRA5, TRA8, TRA11, TRA12 and TRA14 of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (November 2004).

(2) where a satisfactory S106 agreement is not completed prior to 17th September 2010, that delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning Services to refuse planning permission for Application No. 10/00481/F: Hewett School, Cecil Road, Norwich, NR1 2PL, for the following reason:

In the absence of a satisfactory legal agreement or undertaking relating to the appropriate provision of community use of the facilities, sustainable transportation contributions, and street tree replacement contributions, the proposal is contrary to the objectives of national policy PPG17, and saved policies SR3, SR6, TRA11 and NE4 of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (November 2004).