

Agenda Item:

Regulatory Committee

6

Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	23 October 2014
Officer	Head of Economy
Subject of Report	To consider planning application 6/2014/0410 to erect a new school at the end of School Lane to replace existing school in School Lane, West Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5SA.
Executive Summary	This application seeks permission for a new primary school on land at School Lane, West Lulworth, Dorset.
Impact Assessment:	Equalities Impact Assessment: This report concerns the determination of an application for planning permission and not changes to any new or existing policy with equalities implementations.
	Use of Evidence: The recommendation has been made after the consideration of the revised application, supporting documents, the development plan and guidance, representations and all other material considerations as detailed in the body of the report.
	Budget: No VAT implications have been identified.
	Risk Assessment: As the subject matter of this report is the determination of a planning application the County Council's approved Risk Assessment methodology has not been applied.
Recommendation	That planning permission is granted subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 9.1 of this report.
Reason for Recommendation	As set out in paragraph 6.13 of this report.

Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Location plan2. Block plan3. Plans and elevations of the school building
Background Papers	Planning Application file 6/2014/0410
Report Originator and Contact	Name: Mr Chris Stokes Tel: 01305 224263 Email: c.stokes@dorsetcc.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 The proposal for a new school forms part of the Purbeck Schools reorganisation, from three tier to two tier. West Lulworth School is a Federated School with the early years base at Winfrith and upper age groups based in West Lulworth. A new school site has been proposed for West Lulworth Primary School close to the site of the First School, School Lane.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 West Lulworth first school is located at the eastern end of School Lane, immediately to the west of a row of houses and the single storey YHA building. The original school was built in the mid 19th Century and comprises a two storey building and a hard surfaced play area.
- 2.2 The proposed site for the new school is located approximately 90 metres to the east of the existing school, immediately adjacent the eastern boundary of the YHA building at the eastern end of School Lane. The site is an area of open pasture with open views of the surrounding downland to the north, east and south. A multi use games area (MUGA) surrounded by ballnet fencing is located to the north-west and the northern boundary is formed by a barbed wire fence, forming the boundary of a footpath route. The boundary hedge of the YHA, comprising a broken hedgerow and hedgerow trees, forms the western boundary of the site.
- 2.3 The land slopes across the site from the east and north towards School Lane. The site falls within the Dorset AONB and there are extensive views to the site from the higher ground to the south and east. The site borders a public footpath (No 4).

3. The Proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed to replace the existing school with a new school which can deliver a modern primary school curriculum. The proposed school comprises a single storey building constructed of brickwork with a standing seam steel roof coloured slate blue. The new building would provide a hall and plant rooms, three classbases, offices, staff room and library resource area.
- 3.2 The site would include a car park and minibus drop-off area, a hard play area, games court and playing field and ecology area. The applicants have provided a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and a Sites Selection Analysis. In response to the concerns raised by the Parish Council the applicants have sent further information, including a report on the increased school roll, the limitations of the original school building and a drainage strategy.

4. Consultations and Representations

- 4.1 Purbeck District Council:
No objection to the proposal in principle but would request that the County Council assures itself that this is the most suitable location for such a proposal and that its impact upon the AONB and immediate setting is acceptable, plus (a) consideration be given to the incorporation of Purbeck stone and render in the design and a green (living) roof. If a living roof is not used, then consideration be given to a more appropriate roof colour (b) imposition of suitable conditions to ensure: implementation and maintenance of appropriate landscaping; the implementation of an agreed Travel Plan; provision of adequate on-site parking and access; protection of important trees both on, and within the vicinity of, the site; implementation of the recommendations in the Ecology Report; and the

implementation of sustainable drainage measures to adequately deal with any existing surface water issues, and surface water discharge resulting from the new development. In particular, any scheme should be designed to cater for a flash flood event.

4.2 West Lulworth Parish Council:

- i) There is concern that there will be an increase in traffic congestion and the Parish Council believes a traffic survey should be carried out before the application proceeds further.
- ii) A response to queries of why the school needs to be built on a new site and not extended on the current site is that it is more cost effective to do so. No financial appraisal has been shown comparing the cost of a new development as opposed to adapting the existing site and so a request is made for an appraisal to be circulated in order to make an informed decision on the application.
- iii) The possibility of a service road to alleviate the traffic problems has not been considered and the Parish Council would like to suggest it could solve many of the congestion issues if it were to be investigated.
- iv) The surface water management system proposals are inadequate and should be fully reconsidered. The area has a significantly high water table for many months of the year and it is feared that flooding issues have not been addressed sufficiently.
- vi) The blue roof, the building design and the mass should be reconsidered to fit in with the surrounding village. West Lulworth is a unique village in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and it is not therefore acceptable to have a standardised building as has been put forward in the proposal. A blue roof does not conserve character as suggested in the Design Statement Revision A. The building will not “settle unobtrusively and harmonise with the surrounding landscape” as it will be prominently visible from all around the area and has none of the characteristics of properties within the village.

Note: In response to the Parish Council’s comments the applicants have submitted a detailed account of the inadequacy of the existing school, provided a traffic survey, and provided a flood risk assessment. (A meeting has been held with the Parish Council to discuss their concerns).

4.3 Highway Liaison Engineer:

No objection subject to gates being provided at the entrance to the school and details of how parents are to pick up and drop off at the school gate.

4.4 Dorset CPRE:

No financial evidence is available to justify disregarding a project to alter the existing facilities in West Lulworth. Cogent evidence should be made available to concerned members of the public before any contract for procurement is placed. It is the CPRE policy to encourage redevelopment of brownfield sites in preference to losing yet more of the green fields in the countryside.

4.5 AONB Team:

The AONB officer has visited West Lulworth and looked at the various sites. Of the new sites that have been appraised, option C (the application site) is likely to result in the lowest landscape and visual impacts. Notes that this site is less likely to be seen than those options to the west of the village, on account of its relatively discreet location at the end of School Lane. Whilst the site will extend the settlement to the east, the overall magnitude of change is likely to be acceptable, given the scale of development that has been described. Agree that the most significant effects are likely to be on Bindon Hill Camp and would encourage early consideration of mitigation in the design process.

4.6 Environment Agency:

No objection subject to informatives.

4.7 Rights of Way Team:
Awaiting comments.

4.8 YHA:
Object to the development on the grounds that School Lane is too narrow and traffic to the school will block the access for visitors to the YHA during the morning and afternoon. Apart from the MOD the location is very quiet and this will be disturbed by the new school. Background noise is likely to cause disturbance for sleeping guests. The windows of the YHA lounge, dining and self catering kitchen will face the school and there will be a loss of outlook, overlooking and loss of privacy.

4.9 Other Representations:
Forty-seven letters have been submitted, of which six are in support. A petition of 97 names has been submitted which states
“we the undersigned are concerned local residents who urge our Parish Council to act now to prevent the replacement of our school and the redevelopment of this site”.

The letters of objection can be summarised as follows:-

- The viability of the scheme is questionable. The number of children attending the classbase has fallen.
- There is sufficient classroom space for 79 children at the existing school.
- There is sufficient room at the back of the school site to form a playing field.
- There is an option to swap the year groups around, so that the smaller year group attends Lulworth.
- The new building would be highly visible from the surrounding AONB.
- The building would be unsightly and wholly out of keeping with the character of the area and the character of the village.
- It will take many years for the landscaping to mature to screen the development.
- The use of brick and steel is out of keeping with development in the village which is predominantly stone and tile.
- When seen from the higher ground to the east all that will be seen is the large expanse of blue tin roof, which is similar to a factory or warehouse roof.
- The new school and development of the old school site will exacerbate parking and congestion in School Lane.
- Given the topography of the site and the incidents of flooding, the proposed use of soakaways and existing drains will not cope.
- The site will be closer to the gunfire from the camp.
- The proposed site is a greenfield site outside the village planning boundary.

The letters in support of the application can be summarised as follows:-

- The village needs a fit for purpose building to be able to deliver a 21st century curriculum.
- The children in West Lulworth deserve a school site of the same standard as other primary schools in the Purbeck area.
- West Lulworth and Winfrith is rated as an outstanding school by Ofsted and pupil numbers have steadily increased from 54 pupils in 2007 to 119 currently on roll.
- Infant classes are full and these numbers will work through to the Lulworth site.
- The existing school is 150 years old and no longer suitable – the classrooms are too small, windows do not allow enough light in and are single glazed, there is no disabled provision with changes of levels and steep stairs to the SEN room.
- There is no school hall for collective worship or PE.
- There is no library.
- Children have to walk across the playground or through a classroom to get to the toilets.

- There is a lack of hard and soft play which does not meet Government standards.
- The new school project is behind schedule because the preferred site in the middle of the village has been turned down.
- There is no safe drop off point and secure place for the school minibus.
- The demolition of the old building and its replacement on the same site is not feasible.
- A new scheme on the same site would need a library and hall, and there is insufficient play space.
- The use of local materials for the new school would be prohibitively expensive and contrary to Government guidelines for school buildings.

5. Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The term '*other material considerations*' is wide ranging, but includes national and emerging planning policy documents.

The Development Plan

- 5.2 The Development Plan includes the Adopted Purbeck Local Plan Part 1: Planning Purbeck's Future. The following policies are of particular relevance to this application.

Policy BIO: Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

Policy CF: Community Facilities and Services.

Policy D: Design.

Policy IAT: Improving Accessibility and Transport.

Policy LHH: Landscape, Historic Environment and Heritage.

Policy FR: Flood Risk.

National Planning Policy

- 5.2 National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) - Paragraph 69 (Promoting Healthy Communities) and Paragraph 116 (Development in AONBs).

6. Planning Assessment

- 6.1 Having regard to the provisions of the development plan, the information submitted in support of the application and the representations received, the main planning considerations are:

- Principle of development, including need and alternative sites assessment.
- Impact on the AONB.
- Design and Layout
- Impact on neighbouring property
- Highways and Access
- Flooding.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The site is located in the Dorset AONB where development is strictly controlled. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF requires:-

- an assessment of the need for the development ,
- the cost and scope of developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need in some other way; and
- consideration of any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent that they can be moderated.

- 6.3 The applicants have provided information to demonstrate the need for the new school. School numbers have increased as a result of the Purbeck Schools reorganisation with the move from 3 tier to 2 tier. The reception base at Winfrith is at full capacity and these numbers will work through to the rest of the school. The existing 150 year old school lacks a hall and library, does not meet DDA standards, has small classrooms and does not meet modern standards for hard and soft play areas. The ground levels to the south effectively preclude the provision of a playing field extension. Redevelopment of the existing site would not overcome the need for space for a new hall and hard and soft play areas.
- 6.4 The applicants have investigated other potential sites for a school in West Lulworth. A number of sites, large enough to accommodate a school with playing facilities, have been investigated. All the sites fall within the Dorset AONB. The Glebe land, to the south of the Church, was considered to have the least impact on the AONB but was rejected by the local community and the site was withdrawn by the Diocese. Of the remaining sites the site at the end of School Lane was considered by the AONB Team to have least impact. Therefore it is considered that in terms of need and the sites assessment the applicants have satisfied the tests set out in the NPPF.

Impact on the AONB

- 6.5 The new school would be located on the eastern end of School Lane which ends abruptly at a field with open views over the surrounding downland. Consequently development of the site would be visible from the surrounding AONB. The site would be immediately adjacent to the YHA and only some 90 metres from the existing school. It would be close to a fenced play area to the south-west. In this sense it would be seen as an extension of the village. The building would be located close to the boundary with the YHA, with planting on the rising ground to the east. Over time the planting would screen the building and hard play areas.
- 6.6 The AONB Officer has considered the sites in the site appraisal and considers, that of the new sites that have been appraised, option C (the application site) is likely to result in the lowest landscape and visual impacts. This site is less likely to be seen than those options to the west of the village, on account of its relatively discreet location at the end of School Lane. Whilst the site will extend the settlement to the east, the overall magnitude of change is likely to be acceptable, given the scale of development that has been described. The most significant effects are likely to be on Bindon Hill Camp and early consideration of mitigation in the design process should be considered.
- 6.7 The construction of the building would be of brick with steel standing seam metal roof painted blue. This colour has been used on a number of school roofs in Dorset, including Milldown School in the Blandford Conservation area and Sandford Primary school in Purbeck. As part of Baseline Designs, standing seam roofs have been proposed for Manor Park School, Dorchester; Damers school, Poundbury and Bere Regis School. In my view a bespoke design, using local materials, would be the most appropriate option. However the applicant states that this option is not available as part of Baseline Design. They have considered a sedum “green” roof but state this adds loading to the structure and cost and falls outside the cost restrictions.

Design and Layout

- 6.8 The design of the buildings is in accordance with the Governments ‘Baseline Design’ which sets a maximum cost per square metre of floorspace. Dorset Property has developed a design which meets the Governments standards. The layout of the site would provide sufficient space for modern classbases and associated storeroom, a library resource area and a school hall. The site would include hard and soft play areas to Government standards. In this respect the development would be in accordance with Policy CF of the Purbeck Local Plan.

Impact on Neighbouring Property

- 6.9 The new school would be located on the boundary with the YHA hostel. The YHA have objected on the grounds of loss of outlook, traffic congestion, noise and loss of amenity as a result of the development. The main dining room has views over open downland to the east. The single storey school would be approximately 13 metres from the east wall of the YHA building. There is likely to be noise at the beginning of the school day and during playtimes but it is not considered to be unreasonable during evenings. There will be little or no impact during the summer holiday. There are boundary trees and a sparse hedgerow but there would be loss of outlook as a result of the new development. The levels will be critical to ensure the new school is not over-dominant in relation to the YHA.

Highways and Access

- 6.10 The existing school is located on School Lane which is a narrow country lane at the eastern end of the village. It has no parking space for school staff or drop off for the school minibus. School Lane suffers from congestion and lack of parking, particularly at the beginning and the end of the school day. The proposed school would provide staff parking on site and an area for drop off for the school minibus. Although this is an improvement local residents consider that the redevelopment of the existing school site will create extra vehicle movements and parking problems.
- 6.11 If the existing school site is redeveloped a planning application would need to be submitted to Purbeck District Council as the planning authority for (Regulation 4) disposal sites. Any traffic congestion and parking issues associated with the redevelopment of the existing school site would be dealt with at that stage. A traffic survey has been undertaken which demonstrates the new school would add a further 10 two-way movements and the Highway Authority has no objections subject to conditions. The Parish Council has requested the provision of a service road over the downland to the north. In view of the length of road required and the steep changes in levels, this is not considered to be a financially viable option.

Flooding

- 6.12 Residents have raised concerns about the new school contributing to localised flooding. The ground slopes down from the surrounding downland towards the eastern end of School Lane. When there has been heavy rain surface water runs down School Lane and properties have been flooded. The applicants have undertaken a surface water drainage survey and provided details of soakaways and drainage runs around the site, to direct surface water away from the eastern end of School Lane, and to attenuate the flow. The comments of the Environment Agency are awaited.

Conclusion

- 6.13 The applicants have demonstrated that the existing first school is not able to deliver a modern primary curriculum. As part of the Purbeck Schools reorganisation it is proposed to provide a new site for the West Lulworth Primary school which is federated with Winfrith school. There has been an extensive search for an appropriate site in West Lulworth. The application site is considered to be the least intrusive in the AONB of the sites available. The school would have improved access and would be of an appropriate layout to deliver a modern Primary curriculum. The design would be consistent with the Government's "baseline design". The school would operate a travel plan to reduce the potential for parental drop-off and the problems that arise. It is also proposed to improve the landscaping to the site in accordance with Policy LHH of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1. The main concern is the potential impact on the YHA and the height of the new school building.

7. Human Rights Implications

7.1 The provisions of the Human Rights Act and principles contained in the Convention of Human Rights have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report. The articles/protocols of particular relevance are :

Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life
The First Protocol, Article 1 - Protection of Property.

7.2 Having considered the impact of the development, as set out in the assessment above as well as the rights of the applicant and the general interest, the opinion is that any effect on human rights does not outweigh the granting of the permission in accordance with adopted and prescribed planning principles.

8. Statement of Positive Involvement

8.1 In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. The council worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive manner by:

- Providing a pre-application advice service;
- Updating the applicant/agent of any issues as they arose in the processing of the application;
- Suggesting solutions to potential planning issues; and
- Providing the applicant with the opportunity to address issues so that a positive recommendation to grant permission could be given

9. Recommendation

9.1 That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out below:-

1. Three Years - Full Planning application

The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason:

In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. Materials

No development shall take place until samples/details of materials to be used have been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out using the approved materials.

Reason:

To ensure that the external appearance of the completed development is satisfactory and sympathetic to its locality in accordance with Policy D of the Purbeck District Local Plan.

3. Submitted Plans and Details

The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved plans 33411/004483/A100 P3; A101 P3; L100 P4; L101P3; 3511786A/D/001 P2; 3511786A D/005 P1 and the Design and Access Statement dated 23/7/2014.

Reason:

To enable the County Planning Authority to deal with any development not in accordance with the approved plans.

4. Landscaping Scheme

No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals have been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. These details shall include, as appropriate:

- (i) Proposed finished levels or contours.
- (ii) Means of enclosure.
- (iii) Surfacing of vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas.
- (iv) Hard surfacing materials.
- (v) Implementation timetable.

Soft landscaping details shall include

- (i) Planting plans.
- (ii) Written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with grass establishment).
- (iii) Schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities, where appropriate.
- (iv) Implementation timetables.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details

Reason:

To preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy LHH of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1.

5. Tree Protection

All existing trees, shrubs and other natural features not scheduled for removal shall be fully safeguarded during the course of the site works and building operations (see guidance notes enclosed and BS 5837: 1991). The protection measures shall be as specified in drawing number S01 and the Arboriculture Impact Assessment and shall be maintained during the course of the works on site. No unauthorised access or placement of goods, fuels or chemicals, soil or other materials shall take place inside the fenced area.

Reason:

To ensure the continuity of amenity afforded by existing trees and in accordance with Policy LHH and BIO of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1.

6. Lighting

No development shall take place until details of the lighting for the building including external/security lighting have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the County Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

In the interests of the character and appearance of the area and in accordance with Policy LHH of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1.

7. Access, Turning, Parking and Cycle Parking

The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied or utilised until the access, turning, parking and cycle parking shown on Drawing Number L100 Revision P6 has been constructed. Thereafter, these areas shall be maintained, kept free from obstruction and available for the purposes specified.

Reason:

In the interests of road safety.

8. Access Crossing

Before the development is commenced the first 10 metres of the access crossing, measured from the nearside edge of the carriageway, shall be laid out and constructed to a specification submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of road safety.

9. Footway Improvements

Prior to the school hereby permitted being brought into use the footway improvements indicated on Drawing Number L100 Revision P6 have been completed to a specification which shall first be submitted to and agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority.

Reason:

In the interests of road safety.

10. School Travel Plan

Prior to the school hereby permitted being brought into use a detailed travel plan must be submitted to, and agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority. The travel plan must include travel survey data for all modes of transport and set out measures and targets to reduce car trips to the school. The school must also complete the School Travel Health Check annually to monitor the success of the plan. If subsequent annual School Travel Health Checks do not meet the targets set in the approved travel plan a revised travel plan which amends the measures, and specifies the timescales required to meet the targets must be submitted to the County Planning Authority for approval.

Reason:

To reduce the impact of school traffic on the highway network, to increase the number of children using active modes of travel to school.

11. Drainage

No development shall take place until a scheme for the drainage of the site has been submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority. The drainage shall then be constructed in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason:

In the interests of the proper drainage of the site having regard to Policy FR of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1.

12. Levels

Notwithstanding the submitted information, the details of the proposed ground and slab levels of the site shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority and the works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

In the interests of the amenities of adjoining properties.

Highway Informative:

NOTE: The applicant is advised that notwithstanding this consent Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980 requires the proper construction of vehicle crossings over kerbed footways, verges or other highway land. Before commencement of any works on the public highway, Dorset County Council's Dorset Highways should be consulted to agree on the detailed specification. They can be contacted by telephone at Dorset Direct (01305 221000), by email at **dorsetdirect@dorsetcc.gov.uk**, or in writing at Dorset Highways, Dorset County Council, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ.

9.2 Additional information for inclusion in decision notice:

1. A statement explaining how the Council worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way as set out in paragraph 8.1 above.

2. Note to Applicant:

Contact with the County Highway Authority should be made in connection with the above conditions through Ian Madgwick of the Transport Development Team.

Matthew Piles

Head of Economy

October 2014