Proposed Car Park

Supporting Statement

on behalf of Moor Hey School
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is made in support of a planning application for the development of two new areas of car parking at Moor Hey School, Lostock Hall.

1.2 Moor Hey School caters for Primary and Secondary age pupils and has been awarded a Secondary specialism as a Mathematics and Computing College. All of the pupils at the school have statements for special educational needs, with a large proportion of pupils having moderate learning difficulties as a primary need, requiring speech and therapy support. Some pupils have autism, visual or hearing impairments, physical difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social problems and other specific learning difficulties.

1.3 The pupils are given a structured and caring educational environment with positive community links. All of the pupils work within the National Curriculum, although this is extended to meet individual needs. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 11 they are successfully placed in either open employment, a suitable training scheme or on a further education course.

1.4 Pupils at the school come from a wide catchment area including South Ribble, but also Chorley, Preston, West Lancashire and further afield. As such, pupil transport is a major issue with a large number of buses, mini buses and cars utilising the site every day.

1.5 A previous application for the development of 12 No. parking spaces was granted planning permission on the 27th February 2015 (ref. LCC/2014/0147) and was subsequently subject to a non-material amendment granted on the 18th August 2015 (ref. LCC/2014/0147NM1).

1.6 This submission seeks approval for the provision of an additional 8 No. parking spaces off the new access road and the removal of an area of landscaping within the existing car park to provide an additional 4 No. spaces. For safety reasons, a minor extension is also proposed to the existing ambulance bay located adjacent to the main entrance, which is intended to remove the potential for conflicts between overhanging vehicles and pedestrians.

1.7 This statement will demonstrate that not only is the need for the additional car parking essential to the future operation of the school, but also that it will not result in harm to local amenity or open space, and will incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems.


2.0 SITE CONTEXT

Site Location

2.1 Moor Hey School is located to the north west of town of Lostock Hall and falls within the administrative district of South Ribble Borough Council. Access is taken from Far Croft to the south, which leads onto Marina Grove and subsequently the B5254 Leyland Road.

2.2 The surrounding area is predominantly residential with a mixture of single and two storey semi-detached properties.

Car Parking

2.3 Despite the recent construction of 12 new parking spaces adjacent to the school playing field, the school continues suffers from traffic congestion and there is considerable pressure on existing parking facilities as a result of the majority of pupils having to be transported to the school from outside of the local area via local authority transport. This alone involves 14 vehicles at the start and end of the day.

2.4 The traffic management system in place seeks to direct smaller vehicles to allocated parking spaces, larger vehicles to a designated area at the end of the school car park near the playground and the largest mini buses to a drop-off point near the rear entrance to the school off Ampleforth Drive/Lourdes Avenue.

2.5 Due to the nature of the school, there are also a considerable number of other vehicles visiting on a daily basis due to the increasing complexity of pupils’ conditions. Although local residents continue to be very understanding, there has inevitably been a degree of frustration due to the number of staff, parents, professionals or other visitors who have parked within the nearby estate on Far Croft or Marina Drive. Unfortunately, on occasion this has resulted in the school having to call the police to resolve situations that have arisen. This situation is only going become more critical as the number of non-ambulant pupils attending is likely to increase. In addition, now that Marina Grove has been closed off to through traffic, any traffic entering Far Croft in error cannot turn around and must therefore come onto school property to manoeuvre.

2.6 The school has considered all of the alternatives with regard to additional car parking provision, but there are no options available that would not result in significant impacts in terms of health and safety or curriculum activities in the school.

2.7 The existing areas of hard standing are all in use as either existing parking or drop off areas, or as essential outdoor play space for pupils of different ages. In terms of existing greenspace, the only area outside of the playing field is to the north of the school but this is in use as a wildlife garden and is vital to the science curriculum. In any event, use of this for car parking would require a new access road.
through the existing playing field anyway, whilst the movement of vehicles here would be extremely disruptive to pupils within the classrooms.

2.8 The final alternative would be to use the existing horticulture area which was recently provided through grant aid and forms part of the curriculum in association with Myerscough College. Not only would these grants have to be returned if this area was removed, but the loss of this essential facility would be wholly detrimental to the quality of education that pupils receive at the school.

2.9 It is therefore not considered that there are any more suitable alternative locations available than those currently proposed.
PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The application site has an extensive history of submitted planning applications with both South Ribble Borough Council and Lancashire County Council. These are summarised below:

- LCC/2014/0147NM1: Non material amendment to change the parking layout to re-site one parking space. Approved 11/08/2015
- LCC/2014/0147/1: Compliance with conditions 4 landscaping and condition 5 surface treatment of permission LCC/2014/0147. Approved 15/05/2015
- LCC/07/2014/0147: Car park and access track to the west of existing school buildings. Approved 30/10/2014
- LCC/07/2014/0113: Proposed car park and access track to the west of existing school buildings. Approved 05/08/2014
- 07/2005/0728: County Matter. Erection of a single storey extension to provide 4 additional classrooms and toilet facilities. Approved 09/08/2005
- 07/2004/1217: County Matter. Extension to car park to provide an additional 12 parking spaces. Approved 17/11/2004
- 07/2004/0272: County Matter. Erection of 2.4 M high palisade fence to SW boundary. N/A 17/03/2004
- 07/2003/1182: County Matter. Provision of 2.4m high paramount palisade fencing and 3.0m centinel heavy gauge roll top mesh fencing to part of the school site. Approved 16/12/2003
- 07/1996/0044: Siting of a demountable single storey double classroom unit and provision of additional car parking facilities. Approved 21/03/1996
4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Due to continuing pressure on existing parking facilities and a desire to reduce street parking within the nearby residential areas, it is proposed to create an additional 8 No. parking spaces off the new access road and the removal of an area of landscaping within the existing car park to provide an additional 4 No. spaces.

Design Principles and Concepts

4.2 Additional parking spaces were first introduced in April 2016 to attempt to alleviate restricted parking capacity within the school grounds and in an attempt to avoid parking on residential streets within the surrounding area. Whilst the previous phase of expansion has resulted in a degree of improvement, the school continues suffers from traffic congestion as a result of its unique transport requirements.

Access

4.3 The block of 8 No. parking spaces located off the new access road will be accessed via the existing arrangements. Similarly, the 4 No. spaces that will be created following the removal of an area of landscaping within the main car park will be accessed via the existing tarmac-surfaced area.

4.4 Pedestrian access will remain as existing.

Location and Landscaping

4.5 The parking spaces will be located within the school grounds in order to minimise their visual impact, and will be screened from neighbouring properties by existing fences and planting. By utilising redundant space within the main car park, fewer spaces are required adjacent to the playing field and the amount of land required has also been reduced.

Size and Scale

4.6 The block of 8 No. parking spaces will cover an area of approximately 65.5m². The extension of the main car park and the 4 No. spaces that will be created will measure approximately 59.5m².

4.7 Both blocks of parking spaces will comprise standard-size parking spaces and will be set out in a rectilinear arrangement. Where relevant, space will be maintained between the rows of spaces to allow for adequate vehicle access and circulation.

Construction and Appearance

4.8 The block of 8 No. spaces additional to the 2016 car park will be surfaced with permeable asphalt and connected to the existing SuDs system of the previous phase. This approach will provide appropriate levels of attenuation to ensure that the runoff rates remain at the existing greenfield level in this area.
4.9 The extended ambulance bay and 4 No. space extension to the existing car park will be surfaced in standard macadam and will be linked to the existing drainage systems in those areas.
5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 In terms of planning policy, the key considerations come from the South Ribble Borough Council Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The sustainability policies of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy are also of relevance.

Local Plan

5.2 The South Ribble Local Plan was adopted on the 22nd July 2015, which replaces the older Local Plan adopted in 2000. An excerpt from the Proposals Map showing the location of the site is provided below.

![Excerpt from the South Ribble Local Plan Proposals Map](image)

5.3 The site is identified on the Proposals Map as lying within an existing urban area (Policy B1) and also as Green Infrastructure under Policy G7.

Policy B1 – Existing Built-Up Areas

*Within the existing built-up areas, as defined on the Policies Map, proposals for the re-use of undeveloped and unused land and buildings, or for redevelopment, will be permitted provided that the development:*

a) Complies with the requirements for access, parking and services, as set out elsewhere in this Plan;

b) Is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area; and
c) Will not adversely affect the amenities of nearby residents.

5.4 Whilst this policy is not strictly relevant in terms of the re-use of undeveloped land and buildings, the proposal will improve the amenity of nearby residents in reducing on street parking. The proposed parking areas will be specified to be in-keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.

5.5 Policy G7 – Green Infrastructure

“Development proposals should seek to protect and enhance the existing Green Infrastructure. Development which would involve the loss of Green Infrastructure (as identified on the Policies Map) will not be permitted unless:

Alternative provision of similar and/or better facilities for the community will be implemented on another site or within the locality; or

It can be demonstrated that the retention of the site is not required to satisfy a recreational need in the local area; and

The development would not detrimentally affect the amenity value and the nature conservation value of the site.”

5.6 Part of the proposal to accommodate 8 new parking spaces will encroach onto a negligible section of the school playing field. It should be noted however that such space is not required to satisfy a recreational need in the Local Area. The loss of a small section of landscaping (small flowerbed) to the south side of the existing car park to 4 new spaces is also negligible.

5.7 As such, it is not considered that the development would detrimentally affect the amenity value and the nature conservation value of the site.

Policy F1 – Parking Standards

“All development proposals will be required to provide car parking and servicing space in accordance with the parking standards adopted by the Council (see Appendix 4). In general, parking requirements will be kept to the standards as set out unless there are significant road safety or traffic management implications related to the development of the site.

The parking standards should be seen as a guide for developers and any variation from these standards should be supported by local evidence in the form of a transport statement.

Where appropriate, some flexibility will be factored into the standards in relation to the specific local circumstances”. 
Parking standards state that primary and secondary schools require a minimum of 2 spaces per classroom. Disabled and coach / minibus parking is to be determined on a case by case basis.

Moor Hey School comprises a total of 13 classrooms, which would normally suggest an allocation of 26 No. spaces. However, due to its specialised nature the school requires roughly double the number of staff normally associated with an educational establishment of its size. As such, a greater number of standard parking spaces are required to serve its needs.

Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012)

Policy 3 – Travel

Policy 3 sets out a series of measures, which are largely focused on encouraging more sustainable methods of transport other than private car. However, as a result of the school’s specific requirements, it is not possible for walking and cycling to be implemented as the predominant method of travel.

Increased car parking provision will therefore provide extra capacity for vehicles that do use the site and consequently free up more space for minibuses to park and stop elsewhere within the site, rather than on the surrounding residential roads. This will in turn reduce pressure on the local road network.

Policy 29 – Water Management

This policy is relevant to the proposals through the following:

(d) Appraising, managing and reducing flood risk in all new developments, avoiding inappropriate development in flood risk areas particularly in Croston, Penwortham, Walton-le-Dale and southwest Preston; is also relevant to these proposals as it encourages a sustainable approach to drainage through policy 29.

(g) Encouraging the adoption of Sustainable Drainage Systems;

(h) Seeking to maximise the potential of Green Infrastructure to contribute to flood relief.

It is acknowledged that the proposal will result in the loss of a small area of permeable grass and soft landscaping. Accordingly, the new parking area will comprise of a permeable tarmac surface and sustainable drainage system, in order to minimise the risk of flooding on site.

The Environment Agency’s Flood Map shows that the site does not lie within a designated flood zone.

National Planning Guidance
Following its publication in March 2012, national planning policy is now provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (‘the Framework’). The Framework sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Paragraph 14 states:

“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.”

The application proposal represents the sustainable development and growth of Moor Hey School in providing the required additional parking spaces.

Paragraph 17 states:

“Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These 12 principles are that planning should:

• not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;
• take into account and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs”.

This application represents a case where the requirements of the school need to be balanced against the quantity of playing field space available. Scrutinising the application based on a marginal loss of playing field would not be beneficial to the existing and prospective pupils and staff at Moor Hey School.

The application represents the delivery of sufficient supporting infrastructure to a community facility / service to meet identified local needs.

Paragraph 72 emphasises how the Government is strongly supportive of school development, stating that:

“The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

• give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and
5.23 The proposal is paramount to the efficient operation and continued viability of the school. The school will be altered in a positive manner to accommodate increased vehicle parking. The proposal will relieve on street parking in the surrounding residential area, which has caused issues in the past. Whilst this problem has been solved to some extent through the previous application, further parking is required.

5.24 Paragraph 74 states:

5.25 “Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.”

5.26 For clarity, the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (DMPO) defines a playing field in Paragraph (k), as follows:

i) “playing field” means the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch;

ii) “playing pitch” means a delineated area which, together with any run-off area, is of 0.2 hectares of more, and which is used for association football, American football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.

5.27 The site therefore constitutes part of a playing field and includes one or more playing pitches, as defined in the DMPO.

Sport England

5.28 Paragraph E5.1 of Sport England’s Planning Policy Statement explains that there may be occasions when the development of a facility for sport, whether involving the construction of indoor facilities or a change in the use of open land, would lead to the loss of all or part of a playing field. It goes on to state that if Sport England is satisfied that the development proposal represents an opportunity to obtain benefits for sport which are, in its judgment, unlikely to be obtainable in any other way in foreseeable future, and that the benefits which will be obtained will outweigh any predictable detriment to sporting interests caused by the loss of playing fields, then it may not object to the proposed development.
6.0 NEED FOR ADDITIONAL CAR PARKING

6.1 The need for additional car parking within the school grounds has arisen as a result of the difficulties the school faces on a day to day basis.

6.2 The school currently has 28 No. car parking spaces within its grounds. Despite a significant increase in capacity following a recent planning consent for an additional 12 No. spaces, this amount cannot support the existing number of vehicles needing to park within the site. As a result, the school has been forced to allow the parking of vehicles on unallocated spaces within the grounds. In particular this has resulted in difficulties for larger vehicles (such as minibuses) trying to turn within the site.

6.3 The school has the following breakdown of permanent staff:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Type</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teaching staff</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teaching assistants</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin staff</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peripatetic teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caretaker/cleaning staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – Numbers of Permanent Staff

6.4 In addition to permanent members of staff, on average the school receives the following number of visiting professionals per day:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visiting Professional Type</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech and language</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPS</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Numbers of Visiting Professionals

6.5 In addition to permanent staff and visiting professionals, the following additional people (and their associated vehicles) enter and exit the site each day:

- Parents for meetings
- The school has 2 large minibuses which are used to transport pupils to / from the site each day during school hours to other centres.
- Approximately 15 contract taxis (minibuses) are used to transfer pupils to and from the site every morning and afternoon.
- Approximately 4 parents drop off and pick up their children each day.
- The school has also has a number of other visitors on a daily basis including contractors, auditors and assessors.
6.6 In total the school estimates that the site receives over 60 vehicle movements per day. However, even with 28 spaces the school experiences difficulties in matching parking spaces with demand. The school has looked for alternative options to meeting the parking demand within the existing developed area, however as outlined above there are no alternatives available. The proposed works will therefore further improve the situation by providing additional parking spaces.

6.7 The proposals would also allow additional on-site parking which would reduce the amount of on-street parking occurring in the surrounding residential streets. In total the works represent a significant investment by the school and are aimed at further decreasing conflicts and improving highway safety.
7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 As a special school, Moor Hey School has greater problems in terms of traffic and car parking demands than other schools of a similar scale. The current problems have resulted in conflict with neighbours and the involvement of police. A solution is essential to allow the school to continue operating and providing its high quality service to those most vulnerable in our society. The proposed development seeks to address this issue through the provision of additional areas of car parking, located where they will have minimal impact upon open space.

7.2 For these reasons it is considered that planning permission for the proposed development is essential, will not result in harm and therefore should be granted.