

Warblington School – updated ecological statement

January 2013

Introduction

An ecological walkover survey of the site was carried out in December 2009 by Hampshire County Council's ecology team. An update walkover was carried out on 10th January 2013 to re-assess the site and establish if there were any significant changes in the ecological conditions since the original survey.

Statutory and non-statutory sites of nature conservation importance

The school is not on or adjacent to any sites of nature conservation importance protected by law or local planning policy.

However the site is close to Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA), which is designated in part for its population of overwintering Brent geese and waders. The school fields have been identified in the Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy as being of 'uncertain' value as a high tide roost for waders. This means that it has been identified as having some potential for its use by these birds (due to its location, size and habitats), but that survey work is limited and insufficient to draw robust conclusions as to its importance.

The proposals do not seek to reduce the area of potential habitat. However, if the field was used by waders, the potential impacts would be related to disturbance during the winter season. Given its high level of use by the school, the distance of the proposed works from the field and the habitats present (managed amenity grass), it is considered that it is unlikely to be used by waders or that disturbance impact could occur.

There are no concerns raised over this issue.

Notable habitats

The school site is largely buildings, hardstanding and playing field. These offer little biodiversity interest.

There are some areas of rougher / ruderal (i.e. vegetation typical of waste ground such as brambles, thistles, rank grasses etc) vegetation around the site. While these are of typically higher biodiversity value, this is a common and widespread habitat and the small areas on site that are likely to be lost as a result of the development, this does not represent a significant biodiversity impact. Recommendations made below in relation to species would address much of the impact of the loss of these small areas.



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There are various areas of scrub and trees around the site. The loss of these will result in a reduction of the biodiversity value of the site. This is not considered significant in the context of the wider area, although efforts should be made to carry out new replacement planting to ensure there is no net loss in biodiversity.

Legally protected and notable species

- Bats and nesting birds

The 2009 survey identified that the buildings on the school site offer no opportunity for use by nesting birds or roosting bats. Since then, it appears that a number of holes have appeared in the external skin of the sports hall to the west of the old swimming pool, and these have the potential to be accessed by nesting birds.

Examination of these holes suggests that the construction materials of the building use metal cladding inside the external corrugated fibre cement boarding (see photo 1, below). Therefore, given the age, construction type and material, I would consider there to be negligible potential for this building to be used by bats.



Photo 1 – hole to external cladding showing metal internal cladding



It is understood that demolition of the sports hall is likely to take place in January 2014; therefore there would be no risk of birds nesting at this time.

Trees on site affected by the development were not considered to present any opportunity for roosting bats. However the trees and any scrub would present nesting opportunities for birds. Clearance of any scrub or trees should be similarly timed to avoid the nesting season (i.e. carry out clearance between September – February inclusive).



- *Reptiles*

The small areas of ruderal habitat – notably the area of the old swimming pool, and also the area adjacent to the informal overflow car park to the south of the site – have the potential to support small numbers of reptiles, most likely slow worms. Reptiles are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and therefore clearance of these areas must be carried out in a manner that avoids killing or injury of slow worms. Given the location of these areas it is likely that any animals here would have colonised the areas from adjacent habitat – for example the railway line vegetation to the north of the old swimming pool site, or the residential gardens and scrub to the south and west of the car park area. Therefore it is appropriate (given the history, size, likely population size and location of these areas) to clear them in a sensitive manner to flush any reptiles back towards the retained adjacent habitat, rather than undertaking a more formal trapping and translocation scheme.

A possible method for this is included at the end of this statement.

It is understood the swimming pool area works would start in September, which is an ideal time as reptiles are still active (so will readily move away from the area as it is cleared). However, if there is a possibility that works would be delayed, it is still advisable to clear the area of potential reptile habitat before the end of October to ensure there are no potential hibernation areas at the site.

If possible (where suitable retained habitat exists), arisings from site clearance should be used to create new refugia / hibernacula – essentially part-buried mounds (roughly 2m wide by 500mm high) of rubble / debris / woody vegetation and logs, that are allowed to grow over with grass and other vegetation.

Recommendations

1 – clearance of nesting bird habitat (suitable buildings, scrub, trees) outside the bird nesting season. Alternatively, only carried out under ecological supervision and after a detailed check by an ecologist (NB – if occupied nests are found during this, work will have to stop in this area, hence it being far more preferable to clear site in winter).

2 – Progressive sensitive clearance of reptile habitat (e.g. old swimming pool site) under approved method statement.

3 – Re-planting of nesting habitat and erection of bird nest boxes on buildings and retained trees to compensate for loss of habitat.

4 – Creation of new reptile refugia in suitable retained habitat e.g. adjacent to overflow car park.

Site clearance – precautionary method to avoid impacts to reptiles and nesting birds

Alternative 1 – most preferable for birds, but takes longer due to reptiles	Alternative 2 – most preferable for reptiles
Autumn / Winter clearance	Spring / summer clearance
<i>October to February (inclusive)</i> - Any existing piles of cut scrub, dead wood piles, rubble, compost heaps etc. <u>should not be moved</u> at this time – they may support hibernating reptiles, which will die if exposed in the winter. - In areas where work will be carried out, the existing vegetation (e.g. brambles, scrub, nettles, long grass etc) should be cut down to a height no lower than 200mm, but avoiding previously identified habitat piles. This will remove any potential bird nesting habitat before they start to breed and build nests in the spring. - Cut vegetation to be removed and used to create new reptile habitat piles elsewhere on site (e.g. site boundaries, away from development footprint). <i>Mid-March onwards</i> - Dismantle pre-existing habitat piles by hand and transfer material to new location. This removes potential refuges from affected areas. - Starting at points furthest from adjacent areas of retained / boundary habitat steadily trim remaining vegetation in affected areas down to approx 200mm. - Leave area for 24 hrs, then further cut to 50-100mm and maintain at this height until area required. This cut – wait – cut operation allows any reptiles to move to the retained boundary vegetation of their own accord, while the continued strimming / mowing of the development footprint ensures the area remains less suitable for reptiles – while they may bask in the exposed areas, all potential refuge has been removed	<i>Mid-March to September</i> - Dismantle existing habitat piles by hand and transfer material to new location. - Check any suitable nesting habitat for occupied birds nests. *** NB – if occupied nests are discovered, work in that area must cease until nests become empty of their own accord.*** - Cut back scrub / bramble to remove nesting habitat. - Starting at points furthest from adjacent areas of boundary habitat e.g. woodland edge / hedgerows (i.e. within centre of development footprint), steadily trim remaining vegetation in affected areas down to approx 200mm. - Leave area for 24 hrs, then further cut to 50-100mm and maintain at this height until area required. This cut – wait – cut operation allows any reptiles to move to the retained boundary vegetation of their own accord, while the continued strimming / mowing of the development footprint ensures the area remains less suitable for reptiles – while they may bask in the exposed areas, all potential refuge has been removed





Technical Note

Date	1 July 2013
Job No/ Name	ST14023
Subject	Warblington School – Proposed Sports Hall and Multi-Use Games Area Highway Impact Note

Introduction

1. This technical note supports an application by Hampshire County Council (HCC) for sport related development at Warblington School, Havant. This latest application is set amidst the context of previous applications for the site, this introduction therefore explains the historical context and sets out the newly proposed development and methodology for assessing it from a highway perspective.

Previous Application Context

2. In 2010 JMP produced a Highway Technical Note (HTN) in support of HCC's application (No: 10/53510/006) to develop a Hockey Centre of Excellence (HCE) at Warblington School, Havant. The HCE was proposed to include:

"the construction of two synthetic turf pitches (101.5m by 63m), floodlighting, spectator viewing areas and associated drainage which... [would] provide improved sports facilities for Warblington Secondary School and serve to provide the new home of Havant Hockey Club".

3. The HTN set out the transport implications of the proposed development at peak operation, on a Saturday, following consultation with HCC Highway Officers. In line with Officer recommendations, the HTN included assessment of the impact of the proposals on Southleigh Road as a result of any impact at the local level crossing. Concluding that queuing from the crossing could result in vehicles exiting the development northbound being held on site until clearing queues allowed them to depart, whilst southbound vehicles would be unimpeded as a result of keep clear markings.
4. Planning permission was granted for the above proposals in 2010.
5. Subsequently HCC has submitted an application for a non-material amendment (NMA) to the above planning permission, reducing the scale of development from the previously proposed two synthetic turf pitches (STP) with spectator viewing areas to just one STP and no spectator viewing. In these latest proposals, Havant Hockey Club will not be accommodated at the facility and the transport implications will therefore relate only to the use of one STP, being utilised for leisure uses outside of school times. As opposed to the substantially more intensive transport implications of the Hockey clubs needs, which would have seen nine men's and five women's teams as well as a junior section based on site, hosting away teams and matches with up to circa 200 spectators and with training taking place throughout the week.
6. A Technical Note was therefore submitted in support of the NMA application which quantified the net trip impact of the revised proposals when compared with the trip impact of the proposed Hockey club use. The NMA application has now been approved by HCC as planning authority.

New Proposal

7. HCC proposes to further enhance the sporting offer of the school, by developing a new sports hall of 594sqm (to replace the existing sports hall, which is 510sqm), multi-use games area (MUGA) as well as re-locating the existing on-site pre-school to accommodate the proposals. The application to which this technical note relates makes no provision for increasing the number of classrooms, students or staff.
8. Through consultation with HCC Highway Officers it was concluded that the level of information appropriate for support of a development of this type is commensurate with the threshold for "Minor

School Applications < 500 sqm", as identified in HCC's own internal assessment criteria. This is based on the understanding that the new school hall is a replacement for the existing building, resulting in an increase of circa 80sqm; that the MUGA in part replaces existing hard standing (which takes the form of tennis courts, which will be lost to the new sports hall); and that the pre-school relocates only and does not increase in size.

9. HCC highways officers have kindly provided a breakdown of the required information necessary to support an application for a Minor School Applications, the following Table therefore identifies the required information and where it can be located in this note.

Table.1 Required Information

HCC Highways Required Information	Location in Note
Location of School (with plan)	Figure 1
Plan showing catchment area of school	Figure 2
Number of Staff (FT/PT)	Paragraph 15
Number of Pupils	Paragraph 16
Number of classrooms / teaching spaces	Paragraph 15-17
Number of car parking spaces for staff	Paragraph 19
Number of car parking spaces for visitors / parents	Paragraph 19
Number of cycle parking spaces	Paragraph 20
Current school times / term-dates	Paragraphs 13 & 14
Percentage of existing staff travelling by car / walking / cycling / bus	Paragraph 40
Percentage of existing pupils travelling by car / walking / cycling / bus	Paragraph 40
Existing Public Transport provision	Paragraphs 36 - 39
Existing access to walking and cycling facilities	Paragraph 30 - 35
Any known access or transport issues in the vicinity of the school	Paragraph 41 - 44
Extent of any community use of school buildings	Figure 3 / Paragraphs 25 - 29

10. The remainder of this note therefore seeks to set out the required information as detailed above, specifically identifying where the proposals would alter the situation from that existing.

School Information

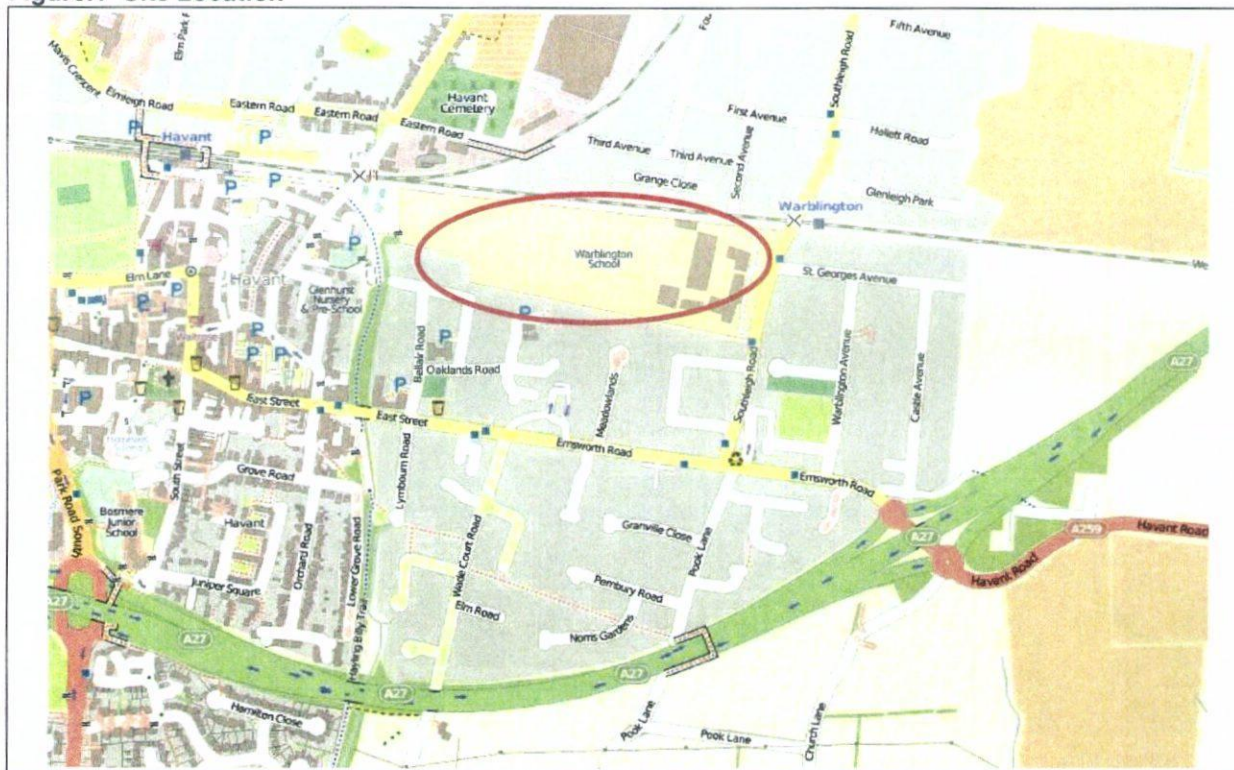
Location Information

11. The School is located on Southleigh Road in Havant, immediately south and adjacent to the west coastway railway line, which links Southampton and Chichester. The school grounds begin immediately east of the centre of Havant, with the school buildings and access at the eastern end of the site, approximately 400m from Havant centre.
12. The School's location is identified in Figure 1.





Figure.1 Site Location



Openstreetmap.org

School Operation

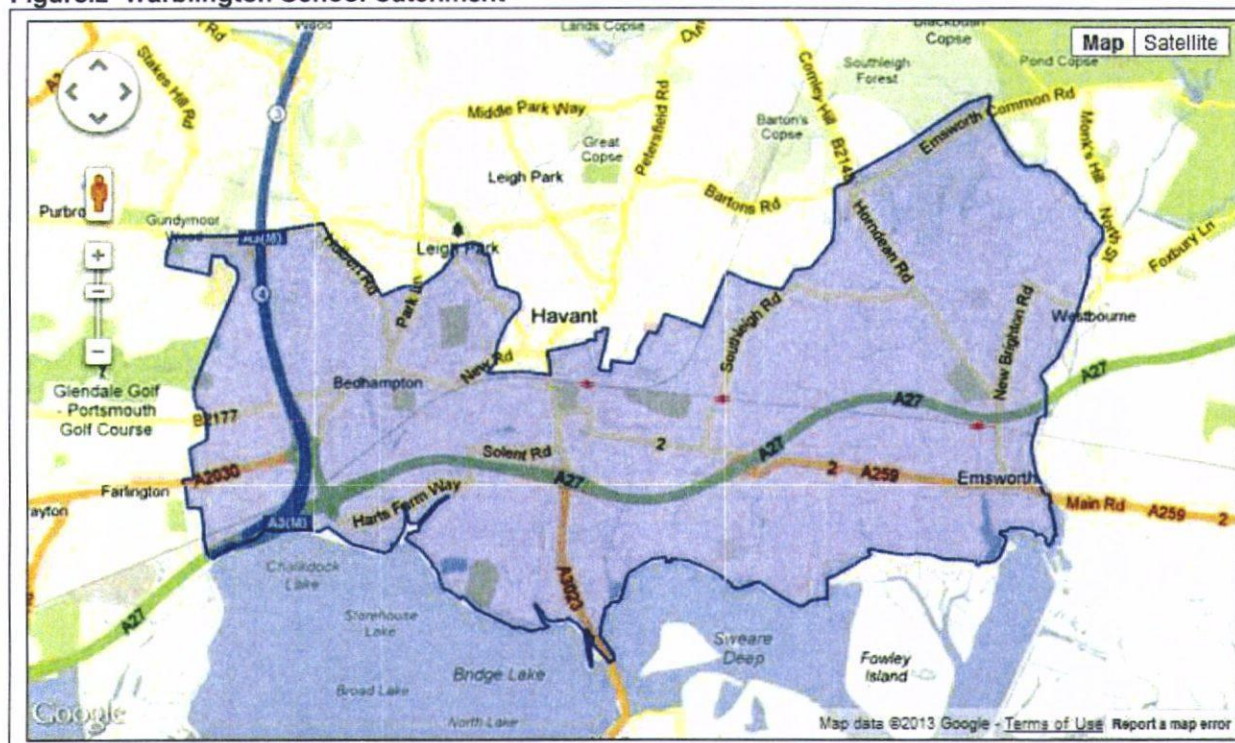
13. The school cafe opens at 08:15 Monday to Friday, for those arriving early enough for breakfast. Registration, assemblies etc take place between 08:35 and 09:05, with lessons beginning at 09:05. Lessons finish at 15:00, other than on Tuesday when the School day finishes at 14:00, although there are activities held on site until 15:00.
14. The School's published 2013 term dates are as follows:
 - March 28th – Spring Term Ends
 - April 15th – Summer Term Begins
 - May 27th – 31st – Half Term
 - July 19th – Summer Term Ends

Staff and Pupils

15. The school currently has 85 staff, of which 50 are full-time and 35 are part-time, the existing pre-school also has four staff.
16. There are 670 pupils on roll, as recorded by the 2013 spring census (as identified in the HCC website) with a further 32 in the pre-school. Pre-school students are split across morning and afternoon sessions so there are approximately 16 pre-school pupils on site at any one time.
17. As previously identified it is not proposed to increase the levels of either staff or pupils above existing numbers, for either the main school or the pre-school, as a result of the proposed development.
18. The school's pupil catchment is shown in Figure 2 below.



Figure.2 Warblington School Catchment



<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/schooldetails?dfes=4318#catchment>

Parking levels

19. There are currently a total of 74 parking spaces provided at the school, including designated disabled parking spaces. This figure includes parking for both staff and visitors. It is not proposed to alter the overall level of parking as part of these proposals.
20. Cycle parking is provided in the form of locked cycle sheds which accommodate up to 60 bicycles.
21. The proposals influence the parking areas to some extent, with some realignment due to enhanced footways, as can be seen in the attached pre and post development plans. However, the overall level of everyday parking is not altered by the proposals.
22. It is understood that the existing arrangement of the school site allows for overflow parking in occasional circumstances, such as for parents evenings. The issue of ensuring capacity for overflow parking was retained with the previous proposals for the Hockey club and was addressed in the HTN submitted with the 2010 application; although at that time it was envisaged that the greatest demand for overflow parking would be in association with the Hockey Club's first team games. These proposals allow for the ongoing provision of overflow parking for occasional circumstances by utilising part of the MUGA, as demonstrated on the site plan.
23. Whilst this need for additional parking has been removed, it is recognised that there will be times, as with the existing operation, when overflow parking is required to reduce impact on the surrounding area, such as for parent's evenings. In order to provide confidence the proposed site layout also makes adequate allowance for overflow parking the attached general arrangement plan shows how the MUGA can be opened up to be used as temporary parking.
24. As can be seen in the general arrangement drawing, the first two pitches on the MUGA will be separated from the remainder, so that in the first instance overflow parking would only take place on approximately two-fifths of the MUGA hard-standing. There would remain the option however, to fully utilise the MUGA for overflow parking if in exceptional circumstances this was considered necessary. For absolute clarity, the MUGA will not be used for overflow parking under ordinary operation conditions, such as a normal school term time day.



Community Uses

25. The School has a number of community uses which take place on site, in a number of different spaces which are made available for use. The School has the following advertisement on their website which sets out what areas can be hired and when:

Figure.3 Community Use Advertisement

Warblington School Community Lettings

Are you a local group looking for facilities?

Here at Warblington School we have a variety of rooms to accommodate clubs and societies, ranging from large halls to smaller classrooms. These are available from:

1800-2200 Monday-Friday and
0930-1500 Saturday.

If your club is interested please contact the Community Lettings Office on the number below for prices and availability.

Warblington School
Southleigh Road
Havant
Hampshire
PO9 2RR
T: 023 9247 5480
F: 023 9248 6127
E: admin@warblington.hants.sch.uk
W: www.warblington.hants.sch.uk
Headteacher: Julia Vincent



**WARBLINGTON
SCHOOL**

Facilities available:

- Sports Hall
- Gym
- Main Hall (max 450 seated)
- Drama Room (max 70 seated)
- Drama Studio (max 60 seated)
- Classrooms

<http://www.warblington.hants.sch.uk/>

26. In relation to this application the use of the existing sports hall is most relevant. It is evident that the existing sports hall is currently available for lettings from 18:00 – 22:00 Monday to Friday and from 19:30 – 15:00 on Saturdays. The newly proposed Sports Hall, which would replace the existing Sports Hall, and would continue to be made available for lettings within the same time periods.
27. Whilst it is envisaged that a newer and slightly larger facility may prove more attractive to potential users, it remains the case that the existing hall is currently available for community uses and that the proposals would only result in a net increase of 84sqm. There is not proposed to be any increase in parking to accommodate this minor increase in hall floor area, so it can be concluded that the proposed sports hall would not result in a net trip increase over that which could be associated with the extant development.
28. With regards to the MUGA, there are no proposals for floodlighting and the facility is only intended for school use, with the exception of use as an overflow car park in exceptional circumstances, as discussed previously.
29. Attached to this note is the current schedule of community uses for the existing sports hall for information.



Transport Information

Site location

30. The site is accessed via Southleigh Road a two-way single carriageway residential road measuring approximately seven metres in width, with good quality footways provided on either side of the carriageway. Keep clear road markings are located adjacent to the site access junctions with Southleigh Road, although no other on-street parking restrictions apply.
31. The western footway measures approximately 1.8 metres in width, whilst the eastern footway measures approximately three metres in width, of which one metre consists of a grass verge. Advisory on-road cycle lanes are provided in both directions along Southleigh Road
32. There are two existing access points to the school via Southleigh Road. The northernmost access is situated opposite St. Georges Avenue and operates as an exit only, with the southern access situated approximately 70 metres to the south operating as an entry access into the site. A pedestrian access is also provided immediately to the north of the site exit.
33. There are no formal pedestrian crossings within the immediate vicinity of the school however, motorists are encouraged to reduce speeds to 20mph within the vicinity of the school. There is also signage which denotes a shared pedal cycle and pedestrian route.
34. There is a level crossing situated approximately 80 metres to the north of the northern exit only school access, where Southleigh Road crosses the main railway line between Southampton Central and Chichester. A spur line at Bedhampton also provides connections to Portsmouth.
35. As identified previously the School provides parking for up to 60 bicycles.

Public Transport

36. Warblington Secondary School is situated within 400m of both bus and rail connections and can therefore be considered to be in a sustainable location.
37. Bus stops are situated adjacent to the site providing covered shelters, seating and bus timetable information. The 27/27A serves the Denvilles, Southleigh Road bus stop and is operated by Emsworth & District Buses which operate many rural and urban services in Havant and Emsworth. The primary route is route 27 which goes from Rowland's Castle through to Southbourne. The 27/27A provides a half hourly service in each direction throughout much of the day from Monday to Friday, and on Saturdays.
38. Warblington Rail station is operated by Southern Railways and is staffed on a part-time basis from 07:55 to 9:10 Monday to Friday. The rail station operates unstaffed at weekends. Services operate from Southampton Central to London Victoria with trains operating at a frequency of up to 2 trains per hour.
39. More frequent services operate along the Southampton to Chichester line, as discussed within chapter 5. Figure 2.5 provides a rail network plan identifying Warblington within the southern rail network.

Existing Travel Habits

40. It is understood that students and staff at Warblington School are subject to an annual audit, which records their main mode of travel to the School. It has not been possible to obtain this information for use in this note however, it is believed that a copy is held with the local authority so should be accessible to Highway Officers.

Existing Transport Conditions

41. For the 2010 application it was agreed in consultation with HCC Highways Officers to provide an assessment of the Southleigh Road level crossing, with the understanding that this is known to cause some queuing back when in operation.
42. The assessment concluded that queuing could impede the site access junctions in the future, yet that left turning exiting vehicles would be able to stack on site whilst awaiting an opportunity to exit. Furthermore the analysis identified that the keep clear markings would ensure right turners and those accessing the site could continue to make their manoeuvres.
43. It should be noted that this assessment was required in support of the application for the Hockey Club's use, primarily to assess the peak impact of a capacity first team home game on a Saturday. As identified

previously, the more intensive Hockey Club use, whilst permitted, is no longer proposed to take place. Rather, a revised NMA application has been submitted which significantly reduces the transport implications of proposals associated with that permission. Furthermore, the proposals associated with the application to which this note relates (replacement Sports Hall, MUGA etc) are not anticipated to result in any trip generation increases over the levels which currently take place.

44. It can therefore be concluded that there will be no further impact on current/future queues associated with the Southleigh Road level crossing as a result of these proposals.

Conclusion

45. This note has been produced in support of development proposals at Warblington School, Havant. The proposals allow for a new sports hall, to replace the existing sports hall, resulting in a net increase of 80sqm; a Multi-use Games Area, which for the most part replaces current playground/tennis courts which will be lost to the new hall location; and for the relocation of the onsite pre-school; with associated alterations to onsite layout to facilitate the changes.
46. There are no proposals to increase staff or student levels nor to alter the overall level of parking on site or access arrangements.
47. Given the modest development proposals, HCC Highway Officers have agreed that the level of information required in support of the application is that in line with requirements for "*Minor School Applications < 500 sqm*". HCC Highway Officers provided a checklist of required information which has been reproduced at Table 1.
48. This note provides all the required information and demonstrates that the level of development is insignificant with regards to transport. It can therefore be concluded that the transport impact of development will not be "*severe*", in line with the test set by the National Planning Policy Framework, and that planning permission should not be restricted on grounds of highways and transportation.

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