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| Committee Date: | 09/07/2015 | Application Number: | 2015/02540/PA |
| Accepted:       | 22/04/2015 | Application Type:   | Full Planning |
| Target Date:    | 22/07/2015 |                     |               |
| Ward:           | Tyburn     |                     |               |

Land off Farnborough Road, Castle Vale, Birmingham, B35 7NL

Erection of new school building with associated sports hall, external play areas, landscaping and parking as a replacement for the existing Greenwood Academy

Applicant: Carillion Construction Ltd  
on behalf of The Secretary of State for Education, c/o Agent  
Agent: Seymour Harris Architecture  
26 Highfield Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 3DP

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Recommendation

**Approve Subject To Conditions**

1. Proposal

BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This full planning application proposes the erection of a new school with associated sports hall and outdoor play facilities to replace the existing Greenwood Academy secondary school to the north. The proposals are part of the Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP), which is a private finance initiative which will deliver 8 new schools within the current 'Midlands' batch.
- 1.2. The intention of the PSBP is to transform the provision of education to children, with a significant aspect of the programme being to provide improved facilities (including sports provision) and making these facilities available for community use.
- 1.3. The Academy is presently undersubscribed and currently has some 680 pupils on roll (full capacity is 900). The proposals would extend capacity to 1104 with 180 of these spaces being for sixth form students and 24 places for children with special educational needs.

LAYOUT

- 1.4. The proposed 3 storey flat-roofed building would be situated towards the front of the site, in a centrally located position and would provide 8,627 sq.m of internal floorspace. Outdoor play space with a three court multi use games area (MUGA) would be situated at the eastern end of the site, whilst parking with a four court sports hall and integrated activity centre would be situated beyond. The area directly to the rear of the school would be a combination of formal and informal play areas and incidental landscaping. A biomass CHP plant area would be situated adjacent to the sports hall.

- 1.5. Internally the main school building has the large communal spaces at its heart (dining, reception etc.) with classrooms arranged in clusters at the periphery. The ground floor would accommodate kitchen and dining spaces, the main hall, drama, design technology, food technology, music/art and vocational spaces for hair & beauty and construction. The first floor would be accessed via a feature staircase and houses the SEN suite including specialist classrooms, a series of flexible teaching spaces and staff spaces. The second floor would accommodate science and English together with further staff spaces and the sixth form study and library centre.
- 1.6. The 63 (+ 4 no. disabled) space staff and visitor car park would be accessed via a single access point from the shared drive leading to the Vale stadium to the south. The car park would also provide dropping off facilities (primarily for SEN pupils). Pedestrian access would be through a single entrance directly off Farnborough Road.
- 1.7. In order to provide adequate security the site would be secured by a combination of 2.4m and 3m high weldmesh fencing, although the frontage would be free from fencing, with the building providing the secure perimeter.

## DESIGN

- 1.8. The proposed school building has a simple grid layout to its elevations. Whilst the window fenestration varies across the elevations, an ordered approach is taken with a bright projecting feature entrance lobby providing a prominent accent to the front elevation. Materials are restrained with the application showing a dark/grey facing brick with dark aluminium window frames and louvres. In order to reduce its prominence, roof top plant has been located away from the building's edges.
- 1.9. The double height dining space would be highlighted through the use of two storey glazing with the cantilevered classrooms above providing opportunities for external dining.
- 1.10. The two storey sports hall building is visually split with facing brickwork at the lower level and translucent panels above. These panels would allow light to filter into the hall during the day whilst allowing internal lighting to create a subtle light box effect during hours of darkness.
- 1.11. Since the application's submission amended plans have been submitted in accordance with Sport England's recommendations in order to make the sports hall more suited to community use.
- 1.12. This application follows public consultation events in February and March of this year.
- 1.13. Full plans, a Planning Statement; Design and Access Statement; Transport Assessment; Travel Plan; Arboricultural Report; Biodiversity Statement; Contaminated Land Desktop Study; Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy Study; Energy Statement; Low and Zero Carbon Technology Feasibility Report; External Noise Survey Report; Waste Management Plan and Phasing Plans have been submitted in support of this application. A request for a screening opinion was submitted at pre-application stage where it was concluded that the proposals do not generate the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment.
- 1.14. [Link to Documents](#)

## 2. Site & Surroundings

- 2.1. This 2 hectare site currently forms open space utilised as paddock land. The site is part of a wider paddock site and roughly comprises 2/3 of this land. This remaining paddock land would be retained as such and there is a current submission (application 2015/03562/PA) for the creation of new paddocks on pockets of land to the east. The site previously accommodated high-rise tower blocks and prior to this formed part of the Castle Bromwich Aerodrome during WWII. The site was previously proposed to be laid out as playing fields (see planning history).
- 2.2. The application site is generally flat and bounded by post and rail fencing. Further to the east beyond the retained paddocks is a nursing home. Residential dwellings lie to the north with the existing Greenwood Academy beyond. The site forms part of a much wider area of open space which includes the Vale Stadium and sports pitches to the south and allotments to the east. The elevated M6 motorway is situated in the distance to the south / east.

### Site Location

## 3. Planning History

### Land to the South/East

- 3.1. Current Application – 2015/03562/PA – Relocation of existing paddocks to new adjacent areas to enable the relocation of the horses from the application site

### Land to the West

- 3.2. 09.08.2001 - 2000/05851/PA – Approval - Erection of 249 dwellings, access and parking and extension of public open space

### Application Site

- 3.3. 29.03.2001 – 2001/00156/PA – Approval - Formation of recreation area/football pitches
- 3.4. 15.09.2005 – 2005/04879/PA – Temporary Approval - Variation of Condition C7 (playing field provision) attached to N/05851/00/FUL (erection of 249 dwellings) to allow use of the land for horse paddocks for a two year period, including importation of topsoil for grass seeding, perimeter post-and-rail fencing, and erection of lighting column
- 3.5. 27.06.2013 – 2013/01818/PA – Approval - Application to remove condition C7 (provision of playing fields) attached to planning approval 2000/05851/PA (erection of 249 dwellings) to retain land for use as paddock

## 4. Consultation/PP Responses

- 4.1. Transportation Development – No objection subject to conditions requiring measures to prevent mud on the highway, completion of an appropriate highways agreement to secure measures such as Traffic Regulation Orders (e.g. school keep clear markings), submission of a School Travel Plan, provision of further details of the proposed cycle parking and a Construction Management Plan.

- 4.2. Regulatory Services – No objection subject to conditions requiring the prior approval of extraction and odour control equipment and further contaminated land studies/remediation. Conditions controlling hours of use of the MUGA and noise from plant and machinery are also recommended. Recommend that 10% of parking spaces are provided with charging points for electric vehicles.
- 4.3. BCC Drainage Team – Recommend conditions requiring the prior approval of a sustainable drainage scheme and maintenance plan.
- 4.4. Leisure Services – Object to the loss of open space but accept that if exceptional circumstances are proven then the school would have a wider community benefit.
- 4.5. Environment Agency – No objection.
- 4.6. Sport England – No objection subject to conditions requiring a community access agreement for the on-site sports facilities and that the alternative location for the horse paddocks is provided prior to the commencement of the development.
- 4.7. West Midlands Police – No objection but recommends that the proposal is built to enhances security standards (Secured by Design).
- 4.8. Severn Trent Water – No objection subject to a condition requiring the prior approval of drainage details.
- 4.9. Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust – Consider that whilst the application to relocate the paddocks is a separate submission they consider that the relocation of the paddocks should be a material consideration in respect of the school application. They add that the intended areas for relocation of the horses has been the subject of funding in 2013 to create floristically species-rich meadows. Further grant aid has been secured and the site is on the priority list to receive further funding. Removing access to the meadow for a restricted horse grazing use would be detrimental to the provision of public open space and the success of past and future project work. Therefore the trust do not support this application until an alternative grazing location and the issue of loss of public open space has been resolved to the benefit of past and planned investment in community, project and financial terms. Note that Birmingham and the Black Country is identified as a Nature Improvement Area (one of 12 in England) and the proposals as currently drafted would fail to realise the opportunities for the natural environmental improvement as required by the NPPF and the Natural Environment White Paper.
- 4.10. Site and Press Notices displayed. Local occupiers, Ward Members, the MP and Residents' Associations were consulted without response.

## 5. Policy Context

- 5.1. Birmingham Unitary Development Plan 2005; the submission draft Birmingham Development Plan; Places for All (2001) SPG; Parks and Open Space Strategy (02006) SPD; Car Parking Guidelines (2012) SPD; Playing Pitch Strategy (2011); and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

## 6. Planning Considerations

POLICY

- 6.1. Policy 3.52A of the UDP states that proposals that result in the loss of open space will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and account will be taken of the availability and quality of public open space nearby.
- 6.2. The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) identifies a shortage of playing fields in the Erdington Area, however there are a number of pitches in immediate proximity. The adds that quality of the pitches is a key issue and the Vale Stadium site is identified as a priority for investment.
- 6.3. Key considerations are the principle of the loss of open space and the erection of the school and associated development, design, amenity, ecology, tree impact and highway matters.

#### PRINCIPLE

- 6.4. The site currently forms open space to which the public do not generally have access. The application must therefore demonstrate exceptional circumstances to permit the loss of this open space. Should exceptional circumstances be demonstrated then adequate compensation for the loss should be provided.

#### Exceptional Circumstances

- 6.5. The Planning Statement outlines that rebuilding the school on the current site would result in an adverse impact on the students' educational attainment due to the relatively tight confines of the site and restricted access during the construction works. In addition, due to the size and irregular shape of the site together with the need to keep the school operational there would be severe constraints on the design of the new building. The new school would be dictated by the logistics of building around existing occupied classrooms, rather than the basis of optimum design principles. Therefore redeveloping the existing site would result in both unacceptable levels of disruption during construction and a compromised end design.
- 6.6. Due to the above constraints alternative sites were explored. The application site was identified due to its close proximity to the existing school and adjacency to the sports facilities. The site would also enable the school to have a prominent frontage providing a visible statement regarding the importance of education and assisting in further developing community engagement.
- 6.7. Tyburn Ward, at 3.15ha per 1000 population, exceeds the minimum target of 2ha for public open space. The proposals would have not impact upon these figures as the existing space is not public open space and there would be no increase in population. Whilst there would be a loss in the open views across this and neighbouring sites, I do not consider this sufficient to warrant resisting the application.
- 6.8. The existing school site accommodates an artificial grass pitch, a MUGA, two rounder's pitches and a sports hall. At least in the short term, the school propose to continue to utilise the MUGA and artificial grass pitch and manage community access outside of school hours in conjunction with Castle Vale Community Housing Association. I note that the UDP allocates the site for playing field use, however as per the planning history, it has been accepted that the site is no longer needed for playing field use and the paddock use has permanent consent.

- 6.9. I consider that the proposals satisfactorily demonstrate exceptional circumstances subject to the community access agreement condition recommended by Sport England.
- 6.10. The issues arising from the displacement of the horses is considered in a separate application and is not within the control of the applicant. I therefore do not consider the condition requiring securing an alternative location recommended by Sport England reasonable or necessary.

#### Compensation

- 6.11. Financial compensation for the loss of the open space to accommodate the school of £300,000 has been secured in principle. This is broadly calculated on the basis of £15 per sq.m which is typically applied in the instances of the loss of playing field. I consider that this is sufficient and conclude that the more onerous £40 sq.m would not be reasonable in this instance as the land does not constitute public open space and is not laid out to that standard. The compensation would be secured by condition requiring the provision of an appropriate mechanism as the city owns the site and cannot enter into a legal agreement with itself.
- 6.12. My Strategic Planning Officer concurs with the above conclusions and I therefore conclude that the proposals are acceptable in principle subject to the appropriate compensation being secured.

#### DESIGN

- 6.13. The principal school building, at three storeys in height, is an appropriate scale for this main road frontage. Residential properties to the north and west are a combination of two and three storeys in height within the vicinity of the application site. The siting of the school set back (12m) from the road behind landscaping reflects the character of the wider Castle Vale estate and would maintain a sense of openness. The sports block beyond has a clear relationship with both the school building and the sports pitches to the south, with its siting facilitating community use, including providing changing facilities for the neighbouring fields. The siting of much of the outdoor play space including the MUGA adjacent to the remaining paddocks will, notwithstanding the proposed fencing, maintain an undeveloped visual corridor from Farnborough Road allowing views across to the fields/planting beyond.
- 6.14. The relatively simple style of architecture for the school building is appropriate and the use of facing brickwork is acceptable. The feature entrance would aid legibility and provide a key marker in the street scene for this community building. The building provides active frontages to all four elevations, with generously proportioned classroom windows. Roof top plant area is situated towards the centre of the roof to minimise visual impact.
- 6.15. Use of brick and a translucent material for the sports hall/dance studio building is appropriate and will add both day and night time visual interest. The translucent material would provide a light and without glare that could compromise the range of sports that could take place.
- 6.16. Ancillary development would include an energy centre housing the boiler, plant and sprinkler tank located adjacent to the proposed shorts hall. This would be bounded by a close boarded timber screen to soften its visual impact. The screened refuse store would be situated between the energy centre and the access road.

- 6.17. Whilst the finer details are to be determined, the scheme outlines a comprehensive planting strategy with trees to the site frontage, car park and rear play space. I consider this acceptable subject to a condition requiring the prior approval of a detailed scheme.
- 6.18. I therefore raise no design/visual amenity objections subject to appropriate safeguarding conditions including prior approval of materials and levels.

#### AMENITY IMPACT

- 6.19. The proposed development is sited approximately 46m from the closest residential property to the north and as such there would be no material overlooking or overshadowing of existing residential properties. In terms of noise and disturbance a Noise Study has been provided. The study includes the results of a noise level survey which provides baseline data for the existing situation. This demonstrates that the school would offer a suitable internal noise environment (in accordance with DfE guidelines) and that the proposal, including the external play areas are unlikely to result in a significant change in noise levels at the nearest residential properties.
- 6.20. Regulatory Services raise no objection subject to conditions requiring the prior approval of extraction and odour control equipment and further contaminated land studies/remediation. Conditions controlling hours of use of the MUGA and noise from plant and machinery are also recommended. I concur with the recommended conditions and do not consider the proposed hours of use for the MUGA (08:00 – 20:00 Monday to Saturday and 10:00 – 18:00 Sundays) a significant barrier to any potential community use. I also note that no floodlighting is proposed and therefore extensive evening use would be unlikely to be feasible.
- 6.21. I note the recommendation for 10% of the parking spaces to be provided with charging points for electric vehicles. However, as there is no policy basis for such a measure, I do not consider this reasonable in this instance.
- 6.22. In terms of comings and goings, the principal pedestrian access is from Farnborough Road, which is an established situation. The proposals would locate the school entrance onto the main road away from the existing cul-de-sac arrangement.
- 6.23. I therefore conclude that subject to the conditions recommended by Regulatory Services, the proposed development would not materially harm the amenity of occupiers of dwellings within the vicinity.

#### ECOLOGY

- 6.24. The comments made by both the Wildlife Trust and the City's Ecologist resisting the relocation of the horses onto the nature conservation area are noted. However, the implication of the proposed relocation of these horses is not the subject of this application, and will be considered in application 2015/03562/PA. The Ecologist notes that the site has limited ecological value as concluded by the supporting biodiversity statement submitted in support of this application and recommends that a condition requiring a scheme of ecological enhancement measures is imposed to provide the maximum ecological benefit from the proposed development. I concur with this recommendation and an appropriate condition is recommended.

#### TREE IMPACT

- 6.25. There are a limited number of trees on this site which would be required to be removed in order to facilitate the development. The City's Arboricultural Officer agrees with the conclusions of the Arboricultural Report and notes that it would be difficult to see how the site could be development without the removal of a number of trees (including two A and five B category and part of a B category grouping on the southern boundary). The Arboricultural Officer recommends a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted report and I concur with this conclusion and an appropriate condition is attached.

#### HIGHWAY MATTERS

- 6.26. The application proposals show 67 parking spaces, 30 cycle spaces (with a potential to expand to 121) and a drop off bay within the car park. Transportation Development calculates the maximum parking provision generated by the staff (126) and student numbers to be 75 spaces. Therefore the proposal would provide a satisfactory level of parking provision. The Car Parking Guidelines SPD states that the proposal generates a minimum cycle parking provision of 124 spaces. However the application's accompanying travel surveys show that only 5 pupils and 2 members of staff currently cycle to the existing site. Therefore the provision of 30 spaces initially with scope for expansion is an appropriate level of provision.
- 6.27. Access would be via an existing (unadopted) access road and would not present highway safety or free-flow issues. Transportation Development recommend conditions requiring measures to prevent mud on the highway, completion of an appropriate highways agreement to secure measures such as Traffic Regulation Orders (e.g. school keep clear markings), submission of a School Travel Plan, provision of further details of the proposed cycle parking and a Construction Management Plan. I concur with this conclusion and appropriate conditions are recommended.

#### DRAINAGE

- 6.28. Since this application's submission the requirement to consider Sustainable Urban Drainage systems for surface water has come into force, with the responsibility for surface water drainage resting with the city. The City's Drainage Engineer raises no objection subject to a condition requiring the submission of a suitable scheme including an appropriate maintenance regime. I concur with this conclusion and an appropriate condition is recommended. The Environment Agency raise no objection and Severn Trent Water recommend a condition requiring the submission of drainage details (including foul). An appropriate condition is recommend.

#### 7. Conclusion

- 7.1. I consider that the proposed school would offer an inspiring educational establishment, delivering a step change in the standard of school and sports provision at Greenwood Academy and provide a catalyst for further improvements. The simple but robust approach in treating the elevations, such as limiting the use of bold colours, aims to deliver a building that would not date and offers internal flexibility. The new sports hall in particular would offer significant benefit to the community, with the changing facilities for the neighbouring sports pitches a further benefit.
- 7.2. I consider that exceptional circumstances for the loss of open space have been demonstrated and that appropriate compensation is secured. I therefore recommend that this application is supported subject to appropriate safeguarding conditions.



8. Recommendation

8.1. Approval subject to the following conditions:

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| 1  | Requires the provision of a financial contribution towards off site public open space in Tyburn Ward.                                      |
| 2  | Requires the prior approval of a Community Access Agreement  |
| 3  | Requires the prior submission of a contamination remediation scheme  |
| 4  | Requires the prior submission of a contaminated land verification report   |
| 5  | Requires the prior submission of a landfill Gas assessment   |
| 6  | Requires the prior submission of a construction method statement/management plan   |
| 7  | Requires the prior submission of a scheme for ecological/biodiversity/enhancement measures   |
| 8  | Requires the prior submission of extraction and odour control details  |
| 9  | Requires the prior submission of hard and/or soft landscape details  |
| 10 | Requires the prior submission of level details   |
| 11 | Requires the prior submission of sample materials  |
| 12 | Requires the prior submission of a drainage scheme   |
| 13 | Requires the prior submission of a Sustainable Drainage Operation and Maintenance Plan   |
| 14 | Requires the prior approval of details to prevent mud on the highway   |
| 15 | Requires the prior submission and completion of works for the S278/TRO Agreement   |
| 16 | Requires the prior submission of cycle storage details   |
| 17 | Requires the submission of an updated School Travel Plan   |
| 18 | Requires the development to be carried out in accordance with the Arboricultural Implications Statement                                    |
| 19 | Limits the hours of use of the multi use games area (MUGA) to 08:00 - 20:00 Monday to Saturday and 10:00 - 18:00 Sundays and Bank Holidays |
| 20 | Limits the noise levels for Plant and Machinery  |
| 21 | Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans   |
| 22 | Limits the approval to 3 years (Full)  |
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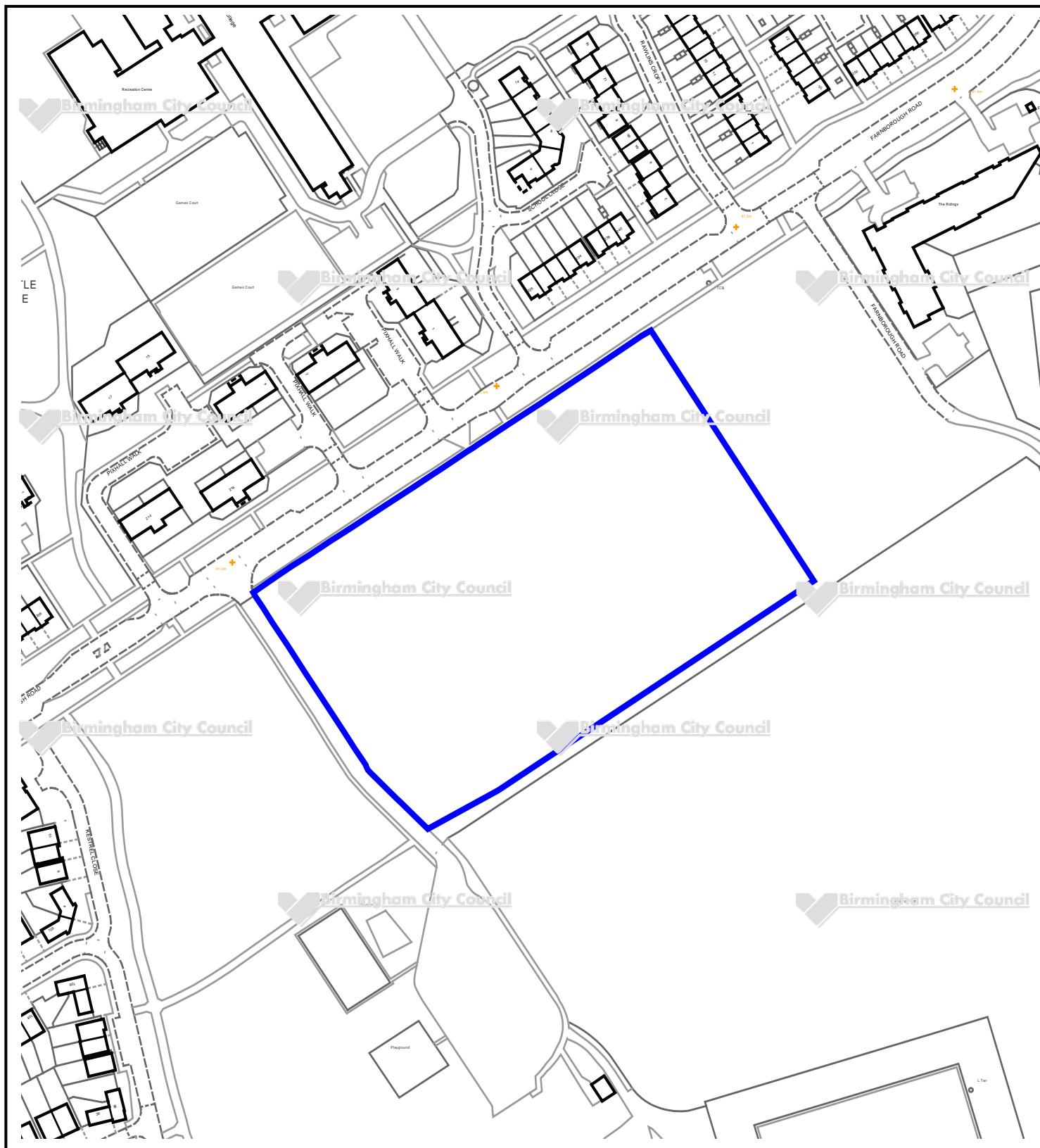
Case Officer: Nicholas Jackson

**Photo(s)**



Figure 1. The Application Site from Farnborough Road with the access road in the foreground

## Location Plan



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