

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	30 January 2020
<b>Application Number</b>	19/10245/VAR
<b>Site Address</b>	Dauntsey's School, High Street, West Lavington, SN10 4HE
<b>Proposal</b>	Variation of condition 2 of planning permission K/42974 (change of use from agricultural land to use of playing fields and outdoor sports facilities) to allow for different surface material for outdoor sports track, with proposed landscaping to reduce visual impact (resubmission of refused application ref 18/11759/VAR)
<b>Applicant</b>	Dauntsey School
<b>Town/Parish Council</b>	WEST LAVINGTON
<b>Electoral Division</b>	Councillor Richard Gamble - The Lavingtons and Erlestoke
<b>Grid Ref</b>	399976 153650
<b>Type of application</b>	Full Planning
<b>Case Officer</b>	Morgan Jones

In accordance with the Council's 'Scheme of Delegation Specific to Planning', this application is brought to committee at the request of Councillor Richard Gamble on the grounds of the visual impact on the surrounding area.

## **1. Purpose of Report**

To assess the merits of the proposal against the policies of the development plan and other material considerations and to consider the recommendation to grant planning permission.

The key issues for consideration are: -

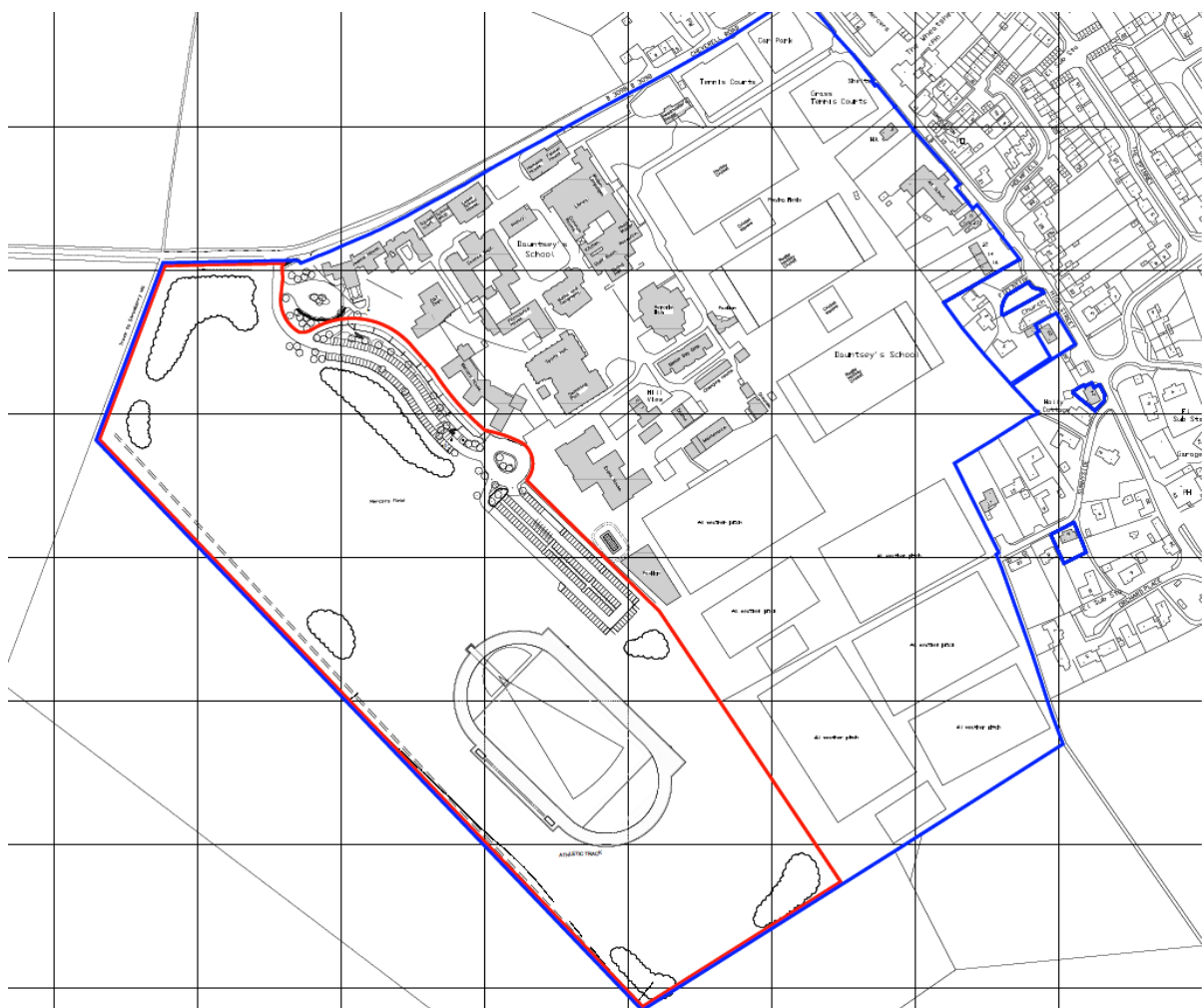
- Principle of development;
- Design, landscape character & visual amenity;

## **2. Site Description & Planning History**

The application site relates to the playing fields at Dauntsey's School, and in particular the athletics track, which was originally granted planning permission on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2013 under planning application ref K/42974. The planning permission was granted for the "change of use of agricultural land to use of playing field and outdoor sports facilities". The planning permission was subject to conditions which required the approved new landscaping scheme to be installed around the periphery of the land along with its future maintenance and management. The planning permission also removed permitted development rights for the erection of any form of means of enclosure on the application land. The application clearly specified that the playing fields would be grassed over apart from the areas required for field events.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2008 planning permission ref K58271/F was granted for landscaping and ground remodelling to facilitate planning permission K/42974. The planning permission also involved a new vehicular access to replace the existing access off Cheverell Road, creation of a new set down and pick up facility for students and staff car parking with associated landscaping, drainage and lighting. The planning permission was subject to conditions which required the approved new landscaping scheme to be installed around the periphery of the land and removed the ability to install any means of enclosure or lighting without further consent. The application clearly specified that the athletics track was going to be an eight-lane grass running track.

The aforementioned planning permissions permitted the change of use and alteration of the land, as defined in red on the location plan shown below, from agriculture to accommodate outdoor sports facilities. The approved plans showed the position of the athletics track and playing field which were all to be of a grass surface. On the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017 a Non-Material Amendment (NMA) application was approved which allowed the layout of the athletics track and playing fields to be re-configured. The rearrangement of the sports facilities did not involve any engineering works and it was not considered that there would be a material alteration to the planning permission, in particular as all the sports facilities were to be of a grass surface. The approved location of the athletics track is shown on the location plan below.



## Site Location Plan

The athletics track was subsequently installed in the approved location; however, due to a misinterpretation of the provision of the planning permission, it was installed with a synthetic surface and is surrounded by a white fence. A retrospective planning application ref 18/11759/VAR was therefore submitted to regularise the appearance of the track and the associated fence. The application also proposed some new planting along the south western boundary of the application site in order to screen the track and fence from views from public rights of way on higher ground to the south of the site.

The Eastern Area Planning Committee refused planning permission for application 18/11759/VAR on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019 on the following grounds:

***The development, by reason of the bright and unsympathetic colours used for the athletics area and perimeter fencing, and the size of the area covered, creates a discordant element in the landscape that has an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. This is exacerbated by its location at the interface of the countryside and the school grounds, and its prominence in views from nearby public rights of way, particularly those on the higher ground to the south. The mitigation measures proposed would not only take a lengthy time to provide any mitigation, but even when mature, would not be able to adequately mitigate the adverse impacts identified. The development therefore conflicts with the policies of the development plan, specifically Core Policies 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and with national planning policy in paragraphs 127, 130 & 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework.***

### 3. The Proposal

The current planning application is the re-submission of application 18/11759/VAR and seeks planning permission to regularise the appearance of the track and the associated fence, and to provide additional landscaping.

The Design and Access Statement submitted in support of the application explains that since the refusal of planning permission for application 18/11759/VAR “Dauntsey’s School has engaged with Officers and Members of Wiltshire Council and West Lavington Parish Council to seek to address their concerns. Following these discussions, a number of revisions have been made to the scheme, which have been incorporated into the current application, including increased planting and landscaping and the painting of the white fencing.” It is understood that detailed consideration has been given to whether the current track could be replaced or painted in an alternative colour although it is stated that these options are not considered to be possible or feasible as detailed within the Design and Access Statement. Whilst changing the track itself is not considered to be an option, the application presents the following amendments to try and assimilate the development in to the local landscape as much as possible and address the previous reasons for refusal: -

- It is proposed that the fence will be painted a matt mid- grey colour (e.g. RAL 7030 – Stone Grey or RAL7034 - Yellow Grey). This is a neutral colour which is visually recessive and will blend with other surrounding colours in the landscape in both summer and winter. The removal of the fence has been considered by the applicant, however its benefits, which include demarcation of the competing and spectating areas, controls access to the track, prevent animals accessing the track etc, are considered to outweigh its visual impact;
- A more comprehensive landscaping scheme will be introduced with the aim of strengthening and enhancing the landscape elements and features around the site

Site plan of the stadium area. The plan shows the stadium (green field, red seating area) and surrounding buildings, roads, and drainage systems. The plan includes a scale bar (1:1250) and a north arrow.

Key features and labels on the plan:

- Stadium:** Green field, red seating area.
- Drainage:** "Circled square (22x22m) with drain 1m offset from square. Location to be agreed." "Location of outlet drain to existing french drain T90C." "Square area 500m<sup>2</sup>".
- Roads:** "95 1m", "96 1m", "97 1m", "98 1m", "99 1m", "100 1m", "101 1m", "102 1m", "103 1m", "104 1m", "105 1m", "106 1m", "107 1m", "108 1m", "109 1m", "110 1m", "111 1m", "112 1m", "113 1m", "114 1m", "115 1m", "116 1m", "117 1m", "118 1m", "119 1m", "120 1m", "121 1m", "122 1m", "123 1m", "124 1m", "125 1m", "126 1m", "127 1m", "128 1m", "129 1m", "130 1m", "131 1m", "132 1m", "133 1m", "134 1m", "135 1m", "136 1m", "137 1m", "138 1m", "139 1m", "140 1m", "141 1m", "142 1m", "143 1m", "144 1m", "145 1m", "146 1m", "147 1m", "148 1m", "149 1m", "150 1m", "151 1m", "152 1m", "153 1m", "154 1m", "155 1m", "156 1m", "157 1m", "158 1m", "159 1m", "160 1m", "161 1m", "162 1m", "163 1m", "164 1m", "165 1m", "166 1m", "167 1m", "168 1m", "169 1m", "170 1m", "171 1m", "172 1m", "173 1m", "174 1m", "175 1m", "176 1m", "177 1m", "178 1m", "179 1m", "180 1m", "181 1m", "182 1m", "183 1m", "184 1m", "185 1m", "186 1m", "187 1m", "188 1m", "189 1m", "190 1m", "191 1m", "192 1m", "193 1m", "194 1m", "195 1m", "196 1m", "197 1m", "198 1m", "199 1m", "200 1m", "201 1m", "202 1m", "203 1m", "204 1m", "205 1m", "206 1m", "207 1m", "208 1m", "209 1m", "210 1m", "211 1m", "212 1m", "213 1m", "214 1m", "215 1m", "216 1m", "217 1m", "218 1m", "219 1m", "220 1m", "221 1m", "222 1m", "223 1m", "224 1m", "225 1m", "226 1m", "227 1m", "228 1m", "229 1m", "230 1m", "231 1m", "232 1m", "233 1m", "234 1m", "235 1m", "236 1m", "237 1m", "238 1m", "239 1m", "240 1m", "241 1m", "242 1m", "243 1m", "244 1m", "245 1m", "246 1m", "247 1m", "248 1m", "249 1m", "250 1m", "251 1m", "252 1m", "253 1m", "254 1m", "255 1m", "256 1m", "257 1m", "258 1m", "259 1m", "260 1m", "261 1m", "262 1m", "263 1m", "264 1m", "265 1m", "266 1m", "267 1m", "268 1m", "269 1m", "270 1m", "271 1m", "272 1m", "273 1m", "274 1m", "275 1m", "276 1m", "277 1m", "278 1m", "279 1m", "280 1m", "281 1m", "282 1m", "283 1m", "284 1m", "285 1m", "286 1m", "287 1m", "288 1m", "289 1m", "290 1m", "291 1m", "292 1m", "293 1m", "294 1m", "295 1m", "296 1m", "297 1m", "298 1m", "299 1m", "300 1m", "301 1m", "302 1m", "303 1m", "304 1m", "305 1m", "306 1m", "307 1m", "308 1m", "309 1m", "310 1m", "311 1m", "312 1m", "313 1m", "314 1m", "315 1m", "316 1m", "317 1m", "318 1m", "319 1m", "320 1m", "321 1m", "322 1m", "323 1m", "324 1m", "325 1m", "326 1m", "327 1m", "328 1m", "329 1m", "330 1m", "331 1m", "332 1m", "333 1m", "334 1m", "335 1m", "336 1m", "337 1m", "338 1m", "339 1m", "340 1m", "341 1m", "342 1m", "343 1m", "344 1m", "345 1m", "346 1m", "347 1m", "348 1m", "349 1m", "350 1m", "351 1m", "352 1m", "353 1m", "354 1m", "355 1m", "356 1m", "357 1m", "358 1m", "359 1m", "360 1m", "361 1m", "362 1m", "363 1m", "364 1m", "365 1m", "366 1m", "367 1m", "368 1m", "369 1m", "370 1m", "371 1m", "372 1m", "373 1m", "374 1m", "375 1m", "376 1m", "377 1m", "378 1m", "379 1m", "380 1m", "381 1m", "382 1m", "383 1m", "384 1m", "385 1m", "386 1m", "387 1m", "388 1m", "389 1m", "390 1m", "391 1m", "392 1m", "393 1m", "394 1m", "395 1m", "396 1m", "397 1m", "398 1m", "399 1m", "400 1m", "401 1m", "402 1m", "403 1m", "404 1m", "405 1m", "406 1m", "407 1m", "408 1m", "409 1m", "410 1m", "411 1m", "412 1m", "413 1m", "414 1m", "415 1m", "416 1m", "417 1m", "418 1m", "419 1m", "420 1m", "421 1m", "422 1m", "423 1m", "424 1m", "425 1m", "426 1m", "427 1m", "428 1m", "429 1m", "430 1m", "431 1m", "432 1m", "433 1m", "434 1m", "435 1m", "436 1m", "437 1m", "438 1m", "439 1m", "440 1m", "441 1m", "442 1m", "443 1m", "444 1m", "445 1m", "446 1m", "447 1m", "448 1m", "449 1m", "450 1m", "451 1m", "452 1m", "453 1m", "454 1m", "455 1m", "456 1m", "457 1m", "458 1m", "459 1m", "460 1m", "461 1m", "462 1m", "463 1m", "464 1m", "465 1m", "466 1m", "467 1m", "468 1m", "469 1m", "470 1m", "471 1m", "472 1m", "473 1m", "474 1m", "475 1m", "476 1m", "477 1m", "478 1m", "479 1m", "480 1m", "481 1m", "482 1m", "483 1m", "484 1m", "485 1m", "486 1m", "487 1m", "488 1m", "489 1m", "490 1m", "491 1m", "492 1m", "493 1m", "494 1m", "495 1m", "496 1m", "497 1m", "498 1m", "499 1m", "500 1m", "501 1m", "502 1m", "503 1m", "504 1m", "505 1m", "506 1m", "507 1m", "508 1m", "509 1m", "510 1m", "511 1m", "512 1m", "513 1m", "514 1m", "515 1m", "516 1m", "517 1m", "518 1m", "519 1m", "520 1m", "521 1m", "522 1m", "523 1m", "524 1m", "525 1m", "526 1m", "527 1m", "528 1m", "529 1m", "530 1m", "531 1m", "532 1m", "533 1m", "534 1m", "535 1m", "536 1m", "537 1m", "538 1m", "539 1m", "540 1m", "541 1m", "542 1m", "543 1m", "544 1m", "545 1m", "546 1m", "547 1m", "548 1m", "549 1m", "550 1m", "551 1m", "552 1m", "553 1m", "554 1m", "555 1m", "556 1m", "557 1m", "558 1m", "559 1m", "560 1m", "561 1m", "562 1m", "563 1m", "564 1m", "565 1m", "566 1m", "567 1m", "568 1m", "569 1m", "570 1m", "571 1m", "572 1m", "573 1m", "574 1m", "575 1m", "576 1m", "577 1m", "578 1m", "579 1m", "580 1m", "5

## 4. Planning Policy

The adopted **Wiltshire Core Strategy**, with particular regard to:

- The made **West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan** (2017 – 2026) (June 2019), with particular regard to:

- Policy BE2 – Design of New Development and Local Distinctiveness;
- Policy CF1 – Community Facilities;
- Policy CF2 – Educational Facilities;
- Policy NE2 – Setting of West Lavington Parish.

**The Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy Supplementary Planning Guidance** (May 2005) provides detailed information of the landscape enhancement priorities for each of the different character areas in the former Kennet District Council Area. There are eleven different character areas as identified by the **Landscape Character Assessment** (1999). Although the former Kennet Local Plan has been replaced by the Wiltshire Core Strategy these documents continue to have full weight and are used for the purposes of implementing Core Policy 51 'Landscape' of the WCS as outlined within paragraph 6.74 of the WCS.

## **5. Consultations**

**Sport England** – Supports the proposal “as it will be of benefit to the school and the local athletics community, by creating a state-of-the-art athletics track thus increasing sports participation and health and wellbeing”.

**Wiltshire Council Leisure & Play Strategy Officer** – Support: -

“I would like it to be noted that there is a need for such a facility in the centre of the county, this will benefit not only the school but also Wiltshire Athletics and will give the residents of Wiltshire another first-class facility from which numerous physical activity opportunities will develop. Therefore, this application is in line with Wiltshire Council's aspiration for Stronger & Healthier Communities.”

**Wiltshire Council Landscape Officer** – No objection, subject to the implementation of the proposed landscape scheme.

**Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer** – No objection: -

“As with the previous application I do not wish to comment. The sports track is some distance from the boundaries of the conservation area and any listed buildings. The key issue is the impact on the special landscape area around the village rather than on the built heritage. I consider it more appropriate for our landscape colleagues to provide advice on this application to vary the condition”.

**West Lavington Parish Council** – Object to the application at is currently stands: -

“West Lavington Parish Council is supportive of the school and appreciates the benefits of the track to both the school and the local and wider communities. It is also very appreciative of the efforts the school has made to address the grounds of the previous refusal. However, by a clear majority the council voted to recommend refusal of the application in its present form for the reasons indicated below:

1. This current application remains in conflict (contrary to the stated views of the applicant) with our made Neighbourhood Plan as the location is covered by the Plan and subject to its policies including NE2 “*Development should respect views into and out of the two villages and be designed to integrate well with its surroundings*”. It is also in breach of core policies 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and national planning framework.
2. A clear majority of councillors felt that the main objections from residents ie the red colour of the track and the railings were still a matter of concern. It would continue to have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and impact on views from nearby public rights of way and that in the words of the planning committee “*even when mature the proposed planting would not be able to adequately mitigate the adverse impacts*”.

3. Ideally, the colour of the track should be changed to green, but the parish council understands that this would be an unreasonable request, and as a compromise it would propose that an undertaking be given that when the track is refurbished in 8-10 years' time, that the colour should be changed.
4. Having considered the changes proposed in this current application, increased planting, landscaping and the painting of the white fence, it was agreed that the council would wish to see the railings removed, although a section could be retained (if painted) for the safety of the spectator area at the "finish". The school had produced two samples of fencing painted mid grey and yellow grey (either of which was acceptable) to aid our discussion.
5. The planting should include a greater number of, and more mature, trees to make an instant impact, as well as planting a mainly evergreen hedge around the hill side of the track, as is already around the existing artificial courts. A strict time line for planting to be established and consideration on the impact of such planting on local nearby houses. The red Ds of the track may still be seen from slightly higher elevations but with judicious planting the impact may be reduced. Offers from the school to remedy if residents spot a "gap" in the planting were welcomed. Concerns expressed by the school regarding vermin (evidence?) could be lessened by making the perimeter fence to the site more robust.

In summary: Whilst opposing the application for the above reasons the council in principle strongly supports the provision of these sports facilities and is keen to work further with the school to develop the existing excellent relationship with a view to reaching a compromise solution acceptable to all concerned."

## **6. Publicity**

The application has been publicised via press and site notices and letters sent to properties within close proximity of the site. As a result of the consultation exercise 12 letters of support and 3 letters of objection have been received.

The letters of support, which include letters from the Wiltshire Athletics Association, Wiltshire and Swindon Sport (WASP) (which is the County Sports Partnership for Wiltshire and Swindon) and Devizes Running Club, are on the following grounds:

- It will be a very valuable and popular asset to our community as well as the school;
- The track will help children get into sport in the area not just in the school;
- The track and the infield have been made readily available to the community by the school and to my knowledge through attending to officiate and from the local media, it has been used extensively throughout the summer for inter-school athletics matches, disability sport and for primary school sport along with the school and local athletics" clubs training sessions;
- I believe that the addition of the running track within the existing bounds of the school playing fields does not detract, in the slightest, from the overall landscape. If you look at the view from the top of Strawberry Hill, as I often do, the school for years and now the track, form part of the overall landscape and the track is not incongruent, in my opinion with the existing backdrop of the school and the village behind it. When taken at a landscape scale, it fits comfortably within the existing environment. The white rails are visible, but in my opinion are not detrimental to the overall view;
- The visual impact from ground level is very limited if nonexistent. Any "detrimental" visual impact from "on high" is mitigated by vegetation growth and the visual impact cannot outweigh the much-needed facility for the local community and for the county and region as a whole;



- The need for this facility is more important than any visual impact from "on high" which can be lessened by landscaping, time and vegetation growth.

The letters of objection are on the following grounds: -

- The application states the site is outside the area of the West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan;
- The Landscape and Visual Appraisal does not refer to the West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan;
- The proposal is contrary to the objectives and policies of the West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan and Wiltshire Core Strategy;
- The mitigation measures do not address the reasons for refusal;
- The applicant should install a green track and remove the perimeter fencing to address the previous reasons for refusal.
- The colour of the orange track could be changed to a less obnoxious colour;
- The development is totally out of keeping with the surrounding landscape;
- It has been built without the necessary planning process being followed and results in a severe visual impact on a designated special landscape;

The applicant's planning consultant provided a written response to the comments from The Parish Council, third parties and consultees. The submission provides an appraisal of the development against the relevant policies of the West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan and argues that the scheme is in compliance with the aims and policies of the plan.

The submission also reiterates the need and benefits of the perimeter fence and explains why it is not feasible or viable to change the terracotta colour of the track at this point in time. It is also mentioned that the applicant is willing to work with the Council to agree a timeframe for the planting of the landscape scheme and to secure a scheme for the future management and maintenance of the trees. Finally, it is stated that when the track reaches the end of its existing life and requires replacing, the applicant is committed to undertake a full assessment of colour options at that time and seek the Council's approval for a new or replacement track.

## **7. Planning Considerations**

The application seeks retrospective planning permission for the synthetic surface track by amending the original planning permission. Sections 73 and 73A of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 enable changes to be made to existing planning permissions. These changes are known as Minor Material Amendments i.e. changes that do not fundamentally change the scope of the original planning permission but are materially different and therefore require planning permission. In this case, planning permission is sought for a synthetic surface athletics track instead of the grass surface athletics track originally approved. The scheme also seeks retrospective planning permission for the fence that surrounds the athletics track but it is proposed to paint it with a more recessive colour. The fence cannot be considered 'permitted development' because the original planning permission removed permitted development rights via a condition for any means of enclosure. The purpose of the condition was to enable the Local Planning Authority to consider the landscape and visual impact of any new development within the application site.

The landscape and visual impacts of the developments currently proposed is the key material planning consideration. In terms of the planning policy background, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (para 170). Furthermore, Core Policy 51 'Landscape' of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) outlines that *"development should protect, conserve and where possible*

*enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and be sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies.”* Core Policy 57 ‘Ensuring high quality design and place shaping’ of the WCS seeks to ensure that development proposals enhance local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the exiting pattern of development. Policy NE2 – ‘Setting of West Lavington Parish’ of the Neighbourhood Plan also seeks to ensure new development respects views into and out of the settlement and is designed to integrate well with its surroundings.

The Parish Council and local residents continue to question the need for the perimeter fence around the athletics track and the terracotta colour of the track surface. Sport England has therefore been approached and have advised that their design guidance for athletics facilities recommends that spectator fencing is installed. Sport England also highlighted the benefits of having a fence around the facility and the need for the colour of any track to be of a contrast to its surroundings. Whilst the reasons for not installing a green surface are noted the application has to be considered as presented and the terracotta colour of the track is the most prominent aspect of the proposal. The application highlights the need and benefits of the fence, but its presence has to be considered when assessing the overall visual impact of the proposal.

The site lies within the Vale of Pewsey Landscape Character Area (Kennet Landscape Character Assessment (1999)) and the enhancement priorities relevant to this development which have been highlighted by the Council’s Landscape and Design Officer include the need to establish strong landscape structure to absorb existing or new development on the fringes of urban areas and settlements. The Officer provided the following assessment of the proposal the subject of the previous application, ref 18/11759/VAR: -

*“The athletics track is sited on the south western edge of the school on the fringes of West Lavington. To the south the land rises to Strawberry Hill, an outlying ridge along the escarpment bordering the northern extent of the Salisbury Plain. This ridge is crossed by the Wessex Ridgeway long distance footpath which affords extensive panoramic views northwards towards the athletics track which is particularly prominent. For this reason, the LPA has requested that a robust woodland planting scheme to the site boundary is submitted, as mitigation to provide a screening and filtering function to lessen the harmful landscape and visual effects on the wider countryside.*

*The revised planting proposals comprise a clump of woodland planting bordering the north western edge of the athletics track and a 10 to 15m belt of proposed woodland along the existing hedge line. The native tree species include Oak, Hornbeam and Field Maple planted as large specimen trees at 4 to 5m high which will reach on average an expected 12 to 15m high at maturity given the exposed nature of the site. The native mix of scrub planting including Hawthorn, Hazel, Holly and Blackthorn will provide a dense understorey and an effective visual barrier. It is envisaged that this planting will over time become a substantial belt of woodland alongside the athletics track, which is characteristic of the wider landscape. The submitted information includes a Landscape Management Schedule for the longer term management of the woodland.*

*It is acknowledged that the proposed woodland planting may not screen the athletics track in its entirety from all elevated views, however it will provide an effective wooded edge to the athletics track and thereby lessening its prominence within the overall landscape. The proposed planting is also consistent with the enhancement priorities for the Vale of Pewsey LCA, and in particular to create a strong landscape edge to minimise impacts on the*



*surrounding countryside. As such this proposed mitigation is considered to be adequate with regards to Core Policy 51”.*

This current proposal is supported by a more comprehensive landscape scheme which builds on the one previously submitted. The application is also supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which considers the likely changes to the landscape and visual effects which would arise if the package of proposed mitigation measures detailed above were implemented (i.e. painting the perimeter fence grey and planting of tree and shrubs around the edge of the site). The report comes to the following conclusion:

*“In summary, the athletics track has introduced additional sports development within an area previously used as school playing fields. The red polymeric surface of the running track and white coloured perimeter fence increase its visibility in the landscape and it is a noticeable feature in some views, particularly from the elevated land to the south. However, it is within the educational campus of Dauntsey’s School and is seen in the context of the existing school buildings and facilities and is considered to be appropriate to the character and context of the school. The proposed package of mitigation measures will reduce the visual impact of the proposals, softening the appearance of the track surface and fence and providing screening of it for many of the views from surrounding public rights of way. Following the implementation and establishment of the proposed mitigation package it is considered that the landscape and visual impacts arising from the Scheme Proposal would be of Low magnitude” (par 8.14).*

The Council’s Landscape and Design Officer agrees with the conclusions of the LVIA and highlighted that *“The athletics track is within the context of a school and therefore not an unexpected feature in the local landscape. However, the urban character of the red surface and white safety rails is at odds with the rural setting of the school. These effects, while negative, are very localised. The LVA proposes additional mitigation in terms of extra planting to screen the track and painting the railings to mute their appearance reducing influence on the local landscape character”*. The Officer advised that the additional planting will also reduce views of the track from Public Rights of Ways with a slight adverse effect remaining on the bridleway east side of Strawberry Hill and the footpath adjacent to the southern boundary. The mitigation measures are considered to be adequate to satisfy the requirements of Core Policy 51 of the WCS.

The synthetic athletics track has been installed on recreational land associated with Dauntsey’s School adjacent to the existing artificial multipurpose sports pitches, the majority of which are enclosed by fences and some have floodlighting. It is therefore considered there is no change to the actual *character* of the landscape in terms of land use and its function but there is a clear *visual impact* due to the terracotta colour of the synthetic surface and bright white perimeter fencing, albeit the fencing will be painted a more recessive colour. The athletics track is not visible from the B3098 Cheverell Road or the A360 High Street which are within close proximity of Dauntsey’s School, but it is visible and is a prominent feature within the landscape when viewed from higher ground. The visual impact of the athletics track from direct and uninterrupted views is therefore primarily limited to what can be seen from higher ground leading to and around Strawberry Hill.

This is recognised within the planning application which is why a comprehensive landscape scheme has been proposed along the south-west boundary of the recreational land to screen and soften the visual impact of the athletics track. Whilst it is recognised that the landscaping will not screen the entire track and will take a number of years to mature, it will provide an acceptable level of mitigation to the visual impact as confirmed by the Council Landscape & Design Officer. Furthermore, the athletics track is seen against the backdrop of the built-up area of the School and the wider village and is not seen in isolation or against a

countywide backdrop. In light of these reasons it not considered that the landscape and visual impacts of the development would warrant a refusal of planning permission.

## 8. Planning Balance & Conclusion

The application seeks retrospective planning permissions for the synthetic athletics track and perimeter fencing at Dauntsey's School via an amendment to the original planning permission (ref K/42974). The track has been installed within the approved position but its impact on landscape character and visual amenity are key material planning considerations which now need to be considered afresh to determine the acceptability of the artificial track and associated fencing.

This current application proposes a series of mitigation measures over and above those proposed within the previous planning application, ref 18/11759/VAR, which was refused by the Eastern Area Planning Committee. The white fence will be painted a more recessive colour and a more comprehensive landscaping scheme will be introduced to further mitigate the landscape and visual effects of the development. It is not possible to fully screen the development but following the implementation and establishment of the proposed mitigation measures it is agreed that the landscape and visual impacts arising from the proposal would be of a low magnitude. It must also be recognised that the prominent views of the track are only experienced from higher ground and it is seen against the backdrop of the built-up area of the school and village rather than being an isolated feature within the landscape.

The West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan supports the expansion or alteration of educational facilities or community facilities at Dauntsey's School but also seeks to ensure new development respects local character and is designed to integrate well with its surroundings. The athletics track will be a valuable facility to the School and wider community and will contribute towards one of the aims of both national and local planning policy which is to enable and support healthy lifestyles through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and sports facilities. Whilst it is considered the visual impact of the development could have been reduced with a more sensitive design, the mitigation measures currently proposed to reduce the visual impact are considered sufficient, and the benefits of the proposal is an important material consideration which weighs heavily in favour of the application. As such, on balance, it is recommended that planning permission be granted to vary the original planning permission as follows: -

- Condition 1 provides a time limit for the commencement of development which can be removed because the development has commenced;
- Condition 2 lists the approved plans and can be updated to refer to the new plans and documents submitted as part of this current application;
- Conditions 3, 4 & 5 required the approval and implementation of a landscaping scheme along with a landscape management plan. These can be updated to refer to the landscaping scheme submitted and approved as part of this current application, and a condition added required the submission and approval of a Landscape Management Plan;
- Condition 6 removes permitted development rights for means of enclosure which should remain in place;
- Condition 7 referred to the re-grading of the land which should remain in place.
- There will be a need to add a condition which requires the painting of the perimeter fence once the final colour has been agreed.

## RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions.

1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- Drawing no. 1 001 Issue A (Mercers Field Proposed Site Location Plan), received 07.11.19;
- Drawing ref. Figure 4 (Revised landscape strategy with additional detailed planting proposals), received 07.11.19;
- Drawing no. 1743 2710 Issue C (Proposed Planting Plan), received 07.02.19 (originally under application 18/11759/VAR);
- Document no. 1743-2960 Rev A (Tree & Planting Schedules), received 07.02.19 (originally under application 18/11759/VAR);
- Drawing no. MCA-MUK1801-01 Rev E (Setting Out as Built), received 18.11.19;
- Drawing no. MCA-MUK1801-02 Rev D (Setting Out as Built), received 18.11.19;
- Drawing no. MCA-MUK1801-04 Rev D (Drainage Layout as Built), received 07.11.19;
- Drawing no. MCA-MUK1801-05 Rev D (Cross Section and Track Construction as Built), received 18.11.19;
- Drawing no. MCA-MUK1801-15 Rev D (Setting Layout as Built), received 18.11.19;
- Drawing no. MCA-MUK1801-16 Rev D (Location Plan as Built), received 18.11.19;
- Drawing no. MCA-MUK1801-18 Rev D (Fence Layout as Built), received 18.11.19;
- Drawing title. Crowd barrier with half mesh, received 07.11.19;
- Drawing no.DAUNT09-OA (Proposed Sportsfield - Section Detail), approved under application K/42974;
- Drawing no.DAUNT09-OB (Proposed Sportsfield - Section Detail), approved under application K/42974.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

2 Within three months of the planning permission hereby granted a colour sample panel of the paint to be applied to the perimeter fence shall be provided on site, inspected and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The fence shall thereafter be painted with the approved colour within one month of the date of the approval or in accordance with a timeframe to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: The matter is required to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in order that the development is undertaken in an acceptable manner, in the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

3 All soft landscaping comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the date of this planning permission. All shrubs, trees and hedge planting shall be maintained free from weeds and shall be protected from damage by vermin and stock. Any trees or plants which,

within a period of five years, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory landscaped setting for the development and the protection of existing important landscape features.

NOTE: The approved landscaping scheme involves the planting originally proposed on drawing no. 1743 2710 Issue C (Proposed Planting Plan) and the additional planting shown on Drawing ref. Figure 4 (Revised landscape strategy with additional detailed planting proposals) listed above in condition 1.

- 4 Within three months of the planning permission hereby granted a landscape management plan, including long-term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for new trees and shrubs approved as part of the landscape scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: The matter is required to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority before development commences in order that the development is undertaken in an acceptable manner, to ensure the proper management of the landscaped areas in the interests of visual amenity.

- 5 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting or amending that Order with or without modification), no gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure, other than those shown on the approved plans, shall be erected or placed anywhere on the site.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity.

- 6 The regarding of the site shall only be carried out in accordance with the details shown on drawing DAUNT09-OA and DAUNT09-OB, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the visual amenity of this edge of the village site.

- 7 The material, colour and treatment of the athletics track hereby permitted shall not be altered or replaced until full details or any proposed works have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In order to agree a suitable replacement track treatment and colour when the track reaches the end of its existing life and requires replacing in the interest of landscape character and visual amenity.

