

REGULATORY COMMITTEE
8th NOVEMBER 2006

**CORSHAM: EXTENSION TO PROVIDE A NEW SURE START CHILDREN'S CENTRE
AT CORSHAM COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL, POUND PILL, FOR
WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
(Application No. N.06.07031)**

Purpose of Report

1. To comment on the application and to recommend that permission for a new Children's Centre be granted subject to conditions.

The Site

2. Corsham County Primary School is located to the south-east of Corsham off the B3353 to Melksham. The Children's Centre would attach to the western end of the main school building. Hardstanding given over to parking with intermittent shrubberies and amenity grassland lies to the south of the site and immediately west is a blackthorn and hawthorn hedge. To the north of the site lies the Corsham Conservation Area.
3. A location plan is attached at **Appendix 1** and a site plan at **Appendix 2**.

Planning History

4. There is no planning history on this particular area of the school site.

The Proposal

5. Children's Centres are at the heart of the Government's Every Child Matters; Change for Children Programme which seeks to provide support for families with children under the age of five years.
6. Corsham Primary School was identified as a site for a Children's Centre as Corsham is in the top 70% of disadvantaged areas in the country. The school is well placed as a hub for the delivery of services for local residents.
7. The centre would have a meeting room available for use by childminders, community groups, health and social workers. There would also be a small interview room for private meetings and one-to-one consultations. The centre would be fully wheelchair accessible.
8. The centre is within walking distance of Corsham and therefore is not expected to increase the volume of traffic to the school. No additional car parking would be provided. The centre Manager and visiting professionals would use the existing parking spaces.
9. A Phase 1 Habitat Survey revealed no evidence of the presence of habitats of nature conservation importance or protected species.

Planning Policy

10. The following policies are considered relevant to this application:
 - Policy DP1 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016
 - Policy CF1 of the North Wiltshire District Local Plan 2011 (Adopted June 2006)
11. All the policies considered relevant to this proposal are set out in **Appendix 3**.

Consultations

12. **North Wiltshire District Council** – the modern design is in keeping with the character and appearance of the main school building. Suggests all walling and roofing materials should match the existing.
13. **Corsham Town Council** – the application should be refused as it would lead to additional traffic movements to a site with existing access problems. The number of movements would be greater than stated in the traffic assessment. The proposal is inappropriately located in relation to the main school building. Alternative land available within the curtilage of the building would be more suitable.
14. **Countryside Section** – no objection.
15. **Highways Development Control** – no objection subject to the proposed parking spaces sharing existing school parking. If additional spaces are proposed full details of their location and a full justification statement will be required.
16. Copies of the consultation responses are available for inspection in the **Members' Room**.

Publicity

17. The application has been publicised by site notice and neighbour notification. No letters of representation have been received.

Planning Considerations

18. The planning application must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations exist which justify a departure from the Plan.
19. Policy CF1 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 states that within or adjoining the framework boundaries of towns and villages, the provision of local community and education facilities will be permitted. The supporting text states that proposals would need to be sympathetically designed to take account of adjoining properties and the area in general. North Wiltshire District Council states that the centre is in keeping with the design of the main school building. The materials proposed are different to the school as it was felt the centre should have an identity of its own. However, the proposed render and dark grey roof would be complementary to the main school and give a clean, modern feel. As the centre would adjoin the framework boundary of the town and be sympathetically designed, the proposal is in accordance with Policy CF1.
20. Policy DP1 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 states that new development should seek to meet local needs for jobs and services in all settlements and improve the amenity of settlements. As the Children's Centre aims to assist disadvantaged groups in the local community, the proposal is in accordance with Policy DP1.

21. Concerns were expressed by Corsham Town Council and Highways Development Control over traffic and car parking. In relation to Highways' comment on car parking, no additional car parking would be provided. As the Children's Centre would consist of an office, a meeting room and an interview room, it is not intended to cater for large numbers of people or generate large amounts of traffic. There are no crèche facilities which would entail additional traffic at those times when parents are bringing children to and collecting them from school.
22. Corsham Town Council also states that the proposed centre is inappropriately located in relation to the main school building and that alternative land available within curtilage of the building would be more suitable. Prior to the application being submitted, five locations for the centre within the school site were considered as part of a feasibility study. The current site was chosen as it did not impinge on any area of formal recreation space and did not necessitate significant alteration of the main school building. In addition, the proposed location enables the Children's Centre to have its own separate access and be self-contained. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed location is the most appropriate for the purpose.

Conclusion

23. The proposal for a Children's Centre at Pound Pill, Corsham, is supported by Development Plan policies which aim to provide community and educational services and improve the vitality and amenity of communities.

Recommendation

24. That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby granted shall commence within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Materials

2. No development shall take place until samples of materials to be used in construction of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Development shall be in accordance with approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

Tree protection

3. All trees and shrubs on and immediately adjoining the site shall be protected from damage during the course of the works on site. This shall be in accordance with the relevant British Standards (BS 5837:2005). In the event that trees become damaged or otherwise defective during such period, the County Planning Authority shall be notified within seven days and a programme of remedial action shall be submitted for approval and thereafter implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure the protection of trees and shrubs on site and in the interests of visual amenity.

4. Any removal of the hedgerow adjacent to the application site or any other significant vegetation removal shall occur between the end of August and the beginning of March.

Reason: To avoid the nominal bird nesting season.

GEORGE BATTEN

Director of Environmental Services

Report Author

JOANNA FREYTHOR

Senior Planning Officer

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Consultation replies