

MEETING:	PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE
DATE:	19 NOVEMBER 2025
TITLE OF REPORT:	251073 - PROPOSED TWO-STOREY EDUCATIONAL BUILDING WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS. AT AYLESTONE HIGH SCHOOL, BROADLANDS LANE, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR1 1HY For: Herefordshire Council per Mr Gareth Hooper, 11-13 Penhill Road, Pontcanna, Cardiff, CF11 9PQ
WEBSITE LINK:	Planning Application Details - Herefordshire Council
Reason Application submitted to Committee – Herefordshire Council application	

Date Received: 31 March 2025**Ward: Aylestone Hill****Grid Ref: 352382,240774****Expiry Date: 4 July 2025**

Local Member: Cllr Adam Spencer (Aylestone Hill Ward member)

Adjoining Local Member: Cllr Frank Cornthwaite (Holmer Ward member)

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site relates to Aylestone High School (Use Class F1), and amounts to approximately 5.64 hectares. It is located in northeastern Hereford and comprises several teaching blocks, playing fields, and sports pitches. Surrounding uses include Broadlands Primary School to the west, the Beacon College SEND facility to the east, and Herefordshire and Ludlow College / Hereford Sixth Form College to the south, with residential areas bordering the site. Access is via Broadlands Lane to the north and Eastnor Drive to the east, connecting to the A465 Aylestone Hill. The site has a number of parking spaces, which are noted as often being over capacity, and minimal cycle parking. Heritage assets include the Grade II-listed Aylestone School building and nearby Athelstan Hall. Ecologically, the site is located close to the Broadlands Local Nature Reserve and the River Lugg SSSI. The site is in Flood Zone 1.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for a two-storey educational building with landscaping and infrastructure works at Aylestone High School. The school currently operates as a 3-form entry (450 pupils) and would expand to 5-form entry (750 pupils) following Herefordshire Council's Cabinet approval in February 2023. The new building would therefore, support this expansion, whilst remaining below the historic capacity of 1,250 pupils.
- 2.2 The proposed building would be located along the southern boundary, replacing part of the existing playing fields. It includes 13no. classrooms, a sports hall, music facilities, staff spaces, and accessible features including a lift. Main access would be from the north, with additional

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr Ollie Jones on 01432 260504

entry points for sports hall use and community access outside school hours. The new block replaces informal sports space, which would be relocated on-site. The deteriorated MUGA would be repurposed for parking, with no loss of sports provision. An extract of the proposed masterplan is illustrated at **Figure 1**. for ease of reference. All plans are accessible via the link to the HC planning website above.



Figure 1- Proposed Site Landscape Masterplan (Rev 05 – 12/9/25)

- 2.3 The building would use buff/grey brickwork to match existing structures, with dark cladding on the sports hall. Glazing would highlight entrances and provide natural light, with high-level windows in the sports hall to reduce glare and maintain safety. Extract of proposed plans inserted below.

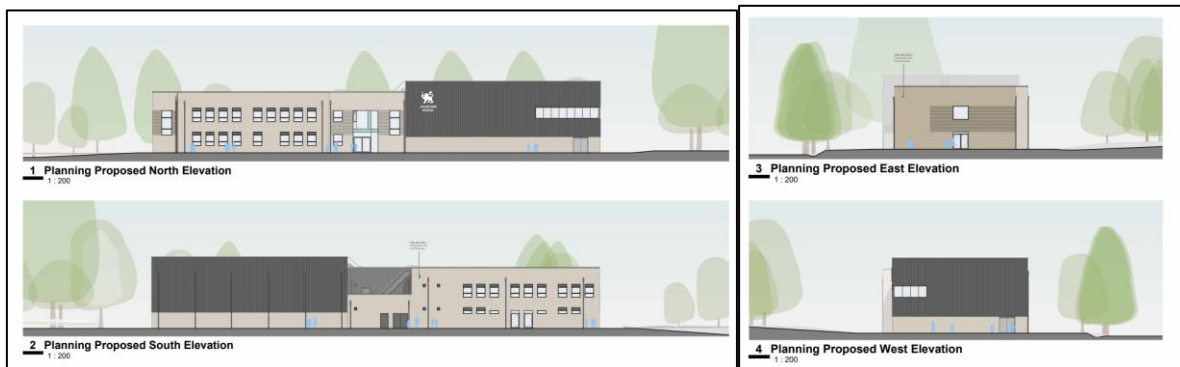


Figure 2 - Proposed General Arrangement Building Elevations – Rev P04 (10/09/25)

- 2.4 The revised layout now includes a widened one-way loop with 24 drop-off spaces, extra parking (including EV chargers), a bus layby, and improved cycle storage. A new pedestrian loop to provide for safe access and separation from vehicles is also included.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

3.1 Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy

- SS1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- SS4 Movement and transportation
- SS6 Environmental quality and local distinctiveness

SS7	Addressing climate change
HD1	Hereford
SC1	Social and community facilities
OS1	Requirement for open space sport and recreation facilities
OS2	Meeting open space, sport and recreation facilities
OS3	Loss of open space, sport and recreation facilities
MT1	Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel
LD1	Landscape and townscape
LD2	Biodiversity and geodiversity
LD3	Green infrastructure
LD4	Historic environment and heritage assets
SD1	Sustainable design and energy efficiency
SD2	Renewable and low carbon energy
SD3	Sustainable water management
SD4	Waste water treatment and river water quality

3.2 National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 2. Achieving sustainable development
 Chapter 3. Plan-making
 Chapter 4. Decision-making
 Chapter 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
 Chapter 9. Promoting sustainable transport
 Chapter 10. Supporting high quality communications
 Chapter 12. Achieving well-designed places
 Chapter 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 Chapter 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 Chapter 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 None relevant

5.0 CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Statutory Consultees

5.1 Sports England - Object; -

5.1.1 10/10/25 - We understand that you have consulted us as a statutory consultee in line with the above Order. Therefore, we have considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular paragraph 104, and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy, which is presented within our 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document': www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy

Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of:

- all or any part of a playing field, or
- land which has been used as a playing field land remains undeveloped, or
- land allocated for use as a playing field

unless, in the judgement of Sport England the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions. The exceptions are provided in the Annex to this response.

The proposal and its Impact on playing field

The proposal at Aylestone School entails the erection of a new two-storey educational building which will contain a sports hall (3 court), PE storage equipment area, changing rooms, toilets, 7 new classrooms and a music room. It is also proposed that additional car parking will be sited on an existing hardcourt PE area.

The proposed building (associated hard informal space and footpaths), relocated shelter, BNG planting and SUDs will be sited on playing field land which has been marked out for training grids, rounders and utilised for football as displayed in the below Google Earth images. It is also noted that as part of a withdrawn planning application (ref 174769) for a 3G pitch at the site (see below plan) the proposed area for the teaching block was identified for a relocated mini rugby pitch.

It is also noted that BNG planting is proposed on the schools western playing field land on an area which has been marked out summer sports throwing activities and close proximity to pitches which have been marked out.

The proposal also results in the loss of a two court MUGA through the provision of a car park, with no replacement provision proposed. As such, the development would reduce the amount of playing field land capable of accommodating a pitch and results in the loss of a two court MUGA.

In terms of temporary impacts, it is proposed that a site compound (and associated works) will be located on playing field land and part of a MUGA.

Assessment against Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and NPPF

The proposal entails the provision of a new school building which incorporates a sports hall, PE storage equipment area and changing room provision on playing field land.

As such, the sports hall and its ancillary provision element of the proposal is considered against Sport England exception 5, which states:

'The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.'

Sport England assess the potential benefit of the new or extended sports facility by taking into account a number of considerations. As a guide, these may include whether the facility:

meets an identified local or strategic need e.g. as set out in a local authority or NGB strategy (rather than duplicating existing provision);

fully secures sport related benefits for the local community;

helps to meet identified sports development priorities;

complies with relevant Sport England and NGB design guidance;

improves the delivery of sport and physical education on school sites; and

is accessible by alternative transport modes to the car.

Need for the Facility

The Council's Indoors and Built Sports Facilities Strategy (IBSFS) undertakes an assessment of sports halls demand for the authority. The IBSFS highlights that the proposal site includes 2no 1 court sports hall, though due to the size of the halls they are not included within the assessment of need. The IBSFS states that in general Herefordshire is well served in terms of the number and coverage of sports halls, with them being well used by a variety of sports clubs and

community groups. The IBSFS key recommendations for sports halls include the need to improve the quality of existing provision, increase hours of access at sites and secure community use agreements at unsecure sites. Specific sport recommendations include supporting access to sports halls and sports development for netball, basketball and cricket (provision of indoor nets).

Based on the above, there is not a specific need for additional sports hall provision identified within the IBSFS with the provision principally meeting the needs of the school. However, access to a 3-court sports hall will support the development of sport as identified within the IBSFS and supports a range of sports clubs and county sports association desire to access to such a facility as identified within the submitted Planning Statement.

Sport England consider that whilst the IBSFS does not identify a shortfall in sports hall provision there would be benefits of replacing the existing sports halls with a more modern facility better suited to meeting community needs and curricular requirements. The provision would provide greater capacity and benefit the local community with access being secured by a community use agreement.

Given the above, this bullet point is broadly met.

Technical Suitability

With regards to technical suitability, the information submitted confirms that the sports hall will be a 3 court hall with an internal height over the sports hall of at least 7.5 metres. An equipment store is proposed accessed via two double doors from the hall, though the area is slightly smaller than 12.5% of the sports hall area as recommended by Sport England's Sports Hall Design and Layouts Design Guidance Note.

Sport England are supportive of the layout of the changing rooms with the provision of shower cubicles and no urinals being present making it more flexible in use and inclusive for users. The staff changing accessible rooms could also be utilised as a match officials' room.

It is also understood that the existing sports hall will be retained and as such it might be beneficial to utilise this hall for exams with the new sports hall being solely utilised for sporting purposes only, reducing damage to court surface from table and chairs.

Therefore, it is considered that this consideration point is broadly met. The applicant should ensure that the detailed internal design of the sports hall meets the requirements of the envisaged sports to be undertaken (such as surface and lighting).

Improves the delivery of sport and physical education on school sites

The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) states that the sports hall will meet the needs of the increased pupil number and highlights that the range of sporting activities which can be undertaken within the two existing sports halls is limited due to the size, height and presence of windows. The proposed sports hall will provide an improved sports facility which can be utilised for greater number of sports and the DAS states the provision will also offset outdoor sports PE area which the school is in deficit of (which decreases even further following the development).

It is noted that the DAS states that the new proposal is sited on the existing soft outdoor PE space, though this area is not large enough to accommodate a football or a rugby pitch. Further to this, the DAS states that the existing softball squares can be relocated with no loss of sports pitches provision with the new building in position. Notwithstanding the additional information document titled Response to Sport England, Sport England considers that the area is capable of accommodating a mini 5v5 soccer pitch and it is noted that the area has been utilised for sporting activity, with the wider playing field where the rounders pitches are to be marked out already being utilised for such provision (as per the above Google Earth imagery). However, on balance when

taking account of the sporting provision of the new block only (not the classrooms) the proposal will improve the delivery of sport and physical education at the school.

Therefore, it is considered that this bulleted point is broadly met.

Community Availability

It is welcomed that the DAS states that the sporting provision has been designed to enable community use of the facility, this should be secured via a planning condition. Securing community use of the sports facilities at the site will be in line with the Council's IBSFS and Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS).

For information Sport England has produced guidance on drawing up a community use agreement which would assist the applicant - <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-andplanning/planning-for-sport/community-use-agreements>

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It is considered that subject to the content of the CUA covering the indoor and outdoor sports provision inclusive of changing room, W/Cs and car parking provision, which should be submitted as part of a planning condition, then this bulleted point on community availability would be met.

Sports development

The submitted Planning Statement highlights a range of sporting clubs, county sports association and physical activity groups who have expressed interest in hiring the facility, with it being experienced that access to sports hall provision being limited. Access to the facility by such groups will assist the development of sport providing a training venue and supporting the potential expansion of team numbers as highlighted by Herefordshire Netball.

Therefore, it is considered that this bullet point is met.

Local Level of Pitch Provision

The existing playing field land can accommodate mini soccer pitches (43x33m including run off areas) but predominantly it has been utilised by the school for sporting activity such as rounders, training grids and informal football activity. In terms of formal pitch sport the Council's PPOSS highlights that there is spare capacity of 1 match equivalent session for 5v5 mini, which is limited. Additional pitch capacity in the area is restricted by sites not being in community use, sites played at capacity, sites being in the flood zone or pitches being of poor quality. It should be noted that since the PPOSS was undertaken there has been an increase of team numbers from 287 to 413 teams (2024/25) which would place a greater demand on pitches within the authority.

In relation to cricket the area of playing field is not suitable due to its size though it could accommodate a mini/junior rugby pitch, which the PPOSS identifies that there is a shortfall in provision of.

Given the above, the proposal would impact on the flexibility to mark out a range of pitches on playing field. As such, this bullet point is not met.

Based on the above (and as previously commented within Sport England's responded dated 15/5/2025), on balance the sports hall and its ancillary provision would meet Sport England Exception Policy E5. This is with it being acknowledged that whilst there would be a loss of playing field land, the sports hall will provide the school with a modern facility which a range of sporting activities can be undertaken. This would assist in delivering curricular activities and benefit the local community (secured via community use agreement planning condition).

With regards to the classrooms which form part of the new block (and associated informal space) the applicant has not demonstrated that the playing field land, which is capable of forming part of pitch, is surplus to requirement (curricular and community) and no replacement provision is proposed (noting marking pitches on existing playing field is not quantitative replacement). Similarly, the location of some of the BNG planting is on playing field land which has been utilised for sport (summer sports, rounders and training grids) and this would result in the loss of usable playing field land.

It is also noted that the school already has a shortfall in playing field provision which will be exacerbated by the proposal and increased pupil numbers. As such, the non-sporting elements of the proposal would not meet Sport England exception policies E1 and E4. Whilst it is noted that the applicant has set out its reasoning for the two elements of the scheme namely sports provision and classrooms being together, this does not overcome the non-compliance with policy but the case officer will need to have consideration to these matters when assessing the scheme against all relevant policies.

With regards to the BNG planting there are other locations on the site where this can be provided without impact on useable playing field land. The applicant should review the location and have regard to Sport England's BNG guidance <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-andplanning/planning-sport/our-planning-role-guidance-and-tools/BNG>

In relation to the loss of hard-court PE area, Sport England note that school has additional provision beyond its BB103 requirement, prior to and following the development. However, the overprovision of hard-court PE area provides additional areas for sporting activity to offset the shortfall of soft outdoor PE (pitches) area. It is also acknowledged though that the hard-court area proposed to be lost is impacted by tree roots which inhabits sporting activities. The PPOSS identifies that the quality of the remaining courts needs to be improved through enhanced levels of maintenance, such improvements should be explored to benefit curricular activities and community users.

In terms of the temporary impacts on the playing field land and MUGA as a result of the site compound (and associated works), Sport England would recommend that the sporting provision is reinstated to at least equivalent quality. As part of this, an existing condition survey should be undertaken and a scheme of works for the restoration (including a timeframe for the programme of works i.e. growing in period of grass) should be provided, with a timeframe for when the works should be undertaken by i.e. for the playing field land within 1 month of the removal of the site compound (and first growing season).

Sport England's position

Given the above, Sport England raises a statutory objection to the proposal as the development as a whole fails to meet any of Sport England Exception Policies or paragraph 104 of the NPPF. As highlighted above, Sport England considers that in isolation the sports hall element of the proposal would meet Sport England Exception Policy E5, subject to a community use agreement condition being secured for the sports provision (indoor and outdoor) and ancillary facilities (changing rooms, W/Cs, car parking) at the site.

Please note that this response relates to Sport England's planning function only. It is not associated with our funding role or any Sport England grant application/award that may relate to the site.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s).

- 5.1.2 24/6/25 – We understand that you have consulted us as a statutory consultee in line with the above Order. Therefore, we have considered the application in light of the National Planning

Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular paragraph 104, and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy, which is presented within our 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document': www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy

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The proposed building (associated hard informal space and footpaths), relocated shelter and SUDs will be sited on playing field land which has been marked out for training grids, rounders and utilised for football as displayed in the below Google Earth images. It is also noted that as part of a withdrawn planning application (ref 174769) for a 3G pitch at the site (see below plan) the proposed area for the teaching block was identified for a relocated mini rugby pitch.

The proposal also results in the loss of a two court MUGA through the provision of a car park, with no replacement provision proposed.

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The proposal entails the provision of a new school building which incorporates a sports hall, PE storage equipment area and changing room provision on playing field land.

As such, the sports hall and its ancillary provision element of the proposal is considered against Sport England exception 5, which states:

'The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.'

Sport England assess the potential benefit of the new or extended sports facility by taking into account a number of considerations. As a guide, these may include whether the facility:

meets an identified local or strategic need e.g. as set out in a local authority or NGB strategy (rather than duplicating existing provision);

fully secures sport related benefits for the local community;

helps to meet identified sports development priorities;

complies with relevant Sport England and NGB design guidance;

improves the delivery of sport and physical education on school sites; and
is accessible by alternative transport modes to the car.

Need for the Facility

The Council's Indoors and Built Sports Facilities Strategy (IBSFS) undertakes an assessment of sports halls demand for the authority. The IBSFS highlights that the proposal site includes 2no 1 court sports hall, though due to the size of the halls they are not included within the assessment of need. The IBSFS states that in general Herefordshire is well served in terms of the number and coverage of sports halls, with them being well used by a variety of sports clubs and community groups. The IBSFS key recommendations for sports halls include the need to improve the quality of existing provision, increase hours of access at sites and secure community use agreements at unsecure sites. Specific sport recommendations include supporting access to sports halls and sports development for netball, basketball and cricket (provision of indoor nets).

Based on the above, there is not a specific need for additional sports hall provision identified within the IBSFS with the provision principally meeting the needs of the school. However, access to a 3-court sports hall will support the development of sport as identified within the IBSFS and supports a range of sports clubs and county sports association desire to access to such a facility as identified within the submitted Planning Statement.

Sport England consider that whilst the IBSFS does not identify a shortfall in sports hall provision there would be benefits of replacing the existing sports halls with a more modern facility better suited to meeting community needs and curricular requirements. The provision would provide greater capacity and also benefit the local community, with access being secured by a community use agreement.

Given the above, this bullet point is broadly met.

Technical Suitability

With regards to technical suitability, the information submitted confirms that the sports hall will be a 3 court hall with an internal height over the sports hall of at least 7.5 metres. An equipment store is proposed accessed via two double doors from the hall, though the area is slightly smaller than 12.5% of the sports hall area as recommended by Sport England's Sports Hall Design and Layouts Design Guidance Note.

Sport England are supportive of the layout of the changing rooms with the provision of shower cubicles and no urinals being present making it more flexible in use and inclusive for users. The staff changing accessible rooms could also be utilised as a match officials' room.

It is also understood that the existing sports hall will be retained and as such it might be beneficial to utilise this hall for exams with the new sports hall being solely utilised for sporting purposes only, reducing damage to court surface from table and chairs.

Therefore, it is considered that this consideration point is broadly met. The applicant should ensure that the detailed internal design of the sports hall meets the requirements of the envisaged sports to be undertaken (such as surface and lighting).

Improves the delivery of sport and physical education on school sites

The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) states that the sports hall will meet the needs of the increased pupil number and highlights that the range of sporting activities which can be undertaken within the two existing sports halls is limited due to the size, height and presence of windows. The proposed sports hall will provide an improved sports facility which can be utilised

for greater number of sports and the DAS states the provision will also offset outdoor sports PE area which the school is in deficit of (which decreases even further following the development).

It is noted that the DAS states that the new proposal is sited on the existing soft outdoor PE space, though this area is not large enough to accommodate a football or a rugby pitch. Further to this, the DAS states that the existing softball squares can be relocated with no loss of sports pitches provision with the new building in position. Notwithstanding the additional information document titled Response to Sport England, Sport England considers that the area is capable of accommodating a mini 5v5 soccer pitch and it is noted that the area has been utilised for sporting activity with the wider playing field where the rounders pitches are to be marked out already being utilised for such provision (as per the above Google Earth imagery). However, on balance when taking account of the sporting provision of the new block only (not the classrooms) the proposal will improve the delivery of sport and physical education at the school.

Therefore, it is considered that this bulleted point is broadly met.

Community Availability

It is welcomed that the DAS states that the sporting provision has been designed to enable community use of the facility, this should be secured via a planning condition. Securing community use of the sports facilities at the site will be in line with the Council's IBSFS and Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS).

For information Sport England has produced guidance on drawing up a community use agreement which would assist the applicant

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It is considered that subject to the content of the CUA covering the indoor and outdoor sports provision inclusive of changing room, W/Cs and car parking provision, which should be submitted as part of a planning condition, then this bulleted point on community availability would be met.

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The submitted Planning Statement highlights a range of sporting clubs, county sports association and physical activity groups who have expressed interest in hiring the facility, with it being experienced that access to sports hall provision being limited. Access to the facility by such groups will assist the development of sport providing a training venue and supporting the potential expansion of team numbers as highlighted by Herefordshire Netball.

Therefore, it is considered that this bullet point is met.

Local Level of Pitch Provision

The existing playing field land can accommodate mini soccer pitches (43x33m including run off areas) but predominantly it has been utilised by the school for sporting activity such as rounders, training grids and informal football activity. In terms of formal pitch sport the Council's PPOSS highlights that there is spare capacity of 1 match equivalent session for 5v5 mini, which is limited with additional capacity being limited by sites not being in community use, played at capacity, being in the flood zone or being of poor quality. It should be noted that since the PPOSS was undertaken there has been an increase of team numbers from 287 to 413 teams (2024/25) which would place a greater demand on pitches within the authority.

In relation to cricket the area of playing field is not suitable due to its size though it could accommodate a mini/junior rugby pitch, which the PPOSS identifies that there is a shortfall in provision of.

Given the above, the proposal would impact on the flexibility to mark out a range of pitches on playing field. As such, this bullet point is not met.

Based on the above (and as previously commented within Sport England's responded dated 15/5/2025), on balance the sports hall and its ancillary provision would meet Sport England Exception Policy E5 with it being acknowledged that whilst there would be a loss of playing field land, the sports hall will provide the school with a modern facility which a range of sporting activities can be undertaken. This would assist in delivering curricular activities and benefit the local community (secured via community use agreement planning condition).

With regards to the classrooms which form part of the new block (and associated informal space) the applicant has not demonstrated that the playing field land, which is capable of forming part of pitch, is surplus to requirement (curricular and community) and no replacement provision is proposed (noting marking pitches on existing playing field is not quantitative replacement). It is also noted that the school already has a shortfall in playing field provision which will be exacerbated by the proposal and increased pupil numbers. As such, this element of the proposal would not meet Sport England exception policies E1 and E4. Whilst it is noted that the applicant has set out its reasoning for the two elements of the scheme namely sports provision and classrooms being together, this does not overcome the non compliance with policy but the case officer will need to have considerations to these matters when assessing the scheme against all relevant policies.

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Sport England's position

Given the above, Sport England raises a statutory objection to the proposal as development as a whole fails to meet any of Sport England Exception Policies or paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

As highlighted above, Sport England considers that in isolation the sports hall element of the proposal would meet Sport England Exception Policy E5, subject to a community use agreement condition being secured for the sports facilities at the site (indoor and outdoor).

Please note that this response relates to Sport England's planning function only. It is not associated with our funding role or any Sport England grant application/award that may relate to the site.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s).

If you would like any further information or advice, please contact me

- 5.1.3 15/5/25 - We understand that you have consulted us as a statutory consultee in line with the above Order. Therefore, we have considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular paragraph 104, and Sport England's Playing Fields

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The Council's Indoors and Built Sports Facilities Strategy (IBSFS) undertakes an assessment of sports halls demand for the authority. The IBSFS highlights that the proposal site includes 2no 1 court sports halls, though due to the size of the halls they are not included within the assessment of need. The IBSFS states that in general Herefordshire is well served in terms of the number and coverage of sports halls, with them being well used by a variety of sports clubs and community groups.

The IBSFS key recommendations for sports halls include the need to improve the quality of existing provision, increase hours of access at sites, and secure community use agreements at unsecure sites. Specific sport recommendations include supporting access to sports halls and sports development for netball, basketball, and cricket (provision of indoor nets).

Based on the above, there is not a specific need for additional sports hall provision identified within the IBSFS, with the provision principally meeting the needs of the school. However, access to a 3-court sports hall will support the development of sport as identified within the IBSFS and supports a range of sports clubs and county sports association desire to access such a facility as identified within the submitted Planning Statement.

Sport England consider that whilst the IBSFS does not identify a shortfall in sports hall provision, there would be benefits of replacing the existing sports halls with a more modern facility better suited to meeting community needs and curricular requirements. The provision would provide greater capacity and also benefit the local community, with access being secured by a community use agreement.

Given the above, this bullet point is broadly met.

Technical Suitability

With regards to technical suitability, the information submitted confirms that the sports hall will be a 3-court hall with an internal height over the sports hall of at least 7.5 metres. An equipment store is proposed accessed via two double doors from the hall, though the area is slightly smaller than 12.5% of the sports hall area as recommended by Sport England's Sports Hall Design and Layouts Design Guidance Note.

Sport England are supportive of the layout of the changing rooms with the provision of shower cubicles and no urinals being present making it more flexible in use and inclusive for users. The staff changing accessible rooms could also be utilised as a match officials' room.

It is also understood that the existing sports hall will be retained and as such it might be beneficial to utilise this hall for exams with the new sports hall being solely utilised for sporting purposes only, reducing damage to court surface from tables and chairs.

Therefore, it is considered that this consideration point is broadly met. The applicant should ensure that the detailed internal design of the sports hall meets the requirements of the envisaged sports to be undertaken (such as surface and lighting).

Improves the delivery of sport and physical education on school sites

The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) states that the sports hall will meet the needs of the increased pupil number and highlights that the range of sporting activities which can be undertaken within the two existing sports halls is limited due to the size, height, and presence of windows. The proposed sports hall will provide an improved sports facility which can be utilised for a greater number of sports and the DAS states the provision will also offset outdoor sports PE area which the school is in deficit of (which decreases even further following the development).

It is noted that the DAS states that the new proposal is sited on the existing soft outdoor PE space, though this area is not large enough to accommodate a football or a rugby pitch. Further to this, the DAS states that the existing softball squares can be relocated with no loss of sports pitches provision with the new building in position.

Sport England considers that the area is capable of accommodating a mini 5v5 soccer pitch and it is noted that the area has been utilised for sporting activity with the wider playing field where the rounders pitches are to be marked out already being utilised for such provision (as per the above Google Earth imagery). However, on balance when taking account of the sporting provision of the new block only (not the classrooms) the proposal will improve the delivery of sport and physical education at the school.

Therefore, it is considered that this bulleted point is broadly met.

Community Availability

It is welcomed that the DAS states that the sporting provision has been designed to enable community use of the facility; this should be secured via a planning condition. Securing community use of the sports facilities at the site will be in line with the Council's IBSFS and Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS).

For information, Sport England has produced guidance on drawing up a community use agreement which would assist the applicant:

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/community-use-agreements>

It is considered that subject to the content of the CUA covering the indoor and outdoor sports provision inclusive of changing room, W/Cs, and car parking provision, which should be submitted as part of a planning condition, then this bulleted point on community availability would be met.

Sports development

The submitted Planning Statement highlights a range of sporting clubs, county sports association and physical activity groups who have expressed interest in hiring the facility, with it being experienced that access to sports hall provision is limited. Access to the facility by such groups will assist the development of sport providing a training venue and supporting the potential expansion of team numbers as highlighted by Herefordshire Netball.

Therefore, it is considered that this bullet point is met.

Local Level of Pitch Provision

The existing playing field land can accommodate mini soccer pitches but predominantly it has been utilised by the school for sporting activity such as rounders, training grids and informal football activity. In terms of formal pitch sport, the Council's PPOSS highlights that there is spare capacity of 1 match equivalent session for 5v5 mini, which is limited with additional capacity being limited by sites not being in community use, played at capacity, being in the flood zone or being of poor quality.

In relation to cricket, the area of playing field is not suitable due to its size though it could accommodate a mini/junior rugby pitch, which the PPOSS identifies that there is a shortfall in provision of.

Given the above, the proposal would impact on the flexibility to mark out a range of pitches on playing field. As such, this bullet point is not met.

Based on the above, on balance the sports hall and its ancillary provision would meet Sport England Exception Policy E5 with it being acknowledged that whilst there would be a loss of playing field land, the sports hall will provide the school with a modern facility in which a range of sporting activities can be undertaken. This would assist in delivering curricular activities and benefit the local community (secured via community use agreement planning condition).

With regards to the classrooms which form part of the new block (and associated informal space) the applicant has not demonstrated that the playing field land is surplus to requirement (curricular and community) and no replacement provision is proposed (noting marking pitches on existing playing field is not quantitative replacement). It is also noted that the school already has a shortfall in playing field provision which will be exacerbated by the proposal and increased pupil numbers.

As such, this element of the proposal would not meet Sport England exception policies E1 and E4. It appears that the opportunity to separate this element of the scheme from the sports block has not been explored fully with this not being the applicant's preference.

In relation to the loss of hard court PE area, Sport England notes that the school has additional provision beyond its BB103 requirement, prior to and following the development. However, the overprovision of hard court PE area provides additional areas for sporting activity to offset the shortfall of soft outdoor PE (pitches) area. It is noted that the hard court area proposed to be lost is impacted by tree roots which inhibits sporting activities. The PPOSS identifies that the quality of the remaining courts needs to be improved through enhanced levels of maintenance; such improvements should be explored to benefit curricular activities and community users.

Sport England's position

Given the above, Sport England raises a statutory objection to the proposal as development as a whole fails to meet any of Sport England Exception Policies or paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

As highlighted above, Sport England considers that in isolation the sports hall element of the proposal would meet Sport England Exception Policy E5, subject to a community use agreement condition being secured for the sports facilities at the site (indoor and outdoor).

Please note that this response relates to Sport England's planning function only. It is not associated with our funding role or any Sport England grant application/award that may relate to the site.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s).

5.2 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water – comment;

5.2.1 9/10/25 – We refer to your planning consultation relating to the above site, and we can provide the following comments in respect to the proposed development.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water has no further comment to make and refer you to our previous responses dated 19/05/2025 reference PLA0087234.

Our response is based on the information provided by your application. Should the proposal alter during the course of the application process we kindly request that we are re-consulted and reserve the right to make new representation.

5.2.2 19/5/25 - We refer to your planning consultation relating to the above site, and we can provide the following comments in respect to the proposed development.

Having reviewed the proposed Drainage Strategy Note reference BLMS0601-HYD-10-NXX-T-C-0001 which indicated the proposal to connect foul water to the public foul sewer within the site boundary and surface water flows into the public surface water sewerage system. In principle we offer no object to the foul and surface water strategy as proposed however as the proposed surface water connection may require crossing of 3rd party land we advise that permission from the land owners may be required.

Notwithstanding this, we would request that if you are minded to grant Planning Consent for the above development that the Condition and Advisory Notes listed below are included within the consent to ensure no detriment to existing residents or the environment and to Dwr Cymru Welsh Water's assets.

Condition

Surface water flows from the development shall only communicate with the public surface water sewer through an attenuation device that discharges at a rate not exceeding 1.4 l/s.

Reason: To prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system, to protect the health and safety of existing residents and ensure no pollution of or detriment to the environment.

Herefordshire Council consultations

5.3 Area Engineer (Local Highways Authority) – comment;

5.3.1 9/10/25 – The amended Transport Assessment (Stantec, August 2025) has been reviewed in light of the Local Highway Authority's previous comments.

It is acknowledged and welcomed that the revised document addresses the majority of the concerns previously raised, particularly in relation to access, parking, and internal circulation.

Access & Congestion:

- The revised Transport Assessment confirms that the internal one-way loop will now be used for both vehicular access and egress, incorporating 24 short-stay parent drop-off spaces. In practice, this equates to around 15 usable spaces, as areas near access points, crossings, and the bus/coach drop-off zone cannot be used for parking when in use.
- This arrangement will enable more effective on-site management of pupil drop-off and collection, thereby reducing congestion and pressure on Broadlands Lane. The Local Highway Authority supports this amendment, which directly responds to earlier requests for tangible mitigation of peak-hour congestion.

Parking Provision:

- The document now provides consistent and verified figures, confirming a total of 98 parking spaces (including 7 accessible, 9 visitor and 3 minibus bays), representing a net increase of twenty spaces overall. Dimensions and swept path analysis demonstrate that these spaces are of sufficient size and accessible layout.
- Provision for 70 secure and sheltered cycle parking spaces has been confirmed and distributed across three locations within the site. This resolves the previous inconsistencies between supporting documents and provides a net increase of 60 spaces.

Trip Generation & Network Impact:

The TA now provides a clear breakdown of trip generation, including directional data for AM and PM peaks. This information confirms that the likely increase in vehicular movements can be accommodated within the local network, particularly with the mitigation provided by the internal loop arrangement.

Coach & Delivery Access:

Two dedicated coach bays have been incorporated into the design and swept path analysis confirms satisfactory manoeuvrability for coaches and delivery vehicles. It is also noted that coach activity will be limited to off-peak periods to minimise conflict with staff and parent vehicles. Delivery and refuse movements will occur within the internal network and outside school peak times, which is acceptable.

Travel Plan:

The amended Travel Plan (Stantec, August 2025) has been reviewed in light of the Local Highway Authority's previous comments.

It is noted and welcomed that the revised document has incorporated the majority of the recommendations previously requested, including:

- Commitment to update the Travel Plan prior to occupation to reflect the expanded school population.
- Provision for repeat and expanded travel training for pupils and staff before and after occupation.
- Commitment to join Herefordshire Council's Travel for Work Network.
- Engagement with the Council's Road Safety Team to arrange updated training sessions.
- Inclusion of Bikeright! and Bikeability initiatives for cycle training and guided rides.
- Formation of a Bicycle User Group (BUG) to promote and support cycling on site.
- Provision of on-site cycle maintenance tools to be installed prior to occupation and promoted via school communications.

These inclusions are welcomed and demonstrate positive progress towards delivering a robust and proactive Travel Plan.

However, it is noted that the establishment of a School Travel Plan Steering Group, comprising representatives from pupils, parents, residents, governors, and staff (or integration of these responsibilities within an existing leadership group), has not been explicitly addressed. This measure is considered important to ensure ongoing stakeholder engagement, accountability, and continuity of delivery throughout the plan's monitoring period.

Accordingly, the Local Highway Authority considers the Travel Plan acceptable subject to the inclusion of a requirement to establish and maintain a School Travel Plan Steering Group as part of the planning condition securing the implementation and monitoring of the Travel Plan.

Construction Environmental Management Plan:

The amended Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP, Rev 04, September 2025) prepared by Morgan Sindall has been reviewed in light of the Local Highway Authority's previous comments.

It is acknowledged and welcomed that the revised document addresses the majority of the concerns previously raised, in particular:

- Use of Internal Loop for Construction Traffic:
The updated CEMP confirms that the internal one-way loop will now be used for construction access and egress, as detailed in Section 2.0 (pages 8–9) and Appendix 1 (pages 23–24). This arrangement provides essential segregation between construction

vehicles and school traffic and is a key mitigation measure to alleviate congestion and maintain safety on Broadlands Lane.

- Construction Traffic Management:
A comprehensive Traffic Management Plan has been included, with the following controls:
 - All construction deliveries to be pre-booked and tightly managed through a gateperson at the site entrance.
 - All construction parking to be contained within the site, with no parking or waiting on surrounding roads.
 - Deliveries restricted to avoid school drop-off and pick-up times.
 - Provision of a holding area and turning space within the compound to prevent queuing on Broadlands Lane.
- Submission of Traffic Management Plan Prior to Works:
 - The CEMP now confirms that the full Traffic Management Plan will be finalised and signed off by Morgan Sindall senior management prior to commencement of construction, rather than being deferred by condition. This is supported and aligns with the Local Highway Authority's previous request for early submission.
 - These revisions are welcomed and demonstrate a significant improvement in addressing the highway safety and operational issues identified in earlier responses.
 - While the CEMP commits to avoiding school peak periods, explicit delivery time restrictions (e.g. no deliveries between 08:00–09:00 and 15:00–16:00) should be defined for certainty.
 - The CEMP would benefit from a short statement outlining how construction activities and deliveries will be coordinated with the school during term time, particularly during exams and events.

Conclusion:

The Local Highway Authority welcomes the revisions made to the Transport Assessment, Travel Plan, and Construction Environmental Management Plan, which collectively demonstrate a clear and considered response to the concerns previously raised. The amendments provide tangible improvements in terms of access, circulation, parking, and travel demand management, and are expected to deliver a meaningful reduction in congestion and highway safety risks along Broadlands Lane.

Subject to the inclusion of a requirement for the establishment and ongoing operation of a School Travel Plan Steering Group, and the incorporation of explicit construction delivery time restrictions within the CEMP, the Local Highway Authority raises no objection to the proposals on highway or transportation grounds.

- 5.3.2 13/6/25 - The application seeks permission for a new two-storey teaching block, sports hall, and associated facilities to enable a pupil capacity increase from 450 to 750, and staff numbers from 77 to 120. The primary vehicular and pedestrian access is via Broadlands Lane, which also serves Broadlands Primary School and Brookfield Primary School and is known to experience significant congestion during school peak hours.

Access & Congestion

- Broadlands Lane is already under heavy pressure at school drop-off and pick-up times, serving multiple educational institutions.
- No dedicated on-site pick-up/drop-off facility is proposed as part of this development. The Transport Statement confirms the school will continue operating as existing in this respect (TS 6.5.1), despite a significant increase in pupil and staff numbers.
- The Transport Statement references that the school previously catered for up to 1,250 pupils; however, the school layout has significantly changed since that time. Therefore, the nature and impact of traffic movements on the highway are likely to have altered, and historical comparisons may not accurately reflect current or future conditions.

- The Safer Routes to School measures, referenced in the Transport Statement, are scheduled to commence on a trial basis in September. While this council-led initiative is supported and welcomed, there is no certainty that the scheme will be implemented on a permanent basis.
- Given this uncertainty, it is requested that the school proactively utilises the existing internal one-way loop—which is currently used only by taxis—to manage increased traffic associated with the additional staff and pupils.
- The internal loop would provide a tangible mitigation measure to alleviate congestion on Broadlands Lane, which is necessary to accommodate the significant increase in site capacity.
- Reliance solely on the trial Safer Routes to School scheme without secured mitigation is insufficient, and therefore the internal loop should be incorporated into the proposed access arrangements. It is recognised that this may require some sort of segregation, such as a fence, to address potential safeguarding issues, however, the local highway authority are of the opinion that this mitigation is vital to accommodate the school expansion.

Parking Provision – Inconsistencies & Concerns

- The application contains conflicting information on existing and proposed parking:
 - o Existing spaces are reported variously as 47 (Planning Statement P7), 76 (PS P30) and 78 (TS 6.4.1).
 - o Proposed provision is described as a net gain of 3 spaces (TS 6.4.5), totalling 83 spaces, of which only 4 are accessible.
 - o Cycle parking provision is also unclear, with 120 spaces (PS P14), 32 spaces (PS P30), and 30 + 2 (TS 6.3.2) all cited.
- This lack of clarity must be addressed prior to determination. Moreover, a net gain of only 5 car parking spaces appears inadequate to meet demand from 43 additional staff, especially given the high car dependency (81% of staff currently drive).
- It is also unclear where staff for Brookfield Primary School currently park, which adds further uncertainty regarding cumulative parking pressures on Broadlands Lane and surrounding areas.

Trip Generation & Network Impact

- The development is estimated to result in an additional:
 - +321 trips in the AM peak (of which 126 are vehicle-based)
 - +261 trips in the PM peak (of which 105 are vehicle-based)
- This does not breakdown the number of trips arriving and departing in the AM peak and the PM peak, only mentions the number of staff and pupils arriving, as clearly staff would stay at the site, but we don't know the exact numbers. Therefore, this needs to be clarified.
- Although the Transport Statement argues many of these trips are "linked" (e.g., parents combining drop-offs with commuting), the practical effect remains a significant increase in movements on Broadlands Lane, with no formal on-site drop-off mitigation proposed. A solution needs to be found, and one solution may be using the internal loop of the site.

Coach & Delivery Access

- The proposal does not include a dedicated coach drop-off area, which is considered inadequate for a school of this size given the likely demand.
- The nearest bus stop is located approximately 180 metres from the site entrance on Broadlands Lane and is served by routes 420 and 426. During a site visit, it was observed that the 426 bus arrived around 15:30, later than the scheduled 15:15, due to difficulty accessing Broadlands Lane caused by parked cars. This obstruction led to traffic congestion backing up onto Aylestone Hill. If a modal shift from vehicular based travel to the site, to sustainable modes such as public transport is to be achieved it is imperative that buses can enter and exit Broadlands Lane unhindered.
- In addition to scheduled bus services, a full-sized Jones company coach supplements route 426 by entering Broadlands Lane and dropping off passengers at the School Gate Roundabout.
- Delivery and refuse vehicle trips, currently estimated at around 10 per day, are expected to increase with the proposed development. While most deliveries are planned outside peak

periods (TS 6.6.5), the cumulative impact of these trips alongside other site traffic remains relevant and should be considered.

- Overall, Broadlands Lane experiences significant congestion and access challenges during school peak periods, exacerbated by parked vehicles, coach movements, and delivery vehicles. The proposed increase in pupil and staff numbers, along with additional cars using the external roundabout on Broadlands Lane, will likely exacerbate existing traffic pressures and impact highway safety without appropriate mitigation measures.

Travel Plan Review

A School Travel Plan (2022) has been submitted and reviewed by the Council's Sustainable Transport Officer. While welcomed, the following recommendations should be secured through condition or S106 obligation to ensure its effectiveness:

- Update the Travel Plan prior to occupation of the new building to reflect the expanded school population.
- Repeat and expand travel training originally delivered in 2022—ideally both before and after occupation.
- Join Herefordshire Council's Travel for Work Network to access best practice guidance and support.
- Liaise with the Road Safety Team (roadsafety@herefordshire.gov.uk) to arrange updated training sessions.
- Engage Bikeright! and Bikeability for guided rides and cycle skills for staff and pupils.
- Establish a School Travel Plan Steering Group, including pupils, parents, residents, governors, and staff, or embed school travel into the remit of an existing school leadership group.
- Form a Bicycle User Group (BUG) and promote cycling through events, mentorship, and visibility.
- Ensure on-site cycle maintenance tools are available and well-promoted for staff and pupils.

The above measures should be included in an updated Travel Plan, to be secured by planning condition with monitoring mechanisms.

Construction Environmental Method Statement

- The applicant's Construction Environmental Method Statement indicates that the school's main entrance will be used for two-way vehicular movements during construction, as opposed to a one-way system utilising the internal loop. This approach raises concerns, given that the internal loop was previously proposed to help segregate traffic flows and reduce congestion and conflicts during peak periods. Clarification is required on why a two-way system via the main entrance is now considered preferable and how this will be managed safely alongside existing school traffic.
- The applicant has stated that a comprehensive Traffic Management Plan (TMP), detailing all aspects of construction-related traffic—including vehicular and pedestrian movements, as well as risks and mitigation measures for both site personnel and the general public—will be developed and approved prior to commencement of works. Given the sensitive nature of the site, its operation during term time, and the potential for significant disruption, it is essential that these details are submitted within the CTMP and agreed well in advance of construction starting, rather than being deferred as a post-approval condition.
- The TMP must include specific information on the types of machinery and vehicles to be used, the expected number and timing of deliveries and movements, and measures to minimise impacts on the school community and surrounding highway network. Early submission of these details will enable effective coordination and risk management to ensure the safety of pupils, staff, and the public throughout the construction period.

Conclusion

While the principle of expanding educational capacity is supported, the current submission does not satisfactorily address the access, congestion, and operational pressures on Broadlands Lane.

The following actions are requested before the local highway authority can offer a recommendation of no objection to the application:

- Clarify all discrepancies in parking and cycle provision figures and confirm final layout.
- Include a formal drop-off/pick-up area, particularly in light of existing congestion.
- Secure the updated Travel Plan and associated measures as part of any permission.
- Provide clarification on why the internal loop is not proposed for construction or operational access, despite its potential to mitigate congestion.
- Submit the Traffic Management Plan and full Construction Environmental Method Statement prior to determination to ensure construction impacts are fully understood and managed, particularly during term time.
- Clarify the trip generation data during construction, including a breakdown of arrivals and departures during peak periods, to accurately assess network impact.

Until these matters are resolved, the proposal presents an unacceptable risk of exacerbating existing highway safety and operational issues.

5.4 HC Public Rights of Way Team – no objection.

5.5 HC Culture and Leisure – no response.

5.6 HC Childrens Wellbeing – no response.

5.7 HC Education – no response.

5.8 HC Built and Natural Environment Service (Ecology) – comment; -

5.8.1 5/11/25 – updated lighting strategy is now acceptable

5.8.2 8/9/25 - Since the original ecology consultation (07/05/2025), the applicant has submitted both a lighting plan and an ecological construction method statement.

With respect to the lighting plan, the current submission does not cover key wildlife corridors—specifically along Aylestone Hill and to the north of the properties at Aylestone Grange. As these areas fall within the RLB, they must be included within the lighting plan.

The ecological construction method statement is considered acceptable. Accordingly, the CEMP condition recommended in the original ecology consultation can be removed. It is essential that the method statement is adhered to throughout construction and during all pre-construction activities.

Regarding the HRA, I note that Welsh Water has raised no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions. The original ecology consultation requested confirmation of the final surface water discharge point. I have not seen any updated reporting to address this. Once this confirmation is provided, the HRA can be completed.

5.8.3 7/5/25 - The application site overlaps both the River Wye and River Lugg catchments. The proposed development triggers the legal requirement for a Habitat Regulations Assessment process to be carried out by the LPA, the final HRA 'appropriate assessment' completed by the LPA must be formally approved by Natural England prior to any future planning consent being granted.

This HRA process needs to be completed based on all current requirements and considerations and on information supplied in support of this specific application and that is sufficiently detailed to allow any relevant conditions to be secured. The HRA process must be completed with legal and scientific certainty and using a precautionary approach.

Comments on HRA

The proposal aims to accommodate an additional 300 pupils. The foul water strategy is to connect to the existing public sewer. The surface water strategy is to connect to existing surface water sewer, although the Drainage Strategy Note (Stantec, 2025) states that the final discharge point is to be determined following a future survey. Both sewer systems ultimately direct wastewater to the Eign Wastewater Treatment Works, situated within the Wye SAC catchment area.

The foul water flows can be regarded as integrated within the domestic foul water discharge from staff and pupils, which is already accounted for within the existing residential foul water flows within the Wye catchment. Confirmation is required from Welsh Water to verify that Eign Wastewater Treatment Works can accommodate the additional flows. The final surface water discharge point must also be confirmed. Thereafter a HRA can be processed by the Local Planning Authority whereby the proposal can be considered as 'screened out' at Stage 1.

Ecology

Document reviewed: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)

Designated Sites

There are seven statutory designated sites within a 1km radius of the proposed development. However, works would take place entirely within the footprint of the existing school grounds and therefore no adverse impacts to sites for nature conservation are not expected.

Protected and Priority Flora & Fauna

Many of the existing buildings hold bat roosting potential, however as they are not subject to any works as part of the proposed development, no further surveys are required. No adverse impacts to any other protected and priority species or habitats are expected providing adequate construction environmental management plans are in place. Note, the submitted CEMP does not adequately cover ecology, and a planning condition is recommended to ensure a revised CEMP is submitted prior to construction – this document should refer to the risks highlighted in the PEA.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Document reviewed: Biodiversity Impact Assessment, and Statutory Biodiversity Metric

The application is subject to delivering mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of a minimum of 10% post-development in accordance with the Environment Act 2021. Proposed habitat loss is limited to modified grassland, and the proposed development includes onsite habitat creation and habitat enhancement. The proposal delivers a net gain exceeding 10% and is satisfactory. The proposed net gain will need to be secured through the standard BNG condition.

Recommended Conditions

Construction Environmental Management Plan

Prior to any works, including site clearance or equipment and materials are moved on to site, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) including a full Ecological Working Method Statement and a specified 'responsible person', shall be supplied to the Local Planning Authority for written approval. The approved CEMP shall be implemented and remain in place until all work is complete onsite and all equipment and spare materials have been removed.

Reason: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981 amended); National Planning Policy Framework, NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1-3; and the council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

Wildlife Boxes

Prior to first use of any part of the development works approved under this planning decision notice, photographic evidence of the suitably placed installation within the school grounds, of a minimum total of three bird nesting boxes and three bat roosting boxes, should be supplied to and acknowledged by the Local Planning Authority; and shall be maintained hereafter as approved. Wildlife boxes must not be installed in ash trees due to endemic Ash Dieback disease. Wildlife boxes should be installed under supervision of a qualified ecologist.

Reason: Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981 amended); National Planning Policy Framework, NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1-3; and the council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

Wildlife Sensitive Lighting

No external lighting is to be used on site boundary habitats. Details of any floodlighting or external lighting proposed to illuminate the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to first use of any part of the development works approved under this planning decision notice. Details should include lighting specifications and lighting contour plans to demonstrate how habitats will be protected from any light disturbance. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and there shall be no other external illumination of the development.

Reason: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019' (the 'Habitats Regulations'), Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981 amended); National Planning Policy Framework, NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1-3; and the council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

5.9 HC Built and Natural Environment Service (Landscape) – comment;

- 5.9.1 31/10/25 - I note the latest Proposed Soft Landscape Layout (dwg no 0540 rev P04) does not include the additional tree planting locations or species as suggested by Nigel Koch in his response dated 26/06/2025.

No further comments.

- 5.9.2 20/6/25 – The applicant has provided satisfactory amended landscape drawings, details and specification as requested 16/05/2025.

I do have a suggestion that could make the tree planting more dynamic and interesting. The existing tree layout (Refer to figure 1) uses three species in a linear (structured) random way. However the *Betula pendula* (Silver Birch) in appearance is a slim tree with delicate branches, often with a characteristic white bark and contrast with the wider and dense canopy of the *Acer campestre* (Field Maple) and *Cerasus avium* (Wild Cherry).

The Silver Birch planted in a 'structured' formal way as individual specimens, in a mix can look weak in comparison. Silver Birch are known as pioneering trees, and can grow close together, quickly. Growing in density is well suited to this tree.

To strengthen or provide a better dynamic or rhythm of trees, consider adding more Silver Birch in groups and clusters that 'embrace' the space (Refer to figure 2). Growing multi-stem Silver Birch will give an interesting effect.

- 5.9.3 16/5/25 - In terms of landscaping, the development is supported and the landscape design provides an enhanced soft landscape (including the addition of predominately native trees, hedges, meadow grasses and wetland habitat). The hard landscaping is appropriate to the setting. Overall, the development is in accordance with Core Strategy LD1.

The soft landscape strategy is provided and as mentioned is supported. What is required is the final setting out of trees, and the overall landscaping supported with a maintenance and management plan for a period of 5 years.

Soft landscape

Before the commencement of construction works on the development hereby permitted a scheme of soft landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The soft landscaping scheme shall include:-

- A plan(s) showing details of all existing trees and hedges on the application site. The plan should include, for each tree/hedge, the accurate position, canopy spread and species, together with an indication of any proposals for felling/pruning and any proposed changes in ground level, or other works to be carried out, within the canopy spread.
- A plan(s) showing the layout of proposed tree, hedge and shrub planting and grass areas.
- A schedule of proposed planting - indicating species, sizes at time of planting and numbers/densities of plants.
- A written specification outlining how they will be planted and protected and the proposed time of planting.
- Management and maintenance, including watering and the control of competitive weed growth, for a minimum period of five years from first planting.

All planting and seeding/turfing shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding/turfing seasons following the completion or first occupation/use of the development, whichever is the sooner.

The planting shall be maintained in accordance with the approved schedule of maintenance. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years from the completion of the planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Reason:

To ensure that that the development does not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area and conforms with Policies LD1 and LD3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy in relation to landscape character, visual amenity and green blue infrastructure and the National Planning Policy Framework

Hard landscape

Before the commencement of construction works on the development hereby permitted OR Before the first use/occupation of the development hereby permitted a scheme of hard landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The hard landscaping of the site shall be completed before [the first use/occupation of the development hereby permitted] or [in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing by the local planning authority]. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- Management and maintenance for a minimum period of five years.

Reason:

To ensure that that the development does not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area and conforms with Policies LD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy in relation to landscape character and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.10 HC Built and Natural Environment Service (Trees) – comment;

- 5.10.1 22/10/25 - Comments: I have reviewed the amended Arboricultural Method Statement and associated plans (240314/24014/AMS V1_10.09.2025). The report highlights the additional impacts to the retained trees as well confirming removals which relate to 5 low quality trees and hedgerow, as well as one moderate quality tree. Although tree removal are regrettable, extensive new tree planting is proposed which will mitigate the loss in the longer-term. As tree cover within

the site is good, the removals are considered to not have a significant impact to the green infrastructure within the site.

I therefore have no objection to the amended layout as long as all works are carried out in strict accordance with recommendations set out within the amended AMS and TPP.

Condition

Except where otherwise stipulated by condition, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following documents and plans:

- Arboricultural Method Statement – Origin Environmental – 240314_24014_AMS_V1 – September 25
- Tree Retention and Removals Plan – Origin Environmental – 240314_24014 TRRP V2a_OE-003 – September 2025
- Tree Protection Plan – Origin Environmental – 240314_24014 TPP V2a_OE-004 – September 2025

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and to conform with Policies LD1 and LD3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.10.2 1/7/25 – Comments: I have reviewed the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement (Origin Environmental – 250609_24014_AMS_V1 – 9th June 2025).

The AMS provides adequate information to ensure the important arboricultural resource within the site is protected during the development proposals.

I have no objection to the proposals as long as work close to trees is undertaken in accordance with this document. This can be imposed via a planning condition if consent is granted.

In addition, I support the landscape officers comments on proposed tree planting for the site.

Condition

Except where otherwise stipulated by condition, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following documents and plans:

- Arboricultural Impact Assessment – Origin Environmental – 250319_24014_AIA_V1 – 20 March 2025
- Arboricultural Method Statement – Origin Environmental – 250609_24014_AMS_V1 – 9th June 2025.
- Tree Retention and Removals Plan – Origin Environmental – 250604_24014_V1_OE-003 – June 2025
- Tree Protection Plan – Origin Environmental – 250609_24014 TPP V1_OE-004 – June 2025

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and to conform with Policies LD1 and LD3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5.10.3 20/5/25 - I have reviewed the submitted site layout and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Origin Environmental_AIA_250319_24014_AIA_V1 – 20 March 2025) and have the following comments.

The AIA provides adequate information in regards to identifying the existing arboricultural resource within the site and highlights the potential impacts from the proposed development. It also confirms that no trees will have to be removed to allow the development to be implemented which is positive.

The AIA also gives guidance to how potential impacts through development will be managed to an acceptable level during the construction phase.

Certain aspects of the development will involve additional input from an Arboriculturist to ensure impacts are kept to an acceptable level. This can be fulfilled through a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and schedule of supervision and monitoring.

Points to be addressed will include but not be limited to demolition of existing buildings, hard surface removal and installation within RPA's, no dig surface installation, services installation and any other activities which could be detrimental to existing/retained trees. The AMS should also include an updated Tree protection Plan if required. I consider that this could requested via a planning condition if consent is given.

I note than the landscape officer has requested a detailed planning plan which will highlight and specify new tree and hedgerow planting.

Condition

Prior to the commencement of any works an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) for any construction activities which can impact retained trees must be submitted and approved by the local planning authority. This should include all construction activities which may adversely impact retained trees, a schedule of monitoring/supervision and an updated Tree Protection Plan (TPP). The development shall then be undertaken in accordance with the AMS and TPP.

Reason: To safeguard the character and amenity of the area and to ensure that the development conforms with Policies LD1 and LD3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5.11 HC Built and Natural Environment Service (Building Conservation) – comment; -

- 5.11.1 8/10/25 – Thank you for consulting on the amended plans and I duly acknowledge the revised site plans, elevational drawings, and landscaping plans and the revised Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement Addendum.

The Heritage Statement Addendum focuses on the revised internal vehicular routes and parking.

It is noted that the 2 closest listed buildings UID 1280566 Aylestone School and UID 1297452 Athelstone Hall were both included on the statutory list on 17/07/1994, when both buildings were in educational use, and as such the former grounds to these properties were utilised for educational playing fields at the time of listing.

The amended documents have been duly read and in respect of the proposed building and transport route and parking provision it is not considered that the proposal has changed since the previous built heritage comments and as such the consideration remains the same – repeated below.

“the expansion of the site will have a limited harm – a low level of less, than substantial harm on the setting of the listed building by the erosion of the former grounds.

NPPF para 215 advises. “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”

The public benefits of the proposal both in terms of the retention and improvement of the school, and the retention of the school building within the listed building, would be considered to outweigh the very low level of harm introduced to the setting of UID 1280566 Aylestone School.

As such no objections are raised in built heritage terms.”

5.11.2 6/6/25 - The site lies outside, but in proximity to the Aylestone Hill Conservation Area. <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1360/aylestone-hill-conservation-area> There is a listed building on the site UID 1280566 Aylestone School a C19th former house. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1280566>

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty on decision makers to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This statutory duty obligation does not prevent change from occurring but merely requires that change is properly informed so not to affect any special architectural or historic interest.

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty on decision makers to pay special regard to preserving listed buildings and their setting. This obligation does not prevent change from occurring but merely requires that change is properly informed to not affect any special architectural or historic interest.

Primary legislation is repeated in National Planning Policy Framework and Core Strategy Policies.

- Paragraph 135 of NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should ensure developments should;

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit

- Paragraph 207 of NPPF advises that “In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.”

- Paragraph 208 of NPPF advises that a “Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by

development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."

- Paragraph 212 of NPPF advises "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."
- Paragraph 213 of NPPF advises "Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification."
- Paragraph 219 of NPPF advises "Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably."
- Policy SS6 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 – 2031 requires that development proposals should: conserve and enhance those environmental assets that contribute towards the county's distinctiveness, in particular landscape, and heritage assets and especially those with specific environmental designations. Development proposals should be shaped through an integrated approach to planning the following environmental components from the outset, and based upon sufficient information to determine the effect upon each where they are relevant.
- LD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 – 2031 requires that development proposals should: demonstrate that character of the landscape and townscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection, protection and enhancement of the setting of settlements and designated areas; conserve and enhance the natural, historic and scenic beauty of important landscapes and features, including conservation areas; through the protection of the area's character and by enabling appropriate uses, design and management.
- Policy LD4 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 – 2031 requires development proposals affecting heritage assets and the wider historic environment should: Protect, conserve, and where possible enhance heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance through appropriate management, uses and sympathetic design, in particular emphasising the original form and function where possible.

The proposal would be for a relatively large building within the school grounds, which contains a listed building. The site of the proposed building is to the south of the more modern school buildings sited between the application site and the listed building to the north of the modern buildings.

The proposed siting of the new building is away from the principal listed building adjacent to existing sports pitches, and not visible from Broadlands Lane where the principal elevation of the listed building can be viewed. There will be a view of the new building from the south, however this will have the existing modern school buildings as a backdrop and not the listed building which is well screened by tree cover, which is to be retained as indicated on the landscape masterplan.

As such no objection is raised to the siting of the proposed building in the location shown. Whilst there is support for improved and expanded facilities in our schools, the expansion of the site will have a limited harm – a low level of less, than substantial harm on the setting of the listed building by the erosion of the former grounds.

NPPF para 215 advises: "Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

The public benefits of the proposal both in terms of the retention and improvement of the school, and the retention of the school building within the listed building, would be considered to outweigh the very low level of harm introduced to the setting of UID 1280566 Aylestone School.

As such no objections are raised in built heritage terms.

5.12 HC Built and Natural Environment Service (Archaeology) – no objection.

5.12.1 2/10/25 - As previously indicated, I regard the likely archaeological impact as low and have no objections.

In general, I am in agreement with the archaeological position summarised in the application - stated inter alia in the submitted desk based assessment (HPS).

To be clear, I have commented, and continue to comment, only in relation to archaeology as normally understood and not in relation to other matters.

5.13 HC Built and Natural Environment Service (Open Space) – comment;

5.13.1 16/10/25 - I have no further comments to make.

5.13.2 24/6/25 - Relevant Policies: In this instance the following national and local planning policies are relevant.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Paragraph 103: Open Space and Recreation: provision of what open space, sports and recreational opportunities required in a local area should be based on robust assessments of need

Paragraph 104: Open Space and Recreation: Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use

Core Strategy (CS) Policy

OS3: Loss of an Open Space/Sports and Recreation Facilities

OS2: Meeting Open Space and Recreation Needs

Core Strategy Evidence Base

Herefordshire Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Assessment September 2022 (PPOS)

Herefordshire Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports (PPOS) Strategy and Action Plan Feb 2023 (PPOS)

Herefordshire Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Assessment September 2022 (IBS)

Herefordshire Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan Feb 2023 (IBS)

Proposal: The proposal is for the erection of a two-storey educational building with associated landscaping and infrastructure works at Aylestone High School to the south of the site along the southern boundary of the school grounds. It will be located on existing playing fields. It will provide classrooms on 2 floors, sports hall and changing rooms and lobby on ground floor. It will support the expansion of Aylestone School from its current 3 form entry to serve 5 forms of entry.

The existing car parking will be extended to the west of the existing main teaching block and will make use of a currently unused hard surfaced MUGA.

The proposal will result in the loss of existing school playing fields currently used as informal summer rounders pitches and 10 x 10 soft ball grids in the winter months. The site is on a gradient which limits sports that can be played on it. Community use of school playing fields in accordance with the PPOS has no security of tenure.

The proposal will result in a new community use indoor sports facility.

My comments are in relation to these elements.

Provision of Indoor Sports Hall / Loss of School Playing Field

School use: The Design and Access Statement describes the proposed sports hall as greatly enhancing provision and addressing inadequacy of existing indoor PE provision. The proposal will be the school in line with accepted DfE guidance on indoor sports facilities for a school of the size proposed. Existing provision within 2 gyms is restricted due to the height and extent of glazing offering limited options for playing sports.

In DfE terms the site is classified as “restricted” and where space is a premium, the recommendations are to take a flexible approach to provision of hard areas for social and PE and soft areas for social and outdoor PE. The site currently falls below the minimum soft outdoor provision, and the applicant acknowledges that the proposal will result in a further reduction.

In the submitted Planning Statement and response to Sport England, the applicant has demonstrated that there will be no net loss to school provision. The area is not large enough to accommodate a senior football or rugby pitch and the applicant has demonstrated that the existing rounders pitches and softball squares can be relocated with no loss of sports pitches as shown on table: External Sport, Play and Social Provision comparison in the Design and Access Statement, therefore resulting in no loss in provision for formal physical education activities.

The applicant describes the MUGA as in poor condition and infrequently used by the school as the surface is broken up by tree roots making the surface uneven and unsafe for sports. Therefore, there will be no loss in provision.

The proposed enhanced internal facilities will also be key to mitigate these current limitations on sports provision on site. The proposal provides a new 3-court Sports Hall with the following facilities:

Indoor cricket nets

3 Badminton courts

Tennis

Basketball and basketball practice hoops

Netball practice hoops

Movable 5-a-side football fold-away goals

In respect of school sports, I am satisfied that the applicant has provided the appropriate information in accordance with DfE technical requirements. As such, the proposal is seen to accord with NPPF paragraph 104 c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use, and CS policies OS2 in meeting the sports and recreation needs of the community and OS3, where the loss of sports facility will result in an equally beneficial replacement.

Provision of Indoor Sports Hall / Loss of School Playing Field – Community Use

The IBS confirms that the existing facilities (x2) at Aylestone School are not considered large enough to accommodate 1 badminton court.

The IBS concludes that sports halls are generally considered to be of greatest value if they are of at least 3+ badminton court size with sufficient height to allow games such as badminton to be played and that a 4-court sports hall provides greater flexibility as it can accommodate major indoor team sports such as football (5-a-side and training), basketball and netball. It also has sufficient length to accommodate indoor cricket nets and indoor athletics; and only halls that meet current Sport England Design Guidance of 34.5m x 20m can fully accommodate the full range of indoor sports, especially for competition/league activities.

The IBS recommends that consideration should be given to:

Whether and how community use can be extended at school sites enabling existing sport and physical activity participation to grow

Projected increases in population can be accommodated during peak hours available in sports halls across Herefordshire

Where no formal agreements are in place, work with educational sites to secure binding and effective community use agreements (CUAs)

The new sports hall is designed to accommodate community use, and the applicant has acknowledged that a community use agreement will be required as part of the planning permission. It is intended that the Sports Hall & its associated changing and storage is accessible as a separate entity from the rest of the building, allowing this section of the building to be available out of hours for the use of local clubs, teams and the community. Adjacent car parking will provide improved community and club access at weekends and evenings to the facility.

The applicant has provided details from a number of locally based sports clubs who have already expressed interest in using the new facility including:

Degreez Allstarz – cheerleading and dance community club
Hinton FC
Bartestree and Lugwardine Cricket Club
Glo fitness – aerobics class with disco lights
Got 2 Sing – contemporary adult choir
Hall Family Taekwondo and Korean Kickboxing
Herefordshire County Netball
Westside Netball Club
Hereford Pamayanan Basketball Group (Filipino community)
Herefordshire Football Association
Herefordshire Girls Football League
Starlight Company – Dance and Yoga classes
Toros FC

Tupsley Girls FC
Wessington Juniors FC
Westfields FC

In respect of community use, I am satisfied that the new facility, subject to a community use agreement, will result in greater sporting benefits to the local sports community, which is in accordance with NPPF paragraph 104 c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use, and CS policies OS2 in meeting the sports and recreation needs of the community and OS3, where the loss of sports facility will result in an equally beneficial replacement, and supported by the Core Strategy evidence base IBS.

Loss of School Playing Field, New Classrooms

The proposal will result in the loss of school playing field to accommodate a new classroom block. CS policy OS3 point 2 is clear in that any proposal that results in the loss of sports facilities will need to demonstrate “that there is clear evidence that the facility is surplus to the applicable quantitative standard”.

In considering this loss against CS policy OS3 and objections received from Sport England, I have evaluated the loss against the following factors: size, security of tenure, deficiencies in sports provision in the Hereford Analysis Area.

Size: The area to be lost to non-sports provision is taken to be the school classrooms only as shown below. It measures approximately 30m x 8.5m.

The PPOS identifies shortfalls in the Hereford Analysis Area of mini rugby provision only. The shortfall is detailed below:

Hereford Rugby Club have 3 senior pitches and 1 mini pitch. They have 2 x senior male, 6 x junior 13–18 and 6 x junior 6–12 teams.

The PPOS shows that the mini pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session per week during peak time, which for mini and junior rugby is Sunday AM, which could be any of the above teams depending on fixtures.

PPOS details for mini rugby pitch dimensions:

Age Pitch Type Maximum pitch dimensions (m)

U7 Mini 20 x 12

U8 Mini 45 x 22

U9 Mini 60 x 30

U10 Mini 60 x 35

U11 Mini 60 x 43

U12 Mini 60 x 43

The area to be lost to classrooms is not capable of forming a mini rugby pitch.

Security of Tenure: In addition, even if some community use of pitches is already provided at Aylestone School, where there is no security of tenure on a site for community use, the PPOS recommends discounting the facility as having spare capacity to meet identified shortfalls. The PPOS indicates that Aylestone School does not have security of tenure and this alone would discount it from being able to reduce shortfalls.

PPOS recommendations for Rugby: The PPOS is clear on where future provision for rugby should be prioritised in the Hereford Analysis Area. With no spare capacity at existing sites or sites

located within the flood zone as is the case for Hereford Rugby Club, the PPOS proposes recommendations in support of deficiencies and shortfalls for both the Hereford Rugby Club and the wider need for the sport, including:

Explore long-term the potential relocation of Hereford Rugby Club to a better-suited location not on a flood zone

Explore the installation of World Rugby compliant 3G pitches as a resolution for clubs that would still have grass pitch shortfalls even if quality and sports lighting was maximised

Whilst there is an identified deficiency for mini rugby in the Hereford Analysis Area, I am satisfied that in assessing the need there is evidence that the area to be lost is considered surplus to requirement in that: it is incapable of providing suitable provision, community access at the school does not have security of tenure, and the PPOS recommendations are for a solution to meet deficiencies for rugby as a whole. It is therefore not seen to be contrary to NPPF paragraph 104 and CS policy OS3.

Conclusion: In evaluating the provision of a new sports hall and school classrooms against NPPF paragraph 104, CS Policies OS2 and OS3, and CS evidence bases IBS and PPOS, I raise no objection.

In respect of school sports, I am satisfied that the applicant has provided the appropriate information in accordance with DfE technical requirements.

In respect of community use, I am satisfied that the new facility, subject to a community use agreement, will result in greater sporting benefits to the local sports community.

In respect of loss of playing field, I am satisfied there is evidence that the area to be lost is considered surplus to requirement in that: the playing field to be lost is incapable of providing suitable provision to meet deficiencies and community access at the school does not have security of tenure.

5.14 HC Environmental Health (Noise) – comment;

5.14.1 22/5/25 - Following noise surveys, an Acoustic Design Report has been written and submitted with this application. The report considers the acoustic requirements in line with the relevant guidance, including BB93 'Acoustic Design of Schools: Performance Standards', DfE & DfA (2015) and 'Acoustics of Schools: a design guide', Institute of Acoustics (2015). Compliance requirements are detailed within the report. External plant noise has also been addressed, with reference to criteria found in BS4142:2014+A1(2019) 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'.

The report outlines that if suggested design criteria are met, compliance with BB93 and BS4142 can be achieved.

External plant noise levels have been set to not exceed background levels, equating to 'low impact' at the nearest residential receptors (BS4142).

Therefore, this department does not object to this application, but suggests that the following condition is added to any permission granted:

All recommendations outlined in Acoustic Design Report ref.BLMS0601-HYD-10-ZZ-T-AC-0001, dated 6th March 2025, shall be implemented and shall be completed before the use, hereby approved, is first commenced and shall be thereafter maintained, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA.

Reason: In order to protect the amenity of the area and future users so as to comply with policy SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-31

5.15 HC Environmental Health (Air Quality) – no response.

5.16 HC Environmental Health (Contaminated Land) – comment

5.16.1 4/6/25 - Further to our memo of 29th April 2025, the applicant has confirmed that they wish to adopt precautionary ground gas protection into the building in accordance with the options and recommendations outlined in the site investigation report. On this basis we would recommend the conditions below be appended to any approval.

1. "Development shall not commence until full design details and a full written technical specification of the soil gas protection scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This plan should include details of the means by which the gas protection measures will be independently validated together with a site specific validation plan for the implementation and validation of gas protection measures.
2. Upon completion of the agreed works, validation documentation shall be submitted to the local planning authority in accordance with the agreed details before the development is first occupied. The validation report must be produced by a suitably qualified person. Any variation to the scheme including the validation reporting shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority in advance of works being undertaken.

Reason: In the interests of human health and to comply with policy SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.16.2 29/9/25 - We refer to the above application and would make the following comments in relation to contaminated land and human health issues only.

The reports below have been submitted in support of the application:

"Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Desk Study Report. Aylestone High School, Hereford." Dated April 2024, Ref: HSP2024-C4607-G-GPI-2141.

And

"Phase II Geo-Environmental Assessment Report. Final-Rev A. Aylestone High School, Hereford." Dated July 2024, Revised March 2025.

Both prepared by HSP Consulting.

The Assessments have concluded that, on the basis that no demolition works are proposed, no further investigation is required at the site and that risks are acceptably low with regard to soils. The Phase II report however, includes a recommendation to include gas protection measures within the buildings. This is made on the basis of monitoring carried out on 4 occasions over two months and seemingly on the results recovered from one of the boreholes.

It is noted that the text of the report does indicate that further ground gas monitoring and more detailed assessment could result in a different 'end point'. This is an important consideration for the applicant as the requirement or otherwise for ground gas protection measures has consequential effects both for the design and construction of the building and with regard to validation plans and reports which will be required to demonstrate such measures have been included.

We would consider that the applicant should confirm whether further monitoring and more detailed assessment is proposed or precautionary mitigation is to be adopted at the site. Upon receipt of this confirmation we will be able to comment further.

5.17 HC Waste & Recycling – no response.

5.18 Land Drainage Team / Lead Local Flood Authority – comment;

5.18.1 26/9/25 - We have been reconsulted on the above application. We note the additional impermeable area now proposed as part of the development; the surface water drainage strategy including sizing calculations has been revised accordingly.

No further information relating to the access permissions necessary to achieve the proposed surface water connection to the public surface water sewer has been presented. As such, the attached (latest) correspondence still stands.

5.18.2 5/6/25 - The revised drainage layout drawings show the revised surface water drainage connection point (now within Pigott Close) to require new pipework to be laid within land outside the red line site boundary; the land also does not appear to be owned by the Applicant. It appears that this may be land owned by Herefordshire College of Arts, but this will need to be determined by the Applicant; discussions/permissions will need to be established to facilitate the works from the associated landowner/s.

Therefore, it still remains the case that third-party land will need to be accessed and crossed to install the surface water drainage pipework to achieve a connection to the Welsh Water public surface water sewer.

The condition wording previously discussed: 'No development shall commence until written evidence has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority demonstrating that the necessary permissions or rights have been obtained from the relevant third-party landowners to allow for the construction and maintenance of the proposed surface water drainage connection to the public sewer in Whittern Way (as indicated on X plan)...?' remains appropriate accordingly.

Other consultees

5.19 The Ramblers Association – no response.

5.20 Open Spaces Society – no response.

5.21 Hereford and Worcester Fire Service - standing advice applies. Full comments accessible via the link at the heading of the report.

6.0 REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 Hereford City Council – support;

The meeting supported this application and noted the improved cycling provision being offered in this amended application. Not sure why they don't submit them.

6.2 34 representations have been received raising objections to the proposal. It is noted that a number of these are from the same individuals submitting multiple responses. The comments can be summarised as follows; -

- Lack of clear evidence or credible plans to address increased traffic and parking pressures, especially around Watermeadow Close and Broadlands Lane, with repeated concerns about pupil and resident safety.
- Existing problems with congestion, dangerous parking, and ineffective traffic management are expected to worsen, potentially impacting emergency access.

- The educational case for expansion is challenged, with reference to Department for Education data showing Aylestone School's academic performance remains well below local and national averages, and no sustained improvement trend.
- Several representations highlight instability in council governance and leadership, including officer departures, unresolved conflicts of interest, and insufficient legal oversight, which undermines trust in the decision-making process.
- The use of the Public Service Infrastructure (PSI) fast-track route is disputed, with claims that statutory criteria are not met and the process is vulnerable to legal challenge.
- Public consultation is described as inadequate, with insufficient notification to affected parties (notably Athelstan Hall), short timescales, unreadable documents, and limited genuine engagement.
- Requests for greater transparency, including full publication of key documents and rationale, and calls for independent scrutiny before any decision is made.
- Loss of playing field land and conversion of playground/MUGA to car parking is contrary to Sport England policy, with statutory objections referenced and concerns about reduced sports provision for pupils.
- Proposed tree and shrub planting near Athelstan Hall is criticised for harming the historic open setting, reducing residential amenity, and diminishing usable sports space, with conflicting heritage and landscape assessments noted.
- Doubts are raised about the school's ability to manage both existing and new landscaping, citing neglected boundary trees and increased future maintenance burdens.
- Alternative mitigation is suggested, such as a heritage-sensitive boundary wall instead of tree planting, to better protect amenity and historic character.
- The intended commercial and community use of the proposed sports hall is seen as a material change of use, requiring separate assessment and consultation.
- Ecological assessment is considered incomplete, with no site visit and insufficient attention to protected species and nearby SSSI; calls are made for a full walkover and updated environmental risk assessment.
- Requests for all "Safer Routes to School" measures to be implemented before any approval, with scepticism about their permanence and effectiveness.
- Some objectors call for the application to be paused, independently reviewed, or referred to the Secretary of State due to unresolved procedural and substantive concerns.
- The proposed £13 million investment is questioned, with suggestions that local need, educational outcomes, and public value do not justify the scale of funding, and that alternative priorities (including SEND provision at other schools) should be considered.
- Concerns about excessive lighting, including omission of MUGA floodlighting from plans, risks to bats and biodiversity, and lack of mitigation or assessment for light pollution.
- Noise impacts from extended hours, amplified events, and commercial use are raised, with calls for robust monitoring and enforceable conditions.
- Loss of informal open space, wildlife corridors, and buffer zones is highlighted, with negative effects on local amenity and the conservation area.
- Some mitigation measures, such as community use agreements, are criticised as speculative and not secured or deliverable.
- Missed opportunities for collaboration with neighbouring colleges and existing sports facilities are noted, leading to unnecessary duplication and further loss of green space.
- Lack of evidence for improved SEND provision, pastoral care, or curriculum flexibility, with calls for investment in schools with stronger outcomes.
- Intensification of site use is expected to increase disturbance, with concerns about long-term management and accountability for impacts.
- The scheme is described as being presented as educational, while its commercial aspects are downplayed or misrepresented in consultation and application documents.
- Calls for enforceable operational hours, event-type restrictions, and robust complaints protocols to protect residents.
- Requests for previous objections (notably from 2018) to be considered and republished, due to concerns about their erasure or lack of visibility.

- Absence of a Heritage Impact Assessment is highlighted, with concerns about harm to Grade II listed buildings and the Aylestone Hill Conservation Area.
- Lack of transparency and evidence regarding funding sources, especially the use of High Needs Capital Grant and claims of PFI constraints.
- Questions about the adequacy and affordability of SEN protection schemes and the impact on the High Needs Block deficit.
- Reports of insufficient engagement with affected neighbours, including exclusion from consultation and failure to address requests for mitigation.
- Cumulative impacts of lighting, noise, and increased activity on wildlife, residential amenity, and the local environment are raised.
- If approved, requests are made for specific planning conditions, including boundary wall installation, lighting controls, implementation of safe routes to school, Sport England clearance, and robust facility management.
- The proposal is described as procedurally unlawful, distorting original criteria, and lacking educational merit.
- Concerns about the loss of green space, with calls for imaginative renovation of existing buildings rather than new construction.
- Environmental harm from excessive lighting is highlighted, with requests for intelligent, motion-triggered lighting schemes.
- Calls for the council to follow national best practice by repurposing existing spaces before building on greenfield land.

6.3 1no. representation received neither in support or objecting. The comments can be summarised as follows;

- CPRE Herefordshire supports timed external lighting but recommends it be shielded, downward-facing, no brighter than necessary, and use warmer tones.
- Reference DarkSky International's principles for responsible outdoor lighting.
- Endorse the Council Ecologist's recommendation that no external lighting be used on site boundary habitats.
- Support the requirement for lighting specifications and contour plans to be submitted and approved prior to first use.
- agree lighting should be implemented as approved, with no other external illumination.
- Their comments align with legal and policy frameworks including the Habitats Regulations, Wildlife & Countryside Act, NPPF, NERC Act, and Core Strategy Policies SS1, SS6, LD1–LD3.

7.0 OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of development

- 7.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states as follows:
"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."
- 7.2 In this instance the adopted development plan is the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a significant material consideration.
- 7.3 The application site comprises an established secondary school located within the urban area of Hereford. The principle of educational development on this site is well established, and the proposal is supported in policy terms by both the Core Strategy and NPPF. Paragraph 100 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools, recognising their critical role in meeting community needs and supporting sustainable development. Core Strategy Policy SC1 similarly supports the provision and

enhancement of social and community infrastructure, including education, particularly where it meets identified needs and is accessible by sustainable modes of transport.

- 7.4 The proposed development seeks to erect a new two-storey teaching block, including a sports hall and associated infrastructure, to facilitate the expansion of Aylestone High School from 3-form entry (450 pupils) to 5-form entry (750 pupils). This responds to a demonstrable increase in demand for secondary school places in Hereford. The proposal remains within the extent of the site, which previously accommodated up to 1,250 pupils, and therefore does not introduce a new or incompatible land use.
- 7.5 The development would deliver modern, accessible teaching and sports facilities, replacing outdated accommodation and enhancing the learning environment for pupils and staff. The inclusion of a new sports hall, designed to meet curriculum needs, represents a qualitative improvement in education provision. The facility would also be available for community use outside of school hours, supporting wider objectives around health, and social inclusion and community cohesion and wellbeing.
- 7.6 In response to objection to this application, it should be recognised that the planning system is not responsible for assessing the academic performance of individual schools. The application is supported by evidence of increased demand for secondary school places in Hereford, and the principle of educational expansion is supported by the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy SC1. The educational case for expansion is therefore considered robust in planning terms.

Siting, design, scale and character

- 7.7 The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England)Order 2015 (as amended) requires that Sport England is consulted on applications likely to affect land being used as a playing field; land which has been used as a playing field in the last 5 years; land allocated for use as a playing field; or for proposals for replacement of a grass surface. A 'playing field' is defined as the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch
- 7.8 The development would result in the loss of part of the existing playing field, currently used for informal sports, and the repurposing of a deteriorated Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) for parking associated with the school expansion. In accordance with Paragraph 104 of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy OS3, the loss of open space and sports facilities must be justified by either surplus provision, equivalent or better replacement, or alternative provision whose benefits clearly outweigh the loss.
- 7.9 In this case:
- The informal playing field area to be developed is limited in its current use due to its size and condition; replacement informal sports provision would be relocated elsewhere on site, ensuring no net loss of formal curriculum sports capacity. The area to be lost is not suitable for formal pitch sports, being undersized and only used for training grids and an undersized rounders pitch.
 - The existing MUGA is in poor condition and infrequently used; its loss would not materially affect current sports provision. The school retains a substantial overprovision of hard court area above requirements, and all hard-court sports are delivered on the main MUGA, which would be unaffected.
 - It is acknowledged, however, that Sport England considers the marking out of pitches on existing playing field land does not constitute quantitative replacement, and that the school already has a technical shortfall in playing field provision which would be exacerbated by the proposal.
 - While the Council's Indoors and Built Sports Facilities Strategy (IBSFS) concludes that there is no specific quantitative need for additional sports hall provision, the new sports hall would provide for a significant qualitative enhancement, enabling a broader range of indoor sports

and activities (including basketball, badminton, trampolining, and indoor cricket), and is designed to accommodate community use (secured through a Community Use Agreement as outlined below). This is supported by letters of support from local sports clubs and organisations, and would allow the school to host county-wide events indoors for the first time, for example.

- 7.10 Sport England, as a statutory consultee, has objected on the grounds that the proposal does not fully meet their exceptions, specifically in relation to local pitch provision. Sport England's objection is based on the fact that the applicant has not demonstrated that the playing field land to be lost is surplus to requirements for curricular or community use, and no replacement provision is proposed. While Sport England acknowledges that the need for the facility, technical suitability, community availability, and sports development criteria are broadly or fully met, they consider that the loss of playing field land is not justified by surplus provision or equivalent replacement. Furthermore, Sport England has raised concerns regarding Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) planting on playing field land, which may further reduce usable sports space.
- 7.11 The Council's Open Space Officer has confirmed no objection to the proposal, noting that the area to be lost is not capable of providing suitable provision to meet identified deficiencies, and that community access at the school does not have security of tenure. The Open Space Officer's assessment is based on the Herefordshire Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS), which discounts facilities without security of tenure from meeting local shortfalls. The Officer also notes that the new sports hall and associated community use agreement will provide significant benefits to both the school and local sports clubs.
- 7.12 Alternative locations for the new building were considered but would have resulted in greater loss of mature trees, biodiversity, or other sports provision, and would not have delivered the same educational and operational benefits. The chosen location for consideration as part of this application minimises overall impact and enables the centralisation of PE teaching and community use.
- 7.13 The sports hall has been designed to accommodate community use outside of school hours. In line with Sport England's guidance and the Council's Playing Pitch and Built Sports Facilities Strategies, it is recommended that a Community Use Agreement (CUA) is secured by condition. The CUA would set out the hours of community access, management arrangements, pricing policy, and how the facility would be promoted to local clubs and residents. This would ensure that the benefits of the new sports hall are maximised for both the school and the wider community, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy SC1 and the NPPF. It would also ensure alignment with the Council's IBSFS and the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS).
- 7.14 It is important to note that, while the proposal delivers significant qualitative benefits, it does not fully meet Sport England's policy in respect of local pitch provision, and the statutory objection remains unresolved. The technical shortfall in outdoor playing field provision, the loss of usable sports space due to BNG planting, and the absence of quantitative replacement are material considerations. On balance, however, the significant public benefits of the new sports hall, the limited value of the area to be lost, and the retention of sufficient outdoor and hard court provision are considered to outweigh the harm in this instance. Should members be minded to approve the application, the statutory objection from Sport England means the proposal must be referred to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2021 before any planning permission is issued.
- 7.15 To address temporary impacts, it is recommended that a condition be imposed requiring the restoration of any playing field or MUGA land used for construction compounds to at least equivalent quality, with a timeframe for reinstatement following completion of works. This will ensure that any temporary loss of sports provision is appropriately mitigated.
- 7.16 In terms of its scale and design, the proposed building adopts a contemporary architectural approach, with a form and material palette that is befitting of its proposed educational function.

The use of buff/grey masonry brickwork and contrasting dark cladding at higher levels would provide some visual interest and would also reflect the evolving character of development in the area, including the similar forms at the colleges abutting the site to the west. The design is informed by the Design and Access Statement, which demonstrates that the building would be legible, accessible, and provide a high-quality environment for pupils, staff, and community users. The layout ensures clear separation of pedestrian and vehicular movement, and the main entrance is defined by extensive glazing, providing natural light and passive surveillance.

- 7.17 The landscaping strategy has been reviewed by the Council's Built and Natural Environment Service who support the approach taken. The scheme provides for enhanced soft landscaping, including the addition of native trees, hedges, meadow grasses, and wetland habitat, as well as appropriate hard landscaping. The landscape design would soften the built form, enhance biodiversity, and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the site. The final details of planting, management, and maintenance are recommended to be secured by condition, in line with the landscape officer's comments.
- 7.18 The reconfiguration of the access loop to respond to highway related constraints and provide for short-stay parent drop-off spaces (as discussed below) would result in the removal of some existing trees, as identified in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Retention and Removals Plan. The Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) provides adequate information to ensure that the important arboricultural resource within the site is protected. The Council's Tree Officer has raised no objection to the proposals, subject to works close to trees being undertaken strictly in accordance with the AMS and its associated plans. This can be secured via a planning condition. In addition, the Tree Officer supports the landscape officer's comments regarding proposed tree planting, which would assist in mitigating the loss and enhance the site's landscape and biodiversity value.
- 7.19 The proposal in this regard is considered to accord with Policy SD1, LD1 and LD3 of the Core Strategy and the design objectives of the NPPF.

Heritage impact

- 7.20 The application site includes the Grade II-listed Aylestone School; the Grade II-listed Athelstan Hall sits to the west, at the junction of the A465 Aylestone Hill and Broadlands Lane. The location of these is shown by the blue markers on **Figure 3**, with the approximate location of the proposed two-storey building shown by the red-star.



Figure 3 – Site (red-star) in relation to designated heritage assets (blue-markers) (Source: Historic England)

- 7.21 The legislative framework for the consideration of heritage assets is set out in Section and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which require special regard to be paid to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings. These duties are reflected in the Core Strategy at Policies SS6, LD1, and LD4, - as well as the NPPF, which collectively require that development proposals conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings, and that any harm is clearly justified and outweighed by public benefits.
- 7.22 The proposed two-storey building would be sited to the south of the main school complex, away from the principal listed building and adjacent to existing sports pitches. The new building would not be notably visible from Broadlands Lane, where the principal elevation of the listed building can be viewed. Views of the new building from the south would be seen in the context of the existing modern school buildings, with the listed building screened by retained tree cover as indicated on the landscape masterplan.
- 7.23 The proposal would also entail changes to the internal access loop; while this would introduce some additional hardstanding within the site, these works – taken together with the proposed landscaping and tree planting, are not considered to result in any additional harm to the setting or significance of the heritage assets.
- 7.24 The Council's Conservation Officer has assessed the proposal and raises no objection to the siting or design of the new building. While the expansion of the site would result in some erosion of the former grounds of the listed building, this is considered to result in a low level of less than substantial harm to its setting. In accordance with NPPF paragraph 215, this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 7.25 In this case, the public benefits include the retention and improvement of the school, the provision of modern educational and sports facilities, and the continued viable use of the listed building as part of the school complex. These benefits are considered to outweigh the very low level of harm identified.

Access and highway safety

- 7.26 It is noted that concern has been raised locally, as evidenced through the consultation, with respect to the impact of the development on access and highway safety. Great consideration has been given to the potential highway related impacts of the proposed development, in line with the expectations of Policy MT1 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.
- 7.27 The site is accessed via Broadlands Lane, which connects to the A465 (Aylestone Hill) and provides the principal point of vehicular access. Broadlands Lane already serves both Aylestone High School and neighbouring and associated Broadlands Primary School – as well as residential properties, and is known to experience significant congestion during school peak hours. The proposed expansion would invariably increase pupil and staff numbers, intensifying demand on the local highway network. Trip generation analysis indicates a significant increase in movements during peak periods, but the majority of vehicle trips are linked to onward journeys (e.g. commuting or shopping) and not solely generated by the school.
- 7.28 To address these concerns and to manage these movements and minimise impact on the surrounding network, extensive discussions have taken place between Herefordshire Council (as applicant), the Local Planning Authority (LPA), and the Local Highway Authority (LHA). The scheme, as shown at **Figure 4** has consequently been amended to incorporate the re-use and reconfiguration of the existing internal loop road, which would operate as a one-way system and provide 24 short-stay parent drop-off spaces during peak periods. This mitigation is intended to alleviate congestion on Broadlands Lane and improve safety for pupils and local residents.



Figure 4 - Proposed Detailed Vehicle Access Loop (rev P02 – 12/09/25)

- 7.29 In parallel, Herefordshire Council is trialling a Safer Routes to School initiative, which restricts access to Broadlands Lane during peak hours. This scheme aims to reduce vehicle dominance and improve safety for pupils and residents. However, permanent implementation of Safer Routes to School is subject to a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), and there remains uncertainty as to whether this would be secured. As such, the Safer Routes to School scheme cannot be relied upon as mitigation for the purposes of this application, and a permanent, deliverable on-site solution is required. Should the TRO be successful and the scheme made permanent, the applicant may seek to vary the planning permission to remove or amend the requirement for the internal loop, subject to future review and consultation with the LHA on the matter.
- 7.30 The submitted and updated Transport Assessment demonstrates that the site, given its location within Hereford, is accessible by sustainable modes, with good pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, proximity to public transport, and further improvements planned for active travel routes. The proposals include increased cycle parking, enhanced pedestrian routes, and a School Travel Plan to encourage sustainable travel behaviour.
- 7.31 Parking provision has been rationalised and increased, with a total of 98no. car parking spaces (including accessible and visitor bays) (an increase in 20no. spaces), three minibus spaces, and dedicated coach drop-off facilities for occasional use. Swept path analysis has been submitted and confirms that service and emergency vehicles can safely access and manoeuvre within the site.
- 7.32 The proposals are considered to comply with Core Strategy Policy MT1 and the NPPF, which states that development should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe (paragraph 116).

Impact on residential amenity

- 7.33 In terms of considering the impacts on amenity, an Acoustic Design Report has been submitted and reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Team. The report demonstrates that, subject to the implementation of recommended design measures, the development would comply with

BB93 'Acoustic Design of Schools' and BS4142 standards for external plant noise. The predicted noise levels at the nearest residential properties are not expected to exceed background levels, equating to a 'low impact'. A condition is recommended to secure the implementation and ongoing maintenance of all acoustic mitigation measures prior to first use of the development.

- 7.34 General amenity impacts, including those arising from construction, have been addressed through the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP includes measures to manage construction traffic, deliveries, working hours, and dust, thereby minimising disruption to neighbouring properties and school users.
- 7.35 Additionally, a condition is recommended to control external lighting, ensuring that boundary habitats and residential amenity are protected from light disturbance.
- 7.36 No significant air quality issues have been identified by Environmental Health. The increase in traffic associated with the development is not considered to be of a scale that would materially affect local air quality, particularly given the mitigation measures proposed, including the School Travel Plan and active travel improvements.
- 7.37 In summary, subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal is not expected to result in significant adverse impacts on noise, air quality, or general amenity, and is considered to comply with Policy SD1 and the NPPF.

Ecology

- 7.38 The application has been supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. The site is not within or adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory designated sites, and no irreplaceable habitats are present. The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the submitted information and is satisfied that, subject to conditions, the proposal would not result in significant adverse effects on biodiversity.
- 7.39 The Biodiversity Metric demonstrates that the scheme would deliver a net gain of approximately 13% in habitat units and 64% in hedgerow units, exceeding the statutory minimum 10% BNG requirement. This would be achieved through a combination of on-site habitat retention, creation, and enhancement, including new and improved grassland, woodland, scrub, hedgerows, and tree planting. The trading rules are satisfied for all habitat types, and no off-site provision is required. The delivery and long-term management of BNG would be secured by condition.
- 7.40 The updated lighting plan submitted has been reviewed and is considered. The plan ensures that key wildlife corridors, particularly along Aylestone Hill and to the north of Aylestone Grange, are protected from light spill. A condition is recommended to secure the implementation of the approved lighting plan and to require any future external lighting to be designed to avoid adverse impacts on habitats and protected species.
- 7.41 An Ecological Construction Method Statement has been submitted and is considered acceptable. The method statement must be adhered to throughout all construction and pre-construction activities, as secured by condition.
- 7.42 The site is located within both the River Wye and River Lugg catchments, and as such, a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required. In this case, the additional pupils and staff to be accommodated by the proposed development are presumed to already be resident within the catchment, and as such, there is no net increase in population or nutrient loading to the designated sites. Welsh Water has raised no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions, and the final confirmation of the surface water discharge point is to be managed through a suitably worded condition. As such, the application can be screened out on the basis that the proposal would not result in likely significant effects on the River Wye or River Lugg Special Area of Conservation.

- 7.43 Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with Core Strategy Policies LD1, LD2 and LD3, and the relevant sections of the NPPF. The scheme would deliver a measurable net gain for biodiversity, safeguard ecological features, and ensure that lighting impacts are appropriately managed.

Flood risk and drainage

- 7.44 The site is not identified to be at risk from flooding, and the area proposed for the siting of the new building is not at risk of surface water flooding.
- 7.45 The proposal looks to manage foul water flows through a connection to the mains sewer that exists within the site boundary; the proposed surface water drainage connection requires new pipework to be laid across third-party land (believed to be owned by Herefordshire College of Arts) to reach the public sewer in Whittern Way. At present, no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the necessary permissions or rights have been obtained from the relevant third-party landowner(s) to allow for the construction and maintenance of the proposed drainage connection.
- 7.46 A Grampian-style condition is recommended to ensure that no development can commence until written evidence has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority demonstrating that the necessary permissions or rights have been obtained. For a Grampian condition to be lawful and reasonable, there must be a real prospect that the required action can be achieved within the lifetime of the permission. It should be noted that, while this approach is considered necessary and appropriate, there remains a risk that if the required permissions cannot be secured from the third-party landowner, the development could not lawfully proceed.

Other matters

- 7.47 Matters raised in the representations relating to Herefordshire Council governance, officer departures, and legal oversight are not material planning considerations. The application has been processed in accordance with statutory requirements, including public consultation and notification. The adequacy of consultation has been reviewed and is considered to meet the required obligations. All relevant documents have been made available for inspection via the Herefordshire Council website.
- 7.48 Furthermore, the planning system does not determine the allocation of education funding or the prioritisation of investment. The application has been assessed on its planning merits, including the need for additional school places.

CONCLUSION

- 7.49 The proposed development would deliver significant public benefits through the expansion and modernisation of educational facilities at Aylestone High School, addressing an identified need for additional secondary school places in Hereford. The scheme would provide a modern, high-quality learning environment, enhanced sports provision, and improved community facilities.
- 7.50 While the development would result in the loss of a small area of playing field and the repurposing of an existing MUGA, the evidence demonstrates that these areas are of limited value for formal sports provision and that the new sports hall would deliver substantial qualitative benefits for both the school and the wider community. The statutory objection from Sport England is acknowledged; however, on balance, the public benefits of the proposal are considered to outweigh the harm identified.
- 7.51 The design, scale, and siting of the new building are appropriate to the context and would not result in any unjustified harm to the setting of heritage assets or the character and appearance of the area. Impacts on highway safety, residential amenity, ecology, and flood risk have been

considered and can be satisfactorily mitigated by the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

- 7.52 Subject to conditions and the referral of the application to the Secretary of State in light of the Sport England objection, the proposal is considered to accord with the development plan when read as a whole, and there are no material considerations that indicate planning permission should be refused.

RECOMMENDATION : That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions and any other further conditions considered necessary by officers named in the scheme of delegation to officers, and subject to the application being referred to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2021 due to the statutory objection from Sport England.

STANDARD CONDITIONS

1. **Time Limit for Commencement**
The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. **Approved Plans and Documents**
The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed below, and the schedule of materials listed thereon.

Reason: To define the terms of the permission and ensure the development is carried out as approved.

PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT

3. **Surface Water Drainage (Third Party Land)**
No development shall commence until written evidence has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority demonstrating that the necessary permissions or rights have been obtained from the relevant third-party landowners to allow for the construction and maintenance of the proposed surface water drainage connection to the public sewer in Whittern Way (BLMS0601-HYD-52-NXX-D-C-7011 P03 & BLMS0601-HYD-52-NXX-D-C-7010 P03).

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory means of surface water drainage and to prevent flooding, in accordance with Policy SD3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy.

4. **Contamination**
Development shall not commence until full design details and a full written technical specification of the soil gas protection scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This plan should include details of the means by which the gas protection measures will be independently validated together with a site specific validation plan for the implementation and validation of gas protection measures.

Upon completion of the agreed works, validation documentation shall be submitted to the local planning authority in accordance with the agreed details before the development is first occupied. The validation report must be produced by a suitably qualified person. Any variation to the scheme including the validation reporting shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority in advance of works being undertaken.

Reason: In the interests of human health and to comply with policy SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

COMPLIANCE/ CONSTRUCTION PERIOD

5. Arboricultural Compliance

Except where otherwise stipulated by condition, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following documents and plans, for the duration of the construction period?

:

- Arboricultural Method Statement – Origin Environmental – 240314_24014_AMS_V1 – September 25
- Tree Retention and Removals Plan – Origin Environmental – 240314_24014 TRRP V2a_OE-003 – September 2025
- Tree Protection Plan – Origin Environmental – 240314_24014 TPP V2a_OE-004 – September 2025

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and to conform with Policies LD1 and LD3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. CEMP Compliance

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) Revision 05, dated October 2025, including all appendices and referenced ecological method statements. The measures contained within the CEMP shall be implemented and adhered to throughout the construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the area, protect biodiversity, and ensure the development is carried out in an environmentally responsible manner, in accordance with Policies SD1 and LD2 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy.

PRIOR TO FIRST USE/OCCUPATION

7. Parking, Drop-off, and Cycle Storage

Prior to first use of the development hereby approved, the parking, drop-off, and cycle storage facilities shown on the approved plans (BLMS0601-AHR-30-ZZZ-D-L-0525 P02 and BLMS0601-AHR-30-ZZZ-D-L-0520 P05) shall be provided and made available for use. These facilities shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure adequate parking and promote sustainable travel, in accordance with Policy MT1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-31.

8. School Travel Plan

Prior to first use of the development hereby approved, an updated School Travel Plan, including the establishment and ongoing operation of a School Travel Plan Steering Group, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall be implemented as approved and monitored for a minimum of five years.

Reason: To promote sustainable travel and reduce congestion, in accordance with Policy MT1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-31.

9. Acoustic Design Compliance

All recommendations outlined in Acoustic Design Report ref.BLMS0601-HYD-10-ZZ-T-AC-0001, dated 6th March 2025, shall be implemented and shall be completed before the use, hereby approved, is first commenced and shall be thereafter maintained.

Reason: In order to protect the amenity of the area and future users so as to comply with policy SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-31.

10. Community Use Agreement (CUA)

Prior to first use of the development hereby approved, a Community Use Agreement (CUA) prepared in consultation with Sport England shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CUA shall include, but may not be limited to details of hours of use, management, pricing, and access arrangements. The approved CUA shall be implemented upon first use and adhered to thereafter.

Reason: To secure community access to the facility, in accordance with Policy SC1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

COMPLIANCE/OPERATIONAL

11. Reinstatement post construction works

Within one month of the completion of construction works (or prior to first use/occupation of the development, whichever is sooner), the site compound and all associated temporary works, structures, materials shall be removed from the site and the land shall be reinstated in accordance with a restoration scheme submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The restoration scheme shall include:

- A condition survey of the affected playing field and/or MUGA prior to commencement of reinstatement works;
- Details of reinstatement to at least equivalent quality;
- A timetable for completion of restoration works (including a growing-in period for grassed areas).

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site and to protect the amenity and function of the school grounds, in accordance with Policies SD1 and OS3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and Paragraph 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. Landscape Implementation

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved Landscape Masterplan (drawing ref: BLMS0601-AHR-30-ZZZ-D-L-0520, Rev P05), Soft Landscape Layout (drawing ref: BLMS0601-AHR-30-ZZZ-D-L-0540, Rev P04), and Landscape Specification (ref: BLMS0601-AHR-10-LZZ-T-L-0610, P01), or any subsequent details approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All planting, seeding, and turfing comprised in the approved details shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the completion or first occupation of the development, whichever is sooner.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development and to enhance biodiversity, in accordance with Policies LD1 and LD2 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy.

13. External Lighting Compliance

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved external lighting plan (drawing ref: BLMS0601-HYD-55-Z00-D-ME-7001, Revision P04, by Stantec). No external lighting shall be installed except in accordance with the approved details. Any future external lighting must be designed to avoid adverse impacts

on habitats and protected species, and details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to installation.

Reason: To protect habitats and species, in accordance with Policy LD2 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

14. Surface Water Discharge Rate

Surface water flows from the development shall only communicate with the public surface water sewer through an attenuation device that discharges at a rate not exceeding 1.4 l/s.

Reason: To prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system and protect the environment.

15. Site Compound Removal

Within one month of the completion of construction works (or prior to first use/occupation of the development, whichever is sooner), the site compound and all associated temporary works, structures, and materials shall be removed from the site. The land shall be reinstated to its former condition or in accordance with a scheme previously submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site and to protect the amenity and function of the school grounds, in accordance with Policies SD1 and OS3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy.

16. Landscape Maintenance

All planting, seeding, or turfing carried out as part of the approved landscaping scheme shall be maintained for a period of five years from the date of planting. Any trees, plants, or areas of seeding/turfing which, within this period, are removed, die, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the successful establishment and long-term retention of the approved landscaping, in accordance with Policies LD1 and LD2 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy.

INFORMATIVES:

1. This permission will not be issued until the application has been referred to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2021, due to the statutory objection from Sport England.
2. The applicant is advised that some conditions attached to this permission require the submission and approval of details prior to commencement of development. Failure to comply with these conditions may render the development unlawful.
3. The applicant is reminded of their legal obligations under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. If protected species are encountered during development, works must cease and advice sought from a qualified ecologist.

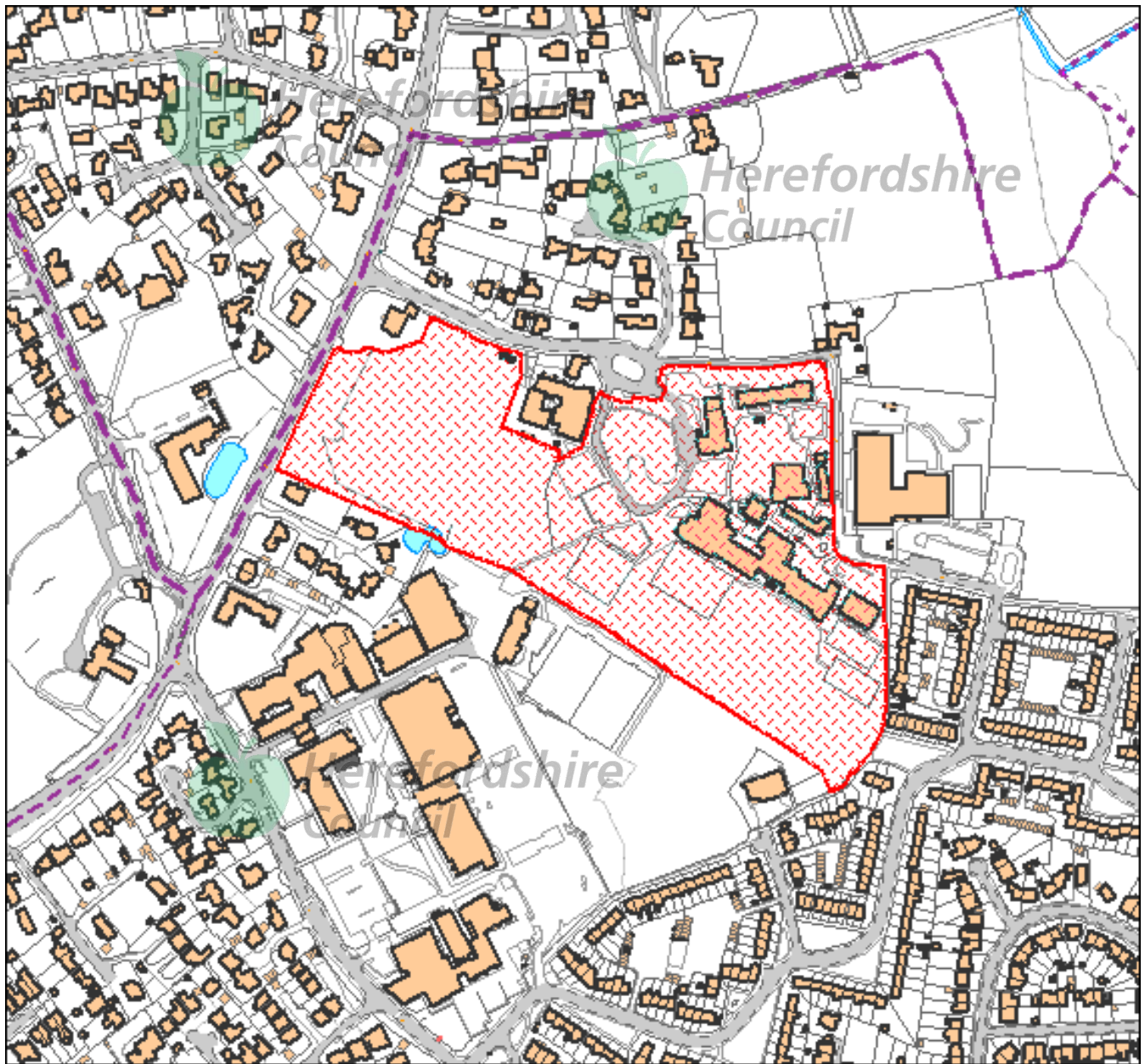
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

None identified.



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APPLICATION NO: 251073

SITE ADDRESS : AYLESTONE HIGH SCHOOL, BROADLANDS LANE, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR1 1HY

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