

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & DIRECTOR OF CHILDRENS SERVICES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	11 JUNE 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES		
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the future needs for additional secondary school places and the approach to securing sufficient spaces to meet need.
- 1.2 The report also seeks approval to commence the required process to develop a new secondary school in response to projected increased demand for places from September 2021 and seeks to confirm a site at Richfield Avenue as a preferred site for a new 6 form entry secondary school.
- 1.3 A Part 2 confidential report setting out legal and property matters accompanies this report. The Part 2 report also provides a high level risk log.

Appendices

- Appendix A - Site Location Plan
- Appendix B - Equalities Impact Assessment.
- Appendix C - Potential Site Layout Options (extracts from Feasibility Study).

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note the data on pupil forecasts and the proposed number of bulge classes to accommodate needs.
- 2.2 Agree that the Council begins to consult formally to gather local views on the plans to develop a new secondary school as a first step towards identifying a provider for a new school.

- 2.3 Delegate responsibility to the Head of Education in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education to;
- (i) progress the publication of a due diligence specification for the new school and an invitation to sponsor and that the specification is considered at a future meeting of the Adults Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee.
 - (ii) identify a preferred sponsor to be recommended to the DfE.
- 2.4 To note the equalities impact assessment attached as Appendix B and to take into account the outcomes of the assessment in determining the recommendations set out in this report.
- 2.5 To agree that the site at Richfield Avenue be the Council's preferred site for a new 6 form entry secondary school.
- 2.6 To delegate responsibility to the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council to commence and thereafter complete appropriate actions related to the appropriation of the land for education purposes in order to override title issues and subsequent disposal.
- 2.7 Agree that £240k of project management costs be allocated to the project from capital noting the financial risks set out in this report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2016 - 2019 sets out the Council's priorities. These priorities include 'providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living'. The Plan sets out that 2,550 new schools places have been provided as part of the Council's £61m Primary School Expansion Programme.
- 3.2 Ensuring sufficient, quality school places in the right locations will help to ensure that school age children achieve their full potential, and support rising attainment levels across the Borough.
- 3.3 Improving attainment and outcomes for students and young people in Reading is a key priority. Secondary school attainment is sound but not outstanding at key stage 4. It is very strong at the end of key stage 5 and well above national averages. There are many measures of key stage four (GCSE) performance - the baccalaureate, progress and performance 8, and 5 A*-C - for example. The attainment of Reading 16 years olds is improving significantly when measured against all English Local Authorities (LAs), and was above the average for Statistical Neighbours and English LAs in 2017. In considering achievement in the Baccalaureate, Reading pupils' performance was good in 2016 - much better than that of pupils in all English LAs, and improving at a faster rate. Reading pupils are first quartile performers measured against those in Statistical Neighbours and English LAs.
- 3.4 Attainment across our secondary schools show outstanding key stage 5 performance as measured by level 3 points scores (level 3 is A level and equivalents) by students attending Reading post-16 education institutions. Outcomes are first rate. The caution here is that student movement between LA areas is significant and some pupils attending our sixth form provision may also be out of borough. The percentage of students achieving 3 very good A levels is extremely high, and far out-performs students in Statistical Neighbours and all English LAs where we perform first in both cases.

- 3.5 Despite high standards and outcomes overall, we are acutely aware of differences in the achievement and progress of particular groups. Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils do not always make the progress they need to make through the secondary education system to catch up and gain the skills and qualifications they need to secure further education, employment or training when they leave school. The DfE's Social Mobility Index in 2016 indicated Reading to be in the bottom quartile nationally, based on the proportion of disadvantaged pupils gaining the expected standard in reading, writing and in mathematics at the end of Year 6, and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils gaining 5 A*-C GCSEs at the end of key stage 4. We are committed to ensuring that any new secondary school has a curriculum which will address these issues and that opportunities for our most vulnerable of pupils to achieve well are taken fully with the education provided for them meeting their future employment needs. This is a key driver for ensuring we reduce the proportion of students missing education, employment and training, and also that provision and teaching engages pupils and reduces the risk of exclusion, particularly for those students with SEND.
- 3.6 Our commitment is for the new secondary school to be a non-selective and inclusive secondary school able to offer appropriate provision for pupils within moderate SEND within an mainstream setting. Separately, the LA is pursuing a SEND strategy which is currently reviewing specialist SEND provision and working to ensure that there are sufficient specialist places to meet the LA's future needs through a mix of specialist schools, along with resourced units attached to mainstream schools.

4. THE PROPOSAL

Pupils need information and Demand

- 4.1 The growth in demand for secondary school places makes a strong case for a new secondary school along with increased enrolment of Reading pupils at Chiltern Edge, South Oxfordshire. The case is recognised by the DfE and, from a national analysis of need from 1-6, 6 being of the greatest need for additional school places, Reading Borough is considered a 6 which means it is a local authority of priority need.

Academic year	Secondary							
	7	8	9	10	11	Total Yr7-11	12	13
2017/18	1375	1247	1247	1078	1052	5,999	848	755
2018/19	1504	1351	1240	1297	1068	6,460	789	727
2019/20	1754	1477	1343	1289	1285	7,148	801	676
2020/21	1722	1723	1468	1396	1277	7,586	964	687
2021/22	1782	1691	1712	1526	1383	8,094	958	827
2022/23	1772	1750	1681	1780	1513	8,496	1037	821
2023/24	1791	1740	1739	1747	1764	8,781	1134	890

Fig 1: SCAP data provided to the DfE on secondary school capacity required (2017)

- 4.2 The above table outlines the need for secondary school places year by year and by year group between 2017 to 2023. By 2023-24, the third year of the new school operation, the local authority will require 8,781 secondary school places for pupils Yr7 - Yr11. Currently, Reading's secondary schools provide 7,945 places*. By 2021, the

secondary school system will be 836 places short. By the time the new school admits Y11 students in 2025-26, based on current capacity, the borough will be close to 1000 places short in the system if the school is not built.

* This does not include numbers for the UTC which does not take pupils until the age of 14 yrs.

- 4.3 Currently, planned admissions to secondary schools are within the context of Reading borough being considered as a single admission area. Although each school has its own catchment area upon which to allocate places based on parental choice, it also allows for pupils to be diverted across the borough to schools with spare places where parents' own choices are full. In planning for secondary places in the future, the DfE is willing to consider three distinct secondary school planning regions within the borough for north, west-central and east-south. The borough's selective schools will be viewed as a distinct group on their own, drawing students from a wider area. This change will enable the local authority to pinpoint local need for additional student places and funding from basic needs grants.
- 4.4 The Borough will continue to grow in population and has an ambitious housing growth plan to meet rising needs as set out in its emerging Local Plan. New housing planned for the town is not the only factor which will increase demand for school places with the way in which the existing housing stock is used factoring heavily. Accurately forecasting pupil needs arising from the current and future population of the Borough is an important aspect of pupil number forecasting.

Meeting Needs - Capacity at existing schools

- 4.5 In response to increased demands for primary school places the Council embarked on a significant primary school expansion project, much of which is now complete. Places have been provided by utilising capital funding (basic needs funding) provided by the Government to this Council as well as additional resources including the extensive use of borrowing. As the larger primary cohorts are beginning to feed through to secondary schools, the Council now needs to agree how such needs can be met.
- 4.6 Following analysis of forecasted pupil numbers it is currently envisaged that seven bulge classes will be required in September 2019 and a further six bulge classes in 2020. Meetings have been held with local schools to discuss this and written confirmation that pupil numbers can be accommodated has been obtained from those schools that can accommodate additional places.
- 4.7 It is anticipated that in most cases the bulge classes required can be accommodated within each schools' existing accommodation. It should be noted that some of the Schools may need extra space towards the end of the bulge years around 2025 but this has yet to be fully investigated.
- 4.8 Dialogue with Chiltern Edge, which is situated out of the Borough in Sonning Common Oxfordshire, has been positive. This follows the campaign to overturn the County Council's intention to close the school. The school will critically provide two additional forms of entry from 2019. The school forms part of the Maiden Erleigh Trust. It is important to note that dialogue with schools is on-going and the final location of the bulge classes required to meet needs may change.
- 4.9 By far the most economic means of providing additional secondary school places on the scale involved here is to develop a single new school. Expanding existing schools was an option explored and discounted as in each case it would be necessary to provide new classrooms but also expand, where physically possible, other essential

elements of an individual school's infrastructure. Multiply this by up to seven schools and the costs are excessive when compared to a new school.

New Secondary school

- 4.10 In addition to the additional forms of entry provided at existing schools, the scale of the need requires the development of a new secondary school to serve Borough residents.
- 4.11 Given the needs set out above the Council will wish to procure a new build 900-place secondary school (6 form entry) with a separate sports hall, car parking, external social areas and playing fields which is to be operational by September 2021. Building Bulletin 103 (BB103) recommends a minimum building area gross internal floor area (GIFA) of 6,720m² for a new build secondary school of this size and a three storey main school block is envisaged. The intention is to meet Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Design standards, supplemented with RBC planning policy requirements and costs are to be as the ESFA model with abnormal site costs identified.
- 4.12 BB103 sets out area guidelines for mainstream schools and while non-statutory the document aims to assist those involved in the designing and creation of a new school. The guidelines will not necessarily have to be met and should always be applied flexibly in light of particular circumstances.

6th Form needs

- 4.13 The information and data available confirm that there is no need for additional sixth form places to be provided in the proposed school. There are currently sufficient 6th form places to meet the needs of the student population with the current 6th form and 16-19 year old provision in local schools and at Reading College. However, the site being proposed is of the size that would allow for expansion into a 6th form at some point in the future should this be required.
- 4.14 Inclusion of a 6th form can sometimes provide an added attraction to parents and also prospective teachers who enjoy teaching key stage 5 pupils in addition to key stage 4. However, operating 6th forms can be expensive and extremely costly if the provision operates below student capacity. By leaving sufficient space for this decision to be made in the future allows the flexibility should the situation and need change at some point in the future, for example if schools with current 6th Form provision reduce their capacity or close their 6th forms altogether.

year	PAN	total capacity	total numbers	VI form capacity	year 12	year 13	VI form total	surplus / deficit
19-20	1,506	9,109	7,077	1,847	787	629	1,416	-154
20-21	1,506	9,109	7,219	1,819	786	633	1,419	-124
21-22	1,506	9,109	7,222	1,821	816	636	1,452	-93
22-23	1,506	9,109	7,221	1,821	816	636	1,452	-92
23-24	1,506	9,109	7,298	1,821	815	636	1,451	-93
24-25	1,506	9,109	7,185	1,850	869	636	1,505	-68
25-26	1,506	9,109	7,053	1,879	869	668	1,537	-65
26-27	1,506	9,109	7,053	1,879	816	668	1,484	-118

- 4.15 The data on 6th form capacity covers schools only. Reading College provides 16-19 provision and currently 27% of Reading's 16 yr olds progress into either Reading College or other further education institutions or 6th Form Colleges outside of borough. Where the above data shows a surplus in current provision within our school 6th Forms, considering the proportion of 16-18 year olds who also attend further education, the case for building further capacity at 6th Form is currently unwarranted.

Special Educational Needs and Disability:

- 4.16 The Council has a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy which is currently aiming to improve the provision of specialist places to meet the increasing needs of pupils with SEND in the borough rather than to educate them out of borough. The SEND strategy covers 4 separate strands; Strands 1 and 3 are pertinent to this report. Strand 1 is focusing on ensuring better collection of data to plan future specialist needs to meet changing demand within the borough. Strand 3 focuses on improving specialist provision within the borough as a means of reducing the need for high cost out of borough and independent school placements. Both Strands are progressing well. Current inclusion and learning support units in mainstream schools are being reviewed to ensure that they are providing appropriate provision for current and future specialist needs. The Avenue Special School is expanding the number of places. Blessed Hugh Farringdon is increasing its specialist provision for Autistic Spectrum Condition and the future of Phoenix Special School is being reviewed given increasing demands. The new secondary school will be part of the strategy by ensuring that SEND pupils identified and supported in mainstream through the school's education strategy is secure. It is not, at this stage, considered to be the most appropriate route to include a specialist SEND unit at the new secondary school.

Process to deliver a new Free School

- 4.17 The Wave 13 Free School process is determined by the DfE and involves applications being made by schools, Trusts or independent bodies to bid for funding to open a new school. The process involves making a strong case for the need for a new school, and also the provision of a suitable proof of concept for the school along with proven capacity to deliver and successfully operate the school once opened.
- 4.18 The DfE already have data indicating their priority areas to support the opening of a new school, and have funding to support the building of a number of new Free Schools across the country. The funding available is perceived to be sufficient to fund

approximately 30 new schools nationally. Bids and proposals are made from operators, academies or Trusts.

- 4.19 However, it is essential that any bid has been developed in close liaison with the local authorities within which the schools will be sited. The DfE need to know that any commitment to fund a new Free School will meet local demand, fill to capacity, and therefore be commercially and educationally viable. It is essential that any proposal is able to demonstrate mitigation of any risks that may conspire to challenge the building and opening of any new school. These would typically involve the availability of appropriate land that is not bound by complex planning and development issues, a clear rationale for the need to meet increasing school rolls, thereby not leading to other local schools becoming financially at risk, and also that consideration has been given to interim and temporary arrangements to manage students in case the permanent building is delayed.
- 4.20 The local authority has a strong case for the need for additional school places. It will be able to provide appropriate information to bidders so that the school concept, data and site is understood and persuasive. Several bidders can put forward proposals and the local authority can provide endorsement of a particular Trust or Academy operator as their 'preferred partner.' Although this does not guarantee that the preferred partner will be successful in securing the funding, this endorsement will be important.
- 4.21 The Wave 13 Free Schools programme was released on 11 May 2018. Interest in the programme must be registered between 18 June and 6 September 2018. A full application must be submitted by midday on Monday 17 September 2018. The Government is looking to approve approximately 35 new mainstream primary and secondary and 'all through' 16-19 free schools in total.
- 4.22 The Government will be looking for applications which are in areas of demonstrable basic need and Reading is one of the targeted districts identified by the department. The rationale for Reading's inclusion includes the increasing demand for secondary school places in the borough over the next 5 years. Consideration has also been given to Reading's position on the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission's Social Mobility Index (2016) which ranks Reading as 225 out of 324 local authorities, and 290 out of 324 with respect to schools. This looks at the percentage of children eligible for a free school meal attaining at least a level 4 in reading, writing and maths at the end of key stage 2 and 5 good GCSEs at the end of key stage 4. It also considers the percentage of children eligible for a free school meal attending secondary schools graded good or outstanding by Ofsted. In both these areas, Reading is in the bottom quartile of all local authorities in England.
- 4.23 The process of apply to open a free school involves operators or Multi Academy Trusts registering an interest from 18 June 2018 and then working with the respective local authorities to determine the land availability, the data and demand, and to submit a proposal. Each proposal is evaluated against key criteria indicated below:
- Evidence of need for a school and how this Free School will fill a shortfall of secondary school places in the borough;
 - Evidence of how the proposal targets the pockets of low standards in the borough;
 - The quality of the vision and how this really meets the needs of pupils in the area, particularly the disadvantaged and how the proposal will help them close the attainment gap;
 - Evidence of support for the proposal from parents and the local community;

- The strength of the education plan for the school opening and continued development, including the curriculum plan, staffing, and integration and community cohesion;
- Evidence of the capacity and capability of the Trust to deliver a successful school;
- Financial viability;
- Appropriateness and availability of a proposed site; and
- Suitability and due diligence of the applicants;

4.24 Once proposals have been submitted in early September, they will be scrutinised by a panel in the DfE / ESFA, and interviews undertaken with shortlisted bidders. It is likely that an outcome will be known by the beginning of 2019. The funding secured through the project will essentially cover the capital build. Although the cost of the land would not normally be included, there have been cases where the cost of purchasing land to build a school has also been included, particularly where there are significant additional costs associated in securing the land. The project and construction can be led, either directly by the DfE and its commissioned capital building contractor, or by external or local authority services. This will need negotiation once the bid has been successful.

4.25 The new school will be a Free School. Free schools are funded by the government but are not run by the local council. They have more control over how they do things.

4.26 They are ‘all-ability’ schools, so cannot use academic selection processes like a grammar school. Free schools can:

- set their own pay and conditions for staff
- change the length of school terms and the school day

4.27 Free Schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum.

The process of selecting a partner to support in the process

4.28 Initial briefings have been provided to local Trust sponsors who would be interested in being involved in the development of a new Free School. Three Trusts have indicated initial interest directly with the local authority and are exploring the project further.

4.29 In identifying a preferred partner, the local authority is completing a due diligence exercise on potential Trust operators in order to provide recommendations for the Council to decide which organisation to support as its preferred partner. The due diligence process is to cover the following key areas:

- Reputation and Quality
- Leadership and Capacity
- Financial Security
- Quality of Provision and of Teaching and Learning
- School to School Support
- Partnership working

4.30 Officers are progressing the publication of a due diligence for the new school in consultation with the lead Councillor for Education and delegated approval is set out in the above recommendation. Notwithstanding the intention is to secure member engagement and oversight on the due diligence proposals via a future Adults Social Care, Children’s Services and Education Committee paper.

4.31 Work is currently taking place with those schools and Trusts that have indicated an interest in working with the local authority on this project. The council will work closely with the preferred partner/s to support the bid process and to ensure that the bid closely aligns to the Council’s needs.

Site options

4.32 Finding a suitable site which can be delivered in time for September 2021 is a challenging prospect not least in a tight and developed environment such as Reading. Strategically it is desirable to locate new provision where needs arise with growth planned in the central area of the town. Whilst this is the case the location of any new school may impact and extend the distance travelled for pupils to school.

4.33 A site selection study has been carried out analysing the suitability of a number of sites in Reading.

4.34 The full study is appended to the Part 2 report accompanying this report. In summary through a site selection process, six sites were analysed in detail against set criteria:

- Site provides a opportunity for civic presence and sense of place;
- Meets recommended site area set out in (set out in BB103)
- Availability of access and public transport links
- Ease if vehicular access
- Ease of access for pedestrian / cycle
- Absence of acoustic (or olfactory) constraints
- Minimises loss of public amenity
- Building massing contributes to the adjacent streetscape/ landscape
- Absence of planning obstacles (Draft Local Plan)
- Offers access to a variety of outdoor spaces
- Ease of access to sports pitches
- Ability to deliver unencumbered site for lowest legal cost and timescale
- Absence of 3rd party issues / users
- Potential for expansion
- Absence of Floor Risk (EA Zones 2 and 3).

4.35 By scoring each site against the above criteria an overall score was concluded:

Site (numbered)	Total Score
1	7
2	9.5
3	9
4 (Richfield Avenue)	11
5	6.5
6	10

Richfield Avenue

4.36 Following the completion of the site selection process, Richfield Avenue, a site in north central Reading with views towards the adjacent Thameside Promenade and the River Thames is considered to be the preferred site for a new secondary school. A site location plan is attached as Appendix A. The site comprises a former golf driving range and open land bordering Richfield Avenue (the ‘southern triangle’) with a combined site area of approximately 55,264m² (thus meeting the BB103 minimum site

area recommendation for a school of this size of 53,350m² min). Rivermead Leisure Centre is situated immediately east of the site.

- 4.37 The River Thames is located to the north and a small drainage ditch borders the site before crossing the site. The southern triangular area of the site fronting Richfield Avenue is within Flood Zone 2 (higher risk) although the actual driving range site is within Flood Zone 3. The site is a former landfill site and the potential for poor quality ground conditions, settlement and contamination issues are being investigated. Access to the site by users is adequately served by a range of sustainable transport modes including public transport (buses), footpaths and cycleways.
- 4.38 The leisure procurement process has commenced in order to find a partner to manage the Council's leisure estate, including the development of a new competition standard swimming pool with diving provision at the Rivermead site. It is not envisaged that the end use of the school at this location will cause a conflict with the adjacent leisure centre. In fact the two uses may be compatible in terms of the option to provide formal leisure provision to the school including a swimming pool. However there are some risks related to the use and especially the timing and impact of the construction programme for the school that will coincide with either a major redevelopment of the existing leisure centre or a new-build leisure facility on adjacent land. Logistically this will need careful management and will need to avoid imposing additional costs on the leisure facility construction. At this stage it is considered that this is manageable via separate site access requirements.
- 4.39 Reading Festival is major annual music festival attended by up to 100,000 people held on land immediately west of the site during the August bank holiday weekend. Festival Republic, organisers of the festival, make ancillary use of all parts of the site during the festival period and consultation with them on the implications of site development have commenced. The Cow Lane entrance is the main access for supplies and construction materials for the festival site, and is the only vehicular access point capable of accommodating the high vehicles required. The current access through the proposed school site to the Festival site is used as a direct exit for up to 20,000 day visitors, which operates in conjunction with road closures and police operations. The operation of the festival, albeit taking into account that the setting up of the festival would mainly take place in the summer holidays, needs careful consideration as detailed design options are developed. Early engagement with Festival Republic will be vital to ensure opportunities to maximise the use of the site are taken fully.
- 4.40 The site is located within an area designated as Local Green Space in the draft Local Plan. Under the Plan areas designated in this way are to be protected from development and dialogue with the planning authority will be required. The draft Local Plan also identifies this area as part of a major landscape feature, where development should not detract from the character or appearance of the Thames valley. Also under the Local Plan part of the southern triangle of land south of the watercourse was considered as potential traveller transit accommodation area. A report on this matter is on the same agenda as this report. The attached Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix B) assesses the implications of the recommendations set out in this report. Essentially the use of the land for this purpose is one of a number of factors which would prohibit the use of the land for a traveller transit site. The site would also need to be appropriated for an educational use from its current leisure use.
- 4.41 The Caversham Bridge Garden Centre is located on the south east corner of the site. Whilst customer access is from the east via the linear car park south of the leisure

centre, the garden centre has a right of way for vehicular deliveries from the west, across the southern triangle of land.

- 4.42 All mains services are on or near to the site. Drainage solutions are being reviewed.
- 4.43 The Committee are asked to endorse the site as the Council's preferred location for a new secondary school noting the information and impacts set out in the Equalities Impact Assessment. A number of property and legal matters are set out in the accompanying Part 2 report attached to this agenda. The formal endorsement of a preferred site for the provision of a new secondary school will support the Wave 13 bid process.

Preferred site design options

- 4.44 A number of sketch development options have been prepared and are included within a feasibility study report by Hampshire County Council Property Services. Extracts of the study are appended (Appendix C) to this report. The full study is appended to the Part 2 report. In each case a three storey main school building with separate sports hall have been considered. Options have looked at potential arrangements of both traditional grass sports pitch provision and also synthetic turf pitches. In each case, consideration has also been given to the possible location of a future expansion block and this is considered achievable, subject to further study. A total of four options have been considered with various configurations of buildings and external spaces. Following engagement with festival operators/ review of current site configuration - water course/ flood plain/ legal arrangements the preferred proposal to form a forecourt area to the road including parking and with the buildings located on the driving range site.
- 4.45 The emerging design options begin to take into account the use of the land at Cow Lane by Festival Republic for the Reading Festival with potential parking areas to serve the school and the Festival during the summer holiday. Different to the proposed use of the land at Cow Lane for a gypsy and traveller site, the school and festival use of the land to the south appear compatible. Nonetheless securing a functional design remains a risk for the project.
- 4.46 The full traffic, highways and other environmental implications would need to be considered as part of a full planning appraisal and assessment. The school would be required to operate a travel plan to reduce car borne commutes and to encourage walking, cycling and public transport use.
- 4.47 Careful design and layout options will be required to manage flood risk risks on the site and a planning application will need to be accompanied by information demonstrating compliance with a sequential approach to site selection and flood risk assessment work.
- 4.48 The landscape and visual amenity matters need to be carefully assessed as the design options are developed. The impact on the Thames Valley major landscape feature will need to be considered as part of any planning application. The tallest building on the site will be no more than three storeys and defined landscape planting around the site will reduce it and other structures' impact from the Thames Valley.

Next stages and timeline

- 4.49 The next steps following the formal ratification of the Richfield Avenue school site includes confirmation of the due diligence process and the appointment of the free school sponsor as well as sign off a feasibility study and submission to ESFA as part of the funding application.

4.50 A draft development programme showing how the school would be operational by September 2021 has been prepared with actions required by Reading Borough Council and the free school governance group which indicates:

- ESFA feasibility study completed (August 2018)
- Heads of terms agreed (October 2018)
- Free School sponsor appointed (October 2018)
- ESFA contractors bidders day (October / November 2018)
- Appoint Contractor (January 2019)
- Planning application (April 2019)
- Contractor Award (October 2019)
- Construction start on site (November 2019)
- School Opens (September 2021)

4.51 A Project delivery programme is to be developed in detail but will need to include a strategy for contingency should a new school not be delivered by September 2021. Consideration will need to be given for either a phased occupation of the school as in 2021 there will be intake from Year 7 only, or the provision of temporary accommodation, preferably on site. The Council, along with the ESFA will prefer to avoid temporary accommodation where possible but a funding request may be required based on pupil demand, programme and timing of ESFA approval/ funding.

Options Considered

4.52 The pupil placement needs set out in this report are unequivocal in relation to the need for new secondary school places from 2019. Given the Council's statutory responsibility to provide school places there are in effect no alternative options open to the Council other than to deliver new secondary school places from 2019.

4.53 An assessment of current secondary school accommodation was undertaken in order to ensure existing capacity is utilised fully. Provision within existing schools and out of Borough placements are being maximised to meet needs in 2019 and 2020. Expanding existing schools was an option explored and discounted as in each case it would be necessary to provide additional infrastructure. It is therefore recommended that new secondary school is provided to meet needs from September 2021.

4.54 Options are relevant in relation to a preferred site for a new Secondary School. Richfield Avenue is not free from legal, property and planning constraints but the same applies to all site options assessed as part of the site appraisal exercise (Appended to the Part 2 report). It is important that the site put forward as part of the Wave 13 programme is as deliverable and achievable as possible in order to put the best case to the ESFA / DfE.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The proposal to deliver additional schools places including a new 6 form entry secondary school primarily contributes to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan:

- Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living;
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Local schools have been made aware of the proposals and comments from head teachers will be sought through relevant forums. Parents and other interested parties can also make comments on the proposals and consultations on the layout of the proposed schools will be undertaken before seeking formal planning approval.
- 6.2 Discussions with key stakeholders have commenced including Festival Republic, Caversham Bridge Garden Centre and prospective bidders involved in the leisure procurement process. Further discussions will take place with key stakeholders to ensure that the site is deliverable and that opportunities to maximise the use of the land are taken as the design for the school is developed. Whilst the land identified for the school is owned by the Council it has a number of third party rights crossing it. As the land is public open space advertisement of the proposed appropriation and subsequent disposal will need to be advertised and the Council will need to consider any responses before a decision is taken. This report seeks authority to delegate that process to the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 6.3 As the due diligence process is completed to agree a preferred partner for the secondary school it is likely that the Leisure Procurement Exercise will also be reaching its conclusion. The timing of these projects provides a unique opportunity to assess the scope for the possibility of the cross use of facilities, to review development programmes and to ensure a joined up approach to how the sites are developed.
- 6.4 It is best practice to consult neighbours and stake holders prior to the formal submission of a planning application in order to ensure the final design is the best fit. A pre application consultation will be undertaken. The formal planning application process will also seek comments from neighbours and statutory and non-statutory consultees.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2 It is considered that that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is relevant to the decision to use the site for educational purposes which would mean the site is no longer available for recreational purposes and in part means that land to the south of the site cannot be used as a traveller transit site. An EIA is attached as Appendix B to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Detailed legal matters are set out in the Part 2 report which accompanies this report.

9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Council approved Capital Programme (February 2018) has set aside an amount to support the delivery of bulge classes. As set out in this report, the majority of bulge

classes would be provided in existing schools which have the necessary capacity to accommodate an additional form(s) of entry. Discussions with local schools continue and some capital expenditure may be required depending on which schools are used to accommodate additional places.

- 9.2 The cost of a new 6th form entry school could be in the order of £19m+. The statutory responsibility of providing school places rests with the Council. The DfE provides Basic Need capital funding to support Councils in achieving this responsibility and the DfE can also provide places through the Free School programme which they operate.
- 9.3 The value of the land, which would not normally be included in any ESFA grant award, is reported in the Part 2 report. It is acknowledged that there have been cases where the cost of purchasing land to build a school has also been included, particularly where there are significant additional costs associated in securing the land. Options to recover the land value will be explored as part of the Wave 13 process and subsequent dialogue with the ESFA.
- 9.4 In developing the site appraisal information potential abortive project management costs have been occurred of approximately £40k. An estimated cost of £200k based on supporting bid, feasibility and allowance for surveys are likely to be incurred, which may not be recoverable. These funds will be funded by the Capital Programme but should the process fail to progress, any abortive costs may have to be found from revenue budgets.

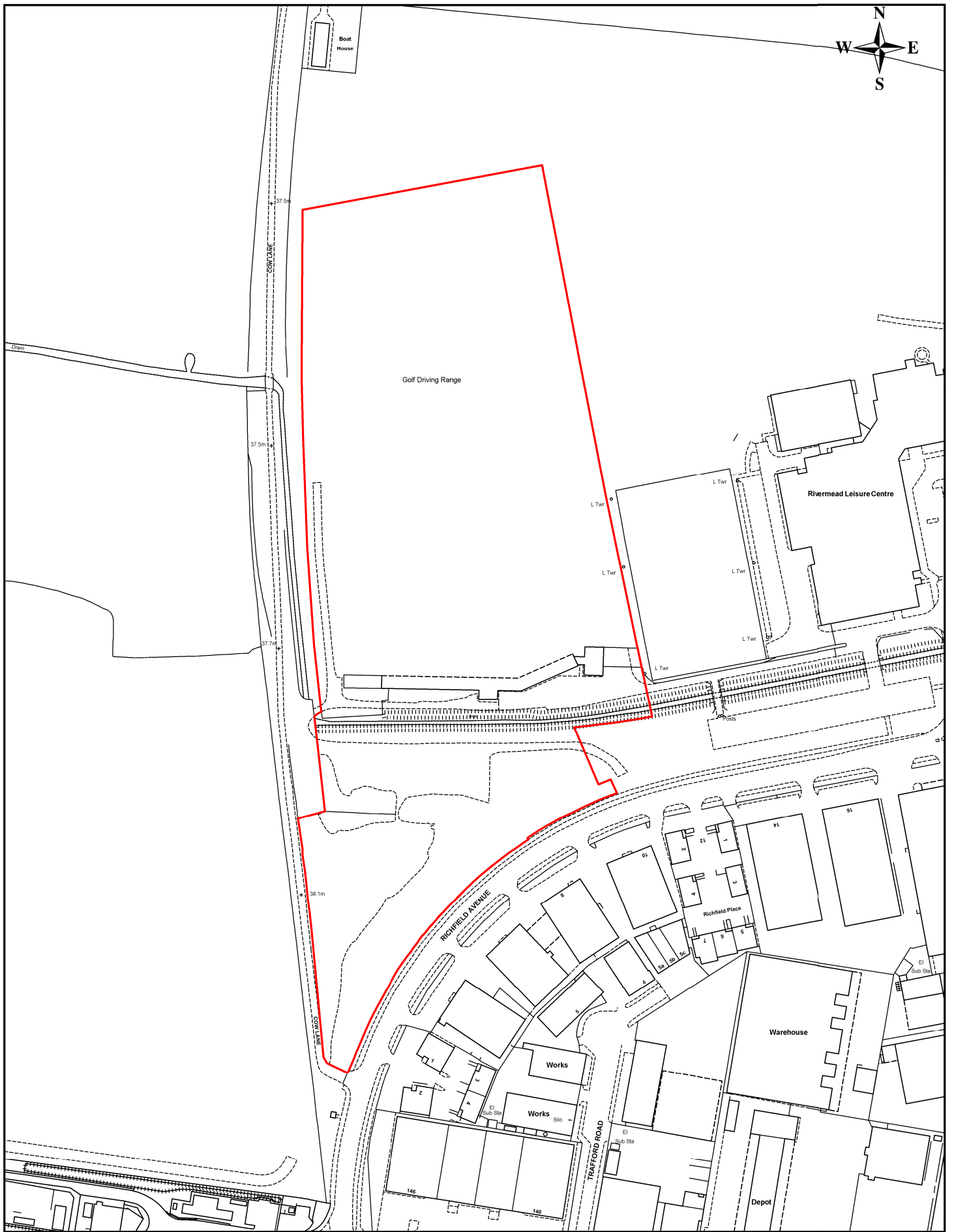
Capital Implications (bulge classes)

Capital Programme reference from budget book: page line	2018/19 £,000
Proposed Capital Expenditure	500
Grant / Section 106 (specify)	500
Total Funding	500

Capital Programme reference from budget book: page line	2018/19 £,000
Project Management	240
Borrowing	240*
Total Funding	240

* Abortive costs cannot be capitalised and will have a revenue impact.

- 9.5 The Council will need to consider the most appropriate option to deliver the new school should it receive Free School Wave 13 funding. Options relate to the Council building out the school through 'self delivery' where the Council effectively project manages the development or the ESFA delivering the full project.
- 9.6 In relation to either option the ESFA will wish to see the school delivered via the ESFA Construction Framework. The process and time lines will be set by the ESFA and the project would be design and build using an ESFA Design & Build Contract. The Brief for the project and costs will be defined by the ESFA - compliance with ESFA specification and area schedules.
- 9.7 Either option presents opportunities and an assessment of the best way forward will need to be made in due course.



Title: Richfield Avenue

File:
Produced by Valuation Section

Date: 27/04/2018 Scale at A4: 1:2500
Ref: 54008\S:\JeanJea\Mapinfo2\736a1.wor





Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed

The selection of the land at Richfield Avenue as the preferred site for a new secondary school. The decision has an impact on other alternative uses of the land including the use of the land for recreational purposes and a traveller transit site.

Directorate:

Children, Education & Early Help Services / Environment and Neighbourhood Services

Service: Education / Planning Development and Regulatory Services

Name: Giorgio Framaliccio

Job Title: Head of Planning Development and Regulatory Services

Date of assessment: May 2018

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

Given local needs for additional secondary school places the report seeks to reach a decision on a preferred site for a new secondary school site in order to support a robust submission for funding as part of the Government's Wave 13 Free School funding process.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

School age children. Without further secondary school place provision the Borough will have a short fall in places. A successful Wave 13 award will secure funding for a new secondary school.

What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?

Increase the number of secondary school places in the Borough to meet needs. The site is currently used for leisure purposes. The use of the land for education is one of a number of factors which would prohibit the use of the land for a traveller transit site.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

School age children, parents, teachers, ESFA, DfE. Those using the site for recreational purposes. Gypsy and traveller community.

Assess whether an EqIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.)

Yes / ~~No~~ (delete as appropriate)

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, and feedback.

Yes / ~~No~~ (delete as appropriate)

If the answer is Yes to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because: n /a

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- Consultation
- Collection and Assessment of Data
- Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive

Consultation

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted

<p><i>School age children, parents, teachers, ESFA, DfE.</i> <i>Recreational uses of the land.</i></p>	<p>Local schools have been made aware of the proposals and comments from head teachers will be sought through relevant forums. Parents and other interested parties can also make comments on the proposals and consultations on the layout of the proposed schools will be undertaken before seeking formal planning approval. Consultation will be undertaken on the appropriation of the land for educational purposes.</p>	<p>June and on going</p>
<p>Gypsy and traveller communities, police, Council members and officers, health and education professionals</p>	<p>Stakeholder involvement, including interviews with travellers, was carried out as part of preparing the GTAA and led to the conclusions set out in the Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Provision (11 June Policy Committee report). The Gypsy and Traveller Consultation Document was also subject to consultation during September and October 2017.</p>	<p>Late 2016-early 2017 September/October 2017</p>

Collect and Assess your Data

Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups

The use of the land for this purpose is one of a number of factors which would prohibit the use of the land for a traveller transit site.

Romany gypsies and Irish travellers are considered to be ethnic groups under the Equalities Act. The traveller community housed in bricks and mortar in Reading is generally of Irish traveller origin, but unauthorised encampments involve a range of groups. Considering provision to meet the identified needs therefore has a potential impact on racial groups.

The effect of the recommended action would be that the Council would not be able to provide for the identified transit accommodation needs for gypsies and travellers. This would therefore be likely to have a continuing negative impact on ethnic groups.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)

No impact.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability

The proposal set out in this report seeks to secure a preferred site for additional school places. The new secondary school will be part of the strategy by ensuring that SEND pupils identified and supported in mainstream through the school's education strategy is secure.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)

No impact.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Age

No impact

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief?

No impact.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Make a Decision

Tick which applies (Please delete relevant ticks)

1. ~~No negative impact identified~~
2. Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason

Reason

The negative impact relates to the proposal to not provide for transit provision for gypsies and travellers and the recreational use of the land ceasing. While the decision to make the site at Richfield Avenue the preferred site for a secondary school is not the only reason why the site cannot be used for a traveller transit site it is a key factor. The recommendations set out in the report are informed by the need for additional secondary school places and follows a Borough wide appraisal of potential sites. This site was considered the most deliverable given relevant constraints and opportunities when compared to other options. The Council continues to undertake work to identify a site to meet traveller transit needs in Reading.

The school will have a number of sporting facilities on the site to meet pupil needs. It may be possible that the facilities can be made available to the wider community out of school hours. The leisure procurement process has commenced in order to find a partner to manage the Council's leisure estate, including the development of a new competition standard swimming pool with diving provision at the Rivermead site. There is an option to provide formal leisure provision to the school including a swimming pool. Equally the use of the facilities by the school may increase the leisure offer to the public outside of the school's use.

3. ~~Negative impact identified or uncertain~~

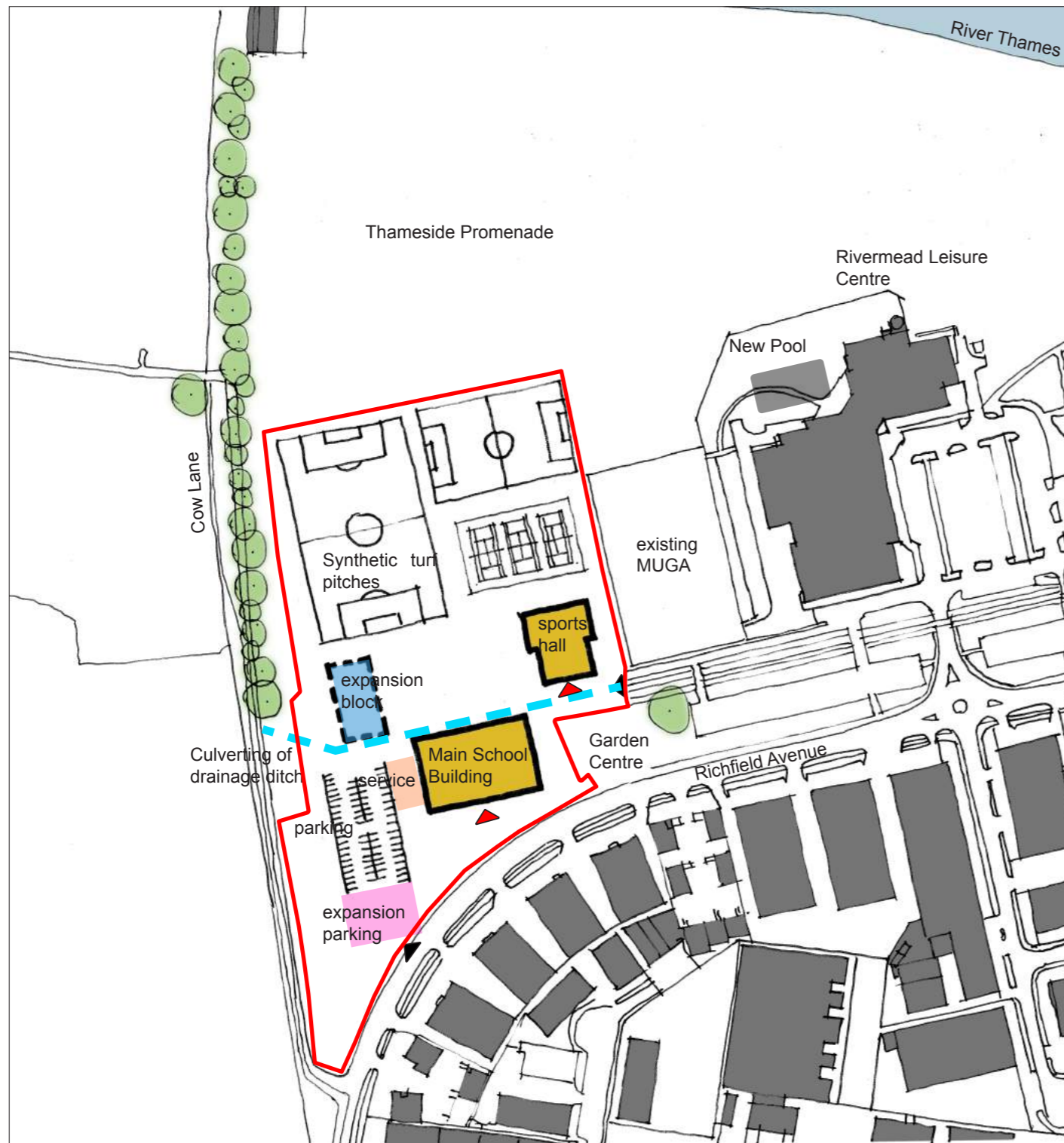
How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?

As set out within the Gypsy and Traveller Provision report (11 June Policy Committee report) the Council will continue to assess sites to meet transit traveller needs. Through the Leisure Procurement process and the Wave 13 process (and beyond) the Council will explore opportunities with shortlisted parties to maximise joint use of facilities and wider community use.

Signed (completing officer) Giorgio Framallicco Date May 2018

Signed (Lead Officer) Giorgio Framallicco Date May 2018

Option II



Option Plan



Aerial view from south east



Aerial view from north west



Aerial view from west

Features

- Main building addresses Richfield Avenue
- 6FE school building with separate 4-court Sports Hall & changing
- Parking provision accessed via Richfield Avenue
- Explore potential for shared use of Rivermead Leisure Centre facilities
- Provision of synthetic turf pitches substantially reduces site area (approx 33,000 m²) and thus requirement of local green space

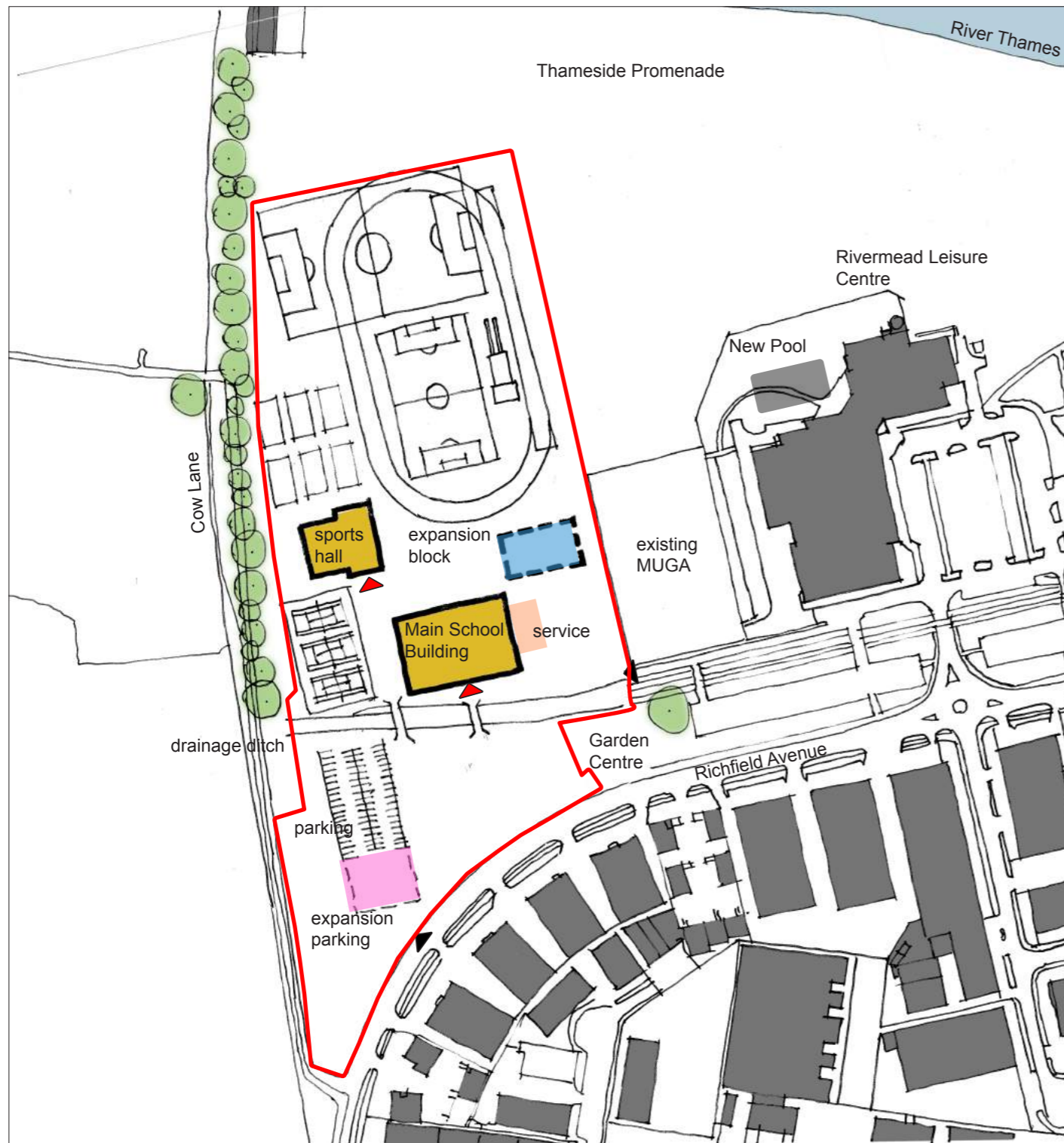
Benefits

- School building prominent to Richfield Avenue creating civic presence
- Scale of adjacent Rivermead Leisure Centre supports three storey school building
- Future expansion of school building and car parking considered achievable
- Reduced development of local green space
- Reduced site extent northwards allows camping areas during Reading Festival period (August bank holiday weekend) Note vehicular access required

Challenges

- Location of school buildings restrict use of 'southern triangle' of site during Reading Festival period (August bank holiday weekend)
- Culverting of drainage ditch which crosses site east to west
- Relatively constricted school site
- Additional capital cost of synthetic turf pitch provision
- Impact to Garden Centre access

Option III



Option Plan



Aerial view from south east



Aerial view from north west



Aerial view from west

Features

- 6FE school building with separate 4-court Sports Hall & changing
- Parking provision accessed via Richfield Avenue
- All buildings sited on former driving range
- Pedestrian bridges span retained drainage ditch crosses site east to west (via partial culverting)
- Explore potential for shared use of Rivermead Leisure Centre facilities
- Service access (eg to school kitchens) potentially via Leisure centre access road

Benefits

- Scale of adjacent Rivermead Leisure Centre supports scale of three storey school building
- Future expansion of school building and car parking considered achievable
- Location of school buildings allows use of 'southern triangle' and possibly sports pitches during Reading Festival period (August bank holiday weekend)
- Potential to retain Garden Centre access

Challenges

- School building not as prominent from Richfield Avenue

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF POLICY COMMITTEE 11 JUNE 2018

(for full Minutes of all items see

<http://committee.reading.gov.uk/TROVEPROGS/TROVEIIS.DLL?/IS=465941335/LI=Committee+Minutes+Library/ID=40/OS=158/DI=6029/DS=6028/LO=0/RW=2560/RH=1080/CD=32/VD=committee/WV=7/ST=ac/AC=AP/Fl=705/HU=EmptyURL>)

5. SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES - LEGAL AND PROPERTY MATTERS

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out the confidential legal and property matters related to the report on 'Secondary School Places'.

Attached to the report at Appendix A was the the full 'Secondary Site Selection Study', setting out an assessment of six potential sites for a new secondary school, and at Appendix B the 'Secondary School Feasibility Study' detailing how the site might be developed at the preferred site.

The report noted that there were a number of legal and property matters in relation to the delivery of a new secondary school at the Richfield Avenue site which represented risks to the overall delivery of the project. There were also a number of uncertainties related to the costs of upgrading current open space facilities to compensate for the loss of open space, and the potential cost of compensating existing users with rights. A high level risk register was attached to the report at Appendix C.

The report explained that the proposed site would need to be appropriated from Leisure to Education use, and a variation or alteration to a lease agreement completed.

Resolved -

- (1) That the conclusions set out in the detailed Secondary Site Selection Study (Appendix A) be agreed and that the Secondary School Feasibility Study (Appendix B) be noted along with the risk register (Appendix C);
- (2) That the appropriation of the site from Leisure to Education use be undertaken at the appropriate time, in accordance with S122 of The Local Government Act 1972, having first advertised the proposed appropriation with it being open space, and that any objections received be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration;
- (3) That in parallel with the appropriation process the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillor for Education, be authorised to take all reasonable steps to seek to vary or alter by agreement the lease to the Caversham Bridge Garden Centre dated 10 September 2015;

(4) That, if the EFSA opted to deliver the full project itself as set out in paragraphs 4.27 - 4.29 then the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillor for Education, be authorised to dispose of the site in accordance with S123 of the Local Government Act 1972 having first advertised the proposed disposal with it being open space, and that any objections received be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

(Exempt information as defined in paragraph 3).