

**Development Control Committee**  
Meeting to be held on 8 September 2021

Electoral Division affected: Moss Side and Farington
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**South Ribble Borough: application number LCC/2021/0029 Creation of a new car park with 2.4m high security fencing and gates, Lever House County Primary School, Bristol Avenue, Farington**

Contact for further information:  
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**Executive Summary**

Application – Creation of a new car park with security fencing and gates, Lever House County Primary School, Bristol Avenue, Farington.

**Recommendation – Summary**

That subject to the Secretary of State not calling in the application for his own determination, planning permission be **granted** subject to conditions controlling time limits, working programme, building materials and layout of car park.

**Applicant's Proposal**

Planning permission is sought for the creation of a new car park with security fencing and gates located on the school playing field at Lever House Primary School, Bristol Avenue, Farington, Leyland.

The new car park would measure approximately 552sqm and would create 26 car parking spaces one of which will be a disabled bay and would also include a designated area for cycles. The car park would be surfaced in tarmac with concrete edging. Around the perimeter of the car park would be 2.4m high weld mesh security fencing (measuring approximately 70 metres in length) coloured green to match the existing fencing at the school.

**Description and Location of Site**

Lever House County Primary School is located to the west of the M6 motorway, approximately 5km south of the centre of Preston on the eastern fringe of Farington and Leyland. Residential properties are located on St David's Road (to the south the school) which back onto the school grounds, whilst properties on Bristol Avenue border the grounds to the north and west. Access to the school is taken directly from Bristol Avenue to the west. The proposed development would be located on the northern edge of the school playing field adjacent to the main school building and

playground. The nearest residential properties are located approximately 16m away on Bristol Avenue.

## **Background**

The site is an established educational facility.

Planning permission was granted in May 2017 for the siting of a storage container on the playing field (LCC/2017/0032).

Planning permission was granted in January 2017 for the erection of a canopy within the playground (LCC/2016/0086).

Planning permission was granted in May 2015 for a single storey extension to provide two classrooms, staff room, reception office, hall, ancillary space along with new pedestrian main entrance and larger staff/visitor car park and 2.4m high fencing (LCC/2015/0023).

## **Planning Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Paragraphs 8-12, 99 and 130 of the NPPF are relevant with regard to the definition of sustainable development, need for good design and the protection of existing open space and sports provision.

Central Lancashire Core Strategy  
Policy 14 - Education

South Ribble Local Plan  
Policy G7 - Green Infrastructure  
Policy G17 - Design Criteria

## **Consultations**

South Ribble Borough Council: No comments received.

Lancashire County Council (LCC) Highways Development Control: No objection.

Lead Local Flood Authority: No comments received.

Sport England: Object to the proposals as they consider that the proposal conflicts with their Playing Fields policy. Sport England state that where development would result in the loss of grass sports fields, it is essential that there are sufficient benefits from the proposal to the development of sport so as to outweigh the detriment resulting from the loss of the grass field. Sport England consider that the proposal does not meet exemption 3 and 4 of their policy as the development site has the potential to be used as a playing pitch and that the proposed hard play surface would not compensate for the loss of the grass pitch area.

United Utilities: In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the site should be drained on

a separate system with foul water draining to the public sewer and surface water draining in the most sustainable way. United Utilities request a condition relating to a surface water drainage scheme.

Representations – The application has been advertised by press and site notice, and neighbouring residents informed by individual letter. One representation has been received which does not object to the application but raises a number of issues regarding highways and parking impacts at the school. The resident considers that a one way system should apply to the parking area, that the parking area should be extended with angled parking spaces allowing easier manoeuvring and a dedicated pupil drop off and pick up area provided. The resident considers that these measures would improve highway safety and would reduce the impact of school traffic on the character of the area.

### **Advice**

Lever House Primary School is situated in a residential area of Farington and was built some 50 years ago but has been extended and modified since to accommodate rising pupil numbers and new trends in education. The school intake is currently 291 pupils. The school also incorporates a large playing field between the school buildings and the M6 motorway.

The school consider that there is inadequate outdoor play space for key stage one and two children. This is a particular issue in the wintertime when the playing field tends to get waterlogged. Outdoor learning has taken an increased prevalence in the national curriculum.

The existing car park is directly adjacent to the playground and separates the existing playground from the playing fields. To provide a greater area of hard surfaced playground, it is proposed to convert the existing car park to playground which would create a single enlarged play area with a size suitable for the school intake. A new area of replacement car parking would then be constructed on the northern edge of the playing field.

Policy G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted for new development where the proposal does not have detrimental impacts on the existing building, neighbouring buildings or on the street scene. The new car park would be visible from the nearest properties on Bristol Avenue being approximately 15m from the frontage of the houses. However, the existing hedgerow and trees on the southern side of Bristol Avenue would be retained which would provide some screening and would ensure no unacceptable loss of visual amenity.

The main issue relates to the loss of part of the playing field. Paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that existing playing fields should not be built upon unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the land to be surplus to requirements or the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision or the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current use.

Sport England object to the proposal as they do not consider the proposal meets with any of the exceptions to their playing fields policy or with the above paragraph of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Sport England considers that there is no evidence or benefits of the hard play area to sport and recreation that would outweigh the impacts on the existing playing field and that the issues relating to useability of the pitch could be resolved including by improved drainage.

There are Government standards for playground space at primary schools. Although the current total playground area would appear to meet the standards, these are minimum levels of provisions and the school consider that at present there is not enough provision for outdoor all year round play space for Key Stage One and Two children. Even if the pitch were subject to additional drainage measures, it would in all probability be too wet for regular usage during the winter months and an additional area of hard surfaced playground is justified. The school was expanded in 2015 but no further hard surfaced play areas were provided at that stage. The existing car park is located directly adjacent to the existing playground and therefore it is logical to convert the car park to playground to create a single enlarged area of play space. Even if another site was available, creating another play area on a different area of the school would introduce other complications such as increasing staff supervision requirements. It is therefore considered that there is a justified need for the additional outdoor play space by converting the current car park.

The new playground provision would not be marked out as any formal sports provision and therefore would not provide a direct replacement for the loss of playing field space. It is therefore acknowledged that the proposal is contrary to paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

However, the car park would be located on the northern edge of the existing playing field and it is considered that the remaining area of playing field would still be large enough to accommodate a junior sized football pitch (measuring approximately 60 metres by 35 metres). Due to the shape of the playing field, it does not appear that the proposed car park would significantly reduce the useable space in any event.

There is no other location within the school that could be used for replacement car parking that would not affect other areas of the playing field. Other options have been considered including not replacing the car parking provision completely, but this was considered unfeasible as it would create increased pressure on the on-street parking in the area which is an issue that has been raised by a local resident.

The conflict with the playing fields policy impacts must be balanced against the benefits of providing the additional playground space and the need to provide some off-street car parking in order to avoid highway safety and amenity impacts for local residents. It is also important to consider that the remaining area of playing field could still be effectively used. On balance it is therefore considered that the harm to the playing fields policy is outweighed by other factors. However, in view of the objection from Sport England it will be necessary to refer the application to the Secretary of State before granting planning permission.

The playing fields are allocated as Green Infrastructure in Policy G7 of the South Ribble Local Plan. The policy states that development which would involve the loss

of Green Infrastructure will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the retention of the site is not required to satisfy a recreational need in the local area and the development would not detrimentally affect the amenity value and the nature conservation value of the site. The footprint of the proposed car park is 552sqm, representing a small percentage of the school playing field and is needed to facilitate the creation of additional hard play area for use of outdoor activities at the school. Nearly the whole of the school site is designated as green infrastructure under this policy and therefore it would be very difficult to develop a replacement car park without affecting land subject to this policy

One letter has been received from a local resident raising a number of issues about highway impacts and car parking. The proposal is not intended to increase car parking at the school and is solely for the purpose of replacing the existing parking provision. Many of the issues raised by the resident are beyond the scope of this planning application. A designated pick up and drop off area within the car park area would put the pupils in conflict with moving cars and would present safeguarding issues whereas at present parents collect the children from the playground in a supervised environment. Lancashire County Council (LCC) Highways has no objection to the layout, access or egress of the car park as proposed. While the issues raised by the resident are noted, they are not matters that can be addressed through this application.

The proposed car park would be surfaced in permeable tarmac to allow water to soak back into the surrounding land and there would be no drainage into the existing sewer. The existing trees and shrubs on the northern boundary of the proposed site are to be retained.

In conclusion the proposed car park is required to enable the creation of a hard play area for Key Stage One and Two pupils. Although the school has an adequate car park, the proposal would allow the school greater outdoor play and educational opportunities. The development would have minimal visual amenity impact and there is sufficient distance from the site to the nearest properties on Bristol Avenue to result in negligible effects on residential amenity. The conflict with the policies protecting playing fields is considered to be outweighed by other factors. Overall the development complies with the policies of the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF), South Ribble Local Plan and the Central Lancashire Core Strategy

In view of the scale, location and design of the proposal it is considered that no Convention Rights set out in the Human Rights Act 1998 would be affected.

## Recommendation

That subject to the Secretary of State not calling in the application for his own determination, planning permission be **Granted** subject to the following conditions:

## Time Limits

1. The development shall commence not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.

*Reason: Imposed pursuant to Section 91 (1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.*

## Working Programme

2. The development shall be carried out, in accordance with the following documents:

- a) The Planning Application and supporting statement received by the County Planning Authority on 6 July 2021.

- b) Submitted Plans and documents:

Plan 11976/RW/1 Rev B Location Plan

Plan 11976/RW/2 Proposed Layout of the Car Park

Plan 11976/RW3 Existing Layout

*Reason: To minimise the impact of the development on the amenities of the area and to conform with Policies G7 and G17 South Ribble Borough Local Plan.*

3. The fencing and gates shall be erected according to the design shown on drawing 11976/RW/2 - Proposed Layout for New Car Park. The fencing shall be coloured green (RAL colour code 6005).

*Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to conform with Policy G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan.*

4. All hedges and trees forming part of the site boundaries or to be retained within the site as shown on Drawing 11976/RW/2 - Proposed Layout for new car park shall be protected from any damage and maintained throughout the development.

*Reason: In the interests of visual and local amenity and the local environment and to conform with Policy G17 of the South Ribble Borough Local Plan.*

5. Prior to the car park being brought into the uses, the car parking spaces including disabled parking shall be marked out on the surface of the car park in the positions shown on drawing 11976/RW/2 - Proposed layout for new car park.

*Reason: To ensure that the car park is properly laid out and to conform with Policy G17 of the South Ribble Borough Local Plan.*

6. No construction development shall take place outside the hours of:

07.30 to 18.00 hours Monday to Friday (except Public Holidays).

No construction development, delivery or removal of materials shall take place at any time on Saturdays, Sundays or Public Holidays.

*Reason: To safeguard the amenity of local residents and adjacent properties/landowners and land users and to conform with Policy G17 of the South Ribble Borough Local Plan.*

#### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

#### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
LCC/2021/0029	August 2021	Pauline Kelly, Planning and Environment 01772 531929

Reason for Inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A