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8:30pm

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS.

The Chair referred to the notice of filming at meetings and this information was noted.

2. PLANNING PROTOCOL

The Chair referred to the planning protocol and this information was noted.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Brands and Cllr Gray.

4. Urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Bevan declared an interest in relation to the Highgate School proposals. He explained that he was involved with the academy operating on the Spurs site, with the academy having a principal education sponsor and Spurs acting as its business sponsor. Both parties have made financial contributions to the academy. He is Chair of the sponsors and they operate separately. Tottenham Hotspur Football Club is located within his ward. Cllr Amin also represents Northumberland Park. These points were noted, but not considered to form prejudicial interests for the purpose of being briefed on the proposals.

6. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th July were approved.

RESOLVED

7. PRE APPLICATION BRIEFINGS

There would be no decision taken on the Highgate School items at the meeting. The items would subsequently be the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Planning Sub-Committee in accordance with standard procedures. Members were advised that pre-application briefings provided an opportunity for Committee Members to raise queries and identify any matters regarding proposals. The Members' Code of Conduct and the Planning Protocol apply to such briefings, notwithstanding that Members would not be exercising the statutory function of determining an application at that stage. Members were reminded that they should not be seen to have predetermined the proposals or closed their minds to them. Otherwise, they could be precluded from participating in the determination of the application, and any subsequent decision in which they had participated could be open to challenge.

**8. PRE-APPLICATION Reference Nos: HGY/2023/0328; HGY/2023/0317);
HGY/2023/0315); HGY/2023/0338); HGY/2023/0313);
HGY/2023/0679);HGY/2023/0390) for Highgate School North Road London
N6 4AY**

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Samuel Uff, Principal Planning Officer introduced the report for the item. The applicant team presented the proposals.

Eva Bell, Ward Councillor for Highgate, attended the Committee meeting to raise her views on the proposals.

- She acknowledged that Highgate School was a valued institution with a long history in the community and that it made a significant contribution to local life. She recognised that it was understandable that the school wished to invest in its facilities to meet future educational needs. However, she emphasised that the proposals were located within one of London's distinctive historic environments. She noted that Highgate's character was defined not only by its buildings but also by its conservation area, listed heritage assets, mature landscape, biodiversity and unique sense of place. These qualities were highly valued by residents and contributed significantly to the identity of the area.
- Having reviewed representations submitted by local residents, she said that many residents were not opposed to investment in the school itself, but were concerned about whether the scale, massing and design of some elements of the proposed development struck the appropriate balance between meeting the school's ambitions and preserving Highgate's special character.
- She shared residents' concerns regarding the potential impact of development at this scale on the heritage significance of the area. She stated that, where substantial change was proposed in sensitive locations, every effort should be made to minimise harm and demonstrate that heritage considerations had been given the greatest possible weight. She added that residents wanted confidence that Highgate's historic character would not be gradually eroded through cumulative development over time.
- She also shared residents' concerns regarding the environmental implications of the proposals. She noted that the developments would shape the area for decades and that climate resilience therefore needed to be fully considered. Concerns had been raised regarding flooding, groundwater impacts, drainage and the ability of the sites to adapt to future climate conditions.
- She further noted that residents had highlighted the importance of protecting biodiversity and the natural environment. Highgate benefited from mature trees, green spaces and ecological networks that were increasingly important in an urban setting. Many residents were concerned about the cumulative impact that extensive construction works, basements, hard landscaping and changes to established landscapes could have on biodiversity and the wider environmental quality of the area.

Finally, she acknowledged that significant consultation had taken place over a number of years, but said that many residents remained unconvinced that community engagement had had a visible impact on the evolution of the schemes. A recurring concern was that, despite extensive consultation, local people had struggled to identify where their feedback had materially influenced the final proposals.

The following was noted in response to questions from the committee:

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- It was explained that the Richard Music Centre (RMC) no longer included music facilities and uses across the site were reviewed. Part of the brief had been revised in response to concerns regarding the amount of development proposed on the Dyne House site. , The school had continued to engage with the community regarding the treatment of the RMC building elevations, with the aim of minimising overlooking.
- The applicant stated that the decision to bring the applications forward together was, in part, a result of the community consultation exercise. Reference was also made to the extent of dialogue and engagement over time, including the King's Foundation process, which had helped the school understand the issues raised and consider how the proposals could respond to them. Where changes could not be made because of the school's academic or operational requirements, the school had sought to explain those constraints to the community.
- The applicant emphasised that the school had been part of the Highgate community for a substantial period and intended to remain part of the community in the future. It was therefore considered important to maintain positive relationships with neighbouring residents while delivering the proposed investment.
- It was explained that the school had previously proposed a synthetic pitch at Far Field but had withdrawn that application. The school proposed to deliver the Mallison Sports Centre development first, which would allow it to provide sufficient internal sports capacity while part of the existing artificial pitch was used as a temporary decant facility. The applicant also explained that a number of options had been explored for the location of music and drama facilities in response to feedback from different resident groups.
- The Committee was advised that the decant site would comprise temporary modular buildings and would be linked to the relevant planning permissions. The applicant explained that the school had engaged with the GLA from an early stage because of the site's relationship with Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). Work had been undertaken to minimise the impact on MOL, particularly the temporary decant facility, and to address the constraints associated with Bishop's Road.
- It was explained that the buildings had been positioned to reduce the impact on openness and that the GLA had been comfortable with the proposed approach, subject to the relevant planning considerations. In relation to the Mallison Sports Centre, part of the site within MOL would accommodate sports courts, which was consistent with one of the purposes of the MOL designation. The applicant also noted that elements of the development would be below ground and therefore would have a limited visual impact. The relationship between the RMC and MOL was also described, including proposed improvements to the quality of the landscape fronting the site.
- The applicant explained that there would be a reduction in parking as a result of rationalising informal parking outside Dyne House and the RMC. This was said to support planning policy objectives aimed at reducing reliance on private cars. The school had a STARS-accredited travel plan with a gold rating and sought to

encourage a shift towards public transport and walking. A modal shift of approximately 30% was referred to, although this was given as an indicative figure.

- It was acknowledged that pick-up and drop-off activity had an impact. However, the applicant stated that the project was not intended to facilitate growth or intensification of use in planning terms. The proposals involved changes to the distribution of activity across the estate and were intended, in part, to ease pressure on the school's timetabling arrangements. It was stated that pick-up and drop-off arrangements at the senior school, including use of the bus stands, would remain unchanged.
- The applicant explained that it was not possible to guarantee that the programme would be delivered without delay, given the complexity of some of the projects, particularly Dyne House. However, the school would take all reasonable steps to minimise the likelihood of delay and referred to its previous track record in delivering projects.
- The school's estates team was described as well organised and responsible for maintaining close control of project delivery. The contractor selection and appointment process would also be rigorous, with the aim of maintaining as much control over the programme as possible. Particular reference was made to the potential impact associated with Dyne House and access through Kingsley Place, which was expected to be used by most construction vehicles. The applicant stated that measures would be taken to minimise the impact and that the projects were anticipated to be linked through Section 106 obligations, enabling the planning authority to control the sequential delivery of the projects.
- Given the complexity of the projects, the applicant explained that early engagement with contractors would be required to understand the programme and inform both the design and construction programmes. Pre-tender advice would therefore be sought during the design process.
- In response to a question regarding the volume of excavation and associated impacts, the applicant referred to a document within the planning application which set out the expected level of construction traffic across the sites. It was also explained that an updated transport statement was being prepared to consider the cumulative transport impact of the proposals. This work was being undertaken in response to feedback from the community and the Council's officers, and it was anticipated that the updated statement would be submitted shortly.
- The Alan Baxter report is a review of the planning application submission, commissioned by the community, to assess and respond to material submitted by the applicant. The applicant referred to engagement undertaken through workshops facilitated by the King's Foundation, involving Alan Baxter, the school's consultants and consultants appointed by the Council.
- It was stated that the Council's consultants agree with the reports prepared by the school's consultants and had concluded that the relevant ground movements fell within Category 1 of the Burland scale, described as the lowest category. The applicant considered that some of the information in the Alan Baxter report was

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out of date and confirmed that discussions with officers were ongoing to ensure that the appropriate information was assessed.

- The applicant provided details of proposed tree losses and planting on a site-by-site basis. In relation to the Mallison Sports Centre, three individual trees on the Bishop's Road side of the building would be lost: one Category A, one Category B and one Category C tree. Two were identified as mature London plane trees and one as a cherry tree. A further 33 trees within a group identified as Categories B/C or C would also be lost. These were described as forming part of an edge-of-woodland group.
- In total, 77 new trees were proposed at the Mallison Sports Centre. The applicant confirmed that discussions were ongoing with the Council's Tree Officer regarding the acceptability of the proposals from a planning policy perspective. This included consideration of canopy cover and the relative contribution of the existing and proposed trees. The proposed planting would include smaller trees as well as semi-mature specimens. The applicant acknowledged the specialist nature of the work and the need to ensure that newly planted trees became established.
- In relation to Dyne House, 11 trees would be lost, two of which were understood to be just outside the application boundary. A total of 96 trees would be planted as part of the project, ranging from smaller ornamental trees to larger specimens. Discussions with the Council's Tree Officer were ongoing and no final position had yet been reached.
- No trees would be lost in connection with the Richard Music Centre. The same applied to the science proposals, with the existing trees within the quad, including the identified plum tree, being retained. These measures were to be considered alongside the proposed biodiversity net gain and greening strategy, which had been developed in response to community feedback.
- The applicant stated that consultation on Dyne House had been extensive and that the front elevation had changed significantly as a result. The original approach had been to create an extension that was more closely aligned with the surrounding residential properties, including positioning it closer to the pavement and aligning it with the front elevations of neighbouring houses. Several iterations of the front elevation had subsequently been considered. The current proposal was described as responding directly to consultation feedback, particularly regarding the openness and character of the intervention on South Grove Lane. It was explained that the revised approach provided a natural break in the residential scale of the street and retained views through the site towards the Highgate Bowl.
- The applicant stated that the amount of development at the front of the site had been significantly reduced. The remaining scale and massing were principally intended to provide an accessible connection at basement level and accommodate the required lifts.
- In terms of architectural articulation, the applicant explained that the surrounding heritage context had informed the design. Reference was made to the brick buildings and stonework opposite the site. It was noted that the proposal was for

a school building rather than a residential building, and that the new intervention sought to reflect elements of the historic context.

- It was also stated that the maximum height of the building fronting the street would be reduced as a result of the proposal. The existing extent of development was identified on the presentation using a green dotted line.
- The applicant explained that senior representatives of the school, including the Head, Bursar and Estates Director, had been involved in the process and would continue to engage with the community. The Head and Bursar would remain points of contact at senior leadership level within the school.
- The school stated that it placed significant importance on maintaining its relationship with the community and intended to deliver the projects in a neighbourly manner. It was noted that the school would remain operational while the projects were being delivered.
- Committee members requested that details of the arrangements for community engagement and communication be included within the application so that residents and other interested parties were clear about what to expect.
- The applicant explained that the school had previously considered providing a second artificial pitch at Far Field but had concluded, following community feedback, that this was not acceptable. The proposed sequencing was intended to address the issue. If permission were granted for the additional sports hall adjacent to the Mallison Sports Centre, sufficient internal capacity would be available for pupils to continue participating in sport while half of the existing artificial pitch was used for the temporary decant facility.
- It was explained that the proposals would provide additional facilities for music, with activities being relocated to areas that would reduce noise transmission to neighbouring properties. Music teaching and performances that currently took place in rooms on the first, second and third floors would instead be accommodated in basement areas where possible, reducing noise leakage, particularly for properties facing Dyne House and further up the street towards the village.
- In relation to sport, the applicant stated that the proposals were not intended to increase the number of hours during which sporting activities took place. Existing sports facilities would continue to be used at the times they were currently used, with activities taking place either indoors or within the same amount of external space. The increase would therefore principally be in internal rather than external sports provision.
- In relation to a proposed pupil cap, the applicant explained that the school required agreement with the Department for Education if it wished to increase its pupil roll. It was stated that, since the project had been under consideration from 2016, the school had consistently maintained that increasing pupil numbers was not the purpose of the proposals.
- The applicant stated that no cap had been requested as part of the current proposals and that the school did not consider there to be a need for one, on the basis that the school was operating satisfactorily in its current form. It was also

noted that transport impacts would be relevant to any assessment of future intensification.

- The applicant explained that there was a practical constraint on pupil numbers arising from the capacity of the dining facilities. Although this did not constitute a formal cap, increasing the number of pupils using the facilities would require changes to the dining provision to accommodate greater throughput. The capacity of the dining facilities therefore represented a practical limitation.
- In relation to any proposed cap on the use of facilities, the applicant asked that any arrangements intended to limit use should take account of community and other-school use. The applicant stated that, where facilities were made available to community members or other schools, the school wished to retain the ability to continue providing that access. The applicant also acknowledged the potential for future commercial pressures on schools to encourage greater use of facilities for income generation.
- The applicant explained that the school had previously delivered temporary decant buildings as part of the junior school's development. A previous decant facility had subsequently been removed and the site restored to its former condition.
- It was acknowledged that the current decant facility might be required for more than five years. If planning permission were granted for a five-year period and a longer period subsequently became necessary, the school would need to return to the Council to seek permission for an extension.
- The applicant explained that, under the current phasing arrangements, the decant facility would ultimately be required for drama facilities, which represented the smallest amount of space required. As the buildings were modular, there might be opportunities to remove parts of the decant facility as individual projects were completed. The facility would initially support science provision and would then be adapted as other projects progressed.
- The applicant confirmed that any extension to the period of use would be at the school's risk and that opportunities to phase the removal of the buildings would be considered. A commitment was given to restore the site to its current condition. The site had been selected partly because the existing pitch had a finite lifespan and was approaching the point at which replacement would be required.
- The applicant explained that the construction programme had been designed around the academic year. Project start and completion dates had been planned, where possible, to coincide with the beginning and end of academic years in order to minimise disruption.
- It was noted that further information on community use should be provided when the matter returned to Committee.
- Members noted a preference for a site visit.
- The applicant drew Members' attention to the Highgate Bowl allocation identified as SA42 in the Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). The extent of the

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allocation was shown, together with an area of proposed significant open land extending beyond the allocation and covering part of the Dyne House site.

- The applicant explained that one of the changes made during the process concerned the parade ground, an area of open space within the proposed significant open land. The school had committed to keeping this area free from development. It would be greened as far as possible and used for the amenity of pupils, but would not be used for formal sporting activity. This change had been made in response to a request from immediate neighbours.
- The applicant stated that the proposals sought to respect the Highgate Bowl and the expectation for open land provision within the school's ownership. It was noted that, in terms of the formal allocation, the relevant area sat outside the Highgate Bowl itself. The applicant nevertheless stated that the proposals sought to respond to nature conservation considerations through biodiversity net gain and greening measures.

10) UPDATE ON MAJOR PROPOSALS

There were no questions on this item.

10) APPLICATIONS DETERMINED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

There were no questions on this item.

11) NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

12) DATES OF FUTURE MEETING

5th October 2026