

COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATION NO:	DM/23/02421/FPA
FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:	Construction of a new one-storey replacement school building followed by demolition of existing school buildings with associated car parking, landscaping and outdoor play space and facilities
NAME OF APPLICANT:	Tilbury Douglas (Department Of Education)
ADDRESS:	Sugar Hill Primary School, Sheraton Road, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 5NU
ELECTORAL DIVISION:	Aycliffe East
CASE OFFICER:	Michelle Penman Planning Officer 03000 263963 michelle.penman@durham.gov.uk

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

The Site

1. The approximately 3.6 hectare (ha) application site comprises of an existing primary school which consists of two buildings which are positioned to the southern part of the site with playing fields, hard surfaced playground areas, and MUGA to the north. Access to the site is currently taken from Sheraton Road, via three separate accesses, and there are two existing car parks located to the south of the school buildings. The main vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is the most western of the three, however, the other two accesses provide additional entry points.
2. The site is located within a predominantly residential area within the built-up area of Newton Aycliffe and is approximately 250 metres to the south of Newton Aycliffe Town Centre. The site is bounded by residential properties to the east, south, and west. Newton Aycliffe Working Men's Club is located to the southwest and St Clare's Court Care Home, Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses and Newton Aycliffe Police Station are located to the north.
3. The northern part of the site comprising playing field lies partially within a Coalfield Development Low Risk Area as defined by the Coal Authority. The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1. The site contains small areas of low, medium and high risk of surface water flooding adjacent to the northern boundary of the site, as identified by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
4. The site is not within or adjacent to any landscape designation. An Area of Higher Landscape Value lies approximately 1033 metres to the southeast of the site.

5. There are no ecological designations within or immediately adjacent to the proposed site. A Local Wildlife Site, Aycliffe Nature Park, is located approximately 750 metres to the southeast. The site is within the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site nutrient neutrality catchment.
6. There are no designated heritage assets on the site or in its immediate surroundings. The site is not located within a Conservation Area or Area of Archaeological interest and there are no Listed Buildings within or surrounding the site or any Scheduled Monuments.

The Proposal

7. Planning permission is sought for the construction of a new primary school, within the existing site confines, comprising a new single storey 'L-shaped' building with early years, infants and juniors suites, together administration suites, main hall and studio. The proposals include a substation, landscaping, soft and hard outdoor play space, and parking facilities, with a total of 50 car parking spaces and cycle parking. The existing MUGA, memorial garden and outbuilding would be retained. The existing western playground would also be mostly retained.
8. The proposed new school would replace the two existing school buildings with high-quality modern facilities. The existing buildings are considered to be life expired and/or at serious risk of imminent failure and exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended. On that basis a new build school was considered to be the appropriate option, rather than refurbishment.
9. The new school has been carefully positioned to the north of the existing buildings, to allow sufficient space for proposed construction works, without affecting the operation of the existing school and preventing the requirement for temporary accommodation throughout the construction phase. It is anticipated that construction will take place for approximately 60 weeks followed by a demolition phase of 26 weeks.
10. The majority of the new school would be built on hardstanding within the existing built footprint of the school, however, one wing of the building would extend into the school's playing field to the north. As such, there would be some temporary loss of playing field while the new school is being constructed, however, this would be replaced following completion of the new school and demolition of the existing school buildings.
11. The proposed school would have the same capacity as existing which is up to 420 pupils and 39 FTE nursery places, for ages 4 to 11. The proposals provide 15 classrooms with 1 nursery playroom, 2 reception classrooms, 4 infant classrooms and 8 junior classrooms, as well as other ancillary shared learning spaces and facilities, such as the main and studio hall, library, practical rooms and learning resource areas.
12. The school would be single storey with a flat roof and have a height of approximately 5.7 metres across much of the building with the main hall having a maximum overall height of approximately 9.7m. The predominant material for use in the construction of the school would be brickwork with feature panels and cladding to the main hall to reduce its massing. A lightweight biodiverse sedum green roof is proposed with photovoltaic system.
13. It is proposed to retain the three existing vehicular accesses into the site with the central and eastern vehicular accesses proposed to be improved to form a one-way system. Three new pedestrian-only access will also be provided with dedicated access for each pupil group. The proposed parking provision will be increased to provide 50 no. spaces in total, including 10 visitor spaces, 3 disabled spaces, and passive and

active electric vehicle parking spaces. Cycle parking with up to 30 no. spaces is also proposed.

14. This application is being reported to the County Planning Committee because it involves major development of more than 2ha.

PLANNING HISTORY

15. The existing school buildings at Sugar Hill Primary School date from 1951. There have been a few applications relating to a dining room extension, demolition of a redundant swimming pool, and construction of additional car parking spaces and pedestrian access, none of which are relevant to this application.

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL POLICY

16. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023. The overriding message continues to be that new development that is sustainable should go ahead without delay. It defines the role of planning in achieving sustainable development under three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.
17. In accordance with Paragraph 225 of the National Planning Policy Framework, existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with the Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given). The relevance of this issue is discussed, where appropriate, in the assessment section of the report. The following elements of the NPPF are considered relevant to this proposal.
18. *NPPF Part 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development* – The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and therefore at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It defines the role of planning in achieving sustainable development under three overarching objectives - economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development for plan-making and decision-taking is outlined.
19. *NPPF Part 6 – Building a Strong, Competitive Economy* – The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and a low carbon future.
20. *NPPF Part 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities* – The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive and safe communities. Local Planning Authorities should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space and community facilities. An integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services should be adopted.

21. *NPPF Part 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport* – Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.
22. *NPPF Part 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change* – The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
23. *NPPF Part 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment* – The Planning System should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, site of biodiversity or geological conservation interests, recognising the wider benefits of ecosystems, minimising the impacts on biodiversity, preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from pollution and land stability and remediating contaminated or other degraded land where appropriate.
24. *NPPF Part 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* – Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

25. The Government has consolidated a number of planning practice guidance notes, circulars and other guidance documents into a single Planning Practice Guidance suite. This document provides planning guidance on a wide range of matters. Of particular relevance to this application is the practice guidance with regards to; listed air quality; climate change; determining a planning application; flood risk and coastal change; healthy and safe communities; historic environment; light pollution; natural environment; noise; renewable and low carbon energy; travel plans, transport assessments and statements; use of planning conditions; water supply, wastewater and water quality.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

LOCAL PLAN POLICY:

The County Durham Plan (October 2020)

26. *Policy 6 – Development of Unallocated Sites* – States the development on sites not allocated in the Plan or Neighbourhood Plan, but which are either within the built-up area or outside the built up area but well related to a settlement will be permitted provided it: is compatible with use on adjacent land; does not result in coalescence with neighbouring settlements; does not result in loss of land of recreational, ecological, or heritage value; is appropriate in scale, design etc to the character of settlement; it is not prejudicial to highway safety; provides access to sustainable modes of transport; retains the settlement's valued facilities; considers climate change implications; encourages the use of previously developed land and reflects priorities for urban regeneration.

27. *Policy 21 – Delivering Sustainable Transport* – Requires planning applications to address the transport implications of the proposed development. All development shall deliver sustainable transport by delivering, accommodating and facilitating investment in sustainable modes of transport; providing appropriate, well designed, permeable and direct routes for all modes of transport; ensuring that any vehicular traffic generated by new development can be safely accommodated; creating new or improvements to existing routes and assessing potential increase in risk resulting from new development in vicinity of level crossings.
28. *Policy 26 – Green Infrastructure* – States that development proposals will not be permitted that would result in the loss of open space or harm to green infrastructure assets unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh that loss or harm and an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space or land to be surplus to requirements. Where valued open spaces or assets are affected, proposals must incorporate suitable mitigation and make appropriate provision of equivalent or greater value in a suitable location. Where appropriate there will be engagement with the local community.
29. *Policy 29 – Sustainable Design* - Requires all development proposals to achieve well designed buildings and places having regard to SPD advice and sets out detailed criteria which sets out that where relevant development is required to meet including; making a positive contribution to an areas character and identity; provide adaptable buildings; minimise greenhouse gas emissions and use of nonrenewable resources; providing high standards of amenity and privacy; contributing to healthy neighbourhoods; providing suitable landscape proposals; provide convenient access for all users; adhere to the Nationally Described Space Standards (subject to transition period).
30. *Policy 31 – Amenity and Pollution* - Sets out that development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impact, either individually or cumulatively, on health, living or working conditions or the natural environment and that the development can be effectively integrated with any existing business and community facilities. Development will not be permitted where inappropriate odours, noise, vibration and other sources of pollution cannot be suitably mitigated against, as well as where light pollution is not suitably minimised to an acceptable level.
31. *Policy 32 – Despoiled, Degraded, Derelict, Contaminated and Unstable Land* – Requires that where development involves such land, any necessary mitigation measures to make the site safe for local communities and the environment are undertaken prior to the construction or occupation of the proposed development and that all necessary assessments are undertaken by a suitably qualified person.
32. *Policy 33 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy* – States that renewable and low carbon energy development in appropriate locations will be supported. In determining planning applications for such projects significant weight will be given to the achievement of wider social, environmental and economic benefits. Proposals should include details of associate developments including access roads, transmission lines, pylons and other ancillary buildings. Where relevant, planning applications will also need to include a satisfactory scheme to restore the site to a quality of at least its original condition once operations have ceased. Where necessary, this will be secured by bond, legal agreement or condition.
33. *Policy 35 – Water Management* – Requires all development proposals to consider the effect of the proposed development on flood risk, both on-site and off-site, commensurate with the scale and impact of the development and taking into account the predicted impacts of climate change for the lifetime of the proposal. All new

development must ensure there is no net increase in surface water runoff for the lifetime of the development.

34. *Policy 36 – Water Infrastructure* – Advocates a hierarchy of drainage options for the disposal of foul water. Applications involving the use of non-mains methods of drainage will not be permitted in areas where public sewerage exists. New sewage and wastewater infrastructure will be approved unless the adverse impacts outweigh the benefits of the infrastructure. Proposals seeking to mitigate flooding in appropriate locations will be permitted though flood defence infrastructure will only be permitted where it is demonstrated as being the most sustainable response to the flood threat.
35. *Policy 39 – Landscape* – States that proposals for new development will only be permitted where they would not cause unacceptable harm to the character, quality or distinctiveness of the landscape, or to important features or views. Proposals are expected to incorporate appropriate mitigation measures where adverse landscape and visual impacts occur. Development affecting Areas of Higher landscape Value will only be permitted where it conserves and enhances the special qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh its impacts. Development proposals should have regard to the County Durham Landscape Character Assessment and County Durham Landscape Strategy and contribute, where possible, to the conservation or enhancement of the local landscape.
36. *Policy 40 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedges* – States that proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of, or damage to, trees, hedges or woodland of high landscape, amenity or biodiversity value unless the benefits of the scheme clearly outweigh the harm. Proposals for new development will be expected to retain existing trees and hedges. Where trees are lost, suitable replacement planting, including appropriate provision for maintenance and management, will be required within the site or the locality.
37. *Policy 41 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity* – Restricts development that would result in significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity and cannot be mitigated or compensated. The retention and enhancement of existing biodiversity assets and features is required as well as biodiversity net gains. Proposals are expected to protect geological features and have regard to Geodiversity Action Plans and the Durham Geodiversity Audit and where appropriate promote public access, appreciation and interpretation of geodiversity. Development proposals which are likely to result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitat(s) will not be permitted unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
38. *Policy 42 – Internationally Designated Sites* – Development that has the potential to have an effect on internationally designated site(s), either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will need to be screened in the first instance to determine whether significant effects on the site are likely and, if so, will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. Development will be refused where it cannot be ascertained, following Appropriate Assessment, that there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of the site, unless the proposal is able to pass the further statutory tests of 'no alternatives' and 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' as set out in Regulation 64 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In these exceptional circumstances, where these tests are met, appropriate compensation will be required in accordance with Regulation 68.
39. *Policy 43 – Protected Species and Nationally and Locally Protected Sites* – States that development proposals that would adversely impact upon nationally protected sites will only be permitted where the benefits clearly outweigh the impacts whilst adverse impacts. Appropriate mitigation or, as a last resort, compensation must be provided

where adverse impacts are expected. In relation to protected species and their habitats, all development likely to have an adverse impact on the species' abilities to survive and maintain their distribution will not be permitted unless appropriate mitigation is provided, or the proposal meets licensing criteria in relation to European protected species.

40. *Policy 44 – Historic Environment* – Requires development proposals to contribute positively to the built and historic environment. Development should seek opportunities to enhance and where appropriate better reveal the significance and understanding of heritage assets.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:

Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan (July 2017)

41. *Policy GANP CH1 – Landscape Character and Townscape* – Requires development to respect the landscape character of the parish and its settlements and incorporate features which contribute to the conservation, enhancement or restoration of local features. In particular, new development should, where appropriate maintain existing hedgerows, trees and woodland and encourage the planting of new trees and hedgerows.
42. *Policy GANP CH3 – Existing Amenity Open Spaces & Recreational Areas* - States existing open spaces, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and amenity open space not identified in GANP CH2, should not be built on unless the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by better provision in terms of quantity and/or quality in a suitable location.
43. *Policy GANP E4 – Existing Tree Retention and Removal* – States that proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of, or damage to, trees of high landscape, amenity or biodiversity value unless the need for, and benefits of, the proposal clearly outweigh the loss. Where tree removal is justified proposals will only be supported if there is a compensatory mitigation proposal which forms part of the submission. Where the removal of a tree(s) is proposed and essential to the delivery of the site, the developer is required to replace at least two of similar amenity value on site. Where a group of trees are removed a similar number must be replaced in a nearby suitable location. Any trees proposed for removal should be detailed, including the reason for removal, through the submission of a Design and Access Statement.
44. *Policy GANP E5 – Protection of existing trees within new development* – Requires proposals for new development to safeguard existing trees where appropriate and integrating them fully into the design and protecting them during construction having regard to their management requirements and growth potential.
45. *Policy GANP T1 – Parking Impacts on Existing Infrastructure* – States that development proposals that include a reliance on existing streets shall not be permitted where on-street parking would impact on the safety of road users or have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character of the area and adequate provision has not been made on-site for parking and access for deliveries, service vehicles, tradesmen working on-site, workers, social visitors and residents.

The above represents a summary of those policies considered relevant. The full text, criteria, and justifications can be accessed at: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/3266/Development-Plan-for-County-Durham> (Adopted County Durham Plan and Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan)

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

STATUTORY RESPONSES:

46. *Great Aycliffe Town Council* – expressed extreme concern that the application does not take advantage of the opportunity to improve safety by creating an on-site drop-off area and comment that vehicular congestion along Sheraton Road and other local junctions at school time is considerable and often dangerous. A query was also raised in relation to whether the on-site parking provisions complies with the Council's Parking and Accessibility SPD. The Town Council also note that there is currently an arrangement whereby the Working Men's Club car park is used for school parking and drop-off, and it was suggested that local initiative or GAMP funding could be used to resurface the car park for use by both the Club and School to relieve congestion. The Town Council also await the construction/demolition management plan with interest, noting existing congestion issues and consider HGV movements would cause more issues. Finally, it is noted that there is a 24-hour accessible public defibrillator in the school grounds which must remain easily accessible.
47. *Highways Authority* – considers the development to be acceptable from a highways perspective subject to conditions relating to implementation of parking, provision of 20% passive EV parking bays and submission of a Construction Management Plan. Officers considered the material impact of the development on the local highway network to be negligible.
48. *Drainage & Coastal Protection (Lead Local Flood Authority)* – raised no objections, following receipt of additional information to address their initial comments. The drainage design is considered to be acceptable.

INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

49. *Spatial Policy* – raise no objections to the proposals. Officers have provided advice in respect of the principle of development and appropriate national, local and neighbourhood plan policies for determining the application.
50. *Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Nuisance)* – raise no objections to the proposals. Officers considered the information submitted to demonstrate that the operational phase of the development is unlikely to lead to an adverse impact, subject to a condition to ensure the proposed fixed plant does not operate during the night, except for a single unit occasionally for a short defrost cycle during winter. However, they raised concerns with the demolition and construction phase of the development and impacts from noise and dust emissions and recommended conditions relating to construction hours and submission of a Construction Management Plan.
51. *Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Air quality)* – raise no objections to the proposal. Officers agree with conclusions that the operational phase of the development will not have a significant impact on area quality. With regards to the construction phase, they consider there would be no significant impacts providing adequate mitigation measures are followed. Officers therefore recommend a condition requiring the mitigation detailed within the submitted Air Quality Report to be implemented.
52. *Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Contaminated Land)* – raise no objections. Officers have reviewed the Phase 2 Site Investigation Report, Ground Gas Risk Assessment, and Phase 2 Ground Investigation report and the Phase 2 report produced by Solmek identified the need for a clean cover system in all areas of soft

landscaping. On that basis a Phase 3 remediation strategy is required, and conditions are therefore recommended for phase 3 remediation works and phase 4 verification.

53. *Ecology* – raise no objections to the proposals. Officers initially noted that the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) recommended bat activity surveys and requested that the result of these surveys should be provided to the LPA prior to determination of the application. The results were provided and considered acceptable. They also require an agreed Biodiversity Management and Monitoring Plan that covers the habitats on site delivering for a Biodiversity Net Gain. An Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan has been submitted with the application and Ecology confirm that this should be secured.
54. *Landscape* – raise no objections to the proposals. Officers request conditions to provide full details of hard and soft landscaping. They commented that the opportunity to address the streetscape more effectively with proposed landscape should be investigated.
55. *Arboricultural (Trees)* – raise no objection to the proposals. Officers comment that the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has identified 11 individual trees, four groups of trees and two hedges for removal, either due to their condition or to accommodate the replacement school building. While four trees to the front of the site are considered healthy, they consider their loss to be acceptable and can be mitigated with additional planting elsewhere.
56. *Design and Conservation* – raise no objections to the proposals. Officers commented that there is depth to the elevations with deep reveals to the fenestration and brick feature detailing. The entrance is legible without over-reliance on signage. Officers note that the application has adopted a different approach to the material palette than was advised at the pre-application stage, however, would not raise a strong objection to the approach proposed given the material palette of the area.
57. *Archaeology* – raise no objections to the proposals. Officers note that the footprint of the development has altered since the pre-application stage, however, consider the area of potential impact on a greenfield area is minimal, so there is no archaeological constraint.

EXTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

58. *Sport England* – initially objected to the application on grounds that the development is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy or with Paragraph 103 of the NPPF. They advise that the scheme results in the loss of approximately 0.3Ha of playing field with only minimal replacement being delivered. They advise that should the Local Planning Authority (LPA) be minded to grant planning permission for the proposal, contrary to Sport England's objection then the application should be referred to the Secretary of State, via the Planning Casework Unit, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation)(England) Direction 2021.
59. Sport England was sent a further consultation when amended plans were received and have confirmed that they wish to withdraw their objection, subject to the imposition of a condition to ensure that the replacement playing field is constructed in accordance with Sport England's design guidance 'Natural Turf for Sport'.
60. *Police Architectural Liaison Officer* – no comments.

PUBLIC RESPONSES:

61. The applications have been advertised by site notice and in the local press as part of the planning procedures. Notification letters were also sent to 112 individual properties in the vicinity of the site. Two letters have been received from local residents in response to the consultation, including one letter of objection and one letter neither supporting nor objecting to the application.
62. One letter raised queries in relation to availability of application plans and in relation to the construction and demolition phases of development including questions around location of entrance for site traffic, storage of spoil, location of wheel wash and hardstanding, impact on traffic using Sheraton Road during drop off/pick up time, parking for workers, process for the demolition of the existing school.
63. The letter of objection suggested the author would oppose the development if the new building encroaches to the rear of their garden and house, as the school playing area is already close to their garden.

The above is not intended to repeat every point made and represents a summary of the comments received on this application. The full written text is available for inspection on the application file which can be viewed at:

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application>

APPLICANTS STATEMENT:

64. The adopted County Durham Plan includes the ambition '*to safeguard, enhance and provide a wide range of educational facilities*'.

The Proposed Development seeks to construct a new one-storey replacement school building alongside demolition of the existing school buildings EFAA and EFAB with associated car parking, landscaping and outdoor play space and facilities at Sugar Hill Primary School, Sheraton Road, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham.

The new school building will be constructed to the rear of the existing school buildings, whilst maintaining sufficient distance between them to ensure construction works can be undertaken safely without disruption to the existing school. The distance from the new school building to the nearest existing neighbouring dwelling measures approximately 28.983 metres.

Construction of the new school building is therefore proposed to comprise the first phase of works, and pupils will then be decanted into the new building once completed followed by demolition of the existing school buildings to ensure minimal disruption to pupils' education. The construction programme is currently anticipated to consist of a duration of 60 weeks, followed by a demolition phase of 26 weeks.

The Applicant team has engaged with the LPA and statutory consultees, including Sport England prior to the submission of the planning application and throughout the determination period to address consultee feedback and to ensure that proposals are appropriate for the local area.

The proposals once fully delivered, will result in significant benefits to the local community, as summarised below:

- The proposed new teaching block will provide modern teaching facilities to contribute towards the overall improvement in the school's operational performance which will ultimately benefit the quality of education for existing and future school pupils.

- Existing and future school pupils will have access to high-quality outdoor sports facilities, including the retention of the existing MUGA, and the implementation of hard and soft landscaping which will contribute towards their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Economically, the proposals will result in a significant amount of investment into education facilities at Sugar Hill Primary School, which will benefit existing and future pupils and their families in the local area.
- The landscaping scheme includes additional tree planting amongst the scheme of soft landscape planting which will enhance biodiversity, whilst it will also include wildlife enhancements such as the provision of bat and bird boxes.
- All energy consumed within the Proposed Development is proposed to be offset via an extensive Photovoltaic Array situated on the roof. The aim of this is to ensure that the development is Net Zero Carbon in operation, with minimal reliance on the National Grid as per the Department for Education's requirements.

Overall, the principle of the Proposed Development is acceptable and is entirely in accordance with the adopted County Durham Plan. The proposals will have significant benefits for the existing pupils of Sugar Hill Primary School and residents of Newton Aycliffe and surrounding areas by improving the education facilities being offered in the area.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

65. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that if regard is to be had to the development plan, decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In accordance with advice within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the policies contained therein are material considerations that should be considered in decision-making. Other material considerations include representations received. In this context, it is considered that the main planning issues in this instance relate to the principle of development, layout and design, locational sustainability of the site, renewable energy, access and highway safety, residential amenity, contamination and coal mining risk, flooding and drainage, landscape, ecology, open space and recreational amenity, cultural heritage, other matters and public sector equality duty.

The Principle of the Development

66. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material planning consideration. The County Durham Plan (CDP) and the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan (GANP) are the statutory development plans and the starting point for determining applications, as set out in the Planning Act and reinforced at Paragraph 12 of the NPPF. The CDP was adopted in October 2020 and provides the policy framework for the County up until 2035. The GANP was adopted in July 2017 and covers the period 2016 to 2036.
67. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or,
 - ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

68. In light of the recent adoption of the CDP and GANP, the Council now has an up-to-date development plan. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay (Paragraph 11 c). Accordingly, Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is not engaged.

69. Paragraph 99 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.

70. The application site is located within the settlement of Newton Aycliffe and is not allocated for development within the Local Plan, as such, CDP Policy 6 (Development on Unallocated Sites) is relevant. Policy 6 states that the development of sites which are not allocated in the Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan which are either (i) within the built-up area; or (ii) outside the built-up area (except where a settlement boundary has been defined in a neighbourhood plan) but well-related to a settlement, will be permitted provided the proposal accords with all relevant development plan policies and:

- a) is compatible with, and is not prejudicial to, any existing, allocated or permitted use of adjacent land;
- b) does not contribute to coalescence with neighbouring settlements, would not result in ribbon development, or inappropriate backland development;
- c) does not result in the loss of open land that has recreational, ecological or heritage value, or contributes to the character of the locality which cannot be adequately mitigated or compensated for;
- d) is appropriate in terms of scale, design, layout, and location to the character, function, form and setting of, the settlement;
- e) will not be prejudicial to highway safety or have a severe residual cumulative impact on network capacity;
- f) has good access by sustainable modes of transport to relevant services and facilities and reflects the size of the settlement and the level of service provision within that settlement;

- g) does not result in the loss of a settlement's or neighbourhood's valued facilities services unless it has been demonstrated that they are no longer viable; or
- h) minimises vulnerability and provides resilience to impacts arising from climate change, including but not limited to, flooding;
- i) where relevant, makes as much use as possible of previously developed (brownfield) land; and
- j) where appropriate, it reflects priorities for urban regeneration.

71. The application site is located within the built-up area of Newton Aycliffe and currently occupies Sugar Hill Primary School. As such, it is considered that the established use of the site is for education, and it has been demonstrated that this use is compatible with the existing use of adjacent land. Therefore, it is considered, subject to detailed consideration of specific issues, that the new development will also be compatible and is in accordance with criterion a).
72. In relation to criterion b) the site is an existing school site and is surrounded by existing development and would not therefore contribute to coalescence with neighbouring settlements or result in ribbon development. In terms of c) given the existing use of the site for education, it is not open to the general public however could be considered to have some recreational and ecological value. There is no heritage value. The ecological value of the site could be improved through new planting and improvement to existing habitats. The site would continue in education use post development and would therefore maintain the character of the of the locality.
73. In respect of criterion d), design aspects are considered in more detail in the relevant section of this report. The replacement school would be one-storey and of a modern design with the material palette predominantly comprising of brick, in keeping with the surrounding area. The replacement school would provide improved education facilities that will maintain the character of the area and its contribution to the wider settlement. The new building is considered to be of an appropriate scale and massing in this location that would not have a significant adverse impact on neighbouring occupants.
74. In terms of criteria e) and f), these will be considered in more detail later in this report. It is considered that the existing site is well located within a residential area, with Newton Aycliffe Town Centre in walking distance to the north of the site and bus stops located on St Cuthbert's Way to the west and Central Avenue to the north. The development does not propose to increase staff or pupil numbers and existing vehicular and pedestrian accesses will be retained. Existing access arrangements and parking will be improved slightly, so it is not considered the development would be prejudicial to highway safety or have a severe residual cumulative impact on network capacity.
75. With respect to criteria g) the development would not negatively impact or result in the loss in neighbourhood facilities or services.
76. In accordance with criteria h), i) and j) the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of flooding. Development would provide a modern, energy efficient building with carefully considered drainage and green energy systems and the site has been previously developed.
77. Taking the above into account, the development is sustainably located in the built-up area of Newton Aycliffe with good access to services and facilities and links to sustainable transport. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable in

principle and to accord with Policy 6 of the CDP, subject to more detailed consideration of the scheme against the relevant criteria of the Policy and other development plan policies in the following sections of this report.

Layout and Design

78. CDP Policy 6 d) requires development to be appropriate in terms of scale, design, layout, and location to the character, function, form and setting of, the settlement. Policy 29 (Sustainable Design) states that development proposals should contribute positively to an area's character, identity, heritage significance, townscape and landscape features, helping to create and reinforce locally distinctive and sustainable communities. Parts 12 and 15 of the NPPF also seek to promote good design, while protecting and enhancing local environments. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF also states that the planning and development process should create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
79. The new school would comprise a single-storey 'L-shaped' building to be positioned to the north of the existing school building and slightly more to the centre and eastern part of the site. The new building has been carefully positioned to allow sufficient space for proposed construction works without affecting the operation of the existing school.
80. The form and layout of the building has been designed to meet the School's curriculum and organisational model. Each year group would have their own classroom with accessible intervention spaces and toilets, ability to teach indoors and outdoors, a separate library, and a linked main hall and studio. The layout would enable passive supervision through cross-views from each wing of the school and the existing MUGA, memorial garden and outbuilding would be retained. The existing accesses from Sheraton Road would also retained and parking provision is improved.
81. There are existing trees within the site and hedges and planting to the boundaries. Once the existing school is demolished the new school would be visible from Sheraton Road and other public vantage points. However, since it would be set further back from the road and existing mature trees, within and to the site frontage, would be retained it is considered that the prominence of the building would be reduced. The new school would be visible in private views from neighbouring properties, however, the height and mass of the new building could be considered reduced when compared with the two existing school buildings on site.
82. The proposed materials are intended to retain the character and familiarity of the existing school while also being physically robust. Brickwork is the predominant material in the area, and it was considered that the main material for the new school should be buff brick. A differentiated brickwork treatment would be used to break up the massing of the school and include panels of bespoke sawtooth bricks and soldier course bands. A canopy and contrasting white brick have been introduced to the main entrance elevation to visually emphasise the street-facing elevation and main entrance area. The main hall would be finished in chalk-coloured rainscreen cladding, to match the contrasting white brick, which would alleviate the massing. Staffordshire Blue bricks are proposed to the first two brick courses. Lighter grey recessed window frames, flashing and rainwater goods would complement the main brickwork.
83. The surrounding built form is characterised predominately by residential properties with some non-residential buildings. Brickwork is the predominant material, with the majority of residential properties of red brick construction and non-residential buildings built of buff, tan or brown brick. The existing primary school buildings are finished in a

mixture of brown and buff brick. The proposed development is designed for its function as a school and is not considered to depart from the prevailing character of the area. The development would be considered to respond positively to the local context.

84. Design and Conservation Officers have commented that the applicant has developed the proposals submitted at the pre-application stage. There is depth to the elevations with deep reveals to the fenestration and brick feature detailing. The entrance is legible without over-reliance on signage. They note that at the pre-application stage, the various options relating to material palette were submitted, however, a different approach has been adopted to that advised by Officers, which they considered would have responded better to the site context. Notwithstanding this, Design and Conservation Officers do not raise any strong concerns to the approach proposed given the material palette of the wider settlement. It is also recommended that a condition be applied to secure submission of final details of materials.
85. The proposed development would provide a modern, well-designed and sustainable school building which would replace the existing school buildings and would be in keeping with the surrounding area. It would provide a benefit to the community and would have a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Subject to the imposition of a condition requiring details of materials and finishes it is considered that the development would accord with CDP Policies 6 and 29 and Part 12 of the NPPF in respect of good design.

Locational Sustainability of the Site

86. Criterion f) of CDP Policy 6 requires that developments to have good access by sustainable modes of transport to relevant services and facilities and reflects the size of the settlement and the level of service provision within that settlement. CDP Policy 21 (Sustainable Transport) requires all developments to deliver sustainable transport by providing appropriate, well designed, permeable and direct routes for walking, cycling and bus access, so that new developments clearly link to existing services and facilities together with existing routes for the convenience of all users. CDP Policy 29 requires that major development proposals provide convenient access for all users whilst prioritising the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, people with a range of disabilities, and emergency and service vehicles. The NPPF sets out at Paragraph 108 that transport issues should be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals so that the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed and opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued. NPPF Paragraph 109 states that that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.
87. The proposed development would be located on the site currently occupied by the primary school which is in a residential area in close proximity to the Town Centre. The site is accessed from Sheraton Road as existing and would provide improved on-site parking facilities for staff and visitors. Pedestrian and cycle access will be provided from Sheraton Road and a secure cycle store is also proposed to facilitate and encourage staff and pupils to cycle to school. There is a cycle track provided on St Cuthbert's Way which connects with the cycle track on Horndale Avenue providing connection between Sheraton Road and Newton Aycliffe Station. The school is served by a school bus (Route 879) connecting Woodham to Newton Aycliffe and there are bus stops in the wider area, the closest being on St Cuthbert's Way.

88. In conclusion, the development would promote accessibility by a range of methods and is not therefore considered to conflict with Policies 6 f), 21 and 29 of the CDP and Part 9 of the NPPF.

Renewable Energy

89. CDP Policy 29 c) and d) also requires development to minimise greenhouse gas emissions, by seeking to achieve zero carbon buildings and providing renewable and low carbon energy generation and minimise the use of non-renewable and unsustainable resources. CDP Policy 33 states that renewable and low carbon energy development in appropriate locations will be supported. In determining planning applications for such projects significant weight will be given to the achievement of wider social, environmental and economic benefits.
90. A Sustainability Statement (Rev P01), prepared by Hoare Lea, has been submitted in support of the application and states that the development will adhere to the Department for Education Employers Requirements known as Spec21+ which feature ambitious Net Zero Carbon in Operation targets. Due to these highly ambitious requirements and that there are already so many beyond best practice Sustainability design features of the proposed development, the applicant has advised that the School is not targeting BREEAM accreditation as it is not a requirement of the DfE specification.
91. The new build envelope is proposed to be designed and built to achieve good thermal performance. The orientation and fabric of the building has been optimised to favour passive design and natural ventilation would take priority. The development will incorporate a highly efficient Air Source Heat Pump system and all energy consumed within the development is proposed to be offset via an extensive Photovoltaic Array situated on the roof of the proposed development. As per the requirements of Annex 2J of the Department for Education Spec21+, a bio-solar roof is to be installed. Small power, lighting and equipment must be energy efficient to meet the Net Zero in Operation targets set in line with the requirements of Spec21+.
92. Taking the above into account, the development would be considered to accord with the aims of CDP Policies 29 and 33 and Part 14 of the NPPF.

Access and Highway Safety

93. Paragraph 114 of the NPPF states that safe and suitable access should be achieved for all users. In addition, Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. CDP Policy 6 e) permits development where it will not be prejudicial to highway safety or have a severe residual cumulative impact on network capacity. CDP Policy 21 states that the transport implications of development must be addressed as part of any planning application, where relevant this could include through Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans.
94. Policy GANP T1 states that development proposals that include a reliance on existing streets shall not be permitted where on-street parking would impact on the safety of road users or have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character of the area and adequate provision has not been made on-site for parking and access for deliveries, service vehicles, tradesmen working on-site, workers, social visitors and residents.
95. It is proposed to retain the existing three vehicular access points into the site from Sheraton Road. The central and eastern accesses will be improved by implementing

a one-way system for staff and visitors, with ingress achieved through the central access and egress via the eastern access. Delivery and servicing, refuse vehicles and emergency vehicles would continue to use the central access for ingress and egress. The proposed layout has been designed to improve on-site staff and visitor parking which currently overflows onto surrounding roads. A new staff parking area has been designed increasing the total car parking provision to 50 spaces. This includes a total of 15 staff parking spaces to the existing parking area to the west of the site, 18 staff parking spaces in the existing parking area to the east of the site and 17 parking spaces in the new central parking and drop-off area. This includes 10 visitor spaces, 3 disabled spaces, and active and passive electric vehicle charging spaces.

96. Three new pedestrian-only accesses will also be provided with dedicated access for each pupil group and will connect directly to Sheraton Road. Cycle access is also proposed off Sheraton road with 30 long-stay cycle spaces provided within an enclosed secure cycle store, to be located within the site near the main entrance and pedestrian route to the school. The pedestrian facilities in the immediate vicinity of the site include footways which are in good condition, with street lighting provided at regular intervals, a cycle track on St Cuthbert's Way which connects with the cycle track on Horndale Avenue, and The Locomotion Way, a traffic free shared use path. The usage of cycle parking will be monitored each term as part of the School Travel Plan to ensure that any additional cycle or scooter parking demand would be accommodated.
97. A Transport Statement (TS) has been submitted in support of the application and sets out the baseline conditions for transport, the proposed access and travel strategy. The TS describes the baseline conditions of the transport networks in the vicinity of the site, the existing operation of the site, the proposed development and transport proposals. The total number of pupils and staff is to remain the same with 420 pupil places, 39 FTE nursery places and 40 FT staff members. The TS concludes that development will not have an adverse impact on the current highway operation. In addition, increased parking is provided on site to reduce the current overflow parking. A Travel Plan (TP) has also been submitted and will be implemented to encourage active travel including walking, cycling, scooting and using public transport, 'park and striding' and car sharing. The Travel Plan is a 'live' document that will be regularly reviewed by the School in accordance with any grant of planning consent.
98. The Council as Highways Authority has considered the proposals and commented that the redevelopment of the school would not result in any changes to the number of staff or pupils on the site and the three existing vehicular accesses to the site would remain. Therefore, the material impact of the development on the local highway would be negligible. They consider the additional 20 spaces would reduce the current overflow on the road network. The 50 spaces would meet requirements in terms of accessible bays and active EV bays, however, falls short of the 20% passive EV bays. They note that servicing arrangements would remain as existing, and Autotracking has demonstrated that the service vehicles could enter the site, manoeuvre safely, and exit the site in a forward gear.
99. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable from a highway's perspective, however, conditions were recommended requiring the car parking to be laid out and available for use prior to occupation, for details of passive EV charging spaces to be submitted to achieve 20% requirement, details of cycle parking, and submission of a Construction Management Plan (CMP) prior to commencement of development. Details of cycle parking were submitted during the application and considered to be acceptable, however, other conditions will be applied in line with officers' comments. The condition relating to the CMP is required to be pre-

commencement to ensure that the whole construction phase is undertaken in an acceptable way.

100. Great Aycliffe Town Council raised concerns in relation to existing vehicular congestion and raised a query in relation to whether the on-site parking provisions complies with the Council's Parking and Accessibility SPD. The Town Council also await the construction/demolition management plan with interest, noting existing congestion issues and consider HGV movements would cause more issues. One letter of representation also raised queries in relation to the construction and demolition phases of development including questions around location of entrance for site traffic, storage of spoil, location of wheel wash and hardstanding, impact on traffic using Sheraton Road during drop off/pick up time, parking for workers, process for the demolition of the existing school.
101. In relation to primary and secondary schools, The Durham County Council Parking and Accessibility SPD Adoption Version 2023, requires provision of 1 car parking space per full time member of staff and 1 visitor space per 50 pupils. The application was submitted prior to the SPD being formally adopted; however, the parking provision would meet the new requirements of 40 spaces for staff and 10 for visitors. As noted above, it is also intended to apply a condition requiring the submission of a Construction Management Plan prior to the commencement of development and therefore not all details are available at this time.
102. The Transport Statement has considered the transport and highways implications of the proposed development and concludes that there will be no adverse impact on the current highway operation. Increased parking will be provided, and access and circulation will be improved. The development would not result in harm to the safety of the local or strategic highway network and would not cause an unacceptable increase in congestion. Subject to conditions, the development would not conflict with CDP Policy 21, Part 9 of the NPPF and GANP Policy T1.

Residential Amenity

103. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of air or noise pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air quality and water quality. Paragraph 191 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location considering the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. Paragraph 192 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs).
104. CDP Policy 29 requires development to provide high standards of amenity and privacy and minimise the impact of development upon the occupants of existing adjacent and nearby properties. Policy 31 sets out that development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impact, either individually or cumulatively, on health, living or working conditions or the natural environment and

that can be integrated effectively with any existing business and community facilities. Development will not be permitted where inappropriate odours, noise, vibration and other sources of pollution cannot be suitably mitigated against, as well as where light pollution is not suitably minimised.

105. The nearest residential properties are located on the boundary with the site on Church Close to the west, Eldon Close and Biscop Crescent to the north/north-east and Hatfield Road to the east. All properties are separated from the site by their rear gardens with varying widths. There are also residential properties to the south of the site, separated by Sheraton Road. To the north of the site is St Clare's Court Care Home, Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses and Newton Aycliffe Police Station and Newton Aycliffe Working Men's Club is located to the southwest. There are no public rights of way within or in the vicinity of the site.
106. A Noise Impact Assessment (Revision P02), prepared by Apex Acoustics and dated April 2023, has been submitted in support of the application and this focuses on noise from fixed plant, which will be located in a plant area upon the proposed school roof, and also considers BB 93 (Building Bulletin 93: Acoustic design of schools - performance standards, DfE & EFA, February 2015) in relation to impact within the school. Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Nuisance Action) Officers commented that the Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) demonstrates that during the day noise from the fixed point will not give rise to negative noise impact upon NSRs (Noise Sensitive Receptors), however, the NIA does advise that should plant be operated during the night for extended periods then there is likely to be an adverse impact by way of noise on NSRs. A condition is therefore recommended in this respect.
107. While the external lighting has not been finalised an External Lighting Statement has been submitted with the application and this confirms that external lighting will be provided to the new building, entrances, access routes and the car-parking areas. Luminaires will be selected for compliance with Building Regulations in terms of luminaire efficacy. External lighting will be provided by LED fittings. A Planning Extract Ventilation Statement has also been submitted with the application. Officers consider the information submitted demonstrates that the operational phase of the development is likely to comply with the thresholds stated within the TANS which would indicate the development will not lead to an adverse impact.
108. During the demolition and construction phase the information submitted indicates that the development may, without further controls, lead to a significant impact. Noise and dust emissions associated with the demolition and construction phase of the development are likely to give rise to statutory nuisance to nearby sensitive receptors (NSRs). However, officers consider that conditions relating to construction hours and requiring submission of a Construction Management Plan (CMP) would be sufficient to mitigate the potential of a statutory nuisance. Officers suggest that suitable hours for external works during the construction and demolition phase to be 0800 to 1600 Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1400 on Saturday and for internal works 0730 to 1800 Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1700 on Saturday. No works are to be carried out on Sundays and Public or Bank Holidays. The CMP would consider the potential environmental impacts (noise, vibration, dust, and light) that the development may have upon any nearby sensitive receptors and shall detail mitigation proposed.
109. An Air Quality Assessment (Revision P01), prepared by Apex Acoustics and dated May 2023, has been submitted in support of the application. Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Air quality) officers confirmed that this demonstrates that the operational phase of the development will not have a significant impact upon air quality. Regarding the construction phase, they agree with the conclusion that there will be no significant impact upon air quality providing that the details of adequate

mitigation as set out Table 16 are adhered to. A condition is therefore recommended in this regard.

110. It is acknowledged that one letter of objection was received from a neighbouring resident who commented that they opposed the development if the new building encroaches to the rear of their garden and house, as the school playing area is already close to their garden.
111. The new school would be located further north than the existing school and slightly further to the eastern boundary of the site. The proposed building would be single-storey with a flat roof and parapet with the majority of the building having a height of approximately 5.7 metres. The main hall and studio would be positioned towards the centre of site and have a maximum overall height of approximately 9.7m.
112. The closest dwellings to the building are within a terrace on Biscop Crescent which is located to the northeast of the site and are separated from the shared boundary by rear gardens. Due to the orientation of the terrace, the distance between the properties and boundary increases gradually going north. The new school building will likely be more visible and appear more prominent from the rear of these dwellings, however, a separation distance of approximately 28 metres between the closest point of the new building and nearest dwelling would be maintained. As such, given the scale of the building and separation distances, together with the existing hedge which provides some screening, it is not considered that the development would have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring property in terms of overbearing, overlooking and overshadowing.
113. There would be some disturbance to residential properties during the construction and demolition phases of the development, however, it is considered that this can be mitigated through suitable conditions and submission of a construction management plan. The disturbance would be time limited and is considered necessary to provide new educational facilities. The residents living around the school will currently experience some disturbance from the existing school and from use of the external areas including playing fields and play spaces, however, this is to be expected and residents will likely be accustomed to this. While the school building would be positioned slightly closer to the western boundary and residents on Biscop Crescent in particular, overall, it is not considered that the use of the site would be altered much with playing fields still predominantly to the north of the site. As such, it is considered unlikely that residents would notice a significant difference to the current situation.
114. Taking the above into account, it is not considered that the proposed development would create an unacceptable impact on health, living or working conditions or the natural environment. The proposals would not result in unacceptable noise, odour, air quality or light pollution and, subject to the imposition of the conditions recommended above, it is considered that the proposals would provide an acceptable standard of residential amenity and would not therefore conflict with CDP Policies 29 and 31 and Part 15 of the NPPF.

Contamination and Coal Mining Risk

115. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil pollution or land instability and remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate. Paragraph 189 states planning decision should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and

contamination. CDP Policy 32 requires that where development involves such land, any necessary mitigation measures to make the site safe for local communities and the environment are undertaken prior to the construction or occupation of the proposed development and that all necessary assessments are undertaken by a suitably qualified person.

116. A Phase 2 Site Investigation Report (2023) and Ground Gas Risk Assessment (2023) prepared by Solmek, and a Phase 2 Ground Investigation Report (2023) prepared by 1st Horizon were submitted in support of the application. The northern part of the site is partly located within a Low-Risk Coalfield Development area and therefore a Coal Mining Risk Assessment is not required. An informative will be added to any consent granted in the event that unforeseen contamination is encountered.
117. Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Contaminated Land) Officers have considered the proposals and raise no objections in respect of land contamination. They commented that the Phase 2 produced by Solmek has identified the need for a clean cover system in all areas of soft landscaping and a Phase 3 remediation strategy is required. Given this, conditions have been recommended to require submission of a land contamination scheme to include a Phase 3 remediation strategy and where necessary include gas protection measures and method of verification. The condition is required to be pre-commencement to ensure that the development can be carried out safely.
118. It is considered that, subject to conditions, the proposed development would be suitable for the intended use and would not result in unacceptable risks which would adversely impact on the environment, human health and the amenity of local communities in accordance with CDP Policies 32 and Part 15 of the NPPF.

Flooding and Drainage

119. Part 14 of the NPPF states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and minimise vulnerability and improve resilience. Paragraph 165 states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Paragraph 173 advises that local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and at paragraph 175 suggest that major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. Paragraph 180 states that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as water quality.
120. Paragraph 167 of the NPPF states that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment it can be demonstrated that it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate, and any residual risk can be safely managed.
121. CDP Policies 35 and 36 of the CDP relate to flood water management and infrastructure. Policy 35 requires development proposals to consider the effects of the scheme on flood risk and ensure that it incorporates a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs) to manage surface water drainage. Development should not have an adverse

impact on water quality. Policy 36 seeks to ensure that suitable arrangements are made for the disposal of foul water. National advice within the NPPF and PPG regarding flood risk advises that a sequential approach to the location of development should be taken with the objective of steering new development to flood zone 1 (areas with the lowest probability of river or sea flooding). When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

122. The site is located in Flood Zone 1, which means it has a low probability of flooding from rivers or the sea. In terms of surface water flooding, most of the Site is at very low risk of surface water flooding, but there is an area of low to high risk of surface water flooding on the playing fields adjacent to the northern boundary of the Site.
123. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), SuDS Management Plan and Drainage Philosophy have been submitted in support of the application. Indicative Drainage GA, SuDS Construction, Flood Exceedance and Attenuation Tank details have also been included. The FRA confirms that the site is located in Flood Zone 1, and is therefore at low risk of flooding, and therefore is suitable for this development.
124. The Drainage Philosophy confirms that the existing school buildings are positively drained into existing separate foul and surface water sewers located on site. These sewers drain in a southerly direction before ultimately connecting into the existing public sewers beneath Sheraton Lane. The Philosophy confirming that it is not possible or practicable to discharge the surface water to either the ground via infiltration or to a nearby watercourse. Therefore, it is deemed necessary to discharge surface water to the nearby sewer as per the existing drainage arrangement.
125. The proposed site is to be designed to provide surface water attenuation for storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year + 45% climate change event. This storage will be provided in the form of an attenuation tank. To provide a level of treatment, all surface water flows from the car parking area will be collected and treated within permeable paving, passing through a silt trap before entering the main system. Flows from the proposed playgrounds and footpaths are to be collected and treated within a gravel strip filter drain, with flows conveyed towards silt traps using perforated pipes. The surface water system will connect into the existing Northumbrian Water sewer located beneath Sheraton Road.
126. The foul water drainage from the school is proposed to be collected around the perimeter of the building, with pipes flowing towards a proposed foul water pumping station which will connect into the existing foul water drainage infrastructure present within the site boundary. This foul sewer ultimately connects into the existing Northumbrian Water sewer located beneath Sheraton Road to the south.
127. Drainage and Coastal Protection officers have raised no objections to the proposals. They have confirmed that their initial comments have been satisfactorily addressed and the drainage design is considered to be acceptable.
128. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not lead to increased flood risk, both on and off site, and would ensure there is no net increase in surface water runoff for the lifetime of the development. It is therefore considered that the proposals would not conflict with CDP Policies 35 and 36 and Part 14 of the NPPF.

Landscape

129. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes in a

manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan. CDP Policy 39 states that proposals for new development will be permitted where they would not cause unacceptable harm to the character, quality or distinctiveness of the landscape, or to important features or views. Proposals will be expected to incorporate appropriate measures to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects. CDP Policy 40 states that proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of, or damage to, trees or hedges of high landscape, amenity or biodiversity value unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the harm. Proposals for new development will be expected to retain existing trees where they can make a positive contribution to the locality or to the development and hedgerows where appropriate. Where trees or hedges are lost suitable replacement planting, including appropriate provision for maintenance and management, will be required within the site or the locality.

130. GANP Policy CH1 requires development to respect the landscape character of the parish and its settlements and new development, where appropriate, to maintain existing hedgerows, trees and woodland and encourage the planting of new trees and hedgerows. Similarly, GANP Policy E4 states that proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of, or damage to, trees of high landscape, amenity or biodiversity value unless the need for, and benefits of, the proposal clearly outweigh the loss. GANP Policy E5 requires proposals for new development to safeguard existing trees where appropriate and integrating them fully into the design and protecting them during construction having regard to their management requirements and growth potential.
131. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Method Statement (Revision 3), prepared by Quants Environmental and dated July 2023, has been submitted in support of the application. As part of the survey relevant tree data was recorded to assess the condition of existing trees, their constraints upon the prospective development and the necessary protection and construction specifications required to allow their retention. The survey includes 66 individual trees, 12 tree groups and 6 hedgerows. There are no trees with Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). A tree protection plan has also been included.
132. The submitted AIA has identified eleven individual trees, four groups of trees and two hedges for removal, either due to their condition or to accommodate the replacement school development. Tree Officers commented that the trees located to the rear of the site are less visible, and due to their size and condition are not considered significant. To the front of the site, adjacent to the existing nursery entrance, five trees are recommended for removal; one due to its condition, the others to accommodate a wider access and car parking area. While four trees are considered to be in a healthy condition, they consider their loss, in the context adjacent to a larger, more mature group of trees to be retained, is acceptable, and can be mitigated with additional planting elsewhere along the frontage of the school site.
133. A Proposed Landscaping Plan has been submitted with the application alongside some landscaping construction details. The proposed plans indicate access and footpaths, tarmac areas, grass playing fields/sports pitches, play spaces, outdoor classroom and planting. Landscape officers have considered the proposals and raised no objections, subject to conditions to confirm full details of hard and soft landscape proposals. Officers commented that the opportunity to address the streetscape more effectively with proposed landscape should be investigated and parking areas should be effectively screened, and site entrances acknowledged through appropriate landscape treatments.

134. The proposed development would result in the loss of some trees and hedges, but this would be mitigated through replacement planting across the site. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not conflict with CDP Policies 39 and 40, Part 15 of the NPPF and Policies CH1, E4 and E5 of the GANP.

Ecology

135. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity and paragraph 186 advises that planning permission should be refused if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for. This is reflected in CDP Policy 41 which states that proposals for new development will not be permitted if significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity resulting from the development cannot be avoided, or appropriately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for. Proposals for new development will be expected to minimise impacts on biodiversity by retaining and enhancing existing biodiversity assets and features and providing net gains for biodiversity. CDP Policy 43 states that development proposals that would adversely impact upon nationally protected sites will only be permitted where the benefits clearly outweigh the impacts whilst adverse impacts upon locally designated sites will only be permitted where the benefits outweigh the adverse impacts.
136. The presence of protected species is a material consideration in planning decisions as they are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the European Union Habitats Directive and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Habitats Directive prohibits the deterioration, destruction or disturbance of breeding sites or resting places of protected species. Natural England has the statutory responsibility under the regulations to deal with any licence applications but there is also a duty on planning authorities when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a development which could harm a European Protected Species to apply three tests contained in the Regulations to determine whether a licence is likely to be granted. These state that the activity must be for imperative reasons of overriding public interest or for public health and safety, there must be no satisfactory alternative, and that the favourable conservation status of the species must be maintained. Brexit does not change the Council's responsibilities under the law.
137. There are no ecological designations within or immediately adjacent to the proposed site. The nearest local designation is Aycliffe Nature Park Local Wildlife Site which is located approximately 750 metres to the southeast. It is not therefore considered that there would be any adverse impact upon any local ecological designations given the distance from the site.
138. An updated Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) (inc. Bat Roost Assessment), alongside an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) (including BNG Assessment) and Biodiversity Metric Report, Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan (EEMP) and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), prepared by Quants Environmental, have been submitted with the application. The EclA presents the results of the ecological surveys undertaken at the site and aims to identify and evaluate all relevant ecological receptors, identify likely ecological impacts, identify mitigation/compensation measures and identify any residual effects.
139. Following evaluation of the nature conservation interest of the ecological features present on the site it was concluded that there is potential for direct loss of potential bat roosts from demolition of the existing school buildings and dusk emergence bat surveys have been undertaken. A CEMP has been prepared to protect species

including bats and nesting birds. Biodiversity enhancements are proposed to be provided in the form of bat and bird boxes to be installed on the new school building. Given the proposed mitigation measures (including further surveys to determine the presence/absence of bat roosts), it is considered that there will be no significant adverse effects on ecological receptors.

140. The DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 4.010 has been used to calculate the baseline values for the on-site habitats (before development) and the post-development value to calculate the Total Net Unit Change. Based on the calculations, the development will result in a Total Net Habitat Unit Change of +2.05 (positive; equivalent to a gain of 12.67%) and Total Net Hedgerow Unit Change of -0.32 (negative; equivalent to a loss of 8.79%). To ensure the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) measures, including the protection of existing habitat features and the creation of new habitats, an Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan (EEMP) has been prepared and submitted with the application.
141. Ecology Officers have considered the proposals and raised no objections. A Dusk Emergence Bat Survey was submitted during the application, as recommended in the PEA, and this concluded that bat roosts are likely absent from the site. During the dusk survey, moderate levels of Common Pipistrelle bat foraging activity were observed around trees immediately to the south of the surveyed building. As such, no further bat surveys or legal compliance measures are currently considered necessary, or is it necessary to apply the derogations tests. No evidence of active bird nests was observed during the dusk survey. Ecology officers also advised that the LPA would require an agreed Biodiversity Management and Monitoring Plan that covers the habitats on site delivering for a biodiversity net gain. As noted, the EEMP has been submitted with the application and demonstrates that the habitat and long-term management (30 years) is deliverable for on-site habitats to be created. Ecology Officers confirm that this is acceptable. Whilst a Section 39 agreement would usually be required, this is not possible because the Council is the landowner. Accordingly, long term management & monitoring is to be secured via condition in this case.
142. The proposed development would provide biodiversity enhancement to the site and, whilst there may be temporary displacement of wildlife during the construction process, the net increase in biodiversity value would adequately mitigate any residual harm. It is not considered that the proposed school would impact upon any nationally or locally protected sites. It is therefore considered that the proposals would not conflict with CDP Policies 41 and 43 and Part 15 of the NPPF in respect of avoiding and mitigating harm to biodiversity.

Nutrient Neutrality

143. CDP Policy 42 states that development that has the potential to have an effect on internationally designated site(s), either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will need to be screened in the first instance to determine whether significant effects on the site are likely and, if so, will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. Development will be refused where it cannot be ascertained, following Appropriate Assessment, that there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of the site, unless the proposal is able to pass the further statutory tests of 'no alternatives' and 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' as set out in Regulation 64 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In these exceptional circumstances, where these tests are met, appropriate compensation will be required in accordance with Regulation 68.
144. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Habitat Regs), the Local Planning Authority must consider the nutrient impacts of any

development proposals on habitat sites and whether those impacts may have an adverse effect on the integrity of a habitats site that requires mitigation, including through nutrient neutrality. In this respect Natural England has identified that the designated sites of the Teesmouth & Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area/Ramsar (SPA) is in unfavourable status due to excess Nitrogen levels within the River Tees.

145. The site lies within the catchment area of the Teesmouth & Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area/Ramsar (SPA). However, the school is to replace an existing school with no increased staff or pupils proposed and based on current guidance, schools are exempted as it is generally accepted that people using the school will live and work in the catchment and so wastewater is accounted for by any new housing. On that basis, the proposal would not be considered to conflict with CDP Policies 41 and 42, Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Open Space and Recreational Amenity

146. Part 8 of the NPPF seeks to promote healthy communities and supports the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure. Paragraph 102 states that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature. Paragraph 103 of the NPPF states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken showing the facility to be surplus to requirements; the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
147. CDP Policy 6 c) permits development that does not result in the loss of land that has recreational, ecological or heritage value, or contributes to the character of the locality which cannot be adequately mitigated or compensated for. CDP Policy 26 states that development proposals will not be permitted that would result in the loss of open space or harm to green infrastructure assets unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh that loss or harm and an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space or land to be surplus to requirements. Where valued open spaces or assets are affected, proposals must incorporate suitable mitigation and make appropriate provision of equivalent or greater value in a suitable location. Where appropriate there will be engagement with the local community.
148. GANP Policy CH3 states existing open spaces, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and amenity open space not identified in GANP CH2, should not be built on unless the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by better provision in terms of quantity and/or quality in a suitable location.
149. The site is not allocated on the CDP Policy map, however, the playing fields/open space associated with the school is allocated as open space for education with the within the Council's Open Space Needs Assessment (OSNA). Although not publicly accessible, the site is still considered important to the local community and local provision. The proposed development would provide a range of outdoor play spaces and pitches with provision of hard informal and social areas, retention of the existing MUGA, soft informal and social areas and playing pitches. Playing Fields Calculation and Open Space Allocation plans, prepared by GHD, have been submitted in support of the application. They seem to demonstrate that while the new school will encroach into the existing open space/playing field, the development once completed will

provide playing fields and open space of at least equivalent to the existing provision in both quality and quantity and will be in a suitable location.

150. Sport England is the statutory consultee for any development affecting playing fields. Its playing field policy states that Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, or land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or land allocated for use as a playing field unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.
151. Sport England was consulted on the application and initially objected to the application on the grounds that the development is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy or with Paragraph 99 of the NPPF. They advise that the scheme results in the loss of approximately 0.3Ha of playing field with only minimal replacement being delivered. They advised that should the LPA be minded to grant planning permission for the proposal, contrary to Sport England's objection then the application should be referred to the Secretary of State, via the Planning Casework Unit, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation)(England) Direction 2021.
152. Following receipt of amended plans Sport England was re-consulted on the proposals and confirm that it wishes to withdraw its objection to this application as it is now considered to meet exception 4 of the Playing Field Policy. It is considered that the proposal meets the quantitative test within the policy and, provided a suitable condition is imposed to ensure that the replacement playing field is constructed in accordance with Sport England's design guidance 'Natural Turf for Sport', the proposal can also meet the qualitative test within exception 4. On that basis, the condition recommended by Sport England would be attached to any consent granted.
153. Taking the above into account, the loss of open space and playing fields as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by at least equivalent provision in terms of quality and quantity, in a suitable location to meet the school's needs. The development, subject to condition, is not therefore considered to conflict with Part 8 and Paragraph 103 of the NPPF, CDP Policy 26 and GANP Policy CH3.

Cultural Heritage

154. In assessing the proposed development regard must be had to the statutory duty imposed on the Local Planning Authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area. In addition, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a statutory duty that, when considering whether to grant planning permission for a development which affects a listed building or its setting, the decision maker shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. If harm is found this gives rise to a strong (but rebuttable) statutory presumption against the grant of planning permission. Any such harm must be given considerable importance and weight by the decision-maker.
155. Part 16 of the NPPF requires clear and convincing justification if development proposals would lead to any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset. CDP Policy 44 seeks to ensure that developments should contribute positively to the built and historic environment and seek opportunities to enhance and, where appropriate, better reveal the significance and understanding of heritage assets.

156. The site is not within a Conservation Area and there are no designated heritage assets within the proposed site. The closest listed buildings are over 1.2 kilometres away. Design and Conservation Officers have considered the proposals and raised no objections in respect to cultural heritage. As such, it is not considered that there would be any harm to any heritage assets or their settings.
157. Archaeology officers raise no objections to the proposals and while they note that the footprint of the development has altered since the pre-application stage, they consider the area of potential impact on a greenfield area to be minimal, so there is no archaeological constraint.
158. It is considered that the proposal would cause no harm to heritage assets or archaeological remains in accordance with CDP Policy 44 and Part 16 of the NPPF and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Other Matters

159. In their comments the Town Council noted existing parking arrangements in terms of the Working Men's Club car park being used for school parking and drop-off and suggest that local initiative or GAMP funding could be used to resurface the car park for use by both the Club and School to relieve congestion. As discussed previously, the number of pupils and staff will remain unchanged as a result on the proposals and the development proposes improvements to existing access and parking including the formation of a one-way system and provision of 50 no. parking spaces. As such, whether the WMC continues to be used for drop-off or requires surface improvements lies outside the scope of this application.
160. They also point out that there is a 24-hour accessible public defibrillator in the school grounds which must remain easily accessible. While this is noted, this issue would lie outside of the planning process.

Public Sector Equality Duty

161. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities when exercising their functions to have due regard to the need to i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct, ii) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic.
162. In this instance, officers have assessed all relevant factors and do not consider that there are any equality impacts identified.

CONCLUSION

163. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.
164. The proposed development would provide a modern primary school within Newton Aycliffe on a site formerly in use for education purposes. The proposed development would provide a significant benefit to the community in terms of the quality of education provision and would be sustainable and of a suitable design for this location.

165. Consideration has been given to the principle of development, layout and design, locational sustainability of the site, access and highway safety, residential amenity, contamination and coal mining risk, flooding and drainage, landscape, ecology, open space and recreational amenity, cultural heritage, other matters and public sector equality duty. The development has been assessed against relevant development plan policies and material considerations and is considered to be acceptable.
166. The proposed development has generated some public interest. Concerns raised by the Town Council and local residents are acknowledged and have been considered and carefully balanced against the benefits of the scheme in terms modern education provision. However, it is not considered that they would be sufficient to sustain a refusal of the application in this instance.
167. Therefore, subject to conditions, the proposed development is considered to broadly accord with the relevant policies of the County Durham Plan and Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan and relevant sections of the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

168. That the application is **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The Local Planning Authority shall be given at least seven days prior written notification of the date of commencement of the development.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved documents.

3. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

REFERENCE	DRAWING / DOCUMENT TITLE
Plans	
SRP1090-HLP-XX-XX-D-A-1000-S4 P02	Site Location Plan
SRP1090-GHD-XX-XX-D-L-0015 P02	Proposed Site Plan
SRP1090-HLP-XX-00-D-A-2000-S4 P18	Level 00 Proposed Plan
SRP1090-HLP-XX-ZZ-D-A-2100-S4 P06	Proposed Elevations
SRP1090-HLP-XX-ZZ-D-A-2101-S4 P06	Proposed Elevations
SRP1090-HLP-XX-RF-D-A-2001-S4 P07	Proposed Roof Plan
SRP1090-HLP-XX-ZZ-D-A-2200-S4 P04	Building Sections
SRP1090-GHD-XX-XX-D-L-0010 P05	Playing Field Calculations (Before and After)
SRP1090-GHD-XX-XX-D-L-0005 P04	External Sports General Layout Plan
SRP1090-GHD-XX-XX-D-L-0016 P02	Open Space Allocation Plan (Before and After)
SRP1090-GHD-XX-XX-D-L-0003 P06	Green Infrastructure Strategy
SRP1090-GHD-XX-XX-D-L-0002 P04	Access and Circulation
SRP1090-GHD-XX-XX-D-L-0001 P08	Landscape Proposals
SRP1090-GHD-XX-XX-D-L-0008 P01	Landscape Construction Details – Sheet 1 of 2
SRP1090-GHD-XX-XX-D-L-0009 P01	Landscape Construction Details – Sheet 2 of 2
SRP1090-GHD-XX-XX-D-L-0004 P05	Landscape Cross Sections
SUGA-BGP-01-ZZ-DR-C-52-01130 P08	Indicative Drainage GA
SUGA-BGP-01-ZZ-DR-C-52-01134 P01	Flood Exceedance Plan

REFERENCE	DRAWING / DOCUMENT TITLE
SUGA-BGP-01-ZZ-DR-C-52-01133 P01	Attenuation Tank Details
SRP1090-BGP-01-ZZ-D-C-01136 P01	SuDS construction Details
SUGA-BGP-01-ZZ-DR-C-01114 P01	Site Sections – Construction Works
Documents	
SRP1090-APX-ZZ-ZZ-T-J-0004-S2-P01. 05.05.2023. 10.07.2023	Air Quality Assessment The Biodiversity Metric
1829d Revision 3. July 2023.	Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan
1829d Revision 1. May 2023.	Construction Environmental Management Plan
SH18-R13 (SRP1090-1HZ-ZZ-XX-T-Y-0004). 21.12.2021.	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
1829b Revision 4. June 2023.	Update Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (inc. Bat Roost Assessment)
1829c Revision 3. July 2023.	Ecological Impact Assessment
12589343 Revision 2. 18.05.2023.	Transport Statement
12589343 Revision 2. 18.05.2023.	Travel Plan
S230317/GAS. 27.06.2023.	Ground Gas Risk Assessment
SH18-R12. 23.12.2021.	Phase 2 Ground Investigation Report
S230317. May 2023.	Phase 2 Site Investigation
SRP1090-HRL-XX-XX-T-M-2000 Rev P02. 20.04.2023.	Extract Ventilation Statement – Stage 3 Report
1829.2 Revision 3. 04.07.2023.	Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement
REP-2324731-20230424-Sustainability Statement-HC- Revision 00. Revision P01. 24.04.2023.	Sustainability Statement – Stage 3 Report
SRP1090-HRL-XX-XX-T-E-2000 Revision P02. 20.04.2023.	External Lighting Statement – Stage 3 Report
KD/LH/ER/5200NE/R002. July 2023.	Planning Statement, Open Space Assessment and Statement of Community Involvement
SRP1090-APX-ZZ-ZZ-T-J-0003-S2 Rev P02. 20.04.2023.	Noise Impact Assessment
1829e. Revision 1. 08.09.2023.	Dusk Emergence Bat Survey
SRP1090-BGP-ZZ-ZZ-T-C-52-0001 Issue 006. 20.02.2024.	Drainage Philosophy
SUGA-BGP-01-XX-RP-C-52-003 Issue 001. 29.09.2023.	SuDs Management Plan
226154 (SUGA-BGP-01-XX-RP-C-52-002) Issue 003. 07.07.2023.	Flood Risk Assessment

Reason: To define the consent and ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained in accordance with Policies 6, 21, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40, 42, 43 and 44 of the County Durham Plan and Parts 2, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. No development shall commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Management Plan shall be prepared by a competent person and shall consider the potential environmental impacts (noise, vibration, dust, & light) that the development may have upon any nearby sensitive receptors and shall detail mitigation proposed. As a minimum the Plan shall include, but not necessarily be restricted to, the following:

- A Dust Action Plan including measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction, taking into account relevant guidance such as the Institute of Air Quality Management "Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction" February 2014. The mitigation measures described within the air quality assessment prepared by Apex Acoustics Ltd reference SRP1090-APX-ZZ-ZZ-T-J-0004-S2, Revision P01, dated 5 May 2023 and published on the planning portal on 2 August 2023 shall be incorporated into the Dust Action Plan.
- Details of methods and means of noise reduction/suppression.
- Where construction involves penetrative piling, details of methods for piling of foundations including measures to suppress any associated noise and vibration.
- Details of measures to prevent mud and other such material migrating onto the highway from all vehicles entering and leaving the site.
- Designation, layout and design of construction access and egress points.
- Details for the provision of directional signage (on and off site).
- Details of contractors' compounds, materials storage and other storage arrangements, including cranes and plant, equipment and related temporary infrastructure.
- Details of provision for all site operatives for the loading and unloading of plant, machinery and materials.
- Details of provision for all site operatives, including visitors and construction vehicles for parking and turning within the site during the construction period.
- Routing agreements for construction traffic.
- Details of the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate.
- Waste audit and scheme for waste minimisation and recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works.
- Management measures for the control of pest species as a result of demolition and/or construction works.
- Detail of measures for liaison with the local community and procedures to deal with any complaints received.

The management strategy shall have regard to BS 5228 "Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites" during the planning and implementation of site activities and operations.

The approved Construction Management Plan shall also be adhered to throughout the demolition period and the approved measures shall be retained for the duration of the construction works.

Reason: To protect the residential amenity of existing and future residents from the development in accordance with Policy 31 of the County Durham Plan and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Required to be pre commencement to ensure that the whole construction phase is undertaken in an acceptable way.

5. No demolition shall commence until Demolition Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Demolition Management Plan shall include as a minimum but not necessarily be restricted to the following:
 - A Dust Action Plan including measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction, taking into account relevant guidance such as the Institute of Air Quality Management "Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction" February 2014.
 - Details of methods and means of noise reduction/suppression.
 - Details of measures to prevent mud and other such material migrating onto the highway from all vehicles entering and leaving the site.

- Designation, layout and design of construction access and egress points.
- Details for the provision of directional signage (on and off site).
- Details of contractors' compounds, materials storage and other storage arrangements, including cranes and plant, equipment and related temporary infrastructure.
- Details of provision for all site operatives for the loading and unloading of plant, machinery and materials.
- Details of provision for all site operatives, including visitors and construction vehicles for parking and turning within the site during the construction period.
- Routing agreements for demolition traffic.
- Details of the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate.
- Waste audit and scheme for waste minimisation and recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works.
- Management measures for the control of pest species as a result of demolition and/or construction works.
- Detail of measures for liaison with the local community and procedures to deal with any complaints received.

The management strategy shall have regard to BS 5228 "Noise and Vibration Control on same Construction and Open Sites" during the planning and implementation of site activities and operations.

The approved Demolition Management Plan shall also be adhered to throughout the demolition period and the approved measures shall be retained for the duration of the works.

Reason: To protect the residential amenity of existing and future residents from the development in accordance with Policy 31 of the County Durham Plan and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Required to be pre commencement to ensure that the whole construction phase is undertaken in an acceptable way.

6. In undertaking the development that is hereby approved:

No external construction works, works of demolition, deliveries, external running of plant and equipment shall take place other than between the hours of 0800 to 1800 on Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1400 on Saturday.

No internal works audible outside the site boundary shall take place on the site other than between the hours of 0730 to 1800 on Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1700 on Saturday.

No construction works or works of demolition whatsoever, including deliveries, external running of plant and equipment, internal works whether audible or not outside the site boundary, shall take place on Sundays, Public or Bank Holidays

For the purposes of this condition, construction works are defined as: The carrying out of any building, civil engineering or engineering construction work involving the use of plant and machinery including hand tools.

Reason: To protect the residential amenity of existing and future residents from the development in accordance with Policy 31 of the County Durham Plan and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. No development shall commence until a land contamination scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted

scheme shall be compliant with the YALPAG guidance and include a Phase 3 remediation strategy and where necessary include gas protection measures and method of verification.

Reason: To ensure that the presence of contamination is identified, risk assessed and proposed remediation works are agreed in order to ensure the site is suitable for use, in accordance with Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Required to be pre-commencement to ensure that the development can be carried out safely.

8. All remediation works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation strategy prepared by a suitably competent person. The development shall not be brought into use until a Phase 4 verification report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the remediation works are fully implemented as agreed and the site is suitable for use, in accordance with County Durham Plan Policy 32 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. No development above damp course shall be commenced until precise details of the colours and finishes for all buildings, external plant and machinery, including photovoltaic panels shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and the development carried out in accordance with agreed details.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved documents and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with County Durham Plan Policy 39 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. The mitigation measures detailed within Table 16 of the Air Quality Assessment (Reference: SRP1090-APX-ZZ-ZZ-T-J-0004-S2 Rev P01), prepared by Apex Acoustics Ltd and dated 5 May 2023, shall be fully implemented and adhered to for the duration of the construction works.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the amenity of neighbouring site occupiers and users from the impacts of the construction phases of the development having regards to Policies 6, 21, 29 and 31 of the County Durham Plan and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

11. The proposed fixed plant associated with this planning consent shall not operate between the hours of 23:00 and 07:00 at any time, with the exception of one individual unit operating a defrost cycle for no more than 5 minutes in any 15 minute period between the months November to March.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the amenity of neighbouring occupants from any noise impacts from the fixed plant having regards to Policies 6, 29 and 31 of the County Durham Plan and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. Prior to the installation of any lighting at the site, a detailed lighting scheme shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing.

Reason: In order to protect amenity and to not impact biodiversity value in accordance County Durham Plan Policies 31 and 41 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

13. Prior to the development being brought into use full details of hard and soft landscape proposals shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. Hard landscape details should include all enclosing elements, street furniture and

street lighting locations. Details of external finishing materials should include finished levels, and all construction details confirming materials, colours, finishes and fixings. Soft landscaping details should include a detailed planting plan and specification of works indicating soil depths, plant species, numbers, densities, locations inter relationship of plants, stock size and type, grass, and planting methods including construction techniques for pits in hard surfacing and root barriers and details of the maintenance of the landscaping. Details of rabbit protection should be provided. All existing or proposed utility services that may influence proposed tree planting shall be indicated on the planting plan. Thereafter, the landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area and to comply with County Durham Plan Policies 6, 29 and 39 and Parts 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

14. The development shall be carried in full accordance with the Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan (Report reference: 1829d Revision 3), prepared by Toby Fisher CEnv MCIEM Quants Environmental and dated July 2023, received by the LPA 2nd August 2023. Monitoring should be undertaken as detailed in the report in years 2, 5, 10, 20 and 30, and a Biodiversity Monitoring Report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority after each of the monitoring stages and before the end of the relevant calendar year.

Reason: In order to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance County Durham Plan Policy 41 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Required to be a pre-commencement condition as the Biodiversity Management and Monitoring Plan must be devised prior to the development being implemented.

15. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, the proposed carparks shall be laid out and cycle parking installed ready for use in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning Authority. The carparks and cycle parking shall be retained for use in perpetuity thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and highway safety in accordance with the County Durham Plan Policy 21 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

16. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved details of 10 no. passive electric vehicle charging points shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, with charging points installed to an agreed timetable. Thereafter, the charging points shall be maintained and retained in perpetuity until such a time as an active chargepoint is installed.

Reason: In order to encourage sustainable means of travel in accordance with County Durham Plan Policy 21 and Part 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

17. Within 6 months of the commencement of use of the development hereby approved the following documents shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England:
 - (i) A detailed assessment of ground conditions (including drainage and topography) of the land proposed for the replacement playing field area which identifies constraints which could adversely affect playing field quality; and
 - (ii) Where the results of the assessment to be carried out pursuant to (i) above identify constraints which could adversely affect playing field quality, a detailed scheme to address any such constraints. The scheme

shall include a written specification of the proposed soils structure, proposed drainage, cultivation and other operations associated with grass and sports turf establishment and a programme of implementation.

The approved scheme shall be carried out in full and in accordance with the approved programme of implementation. The land shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the scheme and made available for playing field use in accordance with the scheme.

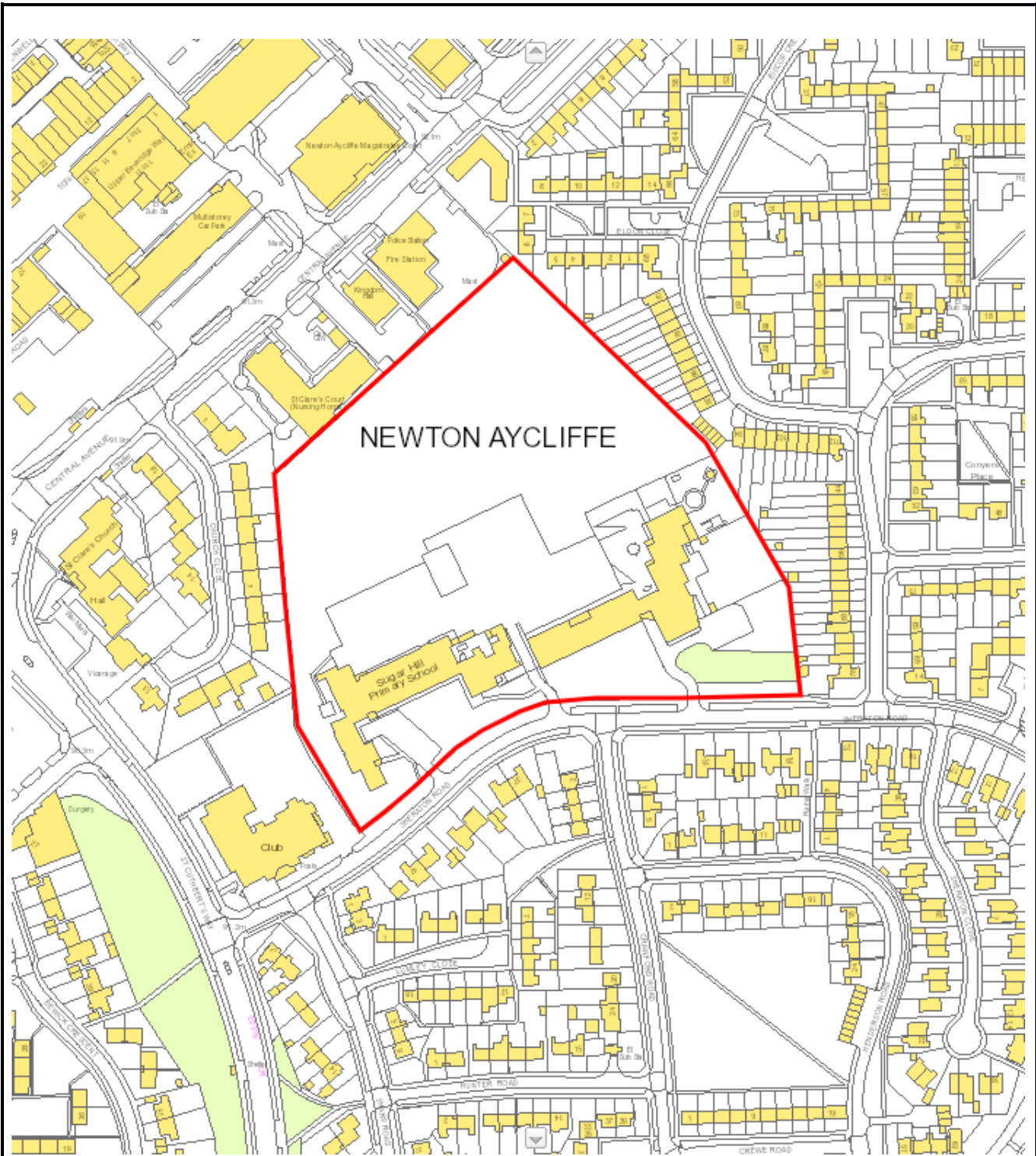
Reason: To ensure that the playing field is prepared to an adequate standard and is fit for purpose in accordance with County Durham Plan Policy 26 and Part 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

STATEMENT OF PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with Article 35(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the Local Planning Authority has, without prejudice to a fair and objective assessment of the proposals, issues raised and representations received, sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner with the objective of delivering high quality sustainable development to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area in accordance with the NPPF.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Submitted application form, plans, supporting documents and subsequent information provided by the applicant.
- The National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
- National Planning Practice Guidance notes
- County Durham Plan
- Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan
- Durham County Council Parking and Accessibility SPD Adoption Version 2023
- Statutory, internal and public consultation response



Planning Services

DM/23/02421/FPA

Construction of a new one-storey replacement school building followed by demolition of existing school buildings with associated car parking, landscaping and outdoor play space and facilities

Sheraton Road, Newton Aycliffe

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Comments

Date February 2024

Scale Not to Scale