

COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATION No:	DM/24/00834/FPA
FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:	Demolition of Blocks 1 (partial), 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10, retention of Blocks 2 & 7 and Sports Centre (Block 8), construction of a new teaching block and extension to Sports Centre, along with associated access and external works
NAME OF APPLICANT:	Durham County Council
ADDRESS:	Greenfield Academy, Greenfield Way, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 7LF
ELECTORAL DIVISION:	Aycliffe North and Middridge
CASE OFFICER:	Claire Teasdale, Principal Planning Officer 03000 261390 claire.teasdale@durham.gov.uk

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

Site

1. The 2.72 Hectare (ha) application site comprises the existing Greenfield Academy to the south west of Newton Aycliffe and east of Shildon. Locomotion The National Railway Museum at Shildon is approximately 1.6km to the west of the site with Shildon beyond, Middridge is some 900m to the north and School Aycliffe 900m to the south. The administrative boundary of Darlington Borough Council is approximately 375m to the south west of the site boundary at its closest point.
2. Immediately adjacent to the application site's boundary is the wider Greenfield Academy site, including the large, grassed open spaces / school playing fields, divided by a tree belt. The southern part of the application site includes part of a playing pitch. Three tennis courts, a double hard surfaced MUGA, and a 3G pitch are located to the immediate west.
3. Academy and school are used interchangeably within this report to describe the educational establishment.
4. To the north of the site are residential properties on Malvern Way, separated from the school by a fence and a permissive multi-user route which runs along the entire northern boundary which also forms part of the Byerley Local Nature Reserve. To the east of the site is the road Greenfield Way which separates the school from residential properties at Hallington Head and Tindale Green, accessed from Alston Crescent, with a skate park and recreational ground to the south of Tindale Green. To the south of the site are the school playing fields with open countryside beyond. To the west of the site is also open countryside.

5. Access to the Academy is from Greenfield Way to the east with a one-way looped access and egress arrangement with vehicles entering at the southern access point, driving north (alongside an area marked for drop off/pick up) to the exit point. Car parking is located to the north and east of the school development.
6. The site is not within or adjacent to any landscape designation. There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within or in the vicinity of the site.
7. There are no ecological designations within the proposed site, but there are sites in the vicinity. Byerley Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies to the north of the site. Simpasture Junction Local Wildlife Site (LWS) lies some 142m to the south. Some 745m to the west are Middridge Quarry geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Shildon Sidings LWS, at the closest point, with Eden Grange Pond LWS approximately 1.1km to the south west and School Aycliffe Wetland LWS some 800m to the south. The site lies within an identified SSSI Impact Risk Zone. The site lies within a nutrient neutrality constraint in respect of the catchment for the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar.
8. The site is also within the Teesmouth and Cleveland coast Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site nutrient neutrality catchment.
9. There are no designated heritage assets within 1km of the proposed site. The closest listed building is the Grade II listed Middridge War Memorial in Middridge approximately 1.1km to the north east. Some 1.3km to the south west are a group of Grade II listed buildings at Middridge Grange, these being Middridge Grange Farmhouse, Walls and Gate Piers to East of Middridge Grange Farmhouse, Outer Walls and Gate Piers to East of Middridge Grange Farmhouse and Cart Shed on rear of Middridge Grange Farm House. The Grade II Thickley wood Railway Footbridge lies approximately 1.6km to the west and 1.4km to the south east is the Grade II School Aycliffe Lane overbridge. Other listed buildings are more distant. The line of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) also known as Locomotion Way and used as a multi-user way by the public, is a non-designated heritage asset that runs to the north of the existing railway line 300m to the south of the site. 950m to the north is the Middridge Conservation Area.
10. There are no designated public rights of way within the site. A permissive multi-user route runs along the northern boundary of the site. This links to other permissive paths and definitive rights of way to the Sustrans Locomotion Way some 240m to the south. The route to the north of the application site is identified as a green corridor in the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan. Green corridors are also identified along the western and eastern boundaries. Existing playing pitches to the south of the application site are identified as local green open space in the Newton Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan.
11. The site lies within Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3 and an area of Groundwater Vulnerability on the Principal Aquifer (formerly called Major Aquifer) as defined by the Environment Agency. There are no watercourses within the site. An unnamed watercourse is located to the south east of south of the site. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 as defined by the Environment Agency. To the west of the site, on areas of open space and playing fields within the wider school site are areas within Flood Zone 2 and 3.
12. The site lies within a Coalfield Development Low Risk Area as defined by the Coal Authority. The site lies within the mineral safeguarding area for coal as defined in the County Durham Plan and upon a mineral safeguarding area for Magnesian Limestone. The line of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) is safeguarded transport

infrastructure in the County Durham Plan as the Weardale Railway Line. Two former quarries are located in the vicinity of the site. Middridge Quarry lies some 745m to the west and Old Towns Quarry is 300m to the south. Three historic landfill sites are recorded within close proximity of the site's southern boundary.

The Proposal

13. The application is for the demolition of part of the existing academy, these being Blocks 1 (partial), 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10, the retention of Blocks 2 and 7 and Sports Centre (Block 8), construction of a new teaching block and extension to the existing sports centre building, along with associated access and external works. The gross external floor space to be created by the development would be 3,925 sqm.
14. The block numbers being 1: Main block comprising English, Maths, Humanities, MFL, 2: Dining hall & Main hall, 3: Gymnasium, 4: Science and Art classrooms, 5: Science demountable, 6: Portakabins containing PE changing rooms, x2 science labs, x4 general classrooms, 7: Main reception, dance, drama and music 8: Sports block – changing rooms, sports hall and sports plant room and 9: Woodwork and Food tech classrooms.
15. Phase 1 works would comprise the construction of the new building and extension to the sports centre. Phase 2 would comprise the demolition works, however in order to facilitate construction demolition of a garage to the east of the sports hall and the northern element of the sports hall would be demolished in Phase 1.
16. The proposed three storey teaching block would be located on an existing car park in the northern part of the site whilst the extension to the sports centre building would be most northerly and closer to residential properties on Malvern Way.
17. A new three storey teaching block is proposed on the site of an existing car park in the northern part of the site, to the north of existing and retained Blocks 2 and 7. Part of the northern car park would be retained, and a cycle storage area would be relocated adjacent to it. The replacement building would comprise a rectangular three storey teaching 'superblock' building with a flat roof measuring being 51m length x 21m wide x 12.4m high. The new teaching building would comprise classrooms, toilets, staff rooms and offices and be a direct replacement for those blocks proposed to be demolished replacing them with high quality modern facilities.
18. As a result of the new teaching block, the existing car park would be relocated to the south of Blocks 2 and 7, in the location of existing Block 1 which is to be largely demolished.
19. The proposed 340 sqm extension to the sports centre would be constructed to the rear of the existing sports building located in the northern part of the site on a car parking area. The single storey rectangular extension with flat roof would measure 22m x 16m x 7.6m high for the new build element only and contain changing facilities negating the need for the current portacabin changing facilities. The extension would also house an activity studio. To the south of the existing sports block external plant is proposed. External plant is also proposed to the south of the existing access to the school. The dimensions being 7.1m x 4.1m x 3.4m high.
20. An additional playground and landscaping area is proposed to the east of Blocks 2 and 7, in place of the existing Blocks to be demolished.
21. The proposed use would continue to be for education. Community use in respect of the sporting facilities currently takes place at the site, and this would continue.

22. Capacity would not change as a result of the proposed development. The Published Admission Number (PAN) will drop to 750 allowing 150 per year group and is considered appropriate given current pupil numbers and the projected population drop of children of secondary age over the next 10 years. Current student numbers would remain at 676. The school provides education for students between 11 and 16 (years 7 to 11) as well as having provision for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) students. 48 full time staff (of which 30 are teaching staff) and 38 part time (of which 7 are teaching staff) are employed at the school.
23. Existing external sports provision would not be affected by the proposals but during construction there would be some loss to accommodate a temporary car park to the south of the existing buildings for staff, visitors and the community use during the construction period.
24. The hours of opening for the school (including community use) are 06:00 – 22:00 hours Monday to Friday and 08:00 – 16:00 hours Saturdays and Sundays. Community uses are provided during non-school hours and weekends between 16:30 – 22:00 hours Monday to Friday, and 08:00 – 16:00 hours Saturday to Sunday. The school is closed for public holidays and between Christmas and New Year.
25. Access to the site would remain as existing (access from the south and egress from the north off Greenfield Way). Alternative internal access arrangements are proposed in order to facilitate access to a new car park to the south of Blocks 2 and 7, the creation of a hammerhead to the northwest of the sports centre (Block 8) in order to enable movement for emergency vehicles, and the addition of dedicated bus lane within the site boundary. Pedestrian access to the Academy would continue to be via Greenfield Way with a diversion in place during construction. The proposed scheme has been designed to provide access for all users, including ambulant and wheelchair users.
26. As part of the current proposals, 46 cycle parking spaces for pupils are proposed including 40 long stays cycle spaces to the north and 6no. short stay cycle spaces outside the main building entrance. Monitoring of the cycle parking would be undertaken as part of the Travel Plan. Details of the cycle spaces would be required through condition.
27. During construction and demolition, a temporary staff parking accommodating 81 spaces would be provided on a grass playing field located within the southern part of the application site. The temporary car park would be relocated on the site of Blocks 2 and 7 once demolished.
28. The proposed layout has been designed to avoid the need for advanced demolition of the existing school buildings, reducing disruption to staff and pupils and to minimise the impact on existing site features and below-ground services. The development is phased to allow for teaching in the existing buildings to continue whilst the replacement buildings are constructed on site. Following construction of the new buildings the schools would decant into their new accommodation. The demolition phase would then commence and finally the completion of the provision of the playground, landscaping, and parking.
29. Options for the refurbishment of the Blocks to be retained (2 and 7) are currently being considered and so do not form part of this planning application. Should works to these blocks require planning permission then a separate planning application would be submitted. Modular classrooms no longer required would also be removed from the site.

30. The proposed phased construction and demolition works are expected to take approximately 24 months, commencing in summer 2024. The buildings would be ready to accept pupils from September 2025. This would be followed by the demolition of the existing buildings and provision of playground and planting.
31. A temporary car park and welfare facilities (contractor's compound / temporary car park) for use by the contractors for the duration of the construction period would be located on a grass playing field immediately to the south of the planning application boundary. This would be permitted development under Class A, Part 4 (Temporary buildings and uses) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and not requiring express planning permission. Originally these were proposed to be located on land on the opposite side of Greenfield Way, adjacent to a sports court with a play area (Horndale Park) and recreation ground beyond.
32. This application is being reported to the County Planning Committee because it involves major development of more than 2ha.

PLANNING HISTORY

33. The existing school buildings date from the 1960s/1970s with a number of applications between 1979 and 2020 for additional buildings, including the 2008 extension to the English block, extension to the sports hall in 2008 and a number of demountable classrooms. There has also been a number of applications granted for sports facilities and car parking.

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL POLICY

34. 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.
35. 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.
36. *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.

37. *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.
38. *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.
39. *NPPF Part 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport* – Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.
40. *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.
41. *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.
42. *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.
43. *NPPF Part 17 - Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals*. It is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation.

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

44. 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: 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)

45. *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.
46. *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.
47. *Policy 25 – Developer Contributions* – advises that any mitigation necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms will be secured through appropriate planning conditions or planning obligations. Planning conditions will be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Planning obligations must be directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
48. *Policy 26 – Green Infrastructure* – States that development will be expected to maintain and protect, and where appropriate improve, the County's green infrastructure network. Advice is provided on the circumstances in which existing green infrastructure may be lost to development, the requirements of new provision within development proposals and advice in regard to public rights of way.
49. *Policy 27 – Utilities, Telecommunications and Other Broadcast Infrastructure* – supports such proposals provided that it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts or that the benefits outweigh the negative effects; it is located at an existing site, where it is technically and operationally feasible and does not result in visual clutter. If at a new site then existing sites must be explored and demonstrated as not feasible. Equipment must be sympathetically designed and camouflaged and must not result in visual clutter; and where applicable the proposal must not cause significant or irreparable interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services or other instrumentation in the national interest.
50. *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 non renewable 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).

51. *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.
52. *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.
53. *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.
54. *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.
55. *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 waste water 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.
56. *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.

57. *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.
58. *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.
59. *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.
60. *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.
61. *Policy 46 – Stockton and Darlington Railway* – States development which impacts upon the historic route of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) of 1825, the Black Boy and Haggerleases branch lines and the Surtees Railway, together with their associated structures, archaeological and physical remains and setting, will be permitted where the proposal: seeks to reinstate a legible route or enhance any physical remains and their interpretation on the ground, and otherwise respects and interprets the route(s) where those remains no longer exist; safeguards and enhances access (including walking and cycling) to, and alongside, the route, branch lines and associated structures, archaeological remains and their setting; does not encroach upon or result in the loss of the original historic route(s), damage the trackbed excepting archaeological or preservation works, or prejudice the significance of the asset; and does not prejudice the development of the S&DR as a visitor attraction or education resource.
62. *Policy 56 – Safeguarding Mineral Resources* – states that planning permission will not be granted for non-mineral development that would lead to the sterilisation of mineral resources within a Mineral Safeguarding Area. This is unless it can be demonstrated that the mineral in the location concerned is no longer of any current or potential value, provision can be made for the mineral to be extracted satisfactorily prior to the non-minerals development taking place without unacceptable adverse impact, the non-

minerals development is of a temporary nature that does not inhibit extraction or there is an overriding need for the non-minerals development which outweighs the need to safeguard the mineral or it constitutes exempt development as set out in the Plan. Unless the proposal is exempt development or temporary in nature, all planning applications for non-mineral development within a Mineral Safeguarding Area must be accompanied by a Mineral Assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the mineral resource beneath or adjacent to the site of the proposed development.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:

Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2036 (2017)

63. *Policy GANP CH1 – Landscape Character and Townscape* – developments must respect the landscape character of the parish and its settlements, as defined within the Great Aycliffe Heritage and Character Assessment (December 2015) and incorporate features which contribute to the conservation, enhancement or restoration of local features. In particular, new development should, where appropriate: 1. Maintain existing hedgerows, trees and woodland and encourage the planting of new trees and hedgerows. Where new trees are proposed these should be appropriate to the site location and disease resistant species. 2. Accommodate and provide tree lined avenues on main thoroughfares to continue the existing character already in place across the parish. The long term maintenance of the tree lined avenues will be agreed through a legal agreement and/or through the adoption process. 3. Ensure green open space is provided within the development site to maintain the Beveridge ‘vision’ for the new town of Aycliffe.
64. *Policy GANP CH2 – Protection of Accessible Local Green Space Designations* – states in order to protect the ‘vision’ of Lord Beveridge local green space will be protected in Great Aycliffe as defined in the Plan. New development that would change the character of accessible local green space will only be permitted if the applicant could demonstrate that very special circumstances exist that would justify such an exception. 1. the Applicant can demonstrate that such loss is related to essential infrastructure works required by a service utility which cannot be accommodated elsewhere; or 2. the proposals involve the provision of public off street parking provision in an area with recognised on street parking congestion. Where off street provision is proposed it will need to be designed in accordance with the principles set out in the GANP 3. the proposal will have a direct community benefit and this outweighs the harm that would otherwise result from the loss of the green space in question. Special circumstances will have to be argued on their individual merits having regard to the general desirability of retaining public access and the openness of such areas.
65. *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 an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by better provision in terms of quantity and/or quality in a suitable location; the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss or the development can help alleviate extensive, long-term on street parking problems for residents and delivery vehicles, provided this does not result in the loss of playing fields or sports facilities. In all cases, development undertaken must preserve and not detract from the character, heritage and appearance of the area and its surroundings.

66. *Policy GANP CH4 – Protecting Heritage Assets* – proposals affecting Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments or the Conservation Area of Aycliffe Village and their settings must preserve and, wherever possible, seek to enhance their significance. New developments should seek to avoid any significant adverse impacts on Heritage Assets and the Conservation Area of Aycliffe Village whether by nature of their height, scale or bulk, position, or by poor design, or by affecting the settings in a way that would compromise these assets.
67. *Policy GANP E1 – Green Corridors* – states developments that ensure the continuation and enhancement of green corridors for wildlife, multi-functional green space and tree lined avenues will be preferred and encouraged. Planning permission will not be granted for developments which would destroy or impair the integrity of green corridors including roads, old railway lines, cycleways, interlinked pockets of open space and natural or semi-natural vegetation including Demon’s Beck at Aycliffe Village.
68. *Policy GANP E4 – Existing Tree Retention and Removal* – 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. New development proposals will be expected to have regard to the local distinctive landscape character of Great Aycliffe and in particular to retain tree lined avenues where they exist. 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. Planting that contributes to the biodiversity of the area and supports green corridors is particularly encouraged. Proposals should be accompanied by an indicative planting scheme to demonstrate an adequate level of sustainable planting can be achieved and maintained in the future.
69. *Policy GANP E5 – Protection of existing trees within new development* – proposals for new development will be expected 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. Residential or commercial development proposals where trees are present should be accompanied by a tree survey and tree protection plan and where necessary an arboricultural impact assessment. These should clearly identify the trees, and root protection areas, and state how the health of the trees on the site will be protected during demolition and construction, including that of installing utilities, drainage and landscaping and in the long-term after construction. All proposals under this policy must meet British Standards 5837:2012 ‘Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction’.
70. *Policy GANP EE3 – Promoting Business Energy Efficiency* – initiatives which would enable local businesses to develop renewable and low carbon energy will be accepted where: 1. They are subordinate to the primary business, 2. There are no unacceptable impacts on the scale character and amenity of the immediate area, and 3. They are in accordance with the principles established in the Great Aycliffe Character and Heritage Assessment 2015 and with the Green Spaces policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.
71. *Policy GANP T1 – Parking Impacts on Existing Infrastructure 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.

72. *Policy GANP T2 – Design Finish for Off-Street Parking in Visually Sensitive Areas* – states where the provision of off-street parking will result in the loss of important local space in visually significant areas that have been identified with significant parking problems with only limited scope to provide off-street parking then geo-grid, or similar permeable design material, type approach must be used to allow grass to be the dominant final finish. Consideration should be given to changes to flood risk as a result of increased parking provision and a flood risk assessment should be undertaken and SuDS incorporated if appropriate.
73. *Policy GANP T3 – Cycle Provision and Walking Routes* – states major development proposals must, where appropriate, provide or contribute toward, safe well lit, accessible and attractive cycle routes and public footpaths. New routes may be provided within the site and/or off site depending on local circumstances and should wherever appropriate, connect to local schools and shops and maintain or improve access to the countryside. Alternatively, this may include upgrading existing cycle routes and public footpaths. Conversely, development proposals which limit the potential to enhance local cycle or public footpaths will not be permitted.
74. *Policy GANP CIL1 - Developer Contributions* – requires all development must provide the necessary and appropriate new facilities, relevant and related to the development, on site, or contribute to off-site facilities, as required by either means of planning conditions, a S106 agreement or use of community infrastructure levy as appropriate. Any necessary facilities and/or infrastructure will be secured by negotiation on a case by case basis taking viability into account.

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 Adopted Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan)

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

STATUTORY RESPONSES:

75. *Highway Authority* – has raised no objections advising that from a Highways perspective, the proposal is acceptable. Officers advise that the proposed amendments to the school would not result in any additional pupil or staff numbers above those already permitted, and so there should be no material impact to the number of trips to and from the site each day. In addition, the existing accesses are to be retained with a separate 'In' access and 'Out' access so there would be no material change to access arrangements. It is noted that there are 97 existing parking spaces on site. These would be relocated and reconfigured to provide 100 new spaces. This would include 5 active EV charging spaces, and 5 accessible spaces. This level of provision would be in accordance with the 2023 Parking and Accessibility SPD. The applicant should also provide 20 passive EV spaces as required by the SPD. Officers advise swept path analysis of the proposed servicing arrangements has been provided and show that these work safely with the servicing vehicles able to enter and leave the site in a forward gear. Overall, it is not considered that there would be any material impact on the local highway network as a result of this development, nor would there be any impact on road safety, and so the development is considered to be in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 115. No concerns are raised regarding the location of the temporary compound from a Highways perspective.

76. *Drainage & Coastal Protection (Lead Local Flood Authority)* – does not object. Officers confirm that following submission of additional information, the proposal complies with Council Policy and National Standards in providing a sustainable surface water management solution for the proposed development. Officers advise that a condition requiring the surface water management scheme for the proposed development is implemented in accordance with the submitted Drainage Philosophy. .
77. *Northumbrian Water* – does not object but advises that at this time the planning application does not provide sufficient detail with regards to the management of foul and surface water from the development for Northumbrian Water to be able to assess its capacity to treat the flows from the development. A condition is therefore requested requiring the submission of a detailed scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water from the proposed development.
78. *Sport England* – raises no objection to the application as it is considered to meet exception 4 of its Playing Fields Policy and to accord with Paragraph 103 of the NPPF subject to conditions securing reinstatement of the playing field lost during the construction phase of works. An informative is also recommended advising that a restoration scheme for playing field land is undertaken by a specialist turf consultant and the applicant should be aiming to ensure that any new or replacement playing field is fit for its intended purpose and should have regard to relevant Sport England guidance and that of the National Governing Bodies. Sport England notes that the proposed new school buildings do not involve the loss of playing field as they are constructed within the school's existing built footprint and areas currently used as car parking. Working within such tight confines does necessitate the creation of a temporary parking area for construction workers and school staff to the south of the school's footprint on the northern edge of the playing field. Sport England note that the proposed temporary incursion into the northern part of the playing field has increased in extent as it now also accommodates the contractor's compound. Nevertheless, they previously raised no objection on the basis that this would be a temporary loss with the playing field restored once the main construction and demolition works were complete. This principle still holds true subject to the imposition of an (amended) restoration condition.
79. *Natural England* – raises no objection advising that based on the plans submitted it considers that the proposed development would not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes. General advice is provided on the consideration of local sites, priority habitats and species, Sites of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zones and other natural environment issues.

INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

80. *Spatial Policy* – has raised no objections to the proposals identifying policies of importance to the assessment of the application. Officers note that this proposal involves the part redevelopment of an existing education site. The principle of what is proposed is considered to be acceptable, and the main issues relate to ensuring compliance with matters of detail in relation to design, amenity, trees, landscape, and ensuring sustainable transport options. Overall, there are no Policy objections to the development proposed.
81. *Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Air quality)* – raise no objection. Officers initially made a number of comments, and the air quality assessment was revised to incorporate previous consultation advice in relation to air quality concerns, the assessment describes suitable mitigation measures, which if followed would provide suitable protection for sensitive receptors in relation to dust control. Should planning permission be granted then it should be ensured that all dust mitigation

measures detailed in the Air Quality Assessment, are fully implemented during the demolition and construction phase of the development. The submitted Dust Management Plan was updated to reflect the latest Air Quality Assessment as requested by Officers.

82. *Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Nuisance)* – has raised no objections to the proposals having undertaken a technical review of information submitted in relation to the likely impact upon amenity in accordance with the relevant TANs (Technical Advice Notes) to assist in consideration of amenity. Officers advise that the information submitted demonstrates that the application complies with the thresholds stated within the TANS. This would indicate that the development would not lead to an adverse impact. Due to the site being an existing/established school Officers main concerns would be impact from the demolition/construction works, particularly from noise and dust. It is noted a dust management plan and a construction method statement have been submitted. Officers support the implementation of these documents in in order to help control/manage relevant impacts to nearby residents and it is suggested that adherence to the documents is conditioned. It is assumed permitted construction operating times would be conditioned. Officers advise that a plan has been submitted which demonstrates new lighting would have minimal impact on the locality and suggest a condition requiring adherence to the submitted plan.
83. Officers note that the submitted noise assessment suggests noise from the demolition/construction phases would be controlled via a construction management which Officers agree. Due to the fixed plant not being known at this stage the assessment has not been able to establish specific levels as stipulated within BS4142:2019. Further details of fixed plant should be submitted including manufacturers' specification including sound power/pressure levels and a third octave frequency spectrum if available. Details of the proposed location of the plant should also be included. Officers confirm that this can be required through condition. Officers advise that based on the information submitted with the application, that the development is unlikely to cause a statutory nuisance.
84. *Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Contaminated Land)* – Officers have assessed the available information submitted with the application and during consideration of the application, and historical maps with respect to land contamination and raise no objection. An informative relating to if unforeseen contamination is encountered is recommended.
85. *Ecology* – raise no objection. Officers consider that the ecological data is sufficient to inform the application and a biodiversity net gain is achieved, with the rules of the metric satisfied. A bat roost was found in building 3 and no works that impact that roost should take place until a Natural England licence is in place; this should form a condition on any planning permission. The provision of bat, bird and invertebrate boxes should be included as a condition and bird boxes should include opportunities for swifts. It is stated that the Council has a preference for integrated boxes.
86. *Landscape* – has raised no objections to the proposals noting that indicative soft landscape proposals have been provided. Officers advise that detailed proposals, along with an associated management plan should be provided in due course. This can be required through condition.
87. *Aboricultural (Trees)* – raise no objection considering the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) to be comprehensible and is acceptable. The AIA identifies two trees (24 and 94) for removal irrespective of the proposals due to their poor condition. Six category B trees and 18 category c trees

have been identified for removal to accommodate the development. Of these, 11 are young Birch and Maple of a maximum height of 4m. The remainder comprise Whitebeam, Rowan, Alder, Cherry and Birch of between 6-8m in height. Whilst the loss of 18 trees may appear significant locally, given their specific location, form and visibility within the site, their loss would not have a significant negative impact on the visual amenity of the area. As part of the design, significant replacement tree planting has been identified in mitigation for those specimens lost. All tree protection measures should be installed as detailed in the AIA.

88. *Design and Conservation* – raise no objections noting that the proposed development site lies within the existing Greenfield Academy campus. The proposed demolition of the existing buildings would not be opposed from a design and conservation perspective. The approach to new build within the existing complex of buildings would help to screen the existing blank elevations of the sports hall and present positive active frontage to the street and neighbouring residential development. With regard to design and material palette, Officers advise that the simple approach to the elevations and fenestration openings, as well as the brick colour palette, reflects that of this part of the New Town, and would not be opposed. The entrances to the building are highlighted by full building height glazed features. The fenestration reveals appear to ensure long flat elevations are avoided. Following pre-application advice, the colour of the cladding is cited as mid-grey, avoiding a stark contrast with the lighter brick.
89. *Archaeology* – has raised no objection to the proposals. Officers note that the proposed works are intended to occur within the area previously developed and any archaeological features that may have existed will have been removed by buildings and landscaping. Consequently, there are no archaeological concerns regarding this proposal.
90. *Access & Rights of Way* – raise no objection. Officers advise that there are no rights of way on or adjacent to the site so no comments. It is noted that there is a permissive multiuser route north of the site, not under the management of Durham County Council, but this should not be impacted by the development.
91. *Sustainable Travel* – raise no objection. Officers advise that the Travel Plan has been reviewed against the BSI 'National Specification for Workplace travel Plans' (PAS 500) and meets the required standard.

PUBLIC RESPONSES:

92. Prior to formal submission the applicant undertook a range of public involvement initiatives including a leaflet drop, website, and 1 no. in person event, to ensure that the proposals were widely promoted, and all local residents, businesses and other stakeholders including Councillors had an opportunity to comment on the evolving scheme. A statement of community engagement has been submitted with the application detailing the consultation undertaken.
93. The application has been advertised in the local press (the Northern Echo), by site notice and through neighbour notification letters as part of the planning procedures. Notification letters were sent to 1,757 individual properties in the vicinity of the site.
94. 4 representations have been received in response to the application, 2 objections, 1 support and 1 offering comments.

Objection

95. 2 objections have been received from local residents. One objector states that no consideration has been given to the residents of Malvern Way, the extra traffic and congestion this is going to bring to the road is unacceptable, residents are already plagued with car parking loud music from the cars and idling engines sometimes going on for an hour or more, so much for the green agenda. The second objector requests that consideration is given to the relocation of the bins on the northern edge of the proposal. It is stated that they would be directly next to homes and worries are expressed about smell, noise and pests, in particular, rats. It is hoped that an alternative location can be found away from residential neighbours for this facility.

Support

96. 1 letter of support has been received from a local resident and former student at the school considering that this is a much needed improvement to the school.

Representation

97. 1 representation offering comments has been received. Whilst supportive of the application one resident states that the speed of traffic on this road known Greenfield Way is not reduced enough outside. The Council is asked to consider making a reduction of 20mph on the approach or introduce speed restrictors along that stretch of road. Whilst it is understood that this is not a material consideration it is an important part of the development consideration needs to be given to road safety.

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:

98. The Durham County Council Plan 2020-2023 includes the ambition *'to safeguard, enhance and provide a wide range of educational facilities'*.
99. The Proposed Development will provide replacement educational and sporting facilities for Greenfield Academy. The application is for the demolition of existing Blocks 1 (partial), 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10 and the construction of a new three storey teaching block and extension to the Sports Centre (Block 8), with associated access and external works. The existing blocks to be demolished have reached the end of their design life and the replacement will facilitate a more functional, welcoming and efficient layout for the school's everyday operations and needs. The application is critical in enabling the delivery of the proposals for Greenfield Academy and securing the long term future of the school.
100. For the avoidance of doubt, the refurbishment proposals for Blocks 2 and 7 to be retained do not form part of this application. Should planning permission be required for any part of the refurbishment works, a separate application will be submitted to Durham County Council.
101. In terms of the proposed phasing, works are scheduled to commence September 2024, with Phase 1 (September 2024 to September 2025) consisting of the new build construction, and Phase 2 (September 2025 to August 2026) the demolition work and landscaping.

102. The Applicant team has engaged with the LPA and statutory consultees prior to the submission of the planning application and throughout the determination period to address consultee feedback and to ensure that the proposals are appropriate for the local area.
103. The proposals will result in significant benefits to the local community, as summarised below:
- The development will provide enhanced, modern, high-quality education and sporting facilities, in accordance with Objective 4 and Objective 14 of the Local Plan.
 - The proposals will result in a betterment to the sporting provision onsite through a 340 sqm extension to the existing Sports Centre, allowing for separate male and female changing rooms to be accommodated within the existing building. This arrangement provides an improved user experience for pupils, staff, and the community use visitors, being more conveniently located than the existing portacabin arrangement 100m from the Sports Centre and as such, improving the Site's functionality for daily use.
 - The development will replace the existing energy inefficient buildings, with modern teaching and sporting facilities which incorporate measures to reduce energy consumption and utilise renewable energy sources. The new build elements target NZCiO (Net Zero Carbon in Operation) and have been designed to Part L Compliance, with measures including the provision of photovoltaics (PVs) and air source heat pumps.
 - The proposed landscaping scheme facilitates an overall enhancement to the visual appearance of the Site and the user experience and work to achieve a 10.24% net gain in habitat units and a 40.31% net gain in hedgerow units, in accordance with national requirements.
104. Overall, the proposals will have significant benefits for local residents, pupils and their parents, staff, and community users of the Site, through improving the education and community sport facilities offered in the area. Approval of this application is essential to facilitating the delivery of the new school development and realising the associated benefits. In addition, and as outlined in the planning submission documents, the proposals are compliant with relevant policies in the adopted Local Plan and the NPPF and therefore we respectfully request that planning permission be granted without delay.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

105. 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 taken into account 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, residential amenity, access and traffic, layout and design, locational sustainability of the site, energy efficiency, contamination and coal mining risk, flooding and drainage, landscape and trees, ecology, nutrient neutrality, open space and recreational amenity, cultural heritage, other matters and public sector equality duty.

The Principle of the Development

106. 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) comprise the statutory development plan relevant to this proposal and are 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.
107. 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.
108. The Council 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.
109. The proposal is for the construction of a new three storey teaching block, an extension to the existing sports centre building, demolition of existing buildings along with associated access and external works. The proposed development would provide an improved educational facility for the local community.
110. The application relates to an existing site in educational use located within the settlement of Newton Aycliffe. It is not allocated for any specific use in the development plan. CDP Policy 6 is relevant and contains criteria which all new development has to accord with. Development is permissible provided the proposal accords with all relevant development plan policies.
111. CDP 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.

112. The application site is not allocated for educational use within the CDP but benefits from an established educational use. The site is located in a built-up area and therefore the acceptance criteria associated with CDP Policy 6 are engaged. Many of the criteria associated with CDP Policy 6 are considered in more detail elsewhere in this report. However, with regard criterion a), the site is an existing school, and currently co-exists with neighbouring land uses which are predominantly residential to the north and north east, with open countryside to the west and playing fields to the south. The use of the land has therefore been demonstrated to be compatible with the existing adjacent land uses, subject to the new location of specific facilities and assessment against other relevant policies.
113. With regard to Criteria b) the proposal would redevelop the existing school site and its footprint. It would not result in coalescence with any settlement or comprise backland or a form of ribbon development.
114. With respect to criterion c) given the existing use of the site for education, it is not accessible open space itself. The typology of the Academy and surrounding playing fields are identified as 'education' in the County Durham Open Space Needs Assessment (OSNA). The playing fields are identified as local green open space the GANP. The proposed development would result in the temporary loss of a grass playing pitch during the construction phase for use as a car park for staff and visitors. The application is accompanied by an open space assessment, and this is considered below. The site of the proposed temporary site compound would be located at Horndale Park on land identified as 'park and recreation ground'.
115. The application site borders Byerley LNR to the north which is identified as accessible natural green space in the OSNA. The proposed expansion of the sports centre would bring development closer to the LNR. Ecology is considered below and the impact of

developing the application site in terms of any increased recreational pressure on, or effect on the integrity of the LWS. It is not expected that there would be an impact upon heritage value given the location of the application site, but this is also considered below. The proposed planting and landscape features would add ecological value. Continuing the use of the site for education would maintain the character in the locality.

116. With respect to criterion d) the scheme presents an opportunity to provide a cohesive redevelopment of the school facilities, replacing aged buildings with a high quality, contemporary replacement. The design of the new teaching building and extension to the sports centre block are appropriate to the site and adequately takes account of its setting and wider character of the area, with reference to the surrounding architecture. The layout and location of the proposed new build elements, along with the proposed movement strategy, would result in an improved layout from an efficiency perspective, with easier connectivity and movement for day-to-day needs for the school, thereby providing functional benefits. The teaching block would be three storey and the sports block single storey. The teaching block would be predominantly buff facing brick with grey cladding on the upper storeys. External glazed doors, windows and curtain walling will be polyester powder coated aluminium double glazed units. These are considered to be a positive choice and in keeping with its surroundings.
117. Criteria e) and f) relate to transport and access. The site is located within a primarily residential area and with existing bus stops in the vicinity. The existing highway access arrangements on to Greenfield Way would continue to be used and the existing school site will have traffic movements associated with it currently. The site is accessible by sustainable modes of transport. There are two bus stops on Greenfield Way, one on each side of the road, between 25m and 65m from the exit to the school providing regular access to/from Darlington and Bishop Auckland and into Newton Aycliffe. There are also footpaths connecting the site to the residential areas to the north for walking and cycling. The site would continue to have a pedestrian access point onto Greenfield Way. In addition to this, there is dedicated school transport provision consisting of taxis, mini buses and coaches provided for pupils. The proposed development has been designed to minimise walking distances from the surrounding areas to the building entrances and the routes from the surrounding highway lead directly to areas of cycle storage. Approximately a 16 minute walk away is Newton Aycliffe Station, providing access to Northern services. A travel plan has been submitted with the application. In addition, there would be adequate parking provision for staff and buses and would not have an adverse impact on the highway network. Access and traffic are considered below, and a Traffic Assessment has been submitted with the application.
118. With respect to criteria g) the development would be a direct replacement to existing educational facilities at the site and would not negatively impact or result in the loss in neighbourhood facilities or services. The proposal would replace existing, outdated facilities on the and provide modern, fit for purpose and improved replacement facilities for a valued community asset.
119. With respect to criteria h) the development is within Flood Zone 1 being at a very low risk of fluvial flooding and does not include the Flood Zone areas 2 and 3 to the west as they are located out with the boundary. A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been submitted and a suitable drainage scheme would be provided. In terms of criteria i) the proposal would involve the redevelopment of brownfield land. With regard to criteria j) the development would not align with any specific regeneration initiatives. However, the development would provide modern high quality educational facilities for the local community, as well as energy efficient buildings with carefully considered drainage and green energy systems on previously developed land in accordance with criteria h), i) and j).

120. Given that the site is already in educational use as a secondary school, the principle is already well established, and the key issue is ensuring the proposal is fully compliant with the criteria of Policy 6 as well as other CDP policies that deal with design, amenity and transport to ensure that the current levels of amenity enjoyed by neighbouring properties is maintained. It is considered that the development of the application site would accord with CDP Policy 6 as it is considered to be located within the built up area, would not significantly affect the landscape character and lies within acceptable distances to local community facilities, services and sustainable transport links. The reasoning behind this judgement is set out in the consideration of the scheme against the relevant criterion of the Policy in later sections of this report.
121. The site is an existing educational establishment but with facilities no longer fit for purpose. Paragraph 99 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of sufficient 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. This reflects wider Government educational policy. In essence a modernised school and revamped site would deliver wider community benefits and can be viewed favourably in terms of the requirements of CDP Policy 6, along with other policy requirements of the CDP. Although no additional pupil places are proposed, an improved teaching provision would be provided.

Residential Amenity

122. 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 taking into account 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).
123. CDP 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. Permission will not be granted for locating of sensitive land uses near to potentially polluting development. Similarly, potentially polluting development will not be permitted near sensitive uses unless the effects can be mitigated.
124. There are residential properties on Malvern Way to the north of the site, separated from the school by a fence and permissive multiuser route. Five properties on Malvern

Way lie to the north of the multiuser route. Distances between the site boundary and those properties range between approximately 12m and 18m. To the east of the site is the road Greenfield Way which separates the school from residential properties at Hallington Head and Tindale Green (referred to as residential dwellings off Alston Crescent in the submitted Air Quality Assessment) the closest property on each being 50m from the application. There are no residential properties to the south and west of the site. To the south are the school playing fields with open countryside beyond and to the west there is also open countryside.

125. During construction the northern part of the site would be surrounded by hoarding segregating the proposed construction areas and associated material laydown areas, waste segregation area and site security from the rest of the school. Access and egress would be as existing via the existing one-way entrance off Greenfield Way. During demolition hording would be erected around the buildings to be demolished and the southern vehicular access to the site would be used as an access and egress thus allowing the new teaching block and retained buildings to be used. This would move activity away from the properties at Malvern Way but would bring activities closer to Tindale Green.
126. During construction and demolition, the proposed hours of working are 08:00 to 18:00 hours Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturdays with due time considerations for offloading between these times. Deliveries will not be accepted outside these times. It is not proposed to work on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.
127. A Construction Method Statement (CMS) has been submitted with the application. This identifies matters to address potential impacts arising from site works, preparation, and construction. It also identifies appropriate mitigation measures to protect nearby sensitive receptors and the local environment. Matters covered in the CMS include: the construction access, parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors; loading and unloading of plant and materials and their storage; erection and maintenance of security hoarding; wheel washing facilities and measures to control and monitor the omission of dust and dirt during construction, HGV routeing; measures to protect existing footpaths and verges; measures to prevent earth movement and ensure land stability during construction; site lighting, noise and vibration, and communication with local residents and properties.
128. Through conditions, adherence with the CMS would be secured and a demolition plan would be required to be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of demolition works.

Noise and dust

129. A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of the application. The assessment provides baseline data for the existing acoustic environment around the site and a consideration of the potential noise from the development against British Standards and the Council's Technical Advice Notes (TANs). Background sound levels have been measured at a position considered representative of the nearest identified noise-sensitive receptors to the north (closest to the site) and those to the east. Based on the statistical analysis results, the background sound level considered representative of the daytime and night time periods. It is noted that the noise environment is dominated by road traffic on Greenfield Way. The Assessment identifies that potential for noise impact during the construction stage may be managed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan. In order to reduce the impact of construction appropriate methods of mitigation should be considered. Measures such as adhering to operating hours, good maintenance of construction equipment, appropriate construction methods to minimise noise and vibration,

silencers or soundproof enclosures on construction equipment utilised and properly maintained. The Assessment also recognises the use of making positive contact with local residents and providing information on the construction phases and durations. The Assessment considers that such measure should be sufficient to ensure the noise impacts from construction are kept to a minimum. Plant noise limits at the nearest residential receptors have been identified based on representative daytime and night time background sound levels and a detailed assessment of noise arising from any fixed plant may be undertaken once plant information is available, which may be controlled by a planning condition. A detailed assessment of noise arising from any fixed plant may be undertaken once plant information is available, which may be controlled by a planning condition. Overall, the Assessment concludes that based on the mitigation and noise limits proposed, it is considered national and local policy aims would be satisfied.

130. Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Nuisance Action) Officers advise that their main concerns would be impact from the demolition/construction works, particularly from noise and dust but agree with the submitted Dust Management Plan and Construction Method Statement in terms of preventing nuisance related matters. Furthermore, officers consider that the application complies with the thresholds stated within the TANS. This would indicate that the development would not lead to an adverse impact. Officers note that the submitted noise assessment suggests noise from the demolition/construction phases would be controlled via a construction management. In order to assess noise impact from the proposed fixed plant a background survey was undertaken to establish relevant background levels for day and night time. As the specific details are not known at this stage the assessment has not been able to establish specific levels as stipulated within BS4142:2019. Further details of fixed plant should be submitted including manufactures specification including sound power/pressure levels and a third octave frequency spectrum if available, location and compliance with a condition setting noise levels. The recommended noise limits can be secured by condition. Planning conditions would also require adherence to the submitted Construction Method Statement which, amongst other matters, control the hours of construction, as recommended by Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Nuisance Action) Officers.

Air Quality

131. An Air Quality Assessment has been submitted in support of the application. The assessment provides a baseline analysis, details of assessment methodology, legislation and policy and consideration of the potential impacts. The Assessment identifies that during the construction and demolition works, there is the potential for air quality impacts as a result of fugitive dust emissions from the site. The impacts were assessed against relevant methodology and assuming good practice dust control measures are implemented, the residual significance of potential air quality impacts from dust generated by demolition, earthworks, construction and trackout activities are predicted to be not significant. Air quality impacts from traffic exhaust emissions associated with vehicle movements for the construction/demolition works have been assessed against the relevant screening criteria. Due to the scale and nature of the proposal, an assessment of construction/demolition phase vehicles has been scoped out. The Assessment concludes that following a review of local air quality, in accordance with guidance from EPUK/IAQM, the impact of the development can be described as 'not significant' assuming adequate mitigation measures are in place. Proposed mitigation measures include The Assessment concludes it has demonstrated that the proposed development would accord with national planning policy and would not lead to an unacceptable risk from air pollution and that there are no material reasons in relation to air quality why the proposed scheme should not proceed.

132. A Dust Management Plan (DMP) has also been submitted with the application which sets out the proposed approach to managing dust emissions arising from the proposed development including the key roles and responsibilities over the construction period. The DMP considers the results of the site specific dust risk assessment and relevant guidance and comprises recommendations for mitigation measures appropriate for the site given the results of the risk assessment.
133. It is identified that prior to site clearance works on-site a minimum 2.4 metre high solid hoarding would be erected on all site boundaries. The site's layout would ensure that the dust increasing/causing activities and machinery would be located away as far as practically possible from off-site sensitive residential receptors to the north and east of the Site's boundary. The DMP notes that wheel washing facilities would be used on-site, as well as road sweeping to maintain highway condition, and that suitable measures would be taken to ensure that any liquid of a potentially hazardous nature on-site is suitably controlled in line with relevant regulations to avoid contaminants reaching watercourses or ground water. It is also confirmed that appropriate procedures and practices relating to air quality and dust control would be incorporated into employee inductions, with toolbox tasks delivered to all operatives to ensure that all aspects of the DMP are understood and put into practice.
134. Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Air Quality) Officers have considered the proposals and raise no objections following submission of an updated air quality assessment. Through conditions adherence to the submitted Air Quality Assessment and Dust Management Plan would be ensured and Officers advise that this would provide suitable protection for sensitive receptors in relation to dust control.

Lighting

135. Temporary site lighting would be required during construction and demolition. This would be designed to be low-level to aid site safety and access and be sensitively located as detailed in the submitted Construction Method Statement.
136. Following comments from Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Nuisance Action) Officers regarding details of lighting being required through condition, details were submitted along with a lighting calculation. External lighting is proposed on both new buildings, car parking areas and surrounding areas within the school. The submission advises that the lighting assessment shows there would be no light spill onto the surrounding properties. Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Nuisance Action) Officers advise that the submitted lighting plan demonstrates new lighting would have minimal impact on the locality and adherence to the submitted plan should be required through condition.
137. Lighting systems within the new buildings would be served by LED lamp technology to maximise efficiency and be designed to provide the varying levels/standards of illumination required for the different spatial functions.
138. External lighting is in place associated with the existing outdoor sports facilities (which are used for community use). The existing MUGA pitch is floodlit, and the community use of the facilities is between 17:00 – 22:00 hours Monday – Friday. This has been in place since the pitch was built in 2005 and is existing and not part of the current planning application.

Summary

139. There would likely be some disturbance to residential properties during construction and demolition operations, but these can be mitigated through appropriate conditions and implementation of the submitted Construction Management Statement along with mitigation measures set out in the submitted DMP and DAP. This disturbance would be time limited and necessary to provide new educational facilities. Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Officers do not envisage that the demolition of the proposed buildings would have a significant impact on the locality providing relevant good practice and guidance are adhered to. A demolition plan would be required through condition. Overall, Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Officers have no objection subject to conditions where appropriate.
140. The proposal is for the same use as is currently in place and is therefore consistent with its school/educational use and also neighbouring uses which are residential. Residents living around the school will currently experience some disturbance from the existing school, but this is to be expected and residents will be accustomed to this. The sports centre would be extended 16m in the direction of existing residential properties on Malvern Way bringing the development closer to those, but with a separation distance of between 15m and 24m from the proposed extension to the site boundary with the properties being between approximately 12m and 18m beyond the site boundary. The extension would accommodate changing facilities and activity studio and is not expected to generate additional impacts such as increased users and resulting in parking issues given a new staff car park is proposed as part of the redevelopment which should provide sufficient on-site parking.
141. The proposed new teaching block would be on the site of part of the northern car park. This would bring development closer to residential properties, however the main building entrances would be on the southern elevation of the building away from Malvern Way. The teaching block would be extended 21m to the north in the direction of Malvern Way bringing the development closer to those properties, but with a separation distance of between 14m and 38m from the proposed building to the site boundary and with the properties being between approximately 12m and 18m beyond the site boundary. The delivery entrance would be on the northern elevation. Given the use of the current northern car park, vehicle movements in this area are likely to be a regular occurrence.
142. The proposed playground area would be in the central part of the proposed new site layout with buildings to the north and east.
143. An objector to the proposal has raised concerns regarding proposed bins on the northern edge of the proposal and the proximity to homes with potential smell, noise and pests and requests these are relocated. A waste segregation area is identified in the northern part of the site during the construction phase only. Waste storage would be kept away from Malvern Way as much as possible within the constraints of the site ensuring correct distances are observed to existing buildings. Storage needs to be kept a safe distance from any existing buildings and buildings under construction to align with fire risk management. Covered skips would be utilised as required to prevent windborne disturbance of lighter waste streams. Waste materials that cause an odour would not be produced on site and stored in this area during the construction/demolition phases. Waste storage would be within skips which would be removed from site once full with no accumulation of waste permitted. Burning would not be permitted on-site.
144. Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would not create an unacceptable impact on health, living or working conditions or the natural environment.

The proposals would not result in unacceptable noise, 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 in accordance with CDP Policies 29, 31 and Part 15 of the NPPF.

Access and Traffic

145. 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 refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts on development are severe. 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.
146. Policy GANP T1 relates to the parking impacts on existing infrastructure and does not permit development that includes a reliance on existing streets 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. Policy GANP T2 relates to design finish for off street parking in visually sensitive areas. GANP T3 relates to cycle provision and walking routes and where appropriate requires, where appropriate, the provision or contribution towards safe well lit, accessible and attractive cycle routes and public footpaths, provision of new routes and the upgrading of existing.
147. The proposals would not result in any increase to the requirements for school transport provisions for eligible pupils compared to the existing situation. No changes are proposed to the existing and established vehicular access and egress to the school from Greenfield Way. Alternative internal access arrangements are proposed in order to facilitate access to a new car park to the south of Blocks 2 and 7, the creation of a hammerhead to the northwest of the sports centre (Block 8) in order to enable movement for emergency vehicles. A dedicated lane for coach parking would be provided within the internal access road accommodating sufficient space and manoeuvring for the necessary school transport provisions.
148. Access to the site during school hours is primarily reserved for staff, any visitors, and school transport provisions (taxis, mini-buses and coaches), however parent drop-off and pick-up for pupils also occurs within the site. The access is available for users of the community uses outside of school operating hours. There are no changes proposed to the vehicular access arrangements, with access continuing from the southernmost access and vehicular egress at the northernmost access.
149. Currently, a shared pedestrian and cycleway is located adjacent to the vehicle egress point, and this would be retained under the proposals. During construction, a pedestrian diversion route would be formed with a new opening from Greenfield Way. The diversion would be closed prior to demolition. Cycle storage would be relocated to the retained part of the northern car park.
150. All construction and demolition traffic would observe the current entry and exit points with the one way system being observed at all times.
151. There would be no increase to the capacity of the school as a result of the proposed development and the impact on traffic flows to and from the site on completion of the development are considered to be minimal.

152. A Transport Assessment (TA) has been submitted in support of the application. The TA provides a baseline assessment of the existing situation, highway network and highways safety. Details are provided of the existing situation, proposed development, site access and parking, coach parking, delivery and service arrangements and the proposed development. Amongst other matters, the TA concludes that the proposed development would be safely connected to and integrated with the local highway network; parking provision is considered sufficient for the operation of the proposed development and in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Parking and Accessibility SPD; traffic flows associated with the proposed development can be satisfactorily accommodated on the highway network, without resulting in any severe residual impacts on the free flow of traffic; a construction method statement would be ensure that construction works would not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding community, both for the construction onsite and the transport arrangements for servicing the site; a travel plan has been prepared for the proposed development, with the intention of encouraging trips to be made by sustainable modes of transport to the site. The impact of the proposed development would not result in any increase of traffic on the highway network and the TA advises that the development can be satisfactorily accommodated on the highway network without resulting in any severe residual impacts on the free flow of traffic. Overall, the TA concludes that the proposed development would result in no unacceptable or severe impact and, as such, there is no justification for refusing the planning application on highway grounds.
153. The recently updated Parking and Accessibility SPD sets out the Council's adopted Parking Standards and is relevant to assessing the new staff car park. The SPD establishes that for Primary and Secondary Schools, there should be 1 parking space per full-time member of staff and 1 visitor space per 50 pupils. For cycle parking, short stay parking is dependent on the agreed Travel Plan and long stay cycle parking should be enclosed, secure and covered, with separate provision for staff and students. The minimum standards are 1 space per 10 pupils and 1 space per 20 members of staff. The minimum electrical vehicle parking point requirements are 5% active + 20% passive parking spaces.
154. There are currently, 97no. parking spaces across four parking areas within the site. The proposed development includes the provision of 100no. parking spaces, including 5no. disabled bays and 5no. EV charging bays. Temporary parking would be provided during construction.
155. The Council as Highways Authority has considered the application noting that there would be no increase in pupil or staff numbers so no material impact to the number of daily trips and no material change to access arrangements. Officers consider that the proposed level of car parking provision accords with the Parking and Accessibility SPD and that 20 passive EV spaces should also be provided. The applicant has confirmed that 20 passive EV parking spaces are proposed. Swept path analysis have shown that they work safely with servicing vehicles able to enter and leave the site in forward gear. Officers consider that there would not be any material impact on the local highway network as a result of this development, nor would there be any impact on road safety, and so the development is considered to be in accordance with Paragraph 115 of the NPPF.
156. A Travel Plan has also been submitted and would be implemented to encourage active travel including walking, using public transport 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. Sustainable Travel Officers raise no objection considering that the Travel Plan meets the required standard.

157. Objectors have raised issues in respect of current traffic with residents of Malvern Way being subject to car parking, loud music from the cars and idling engines sometimes going on for an hour or more. Concerns are raised that the proposed development would result in extra traffic and congestion. The current internal arrangement of the site results in some parents utilising the internal loop road for pupil drop-off and pick-up. There are Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) present on Greenfield Way, therefore some parking off site occurs on Malvern Way and Horndale Avenue associated with pupil drop-off and pick-up. Proposed amendments to the internal arrangement of the site have formalised the internal road layout to provide more efficient space for those parents that undertake pupil drop-off and pick-up within the site. It is considered the improvements may increase the number of parents undertaking pupil drop-off and pick-up within the site, therefore reducing the offsite parking demand. The development proposals would not increase the design capacity of the school from existing, therefore there would be no intensification of pupil drop-off and pick-up and no severe impact on the operation of the surrounding highway network. The submitted Travel Plan seeks to encourage active travel but although measures are in place to seek to encourage this there may be an element of car travel which cannot be prevented.
158. A person making a representation has requested that the Council consider making a reduction of 20mph on the approach to the school or introduce speed restrictions considering this to be important to road safety.
159. While there is no history of accidents on the approach road to suggest any existing road safety issue, the approach road to the school is already subject to a part time 20mph limit, which comes into force during school drop off and pick up times. This is controlled by signs at either end of the road which, when they show lights, indicates that the speed limit is 20mph.
160. This stretch of Greenfield Way is a wide road, with no active frontage, and so would not meet the criteria as set out in the Durham County Council Speed Management Strategy for a permanent 20mph limit. Given the characteristics of the road, it is not considered that a 20mph limit would be credible. This is supported by the fact that while the speed limit is currently 40mph past the site, the last recorded speed surveys on this stretch of Greenfield Way showed an average speed of just over 37mph, and an 85th percentile speed of 45mph. Notwithstanding this, the setting of a speed limit for the road is separate from the planning assessment and no impacts from the proposal which would necessitate any revision to the speed limit have been identified.
161. No objection is raised by the Local Highway Authority. Final details of car parking can be secured through planning condition. Provision or continued car parking for staff and visitors would be made during the construction and demolition phases and upon completion of the development. A temporary compound for workers would be located to the south of the site adjacent to Horndale Park which would include dedicated parking. No new or enhanced cycle routes or public footpaths are proposed but cycle storage is, and the Travel Plan promotes the use of sustainable travel. It is also noted that the school is well located to existing cycle and paths. It is considered that the proposals have been appropriately assessed through a Transport Assessment and 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 the conditions set out above the development would not conflict with CDP Policy 21 and Part 9 of the NPPF.

Layout and Design

162. 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. CDP Policy 29 outlines 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 135 of the NPPF also states that planning decisions should aim to ensure developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area and establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit.
163. Tree cover on the site is generally contained around the periphery of the site or within occasional groups around parking areas. The proposed development would require the removal of 24 trees in order to facilitate the development. The loss of trees would be compensated for through the proposed landscaping scheme. The site is fairly well screened by trees that exist along the northern boundary outside of the site application site. In addition, the orientation of the building is such that it would not be prominent from outside of the site.
164. The height of the proposed new rectangular buildings are approximately 12.4m to main parapet level for the new 3 storey teaching block and 9.5m in height for the extension to the sports building. A Design and Access Statement accompanies the application. The overall massing of the development is informed by the scale of the surroundings, the amount of proposed accommodation and the layout principles. The compact nature of the development means that the building footprint is 1,190 sqm for the teaching block and 1,110 sqm (including existing) for the sports centre. Current buildings on the site have a total footprint of approximately 7000 sqm. With the retention of approximately 2,000 sqm of accommodation in Blocks 2 and 7, the proposed accommodation footprint would be almost 2,500 sqm less than the existing. The existing schools have a total gross internal floor area of approximately 7,980 sqm across the site. The proposed gross internal floor areas are 3,290 sqm for the teaching block and 340 sqm for the extension to the sports centre (727 sqm for the existing sports centre).
165. The proposed 3 storey teaching block would be set back at between 14m and 38m from the northern site boundary and 25m from the eastern boundary. Distances from the nearest properties in Malvern Way would be greater. There would be windows on the northern elevation of the teaching block but is considered that the location of the teaching block would be at sufficient distance from neighbouring properties to the north and east of the site to ensure that the privacy of the residential properties is retained. The proposed sports centre extension would be single story and be set back from the northern site boundary at a distance between 15m and 24m.
166. The proposed layout would create a collegiate campus configuration of the three buildings (the extended sports centre, new teaching block and retained school building) around the shared entrance and car park. The design is considered the optimum spatial arrangement that takes into account both the future of the site and the operational requirements of the existing school during the construction phase.
167. In designing the proposals, a crucial factor was to ensure a logical, efficient flow and movement plan, whilst at the same time, having distinct areas for pupils and staff to accommodate. The 'superblock' arrangement stems from this key design requirement and allows for a compact and efficient building form, with all but the sports facilities in a single block, reducing circulation distances and facilitating links between

departments. This is intended to enable a better relationship between the buildings, with circulation through the site safer and quicker, representing a significant improvement on the current situation, in which staff and pupils are required to walk between the blocks throughout the day.

168. The proposal has been designed to create a cohesive design, which does not detract from the existing architecture of the site and seeks to enhance it. The proposed external materials have been chosen to compliment materials used in the locality to ensure it is in keeping with the character of the area. Given the site is currently a school impacts on landscape character would be negligible and the visual effects would be limited to within the site and surrounding residential properties. The buildings would be predominantly buff facing brick. Brick at lower levels proposed and intended to provide a durable and long lasting finish to the building to ensure that it would age well and require little maintenance. Lightweight cladding on the upper storey of the buildings is proposed to break down the massing of the block. This cladding would be recessed by 100mm compared to the brickwork and have a trapezoidal pattern to create further interest in contrasting materials. External glazed doors, windows and curtain walling would be grey polyester powder coated aluminium double glazed units. The proposed fenestration pattern is required to have predominantly square window openings to provide good levels of natural daylight and ventilation to the internal environment. Windows would be heavily recessed in order to provide depth and character to the building facades.
169. Paragraph 101(a) of the NPPF requires that planning decisions should promote public safety and take into account wider security and defence requirements. Educational establishments are specifically listed in the footnotes which states decisions should anticipate and address possible malicious threats and natural hazards, especially in locations where large numbers of people are expected to congregate. The layout and design of developments should be informed by the most up-to-date information available from the police and other agencies about the nature of potential threats and their implications. This includes appropriate and proportionate steps that can be taken to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety and security.
170. The site boundary would be defined by existing fencing and hedgerows, which would be retained. All pedestrian and vehicular access points could be secured at the site boundaries. Both the pedestrian and vehicle entrances off Greenfield Way would be open at the start and end of the school day (e.g. existing arrangements retained). All entrances would be gated and lockable and the secure line is formed by buildings and fencing. Parking areas would be access controlled. Life safety systems such as fire alarms and emergency voice evacuation systems would be provided in line with the fire strategy and Building control requirements. The fire alarm systems would incorporate class change facilities. An integrated approach would be developed for the sitewide/building security systems. Comprehensive security installations comprising intruder alarms, CCTV and access control systems would be installed to provide a secure environment for staff/pupils/visitors both during and out of normal school operating hours.
171. Design and Conservation officers raise no objections. Officers consider that the approach to new build within the existing complex of buildings will help to screen the existing blank elevations of the sports hall and present positive active frontage to the street and neighbouring residential development. Officers have no objection to the proposed design and material palette considering that it complements this part of the new town. Durham Constabulary been consulted but has not commented on the application.

172. The proposed development would positively contribute to the character and townscape of the area and would create modern well-designed buildings capable of providing and accommodating up to date educational needs. It would provide a benefit to the community and would have a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
173. 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

174. Criteria f of Policy 6 of the CDP requires that developments on unallocated sites 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. Policy 21 of the CDP 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. Policy 29 of the CDP 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 whilst ensuring that connections are made to existing cycle and pedestrian networks. Specifically, the NPPF sets out at Paragraph 109 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. At Paragraph 114 the NPPF states that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes should be taken whilst Paragraph 116 amongst its advice seeks to facilitate access to high quality public transport.
175. The proposed development would be located on a site currently occupied by an existing school in a residential area. The site currently provides access to Greenfield Way. This established access would continue to be used for all vehicular access including visitor and staff parking, coach drops and pick ups. An existing established pedestrians would also continue to be used following completion of the development which has a good network of pavements to the site to allow people to walk. A replacement car park would be provided and internal improvements to traffic flows within in the site.
176. The existing pedestrian entrance to the north of the site would be closed during construction and demolition. The alternative access would be located approximately 50m south of the existing and does not hinder the ability for students to walk to school. Cycle parking would continue to be provided on site to facilitate and encourage staff and pupils to cycle to school. In addition, there are two bus stops between 25m and 65m from the site exit.
177. In conclusion, the development would promote accessibility by a range of methods in accordance with Policies 6 criterion f, 21 and 29 of the CDP and Part 8 Paragraphs 102 and 107 and Part 9 Paragraphs 112 and 114 of the NPPF.

Energy Efficiency

178. 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. CDP Policy 29 includes a requirement for all

major new non-residential development being required to achieve Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) minimum rating of 'very good' (or any future national equivalent). GANP Policy E33 supports initiatives which would enable local businesses to develop renewable and low carbon energy provided certain criteria are met.

179. An Energy Strategy and a Net Zero Carbon Strategy have been submitted with the application. Within these documents, it is confirmed that the existing premises at Greenfield Academy are no longer fit for purposes in terms of their condition, running costs and energy efficiency. The Energy Strategy details how the proposed buildings would include a highly efficient, low-carbon scheme which anticipates to significantly reduce CO₂ emission and achieve the Department of Education's targeted Energy Use Intensity (EUI). High efficiency services equipment and façades would be selected in line with the DfE Specification requirements and would minimise the energy usage of the building. Using the Energy Efficiency hierarchy, the strategy has been developed to ensure that the proposed development is efficient and achieves the highly ambitious EUI targets. The Energy Strategy has been prepared to demonstrate that, at the concept design stage, the design team has given due consideration to the principles of energy and sustainability, and how these could be implemented for the proposed development.
180. The Strategy has been developed using the 'Be Lean, Be Clean, Be Green & Be Seen' energy hierarchy which utilises a fabric first approach to maximise reduction in energy through passive design measures. It goes on to demonstrate that the most suitable low and zero carbon (LZC) technology for incorporation into the proposed development is photovoltaics on the roof of the proposed new teaching block, extension to the sports centre and to Blocks 2 and 7 which are to be retained. In addition to the photovoltaics, air source heat pumps are deemed viable for the proposed development and, as such both heat pumps and photovoltaic panels are proposed for the development in order to offset the EUI requirements of the development. The aim is to be consistent with the drive to the electrification of heating systems and utilise heat pumps to generate heating and hot water demands. Other measures to seek to optimise energy usage include the provision of LED lighting throughout the new teaching building, high efficiency motors and demand control on most ventilation and heating systems. This demonstrates that the new building can operate without reliance upon fossil fuels and the location of the school within a residential area with good transport connections adds to the sustainability credentials of the site. The Energy Strategy also demonstrates that the development is compliant with the building Regulations Part L2 2021. Energy meters would be included to the retained buildings too to inform the school on where to target future improvements in energy and CO₂ reductions as part of a wider strategic brief.
181. The Strategy states that the aim of the project is to achieve Net Zero Carbon in Operation (NZCiO), however, due to site specific constraints of retaining some of the existing buildings, feasibility and costs, it is acknowledged that this may not be possible. Therefore, it is the aim to reduce the overall energy use intensity to as low as is practicable within the given funding and have a clear road map to NZCiO by 2050.
182. The applicant has not demonstrated that the building would achieve a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'very good' rating conflicting with the requirement of CDP Policy 29. The applicant has instead advised that on-site renewable energy is a key element to achieving NZCiO for the new building. The chosen scheme includes air source heat pumps to generate heating and hot water, with on-site offsetting via photovoltaic panels. Photovoltaic panels would be located on the roof of on the roof of the proposed new teaching block, extension to the sports centre and to Blocks 2 and 7.

183. The proposed roof mounted solar arrays would assist the school in achieving NZCiO status. CDP Policy 33 provides support for renewable and low carbon energy in appropriate locations. It is considered that the proposal would therefore accord with CDP Policy 33, GANP policy EE3 and Part 14 of the NPPF. Although there would be some conflict with CDP Policy 29 the scheme would

Contamination and Coal Mining Risk

184. Part 15 of the NPPF (Paragraphs 124, 180, 189 and 190) requires the planning system to consider remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land where appropriate. Noting that where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner. 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.
185. A Phase 1 Ground Investigation (Desk Study) was carried out and accompanies the application. The results indicate that there is medium potential source of contaminants present at the site, and these present a moderate risk to receptors, including humans, structures, controlled surface waters and ecological receptors, with the exception of potential ground gases migrating from the infilled quarry and nearby historic landfills. The Investigation includes a number of recommendations including that a ground investigation is carried out with a suitably qualified geologist or engineer supervising all works, and that this should be combined with a geotechnical investigation. A Phase II Geotechnical Site Investigation has also been submitted which amongst other matters recommends that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is undertaken prior to the commencement of groundworks. A further desk-based contamination and updated conceptual site model has also been submitted having regard to the risk of human health. This involved a desk-based review of available information to allow for the risk arising from chemical ground conditions identified at the site to be more confidently assessed, thereby allowing for the requirement or otherwise for remedial measures to be determined. This recommends that a watching brief is maintained throughout the construction process, and should any unexpected contamination be identified during redevelopment works, any groundworks will cease, and a suitably qualified consultant would be contacted. It is also recommended that construction water and dust management measures should be adopted as necessary to control site surface water and dust emissions. It is concluded that the environmental risk associated with current site and surrounding land users is considered to be low and the environmental risk to construction workers and surrounding land users during redevelopment assuming the above recommendations are adopted is considered to be low. In addition, the environmental risk to future site and future surrounding land users is considered to be low.
186. Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Contaminated Land) Officers have considered the proposals and reports submitted with the application and raise no objections in respect of land contamination. An informative relating to if unforeseen contamination is encountered is recommended.
187. The site lies within a Coalfield Development Low Risk Area. A Coal Mining Risk Assessment is therefore not required. Notwithstanding this, the applicant has considered coal mining legacy matters as stated above. The Coal Authority has considered the development in respect of coal mining risk and raises no objections. The Coal Authority has advised that should planning permission be granted then it

would be necessary to include its Standing Advice within the decision notice as an informative note to the applicant in the interests of public health and safety.

188. It is considered that the proposed development would be suitable for the proposed use and would not result in unacceptable risks which would adversely impact on the environment, human health and the amenity of local communities and it is considered that the proposals subject to appropriate conditions and appropriate mitigation would provide an acceptable standard of residential amenity in accordance with CDP Policies 32 and Part 15 of the NPPF.

Flooding and Drainage

189. Part 14 of the NPPF directs Local Planning Authorities to guard against flooding and the damage it causes. Protection of the water environment is a material planning consideration and development proposals, including waste development, should ensure that new development does not harm the water environment. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF advises 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 water pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as water quality.
190. Paragraph 173 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.
191. 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 with regard to 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 and only consider development appropriate in areas at risk of flooding where a sequential test and some instances exception test are passed, informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment
192. The site is within an area of Groundwater Vulnerability as defined by the Environment Agency. The site is entirely located within Flood Zone 1 being at a very low risk of fluvial flooding. There are no watercourses within the site but there is to the west and areas of open space and playing fields within the wider school site are areas within Flood Zone 2 and 3, indicating a greater risk of flooding from fluvial sources.
193. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), Drainage Philosophy and overall proposed drainage general arrangement details have been submitted in support of the application. The FRA concludes that the site is located within Flood Zone 1, which is categorised as having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding in any one year. The proposed uses of land 'More Vulnerable' are appropriate in this Flood Zone. Each source of potential flood risk has been assessed and this shows that the risk of flooding

to the proposed development on the existing Greenfield Academy site is generally low. However, precaution measures would suitably mitigate any future risks once the development has been fully completed. These measures include the demolition of existing buildings and re-grading levels to direct any surface water flows away from the proposals, and the installation of a positive drainage network that would direct flows from low lying areas into positive drainage infrastructure. It is noted that the existing drained area into the existing would be reduced and a separate positively drained system would take the proposed buildings and hard surfacing and discharge to the NWL sewer at greenfield rate.

194. The proposed drainage strategy for the site includes the provision of discharge of surface water from the site to the nearest available sewer subject to agreement with Northumbrian Water as is the current situation with surface water from the site. It would not be feasible or practical to discharge to ground via infiltration or to any nearby watercourse. Discharge to the sewer would be subject to agreement with NWL. Sustainable drainage features such as swales and permeable paving have been included into the scheme to provide treatment and amenity. The swales are typically located adjacent to footways to treat and convey flows.
195. NWL has raised no objections to the proposals but considers that there is not sufficient detail with regards to the management of foul and surface water from the development for NWL to be able to assess its capacity to treat the flows from the development. A condition requiring a detailed scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water is requested. Additional information has now been submitted and NWL has been reconsulted and comments are awaited.
196. Drainage and Coastal Protection Officers have no objection to the proposal having considered the additional information and consider that the proposal would comply with Council Policy and National Standards in providing a sustainable surface water management solution for the proposed development subject to a condition to implement the submitted Drainage Strategy.. Notwithstanding the comments of Drainage and Coastal Protection Officers, because NWL has requested a condition and not yet responded to the reconsultation, a condition is proposed for the submission of a detailed scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water from the development.
197. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not lead to increased flood risk, both on and off site, and through the use of SUDs 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 and Trees

198. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that 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.
199. 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. Development affecting Areas of Higher Landscape Value will only be permitted where it conserves, and where appropriate enhances, the special qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits of development in that location clearly outweigh the harm.

200. CDP Policy 40 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 benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the harm. Where development would involve the loss of ancient or veteran trees it will be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists. Proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of hedges of high landscape, heritage, amenity or biodiversity value unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the harm. Proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of, or damage to, woodland unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the impact and suitable replacement woodland planting, either within or beyond the site boundary, can be undertaken.
201. 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.
202. The site is not within or adjacent to any landscape designation. There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within or in the vicinity of the site.
203. Indicative landscaping plans have been provided to show hard and soft landscaping within the site, including playing fields, pathways and planting. Landscaping would predominantly be trees and greenspace located around the site with some designated soft social spaces and an additional playground in place of blocks to be demolished and general enhancement. Species rich grassland is proposed to the north east of the site. The proposed development would seek to balance the loss of any tree removals with new planting, though where possible, existing trees would be retained. The planting strategy ensures that extensive green infrastructure is included within the site, with a high percentage of native species to support biodiversity. As stated above existing vegetation would be retained where possible although the proposed development would require the removal of 24 to allow creation of the new teaching block and extended sports centre. 6 of the trees are considered to be of moderate quality, 18 are of low quality and 2 require removal regardless of the current proposals.
204. Proposed landscaping details and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) incorporating a Tree Protection Plan have been submitted in support of the application. The loss of trees would be compensated for through the proposed landscaping scheme and appropriate protection measures put in place for the protection of retained vegetation.
205. Landscape officers have considered the proposals and raised no objections. Conditions are recommended to confirm full details of soft landscape proposals with an associated management plan. Hard landscape details should also be submitted and include all enclosing elements, street furniture and street lighting locations.
206. Arboricultural (Trees) Officers do not object considering that the loss of the trees would not have a significant negative impact on the visual amenity of the area. Officers also note that significant tree replacement would take place in mitigation. Tree protection measures are required to be put in place.

207. The proposed development would result in the loss of some tree planting, but this would be mitigated through replacement planting across the site along with the opportunity to enhancements to the site as part of the development of the site. In addition, there would be appropriate protection of retained trees throughout the construction and demolition process. It is therefore considered that subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposal would not conflict with CDP Policies 39 and 40, Policies CH1, E4 and E5 of the GANP and Part 15 of the NPPF.

Ecology

208. Paragraph 186 of the NPPF sets out the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and providing net gains where possible and stating that development should be refused if significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for. CDP Policy 41 reflects this guidance by stating 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. 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.
209. Policy GANP E1 states developments that ensure the continuation and enhancement of green corridors for wildlife, multi-functional green space and tree lined avenues will be preferred and encouraged. Planning permission will not be granted for developments which would destroy or impair the integrity of green corridors.
210. 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 in order 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.
211. There are no ecological designations within the proposed site, but there are sites in the vicinity. Byerley Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies to the north of the site. Simpasture Junction Local Wildlife Site (LWS) lies some 142m to the south. Some 745m to the west are Middridge Quarry geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Shildon Sidings LWS, at the closest point, with Eden Grange Pond LWS approximately 1.1km to the south west and School Aycliffe Wetland LWS some 800m to the south. The site lies within an identified SSSI Impact Risk Zone.
212. The site comprises a series of school buildings, with areas of hardstanding surrounding them and modified grassland. There are large area of amenity grassland southern and western portions of the site. An area of woodland is located close by with a stream running through it.

213. An Ecological Impact Assessment and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment have been submitted in support of the application.
214. The Ecological Impact Assessment provides an analysis of baseline conditions for the site, and the wider school site, and an assessment of habitats and species, identifies potential impacts and recommends proportionate avoidance, mitigation and compensation strategies and enhancements to demonstrate no net loss in biodiversity and biodiversity net gain. The application site itself comprises developed land and modified grassland.
215. The Ecological Impact Assessment identifies a number of key ecological features and associated recommendations. Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve, and boundary hedgerow, tree-line and Deciduous Woodland are identified as being priority habitat providing notable green infrastructure function. Retention and protection in accordance with the appropriate British Standard are recommended along with implementation of a sensitive lighting scheme. Given the distance from the other designated sites it is not considered that the proposed development would have any adverse impact upon them.
216. With regard to blue infrastructure and riparian fauna, in the wider search area is a stream running through site and Otter and Water Vole were present. Recommendations include an 8m stand-off buffer should be in place with a sensitive lighting scheme implemented. No evidence of badgers has been identified. With regard to breeding birds, habitats and buildings provide nesting potential for a restricted range of bird species, significant nesting potential provided by woodland, tree line and hedgerow. It is recommended that initial clearance/construction programmed outside of the nesting season or under ecological supervision at any other time. Limited opportunities for common reptiles and Great Crested Newt have been identified and reasonable avoidance measures should be implemented during the construction phase with no further surveys or Natural England licence required. The Assessment considers that there are limited extent of opportunities for priority species and that reasonable avoidance measures should be to be implemented during the construction phase. Invasive flora and Invasive flora were identified (Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam) along the river corridor and woodland through the centre of the site and an invasive species specialist should advise on appropriate treatment.
217. A bat survey was undertaken in August 2023 and a single low status Common Pipistrelle roost was identified following further nocturnal presence/absence surveys of the buildings. In May 2024 further surveys were undertaken as contained in a submitted Bat Emergence Survey. The Bat Emergence Survey advises that demolition works to the main school building (Building 3) would cause the loss of the single common pipistrelle day roost and risk causing harm/disturbance to individual non-breeding pipistrelle should they be present at the time of works. The Survey goes on to report that there is a low residual risk that demolition of Building 2 and the extension of Building 1 have the potential to cause harm/disturbance of bats and there is loss of potential roost features associated with demolition and extension works. It is recommended that works to the main school building (Building 3) be undertaken under a Natural England licence. Works to the remaining buildings (Building 1 and 2) would be undertaken to a precautionary working method statement and the proposals would incorporate integrated roost features.
218. In respect of the three derogation tests contained in the Regulations, the demolition of the building would be critical for the delivery of the proposed development as it would allow for the creation of a new playground and completion of the approved development as a whole. In addition, the existing building housing the identified roost

would need to be removed to prevent them becoming hazards once vacated, furthermore there is a need for their replacement. The development is therefore of overriding public interest and would protect public health and safety. Leaving the existing school buildings would sterilise potential space for education provision within the wider site that could not be provided elsewhere and there is therefore no satisfactory and suitable alternative to the demolition of the existing building. Finally, the loss of one bat day roosts is unlikely to adversely affect the favourable conservation status of the species. Ecology officers have raised no issues in relation to bats and consider that there would be no impediment to a licence being granted. Accordingly, it is concluded that the derogation tests would likely be satisfied. Replacement roost provision is likely to be required as part of the Licence. Integrated bat roosting features are proposed and would be secured through condition and also be agreed with Natural England as part of the Licence. Ecology officers raise no concerns regarding the bat survey work, but advise that no works that impact that roost should take place until a Natural England licence is in place and that this should be the subject of a planning condition.

219. Finally, the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment considers that the proposals present opportunities for biodiversity enhancement in order to demonstrate an overall biodiversity net gain in accordance with national and local policies through features such as enhanced opportunities for nesting birds and roosting bats, and through landscape planting. It concludes that if mitigation measures outlined in the report are implemented in full, no significant residual impact could be expected, and the proposed application will result in 'no net loss in biodiversity,' whilst also providing opportunities for 'biodiversity net gain' in accordance with NPPF and Local Planning Policy.
220. Appendix D of the GANP includes a map showing local green spaces and green corridors and identifies green corridors along the western, northern and eastern boundaries of the site. The glossary of the GANP states these green corridors are green spaces that provide avenues for wildlife movement, often along hedgerows, streams, rivers or other natural features. They connect green spaces together and often provide pleasant walks for the public away from main roads. The western corridor appears to run through the application site but having regard to the site and the definition of green corridors in the GANP, the corridor is likely to follow the vegetation on along the site boundary. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not physically affect the green corridors shown on the Appendix D map, there may be some disturbance during construction and demolition from noise and dust, but measures would be put in place to reduce any potential impacts, in addition this would be temporary.
221. The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is supported by a DEFRA's Biodiversity Metric. The metric states that the development would result in a 10.34% gain in habitat units and a 40.31% gain in hedge units and all trading rules are satisfied. The requirements of CDP Policy 41 are met.
222. Ecology Officers have no objection to the application considering that the ecological data is sufficient to inform the application and a biodiversity net gain is achieved, with the rules of the metric satisfied. The provision of bat, bird and invertebrate boxes should be included as a condition and bird boxes should include opportunities for swifts, boxes should be integrated preferably.
223. Ecology Officers advise a Biodiversity Management and Monitoring Plan (BMMP) that covers a 30 year period from the date the habitats were created is needed. Monitoring should be undertaken in years 2, 5, 10, 15, 20 and 30 and the results supplied to the Council after each monitoring visit. The BMMP should include any proposed

ecological enhancements. A condition is regarded as a suitable mechanism in this case as the Council is the applicant.

224. 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 considered that the proposed development would not impact upon any nationally or locally protected sites and protected species subject to appropriate conditions and a Natural England Licence. It is therefore considered that the proposals would not conflict with CDP Policies 41 and 43, GANP Policy E1 and Part 15 of the NPPF in respect of avoiding and mitigating harm to biodiversity and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Nutrient Neutrality

225. 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.
226. 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.
227. The site lies within the catchment area of the Teesmouth & Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area/Ramsar (SPA). However, the development is to replace existing buildings and for an extension to another with associated development. There would be 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

228. Part 8 of the NPPF seeks to promote healthy communities with a key reference being towards the protection and enhancement of public rights of way and access. 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.

229. CDP Policy 6 criterion 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.
230. CDP Policy 26 also states that development will be expected to maintain or improve the permeability of the built environment and access to the countryside for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Proposals that would result in the loss of, or deterioration in the quality of, existing Public Rights of Way (PROWs) will not be permitted unless equivalent alternative provision of a suitable standard is made. Where diversions are required, new routes should be direct, convenient and attractive, and must not have a detrimental impact on environmental or heritage assets.
231. GANP Policy CH2 advises that development that would change the character of accessible local green space will only be permitted if the applicant could demonstrate that very special circumstances exist that would justify such an exception with three exemptions listed. GANP Policy CH3 states existing open spaces, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and amenity open space not identified in GANP Policy 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.
232. The site is not an allocated site in the CDP. The typology of the Academy and surrounding playing fields are identified as 'education' in the County Durham Open Space Needs Assessment (OSNA). The playing fields are identified as local green open space the GANP. Although not publicly accessible, the site is still considered important to the local community and local provision.
233. The proposed new school buildings would be constructed within the school's existing built footprint and areas currently used as car parking. There would be no loss of playing fields through the redevelopment of the site but during construction, a temporary car park would be required south of the school's footprint on a playing field for staff, visitors and the community use. This would be for a period of approximately 24 months following which a new car park would be provided to the south of Blocks 2 and 7.
234. An Open Space Assessment has been submitted with the application. The Assessment concludes that in assessing the site against the OSNA the education typology forms its own type of provision, with the OSNA setting out that this is not subject to typical access and quantitative standards as with other typologies due to limitations associated with accessibility and availability. Still the impact on open space has been assessed. The GANP underlines that the undeveloped land surrounding Greenfield Academy is open space and designated as a local green space, and as such should be protected. The Assessment states that new development on the land is therefore only be permitted where very special circumstances justify an exception. The Assessment demonstrates that the temporary loss of open space is essential to enable the construction of the proposals, whilst still allowing sufficient car parking for the school's operation. On completion, the open space would be made available again

for use, with an additional net gain in open space of approximately 1000 sqm, resulting from the improved, efficient layout following the demolition of the existing one-storey buildings. Further, the proposals comprise a significant community benefit. As such, very special circumstances apply, and the proposal is not in conflict with GANP Policies CH2 and CH3. In summary, it is confirmed that the proposals would have a direct community benefit on completion, and this wholly outweighs any potential harm that derives from the temporary loss of open space. Sport England has requested a condition requiring a scheme for the removal of the temporary parking areas and compound prior to any development commencing which would affect playing fields, thus ensuring its reinstatement. The proposed development would not jeopardise its allocation as a local green open space and the proposals are therefore acceptable from an open space perspective.

235. The Assessment highlights that the proposed development carries significant, direct community benefits, due to the nature of the proposals. The proposal would provide much improved school facilities for the benefit of pupils, teachers and other employees of Greenfield Academy through the construction of a purpose built 'superblock' to accommodate modern day teaching requirements and operations, as well as providing benefits for the wider community with the extension to the sports centre, which would be available for community use, as is currently the case, but with enhanced facilities. These benefits are considered to significantly outweigh any harm resulting from the temporary loss of local green space, and on completion, additional green space is proposed. On this basis, it is considered that the proposed development is not in conflict with GANP Policy CH2 and is in accordance with one of the three exceptions listed in the policy.
236. The site of the proposed temporary site compound, benefiting from permitted development rights, would be located at Horndale Park on land identified as 'park and recreation ground'.
237. Sport England raises no objection to the application because it is considered to accord with exception 4 of its Playing Fields Policy and Paragraph 103 of the NPPF, subject to conditions securing reinstatement of the playing field lost during the construction phase of works and an informative recommending the use of a specialist turf consultant. Exception 4 states the area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field: of equivalent or better quality, and of equivalent or greater quantity, and in a suitable location, and subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.
238. With regard to the change to the location of the temporary compound Sport England notes that the temporary incursion into the northern part of the playing field has increased in extent. Nevertheless, it previously raised no objection on the basis that this would be a temporary loss with the playing field restored once the main construction and demolition works were complete. This principle still holds true subject to the imposition of a restoration condition as referred to above.
239. The proposed development would not have a direct impact upon designated rights of way given there are none in the vicinity of the site. The permissive multiuser route to the north of the site would not be physically affected, but there may be some disturbance to users of the route during construction and demolition. This is because the site access and egress would be via the current exit for the school and the northern part of the site would be used for material laydown and waste segregation areas in addition construction of the buildings would be taking place. Noise and dust are considered above, and suitable mitigation measures would be imposed to reduce any impact during the construction and demolition phases. As no public rights of way are

affected by the proposal and Access and Rights of Way officers have raised no objections and are of the opinion that the permissive multiuser route north of the site should not be impacted by the development.

240. Sport England has no objection to the proposals subject to conditions to secure the restoration for the playing field temporarily lost. The temporary loss of open space on site would be mitigated by the reinstatement of the playing field and this would be secured through condition. No public rights of way would be directly affected by the proposal development and Access and Rights of Way officers have no objection to the proposed development. It is therefore considered that subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposal would not conflict with CDP Policy 26, GANP Policies CH2 and CH3 and Part 8 of the NPPF.

Cultural Heritage

241. 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 also 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.
242. 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. CDP Policy 46 permits development which impacts upon the historic route of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) of 1825, the Black Boy and Haggerleaves branch lines and the Surtees Railway, together with their associated structures, archaeological and physical remains and setting, in certain circumstances. GANP Policy CH4 seeks to protect heritage assets and their settings and new developments should seek to avoid any significant adverse impacts on heritage assets and the Conservation Area of Aycliffe Village.
243. There are no designated heritage assets within the proposed site nor within 1km of the site. The site is not within a Conservation Area with the closest, Middridge, being 950m to the north separate from the site by distance, intervening topography and built development. Aycliffe Village Conservation Area is over 3.4km to the south east. The line of the S&DR also known as Locomotion Way and used as a multi-user way by the public, is a non-designated heritage asset that runs to the north of the existing railway line 300m to the south of the site. There would be no impact on the S&DR non-designated heritage asset given location of the proposed development and the distance from it.
244. Design and Conservation officers raise no concerns in relation to cultural heritage.
245. Archaeology officers have also considered the proposals and have no archaeological concerns given the proposed works are intended to occur within the area previously

developed and any archaeological features that may have existed will have been removed by buildings and landscaping.

246. It is considered that, subject to conditions, the proposal would cause no harm to heritage assets or archaeological remains. The proposal would not conflict with CDP Policies 44 and 46, GANP Policy CH4 and Part 16 of the NPPF and the Listed Building Act.

Other matters

247. The site lies within the mineral safeguarding area for coal as defined in the County Durham Plan and upon a mineral safeguarding area for Magnesian Limestone. CDP Policy 56 advises that planning permission will not be granted for non-mineral development that would lead to the sterilisation of mineral resources within a Mineral Safeguarding Area or which will sterilise an identified 'relic' natural building and roofing stone quarry as shown on Map C of the policies map document unless one of the following apply: a) it can be demonstrated that the mineral in the location concerned is no longer of any current or potential value as it does not represent an economically viable and therefore exploitable resource; b) provision can be made for the mineral to be extracted satisfactorily prior to the non-minerals development taking place without unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, human health or the amenity of local communities and within a reasonable timescale; c) the non-minerals development is of a temporary nature that does not inhibit extraction within the timescale the mineral is likely to be needed; d) there is an overriding need for the non-minerals development which outweighs the need to safeguard the mineral; or e) it constitutes exempt development as set out in appendix C of the Plan. Given the location of the site, the existing and proposed use of the land as well as the likely quality of mineral within the site, it is high unlikely that mineral extraction would be appropriate or viable in this location. Furthermore, in line with criteria d) it can be argued that there is an overriding need for the provision of new schools on an existing site which outweighs the need to safeguard the mineral. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not conflict with CDP Policy 56 and Part 17 of the NPPF.
248. CDP Policy 27 requires all new commercial development to be served by high-speed broadband connection. This would need to be directly accessed from the nearest exchange and threaded through resistant tubing to enable easy access to the cable for future repair, replacement and upgrading. As an educational facility it is likely to be an operational site requirement given the end users. The school would have incoming fibre from the Openreach telecoms network and incoming ducts are shown on an external drawing to accommodate this. It is the school's responsibility as the bill payer to procure the broadband solution from their chosen ISP but the infrastructure would be installed to allow the installation. The development would not conflict with CDP Policy 27 and Part 8 of the NPPF.
249. The site lies approximately 375m to the north east of the administrative boundary of Darlington Borough Council at its closest point. Darlington Borough Council was consulted on the application but has not commented.

Public Sector Equality Duty

250. 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.

251. In this instance, officers have assessed all relevant factors and do not consider that there are any equality impacts identified.

CONCLUSION

252. 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.

253. The proposed development would provide a modern teaching facilities on a site currently in use for education purposes. The proposed development would provide a significant benefit to the community, would be sustainable and well designed, and in keeping with and complementary to its surroundings.

254. Consideration has been given to the principle of the development and the impact of the proposals in terms of residential amenity, access and traffic, layout and design, locational sustainability of the site, energy efficiency, contamination and coal mining risk, flooding and drainage, landscape and trees, ecology, nutrient neutrality, open space and recreational amenity, cultural heritage and other matters. The development has been assessed against relevant development plan policies and material considerations and, subject to conditions where appropriate, the impacts are considered to be acceptable.

255. The proposed development has generated some public interest, with letters of objection having been received. Concerns expressed regarding the proposal have been taken into account, and carefully balanced against the benefits of the scheme in terms modern education provision.

256. The proposed development is considered to broadly accord with the relevant policies of the County Durham Plan and relevant sections of the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

257. 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:

Plans:

- Site Location Plan (ref: LA002-NOR-XX-ZZ-D-A-9000-P04)
- Proposed Demolition Plan (ref: LA002-NOR-XX-ZZ-D-A-9001-P03)
- Proposed Block Plan (ref: LA002-NOR-XX-ZZ-D-A-9002-P04)
- Proposed Demolition Plan (ref: LA002-NOR-XX-ZZ-D-A-9001-P04)
- Proposed Block Plan (ref: LA002-NOR-XX-ZZ-D-A-9002-P04)
- Contextual Elevation – North (ref: LA002-NOR-XX-ZZ-D-A-9010-P01)
- Contextual Elevation – South (ref: LA002-NOR-XX-ZZ-D-A-90102-P01)
- Contextual Elevation – East and West Sports Hall (ref: LA002-NOR-XX-ZZ-D-A-90103-P01)
- Contextual Elevation – East and West Teaching Block (ref: LA002-NOR-XX-ZZ-D-A-90104-P01)
- General Arrangement Floor Plan – Ground (ref: LA002-NOR-01-00-D-A-3000 P P01)
- General Arrangement Floor Plan – First (ref: LA002-NOR-01-00-D-A-3001 P P01)
- General Arrangement Floor Plan – Second (ref: LA002-NOR-01-00-D-A-3002 P P01)
- General Arrangement Floor Plan – Roof (ref: LA002-NOR-01-00-D-A-3003 P P01)
- General Arrangement Building Sections (ref: LA002-NOR-01-00-D-A-3301 P P05)
- Planning – Building Elevations (ref: LA002-NOR-01-00-D-A-3350 P P02)
- General Arrangement Floor Plan – Ground (ref: LA002-NOR-03-00-D-A-3005 P P01)
- General Arrangement Floor Plan – First (ref: LA002-NOR-03-00-D-A-3006 P P01)
- General Arrangement Floor Plan – Roof (ref: LA002-NOR-03-00-D-A-3008 P P01)
- General Arrangement Floor Plan – Roof Existing and Demolition (ref: LA002-NOR-03-00-D-A-3012 P P01)
- General Arrangement Building Sections (ref: LA002-NOR-03-00-D-A-3302 P P04)
- General Arrangement Building Sections – Existing and Demolition (ref: LA002-NOR-03-00-D-A-3303 P P01)
- General Arrangement Building Elevations (ref: LA002-NOR-03-00-D-A-3351 P P01)
- Whole Site Plan (ref: LA002-ONE-00-ZZ-D-L-0002-P08)
- Site Landscaping Sheet 1 of 3 (ref: ref: LA002-ONE-00-ZZ-D-L-0003-P04)
- Site Landscaping Sheet 2 of 3 (ref: LA002-ONE-00-ZZ-D-L-0004-P04)
- Site Landscaping Sheet 3 of 3 (ref: LA002-ONE-00-ZZ-D-L-0005-P04)
- Circulation Strategy (ref: LA002-ONE-00-ZZ-D-L-0006-P04)
- Access and Security Strategy (ref: LA002-ONE-00-ZZ-D-L-0007-P04)
- BB103 Areas (ref: LA002-ONE-00-ZZ-D-L-0008-P04)
- Green Infrastructure (ref: LA002-ONE-00-ZZ-D-L-0009-P04)
- Site Sections (ref: LA002-ONE-00-ZZ-D-L-0010-P04)
- Level 01 Teaching Block Ventilation Strategy (ref: LA002-DES-01-01-D-Z-5701 P01)
- Level 02 Teaching Block Ventilation Strategy (ref: LA002-DES-01-02-D-Z-5701 P01)
- Level 00 Sports Hall Extension Ventilation Strategy (ref: LA002-DES-03-00-D-Z-5701 P01)
- Mechanical Services Teaching & Sports Blocks Ventilation Schematic (ref: LA002-DES-ZZ-ZZ-D-M-5701 P01)
- External Lighting Drawing (rev 1, issued 15th May 2024)
- External Lighting Layout (ref: LA002-DES-ZZ-ZZ-D-E-6301-P01)
- Phasing Plans (issued 8th July 2024)

Documents:

- Design and Access Statement by Norr (Part 1 and Part) (issued 27th March 2024)

- Planning Statement and Open Space Assessment by DPP (ref: R001, v0.1)
- Transport Assessment by SAJ Consultants (ref: JN2839-Rep-0002.3)
- Travel Plan by SAJ Consultants (ref: JN2839-Rep-0001.4)
- Ecological Impact Assessment by 1st Horizon (ref: GCC32-R13-IA)
- Arboricultural Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan, by Elliott Consultancy Ltd (ref: ARB/AE/3350)
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment by OS Ecology (ref: 24070 Net Gain Assessment v2)
- BNG Metric (ref: 24070 BNG metric v1)
- Bat Survey by OS Ecology (ref: 24070 Bat Report v2)
- Air Quality Assessment by Apex Acoustics (ref: LA002-APX-XX-ZZ-T-J-0703-P06)
- Noise Impact Assessment by Apex Acoustics (ref: LA002-APX-XX-ZZ-T-J-0702-P03)
- Construction Method Statement by Kier Construction (received 8th July 2024)
- Dust Management Plan by Kier Construction (rev C, received 4th June 2024)
- Phase 1 Ground Investigation Desk Survey by 1st Horizon (ref: GCC32-R11)
- Phase 2 Geotechnical Assessment by Roberts Environmental (ref: 240215.SI.01)
- Energy Strategy Report by Desco (ref: LA002-DES-XX-ZZ-T-Z-1301-P01)

Reason: To define the consent and ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained in accordance with Policies 6, 21, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46 and 56 of the County Durham Plan, Policies CH1, CH2, CH3, CH4, E1, E4, E5, EE3, T1, T2, T3 and CIL1 of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan and Parts 2, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16 and 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. The approved Construction Method Statement, Air Quality Assessment and Dust Management Plan and mitigation measures contained within them shall be adhered to throughout the construction period and the approved measures shall be fully implemented 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 County Durham Plan Policies 6, 21, 29 and 31 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. The approved Air Quality Assessment and Dust Management Plan and mitigation measures contained within them shall be adhered to throughout the demolition period and the approved measures shall be fully implemented for the duration of the demolition 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 County Durham Plan Policies 6, 21, 29 and 31 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. No demolition shall commence until a 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 demolition, 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 demolition 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 demolition 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 Plan shall have regard to BS 5228 "Noise and Vibration Control on some 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.

7. All works permitted under this planning permission including construction and demolition works shall only take place within the following hours:

08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday

08:00 to 13:00 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: In the interests of residential amenity and highway safety in accordance with the County Durham Plan Policy 31 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. No development shall commence until a detailed scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water from the development hereby approved has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall take place in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding from any sources and to ensure foul and surface water are appropriately managed on site in accordance with County Durham Plan Policies 35 and 36 and Part 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Required to be a pre-commencement condition to ensure a suitable scheme is agreed to prior to commencement of the development.

9. No development affecting playing field shall commence until a scheme for the removal of the temporary teachers and contractor's car park and contractor's compound (indicated yellow and purple on the Construction Method Statement dated 08/07/24) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England. The scheme must be in accordance with Sport England guidance "Natural Turf for Sport" (2011) In the first planting season following the removal of the temporary car park the land indicated yellow on Construction Method Statement must be reinstated in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure the site is restored to a condition fit for purpose and to accord with County Durham Plan Policy 26 and Part 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. 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 the approved 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. Required to be pre-commencement in order to assess the appearance of the development.

11. The development hereby approved shall take place in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan produced by Elliott Consultancy Ltd (ref: ARB/AE/3350) and protective fencing shall be erected prior to the commencement of construction works and maintained during those and demolition works in accordance with the approved document.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area and to comply with County Durham Plan Policies 29 and 40, Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Policies CH1, E4 and E5 and Parts 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. 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 and management 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. 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, Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Policies CH1, E4 and E5 and Parts 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

13. The development shall be implemented in line with the recommendations contained within Table 7 of the approved document Ecological Impact Assessment produced by 1st Horizon (ref: GCC32-R13-IA) for enhancement and monitoring. Confirmation of the type, number and location of integrated bird and bat boxes should be provided to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation and to conserve protected species and their habitat in accordance with of the County Durham Plan Policies 41 and 43 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

14. No works that impact the bat roost in Building 3 shall take place until a Natural England licence is in place.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation and to conserve protected species and their habitat in accordance with of the County Durham Plan Policies 41 and 43 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

15. Prior to installation details of fixed plant shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. The details shall include manufactures specification including sound power/pressure levels, a third octave frequency spectrum if available and proposed location.

Reason: In order to protect amenity in accordance County Durham Plan Policies 6, 29 and 31 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

16. The rating level of noise emitted from fixed plant/machinery on the site shall not exceed the background (LA90) by more than 5dB LAeq (1 hour) between 07.00-23.00 and 0dB LAeq (15 mins) between 23.00-07.00. The measurement and assessment shall be made according to BS 4142: 2014+A1: 2019. On written request by the planning authority the operator shall, within 28 days, produce a report to demonstrate adherence with the above rating level.

Reason: In order to protect amenity in accordance County Durham Plan Policies 6, 29 and 31 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

17. External lighting shall be erected and maintained in accordance with the approved External Lighting Drawing (rev 1, issued 15th May 2024) and External Lighting Layout (ref: LA002-DES-ZZ-ZZ-D-E-6301-P01).

Reason: In order to minimise light spillage and glare, in accordance with County Durham Plan Policies 6, 29 and 31 and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

18. Prior to commencement of the development a Biodiversity Management and Monitoring Plan (BMMP) covering a minimum 30 year period from the date the habitats were created shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. Monitoring should be undertaken in years 2, 5, 10, 15, 20 and 30 and the results supplied to the Council after each monitoring visit. As a result of the monitoring, if there are any required amendments to management to ensure that the target type and condition habitats as detailed in the agreed Defra Metric, these should be highlighted to the Local Planning Authority and agreed prior to any amendment to the management programme. The BMMP should also include any proposed ecological enhancements as detailed in the agreed Defra metric.

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.

19. Prior to first occupation of the new teaching block hereby approved, the proposed northern car park shown on approved Whole Site Plan (ref: LA002-ONE-00-ZZ-D-L-0002-P08) shall be laid out and ready for use in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning Authority. On completion of the development hereby approved, the proposed southern car park shown on approved Whole Site Plan (ref: LA002-ONE-00-ZZ-D-L-0002-P08) shall be laid out and ready for use in accordance with the details approved by the Local Planning Authority. The car parks 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.

20. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, a scheme indicating the locations of a minimum of 5no. active and 20no. passive electric car charging points across the site shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, with charging points installed to an agreed timetable. The charging points shall be retained for use in perpetuity thereafter and maintained.

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

21. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, a scheme indicating the locations of all cycle parking points across the site shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, with the cycle parking points installed to an agreed timetable. A minimum of 46no. cycle parking spaces shall be provided. The cycle parking points shall be retained for use in perpetuity thereafter and maintained.

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

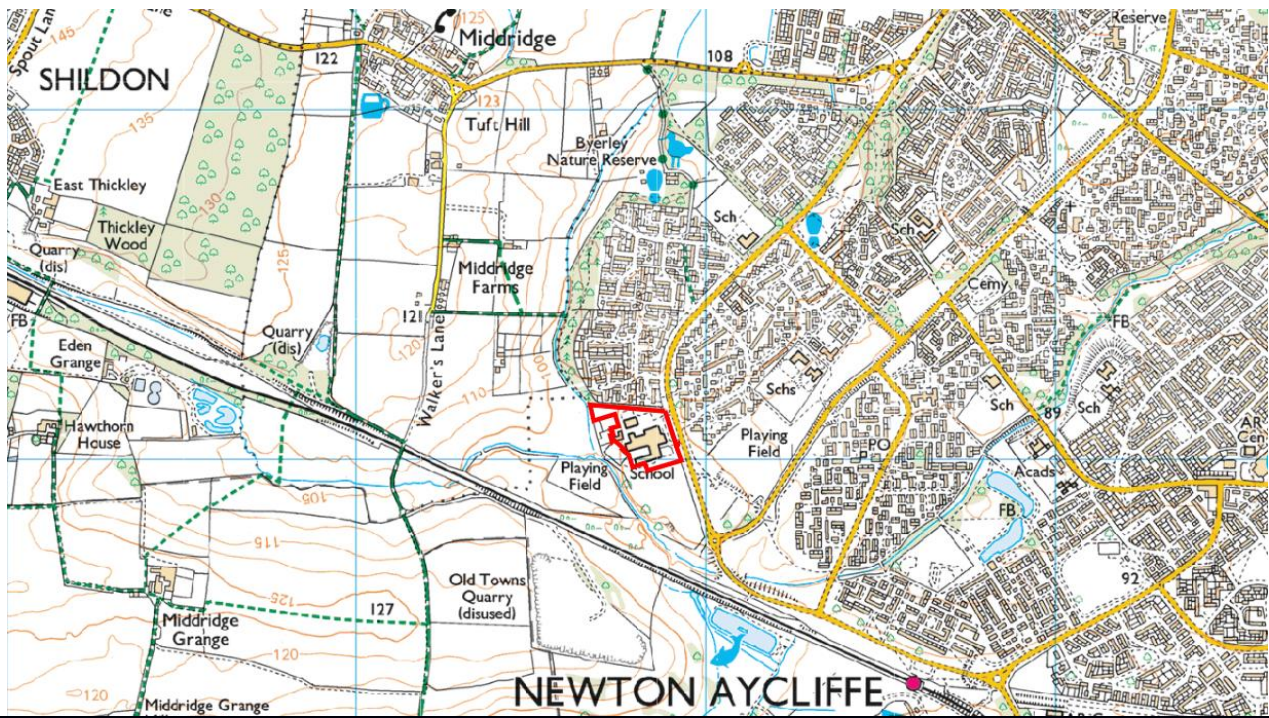
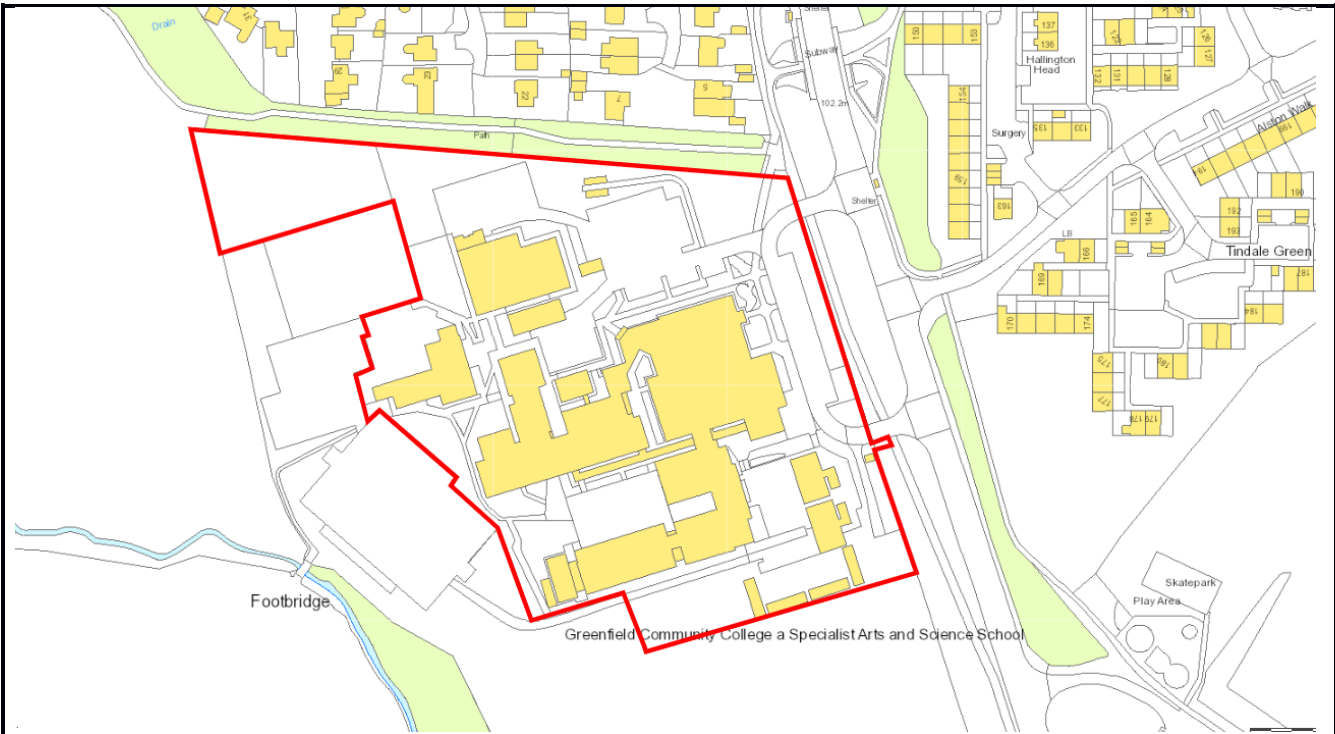
STATEMENT OF PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

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 (2017)
- Parking and Accessibility SPD (2023)

- Trees, Woodlands and Hedges SPD (2024)
- Durham County Council Open Space Needs Assessment (2018)
- County Durham Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan (2021)
- Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy and Guidance (2021)
- Statutory, internal and public consultation responses



Planning Services

DM/24/00834/FPA

Demolition of Blocks 1 (partial), 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10, retention of Blocks 2 & 7 and Sports Centre (Block 8), construction of a new teaching block and extension to Sports Centre, along with associated access and external works – Greenfield Academy, Greenfield Way, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 7LF

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Comments

Date July 2024

Scale Not to Scale