



## **PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT**

**New 2FE Primary School**

At

**A413 (Opposite Kingsley Road), Silverstone, Northamptonshire**

For

**Northamptonshire County Council (c/o Lend Lease)**

Prepared by

Peter Haddon and Partners Architects

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- First Issue

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## **Planning Statement**

The purpose of this report is to outline the local and national planning policy context for the planning application site.

The documents reviewed for this project include:

- *West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) – Tracked Changes Version including Proposed Main Modifications (January 2014)*
- *Northamptonshire strategic plan for schools 2010 – 2021, November 2010*
- *National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012*

*The East Midlands Regional Plan (RSS8) was revoked by the Secretary of State on 12 April 2013 and no longer forms part of the Development Plan, and therefore has not been reviewed.*

*The West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit Joint Local Plan documents are being prepared by the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (WNJPU). The JPU is a team of officers that report to the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee that comprises Councillors from Northampton Borough and Daventry and South Northamptonshire District Councils as well as Northamptonshire County Council. The 2014 revision is in draft form and is awaiting full approval – we have reviewed (as above) this draft document as the basis for this project.*

Introduction:

We have reviewed the above documents and selected the appropriate relevant sections (using their references) which inform the design basis for this project and added commentary as underlined where required.

## **West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, 2014**

*Our rural areas will support a network of vibrant rural communities. Villages will retain their local distinctiveness and character, providing affordable homes for local people set within a beautiful landscape. The countryside will support a diverse rural economy including leisure and tourism through its waterways, country houses, parks and woodlands.*

### **5.0 Spatial Strategy and Key Diagram**

#### **POLICY S7 – PROVISION OF JOBS**

*Provision will be made for a minimum net increase of 16,000 jobs in the period 2010 - 2026 in order to maintain a broad balance over time between homes and jobs and to maintain adverse economic base.*

The site will provide approximately 20 new jobs, in tandem with securing the existing jobs for those employed at the existing 1FE schools.

#### **POLICY S10 - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

*The development will:*

- *achieve the highest standards of sustainable design incorporating safety and security considerations and a strong sense of place;*
- *be designed to improve environmental performance, energy efficiency and adapt to changes of use and a changing climate over its lifetime;*
- *make use of sustainably sourced materials;*
- *maximise use of solar gain, passive heating and cooling, natural light and ventilation using site layout and building design;*
- *maximise the generation of its energy needs from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources;*

The design comprises modern construction techniques and materials with a high proportion of off site manufacture, improving the quality and efficiency whilst reducing waste. These materials have high energy efficiency levels and exceeds expected levels of sustainability.

The proposed scheme adopts the use of natural ventilation where practicable and is to adopt the use of Air Source Heat pumps supplemented with Solar Photo-Voltaic panels, as required.

### **6.0 Connections**

#### **POLICY C2 - NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

*Development will be required to mitigate its effects on the highway network and be supported by a transport assessment and travel plan prepared in accordance with current best practice guidelines as issued by the department for transport or the relevant local authority.*

*Sustainable urban extensions, as allocated within this plan, will additionally be required to:*

- *provide access via walking, cycling and public transport routes to a mix of uses including local employment, housing and retail facilities;*

The school will encourage pedestrians and cyclists through the inclusion of secure covered cycle parking and fully accessible entrance points. The nearby existing bus stop will enable the site to accessed via public transport. The existing pathways

leading to the site are to be increased and improved, including new pavements and pedestrian zebra crossing.

## **10.0 Built and Natural Environment**

### **POLICY BN1 - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIONS**

*Measures to enhance existing and provide new green infrastructure provision will: Reflect local character through the planting of native and other climate appropriate species and consideration of natural and cultural heritage features;*

The proposed development looks to increase the existing biodiversity of the site through the addition of native trees and planting in various areas. This will be developed with specialist Arboricultural Consultants to ensure the correct details and species are specified.

### **POLICY BN2 - BIODIVERSITY**

*Development that will maintain and enhance existing designations and assets or deliver a net gain in biodiversity will be supported.*

The proposal is situated on existing arable farmland. Due to the proposed planting schemes the biodiversity will be increased, establishing a variety of habitats for natural wildlife. In addition and new habitat area with pond and wild flower planting is to be established within the school boundary.

### **POLICY BN7A - WATER SUPPLY, QUALITY AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

*New development proposals will ensure that adequate and appropriate water supply and wastewater infrastructure is available to meet the additional requirements placed upon it and to ensure that water quality is protected, as far as is practicable, is protected or improved.*

*Development proposals will ensure that adequate wastewater treatment capacity is available to address capacity and environmental constraints. Development should use sustainable drainage systems, wherever practicable, to improve water quality, reduce flood risk and provide environmental and adaptation benefits.*

Surface water drainage across the site is to be drained to below ground rainwater attenuation tanks to discharge gradually over time. The school is located at a high point on the site and therefore is positioned to be appropriately flood resilient.

### **POLICY BN7 - FLOOD RISK**

All new development, including regeneration proposals, will need to demonstrate that there is no increased risk of flooding to existing properties, and proposed development is (or can be) safe and shall seek to improve existing flood risk management.

The proposed school is to be located on a flood risk vulnerability zone 1.

## **11.0 INFRASTRUCTURE AND DELIVERY**

## **POLICY INF1 - APPROACH TO INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY**

*New development will be supported by, and provide good access to, infrastructure, including physical, green and social elements. It will integrate with and complement adjoining communities.*

The proposed school forming a replacement to the two existing dilapidated constrained existing schools within the village. Designed as a 2FE school, initially being occupied to serve a 1 form entry school this facility will benefit the growing local community providing the opportunity for enhanced and extended use. The occupancy levels will increase year on year as the forecasted pupil numbers increase in turn.

## **16.0 RURAL AREAS**

### **POLICY R1 - SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE RURAL AREAS**

*Development within the rural hierarchy in the part 2 local plans will have regard to but not exclusively, the following :*

- The presence of services and facilities to meet the day to day needs of residents, including those from surrounding settlements;*
- Opportunities to retain and improve the provision and enhancement of services critical to the sustainability of settlements;*
- the capacity of settlements to accommodate development in terms of physical, environmental, infrastructure and other constraints;*
- support the retention and provision of local services and facilities in rural communities;*
- sustaining the rural economy by retaining existing employment sites where possible, by enabling small scale economic development, including tourism, through rural diversification and by supporting appropriate agricultural and forestry development;*

The proposed school is to serve the local community and provide all Primary School places required for this growing village. The school is to replace the existing 2 schools which are constrained within their existing locations. There is an expanding and on-going demand for school places within the village, particularly given the recent housing developments have been approved/constructed – such as Catchyard Farm.

## **Northamptonshire strategic plan for schools 2010 – 2021; November 2010**

### **4. Duty to secure sufficient school places**

**4.1** *The Council has a statutory duty under the Education Act 2006 to secure sufficient school places in its area to provide primary and secondary education between the ages of 5 and 16.*

**7.4** *The county was previously identified by the Government for future growth. Housing targets are being reviewed but it is likely that much of the previously planned growth will go ahead. The area has a population of around 686,000 people. The number of people living in the county is increasing at one of the fastest rates nationally and this is expected to continue. Since 2001, the population has grown by 7.7%, which is more than twice the national average of 3.3%. Over the same period, the population aged 0-19 has increased by 5.5%. Northamptonshire is expected to experience the highest growth rate in the region. The “Northamptonshire Arc” is a multi-agency strategy to guide future planning and investment in the county.*

**7.5** *The projected increase in the number of homes is expected to be concentrated in two areas: the north of the county around Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough and the West, focussing on Northampton, Towcester and Daventry. With this growth comes an unprecedented demand for schools infrastructure in all phases of education, alongside aspirations of schools as community hubs delivering extended services to local communities.*

**8.2** *The Sustainable Communities Strategy for Northamptonshire seeks to make Northamptonshire “The best place in England to grow”. Improving outcomes for children, young people and their families will be a key contributor to the achievement of the aspirations and ambitions set out in this strategy. Delivery of the Every Child Matters agenda – through which we aim to ensure all children grow up healthy, safe, able to enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and secure economic well-being – is critical to securing the community vision we have set for the county.*

### **20. RURAL SCHOOLS**

**20.1** *Northamptonshire has 50% of its primary schools deemed rural. These schools play a valuable part in the complex schools structure within the County. Rural Primary schools create both challenges and opportunities for strategic planning. Many of the rural primary schools are small schools which are at the heart of their community. They can offer social cohesion and sustainability as the pupils are not being transported long distances around the county. The challenges lie in meeting the increased resource expenditure, difficulty in recruiting leadership teams and sustaining viable pupil numbers. The governance and organisation of small schools needs to be kept under review to maximise opportunities that might occur through collaborations, federation and amalgamations.*

**24.5** *Taking account of the population projections arising from the growth agenda, the county is expecting to require another 40 primary schools by 2026. Where there is an existing primary school and it is under 2 forms of entry, the preference will usually be to add an extension (site restraints permitting) rather than create another separate school. In some situations, the optimum solution may be to relocate the existing school into an enlarged provision on the new development. Where new schools are to open, the Council is required to follow the competition rules that allow alternative providers to bid to operate the school.*

**24.7** “Creating Sustainable Communities” is the Council’s planning obligations framework and guidance and is used to support negotiations with developers. It contains a number of policies regarding new school sites:

- New primary schools should be within 400m from the housing it is designed to serve
- It should be located centrally within the development, ideally close to a local centre
- It should not be located on a cul-de-sac and should have space for parents to drop off and pick up
- There should be separate pedestrian and vehicular access to the school, as well as good pedestrian and cycling routes
- There should not be parking on site for parents
- Playing fields should be located with the school buildings within the school site
- The site should be reasonably flat

**24.8** In addition, the Council has a number of other policies regarding new school sites:

- All new school sites should meet the Team Game Playing Field regulations to support the PE curriculum and Healthy Schools agenda
- All new schools should address safeguarding issues in terms of site security, secure “air-locks” and privacy measures to ensure child protection.
- Consideration is given to the need for specialist SEN provision

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**Silverstone** – Both the Infant and Junior Schools are on restricted sites with poor access. The roll is a little below 1 F.E.. The schools operate under a successful federation arrangement with one Headteacher and Governing Body. It has not been possible to produce an acceptable plan for an amalgamated school on either site.

As the above statement, the existing 2 schools – infants and juniors – are overcrowded and too small with insufficient utilities to provide the desired level of education for young people in today’s curriculum. In order to remedy this, and sustain the growing current and projected pupil numbers for this area it is deemed necessary to build a new 2FE school with all the required facilities – such as playing fields, all weather playing areas, internal recreation, on site catering and a vibrant learning platform. We have adhered to many of the above statements to ensure the design meets with the strategic plan as closely as practicable.

## **National Planning Policy Framework 2012**

**Paragraph 28.** Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

The new school, by retaining the educational facility within the community, will maintain the existing and create additional jobs within the local community.

**Paragraph 56.** The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

**Paragraph 58.** Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics.

Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

**Paragraph 59.** Local planning authorities should consider using design codes where they could help deliver high quality outcomes. However, design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.

**Paragraph 60.** Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

**Paragraph 61.** Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

**Paragraph 62:** Local planning authorities should have local design review arrangements in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design.

They should also when appropriate refer major projects for a national design review. In general, early engagement on design produces the greatest benefits. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the recommendations from the design review panel.

A consultation was held with Northampton County Council Planning Department to review the initial scheme. The scheme was looked on positively and the various comments were reviewed by the design team to ensure the proposal would continue to be in line with these.

**Paragraph 65:** Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design (unless the concern relates to a designated heritage asset and the impact would cause material harm to the asset or its setting which is not outweighed by the proposal's economic, social and environmental benefits).

**Paragraph 66:** Applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Proposals that can demonstrate this in developing the design of the new development should be looked on more favourably.

The Design Team undertook a detailed process to meet with the local public and consult with them on the scheme. We met with the school and Governors who fed back the information to the local Parish Council at their formal meetings. There were various comments that were adopted, where practicable, and significant positive feedback for the scheme. This involvement provided an opportunity to get support from those who would be living close to and using the new school.

**Paragraph 72.** The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available 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.

The provision of a 2Fe school will enable places to be opened to the wider community, removing the current over subscription. Also, due to the increasing population within Silverstone and the wider area, this facility will be sufficient for the foreseeable future.

**Paragraph 100.** *Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.*

The site is in Flood Risk zone 1

**Paragraph 103.** *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, informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment<sup>20</sup> following the Sequential Test, and if required the Exception Test, it can be demonstrated that:*

- Within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location; and
- Development is appropriately flood resilient and resistant, including safe access and escape routes where required, and that any residual risk can be safely managed, including by emergency planning; and it gives priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems.

Surface water drainage across the site is to be drained to below ground rainwater attenuation tanks to discharge gradually over time. The school is located at a high point on the site and therefore is positioned to be appropriately flood resilient.

**Paragraph 125:** *By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.*

The external design for the lighting has been created to mitigate light pollution and create an environment that is appropriate to support the foraging and normal activities of birds, bats and other creatures sensitive to light. We have no information available that says that bats are present on the site, but we have still allowed for the potential in our lighting design.

**Paragraph 188.** Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.