Northamptonshire County Council

Supporting Statement to relocate the mobile nursery at:
Sunnyside Primary Academy, Reynard Way, Northampton, NN2 8QS

Addendum to planning application 13/00047/CCDFUL

Sunnyside Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1988. It operates from a mobile within the grounds of Sunnyside Primary School and serves the local community in Kingsthorpe, Northampton. There is a ramped disability access to the building. They are registered to care for a maximum of 28 children at any one time, aged two years to under five, and currently they have 60 children on the register. This shows that there is a high demand for this facility in the area.

The playgroup is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup is open Monday to Friday during school term times only from 09:00 to 16:30. The group employs 7 part time staff and receives support from a local authority advisory teacher.

The mobile that they occupy needs to be re-located to facilitate the expansion of Sunnyside Primary School and it is proposed to move the facility to the opposite side of the car-park. This will allow the School to expand to two forms of entry (420 pupils) to meet the rising demand for primary places in the area and the proposal is therefore related to the planning application Number 13/00025/CCDFUL for this extension. To support the extension an application was made to relocate the mobile to location option (A) on the Mobile Options Appraisal document as part of this application. During the planning consultation process two objections were received on the basis of impact to private amenity. A further visit to site with planners took place and alternative options were appraised and it was concluded that option D was preferred. The rationale for this location is:

- It allows the construction work to be kept at the front of the site, thus maximising access and minimising disruption for both the school and the contractors.
- It avoids the loss of playground and attractively landscaped space at the rear of the school and brings a previously under-utilised part of the site into more appropriate use.
- It allows the new school extension to connect well with the existing building and ensures a sensible arrangement of year groups, as well as a convenient route through (behind the airlock) for pupils between buildings.
- The car-park can be re-designed and provide additional spaces for staff parking on-site.
- It allows for the nursery to operate separately outside of PFI.
- It is allowable by Sport England.

Whilst the County Council does not receive capital grant funding from central government for the provision of permanent accommodation for Pre-School settings, it does have a statutory duty to secure sufficient early years and childcare places are available in each area by working in partnership with third party providers. It is
therefore important that the facility is retained for the valuable early years provision that it offers families in the area.

The Pre-School was last inspected in November 2009 under the Childcare Act of 2006 on the quality and standards it is registered to provide for “childcare on non-domestic premises”. Overall the quality of provision was judged as good, “because children are very well cared for in a safe and inclusive environment.” The Group’s location on the school site was also commented on: “The Pre-School has very good links with the host school and shares information effectively with them. Excellent partnerships with parents and effective liaison with the school help to ensure all children are sensitively included in well-planned activities.” It is therefore highly desirable that the existing arrangements continue, especially as there is an increasing number of young families in the immediate area.

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014:

a) The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014 Section 8.1 confirms commitment to securing economic stability and prosperity which itself is a key element to improving the quality of life for our residents. We need to ensure there are a variety of job opportunities for local people and that people have access to locally based educational facilities. Section 8.31 states that raising student attainment and school performance is also critical in attracting prospective employers. New housing development will bring with it opportunities along with investing in existing schools.

b) In compliance with Policy S10 the design of the new facility will ensure that the existing temporary facility meets current building regulation requirements and therefore be more energy efficient, using sustainable materials and recycles materials which would otherwise end up at landfill. The new permanent facility will also have increased security provision including multi-point locking doors and new upvc windows.

c) In compliance with Policy S10 building on a good school and providing a new permanent facility will increase the sense of place and provision for the local community and ensure that facilities can be provided in locations where there is strong demand.

d) Policy RC1 & 2 (West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014) states that clearly a commitment to improving and building on existing facilities to enhance facilities and regenerate communities.

e) Policy E6 (West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014) states that new educational facilities should be encouraged and developed at site with sustainable transport. Queen Eleanor serves its local community and a large proportion of existing pupils use sustainable travel methods to access the site.

Town and Country Planning Act 2004:

a) Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, the enclosed proposal should be judged against those relevant policies from the Corby Local Plan (1997) the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (2008) which is currently under review as well as the content of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) where applicable.

National Planning Policy Framework 2012:

b) The National Planning Policy Framework sets out those roles which planning system is required to perform in order to ensure the delivery of sustainable
development. The application contained herein will enable the improvement of the education offer in Northamptonshire and will ensure that the school remains an attractive option to parents who are considering the educational needs of their children. The proposal is clearly line with the Core Planning Principles set out at Para 17 of the Framework.

c) The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing communities. In addition, Para 72 of the framework encourages local planning authorities to take a pro-active, positive and collaborative approach to widening the choice of education. Para 72 also requires LPA’s to afford great weight to the need to expand, create or alter schools, the enclosed application is therefore in conformity with the Governments planning and education objectives.

Materials, will be developed that are considered appropriate in the context of the site.

**Impact on Conservation.**
The location is not in, nor adjacent to, any conservation areas. The site is not registered on any heritage listing nor recognised as having any heritage merit.

**Conclusion:**
The primary school and nursery are a key piece of local infrastructure which needs to remain a place for parents to send their children in their formative years. It is clearly important that the school’s facilities meet today’s modern educational requirements and provide a safe and attractive learning environment for pupils and teachers alike.

It is therefore considered that the enclosed application, which conforms to both national and local planning policy, should be seen favourably and approved without delay in line with the presumption as set out at Para 14 of the Framework.