

**PLANNING STATEMENT**

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PROPOSED WORKS TO IRCHESTER COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

V1 – December 2014

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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1.01 - This statement examines the proposed development in terms of adherence to national and local Planning Policy. Reference is made to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (adopted June 2008). There is also reference to the Borough Council of Wellingborough Local Plan (adopted 2007).

1.02 – A separate Design and Access Statement has been prepared to describe the design and impact of the proposed development.

## 2.0 PLANNING POLICY

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2.01 – This section sets out the key policy considerations taken from national and local policy documents that are applicable.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

2.02 – The ‘National Planning Policy Framework’ (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and identifies the Government’s national planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF supersedes the remaining PPS and PPG documents and is the government’s key policy document. The NPPF is, however, an overarching document and does not provide specific policies. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The document states that there are three main dimensions to this – an economic role, social and environmental.

2.03 – At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 14 states ‘local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area’.

2.04 – Paragraph 70 seeks to deliver social, recreational and cultural facilities and services to meet community needs. Furthermore, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

2.05 - The NPPF encourages the creation of vibrant sustainable local communities by providing a high quality built environment with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs. With reference to the proposed development at Irchester Primary School, the ‘Statement of Need’ which forms part of the ‘Design & Access Statement’ clearly highlights the requirement for additional primary school places in Irchester. The proposed extensions will provide the additional capacity and avoid parents having to transport children to schools in Wellingborough, thus satisfying the NPPF’s aim to encourage people to walk to school. Furthermore, the extensions to the will reinforce the existing local infrastructure and a community focus within Irchester.

The NPPF states under ‘Promoting Sustainable Transport’, Para 38, page 10: *“For larger scale residential developments in particular, planning policies should promote a mix of uses in order to provide opportunities to undertake day-to-day activities including work on site. Where practical, particularly within large-scale developments, key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties”*. It goes on to state, para 37, page 10: *“Planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities”*.

The increased capacity of the school will promote walking, meaning a reduction in both the number and distance of car journeys.

2.06 – The NPPF states under, para 56, page 14 *‘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 ....’*. The design of the proposed extensions at Irchester Primary School follows the guidance in the Department for Education and Skills Building Bulletins for the design of school buildings and up-to-date

techniques on education. The design itself is discussed in greater detail in the Design and Access Statement which accompanies this application.

2.07 – It also states under ‘Promoting Healthy Communities’, Para 72, page 17: *‘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’*. We consider that the application to extend Irchester Primary School is a proactive and positive approach which meets the guidance provided within the NPPF. The extended school will provide the additional demand for places from children living in the village.

### **The Development Plan**

2.08 – Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that regard must be had to the development plan and, for the purpose of decision making, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.09 – The Development Plan, which covers the Irchester area, sets out the overall plan for the whole of North Northamptonshire (i.e. Wellingborough, Corby, Kettering and East Northamptonshire) for the period to 2021, consists of the following policy documents;

- Borough Council of Wellingborough Local Plan (adopted 2007) - Saved Policies
- North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (adopted 2008)

### **North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (adopted 2008)**

2.10 – One of the key spatial themes stated in the NNCSS paragraph 3.6 A, page 23 is to: *“Establishing a strong network of settlements that make North Northamptonshire more self-sufficient in terms of access to jobs, shops, leisure, arts and culture, affordable homes and services such as education and training. The general approach will be to meet needs as locally as possible”*. The extensions at Irchester Primary School and associated increase in the school capacity will accord with this key spatial theme and promote meeting the educational needs locally.

2.11 – Policy 13 on page 62: ‘General Sustainable Development Principles’ states: *‘Development should meet the needs of residents and businesses without compromising the ability of future generations to enjoy the same quality of life that the present generation aspires to.’* It goes on to provide a list of criteria that development should achieve. These criteria are listed under three headings: Meet Needs, Raise Standards and Protect Assets. The proposed extensions will help to meet the needs of the residents of Irchester without compromising the quality of life for future generations.

2.12 – Policy 14, page 67, ‘Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Construction’ states under para b.i, that *“development proposals should demonstrate that ... The development incorporates techniques of sustainable construction and energy efficiency”*. The proposed extensions to the existing school building will be built to current Building Regulations, which require the building to meet current targets for sustainable construction and servicing.

### **Borough Council of Wellingborough Local Plan (adopted 2007) - Saved Policies**

2.13 – The Borough Council of Wellingborough Local Plan sets out policies to control development and to provide a framework for co-ordinating and directing development. The majority of the Local Plan policies are now superseded/replaced by the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (adopted 12th June 2008). Under the planning legislation, a number of these policies were saved. The following 4 policies from the 35 ‘saved’ policies from the Local Plan have been quoted with relevance to the proposals:

- G2 Flood Protection
- G3 Areas of Restraint
- G4 Villages
- L2 New Community Facilities

## 2.14 – Policy G2

The policy states that *'Unless flood protection and mitigation measures appropriate to compensate for the impact of the development are provided, planning permission will be refused for development:*

1. *within the floodplains as shown on the proposals map; or*
2. *in other areas at risk of flooding; or*
3. *which will increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; or*
4. *result in problems due to additional surface water run off.'*

The existing school is outside flood zones 2 and 3 as defined by the environment agency's flood map data and doesn't pose any risk of flooding elsewhere therefore the proposals are deemed to comply with this policy.

## 2.12 – Policy G3

The policy states that *'Development in the areas of restraint, as defined on the proposals map, will only be permitted if it does not contribute to the coalescence of settlements and is not detrimental to the open, rural character of the countryside'.*



Fig 001: Irchester Proposals Map indicating village policy line (red) and open countryside (light green)

The proposals map indicates that the Irchester Primary School site is outside the fringe of open countryside but adjacent to it on the North of the village. The extensions to the existing school are modestly designed in a subservient character so as not to cause any detriment by way of interrupting or encroaching onto areas of restraint.

## 2.13 – Policy G4

The policy states that *'In the limited development and restricted infill villages development will be granted planning permission, subject to more specific policies regarding individual sites areas or uses, if it:*

1. *Is within the village policy lines, as defined on the proposals map;*

2. *Will not, either individually or cumulatively with other proposals, have an adverse impact on the size, form, character and setting of the village and its environs.*

Limited development villages are:

*Earls Barton, Finedon and Wollaston*

Restricted infill villages are:

*Bozeat, Ecton, Great Doddington, Great Harrowden, Grendon, Hardwick, Irchester, Isham, Little Harrowden, Little Irchester, Mears Ashby, Orlingbury, Sywell excluding the old village, and Wilby*

The site is located with Irchester and therefore is listed under the restricted infill village heading, however the proposals for the extensions for the school have been sensitively designed in terms of form, scale and setting to avoid imposing any adverse impact on the village.

#### 2.14 – Policy L2

The policy states that *‘Proposals for small-scale built community facilities will be granted planning permission in Wellingborough town where they are designed primarily to meet the needs of residents in the immediate locality, or in a village provided sites lie within it or on its edge and the facilities are designed primarily to meet that village’s needs’.*

As identified in more detail in the School’s ‘Statement of Need’ (refer to Design & Access Statement), the existing school is already operating at close to capacity and using a number of classrooms that do not comply with current educational standards for area provision. There are a growing number of pupils in the village and the proposed extensions to the school will provide the additional pupil places to meet the needs of the village residents, thus according with the requirements of Policy L2. The proposal will also offer a degree of future-proofing to the school accommodation and avoid the need for village residents to transport children to primary schools in Wellingborough. The proposed extensions and increase in pupil capacity will be especially crucial if it is to sustain longer term needs in the event that further housing development in the catchment area is granted planning approval.