1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for planning permission submitted to Kettering Borough Council on behalf of Brooke Weston Trust. The application seeks planning permission for the erection a freestanding extension to the existing school. The extension will increase the school from a 7 form entry (FE) to a 9 FE and is necessary to accommodate the additional school places generated following the recent housing delivery in the area.

Planning History

1.2 There is no recent relevant planning history relating to the application site.

Application Proposals

1.3 Planning permission is sought for the erection of three storey detached extension to the school. The building will be located to the east of the school site, as highlighted on the aerial image below.
1.4 The extension will be accessed via the west facing elevation and the following accommodation will be provided:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ground Floor</th>
<th>First Floor</th>
<th>Second Floor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dining/Common Room</td>
<td>8 x classrooms</td>
<td>8 x classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>2 x resource rooms</td>
<td>Plant room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and store rooms</td>
<td>Office/support rooms</td>
<td>Resource rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office/staff accommodation</td>
<td>Toilets</td>
<td>Toilets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5 The dining / common room is naturally lit by a full height light well extending the full height of the building, lit by 4 no. large rooflights set behind a parapet wall.

1.6 The extension measures some 30 metres by 31 metres and is some 12.4 metres to the parapet. A small structure sits on the roof above the parapet to provide a lift well over-run and plant room.

1.7 The building will be constructed in materials to match the existing school, including fenestration and any cladding elements, for example, the small projecting sections which provide space for the stair well.

The Application Site and its Surroundings

1.8 The application site is located to the eastern flank elevation of the existing school and sits upon a raised grassed area which drops down to the school’s
playing fields. The existing space is not a playing pitch nor is of a size, shape, siting or location where sports are or would be played.

1.9 Deeble Road is located immediately to the north of the site. The main school campus located to the west. Further playing pitches are located to the north, across Deeble Road; accessed across a Zebra crossing.

1.10 The school site is accessed via Deeble Road to the north west of the site. The access leads directly to a large surface car park which is served by a one way system.

1.11 The closest residential development is approximately 100 metres to the south (Greenbank Avenue) and approximately 140 metres to the north west (Deeble Road/Southgate Drive).
2.0 PLANNING POLICY

Kettering Borough Development Plan

2.1 The Development Plan comprises, *inter alia*, saved policies of the 1995 Local Plan for Kettering Borough (saved 2016) and the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (July 2016).

2.2 In respect of the saved Local Plan, the saved Proposals Map (extract below) shows the location (approximately circled red) of the proposed extension being within an “*Areas protected and/or reserved as (i) public open space or environmentally important open space (ii) outdoor sports facilities*”. Note that the current school building is not shown on this, now dated, map.

2.3 Policy K4 of the saved Local Plan remains the only saved policy that is relevant in this context. The policy is titled, ‘Kettering: Slade Valley’, and makes provision for a linear park and footpath/cycle link within Slade Valley. The policy states that the Local Planning Authority will *inter alia* protect existing open spaces and provide new open space.
2.4 In respect of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS), the following policies are considered relevant to the determination of this application:

- Policy 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 7 – Community Services and Facilities
- Policy 8 – North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles
- Policy 9 – Sustainable Buildings
- Policy 10 – Provision of Infrastructure
- Policy 20 – Nene and Ise Valley

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)

2.5 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Three "overarching objectives" to achieving sustainable development in a planning context are set out in paragraph 8; economic, social and environmental.

2.6 Paragraph 8(b) refers to the social objective and describes its meaning as being, “to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by...fostering a well designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being;”.

2.7 Paragraph 10 makes it clear that, “so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, “at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”. Paragraph 11 states that, for decision taking,
this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

2.8 Section 8 of the Framework promotes healthy and safe communities. Paragraph 94 acknowledges that, “it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.” It reads on to direct Local Planning Authorities to take a, “proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.”

2.9 Paragraph 94 advises that, to meet this policy objective, LPAs should “give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools”.

2.10 Section 11 refers to making effective use of land. Paragraph 117 requires decisions to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment.

2.11 Section 12 sets out the Government's policies to achieve well-designed places. The section opens at paragraph 124 by stating that, "The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.” Paragraph 127 sets out a series of objectives which development should achieve to ensure well-designed places.
3.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The proposed development is considered to raise the following planning issues:-

1. Principle of development
2. Whether the proposed development will detract from the character and appearance of the area.
3. Other Material Considerations: Neighbouring Amenity, Playing Pitches and Transportation/Highways

**Issue 1: Principle of development**

3.2 The JCS sets out a ‘Vision’ of what the sub-region will be by 2031. Amongst other things, the ‘Vision’ states that,

“North Northamptonshire will be an exemplar for construction-based innovation and the delivery of low carbon growth. Its high-quality environment and prosperous economy will ensure it has a stronger profile within the UK and Europe; widely recognised as a safe, healthy, affordable and attractive area for residents and visitors, and an excellent place for business to invest in.”

3.3 To achieve this ‘Vision’ the JCS establishes a series of outcomes that need to be delivered. This includes, *inter alia*, delivering “distinctive environments that enhance and respect local character” and “excellent services and facilities easily accessed by local communities and businesses”.

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Brooke Weston Trust
Kettering Science Academy,
Deeble Road,
Kettering, NN15 7AA
3.4 In this context, Policy 1 of the JCS states that the LPA will take a positive approach to proposals where they reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It clarifies that, to be regarded as ‘sustainable’ within the context of the JCS, development should contribute to delivering the ‘Vision’ and ‘Outcomes’ through the compliance of policies within the Plan.

3.5 Education forms the backbone of a successful and innovative economy. The provision of a sufficient number of high quality education facilities, at all age groups, will therefore contribute significantly to the ‘Vision’ set out within the JCS.

3.6 Policy 10 relates to the provision of infrastructure and sets out that LPAs will work with infrastructure / service providers to identify viable solutions to delivering infrastructure. This is reflected within the Framework wherein paragraph 94 notes the importance of ensuring a sufficient choice of school places are available to meet the needs of the community. This importance is enshrined by the statement that LPAs should “take a positive, proactive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement”.

3.7 The proposed extension to the school to provide, amongst other things, 16 no. classrooms, library and ICT facilities, on a site that is wholly contained within the existing campus and within the settlement boundary, is thus consistent with the ‘Vision’ of the JCS; meets with the LPAs identified ‘Outcomes’ and is in accordance with Policy 1 and 10 of the JCS. It is thus submitted that the principle of development is acceptable.
Issue 2: Character and Appearance

3.8 The application is accompanied by a Feasibility Design Report. This report is provided to show how the proposed siting and design has been arrived at following a consideration of alternative locations and design.

3.9 The image below is extracted from the report and identifies the options considered for the proposed school extension. This image clearly shows the constraints for extending the school. To the west of the existing school buildings (options 3, 4 and 5) a new building would be on circulation space, car parking, playing pitches or would impede the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic. To the north and east (options 1 and 6) lie playing pitches. To the south of the building lie residential properties on Greenbank Avenue. It is thus evident that the most viable option to the site the extension is in the location proposed (option 2).
3.10 The external appearance of the proposed building has been designed to match the existing school. The image below shows the building constructed in similar materials, fenestration, mass and form as the existing. The large area of glazing is the west facing elevation looking towards the existing school. It provides the main entrance and lights the dining/common room; along with a full height atrium which is lit with 4 no. rooflights.

3.11 The proposed north and south (side) elevations each contain a projecting section, clad in standing seam sheeting. The slight projection contains stairwells and allows for a more efficient use of the space within the building. The lift over-run projects above the parapet; as it does on the existing school building. Whilst distant views of the lift over-run can be had, this does not detract from the overall appearance of the building.
Planning Statement

3.12 The only public view of the building is from Deeble Road to the north. The image below shows the raised platform on which the proposed extension will be situated. The proposed extension is a floor higher than the existing school. Careful thought has been taken as to how the two parts (proposed and existing) would relate and what impact this would have on the character and appearance of Deeble Road. Though taller, the site is significantly constrained with limited alternative options to provide additional classrooms. It is therefore important to maximise the potential of the site to provide new accommodation.

3.13 The image below shows an illustration of how the proposed extension will relate to the existing building and neighbouring streetscene. Given the view from Deeble Road is towards a school and school facilities/pitches, the siting of the extension in this context will not appear incongruous. Further, the height and proximity to the road will not result in a building that would be overly dominant or overbearing on Deeble Road.
3.14 It is also to be noted that LPAs should take a “proactive, positive and collaborative approach” to achieving sufficient school places in an area (paragraph 94, Framework). In other words, decision takers should weigh the planning balance and, only if there are significant and demonstrable adverse impacts of development, should permission be refused.

3.15 It is respectfully submitted that the proposed development represents good quality design in a manner that maximises the development potential of the site. It provides additional classrooms and school facilities on an existing site and adheres to the Development Plan on the whole. In these terms, any limited adverse effects of the height are substantially outweighed by the benefits of the proposed development.

Issue 3 : Other Material Considerations

Neighbouring Amenity

3.16 The closest neighbouring properties are located on Greenbank Avenue/Cheyne Walk and Deeble Road/Southgate Drive. Both are located in excess of 100
metres from the proposed building. In the case of homes on Deeble Road and Southgate Drive, the proposed extension is sited beyond the existing school and Deeble Road provides a barrier between the site and homes. It is not anticipated the proposed extension will be a significant noise generator and any noise that may emanate from the building when windows are open will be limited and set against the context of a road and existing school site.

3.17 Properties on Greenbank Avenue and Cheyne Walk are located some 140 meters to the south. The extension is located to the northern boundary of the site meaning the existing school and pitches occupy the intervening land. As above, it is not considered that the proposed extension will adversely affect the living conditions of neighbours to the south.

3.18 In terms of traffic noise associated with the new rooms, whilst modest additional traffic will be generated following the increase from a 7FE to a 9FE school, it is not considered to be of a level to cause a noticeable increase in noise for neighbouring occupiers close to the site access on Deeble Road.

**Transportation/Highway Impact**

3.19 The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement and Travel Plan. The extension will generate modest additional traffic flows to and from the site during school drop off/pick up. The existing school entrance will be utilised, and sufficient car parking remains to serve the expanded school. Deeble Road and the surrounding local highway network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the modest extra flows of traffic.
3.20 It is not anticipated that the proposed development will result in on street car parking or congestion on Deeble Road. Adequate visibility and capacity exist at the site entrance to ensure that no harm will ensue to highway or pedestrian safety.

3.21 The Transport Statement notes that there is no existing queuing back from the site car park and drop off / pick up area and that there is capacity within the site to accommodate additional traffic and parking so that there continues to be no queuing onto Deeble Road.

3.22 It is also acknowledged that, while Deeble Road and Windmill Avenue do experience some congestion at school start and finish times, the traffic impact from the increase in pupils would not create a severe impact on the operation of the road network and no harm to highway or pedestrian safety would be caused by the proposed development.

**Playing Pitches**

3.23 The proposed extension is sited on the raised platform, created when the existing school was constructed. The area where the extension is proposed does not contain a playing pitch and is not of a size, shape or location that can be used to play sport or undertake physical activity. It is, essentially, space left over after planning and its loss as incidental open space will not detract from the existing sports facilities. In short, as a consequence of the proposed development there will be no loss to existing playing pitch provision. Moreover, sufficient playing pitches exist to serve the needs of the pupils of the expanded school and the wider community.
4.0 Conclusions

4.1 The proposed extension will facilitate the expansion of the school from a 7FE to a 9FE and will meet the needs of growing population in the area.

4.2 The proposal is a result of a site sequential assessment with alternative options considered and discounted on the basis of them being unviable or unsuitable. The proposed location is the most preferable location on the site that will not result in the loss of playing pitches and will not impact on neighbouring occupiers.

4.3 The design is similar to the existing school buildings and will provide a modern, light environment for pupils to study. The three storey height maximises the development potential of the site and is a consequence of the limited alternative options on the campus to expand. When seen against the existing site context from public vantage points, the three storey height is not considered to be incongruous. The proposed development is not therefore considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene.

4.4 The proposed development does not give rise to significant increased trips to and from the site and adequate capacity exists on the local highway network. No harm to highway or pedestrian safety will ensue as a result of the development, nor will the proposal result in congestion on local roads.

4.5 The siting of the extension, away from neighbouring occupiers, will not result in the loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers.
Planning Statement

4.6 In the terms of the Framework, both the presumption favour of sustainable development and the need for LPAs to consider such applications in a “proactive, positive and collaborative” way, it is submitted that any limited harm that might be identified through design is substantially outweighed by the significant benefits in local education provision to meet the growing population.

4.7 In the light of the above circumstances, it is considered that the application proposal adheres to the Development Plan and Framework. Planning permission should therefore be granted without delay.

WAB/JAG/5183

11 February 2019