

## Northamptonshire County Council

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Northamptonshire County Council, have prepared a detailed Planning Statement in support of a Planning Application for temporary teaching accommodation at Caroline Chisholm School, located on Wooldale Road, Wootton Fields, Northampton, NN4 6TP (the "Site").
- 1.2 Following the floods in April 2018 Caroline Chisholm School main teaching areas suffered significant damage rendering large areas of the school unusable.
- 1.3 Therefore to accommodate the students a full planning application is being submitted to place temporary mobile accommodation on school site, located in the MUGA hardstanding areas at the rear of the school until the main teaching areas of Caroline Chisholm School are deemed usable and fit for the school its students and staff.
- 1.4 Caroline Chisholm School is an all through school located in Wootton Fields and provides education for 420 primary age students (2 form entry), 1500 place secondary provision and a 300 place Sixth Form.
- 1.5 Caroline Chisholm School opened in September 2004 and is run by the Caroline Chisholm School Trust. It is a PFI initiative school; the contractual agreement being between the Client and Kajima Partnerships. Mitie pfi provide facilities management services to the buildings.
- 1.6 Following the floods in April 2018 the school buildings suffered serious damage to the lower floors to all four of the main teaching blocks. The areas are still out of use and are unlikely to be usable until Easter 2019.
- 1.7 The works were unable to start until the areas have sufficiently dried out and passed moisture tests.
- 1.8 There is not enough space within the existing building to accommodate the relocation of teaching spaces, especially in the specialist subject's areas such as DT and art; these two areas being the worst impacted for flood damage.
- 1.9 Temporary accommodation is required to allow the school to be able to deliver a full curriculum to the whole age range but essentially to KS4 students in year 11 who will be disadvantaged due to the lack of facilities available in specialist subject areas.
- 1.10 The school is Ofsted rated as "requires improvement" and is trying to manage the impact of loss of teaching spaces against their programme of improvement and reform it has in place to make to progress in time for its next inspection.
- 1.11 The school also has to deliver a full curriculum to all year groups, including those in the key year groups 11 and 13.
- 1.12 Northamptonshire County Council has a statutory obligation to ensure that all children aged between 4 and 18 have access to a full time education and a place within an educational setting.
- 1.13 A detailed description of the development is set out in Section 4 below.
- 1.14 The application is submitted to Northamptonshire County Council (the "LPA") as the determining Planning Authority for the area.
- 1.15 This Planning Statement provides a justification for the proposed development in light of prevailing national and local planning policy. The following supporting documents have been submitted with the application:

## Drawings

- CCS Temps Mobile Number Plan
- CCS Temp Accommodation Plan V3

## Other supporting documentation:

- Planning Statement prepared by NCC
- Biodiversity checklist

## **2 SITE & SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 This section of the statement provides an overview and analysis of the site including relevant recent planning history and its relationship with the surrounding area.
- 2.2 The application site is located within the Wootton Fields area on the southern edge of Northampton Town Centre. The site measures c26 hectares in area. It is located on the edge of a housing estate and is surrounded by agricultural land.
- 2.3 Access to the site for both pedestrians and vehicles is via the Wooldale Road main school entrance and serves all year groups and the on - site private nursery provider.
- 2.4 The site of the temporary classrooms comprises of hardstanding to the rear of the school in the form of two MUGA courts usually used for sports activities at the school.
- 2.5 The school has a protected pond area due to presence of Great Crested Newts. This is to the South of the siting of the mobiles and the proximity of the mobiles will not impact any areas of natural inhabitation of plant life or wildlife in the area due to them being sited on existing large hardstanding areas.

## **3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 This application seeks full planning permission to install temporary classrooms on the site of Caroline Chisholm School. The development is a like for like replacement of existing classrooms but not of the ancillary spaces i.e. toilets and staff bases.
- 3.2 The development description as set out in the submitted forms is:  
*Installation of 25 No. 1 storey temporary modular buildings to provide classrooms for Caroline Chisholm School.*
- 3.3 On the Caroline Chisholm School temporary site 25 single storey temporary buildings are proposed. This will provide teaching accommodation for displaced students due to the flooding of the main teaching blocks of the school. The development area is 1,750 square metres.
- 3.4 The layout of the area is contained within the fenced boundaries of the MUGA's. There is deemed to be no visual impact outside of the courts.
- 3.5 The development will not affect the existing ecology or the habitat. No ground works are required as existing services will be utilised. There are no changes to the landscape.
- 3.6 The buildings are standard single storey mobile classroom accommodation. The elevations are perpendicular surmounted by a low pitch roof. The roof is finished in grey felt with a small overhang, discharging rainwater into a black PVC gutter and down pipes. The height of the roof is approximately 3.3m from ground level. The walls are

refinished in a stippled weatherproof coating or pebble dashed, all painted in a green or cream colour. Windows have white UPVC frames and are double glazed in clear float glass or single glazed grey aluminium.

- 3.7 The approach to the mobiles is via an existing gateway and road already constructed at the rear of Caroline Chisholm School. The mobiles have been sited in the MUGA's to allow for ease of access to get between and around them.
- 3.8 No additional parking is required for this development.
- 3.9 Access to the mobiles will be by step or ramp.
- 3.10 The mobiles will be sited on the MUGA's to the rear of the main teaching blocks. The location is ring fenced to ensure the safety of all users.
- 3.11 The design of the mobile will ensure and assist evacuation should an emergency need occur. All travel routes have been carefully planned and emergency exit facilities provided. No changes have been made to existing routes. Evacuation planning will be recorded and regularly tested by the occupiers.
- 3.12 Waste generation will be as per existing.

#### Pre Application Engagement and Consultation

- 3.13 The proposals have not been formal or informally consulted upon prior to install due to the emergency need for the Authority to facilitate and meet its statutory obligations in providing educational places to pupils.

#### **Summary**

- 3.14 Given the above, the current proposal for additional temporary teaching accommodation will result in a continuation of school life and education for the students of Caroline Chisholm School until the permanent buildings become available to them again. At that time the pupils would relocate into the main Caroline Chisholm School buildings and the temporary buildings removed from the site.

## **4 REVIEW OF PLANNING POLICY AND FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that decisions on planning applications be taken in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is also reinforced within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 4.2 In assessing the planning policy context, consideration has been given to the adopted development plan and supplementary planning guidance and also to national planning guidance. All relevant documents are set out below in order of national and local levels.

#### The National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.3 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF"), at Para 10, lies the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

4.4 There are three dimensions to sustainable development as identified at Paragraph 8 - economic, social and environmental and that the planning system must therefore perform a number of roles:

- *An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy;*
- *A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities;*
- *An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.*

4.5 Para 94 of the NPPF states that 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.

#### Caroline Chisholm School Proposed Temporary Teaching Accommodation

Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- *Give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and*
- *Work with school promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.*

#### Caroline Chisholm School Proposed Temporary Teaching Accommodation

Local Planning Policy –

The Development Plan:

4.6 The statutory Development Plan for the area currently comprises of the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014), the saved policies of the Northampton Local Plan (adopted 1997) and the Northampton Central Area Action Plan (2013).

4.7 The following policies are considered to be relevant to the proposed development. West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) (“WNJCS”):

Policy SA Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy S1 The Distribution of Development

Policy S7 Provision of Jobs

Policy S10 Sustainable Development Principles

Policy S11 Low Carbon and Renewable Energy

Policy C5 Enhancing Local and Neighbourhood Connections

Policy BN2 Biodiversity

Policy BN5 The Historic Environment

Policy BN9 Planning for Pollution Control

Policy E6 Education Skills and Training

Saved Policies of the Northampton Local Plan (1997) (“NBLP”)

Policy E11 Hedgerow, Trees and Woodland

Policy E20 New Development

Policy E40 Crime and Vandalism  
Northampton Central Area Action Plan (2013) (“CAAP”):  
Policy 1 Promoting Design Excellence  
Policy 3 Public Realm  
Policy 4 Green Infrastructure  
Policy 5 Flood Risk and Drainage  
Policy 10 Parking

### **Review of Development Plan Policies**

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014):

- 4.8 The Joint Core Strategy (“JCS”) sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the area covered by Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire Council’s for the plan period, including strategic policies for steering and shaping development.
- 4.9 Policy SA sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development reflecting that in the NPPF.
- 4.10 Policy S1 sets out the distribution of development within the plan area and sets out that development will be concentrated primarily in and adjoining the principal urban area of Northampton.
- 4.11 Policy S7 sets out that provision will be made for 28,500 jobs in West Northamptonshire during the plan period.
- 4.12 Policy S10 sets out the principles for ensuring sustainable developments. This relates to design considerations; energy efficiency and materials; waste management; accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport; renewable energy; water efficiency and sustainable drainage; preservation, conservation and enhancement of the of the natural and built environment and heritage assets; promoting Green Infrastructure Networks and enhancing biodiversity and minimising pollution.
- 4.13 Policy S11 of the JCS provides greater detail in relation to low carbon and renewable energy requirements. Proposals should be sensitively located and designed to minimise potential adverse impact on people, the natural environment, biodiversity, historic assets and should mitigate pollution. All new non residential development over 500 m2 gross internal floorspace are required to achieve a minimum of at least BREEAM very good standard (or equivalent).
- 4.14 Policy C5 seeks to improve access to bus, cycle and walking networks to improve connectivity between areas.
- 4.15 Policy BN2 of the JCS sets out development will maintain and enhance biodiversity. Development that has the potential to harm sites of ecological importance will be subject to an ecological assessment.
- 4.16 Policy BN5 relates to the historic environment. Development in conservation areas and on sites of known or potential heritage or historic significance will need to sustain and enhance the area.
- 4.17 Policy BN9 of the JCS sets out that proposals for new development will need to demonstrate that they provide opportunities to minimise and where possible reduce pollution issues. This relates to air quality, water quality, light pollution, ground contamination and reducing the adverse impacts of noise.

- 4.18 Policy E6 sets out that new educational facilities will be encouraged and should be developed at sites which are accessible by sustainable transport modes.
- Saved Policies of the Northampton Local Plan (1997) (“NBLP”):
- 4.19 Policy E11 of the NBLP sets out that planning permission will not be granted for development which would involve the destruction of, or substantial damage to, trees, hedgerows or woodland of significant value and provides general guidance for all new development and requires proposals to be in keeping with the locality and not detract from local amenity. Proposals should have a satisfactory means of access, not have an adverse impact on the road network, be provided with the necessary infrastructure and public services including public transport, not adversely affect heritage assets, nature conservation, geology or archaeology, does not adversely affect a Special Landscape Area and has full regard to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 4.20 Policy E20 sets out that planning permission will be granted for new development subject to the design of the development adequately reflecting the character of its surroundings and being designed, located and used in a manner which safeguards privacy, daylight and sunlight.
- 4.21 Policy E40 of the NBLP relates to crime and vandalism and sets out that development will need to pay adequate regard to the need to deter crime and vandalism.

Northampton Central Area Action Plan (2013) (“CAAP”):

- 4.22 The CAAP was adopted by Northampton Borough Council in January 2013 and forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. Its overall aim is to provide a consistent strategic framework for the improvement and extension of the town centre whilst seeking to protect and enhance its intrinsic historic built character and green spaces.
- 4.23 Policy 1 of the CAAP requires that all new development within the Central Area must demonstrate a high design standard of design and address objectives such as contributing to the character of the area, considers the relationship between buildings and public spaces, considers linkages to improve accessibility, creates uncluttered streets, designing for energy and resource efficiency, make efficient use of land, preserve and enhance heritage assets, promote high quality inclusive design.
- 4.24 Policy 3 sets out that changes to the public realm should be consistent with the Public Realm Implementation Framework.
- 4.25 Policy 4 of the CAAP requires that developments delivers and/or contributes to the provision of green infrastructure.
- 4.26 Policy 10 sets out the parking requirements for the Central Area of Northampton. Within the edge of Town Centre Boundary identified on the proposals map, parking provision will be at a maximum of 50% of the relevant parking standard as set out in Appendix E of the CAAP.
- 4.27 Policy 34 supports the redevelopment of the site for business, residential or other uses in accordance with the Development Plan.

#### Supplementary Planning Documents & Guidance

- 4.28 Northamptonshire County Council adopted revised parking standards in 2016 (“Northamptonshire Parking Standards – September 2016”).

- 4.29 The parking standards replaced the previous countywide parking standards which were published in 2003 and applied maximum parking standards.
- 4.30 Also of relevance to the proposed development is the Planning Out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG (2004).

Other Policy Considerations:

- 4.31 The Government Policy Statement “Planning for Schools Development” (DCLG August 2011) (Appendix B) seeks to ensure that the answer to proposals for the development of state-funded schools should be, wherever possible, “yes”.
- 4.32 The policy statement sets out the following guidance and principles:
- There should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools, as
  - expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework.
  - Local authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the
  - development of state-funded schools in their planning decisions.
  - Local authorities should make full use of their planning powers to support state-funded schools
  - applications.
  - Local authorities should only impose conditions that clearly and demonstrably meet the tests
  - set out in Circular 11/95.
  - Local authorities should ensure that the process for submitting and determining state-funded
  - schools’ applications is as streamlined as possible, and in particular be proportionate in the information sought from applicants.
  - A refusal of any application for a state-funded school, or the imposition of conditions, will have to be clearly justified by the local planning authority.
  - Appeals against any refusals of planning permission for state funded schools should be treated as a priority.
  - Where a local planning authority refuses planning permission for a state-funded school, the Secretary of State will consider carefully whether to recover for his own determination appeals against the refusal of planning permission.
  - This statement applies to both change of use development and operational development necessary to the operational needs of the school.

## **5 PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

### **Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”)**

- 5.1 It is not considered that the regulations would be applicable to this current proposal for temporary teaching accommodation within the same site.
- 5.2 As such it is not considered that this current application would require the submission of an Environmental Statement under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011.

## **The Need for the Development**

5.3 Without providing this emergency temporary accommodation there is no other space for the students to be educated. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide a school place for every child up to the age of 18 years.

5.4 The document sets out:

*“The County Council’s capital programme has planned to add 10,000 new primary school places across the county by September 2015 in order to meet the rising demand from an increased birth-rate, high levels of in-migration and developments of new housing. Northampton town was the first part of the county to experience this growth and since 2010 there have been extensions either completed or currently underway at twenty primary schools. This is adding over 3,360 new pupils and in the next two or three years, they will have moved through the primary system and will be applying for secondary school places. In addition two new primary schools are opening in September 2014 and September 2015 with another 840 places.”*

5.5 This highlights the clear need for Caroline Chisholm School and also the importance of its location, due to the increased house building over the last ten years in the area, to meet the educational needs of the town’s current primary and secondary school children in the area of Wootton Fields.

Given the delay in the refurbishment works to the main Caroline Chisholm School buildings, the additional temporary teaching accommodation is needed to provide the existing pupils with continuity in their education, whilst housing the Year 11 and Year 13 in high quality accommodation that meets their educational needs in their important examination years.  
Caroline Chisholm School Proposed Temporary Teaching Accommodation

## **Principle of the Development**

5.6 The principle of the development has been established through the granting of planning permission for a through school for pupils aged 4-19 in the Wootton Fields area.

5.7 As well as meeting established educational needs, the site is located in a highly sustainable location for a school and therefore consistent with policies S10, C5 and E6 of the WNJCS which support the provision of schools/development in highly accessible locations.

5.8 The contents of Paragraph 72 of the NPPF, where the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places are available, add substantial weight to the proposed development. Further the presumption in favour of building new state funded schools (and carrying out operational development to meet the needs of schools) established through the Government Policy Statement for Planning for Schools Development (DCLG August 2011) adds further weight to the proposed development in planning policy terms.

## **Material Planning Considerations**

5.9 The following planning considerations are considered to be material to the determination of this planning application for temporary teaching accommodation and associated works.

Design and Impact of the Character and Appearance of the Area  
Heritage and archeology  
Highway Considerations/Sustainable Transport

### **Caroline Chisholm School Proposed Temporary Teaching Accommodation**

#### **Design and Impact of the Character and Appearance of the Area**

5.10 Given that the buildings will only be required during the interim period until the main Caroline Chisholm School building is finished, the application proposes the use of modular temporary buildings.

#### **Heritage and Archaeology**

5.11 There are no known designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the site, or listed buildings.

5.12 The proposed temporary buildings on the Caroline Chisholm School site, given their position set within existing MUGA's would have no material impact on any heritage assets, notwithstanding the fact that they are only temporary in nature.

#### **Highway Considerations/Sustainable Transport**

5.13 As considered the site is in a wholly sustainable location. Pedestrian access provides safe walking access to surrounding residential areas. Given the above the site provides the opportunity for access by sustainable means of transport as required by Policies C5, E6 and S10 of the WNJCS in addition to Paragraphs 29 and 32 of the NPPF.

5.14 With regards to parking, there is a dedicated parking area within the existing grounds of the school.

5.15 A sustainable travel plan is already operational, which is necessary to instil travel behaviour in pupils, staff and parents from the outset.

5.16 Given the sites location and accessibility, and the measures put forward to encourage sustainable travel and the management of car parking, it is considered that the proposed temporary accommodation is satisfactory from a highway safety and parking perspective in accordance with Paragraphs 29 and 32 of the NPPF, Policies C5, E6 and S10 of the WNJCS and Policy 10 of the CAAP.

## **6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 Planning permission is sought to install temporary teaching accommodation (25 No. portable buildings) at the Caroline Chisholm School until the main building is complete and ready for occupation. The proposals seek to provide temporary teaching accommodation for pupils who have been displaced due to flooding of the existing buildings.

6.2 The submitted scheme has been developed to provide a high quality learning environment which is essential to meet the educational needs of existing pupils at the

school. Local Authority have developed a temporary scheme that meets the short term educational needs, whilst minimising impact on neighbours, the environment and the highway network, of the pupils of Caroline Chisholm School.

- 6.3 Sufficient car and cycle parking is provided within the existing car park to cater for staff and visitors to the school and parents, there is no reduced impact on existing residents. The above assessment has demonstrated that the proposed temporary accommodation is essential to meet the educational needs of students and that the proposal is well supported by both national and local planning policies which prioritise planning applications for new schools and associated development. Measures can be imposed to ensure that any adverse impacts of the development are mitigated.
- 6.4 Given the above, the proposed development is supported by national and local planning policies and should be approved without delay.

## **APPENDIX**

Policy Statement – Planning for Schools Development (DCLG 2011)

### **Policy statement – planning for schools development**

**The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Mr Eric Pickles) and the Secretary of State for Education (Mr Michael Gove)** wish to set out the Government's commitment to support the development of state-funded schools and their delivery through the planning system. This statement supersedes the Statement of 26 July 2010.

The Government is firmly committed to ensuring there is sufficient provision to meet growing demand for state-funded school places, increasing choice and opportunity in state-funded education and raising educational standards. State-funded schools – which include Academies and free schools, as well as local authority maintained schools (community, foundation and voluntary aided and controlled schools) - educate the vast majority of children in England. The Government wants to enable new schools to open, good schools to expand and all schools to adapt and improve their facilities. This will allow for more provision and greater diversity in the state-funded school sector to meet both demographic needs and the drive for increased choice and higher standards. For instance, creating free schools remains one of the Government's flagship policies, enabling parents, teachers, charities and faith organisations to use their new freedoms to establish state-funded schools and make a real difference in their communities. By increasing both the number of school places and the choice of state-funded schools, we can raise educational standards and so transform children's lives by helping them to reach their full potential.

It is the Government's view that the creation and development of state-funded schools is strongly in the national interest and that planning decision-makers can and should support that objective, in a manner consistent with their statutory obligations.

We expect all parties to work together proactively from an early stage to help plan for state-school development and to shape strong planning applications. This collaborative working would help to ensure that the answer to proposals for the development of state-funded schools should be, wherever possible, "yes". The Government believes that the planning system should operate in a positive manner when dealing with proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of state-funded schools, and that the following principles should apply with immediate effect:

- **There should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools, as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework.**
- **Local authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state-funded schools in their planning decisions.** The Secretary of State will attach significant weight to the need to establish and develop state-funded schools when determining applications and appeals that come before him for decision.
- **Local authorities should make full use of their planning powers to support state-funded schools applications.** This should include engaging in pre-application discussions with promoters to foster a collaborative approach to applications and, where necessary, the use of planning obligations to help to mitigate adverse impacts and help deliver development that has a positive impact on the community.
- **Local authorities should only impose conditions that clearly and demonstrably meet the tests set out in Circular 11/95.** Planning conditions should only be those absolutely necessary to making the development acceptable in planning terms.
- **Local authorities should ensure that the process for submitting and determining state-funded schools' applications is as streamlined as possible,** and in particular be proportionate in the information sought from applicants. For instance, in the case of free schools, authorities may choose to use the information already contained in the free school provider's application to the Department for Education to help limit additional information requirements.
- **A refusal of any application for a state-funded school, or the imposition of conditions, will have to be clearly justified by the local planning authority.** Given the strong policy support for improving state education, the Secretary of State will be minded to consider such a refusal or imposition of conditions to be unreasonable conduct, unless it is supported by clear and cogent evidence.
- **Appeals against any refusals of planning permission for state-funded schools should be treated as a priority.** Where permission is refused and an appeal made, the Secretary of State will prioritise the resolution of such appeals as a matter of urgency in line with the priority the Government places on state education.
- **Where a local planning authority refuses planning permission for a statefunded school, the Secretary of State will consider carefully whether to recover for his own determination appeals against the refusal of planning permission.**

This statement applies to both change of use development and operational development necessary to the operational needs of the school. The Government is today publishing a summary of the responses to its consultation, *Planning for Schools Development*, and will continue to explore whether there is further scope and need for the planning system to do more to support state-funded schools, and in particular, free schools in the future.

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