

Application Number: WND/2021/0610

Location: Land to West of Thorpeville, Moulton

Development: Construction of a Secondary School with outdoor sports facilities, access, parking, landscaping and drainage

Applicant: The Elliott Group Ltd (On behalf of the Department of Education)

Agent: DPP

Case Officer: Mrs K Daniels

Ward: Moulton

Reason for Referral: Major Application

Committee Date: 27.01.2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: THAT THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR GROWTH, CLIMATE AND REGENERATION BE GIVEN DELEGATED POWERS TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS AND SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF HIGHWAYS, LANDSCAPING SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE AND ECOLOGY MATTERS;

Proposal

The proposal is for the construction of a new secondary school with outdoor sports facilities, access, parking, landscaping and drainage.

Consultations

The following consultees have raised **objections** to the application:

- Highways, Parish Council, Ecology, Landscape

The following consultees have raised **no objections** to the application:

- Anglian Water, Environmental Health, Archaeology, Developer Contributions, Natural England, Crime Prevention Design Advisor

The following consultees have not responded on the application:

- Surface Water Drainage

104 letters of objection have been received and 11 letters of support have been received.

Conclusion

The application has been assessed against the relevant policies in the NPPF, the adopted Local Plan and other relevant guidance as listed in detail at Section 8 of the report.

The key issues arising from the application details are:

- Principle of Development

- Highway Safety
- Impact on the character and appearance of the locality
- Residential Amenity
- Surface Water Drainage and Foul Water
- Ecology
- Designated and Undesignated Heritage Assets

The report looks into the key planning issues in detail, and Officers conclude that on balance the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions and the satisfactory resolution of matters relating to highways, landscape, ecology and surface water drainage.

Members are advised that the above is a summary of the proposals and key issues contained in the main report below which provides full details of all consultation responses, planning policies, the Officer's assessment and recommendations, and Members are advised that this summary should be read in conjunction with the detailed report.

MAIN REPORT

1. APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

- 1.1 The application site is located to the south of the village of Moulton, off Thorpeville on a section which is no longer a through road following the opening of the new dual carriage way section of the A43. The site is currently undeveloped (Greenfield) arable land, which is designated as Grade 3 agricultural (Good to Moderate) and has. The shape of the site is irregular. The boundary to the site comprises in majority hedges, with hedgerow trees, however there are two areas which form part of a TPO area. One of the TPO areas form part of the boundary with Thorpeville. The other is known as Round Spinney, given its oval shape.
- 1.2 A residential property is located to the north-eastern of the site. This is a detached dwelling, which has had a TPO recently confirmed. The rear garden faces towards the west. The property has a number of windows which look towards the application site.
- 1.3 There are a number of footpaths which form part of the boundary of the site. These footpaths link with Thorpeville, Ashley Lane with the High Street. The footpath network appears to be well used by dog walkers and walkers.

2. CONSTRAINTS

- 2.1. The application site is within a Green Wedge and is outside the established village confines of Moulton.

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. The development is for the construction of a new secondary school (ages 11-16). The school will be an eight form entry school with a capacity of 1200 pupils. The proposal includes outdoor sports facilities, access, parking, landscaping and drainage within the site.
- 3.2. The school building is located to the northern boundary, nearest to the properties along Ashley Lane. The proposed form is similar to a W shape. The front of the building faces onto Thorpeville, and this element forms the main block. Three wings branch off perpendicular from the main block. The building is proposed to be two storeys in height,

with the exception of the sports entrance, kitchen and sports hall. The kitchen area is single storey with plant on the roof. The sports hall element comprises of a double height area.

- 3.3. The car park element lies to the front of the site accessed from the truncated section of Thorpeville, and comprises of 191 standard parking spaces, 19 disabled parking bays, 45 drop off bays, 3 mini-bus spaces and 2 coach/bus spaces. There are 120 covered cycle spaces for pupils proposed at the southern end of the building. 10 visitor cycle spaces are located outside the main entrance, again this is a covered area. 28 cycle spaces are located to the northern end of the school building. Again this provision will be covered.
- 3.4. There will two pedestrian means of access and two vehicular entrances off Thorpeville. There will be no entrances or exits onto the public right of way which runs along the majority of the perimeter of the site.
- 3.5. The hard outdoor (for netball, tennis etc) PE area is located to the west, a 3g astro turf pitch is located to the south of the hard surfaces area. This will be enclosed by a 4.5m high fence. Further to the south comprises of a grass area for both winter and summer sports provision.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1. There is no planning history directly relevant to the proposal.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Duty

- 5.1. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

- 5.2. The Development Plan comprises the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) which was formally adopted by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 15th December 2014 and which provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2029, the adopted Settlement and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) and adopted Neighbourhood Plans. The relevant planning policies of the statutory Development Plan are set out below:

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (LPP1)

- 5.3. The relevant policies of the LPP1 are:

- SA – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- S1 – Distribution of Development
- S3 – Scale and Distribution of Housing
- S4 – Northampton Related Development
- S10 – Sustainable Development Principles
- S11 – Low Carbon Renewable Energy

- C2 – New Development
- E6 – Education, skills and training
- BN1 – Green Infrastructure Connections
- BN2 – Biodiversity
- BN3 – Woodland Enhancement and Creation
- BN5 – The Historic Environment and Landscapes
- BN7A – Water Supply, Quality and Wastewater Infrastructure
- BN7 – Flood Risk
- BN9 – Planning for Pollution Control
- N3 – Northampton North SUE
- N7 – Northampton Kings Heath SUE
- N8 – Northampton North of Whitehills SUE
- R1 – Spatial Strategy for the rural areas
- R3 – Transport Strategy for rural areas

Settlement and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) (LPP2)

5.4. The relevant policies of the LPP2 are:

- SP1 – Daventry Spatial Strategy
- RA1 – Primary Service Village
- RA6 – Open Countryside
- ST1 – Sustainable Transport Infrastructure
- ENV1 – Landscape
- ENV3 – Green Wedge
- ENV4 – Green Infrastructure
- ENV5 – Biodiversity
- ENV7 – Historic Environment
- ENV9 – Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development
- ENV10 – Design
- ENV11 – Local Flood Risk Management
- CW1 – Health and Wellbeing

Moulton Neighbourhood Plan (NHP)

5.5. The relevant policies of the (NHP) are:

- SD1 – Promoting Sustainable Transport by providing viable alternatives methods to move around the village
- SD2 – Adapting to Climate Change
- CS1 – Provision of Community Infrastructure
- E1 – Protecting Existing Local Green Space.

Material Considerations

5.6. Below is a list of the relevant Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Ministerial Statement

6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report.

Consultee Name	Comment
Moulton Parish Council	<p>Comments: Phasing Plans shows development will be removing trees which are subject to TPO. Tree Report – loss of trees and hedgerows as a result of the development. Vehicle Swept Plans show turning to what is a dead-end route. Deliveries and Refuse are located close to properties in Ashley Lane. Concerns with travel plan and data is 10 years out of date. Bus service is inadequate and further bus routes will need to be provided. Bus service does not meet the needs of a secondary school. The admission prioritises local children to go to school. Junctions are already at capacity. Noise survey doesn't give the full picture and the lighting report is on the basis the school is being built in an E3 zone. Visual separation between Thorpeville and Ashley Lane is removed. Issues with foul water drainage. Redacted sections within the reports, something to hide?</p>
Local Highway Authority	<p>Comments: Summary of main issues: The LHA's assessment on the impact of the development is that too high a reliance has been placed on alternative methods of travelling to school with the majority of trips likely to be made by car. The need for the school has been identified due to a shortfall in secondary school places in the town of Northampton. There is no home to school transport, public bus services are infrequent, and bus stops inconveniently located. The school is not well positioned to serve the majority of Northampton and outlying areas by sustainable transport methods and therefore the current mode share is not viewed as realistic. This prevents an adequate or robust assessment of traffic impact on the nearby highway network. It is the considered view of the LHA that a greater number of private vehicle trips to and from the site will be made than the applicant has estimated, given the over reliance on public transport, and the shortfalls in this element as listed above, plus an overestimate of sustainable walking and cycling usage, this will ultimately result in congestion of the local road network surrounding the site, which is not acceptable. Further, where a significant emphasis is being placed on walking/cycling to school, the infrastructure in the immediate area must be of a high standard to encourage this method of travel. Whilst some minor improvements are being promoted by the applicant, these should be seen as an absolute minimum, but do not go as far as providing a good standard of facilities for future pupils and other visitors of the school, the applicant must revisit the listed requirements made by the LHA and accommodate them on plan.</p>
Ecologist	<p>Comments: I'm writing in response to your consultation on additional information received for the above application at Thorpeville Moulton. The ground level assessment of the woodland on the east of the site has determined that it has considerable bat roosting potential, however it is likely that a licence would not be needed provided reasonable precautions are taken. Until the bat activity survey has been completed, I think it would be premature to recommend conditions regarding bats. The habitat quality does raise a few considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bats in and around the woodland will undoubtedly be foraging at Crowfields Common LNR next to the site's

	<p>northern boundary. Therefore dark corridors will need to be maintained between the woodland and the LNR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The round spinney off site to the south has not been surveyed, but it might also have roosting bats and they will need to be able to access the LNR as well. • The external lighting report focuses on impacts on the nearby houses. Any playing pitch lighting will also need to be examined at some point to ensure it does not disturb bats in the woodlands or commuting along the site boundaries. <p>I should point out that bat activity surveys and great crested newt eDNA surveys (should the applicant not opt for the district licence) remain to be done therefore the council still does not have sufficient information to determine this application.</p>
Natural England	Comment: Have no objections to the proposal
Landscape	<p>Comments: a number of concerns regarding the impact on the existing boundary vegetation. With reference to Access and Security Schematic FS0947 it is apparent that the proposed parking area to the front of the school is surrounded by a 2.4m high fence which would certainly be visible above the retained hedgerow and if the application went ahead thought would need to be given to the potential impact of such a structure on the street scene. I have concern that the erection of the fence could have an impact upon the existing boundary hedge and associated trees, not only canopy below 2.4m but their roots. There are a number of trees located in particular around the northern boundary with the property of 74 Ashley Road an individual Sycamore and small group of two Pine and a Maple are now subject to a Tree Preservation Order so extra care needs to be given to avoid damage to the protected trees.</p> <p>Given the TPO designation the location of the Site Compound is very close to them, and care should be given in order to avoid impacting either of the canopies or their roots.</p> <p>The inclusion of two vehicular and two pedestrian accesses off Thorpeville which due to their proximity will have a significant impact upon the existing field hedge.</p> <p>With reference to the Phase Plans a temporary access at Point 2 has been identified. The location is not acceptable as it will cut through the TPO Wood, any temporary access needs to be located beyond the southern end of the triangular TPO Wood. This also applies to the plant parking identified next to the temporary access as this also conflicts with the southern end of the TPO Wood. This parking area will also need to be located beyond the extent of the TPO Wood.</p> <p>The Site Strip indicated in Phase 3, needs to take account to the retained boundary hedgerows, associated trees and the TPO Woods in order to avoid impacting either roots.</p>
Environmental	Comments: Additional comments:

Health	<p>The Remediation information submitted to the Council are acceptable. A condition relating to validation is still required.</p> <p><u>Construction Phase</u></p> <p>Whilst the submitted CEMP document is broadly accepted, the report should be amended to reflect the permitted hours of work:</p> <p>Monday – Friday 08:00 – 18:00 Saturday 08:00 – 13:00, and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.</p> <p>The report currently proposes HGVs etc on site from 7am, which is not approved.</p> <p>In addition the “Noise & Vibration” section should be amended for start times Monday – Friday to be 8am.</p> <p><u>Noise</u></p> <p>I have reviewed the report prepared by Acoustic Design Technology, ref: NBSC-ADT-ZZ-ZZ-RP-Y-00001, dated 20 July 2021.</p> <p>The report addresses the compliance with Building Regulations, to achieve the necessary internal ambient noise (BB93) and a proposed means of compliance with environmental noise limits for new fixed plant installations.</p> <p>However, as the plant is not yet known, the submitted information is largely theoretical, and therefore a condition relating to noise is necessary.</p> <p>In addition, there does not appear to be an assessment of noise from the sports fields, or any control of hours of use. Rather than recommending a condition at this stage which may or may not be suitable, I would request that the applicant provides further information relating to the hours of use of the outside sports area, with particular consideration of evenings and weekends. It may be that a time restriction would be more suitable than a noise condition. Please get back to me if you would like to discuss this further.</p> <p>It is not known if a commercial kitchen and extractor will be installed on site. If so, a condition is necessary to prevent odour and noise nuisance.</p> <p><u>Contaminated Land</u></p> <p>I have reviewed the Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment prepared by HSP Consulting, reference C3241/P1, dated 18.05.2020, and the Phase II Geo-Environmental Assessment prepared by HSP Consulting, reference C3241/PII, dated 28.08.2020</p> <p>The executive summary states:</p>
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	<p><i>“The site falls in a Characteristic Situation 2 and therefore gas protection measures will be required for the proposed development”.</i></p> <p>However, section 5.4 of the same report states:</p> <p><i>“The site falls into a Characteristic Situation 2, and therefore ground gas protection measures are not required at this stage as part of a school development”.</i></p> <p>I presume that this is a typo as the report goes on to state that the proposed mitigation measures will be confirmed at the detailed design stage.</p> <p>Therefore the following condition is necessary regarding contamination and any remediation and validation.</p>
Fire and Rescue	<p>Comments: In summary, in regard to both 8.2 fire service access and 8.3 vehicle access on the Fire Strategy Report dated 20/07/2021, these appeared to be outside of the provisions of BS-9999 and ADB. We advised for fire service access, this should be 50% of the perimeter of the buildings. (The Fire Strategy Document indicated this was only at 15% of the access).</p> <p>Also we advised, the vehicle access requirements i.e. weight/dimensions for a NFRS pump differed to those in the strategy document. We provided them with a copy of our pre-planning guide for consultation. Additionally, consultation was made with the NFRS Water Officer who provided plans of the nearest hydrants. Furthermore we advised that should these requirements not be able to be met, then it would be advisable to recommend a compensatory feature such as a fire suppression system into the premises, e.g. sprinklers.</p>
Crime Prevention Design Advisor	<p>Comment: Have nothing to add to the Fire and Rescues comments</p>
Archaeology	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Amended comments: Happy with the proposed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI). Development needs to be carried out in accordance with the WSI.</p> <p>Original Comments: Have no objection to the proposal, however, recommend a pre-determinative condition relating to a WSI.</p>
Developer Contributions	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Updated comments: Hydrants There are additional hydrants along the Thorpeville Road therefore I recommend that the provisions of BS 9999 are checked to ensure compliance.</p> <p>Fire Protection</p>

	In regard to both 8.2 fire service access and 8.3 vehicle access, these also appear outside of the provisions of BS9999 and ADB. For fire service access, this should be 50% of the perimeter of the buildings, the Fire Strategy Document indicates this is only at 15% of the access. Also, the vehicle access requirements i.e. weight/dimensions for a NFRS pump differ to those in the strategy document. I have attached our pre-planning guide for consultation. Should these requirements not be able to be met, then it would be advisable to recommend a compensatory feature such as a fire suppression system into the premises, e.g. sprinklers.
Lead Local Flood Authority	No comments received to date
Anglian Water	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Amended Comments: Have no objection the foul water drainage layout is acceptable, and therefore recommends conditions are imposed.</p> <p>Original Comments: Have no objection to the proposal as there is sufficient capacity to deal with foul wastewater at Great Billing. However recommends conditions relating to foul water drainage, and drainage strategy. Need to consult the Lead Local Flood Authority.</p>

7. RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

Below is a summary of the third party and neighbour responses received at the time of writing this report.

7.1. There have 100 of objections and 1 letter of support raising the following comments:

- Highways
 - Parking insufficient and will spill out into the local area (Thorpeville and Ashley Lane)
 - Access onto Thorpeville is via Ashley Lane and Park View only
 - Routing to the proposed school will be through the village, which cannot cope
- Noise
- Visual impact (loss of open space)
- Light Pollution
- Air Pollution
- Impact on habitats
- Lack of Landscaping
- Flooding
- Overdevelopment of the site
- Loss of tranquility
- The need for a school
- Too many schools in close proximity

8. APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

Policy Context

- 8.1. The site is located outside the established confines of the village, where LPP2 Policy RA1 allows for development outside the confines where it can be demonstrated that the development would clearly meet an identified local need (Bii). LPP2 RA6 allows for development within the open countryside where it is essential investment in infrastructure (vii). LPP2 ENV3 relates to Green Wedge, so to stop the coalescence between Northampton and Moulton. Development should be restricted in these areas unless it can be demonstrated that the gap would still maintain a physical and visual barrier.
- 8.2. LPP1 Policy E6 encourages new educational facilities and should be developed at sites which are accessible by sustainable transport modes.

Assessment

- 8.3. As part of the application the applicants have provided evidence that there is a need for a school in the locality. The site is not located within the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA); however the site is close to three Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE) – Northampton North, Northampton Kings Heath and Northampton North of Whitehills. These will increase the need for additional secondary school places, and it has been demonstrated that there will be a shortfall for the September 2023 intake.
- 8.4. A number of the local residents acknowledge that there is a need for additional secondary school places, however the site is located in the wrong location – further consideration of the impact on the locality and highways is further considered in the report below. The applicants have provided details of other sites that could be used for the purposes of a school.
- 8.5. This included sites within the existing SUEs, available land, commercial sites, however these have been discounted for a number of different reasons, such as the land is not large enough, its location and the site will not be deliverable in time for the secondary school spaces shortage – this proposed development is time critical in order to open in time for students in 2023.
- 8.6. The development would reduce the open space between Moulton and Northampton, which is designated Green Wedge. Further consideration of the impact on the character of the locality is considered below. The scheme has been designed so the main built form is located adjacent to the main built-up area of Moulton and the greener more open aspects of the development (sports pitches) are located towards the other fields to the south. This ensures there is a visual and physical separation between the two urban areas and coalescence does not occur.
- 8.7. It is acknowledged that there is a demonstrable need for a secondary school in the vicinity and there are no other suitable sites that are capable of delivering this to the required timetable which requires the school to be open for September 2023. This weighs heavily in favour of supporting the principle of a new secondary school on this site.

Impact on Character and Appearance of the Locality

Policy Context

- 8.8. The site is located within an area of green wedge, which seeks to separate the expansion of Northampton with coalescing with the nearby villages (LPP2 Policy ENV3). Development should seek to prevent its becoming part of Northampton.
- 8.9. LPP2 Policy ENV1 seeks to ensure proposals maintain the distinctive character and quality of the District's landscape and will take into consideration the cumulative impact of the development proposals on the quality of the landscape. ENV10 seeks to ensure development is a high quality and creates a strong sense of place.
- 8.10. NHP Policy E1 seeks to protect existing Local Green Spaces, which Crowfields Common Local Nature Reserve to the north of the application site is allocated as a Local Green Space.

Assessment

- 8.11. It is considered that the development will be seen as part of the existing village, and there is still green space between Moulton and Northampton. This has been achieved with the location of the buildings to the north and open pitches to the south which maintains the green space between the two urban areas, preventing coalescing between Northampton and Moulton.
- 8.12. The Landscape Officer has raised concerns regarding the impact on existing vegetation as a result of the proposed development. This is namely the following:
 - The proposed 2.4m high fence surrounding the site
 - The number of access points (pedestrian and vehicular)
 - The location of the site compound and the impact this will have on the existing TPO trees.
 - The temporary access to the west of the site.
- 8.13. The existing hedgerow is currently less than 2.4 metres high, therefore this fence will be visible from a wider locality. There is also a potential that the construction of this fence could cause a negative impact upon the hedgerow itself. The hedgerow is an important feature of the site, and the character and appearance of the locality.
- 8.14. If the hedgerow was damaged as a result of the construction of the fencing, it is considered that this would lead to a harmful impact upon the locality and would also have a negative impact on biodiversity. The existing hedgerow needs to be protected, during the construction of the fence and the development as a whole. The hedgerow could be grown up so the fence is not seen, and it becomes part of the site. This will also reduce the impact of the fence on the character and appearance of the locality. Suitable worded conditions could be imposed to ensure that the proposed development impact will be reduced.
- 8.15. There are a number of access points into the site, which will result in part of the existing hedge being removed. This will further open the site up to the wider locality. It is regrettable that there will be loss of the existing hedgerow, however, there needs to be separate access points for pedestrians and vehicles. There would be a preference for the number of access into and out of the site to be reduced, however in the interest of

pedestrian and vehicular safety, it is more of a necessity. It is considered that further planting could be arranged to mitigate the overall reduction in hedgerow. This could be done by way of a planning condition.

- 8.16. The location of the car parking area and compound area close to 74 Ashley Lane, mean that this is likely to have a negative impact upon the existing protected trees. The car parking area and compound area need to be moved away from this boundary in order to safeguard the protected trees. This will ensure the longevity of the existing trees are maintained in the future. At the time of writing amended plans showing this requirement have been received and are currently being reviewed by the Landscape Officer.
- 8.17. The applicants have submitted information about how the construction will be phased. This shows a new temporary access into the site through an existing TPO group. This will further impact the integrity of the group. There is another existing location this temporary access could go. There is an existing field gate entrance to the west of the site. This adjoins the existing footpath network. This access may need to be moved slightly so pedestrians and construction vehicles do not mix. Overall this is considered to be an improvement and would be supported with amended details, which have been received and are currently being reviewed by the Landscape Officer. This could be a condition of any permission.
- 8.18. With regard to the physical development of the site, it is considered that the proposal will not result in a major change to the character of the village. At present it is dominated by residential development.
- 8.19. The school will be in the majority two stories in height, which is not dissimilar to the existing buildings surrounding the site. The massing will be greater, but the proposed location of the building is close to the existing urban area of Moulton. The building is approx. 61m from the nearest residential property.
- 8.20. Schools in general are normally sited in close proximity to residential properties. Secondary schools also tend to require more space than primary schools, given the number of students attending the school and the external space they require for sporting and other activities. Overall it is considered that the school will alter the rural character and appearance of the immediate locality, but it is considered that the impact is not significant enough to warrant refusal of the application based on character and appearance of the locality. A similar development recently took place on the Boughton Rd. side of the village in a similar greenfield Green Wedge location which was supported by a policy in the neighbourhood plan
- 8.21. Provided amended plans are received to demonstrate an acceptable reduced impact on the existing vegetation, and appropriate conditions are imposed, the impact upon the character and appearance of the locality will be considered acceptable. Overall the proposal would be considered to be in accordance with LPP1 Policy BN5 and LPP2 policies ENV1 and ENV10.

Lighting

- 8.22. There are some concerns regarding the lighting of the site, and which area class is the site is within. The applicants consider that the site is located within an E3 zone, which is

classed as a suburban area. The guidance states E3 is for 'well inhabited rural and urban settlements, small town centres of suburban locations'. Officers consider that the site is in fact is in an area of E2 which is defined as a rural sparsely inhabited rural areas, village or relatively dark outer suburban locations. Although there is a difference of opinion, the impact can be mitigated against with the imposition of a planning condition. This will then ensure any lighting does not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the locality.

Highway Safety

Policy Context

- 8.23. Policy SS2 of LPP2 requires developments to have a safe and suitable means of access. The adopted Northamptonshire Parking Standards also applies to this development. SD1 of the NHP seeks to promote sustainable transports, by providing viable alternative methods to move around the village.

Assessment

- 8.24. The secondary school will be an eight-form entry school with a capacity of 1200 students. There will be 111 staff members. The proposal includes 191 standard car parking spaces, of which 9 are enlarged spaces, 19 disabled parking bays, 45 pupil drop off bays, 3 mini-bus spaces and 2 bus/coach spaces. The proposal also includes 120 pupil cycle storage spaces, 10 visitor cycle storage spaces and 28 staff cycle spaces.
- 8.25. The introduction of a school has the potential to result in a negative impact on the existing road network. Thorpeville was closed off to the south of the application site following the opening up of the A43 bypass in 2020. The junction with Park View and Overstone Road has been altered as a result of the by-pass. There are strong concerns from objectors that the road will be re-opened, this is not the intention to re-open Thorpeville to through traffic and will remain as a cul-desac.
- 8.26. The main issue at the time of writing the report) remains an impasse between the applicants and the Local Highway Authority in relation to the following points:
- No transport from the school due to the wide catchment area of a village which already benefits from a secondary school.
 - Verge of footpath is missing along the east of Thorpeville. A 3m wide footpath needs to be provided.
 - Residual parking nearby the site
 - Provision of plans to demonstrate, a zebra crossing at Thorpeville by the existing refuge island, and showing the cycling/pedestrian provision outside of the site
 - Mode share is not agreed, therefore consideration on how the school will be impact the junction capacity cannot be undertaken. The junction modelling needs to be re-run.
 - Junction geometry plans need to be submitted
 - The Travel Plan needs to be updated to ensure the school promotes sustainable travel to school

- 8.27. The school will not be using private coaches but is reliant on public transport, cars, walking and cycling for pupils to arrive at school. Highways state that the modelling data is incorrect and this needs to be resolved to truly understand the comings and goings of pupils and staff.
- 8.28. Highway issues are one of the main concerns of the local residents, as well as local ward members. Ideally it would be preferable if there was agreement between the applicants and the LHA, however this is not the case in this situation. Following negotiation with the Local Highway Authority, the applicants have conceded some of the points, however, differences remain which the Highway Authority have issues with:
- No bus service to be provided by the school
 - Concerns over parking in the local area
 - A new combined footpath/cycle path needs to be provided along the frontage side of the proposed school on Thorpeville
 - The modelling Data needs to be re-run to assess the impact on the wider network
- 8.29. Amended plans/details have been provided by the applicants to demonstrate the new crossing points, plans of junctions etc. At the time of writing the report these details have not been assessed by the LHA, and any comments that are received will be reported as late representation prior to committee.
- 8.30. Turning to the points of impasse between the applicants and the LHA. The applicants have stated that they will not be providing a bus service for students, therefore reliant on other modes of transport, including public transport. According to the Transport Assessments 29% of students will be travelling by public transport. This equates to approximately 348 students using public buses. It is acknowledged that the local bus service will not be able to cope with this additional use. Therefore there is likely to be a resultant greater reliance on the car as well as other modes of transport (walking and cycling).
- 8.31. The applicant's state that the students who will be attending the school will be from a smaller locality, therefore there is not a requirement for the school to provide buses. Therefore it is considered that the school will meet the requirements of the Education Act 1996. This is noted.
- 8.32. As a result of the school not providing a bus service, the LHA would like the modelling data re-run given the likely reliance on the motor car, and whether existing junctions are able to cope with the additional traffic.
- 8.33. It is noted that Moulton already suffers from congestion during the day due to the existing services within the village (Secondary School, College etc). A number of residents are concerned that the development will exacerbate the current situation.
- 8.34. Schools are notorious for creating parking issues in the vicinity, and it is the LHA's position that this shouldn't be the starting point. Secondary schools tend to cause more parking issues at the end of the day than at the beginning of the day. The school is providing a drop of area and pick up area within the school grounds. Therefore the impact, especially during the morning will be reduced. There are parking restrictions

within Thorpeville as this is currently a clearway (which is not likely to be revoked). Thorpeville also provides a cycle path along the road, therefore by parking in this locality is not encouraged, especially for students who use other modes of transport. There is parking along Ashley Lane, which currently has no restriction and a narrow carriageway dating back to its 1930s origins. Therefore it is likely that residents along Ashley Lane will be affected as a result of the proposal and will be inconvenienced during the pickup and drop off times.

- 8.35. The LHA has requested that a 3m combined footpath and cycle path along the entire frontage side of the proposed development. This is to assist with the providing alternative methods for students to attend the school. The applicants are not willing to provide this, as there is an existing cycle path provided along Thorpeville and a footpath on the opposite side of the road. A pedestrian crossing will be provided by the site entrance to ensure that there is a safe means of access into the site.
- 8.36. The provision of a new combined footpath to the site frontage, is likely to cause harm to the character and appearance of the locality. The creation of a combined footpath is likely to further damage the hedgerow and the TPO area which fronts the road.
- 8.37. At the time of writing this report, the applicants have not provided the Local Planning Authority with the further details of matters agreed with the LHA. However it is expected that these will be provided prior to committee and will be reported as late representation.
- 8.38. It is accepted that there will be a negative impact upon highways based on the LHA comments, however these are not severe in accordance with the NPPF. If some of the measures suggested are included, such as the new combined path along the school's frontage, it will result in a negative impact on existing vegetation, which is an important feature in the immediate vicinity.
- 8.39. The provision of a school carries significant weight in determining this application and given that the LHA have not stated that the development would cause a severe impact on the highway network, it is considered that the application should not be refused on highway grounds as the benefits of the scheme outweighs the impacts of the development on the highway network.

Residential Amenity

Policy Context

- 8.40. Policy ENV10 of the LPP2 seeks to ensure development protects the amenity of new and existing dwellings and not compromise the function of existing surrounding uses.

Assessment

- 8.41. At the present time the site is currently an open field, generating little noise. As a result of the development, there will be an increase in noise and disturbance to the local residents.

- 8.42. The residents will experience additional noise as a result of the proposed development. The area for deliveries and bin collections lies approx. 61 m away from housing. Environmental Health do object to the proposed development, provided suitable conditions are imposed. Therefore it is likely that the proposed school will not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the adjoining neighbours through noise. In any event if the school does cause a nuisance, environmental health will be able to investigate and take appropriate action if necessary.
- 8.43. Impact upon privacy has been raised as an issue. As the school building will be approx. 61m from the nearest residential property, it is unlikely that the school will result in a negative impact upon the amenities of the adjoining neighbours through overlooking.
- 8.44. There has been concern regarding impact upon privacy due to the location of the car park in relation to the property. At present the property (74 Ashley Lane) is not currently overlooked. It is noted that there will be some impact on the amenities of the residential property, however it is considered that the impact is not sufficient to warrant refusal. At the present the field is being used informally by dog walkers and walkers, therefore (although not a formal footpath) there is some overlooking at present.
- 8.45. Provided suitable conditions are imposed, it is considered the proposal would be in accordance with LPP2 Policy ENV10, as it will not have a detrimental impact to residential amenity. If any nuisance does occur through noise and disturbance this can be dealt with via environmental health.

Flooding

Policy Context

- 8.46. LPP1 policy BN7 requires appropriate flood risk assessment to be completed and for development not to result in an increased risk of flooding to existing or proposed properties. Policy BN7A of the LPP1 requires new developments to have adequate and water supply and wastewater infrastructure. Policy ENV11 of the LPP2 development will be expected to comply with the Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and the local standards and guidance for surface water drainage in Northamptonshire and Anglian Water's surface water drainage policy.

Assessment

- 8.47. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, and the applicants have provided a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). At the time of writing this report no comments from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), have been received. If the proposed school will exacerbate flooding elsewhere any recommendation will be caveated to ensure flooding is not exacerbated elsewhere.
- 8.48. Anglian Water have made no objection to the proposal and has proposed conditions or informatives are used in granting any permissions.

- 8.49. Flooding/drainage is subject to further dialogue and whether further information is required by the LLFA. However, it is assumed that the proposal can overcome any concerns the LLFA may raise.

Ecology

Policy Context

- 8.50. LPP1 Policy BN2 seeks to ensure development will conserve biodiversity in its design and construction. Policy ENV4 of the LPP2 seeks to protect, enhance and restore the District's green infrastructure assets.

Assessment

- 8.51. Ecological issues have been raised as a concern, both by local residents and the ecologist. At present there is still on-going discussions between the applicants and the ecologist to ensure there is a biodiversity net gain, and all the relevant surveys have been undertaken.
- 8.52. The ecologist has asked for further surveys to be undertaken in respect to bats and Great Crested Newts (GCN). Assuming all the points are satisfactory concluded, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to have a negative impact upon protected species. It is therefore considered that subject to satisfactory reports being submitted to the LPA and any conditions as recommended the proposal will not have a negative impact on biodiversity.

Designated and Undesignated Heritage Assets

Policy Context

- 8.53. LPP2 Policy ENV7 seeks to ensure developments are sympathetic to non-heritage assets. Policy BN5 of the LLP1 seeks to sustain and enhance the sites of potential heritage or historic significance.

Assessment

- 8.54. The application site is not near any existing designated heritage assets, however there is potential that there could be some archaeological remains within the field. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted as part of the application process. This has been reviewed by the archaeologist, who has confirmed that this is acceptable. A condition is recommended for the proposed development to ensure the development is constructed in accordance with the WSI.

9. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1. CIL is not applicable in this case, however it is likely that the proposal will bring some benefits economically to the locality whilst constructing the site and post construction through employment. There will also be the on-going benefits of a commercial operation on the site and the additional commerce as a result of this.

10. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 10.1. As members are aware planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material planning considerations demonstrate otherwise. There is conflict with the development plan, as it is considered that the provision of a secondary school in this particular location will have a negative impact upon the wider highway network. Therefore consideration has to be to whether there are material considerations which weigh in favour of the proposal.
- 10.2. The principle of development should be accepted, as it has been demonstrated that a secondary school is required and there are no available sites in the vicinity that could be developed within the tight time frame. It is considered significant weight should be given to the need for the school.
- 10.3. Amended plans have been received in respect to the impact upon landscaping, following concerns from the Landscape Officer, and these are currently being reviewed and any comments will be reported as late representations. However it is considered that the impact on the character and appearance of the locality can be made acceptable. The openness between Moulton and Northampton will still be preserved.
- 10.4. Further negotiation is still occurring with Ecology, Landscape, and Surface Water Drainage, and it is likely that these can be addressed, and therefore there would be no sustainable reasons for refusing this application on these bases.
- 10.5. An amended Travel Plan and Transport Assessment have been received, and have been sent to the LHA for comment, however it is likely that there will still be some concerns, and it is likely that the development will have a negative impact upon the highway network.
- 10.6. The construction of a secondary school in this locality for 2023 is important, it has been demonstrated by the applicants that there are no other sites available. This carries significant weight in determining the planning application. Although there is conflict with the development plan with regards to the impact upon the highway network, the significant benefit of the school outweighs this harm. The benefits of the scheme justify granting permission.

11. RECOMMENDATION

DELEGATE TO THE ASSISTANT FIRECTOR FOR GROWTH, CLIMATE AND REGENERATION TO GRANT PERMISSION SUBJECT TO:

1. CONDITIONS (AND ANY AMENDMENTS TO THOSE CONDITIONS AS DEEMED NECESSARY); AND
2. RECEIPT OF SATISFACTORY TECHNICAL INFORMATION REGARDING HIGHWAYS;

IF THE HIGHWAYS, LANDSCAPE, SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE AND ECOLOGY MATTERS ARE NOT SATISFACTORILY RESOLVED BY 31 MARCH 2022 (AND NO EXTENSION OF TIME HAS BEEN AGREED BETWEEN THE PARTIES), DELEGATE TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR GROWTH, CLIMATE AND REGENERATION TO REFUSE PERMISSION ON

THE FOLLOWING GROUNDS (FINAL WORDING DELEGATED TO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR GROWTH, CLIMATE AND REGENERATION):

- Increased risk to highway safety
- Increased risk of surface water flooding and/or;
- Harm to wildlife/biodiversity
- Impact upon the character and appearance of the locality

CONDITIONS

To be provided as an update prior to and possibly at the Committee meeting as negotiations continue on various matters. The areas to be conditioned will be, under the following headings:

Time Limits

Drawing Numbers

Landscaping

Permitted Development Rights

Boundary Treatments

Materials

Archaeology

Lighting

Noise/Ventilation

Highways

Travel Plan

Ecology

Surface Water Drainage

Foul Water