



23rd February 2016

Agenda Item:10

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR – PLACE

GEDLING DISTRICT REF. NO.: 7/2016/0047NCC

PROPOSAL: SINGLE STOREY FOUNDATION CLASSROOM EXTENSION WITH EXTERNAL CANOPY AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND FENCING

LOCATION: MANOR PARK INFANTS AND NURSERY SCHOOL, FLATTS LANE, CALVERTON

APPLICANT: NCC CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a planning application for a new classroom extension at Manor Park Infants and Nursery School, Calverton. The key issues relate to the provision of school places to serve the local area and the associated travel and amenity implications arising. The recommendation is to grant planning permission subject to the appended planning conditions.

The Site and Surroundings

2. Manor Park Infants and Nursery School is part of a larger community campus encompassing Colonel Frank Seely Secondary School, Sir John Sherbrooke Junior School and Calverton leisure centre in the centre of the village. This wider campus is broadly bounded by Collyer Road, Flatts Lane, Park Road and Mansfield Lane as shown on Plan 1. Manor Park Infants and Nursery School is situated in the southern portion facing towards, but set back from, Collyer Road.
3. The character of the area is one that reflects the post war expansion of the village in response to the development of the colliery, with the schools very much at the centre of this expanded community. The former colliery housing estate to the west of Flatts Lane is noted as being of local historical interest. A small parade of shops are situated on Flatts Lane at its corner with Collyer Road, opposite the main entrance driveway to the school. This is a shared vehicular and pedestrian driveway also serving the William Lee annex/sixth form centre to Col Frank Seely School in the south-west corner. A pedestrian path then connects across to the main secondary school. Parking restrictions and pedestrian crossings are in place on the approach to the school and outside of

the shops. Beyond the shops residential properties bound both sides of Flatts Lane up to Park Road.

4. Pedestrian access to the school can also be taken from a footpath to Mansfield Lane to the east and from a pedestrian gate on Collyer Road to the south. Collyer Road is somewhat broader than Flatts Lane and is a tree-lined road with residential properties lying on the southern side opposite the infants school. There is a pedestrian safety rail and parking restrictions in front of the pedestrian gate.
5. The existing school building dates from the 1950/60s and is arranged in two wings positioned off a central hall. It is built with a reddish/light brown brick and white and blue window sets. A SureStart centre, developed in 2007, is situated adjacent to the eastern side of the school with a pedestrian path to Collyer Road. A mix of hard and soft play areas and landscaping surround the buildings.
6. A staff car park is positioned to the rear (north) of the school building with access via the main driveway from Flatts Lane. It provides for circa 12 spaces with additional spaces allocated for the adjacent SureStart centre.

Proposed Development

7. Permission is sought to erect a 70sqm (internal space) extension to provide a single-storey foundation year classroom thereby enabling the expansion of the school to address an increasing basic need for local school places.
8. The new classroom would be built as an extension onto the existing foundation year classroom, on the southern school wing, thereby creating a double foundation unit. The new classroom would be built on part of the existing playground where currently there are two storage sheds sited. It would measure 8m by 9.5m and would be 3m high with a flat roof to continue the existing roof line. Externally it would be faced with red/light brown bricks to closely match the existing building and the white facia would also be continued across onto the extension. Simple white powder-coated windows would be positioned on the northern and southern elevations and a skylight would also be built into the flat roof. An external door would offer access to the outside play area to the south. A feature canopy would provide shelter over part of this area. Internally, access would be made by a double-door opening from the adjacent classroom. New toilets would be installed within the existing classroom and an existing set of window panels on the northern side of the existing classroom would be replaced with new brickwork.
9. The new classroom, whilst accommodating 30 pupils, would also enable the school to expand its Published Admission Number (PAN) from 40 to 60 and take the net capacity from 135 to 180 from September 2016. Currently there are 121 children on the roll.
10. 14 members of full-time staff and 17 part time staff are currently employed and the proposal could result in an additional one to two staff members. No additional parking is proposed.

Consultations

11. **Gedling Borough Council** – No response has been received. Any comments will be orally reported.

12. **Calverton Parish Council - Objection**

The Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds that it would exacerbate an already problematic issue with traffic and inappropriate parking in the area – most especially on Collyer Road – when children are delivered to school and collected from school. Current restrictions on local parking are not adhered to or policed making driving in the area at these times difficult and dangerous. This situation can only be worsened by developing greater school capacity as proposed.

13. **NCC (Highways)- No objection**

The proposal is for a single classroom extension within an existing school. It has been indicated that as a direct result of the proposal there could now be an increase of 60 pupils.

On a recent site visit, the school keep clear markings on Collyer Road were well observed by vehicles. It was noted that there were vehicles parked partly on the footway on Collyer Road close to the junction with Flatts Lane, and also on the single lined section of Flatts Lane outside the parade of shops however none of these vehicles looked as if they were in association with the school.

There is sufficient on-street parking on Collyer Road outside of the school to accommodate the predicted increase in vehicles associated with increasing the maximum number of children to 180.

The Highways Authority has no objections in principle to the proposal as the increase is unlikely to have any significant impacts on the highways in the vicinity of the site. Notwithstanding this, the School Travel Plan which was submitted as part of the planning application is outdated. It is recommended that the School Travel Plan is updated to incorporate the increased size of the school, and to look at measures which would encourage decreased use of cars to visit the school.

14. **NCC (Road Safety) -Comments**

An increase in traffic and parental dropping off etc may well exacerbate existing traffic and parking problems to some extent. The well-known traffic issues around schools rarely lead to road accidents where someone is injured, largely due to the fact that people are going very slowly. There isn't a reported injury accident issue at the moment near the school.

From March 2016 all the county school Keep Clear Markings are set to be enforceable, following a vast project over the last three years.

An enforcement camera car is to be deployed [countywide] which will be able to enforce the restrictions and it may deter parents from just ignoring the markings.

15. **NCC (Noise Engineer) – No objection**

The dominant noise source from school sites is activity noise from children playing outdoors which is generally short duration and occurs only on school days during term time and it is therefore rare for this type of transient noise to cause a strong adverse reaction. The proposed development will lead to an overall increase in the schools [PAN] capacity from 121 [current school roll] to 180 pupils.

To put into context, a doubling of pupil numbers would give rise to an increase in external activity noise levels of approximately 3dB which is widely accepted as the minimum perceptible increase of an existing noise source by the human ear. The proposed increase of around 60 pupils (50%) will increase external activity noise by less than 2dB and therefore will not be perceptible at nearby receptors. In addition, any impact is further diluted by the other adjacent school sites which will also contribute to overall school activity noise levels in the area.

Noise associated with the construction of the single classroom is not expected to give rise to any significant noise impacts due to the remote distance and location of the nearest properties which are located on the opposite side of Collyer Road, subject to usual controls on working hours as recommended by condition.

In summary, there is already a clear established use as a school site over many years and the proposals are not expected to significantly alter the existing noise climate. Therefore the proposals are not expected to cause an adverse noise impact at nearby properties.

16. **NCC (Reclamation) - No objection.**

The submitted contamination appraisal does not identify any significant risk with respect to contamination. The potential for localised and discrete occurrences of construction debris amongst the foundation / earthworks is identified along with potential contamination derived from the heating system. These risks are considered to be low and as such it is recommended the application is subject to a condition to maintain a watching brief during the excavation of the foundations.

The building is identified as one which may contain asbestos containing materials and as such a pre-demolition asbestos materials survey should be carried out prior to any works being carried out to ensure the safety of pupils and staff at the school and workforce involved.

17. **National Grid (Gas)**

National Grid has identified that it has apparatus in the vicinity which may be affected by the proposed development. The contractor should contact National Grid before any works are carried out to ensure the apparatus is not affected by any of the proposed works.

18. **Severn Trent Water Limited**

Has no objection subject to the inclusion of an informative note.

19. No response has been received from **Western Power Distribution**. Any response received will be orally reported.

Publicity

20. The application has been publicised by means of three site notices and 8 neighbour notification letters sent to the nearest occupiers in accordance with the County Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement Review. No representations have been received.
21. Councillor Boyd Elliott has been notified of the application.

Observations

Education need

22. Under the requirements of the Education Acts the County Council has responsibility to secure school places for all children of statutory school age who are resident within the county and whose parents wish them to be educated in a state funded school. The County Council monitors and forecasts demand for school places on an area by area basis taking into account population/demographic trends, such as the increase in birth rates, as well as new housing developments.
23. This application has been made in response to an identified need for additional school places within Calverton partly stemming from the development of new housing in the village and in particular the development of 113 new houses by Taylor Wimpey on land between Collyer Road and Hollinwood Lane, 1km to the west. Developer contributions of circa £290,000 (2012 prices) were secured from the developer towards providing increased primary school capacity in the area and it is these contributions which are earmarked to the new classroom. These contributions could enable an expansion and organisation of the school to accommodate the additional forecasted pupils (across all infant age groups) which would otherwise not be able to be accommodated locally.
24. Presently the school has a single reception classroom and 4 classrooms for years 1 to 4 giving a physical capacity for 150 children, however in reality due to other constraints the net capacity of the school is currently 135. The current Published Admission Number (PAN) of 40 is also a constraint and presents difficulties for the school. Based on the existing PAN the school currently has a PAN capacity for 120 children. The proposal would create a second reception year classroom (linked to the first) catering for a further 30 pupil places. In turn this would allow the school to increase its PAN from 40 to 60 and reorganise itself such that space would be used more effectively. By this the physical

capacity would be increased to 180, bringing it into line with the new net capacity and PAN capacity.

25. In terms of planning policy there is strong support for what would be an expansion and improvement to this community facility. Policy 12 of the Gedling Borough Aligned Core Strategy (ACS) sets out its support where such facilities are located in accessible and sustainable locations and ideally alongside other such facilities. In this respect the school is situated within its own catchment in a central and accessible neighbourhood and furthermore is part of a wider education setting. Saved Policy C1 of the Gedling Borough Replacement Local Plan (GBRLP) similarly supports the principle of the improvement of community facilities provided there are no detrimental amenity impacts.
26. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraph 72 emphasises the importance the Government attaches to the provision of sufficient school places and it is advised that local planning authorities should attach great weight to the need to expand or alter schools.
27. Therefore subject to design, amenity, transport and other considerations, the proposed development is strongly supported in principle planning policy terms.

Design, siting and appearance

28. The development proposal is for a conventional brick-built extension onto the end of the school building. The design is simplistic, though robust in terms of choice of materials and the aim is to seamlessly tie the extension into the existing building through matching brickwork as closely as possible to the existing red/light brown brick and by continuing the white facia across onto the extension. In scale and form therefore, the new classroom would be appropriate to the context. There would be simple white windows, doors and a rooflight providing natural light. The classroom would be fully accessible and would open out onto a dedicated outdoor play area.
29. As added interest a feature canopy of a 'wave design' would be positioned over part of the exterior play area for the new foundation unit (indicatively coloured blue). This is considered to be an attractive addition to the southern (front) elevation and an enhancement to the play environment for the children. The extension and the canopy would, however, not be overly prominent when viewed from Collyer Road as the school is well set back by areas of hard play and landscaping.
30. In design terms the proposed development is considered to meet the aims of ACS Policy 10 in providing an attractive, safe, inclusive and healthy environment (for school pupils). In accordance with GBRLP Policy ENV1 the proposal would be in-keeping with the school environment and the character of the wider area, by virtue of it appropriate scale, layout, form and use of materials which seek to tie in with the existing buildings.

Traffic, Access and Parking

31. The school is situated as part of an established campus of three schools in the centre of Calverton. These facilities and the surrounding colliery housing were part of the planned expansion of the village in the 1950s and 60s and these facilities remain at the centre of an accessible settlement and catchment area.
32. Unlike some more constrained schools, there is no single point of access. Instead, pedestrian access can be made from the west via Flatts Lane, from the south via Collyer Road, and from the east via Mansfield Lane. Notwithstanding this good level of accessibility, the growth of the private car as used by parents dropping off and picking up their children has an impact, albeit time- limited, on the surrounding environs and nearby residents. Local authorities and schools themselves have to manage this using a variety of tools.
33. One of the main means of controlling parking and access is the use of highway safety signage and parking restrictions. The surrounding roads are subject to various road safety and parking/stopping restrictions. Collyer Road has 'school keep clear' yellow zig-zag markings along the northern side of the carriageway outside of the front of the school and signage directs that there be no stopping on Mondays to Fridays between 8am to 4.30pm. A pedestrian safety barrier is also positioned outside the school gate. There is a 1m wide footway set within a wider grass verge running along Collyer Road. Flatts Lane has a pedestrian area outside of the shops and tactile-paved pedestrian crossing points on the approach to the school driveway. There is also a school crossing patrol. School 'keep clear' markings are again made across the entranceway restricting parking between 8am and 4.30pm. At the last regular inspection of the local highway the road markings were found to be in satisfactory condition. Highway signage advising of the presence of the schools and young children are located on all approaches and in addition the area has been signed as part of the 20mph advisory speed limit scheme for county schools. NCC Road Safety do not identify any accident issues.
34. The Parish Council in their objection note the existing difficulties experienced as a result of inappropriate parental parking and drop off/pick ups at the start and end of the school day. This is despite extensive use of parking restrictions as mentioned above. These restrictions will be legally enforceable across the county from March, but ultimately it relies on the goodwill and cooperation of parents in how and where they choose to pull up or park if choosing to drive to the school.
35. The highways officer is of the opinion that the expansion of this school would unlikely result in any significant impacts to the surrounding highway. The officer considers there to be sufficient on-street parking along Collyer Road to accommodate the potential increase in vehicles resulting from an expansion of the school and generally found the various traffic restrictions were being adhered to. The officer notes that the current school travel plan (previously undertaken jointly with the other schools) is now out of date and requires that this be updated to take into account the latest circumstances and increased pupil numbers. The purpose of undertaking such travel planning is to promote sustainable travel choices such as walking, cycling and scootering for pupils and

staff and help reduce over reliance on the private car. It could consider the suitability of existing access arrangements and devise fun and rewarding initiatives to promote change in travel behaviour. The school could again work with neighbouring schools, but equally it could undertake its own travel plan exercise and appoint a member of staff as a coordinator or 'travel champion' to lead initiatives and monitor future progress. A condition requiring submission of an update to the school travel plan is therefore recommended.

36. There is no requirement for additional staff parking given only one or two additional staff would be required and alternative means to the car are available. The car park has around 12 spaces for use by the school but in reality the school makes use of further areas along the access drive where it is safe to do so. Given its position against the boundary with the adjacent Col Frank Seely School, there is little to no opportunity to expand the car park without compromising playing field areas.
37. The provision for an additional 60 school places at this site is considered to be appropriate given its situation within, and available access to, its surrounding residential catchment. Sustainable travel choices are entirely viable for many pupils and staff and no significant or severe highway impacts are expected. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with Policy ENV1 and C1 on matters of traffic generation and associated amenity impact.

Residential amenity

38. Due to the wide, campus nature of the site with the infants school forming a small component alongside Col Frank Seely and Sir John Sherbrook Schools, there are relatively few residential properties which would be individually and directly affected by the increase in pupils attending this site. The extension itself does not overlook any neighbouring properties and is set well within the school site.
39. Cumulatively the three schools, with over 1000 pupils, inevitably have an influence on life and general amenity in the surrounding streets in terms of travel, noise and activity, however the schools' multiple access points for pedestrians enables a dispersion of pupils when arriving or departing school. The community was also planned in such a way that these schools lie at its heart. New housing, such as that at Hollinwood Lane/ Collyer Road, has now created additional need for primary age places – something this school is ideally placed to deliver. The proposal to increase the school numbers by around 60 pupils is not though considered to lead to any noticeable increase to noise or amenity impact when seen in context. School hours would remain the same and the prevailing character of the area would not be materially affected.
40. In summary the proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the amenities of nearby residents or the locality generally, by reason of traffic generation or general noise/activity and is consequently considered to accord with Policy ENV 1 with respect to local amenity.

Ground conditions and construction management

41. A full appraisal of ground conditions and potential commination risks has been undertaken. The Reclamation Officer advises there is a low risk of contamination in the ground as well as there being possible asbestos fabric within the current building. As such conditions are recommended for an asbestos survey to be undertaken prior to the development taking place as well as a watching brief during construction works. The site is in an area of historical underground coal mining, however any ground movements should have stopped by now and standing advise from the Coal Authority can be applied.
42. Construction works would have a minimal impact to the functioning of the school or to the local residents. If works coincide with the school term the contractor would separate the construction site from the rest of the functioning school and arrange access for contractors' vehicles- details of which are subject to a recommended planning condition. Conditions are also recommended to set reasonable hours for construction in the interests of local amenity. In addition associated deliveries would not be permitted at the start and end of any school day to avoid conflict with young children.

Other issues

43. Policy R1 of the Gedling Replacement Local Plan seeks to protect open spaces including school playing fields and play areas across this site. Whilst the classroom extension would encroach onto a small part of the hard playground, two storage sheds are already positioned on the proposed footprint and there is sufficient area remaining for use by the school. The spirit of the policy is to protect important open spaces such as playing fields, as such no conflict with this policy is identified.
44. There are no apparent issues relating to flooding, ecology, heritage and no trees are planned to be removed.

Other Options Considered

45. The report relates to the determination of a planning application. The County Council is under a duty to consider the planning application as submitted. Accordingly no other options have been considered.

Statutory and Policy Implications

46. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment, and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

47. The extension would enable the school to respond to an increased basic need for primary age pupils in the village.

Financial Implications

48. Developer contributions have been earmarked for the project as detailed within the report.

Equalities Implications

49. The classroom would be fully inclusive and accessible.

Crime and Disorder Implications

50. The new classroom would be within a secure school site.

Human Rights Implications

51. Relevant issues arising out of consideration of the Human Rights Act have been assessed. Rights under Article 8 (Right to Respect for Private and Family Life), Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) and Article 6 (Right to a Fair Trial) are those to be considered. In this case, however, there are no impacts of any substance on individuals and therefore no interference with rights safeguarded under these articles.

Safeguarding of Children Implications

52. The school will have appropriate protocols in place.

Human Resources Implications

53. An additional two members of staff may need to be employed by the school.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

54. The school is situated within its local catchment in a sustainable location. The extension would have a minimal environmental footprint.

Conclusion

55. The proposal is to construct a foundation year classroom extension to the established infants/nursery school so to enable an additional 60 pupil places to be created across the school and allow it to raise its PAN from 40 to 60. The need for the proposal stems in part to the nearby construction of new housing

from which developer contributions have been earmarked for the proposed project. As such there is an identified need to expand this community facility which sits centrally within the later expansion of Calverton village - its immediate catchment. In accordance with ACS Policy 12 and GBRLP Policy C1, the proposal to enhance this community facility is supported subject to acceptable amenity impacts.

56. The school is well-situated within the community as part of a wider school campus. It is readily and safety accessible on foot and although there will always be a level of car-borne traffic at such schools the proposal would not significantly change or worsen the current impact to the highway or to local amenity. The school travel plan requires updating to promote sustainable travel awareness. The character of the area would be maintained and there would be no direct adverse impacts to local residents. The proposal is considered to accord with GBRLP Policy ENV 1.
57. The proposed design is simple but appropriate to the existing appearance of the school building. A proposed feature canopy is considered to add visual interest. The new classroom would be an accessible and attractive learning environment. There would be a small loss of the wider school playground, however no conflict with Policy R1 is identified.
58. Consideration has been given to any potential contamination risks including from the possibility of asbestos fabric being present.
59. Paragraph 72 of the NPPF presents a clear weighting in favour of expanding schools and providing new school places to serve local communities. The proposal clearly delivers on this aim and in the round is considered to be sustainable development which is supported by the development plan. No material considerations indicate that the development should be prevented.

Statement of Positive and Proactive Engagement

60. In determining this application the County Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant by entering into pre-application discussion; assessing the proposals against relevant Development Plan policies; all material considerations; consultation responses and any valid representations that may have been received. This approach has been in accordance with the requirement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

61. It is RECOMMENDED that planning permission be granted for the purposes of Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1. Members need to consider the issues, including the Human Rights Act issues, set out in the report and resolve accordingly.

TIM GREGORY

Corporate Director – Place

Constitutional Comments

Planning & Licensing Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

[SLB 03/02/2016]

Comments of the Service Director - Finance (SES 05/02/16)

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers Available for Inspection

The application file available for public inspection by virtue of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

Electoral Division and Member Affected

Calverton – Councillor Boyd Elliott

Report Author/Case Officer

Joel Marshall

0115 9932578

For any enquiries about this report, please contact the report author.