



# Bowmer and Kirkland Limited

## **Planning Statement**

Proposed redevelopment of Co-Op Academy Smithies  
Moor, Leeds Old Road, Heckmondwike

September 2025

UK0041077.8367



Bowmer and Kirkland Limited

---

## **PLANNING STATEMENT**

Co-op Academy Smithies Moor, Leeds Old Rd,  
Heckmondwike

WSP

First Floor

3 Wellington Place

Leeds

LS1 4AP

Phone: +44 113 395 6200

[WSP.com](http://WSP.com)

# CONTENTS

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

|          |                                                  |           |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND</b>               | <b>1</b>  |
| <hr/>    |                                                  |           |
| 1.2      | BACKGROUND                                       | 1         |
| 1.3      | SITE CONTEXT                                     | 2         |
| 1.4      | RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY                        | 2         |
| <b>2</b> | <b>PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT</b>                      | <b>4</b>  |
| <hr/>    |                                                  |           |
| 2.1      | DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT                       | 4         |
| 2.2      | PHASING                                          | 5         |
| <b>3</b> | <b>PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT</b>                | <b>6</b>  |
| <hr/>    |                                                  |           |
| 3.1      | PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS AND ENGAGEMENT       | 6         |
| 3.2      | STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT                           | 7         |
| <b>4</b> | <b>PLANNING POLICY</b>                           | <b>8</b>  |
| <hr/>    |                                                  |           |
| 4.2      | LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN                           | 8         |
| 4.3      | NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) (2024) | 9         |
| 4.4      | OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS                    | 10        |
| <b>5</b> | <b>PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS</b>                   | <b>12</b> |
| <hr/>    |                                                  |           |
| 5.2      | PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT                         | 12        |
| 5.3      | DESIGN, SCALE AND MASSING                        | 13        |
| 5.4      | HIGHWAYS AND ACCESS                              | 14        |
| 5.5      | AMENITY                                          | 15        |
| 5.6      | ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY                         | 16        |
| 5.7      | LANDSCAPING AND TREES                            | 17        |
| 5.8      | SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY                        | 17        |

---

|          |                                     |           |
|----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 5.9      | FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE             | 18        |
| 5.10     | GROUND CONDITIONS AND CONTAMINATION | 18        |
| 5.11     | HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT            | 19        |
| 5.12     | SECURED BY DESIGN                   | 19        |
| <b>6</b> | <b>CONCLUSIONS</b>                  | <b>20</b> |

---

|     |                   |    |
|-----|-------------------|----|
| 6.2 | PLANNING BENEFITS | 20 |
|-----|-------------------|----|

---

## ***TABLES***

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Table 1-1 – Key Planning History | 2 |
|----------------------------------|---|

---

## ***FIGURES***

|                                            |   |
|--------------------------------------------|---|
| Figure 1-1 - Kirklees Policies Map Extract | 8 |
|--------------------------------------------|---|



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Planning Statement has been prepared by WSP in support of a full planning application submitted at the Co-op Academy Smithies Moor in Heckmondwike.

The application scheme proposes the redevelopment of the Co-op Academy Smithies Moor. The existing school building is proposed to be demolished and replaced with a single storey school building and other external works including a forest school, play spaces, landscaping features and car and cycle parking.

This Statement explains the background to, and the requirement for, the proposed development. It discusses the existing site context and planning history, and provides details of the planning policy context, before describing the proposals in detail. Finally, this Statement provides an assessment of the proposals against planning policy and other material considerations.

There has been a longstanding requirement for the redevelopment of the existing school and the proposals that are the subject of this application, provide an excellent opportunity to significantly improve the facilities for students and the overall quality of the school. The proposed development will result in numerous benefits for its future users, including an improved learning environment, state of the art sports and teaching facilities, and high quality landscaped external spaces.

This Statement demonstrates that, as required by national policy, the proposals have been subject to detailed pre-application discussions with Kirklees Council and consultation with key stakeholders, and the advice received has enabled the proposals to evolve into a scheme that represents the overall most suitable and deliverable design.

The proposals comply with the local development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, and the benefits of the scheme considerably outweigh any perceived adverse impacts.

---

## Contact name Fraser Dann

Contact details +44 113 395 4488 | [fraser.dann@wsp.com](mailto:fraser.dann@wsp.com)

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

---

- 1.1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a full planning application at Co-op Academy Smithies Moor in Heckmondwike, submitted by Bowmer and Kirkland (B+K) on behalf of Co-op Academy Smithies Moor and the Department for Education (DfE) (the Applicants).
- 1.1.2. The application seeks permission for the demolition of the existing buildings on site and their replacement with a new teaching block, hard and soft PE and play spaces, a forest school and associated landscaping and parking provisions.
- 1.1.3. This Statement sets out the detail of the proposed development, establishes the relevant planning policies against which the application is to be determined, and assesses the acceptability of the proposals in the context of that planning framework and other material considerations.
- 1.1.4. This Planning Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2 describes the proposed development
  - Section 3 outlines the pre-application engagement undertaken to date
  - Section 4 sets out the planning policy context
  - Section 5 sets out the planning considerations
  - Section 6 summarises the conclusions
- 1.1.5. Further details of the proposals are set out in the accompanying technical reports and drawings.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1. Smithies Moor is a one-form entry primary school currently housed in a three-storey accommodation block, which originally functioned as a secondary school until it was closed in the 1990s. Parts of the ground, first and second floor are mothballed, and the school has been identified by the DfE for inclusion in its School Rebuilding Programme on this basis. After closure of the secondary school, the buildings then re-opened as 'Leeside Community Primary School'. Following this, the school was re-named as, 'The John Curwen Co-operative Primary Academy' before it went into special measures and is now named 'The Co-op Academy Smithies Moor'.

- 1.2.2. The building is not fit-for-purpose and it is financially exhaustive for the Co-op Academies Trust in terms of operational and maintenance costs. The redevelopment of the school is therefore being progressed by the DfE under the UK Government's School Rebuilding Programme (SRP), dedicated to rebuilding schools that are assessed to require replacement, based on a building condition assessment. The programme champions the provision of high-quality learning environments in line with the UK's latest government standards, alongside low energy solutions delivering net zero carbon in operation.

## 1.3 SITE CONTEXT

- 1.3.1. The site is approximately 1.23ha and comprises the school grounds and buildings. The existing site has one three-storey building plus staff car park, landscaping and hard and soft play areas. The school accommodates up to 236 pupils aged between 3 and 11 years old.
- 1.3.2. Access is achieved off Leeds Old Road in two areas to the west of the site. To the north of the school is Fairfield School. A copse of trees runs along the south-western boundary of the site, with playing fields to the south and east, with one being a rugby pitch, but these are largely unaffected by the proposals. To the west of the site lies Leeds Old Road (a 30mph road), with dwellings to the opposite side looking towards the Co-op Academy Smithies Moor. Access into the school site itself is restricted to staff, visitors, and service vehicles only.
- 1.3.3. The site lies to the north-eastern edge of Heckmondwike. Heckmondwike is predominantly surrounded by other small towns that make up the Local Authority area of Kirklees. The site lies within the settlement boundary, but just to the north, the land is designated as Green Belt.

### KEY FEATURES AND DESIGNATIONS

- 1.3.4. The site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area.
- 1.3.5. There are no SSSI's in close proximity to the site.
- 1.3.6. The site is within Flood Zone 1. This means in any year the land has a less than 0.1% chance of flooding from rivers or the sea. Parts of the site are at medium risk of flooding from surface water ie is a 1 in 30 chance of surface water flooding each year.
- 1.3.7. There are no single or group protected trees within the site boundary.
- 1.3.8. The site is located within a Coal Mining Development Risk Area.

## 1.4 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 1.4.1. Table 1.1 below demonstrates the site's planning history, the information available relates only to minor alterations to the school site.

**Table 1-1 – Key Planning History**

| Reference        | Proposal                                    | Date approved         |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2008/48/92346/e2 | Repositioning of 2400mm high weldmesh fence | Approved August 2008  |
| 2005/48/95255/e2 | Erection of security fencing                | Approved January 2006 |

|                  |                                   |                        |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2000/62/93610/e5 | Formation of disabled access ramp | Approved February 2001 |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|

- 1.4.2. A request for an EIA Screening Opinion (ref: 2025/20703) was submitted to the Council which sought to confirm that the proposals do not represent EIA development. Confirmation that the proposals on the site do not represent EIA development was received in July 2025.

## 2 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

---

### 2.1 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1.1. The description of the proposed development is:

*“Redevelopment of school, including demolition of existing buildings and construction of replacement single storey school building with external works including provision of a forest school, hard and soft PE and play spaces, car and cycle parking, bin store, sub-station, pedestrian and vehicle access, and landscaping.”*

- 2.1.2. The submitted Design and Access Statement and drawings prepared by Pick Everard (the architects) and One Environments (the landscape architects) provide full details of the proposals and each element is summarised below.
- 2.1.3. Please note that the Co-op Academy Smithies Moor will remain in operation on the site throughout the construction process. The replacement school will only accommodate one-form entry as per the existing school.

#### EXISTING BUILDINGS TO BE DEMOLISHED

- 2.1.4. The proposals include the demolition of the existing school building on site, which is a three-story 3,736sqm GIFA former secondary school.

#### PROPOSED BUILDINGS

- 2.1.5. The proposed replacement school is single storey, with the exception of a small part of the school being 1.5 storeys, housing the main assembly hall, and extends to 1,549sqm.
- 2.1.6. Please see the submitted floor plans demonstrating the internal layout of the building, which includes changing rooms that will also serve users of the adjacent rugby pitch.
- 2.1.7. The submitted elevations provide details of the materiality and colours to be used, which include stone Swisspearl fibre cement cladding, and black and buff Stofix brick slip cladding.
- 2.1.8. The building will accommodate a bio solar roof, as well as an air source heat pump at roof level. These are shown indicatively on the submitted roof plans and are included as part of the proposals. Full details will follow either during the course of the application or at discharge of condition stage.

#### PROPOSED SPORTS FACILITIES

- 2.1.9. The proposed replacement sports facilities include a MUGA (hard PE) and a soft landscaping area with adventure play, a footpath pitch (soft PE), a running track and a forest school.

#### EXTERNAL WORKS AND LANDSCAPING

- 2.1.10. The proposals include a hard and soft landscaping scheme that will provide high quality external areas for students and staff to enjoy. The proposed site layout will utilise the existing pedestrian entrance and provides for a new pedestrian entrance to the north. The existing vehicle entrance (which is segregated for the pedestrian entrances) will be retained. The proposed car parking layout will consist of 20 car parking spaces, including 2 accessible, 4 electric vehicle charging points PV and 1 mini-bus space. The scheme includes 40 secure cycle parking spaces.

## **SUB-STATION**

- 2.1.11. The proposed development includes the provision of a new sub-station which is proposed to be located to the North-West of the site, adjacent to Leeds Old Rd. The location has been shown indicatively on the proposed drawings, however the requirement for the substation will be confirmed during the course of the application through discussions with Northern Powergrid.
- 2.1.12. It is likely that the sub-station housing will be GRP. However, it is proposed for the exact details of the housing and the sub-station itself to be confirmed either during the course of the application or via condition.

## **TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION ACCESS**

- 2.1.13. Please note that it is proposed for temporary construction access to be taken off White Lee Road to the east. The access route will run to the north of the rugby pitch, and will be restored to its current condition upon completion. The area of land required for this temporary access has been included within the red line boundary of the application for completeness.

## **2.2 PHASING**

- 2.2.1. To ensure the ongoing operations of the school, and to limit disruption, the delivery of the development will be phased. Details of the proposed phasing are provided in the submitted Phasing Plans, but can be summarised as follows:

### **PHASE 1**

- 2.2.2. Site set up and formation of new temporary site entrance to White Lee Road.
- 2.2.3. Construction of new single storey teaching block on the site of the existing school playground to the Southeast of the existing school building.

### **PHASE 2**

- 2.2.4. Existing school to be decanted into new teaching block and existing teaching facilities to be demolished and removed from site.
- 2.2.5. Construction of new school car park, and early years playing areas alongside playing fields and pedestrian access.

### **PHASE 3**

- 2.2.6. Existing pedestrian entrance to be resurfaced, completion of the forestry school followed by the creation of the new MUGA pitch, remaining landscaping and removal of the site set-up.

## 3 PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

---

### 3.1 PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

#### CO-OP ACADEMY SMITHIES MOOR AND THE DfE

- 3.1.1. The proposals are based on a project brief provided by the DfE, but the design process has also involved a series of Client Engagement Meetings between the School, DfE, B+K as the contractor and their advisors. The design went through several iterations as summarised by the accompanying Design and Access Statement by Pick Everard, before the current proposals were agreed upon as the most appropriate given the constraints and opportunities posed by the existing site.

#### LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

- 3.1.2. The proposed redevelopment of the school has been the subject to one formal pre-application enquiry submitted to Kirklees Council as the local planning authority.
- 3.1.3. The pre-application enquiry was prepared and submitted by Turner and Townsend on behalf of the DfE in July 2023 (ref: 2023/20900), with written advice issued 29 November 2023. At the time of the enquiry the proposals (known as the Control Option) were for a single storey school within the same site.
- 3.1.4. Officers during pre-application concluded overall that in principle the replacement school could be considered acceptable, however further information was requested (including details of the green space or MUGA and visual and residential amenity impacts) so that officers could make a better assessment of the proposals. This application seeks to address these queries raised at pre-application stage by providing a full suite of information relating to the development proposals.
- 3.1.5. The Highways officer requested a Transport Statement as part of the full submission. The Transport Statement has been submitted as part of this application and comments regarding the existing access junction have been addressed within the Statement. Subsequent informal email engagement has also taken place confirming that temporary construction access from White Lee Road is acceptable, subject to the detail being provided and agreed.
- 3.1.6. The Environmental Health officer stated in their pre application response that a Phase 1 Contaminated Land Report should be submitted as part of the planning application in addition to a Coal Mining Risk Assessment. This has been provided as part of the application submission, alongside a Ground Investigations Report.
- 3.1.7. A preliminary ecological appraisal has been submitted as part of the proposals as per the Ecology officer's request.
- 3.1.8. Kirklees Physical Activity team recommended the proposals provided adequate mitigation for the loss of sports facilities in any future planning application and liaison with Sports England and the rugby football league. These comments have been addressed as part of this application.
- 3.1.9. The Council also confirmed the technical assessments required to support a subsequent planning application. Following the pre-application feedback the design was developed further to take into consideration the points raised by the Council and the outcome of the technical assessments, this has resulted in the application scheme.

## **SPORT ENGLAND**

- 3.1.10. Pre-application advice was sought from Sport England three times. The initial enquiry was submitted in September 2023. Given the loss of the rugby changing rooms as part of the proposals, Sports England advised that they would object if no detail was given with regards to the changing accommodation being replaced.
- 3.1.11. The second pre-application request was received on July 2024 from Sports England. This focused on the replacement playing field and MUGA in addition to the proposed relocation of the changing rooms. Sports England requested further information to understand the proposals.
- 3.1.12. The third advice email from Sports England received in April 2025 considered the replacement playing field and MUGA in addition to re-providing the changing rooms. Sports England commented they would be minded to have 'no objection' to the proposals providing that the application dealt with the following matters:
- The replacement playing field was designed by a turf grass agronomist (proposed to be dealt with by way of a planning condition)
  - The pitches met recognised dimensions
  - New development did not impact the existing rugby pitch and safety margin
  - The MUGA met relevant design guidance
  - A phasing plan showed how the rugby teams would have access to changing during construction and the design considerations.
  - A community use scheme secured use of the sports facilities (proposed to be dealt with by way of a planning condition)
- 3.1.13. In summary, the latest advice from Sport England confirmed that, subject to several conditions being agreed, no objection would be made by Sport England to a future planning application as the proposal is considered to meet paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

## **3.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- 3.2.1. In line with Chapter 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (2018), the proposals have been subject to early engagement in an effort to resolve potential issues prior to the submission of the application and to involve the local community and key stakeholders in the proposed development to ensure the most appropriate outcome for all.
- 3.2.2. Please see the enclosed Statement of Community Involvement prepared by Stonyrock, which details the additional stakeholder engagement that has taken place. It also sets out the feedback that has been received, and the ways in which it has been addressed and / or incorporated into the proposals.

## 4 PLANNING POLICY

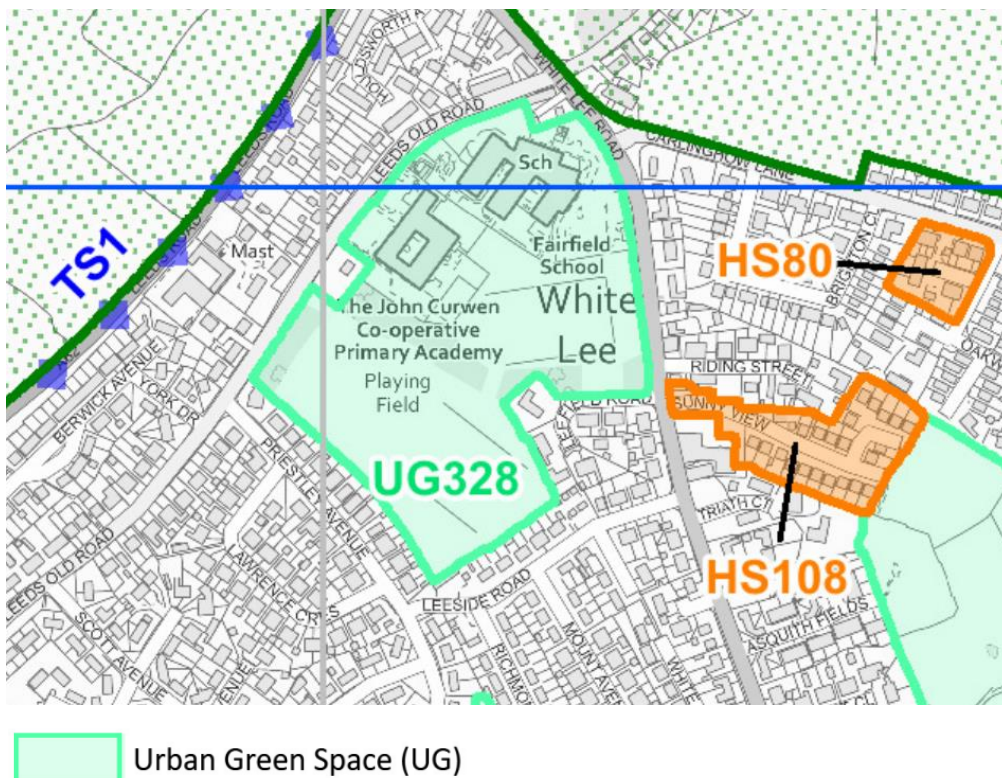
- 4.1.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires decisions on development proposals to be taken in accordance with the adopted development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.1.2. This section sets out the relevant policies within the development plan for the area and other material considerations such as national and local policies plus other guidance against which the proposal will be considered.

### 4.2 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

#### ADOPTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR KIRKLEES

- 4.2.1. The Development Plan for Kirklees comprises Kirklees Local Plan Strategy and Policies (February 2019) and Local Plan Allocations and Designations (February 2019).
- 4.2.2. On the adopted Policies Map, the site sits entirely within a wider Urban Green Space Designation (UG328 - White Lee Playing Fields, Leaside School & Fairfield School) under Policy LP 61 – Urban Green Space. This is shown in an extract from the Kirklees Local Plan Policies Map below.

**Figure 1-1 - Kirklees Policies Map Extract**



- 4.2.3. The policies of most relevance to the site and proposals are listed below:

- LP 1 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- LP 2 – Place Shaping
- LP 3 – Location of New Development

- LP 7 – Efficient and Effective Use of Land and Buildings
- LP 20 – Sustainable Travel
- LP 21 – Highway Safety
- LP 22 – Parking Provision
- LP 24 – Design
- LP 28 – Drainage
- LP 30 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP 33 – Trees
- LP 49 – Educational and health care needs
- LP 51 – Protection and Improvement of Local Air Quality
- LP 52 – Protection and Improvement of Environmental Quality
- LP 53 – Contaminated and Unstable Land
- LP61 – Urban Green Space

## EMERGING LOCAL PLAN

- 4.2.4. The latest Local Development Scheme for Kirklees Council was approved in March 2024 and sets out the timescales for the emerging Local Plan. Early engagement commenced in August 2024, with the consultation ending in October 2024. The next publication consultation is proposed for September- November 2025, with submission to the Secretary of State in March 2027.
- 4.2.5. Given the emerging plan is at such an early stage of its preparation no weight is given to this document at this time.

## 4.3 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) (2024)

- 4.3.1. The NPPF outlines that sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.3.2. Paragraph 8 highlights the three main objectives of achieving sustainable development:
- “a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*
- 4.3.3. Paragraph 98, states that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:
- “a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of*

worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

*b) consider and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*

*c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*

*d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*

*e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services."*

- 4.3.4. Paragraph 100, which states that it is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.
- 4.3.5. At Paragraph 100 the NPPF states Local Planning Authorities should:  
*"a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and*  
*b) work with early years, school and post-16 promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted."*
- 4.3.6. Paragraph 128(b), states that Local Planning Authorities should support proposals to make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools and hospitals, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.
- 4.3.7. Paragraph 131 states the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

## 4.4 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### SPORT ENGLAND PLAYING FIELD GUIDANCE

- 4.4.1. Sport England's Playing fields Policy and Guidance (March 2018, last updated December 2021) seeks to assist Sport England in assessing and responding to applications for proposals that affect playing fields.
- 4.4.2. Where a site is considered to constitute playing field, or land last used as playing field, Sport England advises that proposals affecting such site would require statutory consultation, under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, at the formal planning application stage.
- 4.4.3. Sport England considers proposals affecting playing fields in the light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (in particular Para. 104), and its Playing Fields Policy.

- 4.4.4. Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of:
- all or any part of a playing field, or
  - land which has been used as a playing field land remains undeveloped, or
  - land allocated for use as a playing field
- 4.4.5. unless, in the judgement of Sport England the development as a whole meets with one or more of their five specific exceptions.

## 5 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

---

- 5.1.1. This section assesses the proposals against relevant planning considerations in line with planning policy and material considerations.

### 5.2 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

#### SCHOOL REBUILDING PROGRAMME

- 5.2.1. The development proposals subject to this application have been identified as being necessary as part of the DfE's School Rebuilding Programme, largely due to the existing buildings being in a poor condition and approaching the end of their useable lifespan. There has been a longstanding requirement to improve the school facilities.
- 5.2.2. The proposals, which represent a major investment by the DfE, therefore seek to redevelop the existing developed site to provide students and staff with access to modern, state-of the-art facilities that enhance the quality of learning and teaching, providing a safe and sustainable environment which supports academic, social and emotional development. The proposals will also result in a much more integrated and fully accessible school campus, to the benefit of its students and the local community.
- 5.2.3. The proposals are supported in principle by paragraph 100 of the NPPF, which requires Local Planning Authorities to give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through decisions on applications.

#### URBAN GREEN SPACE

- 5.2.4. The site sits entirely within a wider Urban Green Space Designation (UG328 - White Lee Playing Fields, Leaside School & Fairfield School) under Policy LP 61 – Urban Green Space. Policy LP 61 only permits development proposals which would result in the loss of urban green space if they comply with certain criteria / conditions.
- 5.2.5. Criterion b relates to *“replacement open space, sport or recreation facilities which are equivalent or better in size and quality are provided elsewhere within an easily accessible location for existing and potential new users.”*
- 5.2.6. The proposals comply with this criterion and are in accordance with Policy LP 61 because:
- As shown on the submitted General Arrangement External Area Provision drawing, the existing site accommodates 1,244sqm of green space (soft outdoor PE, soft informal and social area, and habitat), whereas the proposed scheme provides 3,328
  - In line with pre-application discussions with Sport England, the quantity of open space and sport / recreational facilities on site will also be significantly improved in quality. The proposals include soft PE space market out to Sport England compliant dimensions, a running track, enhanced landscaping, adventure play, as well as a dedicated MUGA.

#### PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND

- 5.2.7. The application site is a brownfield site; the development of which is supported by local and national planning policy. Paragraph 128(b) of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should support proposals to make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space. The

proposals for the site will provide a considerably more efficient footprint, which enables more effective use of external spaces and improves the overall quality of development and amenity across the site. Policy LP7 of the Local Plan requires ‘the efficient and effective use of land and buildings’ and that to ensure this, proposals should make efficient use of previously developed land. The redevelopment of the Co-op Academy Smithies Moor, therefore accords with Policy LP7.

## SPORT ENGLAND

- 5.2.8. In line with Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy and Guidance, due to the proposals affecting the existing MUGA and, somewhat, the adjacent rugby field, the proposals must meet one of the five specific exceptions in order to be supported.
- 5.2.9. In pre-application discussions with Sport England it was demonstrated that, for the reasons mentioned above at paragraph 5.2.6, the proposals can meet exception E4 of the policy, which states:
- “The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field:*
- *of equivalent or better quality, and*
  - *of equivalent or greater quantity, and*
  - *in a suitable location, and*
  - *subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.”*
- 5.2.10. Sport England agreed at pre-application stage that the proposals meet exception E4, providing:
- *That the replacement playing field is designed by a turf grass agronomist (this can be dealt with by way of a planning condition) – this detail will be provided during the course of the application.*
  - *The pitch(es) meet recognised dimensions – the submitted drawings demonstrate compliance with this criterion.*
  - *That the new development does not impact on the existing rugby pitch and safety margin (show the full detail of the proposed path to the pitch). The submitted drawings, with associated safety margins, demonstrate compliance with this criterion.*
  - *The MUGA meets relevant design guidance. The submitted drawings demonstrate the dimensions of the MUGA and that it is designed in accordance with the relevant criteria.*
  - *A phasing plan shows how the rugby teams will have access to changing during construction and the design considerations in respect of safeguarding are considered. Phasing Plans are submitted in support of this application demonstrating that the proposals will not prejudice access to the changing rooms. The existing changing rooms will be accessible until the new changing rooms are available.*
  - *A community use scheme secures use of the sport facilities (this can be dealt with by way of a planning condition). This is acceptable.*
- 5.2.11. In light of the above, the proposals comply with the Sport England Playing Fields Policy.

## 5.3 DESIGN, SCALE AND MASSING

- 5.3.1. The proposals have been designed in the context of national and local planning policy from the outset, in particular paragraph 131 of the NPPF which requires proposals to achieve good design and high-quality places, whilst also ensuring compliance with the DfE’s space standards and specifications for primary schools.

- 5.3.2. In producing the design of the proposals, the design team has undertaken a detailed assessment of the existing site context to understand the constraints and opportunities. The design process has also involved consultation with key stakeholders, to fully appreciate local interest and concerns, as detailed in the submitted Statement of Community Involvement.
- 5.3.3. The proposals take a holistic approach to design, by addressing the existing issues (such as the poor condition of the buildings, lack of accessibility, and a sprawling, piecemeal campus) and producing the most suitable development for its future users and stakeholders.
- 5.3.4. The form of the new school building is energy efficient, with an 'I' shape single storey, with a small 1.5 storey portion housing the main hall and plant access. The layout is efficient, with an internal cluster based design approach which optimises the use of the school site.
- 5.3.5. The positioning and elevational treatment of the proposed buildings has therefore evolved during the design process and within the context of the site constraints and location.
- 5.3.6. The elevational treatment of the buildings includes buff-multi and dark grey brick, with smooth cladding panels. This proposed elevational treatment has been designed to add interest to the buildings and to break down the massing, which improves the appearance within the wider setting.
- 5.3.7. Please refer to the submitted Design and Access Statement prepared by Pick Everard which discusses the design approach in further detail, including the overall layout, proposed buildings, materiality, form and massing and boundary treatments. The Design and Access Statement outlines how the proposals accord with Policy LP24 of the Local Plan which requires good design to be at the core of all proposals.

## **5.4 HIGHWAYS AND ACCESS**

- 5.4.1. Policy LP21 of the Local Plan states that 'Proposals shall demonstrate that they can accommodate sustainable modes of transport and be accessed effectively and safely by all users'. The Transport Statement by Eddisons assesses the traffic and transport impacts of the proposal in accordance with Policy LP21. The report concludes that the proposed development is accessible by non-car travel modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. Furthermore, the report states the traffic impact as a result of the new development will have no material differences in traffic generation and car parking requirements between the existing and proposed school, given the capacity and staffing numbers will remain as existing.
- 5.4.2. A total of 20 car parking spaces incorporating 2 mobility impaired spaces and 4 EV charging bays are proposed within the site layout. Secure cycle parking provision (40 spaces) will be provided within the site off the main pedestrian access into the site. Details of the parking provision are within the submitted planning drawings, as per the requirements of Policy LP22 of the Local Plan.
- 5.4.3. A detailed Travel Plan has been prepared by Local Transport Projects which demonstrates the accessibility of the site by sustainable modes, outlines the strategy and Action Plan, defines the aims and objectives, establishes the expected baseline travel situation and sets out appropriate targets to minimise car journeys to/from the site. The Travel Plan sets out stages of how the plan will be implemented and concludes any intervention measures to be implemented if the Travel Plan target is not being achieved.
- 5.4.4. A monitoring and evaluation strategy will allow the Travel Plan to be appropriately reviewed and modified to ensure the achievement and maintenance of the Travel Plan targets. Please refer to the

submitted Travel Plan which discusses the above in further detail. Policy LP20 of the Local Plan requires developments to ensure that sustainable modes of transport, other than the private car, are utilised. Given the provision of cycle infrastructure and the submission of a Travel Plan associated with the proposed development, it is considered that the development accords with Policy LP20.

- 5.4.5. Overall, it is considered that the highways and access proposals incorporate a 'vision-led approach' as per the requirements of Paragraph 109 of the NPPF which talks about transport issues being considered from the earliest stages of development.

## **5.5 AMENITY**

### **INTERNAL AMENITY**

- 5.5.1. The proposed scheme has been designed to significantly improve the experience of the school and its facilities for students and staff within the buildings and around the site. The proposals principally seek to optimise the teaching environments within the classrooms, with material finishes that add interest, and colours used as wayfinding within the interior of the school. Policy LP49 of the Local Plan states that proposals for new or enhanced education facilities will be permitted where the scale, range, quality and accessibility of education facilities are improved. It is considered that the improvements to Co-op Academy Smithies Moor satisfy the requirements of this Policy.

### **EXTERNAL AMENITY**

- 5.5.2. The potential impact of the proposals on the amenity of neighbouring properties has been a key consideration throughout the design process, given there are residential properties near to the site to the Western boundary of the site on Leeds Old Road, with the closest house being 173 Leeds Old Road.

#### **Noise**

- 5.5.3. The submitted Noise Impact Assessment by Ramboll assesses the noise impact from mechanical plant and external sports areas associated with Co-op Academy Smithies Moor in accordance with the Kirklees Council published Noise Design Advice and planning conditions relating to plant noise for recent similar developments in the area.
- 5.5.4. The assessment found that noise levels at the facades of the proposed building are calculated to be up to 52dB at the most exposed facades of the new school buildings, but generally lower than this.
- 5.5.5. The assessment summarises that overall there is not expected to be a significant impact in terms of noise upon surrounding residents as a result of the proposals.

#### **Odour**

- 5.5.6. The application is supported by a Commercial Kitchen Odour Assessment (CKOA) prepared by Miller Goodall due to the proposed building including a kitchen. The scheme will include the installation of cooking equipment that includes a recirculating condensation hood designed to capture and condense steam, vapours and odours without an external ventilation system in the school kitchen.
- 5.5.7. The CKOA explains that a commercial kitchen odour risk assessment is therefore not appropriate because dispersion is a key component of the assessment. However, a desk-based odour screening assessment has been completed to consider FIDOL (Frequency, Intensity, Duration, Offensiveness and Location) and the source-pathway-receptor methodology, in accordance with the Institute of Air

Quality Management 'Guidance on the assessment of odour for planning' 2018. The screening assessment concludes that the risk of odour impact arising from the proposed school kitchen is negligible and not significant.

#### **Daylight / sunlight**

- 5.5.8. All parts of the proposed Co-op Academy Smithies Moor redevelopment are considered to be sufficiently far away from all surrounding properties therefore no further analysis is deemed necessary in accordance with guidance presented in BRE 209.

#### **Construction stage**

- 5.5.9. The application submission also sets out the proposed approach to managing potential disruption and effects on amenity, in the enclosed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- 5.5.10. As the school will remain operational on the site throughout the construction period, careful consideration has been given to avoiding impact and disruption on the users of the school and surrounding roads.
- 5.5.11. The CEMP identifies the impacts and relevant mitigation that will be implemented by B+K throughout the project to minimise the impact to the local environment from the construction activities. It provides details of the following:
- Hours of operation of construction works
  - Delivery restrictions
  - Location of site compound
  - Parking of vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors
  - Loading and unloading of plant and materials
  - Storage of plant and materials in constructing the development
  - Measures to control surface water runoff
  - Noise management
  - Dust management
  - Vibration management
  - Construction logistics
  - Site hoarding
- 5.5.12. In light of the above, the application package demonstrates that the proposals have fully considered and seek to mitigate and manage the potential impact of the proposals on amenity, including that of students and staff using the development in the future, and those living and working in close proximity to the site, with regards to construction activities. As such, we consider that the proposals comply with LP51 and LP52 of the Local Plan.

## **5.6 ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY**

### **ECOLOGY**

- 5.6.1. The preliminary ecological appraisal and impact assessment by Antea Group demonstrates that the existing habitats on site are widespread in both a local and national context. During the design process, the mitigation hierarchy has been followed such that those habitats with the greatest ecological value are to be retained within the development, wherever possible. As such, individual trees within the western area of the Site have been identified for retention and will receive appropriate protection during the works. Furthermore, areas of grassland within the western area of

the site are to be retained/replanted and enhanced following the development. Grassland in the eastern area of the site will only be temporarily lost to facilitate construction access and will be reinstated following the works.

## **BIODIVERSITY**

- 5.6.2. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that development proposals should minimise impact on biodiversity and provide a net biodiversity gain. The Biodiversity Enhancement Plan and associated Metric by Antea Group has indicated that the proposed development has the potential to result in a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of 11.09% which is in accordance with national and local policy. The Biodiversity Net Gain is proposed to be achieved on site through the implementation of trees, modified grassland and mixed shrub.

## **5.7 LANDSCAPING AND TREES**

- 5.7.1. The proposals include a high quality landscaping scheme that has been designed based on the proposed use of the site. The proposals provide significantly more hard and soft PE and social areas on site than the existing. Species rich shrub and ornamental planting also form part of the proposals for the site. Please refer to the submitted landscaping drawings for further detail which seek to address the requirements of Policy LP61 of the Local Plan.
- 5.7.2. The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Antea Group clarifies that all trees within the site are outside of any Conservation Area. No trees on-site nor on land adjacent to the site are covered by a Tree Preservation Order. A total of 14 individual trees and 12 tree groups were identified and assessed as part of the tree survey. All trees surveyed with the exception of six Tree Groups (TG) and four individual Trees (T) were within the site boundary.
- 5.7.3. Please note that the Arboricultural Survey plans include an area bounded by a blue line. This area is excluded from the application proposals and relates to works that will be undertaken under permitted development rights once permission has been granted for this scheme, to facilitate the construction access.
- 5.7.4. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies that 9 trees will be removed to facilitate the development proposals. Three of these trees are Category B and six of the trees are Category C. New tree planting as part of the site landscaping plans is proposed, which are projected to mitigate for the tree loss. In total, ten new trees are proposed.
- 5.7.5. Limited management has taken place to the trees present on-site. To ensure that the root areas and canopy extremities of the individual trees and the tree groups that may be retained are not damaged, a Constraints Plan has been prepared to show the locations where protective fencing should be erected for retained trees.
- 5.7.6. It is considered that the above proposals with regards to trees, align with Policy LP33 of the Local Plan.

## **5.8 SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY**

- 5.8.1. The proposed teaching block and associated facilities are designed according to the standards to achieve Net Zero Carbon in Operation at the handover of the building set out in the DfE Output Specification 21 (S21). The new buildings will therefore surpass the regulated energy targets of Building Regulations AD Part L. The proposed energy strategy includes high insulation standards, very efficient building services, low energy ventilation systems and low energy LED lighting.

5.8.2. In light of the above, the proposals are in line with the aspirations of Policy LP52 of the Local Plan.

## **5.9 FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE**

- 5.9.1. The flood risk assessment and drainage details by Morgan Structural sets out key considerations and design parameters associated with the below ground drainage. The latest EA published flood zone map shows that the site lies entirely within fluvial Flood Zone 1 representing land with a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding.
- 5.9.2. The EA's surface water flood map shows that there is localised surface water flood risk on site. The risk ranges from medium to high. All surface flood risk is located on the northeast side of the existing school building and site; however the area proposed for the new building in the southeast of the site has a low surface water flood risk. The surface water accumulating along the northeast side of the building appears to be where there is a low lying below ground access area which is causing the localised high risk of surface water flooding.
- 5.9.3. A new foul water connection will be constructed in advance to ensure that, prior to the new teaching block being built and brought into operation, a dedicated connection point into the existing off-site system is established. This connection will subsequently serve the new building under Phase 2, following the demolition of the existing school building.
- 5.9.4. Policy LP28 Drainage of the Local Plan asks that development proposals utilise Sustainable Drainage Systems. The proposals for Co-op Academy Smithies Moor align with the policy requirements by utilising water storage features.
- 5.9.5. Paragraph 172 of the NPPF requires proposals to take into consideration drainage and flood risks. Paragraph 172c specifically asks for infrastructure to provide opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding. Given that the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and proposes to utilise a combination of SUDs features, it is considered that the development will accord with the requirements of Paragraph 172 of the NPPF.

## **5.10 GROUND CONDITIONS AND CONTAMINATION**

- 5.10.1. In support of addressing the requirements of Policy LP 52, the application is supported by the following documents:
- Phase 1 and Phase 2 Geo-environmental and Geotechnical Factual and Interpretative Report prepared by RSK (ref: 323197-R02(00));
  - Coal Mining Risk Assessment prepared by Sweco (ref: 65208318-SWE-XX-XX-T-GE-0001 C01);
  - Ground Investigation Report prepared by Hexa (ref: 601124 -HEX-XX-XX-RP-GE-0001 P02); and
  - Ground Investigation Summary letter prepared by Hexa (ref: 01124-HEX-XX-XX-RP-GE-0002).
- 5.10.2. The Ground Investigation Summary Letter provides an overview of the findings of these reports, and the recommendations moving forward with respect to ground conditions and contamination.
- 5.10.3. In summary, the mining legacy at the site prevents the adoption of traditional shallow foundations in the development. Shallow foundations are not suitable because the ground has been heavily disturbed by past mining in some areas, and in others the coal seams are so deep that extending footings to reach stable ground would not be practical or cost-effective.

- 5.10.4. The high risk of ground instability from the deeper workings requires mitigation in the form of grouting (injection of material to stabilise old workings) across the development footprint. As such, recommendations include the following:
- Mine stabilisation: The site is suitable for redevelopment, but mine workings must be stabilised first. A detailed scope of works for this stabilisation is being prepared by Hexa and will be submitted to the Mining Remediation Authority (Coal Authority) during the course of the planning application, for agreement and approval prior to commencement.
  - Foundations: Piled foundations are likely required to support the new school buildings and facilities. These will be subject to detailed specialist design once loadings are confirmed and will need to take into account the influence of stabilised coal workings.
  - Contamination/Ground Gas: No major contamination or gas risks were identified, meaning environmental risks are low, however vigilance and continual assessment during stabilisation and development works will be required.

## **5.11 HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.11.1. The enclosed Health Impact Assessment (HIA) prepared by WSP follows the Council's Rapid HIA for Spatial Planning guidance, addressing key health themes including active travel, access to green space, community safety, and climate resilience. It identifies positive health outcomes from improved school facilities, enhanced accessibility, increased green space, and sustainable design. Temporary construction impacts (e.g. noise, dust) are mitigated through a Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- 5.11.2. The scheme complies with Policy LP47 by promoting healthy, active lifestyles and aligns with national policy by improving educational infrastructure and community wellbeing. Overall, the HIA concludes the development will deliver long-term health benefits for pupils, staff, and the wider community.

## **5.12 SECURED BY DESIGN**

- 5.12.1. Policy LP24 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to minimise the risk of crime by enhanced security and high levels of activity. In accordance with this policy, the submitted Crime Impact Statement sets out how the features of the development reduce the risk of crime. Features include perimeter fencing and gates which promote natural surveillance and landscaping features will support natural access control and the wayfinding strategy. Overall, the measures proposed seek to reduce opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour, support effective site management and contribute to a development that promotes safety community confidence and sustainability.
- 5.12.2. A meeting with the Designing Out Crime Officer was also held in June 2025, where no significant security concerns were raised in relation to the site. Nevertheless, we have sought to address the comments, policy requirements and Paragraph 135 of the NPPF (requiring development to be safe, inclusive and accessible) by providing further detail as suggested in the feedback received at pre-application stage.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

---

- 6.1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by WSP, on behalf of B+K, the DfE and The Co-op Academy Smithies Moor, as part of an application for full planning permission for the redevelopment of the school.

### 6.2 PLANNING BENEFITS

- 6.2.1. The proposals involve the demolition of the existing school building which is no longer fit for purpose and its replacement with a single new building and external works including a forest school, play spaces, landscaping features and car and cycle parking. The demolition of the existing building allows the site to incorporate more open space and for the buildings and structures on the site to have a smaller overall footprint.
- 6.2.2. The masterplan for the proposed development has been designed thoughtfully to provide a unified campus that responds positively to its location. The proposal represents a high quality, sustainable development that would provide significant benefits which include:
- Replacing an existing building that is in a poor condition and approaching the end of its useable life span with a modern, state of the art building that provides high quality facilities across a more efficient footprint;
  - The provision of hard and soft landscaping across the site that includes external spaces to be enjoyed by future users as well as the overall greening of the site which seeks to improve mental health and wellbeing;
  - A biodiversity net gain delivered on site that exceeds the necessary 10% requirement;
  - Enabling full accessibility across the site and internally within the proposed building;
  - Providing a building that achieves Net Zero Carbon in Operation and therefore surpasses the regulated energy targets of Building Regulations AD Part L, thereby meeting sustainability aspirations and providing a development that operates considerably more efficiently;
  - Providing 40no. covered, secure cycle spaces to encourage sustainable transport options.
- 6.2.3. As set out in paragraph 100 of the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities should give great weight to the need to alter schools through decisions on applications. The significant benefits of the proposals summarised in this Statement therefore outweigh any localised negative impacts when considering the planning balance.
- 6.2.4. There is a well-established requirement for redevelopment of the school and the proposals have been subject to detailed engagement with key stakeholders and Kirklees Council. The design is based on a thorough contextual understanding of the site and surroundings, and the associated constraints and opportunities. We therefore consider that the development proposals subject of this application, is the most appropriate scheme for this site.
- 6.2.5. It has been demonstrated in this Statement and the supporting application documents and drawings that the proposal complies with local and national planning policies, and that the planning benefits, outweigh any adverse impacts. On that basis, and in line with paragraph 11 of the NPPF, we respectfully request that the application is approved without delay.

wsp



[wsp.com](http://wsp.com)