

Green Park Village School

Planning Statement

on behalf of St Edward Homes

March 2018



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Contents

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Site Context.....	6
3.	Relevant Planning History	8
4.	The Proposed Development.....	10
5.	Planning Appraisal.....	11
6.	Conclusion	25

Appendices

Appendix A: Drawing Schedule

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared, on behalf of St Edward Homes ("**the Applicant**"), in support of a detailed planning application submitted to Reading Borough Council ("**the Council**") at Flagstaff Road, Green Park Village, Reading ("**the Site**") for:

*"Clearance of the site; the erection of a two-form entry primary school building; construction of a multi-use games area, playing pitch and play areas; and associated car parking, landscaping, access and ancillary works" ("**the Proposed Development**").*

Application Documentation

- 1.2 The planning application documentation submitted for approval comprises the following:

- Planning application forms/ certificates
- Site location plan
- A full set of proposed drawings – see attached schedule at **Appendix 1**.

- 1.3 The drawings should be read in conjunction with a range of technical documents and supporting materials submitted with the application as follows:

- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement (including landscape strategy)
- Heritage Statement
- Transport Statement
- School Travel Plan
- Daylight and Sunlight Impact Assessment
- BREEAM Pre Assessment Report
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Air Quality Assessment
- Contaminated Land Survey
- Noise and Vibration Report
- Archaeological Mitigation Report
- Energy Statement

- Ecology Survey & Assessment
- Utilities and Services Report

- 1.4 Whilst this application relates solely to the Proposed Development on the Site, the Design and Access Statement illustrates how it is compatible in the surrounding context including the residential and extra care home development and areas of public realm that are under construction at Green Park Village.
- 1.5 This Planning Statement describes the Site and its surroundings (Section 2); sets out the relevant planning history for the various phases of Green Park Village (Section 3); presents the Proposed Development in more detail (Section 4); before making an assessment of the Proposed Development against the development plan and other material considerations (Section 5).
- 1.6 As a detailed planning application, a planning fee that reflects the floor area of the school building is required, which will be paid directly to the Council by the Applicant.

2. Site Context

- 2.1 The Site comprises land identified as Phase 2B of the wider Green Park Village development (as granted outline planning permission in 2011 under application 10/01461/OUT), located to the north of the roundabout junction between Longwater Avenue/Flagstaff Road. On this junction, the Site has a gateway position in relation to the wider development.
- 2.2 Flagstaff Road will be the main link to the western part of Green Park Village and to the new railway station once completed.
- 2.3 Green Park Village comprises a large and strategic mixed use development across 25 hectares of land, including residential and office accommodation, as well as and green and community infrastructure. This development has commenced and parts of the first phase are now occupied.
- 2.4 Phase 2B (the Site) of this outline planning permission was for a one-form entry primary school, with buildings up to two storeys in height and associated playing fields. The school hall and playing fields were also to be available for community use.
- 2.5 More detail on the relevant planning history is set out at Section 3 of this report.
- 2.6 The Site is broadly square in shape, measuring approximately 91m by 108m and covering an area of 0.94 hectares.
- 2.7 The Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (land at least risk of flooding) following the completion of engineering works that have raised ground levels and remodelled the surrounding hydrology. (More detail on this is contained within the Flood Risk Assessment that accompanies this application.)
- 2.8 To the north and east of the Site is the now almost complete Phase 1 residential development, with a mixture of three storey houses and a taller apartment building (up to four storeys). To the west of the Site will be an area of new public realm – Market Square that also forms part of Phase 1. Beyond Market Square is another four storey apartment building (Phase 2C), which is currently under construction.
- 2.9 On the opposite side of Flagstaff Road that bounds the southern side of the Site, a six storey extra care home with 137 residential units is being built.

- 2.10 To the south east, between the Site and Longwater Avenue, is an area of landscaping and surface water drainage attenuation that also provides a buffer to the main spine road through Green Park.
- 2.11 In a slightly wider context, larger four to five storey offices at Green Park are located to the south and east of Longwater Avenue. The closest of these are the Thales and Cisco Systems buildings.
- 2.12 The Site is served by regular bus services along Longwater Avenue, with connections to Reading town centre and MereOak Park and Ride to the south of the M4 motorway. The Site is within close walking distance of Green Park railway station, which is expected to open in May 2019.
- 2.13 Cycleways connect the Site to the wider Reading cycle network, as well as there being attractive and permeable walking routes around Green Park.
- 2.14 The Site is not within a conservation area and is unconstrained by built heritage.

3. Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 Planning permission was granted in 2011 (application reference 10/01461/OUT) for the Green Park Village masterplan development, which has now been implemented. This covers an area of approximately 25 hectares between the north western edge of Green Park and the railway connecting Reading to Basingstoke.
- 3.2 Across this wider site, the consented masterplan is for a range of complementary residential, office, retail and a primary school uses, divided between six phases.
- 3.3 Detail on each of the phases, together with their planning status, is set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Green Park Village Planning History

Phase	Development	Planning Status
1	97 houses and 11 apartments	- 10/01461/OUT - full planning permission approved - Implemented
1C	Access and roadway (Flagstaff Road) into the development from Longwater Avenue	- 10/01461/OUT - outline planning permission approved - 151054/NMA – additional roadway phase approved - 151070/REM - reserved matters approved - Implemented
2A	Extra care home – 137 units	- 10/01461/OUT - outline planning permission approved - 151761/REM – reserved matters approved - Implemented
2B	Primary school	- 10/01461/OUT - outline planning permission approved - Subject to this detailed planning application
2C	30 apartments	- 10/01461/OUT - outline planning permission approved - 162050/REM - reserved matters approved - Implemented
3A	68 houses and 6 apartments	- 10/01461/OUT - outline planning permission approved - 160700/REM - reserved matters approved - Implemented
3B	3B1 – 23 dwellings 3B2 – 143 dwellings	- 10/01461/OUT - outline planning permission approved - 170095/REM - reserved matters approved - 170096/REM - reserved matters approved
3C	Landscaping around waterside	- 170087/REM - reserved matters approved

4	Residential development	- 10/01461/OUT - outline planning permission approved
5	54 houses and 29 apartments	- 10/01461/OUT - outline planning permission approved - 161893/REM – approved - Implemented
6A	Originally office development Proposed as residential – 339 apartments	- 10/01461/OUT - outline planning permission approved (offices) - 171019/FUL – full application for residential; decision pending
6B	120 apartments	- 10/01461/OUT - outline planning permission approved - 171017/REM – reserved matters application; decision pending - 172236/NMA – non-material amendment application to change the phasing plan, parameter plans and the Design and Access Statement with regard to blocks within Phase 6B

- 3.4 Adjacent to the west of Green Park Village will be a new railway station, approved under application 141944/FUL. As well as direct rail connections to Reading and Basingstoke, this development will provide a new bus interchange and multi-storey car park. The latest planning permission was granted in May 2015 with a five year period for commencement, although it is understood that the station is due to open in May 2019.

4. The Proposed Development

- 4.1 The Proposed Development comprises the construction of a new primary school with two-forms of entry and a multi-use games area, playing pitch and other play areas.
- 4.2 The new building will have a curved arrangement along the south western side of the Site, fronting both Flagstaff Road and Market Square. The building will be two storeys in height, consisting of three main accommodation pavilions each with a square footprint, connected by two wedge-shaped link sections.
- 4.3 The building includes the following accommodation/facilities:
- main hall and with changing rooms;
 - four key stage 1 classrooms;
 - eight key stage 2 classrooms;
 - two reception classrooms;
 - nursery accommodation;
 - kitchen; and
 - staffrooms, offices, stores, breakout areas etc.
- 4.4 Externally the Proposed Development includes:
- a playing pitch that occupies the eastern half of the Site;
 - an all-weather multi use games area close to the northern Site boundary; and
 - areas for playing.
- 4.5 Vehicular access to the Site is through Phase 1, off Maine Street, and will be restricted to staff vehicles only. 20 staff car parking spaces will be provided.
- 4.6 Deliveries and refuse collection will be accommodated in the staff car park.
- 4.7 Seven parking bays for dropping off / picking up will be provided on Flagstaff Road, as part of the Market Square development (Phase 1).
- 4.8 30 cycle parking spaces for students and 10 spaces for staff as well as designated scooter parking will be provided.

5. Planning Appraisal

5.1 The combined effect of section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) is that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 This section provides an assessment of the Proposed Development against the development plan and any other relevant material considerations (including the Framework).

Development Plan

5.3 The statutory development plan for the Council comprises:

- Core Strategy (adopted January 2008, with alteration in January 2015) ("**the Core Strategy**"); and
- Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted October 2012, with alteration in January 2015) ("**the SDPD**").

5.4 Paragraph 215 of the Framework requires that the weight to be given to the policies of the Core Strategy depends on their degree of consistency with the National Planning Policy (2012) ("**the Framework**") (the closer the policies in the Core Strategy to the policies in the Framework, the greater weight that may be given).

Other Material Considerations

5.5 The Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is therefore a material consideration, to which significant weight should be attached in determining the application.

5.6 At the heart of the Framework (paragraph 14) is the "presumption in favour of sustainable development", this is seen as the "golden thread" running through plan making and decision taking. For decision-taking, development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

5.7 Other material considerations include:

- the Planning Practice Guidance ("**the PPG**");
- the National Planning Policy Framework – Draft text for consultation (March 2018) ("**the Draft Framework**");
- emerging Draft Reading Borough Local Plan ("**the Emerging Local Plan**")
- Revised Car Parking Standards and Design SPD (adopted October 2011) ("**the Parking SPD**");
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted July 2011);
- Planning Obligations under Section 106 SPD (adopted April 2015);
- Reading Borough Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (January 2015); and
- previous planning permissions for the Site and surrounding area including the extant outline planning permission for Green Park Village (10/01461/OUT).

Sustainable Development

- 5.8 At paragraph 7, the Framework states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development – an economic role, a social role and an environmental role. These roles (Framework paragraph 8) cannot be undertaken in isolation because they are mutually dependent. Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards, and well-designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities.
- 5.9 Local planning authorities should seek opportunities to achieve each of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, with net gains across all three (Framework paragraph 152). Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, measures to mitigate the impact should be considered, or compensatory measures may be appropriate.
- 5.10 As expanded upon elsewhere in this Planning Statement and the application documentation as a whole, the Proposed Development is wholly sustainable, delivering the following economic, social and environmental benefits:

Economic Role

- A significant capital investment
- Employment for the operation of the Proposed Development
- Spending by employees in local shops, restaurants, businesses and on other services
- Construction job opportunities

Social Role

- New education facilities serving local communities
- Community use of the facilities
- Improved physical environment
- Opportunities for social interaction
- Opportunities to improve health and fitness
- Sustainable location within walking distance to services and amenities
- Accessible to public transport

Environmental Role

- Regeneration and effective use of a brownfield site
- Enhancement of the townscape and appearance of the area
- Accessible location by walking, cycling and public transport
- Improved sense of place and identity
- Decontamination of land
- A net gain in biodiversity

5.11 The Proposed Development will therefore fulfil the economic, social and environmental role of sustainable development.

5.12 This Planning Statement makes an assessment below of the impacts of the Proposed Development and will conclude that it accords with the development plan, taking account of other relevant material considerations including the Framework which weigh heavily in its favour. Therefore, the Framework requires that planning permission should be granted without delay.

Principle of Development

5.13 The principle of a primary school development on the Site has been established in the approval of the outline masterplan development for Green Park Village (10/01461/OUT). This permission was for a one-form entry school, to provide for the education needs of the residential development.

5.14 Core Strategy Policy CS14 identifies Green Park as a location for housing development, whilst the supporting text at paragraph 6.13 goes further:

"A high level of residential development will continue to be delivered as part of mixed-use developments in South West Reading, particularly in the very accessible A33 corridor. This supply will arise from the intensification of existing permissions, such as at the former Manor Farm Development, the proposed development of Green Park 3 (North) for around 700 dwellings and, in the longer term, the possible redevelopment of selected existing employment sites in suitable locations for residential or mixed-use developments."

5.15 The suitability of Green Park as a sustainable location for residential development is further enhanced by the mix of complementary facilities including a primary school, community uses, public open space and recreation areas, as well as the delivery of the new railway station.

5.16 The importance of the school, which will provide community use of its hall and playing pitches, is reflected in the provisions of the s.106 legal agreement that relates to the masterplan scheme (10/01461/OUT): that the school (a one-form entry, including nurseys and sports pitches) should be completed before occupation of the 300th dwelling.

5.17 In the officers' report to the Council's planning committee for application 10/01461/OUT, the principle and location of a primary school was endorsed:

"...education officers have confirmed that the proposed school and its location is the right solution for providing a primary school in terms of education as well as other community advantages."

5.18 Since the grant of the outline planning permission and the commencement of that development, the position surrounding the primary school has changed. The Council has advised the Applicant that a one-form entry school would not meet its wider education needs and, despite provisions in the s.106

agreement that required the Applicant to only provide a school of this size, a two-form entry school should be provided instead.

- 5.19 Following discussions with the Council, the Applicant has agreed to provide such a two-form entry school on the Site, with additional funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency. As this larger school is beyond the provisions of the extant outline planning permission, it has necessitated the submission of this new application.
- 5.20 There is clear support in the Core Strategy for this larger primary school: one of its key social and economic objectives is to "*maximise access for all to the necessary education, skills and knowledge to play a full role in society*". Policy CS3 (Social Inclusion and Diversity) requires major developments to enhance social inclusion including by access to education facilities.
- 5.21 Policy CS31 (Additional and Existing Community Facilities) supports new education development, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site. Core Strategy paragraph 10.7 acknowledges that the Council must work with its partners in the education sector to ensure that educational needs are met.
- 5.22 This aim is carried through to the Emerging Local Plan, which includes a vision and objectives of improving the quality of life for children and young people through good access to education. Paragraph 3.1.7 of the Emerging Local Plan specifically identifies a need for new education provision at both primary and secondary level; and Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) gives the highest priority to securing education facilities.
- 5.23 In the Framework (paragraph 72), the Government places great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is 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. The Framework is clear that the Council should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

Building a Strong and Competitive Economy

- 5.24 Paragraph 18 of the Framework details the Government's commitment to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity. At paragraph 21, it is recognised that a lack of infrastructure (which should include education facilities) can be a barrier to investment and economic growth.

- 5.25 During construction, the Proposed Development will create a significant number of construction jobs on the Site, which in turn will generate spend in the local economy.
- 5.26 Once occupied, the Transport Statement details that 41 new jobs (full time equivalent) will be created. This new employment through spending and multiplier effects will have a material impact on the local and regional economy, including supporting existing local shops and businesses.
- 5.27 These major economic benefits of the Proposed Development, in providing new infrastructure and creating construction and operational jobs and expenditure in the local economy, should be afforded significant weight under paragraph 19 of the Framework in the consideration of the planning application.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 5.28 The Framework sets out that a key principle to promoting sustainable transport is for there to be a balance of land uses in an area so that people are able to minimise their journey lengths.
- 5.29 Developments that generate a significant number of trips (Framework paragraph 32) should be supported by a Transport Statement. Decisions should have regard to opportunities for sustainable transport and the provision of safe and suitable access for all. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts are severe.

Accessibility

- 5.30 Core Strategy Policy CS4 requires that an appropriate scale or amount of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities. The acceptance of the location of the Site for a primary school development, as part of the larger, transformational development of Green Park Village, has already been accepted by the Council. In the officers' report to the Council's Planning Applications Committee (10/1461/FUL), it was considered (paragraph 6.6) that the principle of this wider development complies with the objectives of the Core Strategy. These objectives include that development should "*reduce the need for travel and transport particularly by car or lorry while providing good physical access for all to services, facilities and other people.*"
- 5.31 In increasing social infrastructure and facilities on the Site (the school expanding from a one to a two

form entry), the level of accessibility and overall sustainability of Green Park Village is improved, over what has already been accepted as being an accessible location. This is supported by analysis in the Transport Statement that at least 93% of the students will be able to walk to the school, as they will live within Green Park Village. Not only is walking an extremely sustainable mode of travelling, the Proposed Development will reduce the need for the children (and their parents) to have to travel further to access other schools.

- 5.32 It is noted, as defined by the Council's Parking SPD, that the Site is within a Zone 3 area, which is within a recommended 400m walking distance and accessible to a high frequency bus route and therefore the wider bus network.

Car / Cycle Parking

- 5.33 Core Strategy Policy CS24 refers the application of maximum parking standards for new development, in relation to its accessibility. For the Zone 3 location of the Site, the maximum parking provision would be around 80 spaces. However, in accordance with this maximum approach, the Parking SPD makes provision to justify a reduced level, taking into account matters of sustainable transport accessibility; benefits of carbon emissions; tackling congestion; and making more efficient use of land.
- 5.34 This last point is important because the Site, as part of the wider masterplan scheme, was originally intended as a one-form entry school. Whilst the need for school places has increased (and the Applicant is pleased to assist the Council in helping meet this demand through making better use of the Site), the size of the Site has not changed; and nor can it, because it is constrained on all sides by other development under construction.
- 5.35 The Transport Statement explains the approach to car parking on the Site. As with the previous one form entry school, most pupils will live in Green Park Village and so would walk, scoot or cycle to school. Currently the Transport Statement identifies that 93% of prospective pupils will live within walking distance, which may increase to 100% with the change of use of Phase 6a to residential.
- 5.36 Should any pupils be dropped off or picked up by car, seven designated bays for this purpose will be available on Flagstaff Road, adjacent to Market Square.
- 5.37 20 spaces will be available for staff parking, which is justified because of the accessible location of the Site to high frequency bus routes and Green Park railway station. The Proposed Development is also

supported by a Travel Plan that will minimise single occupancy car travel and maximise the number of journeys made using alternative (and more sustainable) transport modes.

- 5.38 Service, delivery and refuse vehicles will utilise the staff car park, which is conveniently placed in relation to the main school building and facilities.
- 5.39 Community use of the Site will only occur outside of the normal school day. Parking for such users would be along Flagstaff Road, at the railway station car park and/or local park and ride facilities.
- 5.40 A total of 40 cycle parking spaces and a designated scooter store will be provided by the Proposed Development.

Development Traffic Generation

- 5.41 The Transport Statement presents a detailed breakdown of multimodal trips associated with the Proposed Development and considers any impact of the expanded school on the local highway network. This includes an assessment of the junctions around Green Park, between Longwater Avenue, Brook Drive, Green Park Village, South Oak Way, Costco and Hurst Way.
- 5.42 The Transport Statement concludes that there is sufficient spare capacity to accommodate vehicle flows associated with the Proposed Development, without adversely affecting the operation of the junctions within Green Park.

Requiring Good Design

- 5.43 The Framework at paragraph 56 attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is indivisible from good planning. The Framework advises (paragraph 58) that development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area; establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development; respond to local context whilst not preventing or discouraging innovation; create safe and accessible environments; and be visually attractive through good architecture and landscaping.
- 5.44 At the local level, Core Strategy Policy CS7 requires that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

5.45 The main design elements of the Proposed Development comprise:

- the construction of a series of connected buildings in a curved arrangement fronting Market Square; and
- the positioning of sports pitches and play areas to the rear.

5.46 The Design and Access Statement provides a clear and strong justification for the design of the Proposed Development. In particular, the Proposed Development will:

- provide a gateway to Green Park Village, with a distinctive and contemporary form;
- add interest and diversity to the street scene;
- enhance the vibrant and community-led focus of Market Square;
- utilise a dynamic and distinctive pallet of materials, creating a positive sense of place;
- have large windows that maximise natural daylight and create light and airy teaching spaces;
- provide a range of multi-function, adaptable and usable external spaces; and
- incorporate hard and soft landscaping to enhance the appearance of the public realm.

5.47 Overall, it is considered that the design of the Proposed Development is of the highest possible quality, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS7 and the Framework.

Amenity

5.48 The outline planning permission (10/1461/OUT) for the masterplan development considered the relationship between the school, including its playing pitches and use by the wider community, and the neighbouring residential properties, to be acceptable. For the Proposed Development, this will not be materially different.

5.49 A number of conditions were previously imposed to protect nearby residential amenities, including the control of noise from the sports pitches (Condition 33); restriction on floodlighting (Condition 34); and hours of use (Condition 35 & 36). The need for conditions to secure an acceptable balance between different uses is accepted, but some discussion as to their precise terms in the context of this new application would be welcome.

Promoting Healthy Communities

5.50 The Framework recognises that the planning system has an important role to play in facilitating social

interaction and creating healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.

- 5.51 Paragraph 69 of the Framework advises that there are social benefits in good design, in promoting healthy communities. These are realised by providing opportunities for social interaction between different members of the community, a safe environment that reduces opportunity for crime and the fear of crime, and high quality public spaces in a clear and legible environment.
- 5.52 The Proposed Development, due to its highly accessible location by walking and cycling, and prominent location on Market Square, will encourage such activity with benefits of surveillance and community interaction.
- 5.53 Local planning authorities in deciding planning applications (such as this for the Proposed Development) should positively encourage the provision of shared-use space and community facilities, which will enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.
- 5.54 The Framework (paragraph 72) places great weight on the need to create, expand or alter schools to accommodate developments – which is the very purpose of the Proposed Development.
- 5.55 The Framework identifies (paragraph 73) that open spaces and opportunities for recreation make an important contribution to health and well-being.
- 5.56 It is therefore clear the Proposed Development will offer a range of very substantial benefits that carry great weight in favour of it.

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, flooding and Coastal Change

Sustainable Design and Construction

- 5.57 Paragraphs 93 and 97 of the Framework confirm that planning has a key role in the delivery of renewable or low carbon energy. In reducing CO2 emissions, the Framework identifies the importance of renewable and low carbon energy, although it does not readily distinguish between the two.
- 5.58 Policy CS1 Core Strategy (Sustainable Construction and Design) seeks for at least 50% of floorspace of major, non-residential development to meet a BREEAM 'Excellent' standard, with the rest to meet a 'Very Good' standard. Where there is a single building, the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD clarifies that a minimum BREEAM score of 62.5% is sought.

- 5.59 A BREEAM pre-assessment report accompanies the planning application, which demonstrates that a BREEAM score of 68.3% can be achieved, exceeding the requirements of Policy CS1.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.60 With regard to flood risk, the Framework (paragraph 100) is clear that inappropriate development in areas at high and medium risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development to areas at lowest risk. Flood risk is categorised into flood zone areas, with zone 1 being the area at least risk of flooding, zone 2 being at medium risk and zone 3 being at greatest risk with more than 1% annual probability of flooding.
- 5.61 As detailed in the Flood Risk Assessment, the Site has benefited from extensive hydraulic remodelling, which has raised the development platform (ground levels) of Green Park Village to be outside of areas at greater risk of flooding - to be above the modelled 1:100 year+20% climate change fluvial flood level i.e. within zone 1. The Site is wholly suitable for development.
- 5.62 A surface water drainage strategy also forms part of the planning application (as part of the Flood Risk Assessment), which sets out that drainage on the Site will be designed to accommodate rainfall intensities for a 100-year+40% climate change storm event. The discharge of surface water will not exceed that which was allowed under the masterplan development (10/01461/OUT).

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 5.63 Paragraph 109 of the Framework states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the wider benefits of ecosystems. Development should minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains where possible in order to contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity.
- 5.64 Policy CS36 (Biodiversity and Ecology) of the Core Strategy seeks for development to retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity found on the Site and incorporate them into their scheme.
- 5.65 The Ecology Statement provided on behalf of the Applicant concludes that the Site has historically contained habitats of low ecological value and currently there are no specific ecological constraints to the Proposed Development. This is unsurprising given that the Site is currently surrounded by ongoing

construction works.

- 5.66 The Ecology Statement identifies that the Proposed Development, with a focus on recreating ephemeral habitats and providing opportunities for bats, birds and invertebrates to persist within the built environment, will result in a net gain in biodiversity.

Air Quality

- 5.67 Paragraph 109 of the Framework requires that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the local environment in preventing new and existing development from being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution. At paragraph 120, it is emphasised that planning decisions should ensure that development is appropriate for its location. Any adverse effects of air pollution should be taken into account.
- 5.68 The Site is not within an Air Quality Management Area and air quality is not considered a constraint to development.

Noise

- 5.69 In relation to noise, paragraph 123 of the Framework requires that development should aim to avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.
- 5.70 Core Strategy Policy CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks for development to not result in a harmful level of noise pollution; and noise sensitive development should only be located in areas not already subject to adverse levels of noise.
- 5.71 The submitted Noise and Vibration Report includes up to date noise survey data. It demonstrates that existing road noise can be attenuated through the specification of glazing on the school.
- 5.72 Noise from any fixed plant required for the Proposed Development can also be attenuated through plant enclosures and acoustic louvres so to meet the Council's requirements – understood to be at least 10dB below the background noise level.
- 5.73 The Proposed Development will comply with Policy CS34.

Geo Environmental

- 5.74 The Framework requires that land should be suitable for its new use taking account of ground conditions including pollution from previous uses and proposals for remediation mitigation as informed by adequate site investigation.
- 5.75 Core Strategy Policy CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources) sets out that development will be permitted on land affected by contamination where it can be demonstrated that the contamination can be satisfactorily remediated so that it is suitable for its proposed end use.
- 5.76 In previously granting outline planning permission for a school development on the Site, the Council is evidentially satisfied that any ground contaminants (if not already addressed) can be suitably remediated. Any further remediation (if necessary) can be addressed through planning conditions.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 5.77 The Framework states at paragraph 128 that an applicant should describe the significance of any heritage asset affected by development. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance and significance of any asset. As a minimum, the relevant historical environmental record should be consulted and heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise. Where a site has the potential to include an asset with archaeological interest, an appropriate desk based assessment should be submitted.
- 5.78 The Proposed Development on the Site is unconstrained by existing and known built heritage. The closest statutorily listed building is a Grade II listed farm house at Reading Lake Hotel, separated from the Site by the railway, two lakes and a considerable distance of approximately 730m.
- 5.79 As for the potential of undesignated archaeological remains, an Archaeological Mitigation Report prepared by Oxford Archaeology (November 2016) confirms, following trial trenching on the Site (as Phase 2B), that no archaeological features were discovered.

S.106 / CIL

- 5.80 The Council has an adopted CIL charging schedule (January 2015). The Proposed Development attracts a nil CIL rate.
- 5.81 The approval of this planning application may necessitate some variation of the existing s.106 agreement for the wider masterplan development (10/01461/OUT). Discussion with the Council to

reach agreement of how this can best be regularised would be welcomed.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with the Core Strategy and the SDPD as the statutory development plan. It also derives further support from the Framework, which carries substantial weight. There are no other material considerations that indicate that planning permission should not be granted.
- 6.2 The Proposed Development will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits, which include:
- the provision of a new primary school to help meet the educational needs of Green Park Village and other areas of Reading;
 - the provision of new sports, recreational and community facilities, that will unpin the sustainable credentials of Green Park Village, with benefits to health, wellbeing and community cohesion;
 - a building of high quality architectural design that will further enhance the vitality of Market Square and the distinctive sense of place of Green Park Village.
- 6.3 The Proposed Development is sustainable development: it must benefit from the presumption in paragraph 14 of the Framework, such that planning permission should be granted by the Council without delay.

Appendix A: Schedule of Drawings

Nexus Planning
Thames Valley

3 Weybridge Business Park
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