



# Northumberland

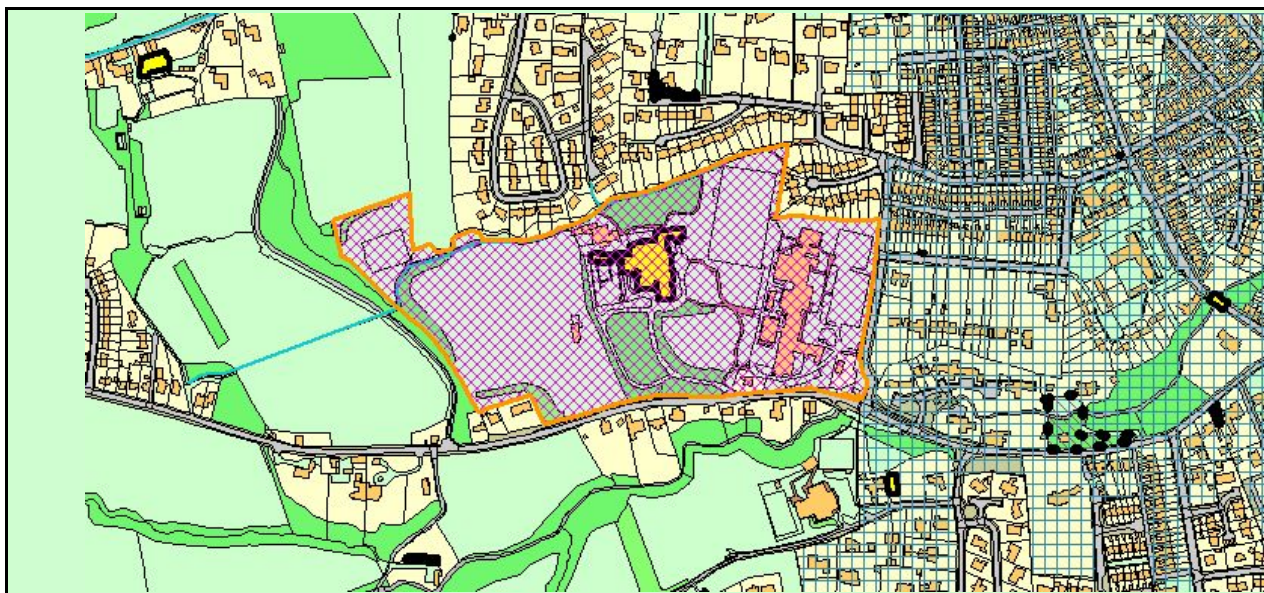
## County Council

### Strategic Planning Committee

#### 7 January 2020

<b>Application No:</b>	19/03998/CCD		
<b>Proposal:</b>	Redevelopment of Queen Elizabeth High School including the refurbishment of Grade II listed hydrobuilding and Westfield house for ongoing school use. New build school buildings of 2 and 3 storeys. Demolition of existing school buildings and associated new access points, car parking, bus parking, landscaping, grass playing fields, hard courts, and the artificial sport pitches including sports lighting.		
<b>Site Address</b>	Queen Elizabeth High School, Whetstone Bridge Road, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 3JD		
<b>Applicant:</b>	Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF	<b>Agent:</b>	Miss Anne Hargreaves, Avison Young, 1st Floor, City Point, 29 King Street, Leeds, LS1 2HL
<b>Ward</b>	Hexham West	<b>Parish</b>	Hexham
<b>Valid Date:</b>	10 October 2019	<b>Expiry Date:</b>	9 January 2020
<b>Case Officer Details:</b>	Name: Mr Neil Armstrong Job Title: Senior Planning Officer Tel No: 01670 622697 Email: neil.armstrong@northumberland.gov.uk		

**Recommendation:** That Members are minded to GRANT permission subject to referral to the Secretary of State under CLG Circular 02/2009 - The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009



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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This application is brought to the Planning Committee given the strategic nature of the proposals and as Northumberland County Council is applicant.

## **2. Description of the Proposals**

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for the redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth High School (QEHS) including the refurbishment of the Grade II listed Hydropathic building (Hydro) and Westfield House for ongoing school use and the construction of new build school buildings of two and three-storeys. The overall development proposes new accommodation for the QEHS as well as the relocation of the Hexham Middle School (HMS) to the same site resulting in colocation of both schools as part of the Hadrian Learning Trust (HLT).
- 2.2 HMS is currently located at Wanless Lane around 1.2km to the east of the QEHS site. The redeveloped site will support the two distinct schools with separate facilities for each age group. The proposals as a whole also include the demolition of existing school buildings and associated new access points, car parking, bus parking, landscaping, grass playing fields, hard courts, and artificial sport pitches including sports lighting and perimeter fencing with other associated works.
- 2.3 The proposed development would cover an area of 10.1 hectares that comprises of the existing buildings, grounds and playing fields of the QEHS. This includes the modern buildings, hardstanding and sports pitch to the eastern part; the Grade II listed Hydro building and grounds to the centre; and the playing fields to the west.
- 2.4 The QEHS site is outside of but lies immediately adjacent to the Hexham Conservation Area, the boundary of which is formed by Whetstone Bridge Road. The site is adjoined to the north by a public right of way with residential properties beyond on Alexandra Crescent, Beech Avenue and Leazes Park; to the east by Whetstone Bridge Road with adjacent residential properties; to the south by Allendale Road (B6305) and residential properties with St Josephs RC Middle School further south; and to the west by a private access road with open land beyond. The land to the west of the Hydropathic buildings and walled garden, including the existing school playing fields, falls within the Green Belt.
- 2.5 The redevelopment of the site proposes the demolition of the existing more modern school buildings to the eastern part of the site with the creation of new high and middle school provision with buildings attached and adjacent to the listed Hydro building following demolition in this part of the site as well. The scheme also includes the alteration and refurbishment of the existing Hydro buildings. The works of demolition, extension and alteration that directly affect the Grade II listed Hydro building and its curtilage buildings/structures are subject to a separate application seeking listed building consent submitted under 19/03999/LBC.

- 2.6 The supporting Planning Statement submitted with the application states that the existing gross internal floor area of the development on the site at present is 13,580m<sup>2</sup> and the proposed floor area of the overall development would increase to 17,522m<sup>2</sup> (an increase of 3,942m<sup>2</sup>). The statement sets out that the retained Hydro accommodation provides 3,779m<sup>2</sup> gross internal floor area, with the new build elements providing an additional 13,486m<sup>2</sup>, giving a completed gross internal floor area of 17,265m<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.7 The planned number of pupils attending each school will remain unchanged based on the Published Admission Number (PAN) for each school entering into Years 5 & 9 respectively: resulting in 1,308 pupils at QEHS (306 in each of Years 9 -11, and 390 in Sixth Form) and 600 pupils (150 in each of Years 5 – 8) at HMS. Staff numbers at the schools are expected to total approximately 225 (QEHS – 174 / HMS – 51).
- 2.8 On-site parking is proposed as 235 standard car parking spaces for staff, visitor and sixth form alongside 15 accessible parking spaces. In addition, the onsite bus drop off area can accommodate 19 full size coaches and five mini buses. 68 cycle stands are proposed for pupil and staff use, plus visitors.
- 2.9 The Planning Statement sets out that the redevelopment of the QEHS site will take place in two broad phases:
- Phase 1 – The refurbishment of the Hydro Building and Westfield House, the erection of new buildings to the rear, and associated required demolitions; and the completion of car parking and external hard courts and artificial sports pitches;
  - Phase 2 – The demolition of the redundant Lower School building and construction of the new bus parking area and grass pitch.
- The statement highlights that during Phase 1, it is likely that some level of temporary teaching accommodation provision will be required within the site boundary. At this stage it is expected that this will not exceed 20 classrooms within standard temporary classroom blocks of up to two storeys. These blocks would be provided in the existing clearing to the south of the Hydro building that is due to accommodate two hard courts as part of the final scheme.
- 2.10 The context and background to the proposals is set out within the Planning Statement, which states that in February 2019, NCC published its 'Outline Business Case (OBC) for the replacement school buildings for Hadrian Learning Trust schools'. This set out the detailed aspects of the case for the co-location of the two schools, and why the redevelopment of the QEHS site is considered by it to be the most favourable option for this. This case, as set out within the Planning Statement, is summarised below with extracts copied from the statement:

#### *County-wide education strategy*

*Northumberland's countywide strategy for education is articulated within the Service Director's Annual Report 2018. Elected members recognise how vital it is for the future prosperity of Northumberland that children and young*

*people achieve the highest levels possible in schools, academies and colleges and that all educational establishments are judged to be good or better by Ofsted.*

*It is accepted that while strong leadership and governance in schools together with good teaching are key to improving outcomes for pupils, studies have shown that poor quality surroundings can impact negatively on effective teaching and learning, both for staff and pupils. In order to address this issue, NCC is proposing to continue to invest significant capital resources in education*

#### *West of Northumberland & HLT education strategy*

*In summer 2017, HLT undertook consultation to gather views on a proposal to amalgamate QEHS and HMS in order to create a single secondary school. This proposal would result in the expansion of the age range of QEHS from a 13-18 years high school to an 11-18 years secondary school, and the closure of HMS.*

*One of the drivers for the consultation was HLT's desire to provide a financially and educationally secure future for its schools. They were also faced with the need for significant capital investment in the school estate, and although investment had been earmarked for part of the QEHS site (see below), it did not address the remaining buildings.*

*HLT consultation formed part of the rationale for consultation by NCC on proposals for schools in the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships between February and April 2018. Part of NCC's consultation also included a proposal to financially support the rebuilding or refurbishment of the HLT school buildings as these were no longer providing a suitable environment for the education of children and young people in the 21st century.*

*HLT carried out further consultation on potential age range change between 2nd and 29th March 2018 in parallel with NCC's consultation.*

*Following the consultations, NCC concluded that there should be no change to the organisation of the maintained first and middle schools in the Hexham Partnership and HLT decided not to pursue the amalgamation of QEHS and HMS in the light of feedback received.*

*As a result of the consultation there was, however, overwhelming support for the schools to have significant capital investment.*

*Furthermore, HLT took the view that having QEHS and HMS co-located would bring educational, operational and financial benefits. For example, teachers can work more closely together, sharing best practice; and pupils at both schools can enjoy better facilities than they would have access to on separate sites. Running a single site is more efficient and cost effective, and resources can therefore be focused on supporting the delivery of the curriculum and the broader educational experience.*

*HLT therefore concluded that the vision of co-locating both schools on one site was highly desirable, whilst maintaining each school's own age range and distinctiveness.*

*In tandem, NCC's Cabinet instructed officers to work with HLT to develop an OBC in order to inform feasibility, establish a preferred site and develop a robust project budget to provide new buildings for HLT in Hexham.*

#### *Previous funding bid*

*In 2014, NCC was successful with its application for QEHS to form part of the national Priority School Building Programme (PSPB2) - a programme of investment in school buildings through replacement or refurbishment. Whilst the original application was for a whole school replacement, the outcome was that the Department for Education (DfE) deemed that investment should only be made in the refurbishment of the Grade II listed Hydro building.*

*Since this funding was awarded, as the proposals are now to replace all the school buildings for both QEHS and HMS, NCC, with support from HLT, has been working with representatives from the DfE to agree the project delivery arrangements, along with the level of contribution that the DfE would make to the wider scheme. This contribution is time limited; needing to be fully expended by September 2021.*

#### *Project objectives*

*In response to the strategic considerations above, in developing its OBC, NCC set the following objectives:*

- provide good quality, modern teaching and learning environments for the pupils attending HMS and QEHS, thereby removing existing physical barriers that distract from the teaching and learning experience;*
- provide modern sporting facilities on-site to enhance the curriculum offer and to provide improved sporting and community facilities for the wider community in and around Hexham; and*
- support HLT in providing an educationally and financially secure future for its schools through their colocation.*

#### *Site options*

*As part of the OBC process, NCC undertook a site options appraisal. Sites with the potential to accommodate QEHS and HMS onto a single site were considered.*

*Sites considered as part of the options appraisal process included the QEHS and HMS sites, land adjoining QEHS, Highwood and The Hermitage. 6 resulting options were considered as detailed in Figure 3.1 below. It should be noted that the HMS site was not considered for co-location as it is significantly below the required size to accommodate the two schools.*

*The sites were then appraised in a systematic manner by application of nine criteria to produce a score for each in order to grade any suitable options. The*



*appraisal criteria included: ownership; site capacity; planning; access & transport; timescale; acquisition cost; title investigation; location; and support from schools. The resultant scoring process is shown on the proformas for each option included within Appendix I, and the overall scores included in Figure 3.1 below.*

*It should be noted that Options 3 and 4 would involve the schools development being entirely located within the Green Belt, and Option 2 would also bring in additional land currently wholly sat within the Green Belt.*

*Furthermore, the potential land acquisition costs and capital receipts from site disposals were factored into the appraisal process, as were the project construction costs. Figure 3.1 below includes the identified net capital receipt (acquisition vs disposal costs), as well as the overall scheme construction cost of each option.*

Option	Proposal	Score	Net receipt (land acquisition / disposal)	Design & construction costs
1	Development of a new co-located High and Middle School on the Queen Elizabeth High School site. Disposal of the Hexham Middle School site.	73	£3,700,000	£36,090,900
2	Development of a new co-located High and Middle School on the Queen Elizabeth High School site, incorporating additional land to the west. Disposal of the Hexham Middle School site and possibly parts of the Queen Elizabeth High School site.	48	£2,300,000	£38,108,250
3	Development of a co-located High and Middle School on the Hermitage site. Disposal of the Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School sites.	37	£1,000,000	£32,618,000
4	Development of a co-located High and Middle School on the Highwood site. Disposal of the Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School sites.	42	£1,600,000	£33,615,000
5	Development of a part new/part refurbished school building on each of the Middle and High School sites to replace the existing provision.	67	£0	£39,082,875
6	Schools remain in current locations with no work undertaken and no disposals. Work is undertaken to Hydro as funding already allocated.	64	£0	£11,510,390

*The result of the appraisal was to identify Option 1 as the preferred option, with the highest score, being the only option to generate a capital receipt, and the most viable and deliverable being on land currently in NCC ownership.*

- 2.11 The Planning Statement goes on to outline that HLT's education brief has informed the overall design proposal. This includes that co-locating the HMS and QEHS creates unique opportunities to enhance the quality of educational experience, while realising operational efficiencies. HLT has stated that any design solution must be of high quality, efficiently delivering specialist facilities, while providing each child with a "home of their own". The proposals

have been designed to maintain the distinctiveness of each school although there is also an intention to create a clear sense of progression through the different phases of pupil's educational journey. The HLT also wants to maintain the close, collegiate teamwork of staff across curriculum, pastoral, departmental and support functions.

- 2.12 The current QEHS and HMS sites are both used by the wider community. The QEHS site (main hall, sports hall, theatre, Hydro hall, some classrooms) are used in the evenings for a range of community classes and clubs. The Winter Gardens is also let as a wedding venue at weekends. Use of the existing artificial pitch also takes place outside of school hours for hockey and occasional football use. In the future it is expected that the internal school spaces will continue to be used by the community and in particular use of the two new artificial pitches is expected to take place in the evenings and at weekends. The main hall and gym at the HMS site are used in the evenings, and this demand is expected to transfer to the QEHS site with the relocation of the school. The following table from the Planning Statement sets out the anticipated hours of operation of the site:

Day of the week	Internal spaces	External pitches	Car park
Monday – Friday	06:00 to 22:30	08:00 to 22:00	06:00 to 22:30
Saturday	08:00 to 23:00 (Weddings to end at 23:00)	09:00 to 18:00	08:00 to 23:30 (Weddings to be off-site by 23:30)
Sunday / Bank Holiday	08:00 to 20:00 (Wedding clean up on Sunday mornings)	09:00 to 18:00	08:00 to 20:00

- 2.13 As set out within the Planning Statement, the future of the existing HMS site is not part of this application. HLT will need to apply to the Secretary of State for Education for permission to surrender their lease, and then the future of the site will be the subject of further detailed consideration by the Council in due course, and any alternative proposals or use of the site may be subject to the planning process and the need for planning permission.

### 3. Planning History

**Reference Number:** 19/03999/LBC

**Description:** Listed Building Consent for redevelopment of Queen Elizabeth High School including the refurbishment of Grade II listed hydrobuilding and Westfield house for ongoing school use. New build school buildings of 2 and 3 storeys. Demolition of existing school buildings and associated new access points, car parking, bus parking, landscaping, grass playing fields, hard courts, and the artificial sport pitches including sports lighting.

**Status:** Pending

**Reference Number:** T/20041460

**Description:** Tree Notice: Felling of six trees and removal of dead wood to seven trees

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/76/E/218

**Description:** Renewal of temporary approval for a tennis pavilion/shelter, as amended by letter received by Northumberland County Council on 13th May, 1976.

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/10/00105/CCD

**Description:** Demolition of existing modular classroom and construction of a new modular classroom

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** T/20050755

**Description:** Tree Notice: Crown raise to produce clear stem of 5m, remove dead wood, and sever Ivy from one Ash

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/20041409

**Description:** County Council - 04/00222/LBC - Listed Building Consent for an extension to provide music practice room and recording studio

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/75/E/633

**Description:** Conversion of a college of education to an annex for adjacent high school.

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** T/20040872

**Description:** County Council: 04/00124/CCD - Provision of mobile classroom building for use as a social inclusion unit

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** C/03/00265/CCD

**Description:** Construction of extension

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** T/84/E/683

**Description:** Detailed application for construction of extension to outbuildings, as amended by plan and memo dated 26th September 1984.

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/20031500

**Description:** County Council 03/00272/LBC - Listed building consent - Demolition of building and construction of extension

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** C/99/CC/68

**Description:** Construction of extension to provide additional teaching accommodation

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/94/CC/069

**Description:** Details of materials submitted pursuant to condition no. 4 of planning permission 94/CC/3 in respect of lower school extension

**Status:** Permitted



**Reference Number:** C/94/CC/003

**Description:** Extension to lower school building

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/76/E/315

**Description:** Kitchen extensions and minor internal alterations

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/78/E/013

**Description:** Enclosure of covered play area

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/79/E/0309

**Description:** Minor alterations to existing toilets at the Hydro Annexe

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/80/E/872

**Description:** Provision of fire stairs

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/87/E/565

**Description:** Renewal of planning permission 82/E/323 for siting of timber tennis pavilion

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/89/E/0220 LBC

**Description:** Listed Building Consent for refurbishment and re-roofing of the Wintergarden building

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/01/00028/CCD

**Description:** Erection of 1.8 metre high fence

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/01/00141/CCD

**Description:** Construction of external lift shaft

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/03/00227/CCD

**Description:** Construction of extension

**Status:** Withdrawn

**Reference Number:** C/03/00272/LBC

**Description:** Listed Building Consent for demolition of building and construction of extension

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/04/00124/CCD

**Description:** Provision of mobile classroom building for use as a social inclusion unit

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/04/00143/CCD

**Description:** Construction of extension for drama performance space

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/04/00221/CCD

**Description:** Construction of extension

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/04/00222/LBC

**Description:** Listed Building Consent for an extension to provide music practice room and recording studio

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** C/09/00081/CCD

**Description:** Variation of condition 1 of planning permission 04/00124/CCD to retain the mobile classroom until July 2014

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** T/20090084

**Description:** Tree Notice - Crown reduce by 30% 2 prunus and 1 sycamore tree

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/80/E/872

**Description:** Detailed application for provision of Fire Stairs at Queen Elizabeth High School, as amended by memorandum received on 26 November 1980.

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** T/79/E/309

**Description:** Detailed application for minor alterations to existing toilets.

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/20041006

**Description:** County Council: 04/00143/CCD - Construction for drama performance space

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/20031486

**Description:** County Council 03/00265/CCD - Construction of extension

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/20031302

**Description:** County Council 03/00227/CCD - Construction of extension

**Status:** Object

**Reference Number:** T/20031092

**Description:** Tree Notice - Pruning of one walnut tree

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/20020960

**Description:** Tree Notice - Felling of one sycamore tree

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/990864

**Description:** 99CC68 - Construction of extension to provide additional teaching accommodation

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/940046

**Description:** (94/CC/3) Extension to north end of Lower School: six classrooms for new geography block

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** T/20010572

**Description:** 01/00141/CCD - Construction of external lift shaft at

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/20010111

**Description:** 01/00028/CCD: Erection of 1.8m high fence at

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/20041412

**Description:** County Council Ref 04/00221/CCD - Construction of extension

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/82/E/323

**Description:** Temporary permission for tennis pavilion/shelter.

**Status:** Permitted

**Reference Number:** T/20010606

**Description:** Tree Notice - Tree management plan (as amended on 20/8/01) at

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/20010532

**Description:** Tree Notice: Removal of one Beech tree at

**Status:** No objection

**Reference Number:** T/20000325

**Description:** Tree Notice : Removal of 1 Horse Chestnut, 1 Lime and 1 Sycamore at

**Status:** Permitted

#### **4. Consultee Responses**

Hexham Town Council	<p><u>October 2019</u></p> <p>The redevelopment and additional County Council funding are welcomed. However, both the Town and County Council have declared a climate emergency so the school should be built to a standard similar to or better than Passivhaus. Also, traffic plans will need careful attention; there must be due consideration to noise and light pollution from use of the site for other than education purposes; and the Council hopes that there will be improved landscaping and garden facilities.</p> <p><u>December 2019</u></p>
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	<p>Welcomes the revised traffic plans but would like them to be reviewed within two years and traffic patterns should be monitored very carefully so earlier changes can be made if necessary. The Council also considers there is a need for a plan to encourage walking and cycling to school and would like to see more cycle parking spaces.</p>
Building Conservation	<p>The proposed development is considered to be a well designed and well considered scheme. Whilst there will be some loss of historic fabric, this is considered to be fabric which is of lesser significance. Nonetheless it is considered that this fabric should be recorded in line with detailed specifications. This loss has to be balanced against the benefits of achieving a sustainable new school which will enhance and safeguard the future of the most significant elements of these important listed buildings. Building Conservation support and welcome the restoration of the listed buildings, which has been carefully approached and detailed and which it is considered will considerably enhance the most prominent elevations and the internal architectural qualities of the listed buildings.</p>
Highways	<p>The submitted clarifications, revised documents and updated layouts are acceptable in highways terms and demonstrate that the development will not result in impact that has demonstrable harm to the highway network or cause a severe impact that would warrant a reason for refusal under the NPPF. As such there are no objections to the development on highway grounds subject to the imposition of conditions.</p>
County Archaeologist	<p>Even in their current form with later alteration and re-use, the form and surviving fabric of the historic structures and buildings proposed for demolition still have evidential, illustrative and historic interest in association with the listed buildings. However, given the nature and survival of the historic structures, agree with the Heritage Statement that the majority of the historic structures are of moderate significance.</p> <p>The demolition of historic structures will need to be balanced with the impact on the setting of the listed buildings, the public benefits of the scheme and the viability of reusing these structures in line with paragraphs 192-197 of the NPPF. If the loss of these buildings and structures is deemed to be appropriate in planning terms, it is important that they are recorded prior to demolition in order to preserve the site “by record” in line with paragraph 199 of the NPPF.</p>
Historic England	<p>No comments or objection – advise that the views of the Council’s specialist conservation and archaeological advisers are sought.</p>

Natural England	The proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes. No objection – refers to standing advice on protected species and ancient woodland.
County Ecologist	Provides advice in respect of the ecological impacts of the development upon habitats and species, and the need to consider the three tests and assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Recommends conditions in respect of avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures.
Countryside/ Rights Of Way	No objection to the application on the condition that Public Footpath No.7 is protected throughout.
West Tree And Woodland Officer	No response received.
Public Protection	No objection subject to conditions.
Sport England	No objection subject to conditions.
Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)	No objection subject to conditions.
Northumbrian Water Ltd	No objection subject to condition
Fire & Rescue Service	No objection in principle.
Architectural Liaison Officer - Police	No objections – provides advice on Secured by Design guidance.
Northumbria Ambulance Service	No response received.
Forestry Commission	No response received.
Environment Agency	No response received.
Waste Management - West	No response received.

## 5. Public Responses

### Neighbour Notification

Number of Neighbours Notified	221
Number of Objections	80

Number of Support	2
Number of General Comments	6

## Notices

Site notices – Affecting conservation area and listed building: 10 October 2019

Press notice - Hexham Courant: 17 October 2019

## Summary of Responses:

Following consultation and publicity on the application, including re-consultation on additional and amended information, representations have been received from 88 contributors at the time of preparing this report.

79 objections have been received during the course of the application and at the time of preparing this report, including from the Hydro Neighbourhood Group (representing residents from c.20 streets in the area overall and database of 118 personal details) and Hexham Civic Society. Comments received in objection and raising concerns to the application raise the following matters:

- decision to combine two schools on the existing site will result in harm and could be a step towards creation of a two-tier system;
- concerns over promotion of the scheme as the preferred option and not taking into account concerns raised in public consultation with lack of public engagement;
- loss of HMS site against long-term interests of Hexham and concerns over future development of this;
- no expansion potential of redeveloped site to meet further demand;
- co-location on the site is unsustainable and would result in harmful impacts upon the site and wider environment;
- scale of development in the Green Belt - overall harm is not outweighed by benefits;
- overdevelopment of the site placing two schools in the same location and given the constraints of the site;
- car parking provision will be inadequate to cope with increased number of vehicles;
- on-street parking and problems with residents being able to access and egress properties;
- relocation of access along Whetstone Bridge Road and impacts upon highway safety and residential amenity;
- general increase in traffic movements with associated congestion, pollution and highway safety issues with disruption to residents and impacts upon safety of pedestrians and cyclists;
- increase in pedestrian movements and inadequate existing footpaths;
- requirement for suitable crossing points, increase 20mph limit on surrounding roads;
- inadequate existing junction arrangements;
- lack of measures to encourage sustainable transport options;
- impacts during construction period – impacts on amenity, potential conflicts with school traffic and routes to and from the site as well as cumulative impact with other developments;
- drainage and flood risk;



- concerns over content and conclusions of the submitted Transport Assessment and Travel Plan;
- location of the proposed coach parking and arrangements for bus transport to and from the site;
- concerns over pedestrian access from Leazes Park;
- impacts upon residential amenity – increased disturbance through intensification of use, loss of privacy, loss of light, visual intrusion, impacts from increased use of sports pitches, noise and light pollution (car headlights and sports pitch lighting), security concerns;
- contravention of Human Rights Act (1998) in respect of property and entitlement to peaceful enjoyment;
- need for restrictions on the use of the new sports pitches to reduce impacts on residential amenity;
- additional facilities would be operated for commercial benefit rather than community benefit;
- insufficient information to assess ecological impacts of the development;
- significant tree loss across the site with loss of habitat and impacts on trees to be retained;
- impacts on ecology and habitats and insufficient mitigation;
- harmful impacts upon the listed Hydro building and its setting, including loss of buildings and the walled garden;
- inadequate public consultation with local community and concerns that comments have not been taken into account following earlier consultation;
- impacts on air quality from development, traffic and coach parking;
- sustainability - NCC has declared a climate emergency and little evidence of incorporating renewable energy sources;
- loss of walled garden and impacts on health and well-being of students;
- increased use of Hydro buildings for private functions – additional disturbance and impacts on residential amenity;
- scale, design and visual impact of the proposed development;
- contrary to policies of the adopted development plan and emerging Northumberland Local Plan and Hexham Neighbourhood Plan;
- increased litter;
- public health concerns due to new all weather pitches;
- need for management plan and on-site and contactable management to deal with increased use of school and sports facilities out of hours;
- development is not in keeping with the context of the local area;
- impacts upon the Hexham Conservation Area;
- lack of information on landscaping proposals;
- disruptive impact upon existing students during construction period;
- proposal does not achieve sustainable development in respect of economic, social and environmental impacts – potential impacts on Hexham's east end;
- concerns over accelerated timetable for the project and planning process and submission of further plans/documents through the process with little time for further consideration;
- additional information submitted does not seek to address comments/objections submitted with application;
- justification put forward for the increase in levels of the proposed artificial sports pitches and resultant greater impact on residential amenity;
- visual impact of development during construction period;
- impacts on residential amenity due to increased traffic and buses;
- impact on Conservation Area due to coaches parked on site through the day;

General comments and comments received in support raise the following matters:

- long overdue modern education facilities to replace the ageing QEHS and HMS buildings;
- site is already in education use and proposals will lead to higher standards of education, sport and well-being;
- design is well thought out and does not cause harm to the listed Hydro building;
- revised parking arrangements provide an opportunity to re-direct traffic flows directly onto the B6305 and to restrict school traffic from using the residential roads in the area;
- proposal will improve safety of HMS pupils compared to current situation;
- proposal is the best option of those considered;
- there is a need for sustainability in terms of encouraging sustainable transport options and sustainable design/construction;

The above is a summary of the comments. The full written text is available on our website at:

<http://publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk/online-applications//applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=PYFOQJQS0K500>

## **6. Planning Policy**

### **6.1 Development Plan Policy**

Tynedale District Local Plan (2000)

GD2 Design criteria for new development

GD3 Provision of suitable access for people with impaired mobility

GD4 Range of transport provision

GD7 Car parking standards

NE7 New buildings in the Green Belt

NE27 Protected Species

NE28 Rivers, smaller watercourses and their corridors

NE33 Tree protection

NE34 Tree felling

NE37 Landscaping in developments

BE18 Development affecting the character and setting of a Conservation Area

BE19 Demolition of listed buildings

BE20 Demolition of structures in the curtilage of a listed building

BE21 Alteration and extension to listed buildings

BE22 Setting of listed buildings

BE23 Change of use of listed buildings

BE27 Archaeology

BE28 Archaeological assessment

BE29 Development and preservation

LR3 Protection of open space facilities

LR8 Sites for outdoor sport and recreation

LR19 Safeguard existing and promotion of new public rights of way

TP26 Protection and enhancement of Rights of Way network

TP27 Development affecting Public Rights of Way

CS19 Location of development either causing or adjacent to pollution sources  
CS21 Location of noise sensitive uses  
CS22 Location of noise generating uses  
CS23 Development on contaminated land  
CS24 Development adjacent to or in the vicinity of contaminated land  
CS27 Sewerage

#### Tynedale Core Strategy (2007)

GD1 Location of development  
GD2 Prioritising sites for development  
GD3 Green Belt  
GD4 Transport and accessibility  
GD5 Flood risk  
NE1 Natural environment  
BE1 Built environment  
CS1 Principles for community services and facilities  
EN1 Principles for energy  
EN3 Energy conservation and production

### 6.2 National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)  
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (2018, as updated)

National Design Guide (2019)

### 6.3 Emerging Planning Policy

Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) and proposed minor modifications, submitted on 29 May 2019

STP 1 Spatial strategy  
STP 2 Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
STP 3 Principles of sustainable development  
STP 4 Climate change mitigation and adaptation  
STP 5 Health and wellbeing  
STP 7 Strategic approach to the Green Belt  
STP 8 Development in the Green Belt  
QOP 1 Design principles  
QOP 2 Good design and amenity  
QOP 3 Public realm design principles  
QOP 4 Landscaping and trees  
QOP 5 Sustainable design and construction  
QOP 6 Delivering well-designed places  
TRA 1 Promoting sustainable connections  
TRA 2 The effects of development on the road network  
TRA 4 Parking provision in new development  
TRA 5 Rail transport and safeguarding facilities  
ENV 1 Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment  
ENV 2 Biodiversity and geodiversity

ENV 3 Landscape  
ENV 4 Tranquillity, dark skies and a sense of rurality  
ENV 7 Historic environment and heritage assets  
ENV 9 Conservation Areas  
WAT 2 Water supply and sewerage  
WAT 3 Flooding  
WAT 4 Sustainable drainage systems  
POL 1 Unstable and contaminated land  
POL 2 Pollution and air, soil and water quality  
INF 1 Delivering development related infrastructure  
INF 2 Community services and facilities  
INF 5 Open space and facilities for sport and recreation  
INF 6 Planning obligations

## Hexham Neighbourhood Plan - Submission Draft March 2019

HNP1 Sustainable development in the Neighbourhood Area  
HNP2 High quality sustainable design in the Neighbourhood Area  
HNP3 Design in the Hexham Conservation Area  
HNP4 Non designated heritage assets  
HNP7 Designated heritage assets  
HNP15 Wildlife corridors  
HNP17 Hedgerows, trees and verges in Hexham  
HNP18 Dark skies  
HNP19 Community facilities

### 6.4 Other Documents/Strategies

Hexham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (March 2009)  
The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England – December 2017)  
Planning for Sport Guidance (Sport England – June 2019)  
Policy Statement - Planning for Schools Development (CLG – August 2011)  
Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2018-2021

## **7. Appraisal**

- 7.1 In assessing the acceptability of any proposal regard must be given to the policies contained within the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration and states that the starting point for determining applications remains with the development plan, which in this case contains policies from the Tynedale Local Plan (TLP) and Tynedale Core Strategy (TCS) as identified above.
- 7.2 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that weight can be given to policies contained in emerging plans dependent upon the stage of preparation of the plan; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to policies within the plan; and the degree of consistency with the NPPF. The Council submitted the Northumberland Local Plan (NLP), in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 22(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, to the Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local

Government on 29 May 2019 for examination. The Plan is currently in the process of examination.

- 7.3 In addition, Hexham Parish is a designated Neighbourhood Area. A Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) has been prepared and consultation has been undertaken on that Plan in accordance with statutory requirements and has now been submitted to the Council. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan is therefore a material consideration in the determination of this planning application, although it may only be afforded some weight at this stage.
- 7.4 Having regard to the assessment of the site, its constraints and the application proposals, as well as the responses received during the consultation period, the main issues for consideration as part of this application are considered to include:
- principle of development
    - location
    - Green Belt
  - design, landscape and visual impact and heritage assets
  - sustainability
  - residential amenity
  - transport, accessibility and highway safety
  - ecology
  - flood risk and drainage
  - ground conditions
  - sports provision

#### Principle of Development

##### *Location*

- 7.5 The site is within Hexham, which is identified in Policy GD1 of the TCS as one of the main towns that will be the main focus for development and also where any large scale individual developments would be located. This is carried forward into the emerging NLP through Policy STP 1 where Hexham is again identified as a Main Town, which will also be the main focus for employment, housing, retail and services.
- 7.6 There is no allocation within the existing TLP or TCS documents for the site currently occupied by the main school buildings or the Hydro building, although the land to the west of the existing buildings occupied by the playing fields and pavilion falls within the Green Belt. The land further to the west of the existing playing fields are allocated within TLP (Policy LR8.1) for specified recreational use - playing fields, although it is noted that no part of the application site would fall within this area.
- 7.7 The part of the site occupied by the existing buildings does not feature any allocation within the emerging NLP or the HNP. However, the land to the west of this area, including the playing fields and land beyond, remains within the Green Belt. The policy context for and impact on the Green Belt will be discussed later in this report.

- 7.8 Policy GD2 of the TCS prioritises previously developed land and buildings within the built up area of settlements, followed by other suitable sites within the built up area of settlements and then those adjoining the built up area of settlements. The policy goes on to emphasise access as the other main consideration when applying this sequential approach. The site would best be characterised as previously-developed land on the edge but mostly within the built-up area. On the basis of the need for a site of this size based on co-location of the two schools then were a sequential test to be required or carried out in terms of Policy GD2, it is unlikely (in the context of Hexham) that a more suitable site could be identified.
- 7.9 Policy GD4 of the TCS seeks to maximise conflict-free, sustainable access, while minimising the overall need for journeys, especially by private motorised modes. It is noted that the HMS, which is proposed to be vacated if this application is successful, is much closer to the town centre than the application site, and bearing in mind that many children attending the schools will come by public transport from outside the town a more central site would be more preferable when looked at against this policy. However it is acknowledged that the existing HMS site would not be able to accommodate both schools and it appears unlikely that there are any other suitably sized sites closer to the middle of town.
- 7.10 At the pre-application stage, advice was given that any planning statement submitted with the application should look to set out the advantages to be gained from locating both schools on a single site and in order to justify the more peripheral of the two sites being utilised for the combined facility. The Planning Statement has set this out in terms of the context for the proposed development as detailed at paragraph 2.9 of this report.
- 7.11 Further advice was given that the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will also need to make clear commitments as to how pupils will reach the school by the most sustainable means, given its more peripheral location - especially since more pupils than before will be accessing the site. This will be considered in more detail within the Highways section of the report in respect of matters of transport and accessibility.
- 7.12 Policy CS1 of the TCS seeks to retain essential community services and facilities, especially where there are no accessible alternatives, while addressing deficiencies and facilitating improvements in their level of provision, quality and accessibility. Having regard to the information provided with the application and justification provided within the supporting Planning Statement it is considered that this policy would be satisfied ensuring that existing middle and high school provision is maintained within the town and also providing enhanced facilities for education and wider community use.
- 7.13 Along with other aspects, paragraph 92 of the NPPF sets out 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;*

- 7.14 Paragraph 94 of the NPPF states that *“it is important 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. They should:*
- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and*
  - b) work with schools promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted”.*
- 7.15 Paragraph 96 of the NPPF also states that *“access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities”*. The proposed enhancement of sporting facilities on the site would be in accordance with this objective.
- 7.16 In terms of emerging plans, Policy INF 2 of the NLP states that *“improvements in the quantity, quality, accessibility and range of community services and facilities, and the provision of new services and facilities where these will meet an identified need will be supported, subject to conformity with policies elsewhere in the Local Plan, and any made neighbourhood plans, which seek to ensure any significant adverse effects on the environment, habitats, heritage assets and local amenity can be avoided through good design and siting of development or that those effects can be suitably compensated for or mitigated”*.
- 7.17 With regard to new and shared facilities for community use, Policy INF 2 also goes on to state *“where opportunities arise through new built development and changes of use, the shared use of facilities, including community use of educational facilities where appropriate, will be supported and secured through planning conditions or planning obligations as appropriate”*. This would reflect and be in accordance with the NPPF in respect of the provision of and enhancement of community facilities.
- 7.18 Policy HNP1 of the HNP relates to achieving sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. This sets out that development will be supported within the Hexham Green Belt inset area that provides, amongst other criteria, proposals that provide new community facilities in central and accessible locations; proposals that provide new and/or retain, improve and expand existing community facilities including indoor and outdoor sports and recreational facilities; and provision for education, including the relocation and/or re-building of school buildings. The proposal would include development within the inset area as well as the Green Belt itself. The policy goes on to state that within the Green Belt development will be determined in accordance with national planning policy on development in the Green Belt.
- 7.19 Having regard to the existing development plan, emerging policy context and the NPPF, it is considered that the redevelopment of the existing site for

middle and high school provision would be acceptable in principle in terms of location and sustainability. Importantly, the proposed development would significantly contribute to the overall provision of a sufficient choice of school places being made available to meet the needs of existing and new communities and would also provide new and improved sporting facilities for the health and well-being of local residents. The principle of the provision of enhanced and improved education and sporting facilities on the site, including opportunities for facilities that can be used by the wider community would be in accordance with the NPPF.

- 7.20 Notwithstanding the above, it is clear that development of the site needs to be carefully considered in respect of its suitability and ability to achieve a sustainable form of development overall relating to other matters such as development within the Green Belt, other environmental impacts, effects on residents and transport. These will be considered in more detail separately within the report and consideration given to overall conclusions and the planning balance.

### *Green Belt*

- 7.21 As referred to earlier the western part of the site is located within the Green Belt, and the plans show that there would be a relatively large amount of new development that would extend into this area in order to accommodate the new school buildings to the rear of the Hydro building and the sports block. Information provided by the applicant's agent states that the gross internal floor area of new buildings within the Green Belt would be 4,168m<sup>2</sup> relative to an overall figure for the proposed development of 17,265m<sup>2</sup>.
- 7.22 Furthermore, new all-weather pitches would be constructed on the site of the existing playing fields within the Green Belt land, which would be floodlit with 15 metre high lighting columns and incorporate perimeter fencing (4.5 – 6 metres high). There would also be MUGA provision adjacent to the new artificial pitches and also in a separate parcel of land to the north-west of the site, as well as external cricket net provision, a storage container, sprinkler tank and associated hardstanding around all of the above proposals.
- 7.23 Policy NE7 of the TLP sets out circumstances when the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt may be permitted, which would include essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation. However, this is not considered to be fully in accordance with the NPPF that allows scope for consideration of very special circumstances, and so would have more limited weight. Policy NE14 of the TLP states that proposals for the change of use, conversion or extension of existing buildings in the Green Belt will be permitted where criteria are met. These include that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and the proposed use and any associated use of land are in keeping with their surroundings and the proposed development does not have a materially greater impact than the existing on the openness of the Green Belt or on the purposes of including land in it.
- 7.24 The most up-to-date Green Belt policy guidance is set out within the NPPF. Paragraph 133 states *"the Government attaches great importance to Green*

*Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence". The five purposes that the Green Belt serves are set out at paragraph 134, which are:*

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

7.25 Paragraph 141 of the NPPF states that *"once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land".* On this basis consideration has been given to the additional opportunities arising for outdoor sport and recreation as a result of the proposals.

7.26 Paragraph 143 states that *"inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances".* Paragraph 144 goes on to state that *"when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations".*

7.27 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that *"a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e) limited infilling in villages;*
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*

*g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*

*– not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*

*– not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority”.*

- 7.28 Paragraph 146 also states that other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, including engineering operations.
- 7.29 Policy STP 7 of the emerging NLP sets out the strategic approach to the Green Belt in Northumberland and the purposes of this. Policy STP 8 of the emerging NLP sets out criteria for assessing development proposals within the Green Belt, which largely reflects the NPPF. This states that inappropriate development in the Green Belt will not be supported unless very special circumstances clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm resulting from the proposal. Development that is appropriate, as defined in national planning policy, will be supported. Furthermore, development that improves access to the countryside; provides opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; enhances landscape and biodiversity; or improves damaged and derelict land will be encouraged and supported, provided it does not conflict with national planning policy in relation to Green Belt.
- 7.30 With regard to the extent of new building with the Green Belt, exception (c) of paragraph 145 refers to *“the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building”*. The section of building that is in the Green Belt is a relatively small part of the whole development, but the building as a whole is mostly new so it is considered that this exception could not be applied in this case.
- 7.31 Having regard to the above, the construction of new school buildings in this location would amount to inappropriate development within the Green Belt that does not meet any of the exceptions identified within paragraph 145 of the NPPF. Exception (c) refers to *“the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building”*. The section of new buildings that are extensions in the Green Belt account for a smaller part of the whole development, although the building as a whole is mostly new therefore it is considered that this exception could not be applied in this case. On this basis there would need to be very special circumstances demonstrated to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

- 7.32 Consideration has also been given to paragraph 145 b) of the NPPF in this case, which sets out an exception to new buildings, which would include structures, as being inappropriate development for the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for purposes including outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, provided the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 7.33 Although there is existing playing field use in this area along with a pavilion building and external cricket nets in poor and disused condition, the new proposals introduce a more substantial form of development with new artificial playing services, perimeter fencing, associated hardstandings, storage container and 16 x 15-metre high lighting columns in total.
- 7.34 As set out within National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the concept of 'openness' in the Green Belt has spatial and visual aspects, in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume. Other matters to consider can include the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and the degree of activity likely to be generated.
- 7.35 In spatial terms the proposed columns, fencing and container in themselves would not have a substantial footprint given their scale and form. Furthermore, consideration has also been given to the existing educational use of the site and its largely enclosed nature having regard to existing tree screening to the boundaries of the site, with development not encroaching further into the countryside or Green Belt beyond existing site boundaries. However, it should be noted that there are also more open aspects in some areas and the visual impact of the development would not be completely contained.
- 7.36 The proposal is partly located on existing playing field land and therefore comprises the replacement of existing pitches with upgraded facilities. The site is located within the extent of the existing school grounds, and is therefore partly a built up site within the Green Belt. The overall impact of the proposals could be said to be mitigated to a degree given its location as part of the larger school site and its proximity to the built up area of Hexham, albeit to the edge of the settlement in a more rural setting within the Green Belt and adjacent to open countryside.
- 7.37 Although not adopted development planning policy the Sport England document Planning for Sport Guidance (June 2019) defines 'appropriate facilities' in the Green Belt as those that directly support participation in, and help to secure the long-term viability and sustainability of, outdoor sport and recreational activities so long as they preserve the openness of the Green Belt. It goes on to advise that this could include changing provision, lighting of outdoor sports facilities, car parking, social and catering facilities, fencing and sports domes (for example covering outdoor tennis courts). As referred to earlier it should also be noted that paragraph 141 of the NPPF supports the provision of opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation within Green Belts.

- 7.38 Although the provision of new sports facilities of this nature could in some circumstances potentially be considered as an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt under paragraph 145 b) of the NPPF, given the increased scale and form of development on the site with a greater visual impact (including operation of floodlights), along with a likely more intensive use due to enhanced facilities and proposed wider community use, it is considered that there would likely be greater impacts on the openness of the Green Belt. As a result officers therefore consider that taken as a whole, the sport/recreation elements of the proposals would also result in inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- 7.39 Considering the existing level of facilities and infrastructure in relation to the provision of the additional facilities, it is considered that there would be some harm to the openness of the Green Belt arising from the provision of new development required for the purposes of outdoor sport and recreation. This is owed, in part, due to the location and scale of the development proposed within the application, as part of the wider aim to significantly improve available facilities for the schools as well as the wider community.
- 7.40 The High Court judgement in the case of *R (Boot) v Elmbridge Borough Council* [2017] EWHC 12 (admin) provides useful clarification on the approach that local planning authorities should take when considering development proposals in the context of harm to openness, and whether development preserves the openness of the Green Belt. The judgement centres on the identification of harm to the openness of the Green Belt as a result of new development, however this level of harm was regarded by the local planning authority to be of a degree limited to the extent that the proposals would have preserved openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.41 The High Court upheld the challenge and concluded that a development cannot preserve openness of the Green Belt when it causes harm to its openness, essentially through a reduction in openness or any other perceived harm. Consistent with this judgement, therefore, the additional facilities on the site would reduce openness of the Green Belt by virtue of their greater scale, massing and siting and as such would fail to preserve the openness of the Green Belt. In turn, the development is regarded as being inappropriate development within the Green Belt, and the test of 'very special circumstances' would apply.
- 7.42 Taking the above factors into account, it is considered that in line with relevant case law and other material considerations that the proposed development of the new buildings and the sporting facilities would constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The degree of harm to the openness is regarded as being more limited, and is not regarded as being adverse, having regard to the proposed development being within the existing school grounds and not encroaching further into the countryside or Green Belt than the existing site boundaries. This level of harm is not a factor which can overcome the conclusion that the development is inappropriate within the context of the NPPF. However, it does, remain as a material consideration in reaching any overall planning balance.

#### *Very Special Circumstances*



- 7.43 As referred to earlier Paragraph 143 of the NPPF advises that inappropriate development in the Green Belt should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 144 of the NPPF goes on to state that when considering any planning application, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. It sets out that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 7.44 The presence of very special circumstances will depend on the weight of each of the factors put forward and the degree of weight to be afforded to each, both individually and in combination. The first part of that process is to determine whether any individual factor, taken independently, would outweigh the overall harm to the Green Belt. The second part is to determine whether some or all of the factors, in combination, would outweigh the harm.
- 7.45 There is no formula or categorical process for deciding whether any particular factor in its own right, or any combination of factors, would amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify allowing inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The application must therefore be decided in terms of the overall planning balance, qualitatively rather than quantitatively, and also in line with the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development based on the merits of the application.
- 7.46 The proposal is required to demonstrate an outweighing benefit to the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, to enable this to be justified and acceptable in planning terms. The applicant's Planning Statement sets out the very special circumstances and an assessment of the Green Belt issues that are considered to apply to this proposal. A summary of these are set out below as taken from the statement:

Business case for co-location:

- provide good quality, modern teaching and learning environments for the pupils attending HMS and QEHS, thereby removing existing physical barriers that distract from the teaching and learning experience;
- provide modern sporting facilities on-site to enhance the curriculum offer and to provide improved sporting and community facilities for the wider community in and around Hexham; and
- support HLT in providing an educationally and financially secure future for its schools through their colocation.

Site options

- to summarise, 6 alternative options were considered. Three of the options (options 2, 3 and 4) involved land additional to the existing QEHS / HMS sites. All of these options would have placed some (to a greater extent than currently proposed) or all of the development in the Green Belt.
- in addition to the option that was selected (option 1), the other two options either did not deliver the benefits of co-location (option 5) or the significant capital investment identified as necessary into the schools (option 6).

- there were no alternative site options that could meet the defined project objectives without a more significant incursion into Green Belt land than that currently proposed as part of this application.

#### Community benefits of improved sports provision

- the great benefit to the community that will be delivered in terms of improvements to sports provision. This is as articulated in further detail in text later in this Section, which sets out the strategic / needs case for investment in local facilities for hockey and football. The artificial pitches together with the sports lighting and the new associated changing provision in the sports hall block; as well as the indoor sports hall provision itself; will be a big benefit to the local Hexham community.

#### Site design options

- the key site considerations articulated in the Design and Access Statement (DAS), one of which was avoiding or minimising development in the Green Belt.
- the DAS sets out how the proposed scheme was developed for the site, including the 4 concept options considered; and then it explains the resulting 'developed concept' that forms the basis of the scheme submitted with this application. In terms of the 4 concept options that were considered, and the Green Belt implications of these is set out in Figure 7.1 below.

Option	Description of option	Green Belt impact
1	Provides a three storey ribbon of teaching accommodation wrapped around the Walled Garden, containing the main body of Middle School and High School teaching spaces. The Hydro forms a central hub of administrative, Sixth Form and some High School teaching accommodation with new theatre, hall and dining spaces provided between the existing wings. A standalone sports block is located on the site of the existing hockey AWP.	Some elements of building sit within the Green Belt
2	Provides two wings flanking the Walled Garden to the north and south which accommodate the High School's general and specialist teaching accommodation. The Hydro forms a central hub of administrative, sixth form and some High School teaching accommodation. The dining and LRC spaces are located between the existing Hydro wings with the main hall and theatre space above. The Middle School sits as a standalone building built on the clearing to the south east of Westfield House. A standalone sports block is located on the existing hockey AWP.	Buildings sit outside of the Green Belt

Option	Description of option	Green Belt impact
3	Arranges the main body of teaching accommodation as a ribbon which runs along the southern edge of the Walled Garden and into the tree clearing to the south of Westfield House. Middle School accommodation is located to the east end allowing for a dedicated entrance. The Hydro forms a central hub of administrative, sixth form and High School teaching accommodation with hall, theatre and the LRC provided between the existing Hydro wings. The Walled Garden is converted into a central dining space. A standalone sports block is located to the east of the site on the plateau currently occupied by the lower school.	Buildings sit outside of the Green Belt
4	Locates the building to the north east corner of the site running perpendicular to the Hydro. The building is located to minimise the demolition of the lower school to construct the new buildings by retaining the higher density areas of existing buildings to the south. The layout is arranged as linear wings of accommodation which taper to allow for the large format spaces such as the halls and dining. The building works with the existing topography, stepping down the site by three stories. The Hydro forms a central hub of administrative, sixth form and an art and design hub which is created in a new block of accommodation between the Hydro and Walled Garden. A standalone sports block is located on the northern portion of the existing AWP.	Buildings sit outside of the Green Belt

- Following detailed consideration of the 4 concept options, as set out in the DAS, it was identified that there were some fundamental operational needs that must be addressed to ensure the development is suitable for the Trust. These included:
  - Middle School pupils must have direct access to a dedicated dining space which is served off the main kitchen which also serves High School dining
  - Middle School pupils must be able to access sports facilities without the need to cross over with High School pupils and these facilities should be grouped for community access
  - Dedicated external spaces should be located directly adjacent to each school
- The DAS states that through dialogue and review of the proposals with members of NCC's Planning and Conservation team it was defined that the proposals should:
  - Minimise their impact on the principal east and south frontages of the Hydro and Westfield House
  - Retain the historic coach loop and the green infrastructure that has developed around this.
  - Respect the form of the Walled Garden
  - Minimise the loss of trees
- The DAS goes on to state that whilst this approach results in some of the building footprint extending into the Green Belt, the detailed optioneering process undertaken showed that this encroachment into the Green Belt is preferred to minimise the impact of the scheme on the Hydro and its setting, to maximise the retention of mature trees on the site and to ensure

that the site works operationally for the Trust and therefore for the delivery of education for the young people of Hexham and beyond.

- whilst concept options 2, 3, and 4 included no built form in the Green Belt, they did not meet the operational needs of the Trust. Option 1 included some incursion into the Green Belt, albeit not with the separate sports block, but again, this did not meet the operational needs of the Trust.
- detailed consideration has also been given to the location of the sports pitches and associated sports lighting within the scheme. As both artificial pitches require lighting, there will need to be at least one pitch on the top field that is lit. The benefits of co-locating the two artificial surfaces for the delivery of the curriculum and for management, maintenance and community use led to the current proposals. This was also informed by the Conservation Officer's preference that sports lighting should not be to the Hydro frontage.

#### Views and sections

- 11 views of the proposed scheme in its setting are provided as part of the Heritage Statement and the Landscape & Visual Appraisal (LVA) submitted as part of this application. The views are assessed from the different perspectives of the authors / for the technical purpose of each document. Both reports recognise that in the longer range views (7-11) there is little perceptible change as a result of the development due to distance and screening (by existing trees / woodland / buildings) from their technical position.
- from a Green Belt openness and permanence perspective, for the same reasons, views 7-11 do not in any way indicate that the proposed development will erode the overriding intention of the Green Belt around Hexham.
- in the closer range views (1-6), the Heritage Statement and the LVA and identify a range of positive / adverse changes in the views, mostly related to the removal of the Lower School building and how much of the proposed built form can be seen / glimpsed through trees. Where the proposed buildings are more visible in views (e.g. view 6) the building is being seen in the context of other built form in Hexham. The Heritage Statement also notes in relation to view 6 that the conservation area is not best represented in this view, with little of the historic core visible and the industrial complex detracting from the setting of Hexham Abbey.
- the Hydro building and its extension will sit at a lower level than the top field, which itself sits at a lower level than the fields that rise beyond the woodland to the west, minimising / containing the impact of its incursion into the Green Belt. A similar arrangement is shown in terms of the new sports hall building.

#### Green Belt Review (2015)

- also important to consider is the detailed assessment work undertaken at a local level to inform the emerging Local Plan. In particular, The Green Belt Review from 2015 considered the role and purpose of specific land parcels around Hexham.
- in terms of the application site, the conclusions drawn show that the south part of HM18a is screened by tree cover and slopes to the east. The

northernmost part of HM18a (not including the application site) is identified as being on the slopes of the Tyne Valley but the whole area is identified as not being as exposed as the Green Belt areas to the south of Hexham.

- also identifies that the northern part of HM18a (not including the application site) as being open countryside in character, but still having the opportunity for strong, durable boundaries. Figure 7.6 also recognises the role of High Wood in containing potential sprawl.

#### Assessment against the purposes of the Green Belt

- the NPPF identifies five purposes of the Green Belt. This is refined at a local scale in Policy STP 7 of the emerging NLP.
- a conclusion regarding the contribution that the top field part of the site makes to the Green Belt purposes against each of the categories of emerging Policy STP 7 is set out in Figure 7.7 below.

Policy STP7 purpose	Status in proposed scheme
Check the unrestricted sprawl of Tyne and Wear	Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states that LPAs should define Green Belt boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Given the existing woodland band along the western edge of the top field, as can be seen in Figure 7.5, and the presence of High Wood further afield (as mentioned in Figure 7.6), it is considered that there are physical features that both contain and screen development at the site. This prevents unrestricted sprawl and safeguards the countryside from encroachment (Figure 7.6 only identifies the northern part of HM18a as being in the open countryside). The application proposals also include further bolstering of the existing tree screening along the northern site boundary and around the hard courts to the north west of the application site, which will further contain the development proposed and avoid any impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The site levels relative to the land to the north and west of the site, and the position of the built form in relation to the top field do further contain the development / avoid any impact on openness.
Safeguard the countryside from encroachment	
Prevent the merging of: Newcastle upon Tyne with Ponteland, Newcastle Airport, or Cramlington; and North Tyneside with Cramlington or Blyth	Not applicable to this application

Policy STP7 purpose	Status in proposed scheme
Preserve the setting and special character of Hexham, Corbridge and Morpeth	The submitted Heritage Statement and LVA do not draw any conclusions that suggest that the setting and special character of Hexham in terms of the role of the Green Belt will be impacted by the proposed development. As set out above, when the views assessed in both reports are considered in the context of the role of the Green Belt, none indicate that the development will erode the openness and permanence of the Green Belt around the town.
Prevent Morpeth merging with neighbouring settlements	Not applicable to this application
Prevent the merger of rural settlements	Not applicable to this application
Assist in the regeneration of settlements in South East Northumberland beyond the Green Belt	Not applicable to this application



- 7.46 In conclusion, the applicant's Planning Statement considers that the above sets out the very special circumstances and Green belt considerations relating to the proposals. The statement gives further consideration to other aspects and impacts of the development that officers will also consider later in this report in relation to whether there is other harm to weigh in the overall balance. The Planning Statement concludes that the proposed development will be well screened/contained and will not impact on the openness and permanence of the Hexham Green Belt. Specific details can also be discussed and agreed with the LPA, such as the specification and colour of the sports lighting columns and sports fencing to further manage / minimise any impacts.
- 7.47 In general terms, the main purpose of the proposed development is the replacement and enhancement of the existing QEHS and HMS with the co-location of the schools on the same site. The development also seeks to enhance the associated sporting facilities as part of this principal educational use of the site, as well as enhancing the provision of facilities for the wider community, which follows the policy approach of the NPPF and emerging plans.
- 7.48 With regard to education provision, planning policy at all levels seeks to provide for enhanced educational facilities whether this be via replacement of existing, or the provision of new, educational facilities to meet the needs of the expanding population. The policy statement "Planning for Schools Development" published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in August 2011 advises that the Government believes the planning system should operate in a positive manner when dealing with proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of state-funded schools, and that the following principles should apply in respect of local authorities:
- *There should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools, as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework.*
  - *Local authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state-funded schools in their planning decisions. The Secretary of State will attach significant weight to the need to establish and develop state-funded schools when determining applications and appeals that come before him for decision.*
  - *Local authorities should make full use of their planning powers to support state-funded schools applications. This should include engaging in preapplication discussions with promoters to foster a collaborative approach to applications and, where necessary, the use of planning obligations to help to mitigate adverse impacts and help deliver development that has a positive impact on the community. Local authorities should only impose conditions that clearly and demonstrably meet the tests set out in Circular 11/95. Planning conditions should only be those absolutely necessary to making the development acceptable in planning terms.*
  - *Local authorities should ensure that the process for submitting and determining state-funded schools' applications is as streamlined as possible, and in particular be proportionate in the information sought*



*from applicants. For instance, in the case of free schools, authorities may choose to use the information already contained in the free school provider's application to the Department for Education to help limit additional information requirements.*

- A refusal of any application for a state-funded school, or the imposition of conditions, will have to be clearly justified by the local planning authority. Given the strong policy support for improving state education, the Secretary of State will be minded to consider such a refusal or imposition of conditions to be unreasonable conduct, unless it is supported by clear and cogent evidence.*

- 7.49 Northumberland's County-wide strategy for education is set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2018 - 2021 and identifies that improving education performance represents the Council's single biggest challenge.
- 7.50 The requirement for improved education provision in the County is considered to represent a very special circumstance justifying development in the Green Belt, particularly where this would involve the redevelopment of existing facilities with a limited impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Indeed, in line with the NPPF objective of achieving sustainable development, these very special circumstances would deliver significant social, economic and environmental gains for Hexham and the wider area.
- 7.51 The application has also sought to demonstrate that alternative options to development within the Green Belt have been taken into account as set out earlier. This has also been balanced against other constraints of the site, such as the enhancement of the Grade II listed Hydro and its setting and providing new buildings to the rear of the heritage asset. Other options that have been discounted include development completely in the Green Belt and on more peripheral sites that would result in much more significant encroachment into the countryside and greater visual impact.
- 7.52 The proposed development would also result in significantly enhanced sporting facilities for the two schools as well as for the benefit of the wider community, which is a consideration that weighs positively in the assessment of very special circumstances.
- 7.53 Further, other benefits of the scheme are cited by the applicant as being of significant benefit which, when considered cumulatively, are also considered to contribute to the overall qualitative very special circumstances case.
- 7.54 It is therefore considered that on the basis of the above, very special circumstances do exist to outweigh harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and the harm imposed by the impact upon its openness. Whether the very special circumstances would outweigh any other harm identified as arising from the proposal will be considered in the sections below and returned to at the end of the report in the assessment of the overall planning balance.

#### Design, Landscape and Visual Impact and Heritage Assets

- 7.55 Policy GD2 of the TLP looks to ensure that development is appropriate for its location in terms of matters such as layout, scale, design and impact upon the amenity of residents. Policy BE1 of the TCS seeks to conserve and enhance Tynedale's built environment and conservation areas, whilst Policy NE1 sets out principles for the natural environment.
- 7.56 With regard to impacts on heritage assets, Policy BE18 of the TLP states that outside of Conservation Areas, development will be permitted if it would not harm the character, setting or views into or out of the Conservation Area. Policy BE19 states the total or substantial demolition of a listed building will not be permitted. Policy BE21 relates to proposals for the alteration or extension of a listed building, which will be permitted subject to satisfying criteria. This includes that the essential character of the building is retained and its features of special interest remain intact and unimpaired; and the works proposed make use of traditional and/or sympathetic building materials and techniques which match or are in keeping with those found on the listed building.
- 7.57 With regard to the setting of listed buildings, Policy BE22 of the TLP states that development that would adversely affect the essential character or setting of a listed building will not be permitted. Development will be permitted where the detailed design is in keeping with the listed building in terms of scale, height, massing and alignment; and the works proposed make use of traditional or sympathetic building materials and techniques which are in keeping with those found on the listed building.
- 7.58 Policies BE27, BE28 and BE29 relate to ensuring there is appropriate assessment of archaeological impacts with appropriate preservation in situ or mitigation as required.
- 7.59 The NPPF also supports good design in new development that is appropriate for its location. Paragraph 124 states that *"the creation of high quality 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"*. Paragraph 130 states that *"permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions"*. This goes on to state that *"conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to the development"*.
- 7.60 In terms of emerging planning policies, Policies QOP 1, QOP 2, QOP 3, QOP 4, QOP 5 and QOP 6 of the NLP are relevant in relation to achieving high quality and sustainable design, along with well designed places in accordance with the NPPF. Policies ENV 1, ENV 3, ENV 4, ENV 7 and ENV 9 are also relevant in respect of development affecting the built and historic environment, landscape character and heritage assets. Policies HNP2, HNP3, HNP4 and HNP 7 of the emerging HNP are also relevant in relation to design and impacts upon heritage assets.

- 7.61 The site includes the Grade II listed Hydro building and is located outside of, but immediately adjacent to the boundary of the Hexham Conservation Area. The QEHS site had previously been included within the Conservation Area although this was excluded, along with other large parts of the previous extent of the designation, following the Character Appraisal undertaken in 2009. The appraisal states that the QEHS is a large late C20th slab complex that does not contribute to the distinctive historic character of the area. The appraisal also states that the listed status of the Hydro offers it and its setting adequate protection. Where development affects a listed building or its setting Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72 of the Act also imposes a duty on the local planning authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.
- 7.62 Section 16 of the NPPF sets out the policy framework for conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 193 states that *“when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance”*. Paragraph 194 goes on to state that *“any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*
- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;”*.

## Design

- 7.63 The principle of the redevelopment of the site is considered to be generally acceptable and the design approach to the proposed scheme has been set out in detail with the submitted Planning Statement and the Design and Access Statement (DAS). This includes consideration of various alternative options for the development of the site.
- 7.64 The DAS states that the proposal focuses the largely three-storey teaching blocks around the walled garden, limiting the removal of existing trees to predominantly lower grade specimens. Locating the building mass to the rear of the Hydro also provides the opportunity to form a new pedestrian boulevard to the Hydro entrance from Whetstone Bridge Road, opening up views of the heritage asset on the hillside. Clearly defined and separate entrances can be created for the Middle and High School off the boulevard approach.
- 7.65 The new teaching blocks wrap around the walled garden, which is intended to maximise the distance from adjacent properties and minimise the extent of the building’s footprint within the Green Belt. The blocks are located to maximise the connectivity with the Hydro and create strong links between the Middle School and High School. Each school’s dedicated dining space is served from

a single kitchen to capitalise on the efficiency of co-locating the schools. A standalone sports building is located so that it is accessible for both schools and sited so there is no need for Middle and High School students to cross over, whilst also allowing ease of community use out of hours.

- 7.66 The DAS acknowledges that whilst the proposed approach results in some of the building footprint extending into the Green Belt, the detailed consideration of options showed that this encroachment into the Green Belt is preferred to minimise the impact of the scheme on the Hydro and its setting, to maximise the retention of mature trees on the site and to ensure that the site works operationally for the HLT.
- 7.67 The proposals how pupils will arrive and depart from the school site safely, and look to ensure good segregation between pupils and vehicles. A new boulevard leads pedestrians from Whetstone Bridge Road to the main entrance of the Hydro offering uninterrupted views on approach. Dedicated pupil approaches are provided to each school from the boulevard. Multiple vehicular access points are provided from Whetstone Bridge Road for buses directly into the bus parking and to the main car park and delivery area.
- 7.68 A secondary entrance is retained from Allendale Road for occasional managed deliveries, bin collection, emergency access and out of hours access to the sports block for disabled users. The separate bus parking area has been designed and arranged to allow forward manoeuvres into bays, ensuring the safest method of drop off / pick up can be adopted. Pupils alighting the buses are proposed to be safely directed to the boulevard. Additional pedestrian access gates are provided in the perimeter fence to the public right of way to the north to formalise an existing informal access point and to allow access to the north west MUGAs which sit beyond the public right of way.
- 7.69 The external walls are proposed to be predominantly made up of brickwork selected to compliment the Hydro's stone. The cloister which sits on the line of the original walled garden is identified through the use of a red brick, which is intended to reflect the inner material of the original garden wall. The existing bricks of the walled garden wall will be reclaimed and reused in the creation of the cloister. Recessed panels and textured brickwork panels are used to help create variety and interest across the façade. Generally PPC aluminium curtain walling and windows are proposed, with integrated lookalike panels and louvres where required. The proposed roof material is predominantly single ply membrane roof at minimum roof pitches behind low parapets.
- 7.70 Notwithstanding further more detailed consideration to be given to matters such as the impacts on the wider landscape, heritage assets and residential amenity, it is considered that the proposed layout, scale and design of the development as a whole is considered to be acceptable and would result in a new and high quality design for the site. The design has taken into account the constraints of the site, including the relationship with the listed buildings, existing trees and surrounding development, whilst also giving consideration to the opportunities to enhance the character of the area through the removal of the existing modern school buildings. The layout, scale and appearance of the proposals are therefore considered to result in a high quality design for the

site that would be in accordance with identified development plan policies and the NPPF.

### Landscape and Visual Impact

- 7.71 There will clearly be a change in the overall character and appearance of the site, although the proposals also represent an opportunity to enhance its appearance through the removal of buildings of poor quality and appearance, and secure the longer-term future of the listed building as well as improving the relationship with the adjacent Conservation Area.
- 7.72 There are a large number of existing mature trees within and to the boundaries of the site that contribute to the overall character of the site, the setting of the listed building and help to mitigate the visual impact of the site and impacts on adjacent residents. Pre-application advice was given that these should be retained and protected as far as possible in seeking to preserve the character of the site and the setting of the Hydro, although it is acknowledged that a relatively large number of trees will need to be removed and will be impacted in order to accommodate the development. However, the proposals also look to retain large areas of planting to the boundaries of the site, and this is proposed to be supplemented in order to mitigate for any trees that are lost and to minimise visual impacts upon the wider landscape and the amenity of adjacent residents.
- 7.73 As referred to earlier the application has been submitted with a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA). The LVA has identified 11 specific viewpoints for consideration in the assessment of landscape and visual impacts. The LVA also identifies a number of landscape receptors requiring assessment / consideration, whilst scoping out others (including Hexham Abbey Scheduled Monument; The Sele Registered Park and Garden; St. Andrews Cemetery Registered Park and Garden; and the North Pennines AONB). The findings from the Planning Statement and the LVA are summarised below.

### *Landscape Receptors*

- 7.74 Grassland, individual trees, tree and shrub cover, buildings and hard surfacing are assessed, with all but the individual trees classed as experiencing a neutral or beneficial effect as a result of the development. The individual trees category is identified as experiencing a moderate (adverse) effect. The LVA states that a number of individual trees will be lost to facilitate development although the trees which comprise the tree belt to the perimeter will generally be retained limiting effects on the wider landscape beyond the site boundary. The landscape scheme will introduce a considerable number of new individual trees into the site further strengthening the perimeter planting and over time helping to assimilate the new buildings.
- 7.75 The LVA report identifies neutral or low / negligible adverse effects, with the exception of the Whetstone Bridge Road Area in the host Landscape Character Area (LCA), which is identified as experiencing a major adverse effect. The report summarises that the introduction of the bus parking area adjacent to Whetstone Bridge Road will have a localised adverse effect on this area. The updated plans that have been submitted for the bus parking

area now retain the existing tree and also introduce new planting, mitigating the identified impact. It is suggested that this impact is also balanced to an extent through the removal of the existing Lower School building, opening up views of the Hydro Building and providing an improved pedestrian access which relates to the Hydro Building frontage.

### *Visual Receptors*

7.76 The report assesses the level of effect on the 11 specific viewpoints identified. Viewpoints 7-11 which are over 1km from the site are identified as experiencing no / a negligible level of effect. Viewpoints 1 – 6 are within 1km of the site and a range of effects are identified. The report conclusions in relation to these views are set out below as taken from the Planning Statement.

- *Viewpoint 1 – Whetstone Bridge Road is identified as experiencing a neutral effect. Beneficial effects introduced by the removal of the existing Lower School building and introduction of a new pedestrian access and soft landscaping need to be balanced against the adverse visual effects of the proposed bus parking area at the interface with Whetstone Bridge Road (although it is understood that planting for the bus parking frontage is being considered).*
- *Viewpoint 2 – Leazes Park is identified as experiencing a minor adverse effect in summer and a moderate adverse effect in winter. In summer, new buildings to the west of the existing Hydro Building will become partially visible through gaps in the mature tree cover to the northern site boundary. In winter, Filtered views through the branch structure of deciduous trees will become increasingly prevalent as the trees become defoliated during the winter months.*
- *Viewpoint 3 - PRow 524/007 west of the site is identified as experiencing no effect in summer and a minor adverse effect in winter. In summer, the mature tree cover to the western site boundary provides comprehensive screening towards the site and proposed development. In winter months there is the potential for filtered views to become available through the branch structure of deciduous trees. It is anticipated that this visibility will remain extremely limited because of the dense branch structure.*
- *Viewpoint 4 - Shaws Lane, Bridleway 524/006 is identified as experiencing a minor adverse effect. Views of the main site area will be screened and filtered by intervening mature vegetation to the northern site boundary and to field boundaries to the north west of the site. Taller elements (fencing) of the hard courts proposed for the site area to the north west of the site will be partially visible.*
- *Viewpoint 5 - Bishopton Way is identified as experiencing a moderate adverse effect. Residents' views will be always at least partly screened and filtered by the presence of intervening tree cover with tree cover on the southern site perimeter and within the Site. This will minimise any views of ground and lower construction activities and built elements. This screening will be gradually reinforced as proposed on-site and perimeter planting*

*becomes established. More elevated construction activities e.g. the tower crane, and taller built elements of the school buildings are likely to be partially visible above and/or through the vegetation cover, especially in winter months. The amount of built elements visible will vary between individual properties with the assessed moderate level of effect being sustained by only a small number of residents in these properties.*

*• Viewpoint 6 - Upper Highford Lane is identified as experiencing a moderate adverse effect. Views will be always at least partly screened and filtered by the presence of intervening tree cover with tree cover on the southern site perimeter and within the Site. This will minimise any views of ground and lower construction activities and built elements. This screening will be gradually reinforced as proposed on-site and perimeter planting becomes established. More elevated construction activities e.g. the tower crane, and taller built elements of the school buildings are likely to be partially visible above and/or through the vegetation cover, especially in winter months.*

- 7.77 The application acknowledges that the LVA identifies a number of adverse effects as a result of the proposed development in the context of certain views and/or landscape receptors. However, it goes on to state that these effects are not considered so detrimental to the character of the landscape or the view so as to render the development unacceptable. It is stated that where impacts in views are adverse, they are mostly seasonal and/or partially screened/filtered. In terms of the landscape receptors, the individual trees lost will be off-set by mitigation planting, and whilst the introduction of the bus parking area adjacent to Whetstone Bridge Road will have a localised adverse effect, it is considered that planting for the bus parking frontage will mitigate impacts of this.
- 7.78 On the basis of the submitted information and officer assessment, whilst the proposal would introduce a substantial form of new development and associated facilities onto the site, it is considered that the likely impacts on landscape character would not result in unacceptable impacts that would justify a refusal of the application. Adverse effects that have been identified as a result of the proposals can be mitigated through conditions in respect of use as well as through the design and additional landscape planting for the development.

#### Heritage Assets

- 7.79 The appraisal of this application and the impacts of the development upon the identified heritage assets, particularly the Grade II listed Hydro building and the Conservation Area, has been based on the very detailed and comprehensive comments of Building Conservation in response to the application and is set out having regard to these comments. The associated application seeking listed building consent (19/03999/LBC) also considers in more detail the direct impacts of the development upon the listed building and it is not proposed to duplicate all of that assessment as part of this appraisal of the proposed development. Notwithstanding that, the impact of the proposals on the designated heritage assets is a particularly important consideration in the assessment of the proposals.

## *Significance*

- 7.80 Building Conservation advise that the Grade II listed Hydro consists of a collection of buildings on a raised plateau within landscaped grounds with mature trees and attractive shrubbery creating a parkland setting of great aesthetic and nature conservation value. The building can be divided historically into three phases: the southern building (the former Westfield House) dates from 1859; the central block dates from 1878; and the Winter Gardens at the northern end was added in 1907. The three distinct phases are evident through the building fabric, through which the differing architectural styles can be appreciated. The southern wing is the earliest part and was constructed in 1859 as a two storey private house known as Westfield House. The original tree lined carriage drive leading from Allendale Road was constructed to serve this elegant house.
- 7.81 The building was substantially enlarged in 1878-9 to form the Hexham Hydropathic Hotel or Hydro, designed in the Free French Renaissance style of ashlar stone with ashlar dressings to the principal (east) elevation and squared coursed stone to less prominent elevations, with a Welsh slate roof. The main entranceway is reached via a linear path and steps through the lawn up to the raised plateau. The landscaped grounds were adapted at this time to include bowling greens and lawns for croquet and tennis. The rear (west) wing of the Hydro was built to house bathing facilities, including a Turkish bath and formed a single storey 'T'- shaped block. The courtyard areas which were formed by these buildings were subsequent infilled in the 1920s to provide ancillary spaces for the steam baths, Turkish baths, massage tables and a cold plunge pool.
- 7.82 The Winter Gardens were built in 1907 by an Edinburgh firm who had recently built the Temperate House at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. They are a highly significant space, relating to the former use of the hotel and its emphasis on health, recreation and leisure and were built as an extension to the main Hydro building, projecting from the northern end of the east elevation and connected internally. In the 1980s, substantial renovations to the Winter Gardens included a new Welsh slate roof to replace the previous glass panes.
- 7.83 The walled garden to the rear (west) of the buildings is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1860 associated with Westfield House but continued in use through the history of the buildings. A plan from 1874 shows a fernery, shed, byre and conservatory along the northern wall of the kitchen garden and offices and stables along the northern part of the east wall. Many of these features are still present today either as structures or visible remains within the structure of the wall. By the 1990s it had fallen into disrepair and in 1997 High School pupils took on a five year project to renovate the then dilapidated Victorian Walled Garden.
- 7.84 The site was used as a sanatorium in World War II and the bathing rooms and various other parts of the building were altered at that time. The outbuildings to the rear of the Hydro were used as a bakery and for administrative services. By the end of the 1940s, the buildings had been purchased by the County Council for conversion into the Northern Counties Training College of Domestic Science and at this time significant alterations were made to the



buildings to accommodate this use. The buildings were subsequently used by the Northumberland Teacher Training College from 1962 and then by the new Queen Elizabeth High School, which was constructed in 1965 and expanded into the Hydro building to accommodate the extra pupils and staff in 1976. Further alterations and additions to the buildings took place at this time.

#### *Assessment of Development Proposals*

- 7.85 The detailed consultation response from Building Conservation looks at the following main areas as part of the submission:

#### *Assessment of Heritage Statement*

- 7.86 The Heritage Statement looks at the development of the site in some detail and identifies that the majority of the buildings and structures have been subject to alterations over the different periods of use of the buildings, which has resulted in the removal of many fixtures and fittings relating to the structures' original function. This is most apparent in the stables and the Turkish baths where the form of the buildings remain but the interior of the buildings has been largely removed. Nevertheless, the structures on the site are still readable as historic structures and the surviving historic fabric provides an understanding of the history and development of the site. The Heritage Statement describes how the proposal will affect the significance and setting of the listed Hydro building, which has been considered in detail by Building Conservation.

#### *Proposed Demolitions*

- 7.87 The proposed works include the removal of certain structures associated with the listed buildings to facilitate its adaptation to accommodate the new school buildings. The structures which are proposed for removal include:
- the walled garden associated with Westfield House, which is shown on maps from 1859, although the original internal layout has changed since that date. The footprint and function as a garden space will be retained;
  - buildings attached to the walled garden shown on maps from c.1865. A plan from 1874 indicates that these structures include a fernery, shed, byre and conservatory along the north and offices and stables along the northern part of the east wall;
  - the building to the north-west of the walled garden shown on maps from c.1874. It is apparent on site that there is an earlier core which has subsequently been expanded and altered into a groundsman's cottage and later, garaging for the Hydro guests;
  - buildings constituting the west wing to the rear of the Hydro dating from 1879 which originally housed the bathing facilities in a single storey T-shaped block;
  - additional buildings to the rear of the Hydro from the 1920s connecting to the rear elevation of the principal east wing; and
  - modern buildings to the east of the 19th century groundsman's house and infill buildings to the rear of the Hydro, the modern school to the east and other various modern buildings across the site. A circular

structure which is located to the east of the walled garden, the function and date is unclear, but it could potentially represent an air raid shelter or secure store, is also to be demolished.

#### *Works to the Listed Building*

- 7.88 The proposals retain the principal external elevations of the Grade II listed Hydro building and no alterations are proposed to these key facades. All of the existing fenestration is to be retained and restored where necessary. Modifications are kept to the rear of the Hydro where heritage significance is lower and harm can be minimised. Materials and interfaces with historic fabric have been carefully considered to ensure development does not harm the heritage asset. Infills will be set back so that original openings can still be read as part of the fabric.
- 7.89 A full summary of all proposed works to the listed buildings and their impact and proposed mitigation of this impact have been submitted as part of the Heritage Statement to accompany this application and this is considered by Building Conservation to be satisfactory. A more detailed assessment is also provided within the assessment of application 19/03999/LBC.

#### *Assessment of the New Build Development*

- 7.90 The new build schools will change the setting of the Hydro from the western and southern aspects. The new development is located primarily to the west of the historic building and encroaches into the grounds and playing fields, which are characteristic of the more rural nature to the west of the site. This was considered necessary in order to pull the bulk of the new build away from the listed building and provide 'breathing space' for the Hydro's immediate setting. The impact has been minimised by keeping the massing of the new schools as low as possible and breaking it down into separate elements on the site – the finger blocks around the courtyard, link block to the Hydro and the sports block.
- 7.91 The Hydro's setting is protected by ensuring there are no buildings developed within the historic lawns to the east of the building and the new elements to the west of the Hydro are set back as much as possible from the historic southern approach and screened by mature trees to protect Westfield House's main entrance. Originally the main approach to Westfield House was a tree lined carriageway drive from the south, leading from Allendale Road. The circular path and main tree groups are still evident. The proposals retain this historic carriageway and trees to retain the landscaped setting of the Carriageway and the historic approach to Westfield House.
- 7.92 The Hydro was built to face east towards the town and this elevation, incorporating the east facade of Westfield House, is its principal frontage and is of most significance. The topography of the wider area and the raised plateau on which the buildings sit, accentuates the historic importance of the buildings, emphasised by the Hydro's tower element. Responding to this, all of the proposed built development has been sited to the rear (west) of the Hydro minimising the impact of the new build element on the setting of the principal facade of the heritage asset. The scale and massing of new build

development is subservient to the Hydro, ensuring it does not dominate the heritage asset.

- 7.93 The new development has been planned around the retained footprint of the walled garden. The new buildings are arranged in wings around this courtyard providing the garden with an appropriate setting and level of enclosure and shelter, referencing its historic use. It is intended to create a colonnade on the historic line of the original garden wall using red brick, which reflects the inner material of the original garden wall. This collegiate approach, with glazed entrances and vertical emphasis will help to enhance the setting of the Hydro. The existing bricks of the walled garden wall will be reclaimed and reused as much as possible in the creation of this cloister. The form of the walled garden will therefore be retained, albeit its character will change. Within the 're-imagined' garden area, planting is proposed, which has a luscious botanical aesthetic made up largely of evergreen plants with strong architectural forms and will become the central focus of the school. Building Conservation advise that the loss of the existing wall from the walled garden is disappointing and this loss will have to be balanced against the technical and practicable reasons put forward to justify this loss.
- 7.94 The proposed external appearance of the new build school has been developed in response to the listed Hydro building and its landscape setting. The design is restrained and the materials palette is deliberately simple so as not to compete with or over-dominate the listed building. Materials and tones have been selected to be sensitive to the high quality of the stone of the Hydro and Westfield House and their architectural expression sits comfortably with the historic buildings. The linkages between the historic fabric and the new build have been designed to be lightweight, using glazing where possible so that the impact on the setting of the Hydro is minimised.
- 7.95 The Middle School is located to the south and west of the Hydro. It is set back from Westfield House, allowing plenty of 'breathing space' between the historic building and the new school, and retaining Westfield's House historic relationship with the historic carriageway and the landscape. The Middle School is two storeys, with a single storey link, responding to the lower height of Westfield House and ensuring that the new building is subservient to the heritage asset. The simple elevations with picture windows and recesses do not detract from the fine detailing of Westfield House and the Hydro.
- 7.96 The High School block is set back to the west of the Hydro's north wing, reducing its impact on the setting of the Hydro, particularly its principal elevation. This block is three storeys and so has been set back from the smaller scale elements of the heritage asset. The High School hall and theatre which sit over the dining area are expressed in large format masonry with recessed panels and slot windows and louvres. At high level the façade steps in and is finished with a grey vertical cladding panel which takes its cues from the mansard roof of the Hydro.
- 7.97 The courtyard colonnade provides a single storey link between the Hydro north wing and into the central garden. The northern elevation of the Hydro is plainer than the principal east elevation, and the elevational treatment of the

new High School block reflects this with a uniform fenestration pattern and clean, simple detailing which does not detract from the heritage asset.

- 7.98 The LRC block provides a single storey link between the rear of the Hydro and the new schools, ensuring that the scale of the new build adjacent to the rear of the Hydro is lower, before stepping up to two and three storeys further to the west. The High School's dining and theatre block is three storeys. However, this has been located along the west elevation, which is of lesser significance, and protects the setting of the key east and south elevations. Despite rising to three storeys, this block is concealed behind the Hydro in views from the east and in views from the west the roof and tower of the Hydro can still be read.
- 7.99 The simple, flat roof profiles of the new build schools do not detract from the varying roofscape and chimneys of the Hydro. The proposed roof material is predominantly single ply membrane roof at minimum roof pitches behind low parapets.
- 7.100 The proposed MEP strategy for the site has been carefully considered to ensure that proposals enhance significance of the listed buildings by removing intrusive later services where possible, and consolidating new services to minimise impact. It includes a central heating and hot water plant room and switch room located within the new build. This avoids the need to provide any central plant space within the listed building. Roof mounted MEP plant is located on the new build roof in areas where it will have the least visual impact when viewed from the Hydro buildings. The kitchen ventilation plant will be largely concealed from view in alcove roof areas. ICT suites that may require cooling and therefore require outdoor condensing units have been located in the north and west blocks of the new build areas, furthest away from the Hydro, minimising impact on the setting of the heritage asset.
- 7.101 In terms of hard landscaping, a simple and robust palette of materials is proposed across the site. A new accessible step and ramp arrangement is proposed at the front of the Hydro and this will re-use existing natural stone steps, flank walls and copings. New natural stone elements will complete the detail. The creation of a boulevard to the main frontage of the Hydro will restore its former prominence. The necessity for fencing within the site to comply with security requirements is acknowledged and the submitted details are satisfactory. However, a condition regarding boundary treatments is suggested by Building Conservation to allow flexibility for future requirements as the site develops
- 7.102 Following this detailed assessment of the proposals Building Conservation conclude that the proposed development is considered to be a well designed and well considered scheme. Whilst there will be some loss of historic fabric, this is considered to be fabric which is of lesser significance. Nonetheless it is considered that this fabric should be recorded in line with detailed specifications. This loss has to be balanced against the benefits of achieving a sustainable new school which will enhance and safeguard the future of the most significant elements of these important listed buildings. Building Conservation support and welcome the restoration of the listed buildings, which has been carefully approached and detailed and which it is considered

will considerably enhance the most prominent elevations and the internal architectural qualities of the listed buildings.

- 7.103 Building Conservation consider that the proposals are acceptable and will not cause any harm to the significance of the listed buildings, subject to conditions. These would include details of external materials and mortar mix; new windows, doors and rooflights; details of the proposed bin store; mechanical and electrical services; partitions within the listed building; boundary treatments; hard and soft landscaping; extent of reuse of reclaimed materials from the walled garden; any proposed restoration works to the tower of the listed building; and measures for protection of features during demolition and alteration works.

#### Archaeology

- 7.104 Archaeology, as part of the Council's Conservation Team, highlight the significance of the heritage assets in a similar way to Building Conservation. They identify that the proposals involve alteration to the listed structures, which will largely retain the surviving historic fabric, fixtures and fittings of these historic buildings. However the scheme also involves the demolition of various buildings and structures to the west of the listed buildings which are curtilage listed. These include the walled garden which is contemporary with Westfield House, various associated outbuildings and buildings associated with Hexham Hydro and its subsequent uses.
- 7.105 Archaeology advise that even in their current form with later alteration and re-use, the form and surviving fabric of the historic structures and buildings proposed for demolition still have evidential, illustrative and historic interest in association with the listed buildings. However, given the nature and survival of the historic structures, they agree with the Heritage Statement that the majority of the historic structures are of moderate significance. The demolition of these historic structures will therefore need to be balanced with the impact on the setting of the listed buildings, the public benefits of the scheme and the viability of reusing these structures in line with paragraphs 192-197 of the NPPF.
- 7.106 The advice received from Archaeology states that it is not within their remit as an archaeological consultee to provide detailed advice on those aspects of the application. If the loss of these buildings and structures is deemed to be appropriate in planning terms, it is important that they are recorded prior to demolition in order to preserve the site "by record" in line with paragraph 199 of the NPPF.
- 7.106 Alongside the advice on the related application seeking listed building consent, a building recording condition had been recommended in this respect by Archaeology, and historic building recording reports have since been submitted following this advice. However, whilst these have been reviewed by the Conservation Team they are not of an appropriate level at this stage to fulfil the requirements of the proposed condition. Appropriate building recording work can be secured under the listed building consent application should Members be minded to grant consent.

- 7.107 Archaeology have considered the distance of the proposed development from known archaeological remains, the impact of previous groundworks and the nature and extent of groundworks required for this development. Based on the available evidence, it is very unlikely that any significant archaeological reason will survive on this site which would be impacted by the proposed development. As a result no further below ground archaeological work is required.

#### *Assessment of Harm*

- 7.108 As set out above, subject to conditions that would predominantly apply to any grant of listed building consent given the nature of the proposals and suggested conditions, Building Conservation consider that the proposals will not cause any harm to the significance of the listed buildings. However, officers acknowledge that comments and objections have been received that raise concerns in respect of the proposed extent of works, including demolition of buildings, the loss of the existing walled garden and impact of the proposed new works on the listed buildings. Furthermore, the applicant's Heritage Statement concludes there is less than substantial harm as a result of the demolition of rear sections of the Hydro building, its outbuildings and the walls of the walled garden. Notwithstanding advice received from Building Conservation that the proposals are acceptable and will not cause harm to the significance of the listed buildings, consideration has also been given to the proposals in the context of if harm had been identified.
- 7.109 Paragraph 195 of the NPPF sets out that *"where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
  - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
  - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
  - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use".*
- 7.110 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that *"where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use".*
- 7.111 The applicant's Planning Statement considers the balancing exercise where less than substantial harm is identified and considers these benefits to include securing the future of the listed building by making it a central part of the redeveloped schools complex. The Statement refers to these benefits also being as detailed in relation to the case being presented seeking to justify that

there are very special circumstances for inappropriate development in the Green Belt that have been discussed earlier in this report.

7.112 In addition to the proposals helping to secure the long-term future of the buildings, the benefits referred to in the Planning Statement to be weighed in the context of outweighing harm to the heritage assets therefore also include:

- Business case for co-location: to provide good quality, modern teaching and learning environments for the pupils attending HMS and QEHS, thereby removing existing physical barriers that distract from the teaching and learning experience; provide modern sporting facilities on-site to enhance the curriculum offer and to provide improved sporting and community facilities for the wider community around Hexham; and support Hadrian Learning Trust in providing an educationally and financially secure future for its schools through their co-location.
- Community benefits of improved outdoor sports provision

7.113 In light of the information provided with the application, along with the overall design proposals in response to the constraints of the listed buildings and proximity to the Conservation Area, it is considered that there are sufficient public benefits that would outweigh any identified harm in this instance having regard to the NPPF. The proposals would secure the long-term future of the Hydro building and work is undertaken in an acceptable manner. Furthermore, there are enhancements to the setting of the listed building through the removal of the modern school buildings to the east of the site that would open up this view on the approach to the site. The proposals are also not considered to result in significant impacts or harm to the character of the adjacent Conservation Area given that the proposals see the removal of the more modern elements that are adjacent to this area.

### Sustainability

7.114 With regard to matters of sustainable design, construction and renewable energy paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should expect new development to:

- a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and*
- b) take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.*

7.115 Policy EN3 of the TCS requires development involving new buildings of at least 1000sqm floorspace to incorporate energy efficiency measures and/or on-site renewable energy generation which results in the actual CO2 emission rate being at least 10% below the target emission rate as defined by building regulations. Policy QOP 6 relates to sustainable design and construction, and proposals should incorporate passive design measures which respond to existing and anticipated climatic conditions and improve the efficiency of heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting; demonstrate that opportunities to

incorporate locally sourced, recycled and energy efficient building materials have been considered; and demonstrate that opportunities to include small-scale renewable and low carbon energy generation have been considered.

- 7.116 Matters of sustainable design and construction are also covered in emerging planning policy, including Policies QOP 1 and QOP 5 of the NLP and Policy HNP2 of the HNP.
- 7.117 In response to this policy context the application has been accompanied by a Sustainable Development Planning Statement (SDPS). The SDPS sets out that the scheme consists of a large area of new build construction and refurbishment of the current Grade II listed hydro building. The approach to sustainable design adopts a fabric first approach for the new build elements. The listed status of the Hydro building restricts a full fabric first approach.
- 7.118 The SDPS sets out objectives for the new building including optimising daylight, optimising the amount of fresh air, achieving a thermally efficient building, minimising the impact of solar gains and maximising potential for natural ventilation. The scheme also recognises the need for energy efficient measures.
- 7.119 In light of the Council's commitment and its intention to accelerate its emission reduction by 50% by 2025, £400k has been earmarked in the Council's Renewable Energy Programme to enhance the project in order to relocate the existing PV panels, to ensure they maximise renewable power generation as well as ensuring the new schools achieve an energy EPC A rating. The £400k will be ring fenced to low carbon technologies and climate change behaviour engagement.
- 7.120 Additional options being considered to be incorporated into the design include the use of photovoltaic panels (PV) that are considered to be practical in this instance, as well as the use of air source heat pumps to generate hot water. A condition can be included on any approval securing further details of these measures. Electric vehicle charging points will also be sought as part of the development and these can be secured by condition.
- 7.121 The SDPS highlights that due to the listed status of the Hydro, maintaining energy standards equivalent to the new build works is challenging. The building currently uses opening windows to provide ventilation, and during the winter and part mid-season this is inefficient when heating the building with windows open. The listed status means that considering mechanical ventilation systems would detract from the building form as provision for perimeter louvres would be required and discussions have taken place with Building Conservation on this.
- 7.122 The proposal will therefore maintain the natural ventilation strategy and provide a more efficient heating system throughout the building. To help mitigate the inefficiencies of providing heating with opening windows, simple CO2 monitoring and signalling will be provided locally to inform the staff as to when to open/close windows. The lighting system will be replaced throughout with an efficient system of LED luminaires with automatic control. The building



will be served by the new central hot water system serving the whole school. This will provide equivalent energy efficiency to that of the new build. The SDPS also states that the scheme has targeted a mains fed water consumption figure of 5l/s/person/day.

- 7.123 Having regard to the above, and subject to a condition to secure further details, it is considered that the proposed development looks to proactively deal with matters of sustainable design and construction that would be in broad accordance with the requirements of adopted and emerging policy as identified, and the NPPF.

#### Residential Amenity

- 7.124 The impact of the development on the amenity of residential properties is a consideration that has raised a number of objections, including in the context of the Human Rights Act 1998 and respect for private and family life and home, and right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property. Policy GD2 of the TLP refers to the scale, design and layout of development, and also refers to impacts on the amenity of existing residents and future occupiers of the development. Policies CS19 and CS22 of the TLP also refer to consideration of impacts arising from development including in respect of noise, smell, vibration, dust, atmospheric or other pollution. Policy POL 2 of the emerging NLP sets out criteria in relation to potential impacts from pollution including air quality, noise and light. Policy HNP2 of the HNP also requires matters of amenity to be taken into account in assessing proposals.

- 7.125 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states:

*Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:*

- a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;*
- b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and*
- c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.*

- 7.126 There are already impacts associated with the existing QEHS use of the site, although the development and introduction of the HMS clearly has the potential to have a greater impact upon the amenity of residents immediately adjacent to the site and in the wider locality due to the increase in scale of development and intensification of use associated with additional pupil numbers, traffic movements, altered access arrangements, use of the artificial sports pitches and wider community use of the site.

## *New Buildings*

- 7.127 In addition, there will be potential impacts arising from the construction of the new buildings and increased scale of development to the rear of the Hydro building, particularly in relation to the properties to the north on Leazes Park and Beech Avenue. The revised vehicular access arrangements, including the route into the site to the south of properties on Alexandra Crescent and new car parking provision also has the potential to impact on amenity from these elements. There may be some enhancements in terms of visual amenity arising from the removal of buildings to the eastern part of the site for residents to the north at Alexandra Crescent, although there will be potential for disturbance from the new vehicular access, car parking and sports pitches at this part of the site.
- 7.128 In terms of the new school buildings to the rear of the Hydro building it is noted that the submitted plans propose the demolition of the existing Technology building and adjacent structures to the northern boundary and the new buildings would create additional scale and massing of buildings towards this boundary. The relationship between this section of the new buildings and the impact upon the dwellings to the north on Leazes Park and Beech Avenue is particularly important given potential issues in relation to overbearing impact, visual amenity loss of light and privacy. It is acknowledged that there are existing trees along the northern boundary that help to minimise and mitigate the impact of development to a degree and these should be retained and supplemented with new planting where possible.
- 7.129 At this point of the site the proposed new school buildings would be 32 metres from the corner of the nearest property to the north on 24 Leazes Park, which it should be noted faces in a south-easterly direction rather than facing directly towards the new development. This relationship, along with the existing/proposed planting to the boundary and separation by the public right of way helps to mitigate the impact of the new development. The property further to the west at 23 Leazes Park would be around 31 metres from the new buildings, although the outlook for that property does not face directly towards the school buildings. The new school buildings would be around 16 - 19 metres from the southern garden boundary of these nearest properties.
- 7.130 The new sports block building would be around 30 metres at its nearest point to the nearest property at Milestone House to the south on Allendale Road. However, given the existing tree coverage to this boundary and as the property has its gable end facing Allendale Road, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impacts. The new sports building would be around 48 metres to the east of the Hydro Bungalow, although again given the separation, orientation of the dwelling and topography this arrangement is not considered to result in harmful impacts.
- 7.131 In terms of potential impacts on noise from the new buildings, including fixed plant and the function use of the site, the Council's Public Health Protection team (PHP) have considered the submitted noise assessment. PHP comment that the noise assessment does not address fixed plant as the choice and specification were not available at the time of preparing the noise assessment. However, the noise assessment does contain a background

noise assessment, which has representative noise levels of 39dB LA90 and 30dB LA90, day and night respectively. It is unlikely there are other sources of fixed plant noise in the area, with the exception of the school itself so a condition has been recommended for any newly installed fixed plant to not raise the background noise level.

### *Artificial Sports Pitches*

- 7.132 Consideration has also been given to the impact of the proposed artificial sports pitches to the western part of the site, which would result in greater use of the facilities at this part of the site, and which would also be floodlight with 15 metre high lighting columns resulting in increased use, including outside of school hours. The direct impacts arising from the use of these pitches, the proposed lighting and the new perimeter fencing would be more likely for the adjacent residents to the north on Leazes Park and properties to the south that share an open boundary at present with the school site (Capra, The Spinney and The Hydro Bungalow). It should be noted that the existing playing field is already at a higher level than the properties to the south, whilst the application shows that the levels of the playing fields would be raised above their existing level, which the applicant's agent has clarified is not to the extent originally shown within the application, but would be around 1.45 metres higher than existing. The agent has stated that the higher pitch level is required in order to retain material on site as part of the cut and fill, which will avoid unsustainable muck shift off-site. It is also suggested that the higher pitch level has benefits acoustically for the Hydro Bungalow, The Spinney and Capra to a point where acoustic treatment of the fencing to the south of the all weather pitches is not required. It also has benefits in terms of reducing the acoustic treatment requirements to the north, although an acoustic fence 1.5 metre high is required to the northern side of the pitches.
- 7.133 The properties on Leazes Park to the north are at a lower level to the site and around 43 - 45 metres from the nearest edge of the northern artificial pitch and floodlights that would be used primarily for football and rugby, and this is around 21 metres at its nearest from the southern edge of the gardens of the properties. The properties are separated by the existing right of way as well as mature tree planting to this boundary.
- 7.134 The properties to the south of the site at The Spinney and The Hydro Bungalow currently have a boundary featuring a low wall and fencing with an outlook onto the school playing fields. At this point the land slopes up from the rear of the properties to the existing playing fields by around 1.5 - 2.5 metres and the level of the pitches are due to be raised by a further 1.45 metres. The southern extent of the new artificial surfaced hockey pitch would be around 15 – 23 metres from the boundary of these properties with a 4.5 metre high weldmesh ballstop fence to its southern boundary. A 2.4 metre high perimeter fence to the school site is also located near to the boundary with the Hydro Bungalow.
- 7.135 The southernmost artificial pitch would have a specialist surface for hockey use, although could still be used for overspill use alongside the northern pitch that is proposed for football and rugby use. The lighting for the northern football pitch would require an illumination level of 200 Lux to meet necessary

standards. The lighting for the hockey pitch would be capable of differing levels of illumination with 200 Lux for training purposes and the higher 350 Lux required for matches.

7.136 The application has been submitted with an external lighting assessment that sets out the proposed impact of the lighting upon the site and surrounding area. The application sets out that general external lighting (with the exception of safety and security lighting) will be time controlled to provide the facility for the lighting to be automatically switched off or switched to a lower level during night time curfew hours of 2330 to 0600. Lighting cowls are also proposed to the sports lighting to address light spill requirements. It also states that it is envisaged that the artificial pitches will be in use up to 2200 on weekdays and 1800 on weekends.

7.137 The application documents, including the submitted lighting and noise assessment reports, have been assessed by the Council's Public Health Protection (PHP) team. PHP advise that the submitted noise assessment has shown that noise from the proposed pitches and MUGAs would be below guidance levels in external locations during the day (0700 to 2300). The dwellings most impacted by this (but still below daytime guidance limits) would be several dwellings at the south of Leazes Park. Other dwellings identified are The Spinney, Capra, The Hydro Bungalow and several dwellings south of Allendale Road, which again are all below the daytime guidance limit. PHP comment that it is likely that these dwellings to the south will be impacted by noise from road traffic on Allendale Road which may already raise the noise levels impacting these dwellings. PHP state that the assessment of noise from the sports pitches/MUGAs is acceptable and demonstrates that there would be minimal impact and represents a minimal change to existing use. A noise barrier has been recommended along the northern edge of the all weather pitch south of Leazes Park. PHP advise that noise from events are difficult to determine as they are dependent upon a number of factors (number of players, sport type, size of crowd - of present etc.). However, Sport England have determined a noise level from an Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) as being: *"From the measurement data, a typical free-field noise level of 58 dB LAeq(1 hour) at a distance of 10 metres (m) from the sideline halfway marking has been determined as representative for noise from an AGP."* The updated noise assessment that:

- The noise levels from sports activities on the hockey pitches at the dwellings known as Hydro Bungalow / The Spinney and Capra have been calculated at 52dB LAeq.

This is an external level which would equate to 37dB LAeq internally. This is below the recommended internal level of 40dB LAeq contained within BS 8233:2014 which sets daytime limits of:

- Resting in a living room = 35dB LAeq (this was introduced in the latest guidance to address shift workers who might sleep during the day).
- Dining in a dining room/area = 40dB LAeq.

Additionally, the external limit does not exceed the upper amenity limit for gardens contained within the same guidance document (limit of 55dB LAeq).

- 7.138 PHP advise that any fixed, external lighting (principally pitch floodlighting) installed as part of this development should have regard for the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance on the Reduction of Obtrusive Light 2012. The applicant is required to ensure that lighting does not cause annoyance to any nearby receptors. Experience of lighting installations has shown that complaints about floodlighting normally arise from poorly designed or installed lighting schemes. PHP therefore advise that, if approved, the applicant ensures the lighting contractor installs the proposed lighting scheme in line with submitted proposals and that the ILP guidance is adhered to minimise the impact of lighting as part of this development.
- 7.139 PHP consider the site as Environmental Zone E3 - suburban medium district brightness (i.e. small town centres or suburban locations). This requires that light intrusion through any window of a receptor should not exceed 10 lux pre-curfew and 2 lux post-curfew. The applicant has submitted a lighting spill assessment for the impact of any fixed, external artificial lighting which shows compliance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) guidance, which is acceptable to the PHP team. The lighting assessment has also taken into account the difference in levels across the site, including the proposed raising of the pitch levels, and further information and clarification has been provided on this aspect.
- 7.140 Given the closer proximity to and the more open boundary with the properties to the south of the pitches, officers have given consideration to a reduction in the hours of use for this pitch. It is also noted that this is proposed primarily for hockey use, which it is understood would likely be used less than the proposed football pitch, although there is also likely to be some overspill use for other sports. Notwithstanding the information provided with the lighting and noise assessments, and in order to seek to mitigate impacts on amenity further, it is proposed to restrict the operation of lights and use of this pitch up to 2100 rather than 2200.
- 7.141 The application also proposes additional landscaping on the slope between the rear of The Spinney and The Hydro Bungalow in order to mitigate the impacts of the pitches and the lighting further in this area. Whilst this would be welcomed and would help to lessen the visual and other impacts of the use of the pitches, fencing and lighting further, it is considered necessary to achieve a balance so that any new planting would not adversely impact on the outlook or light for these properties. Whilst a landscaping scheme has been submitted as part of the application, it is proposed to condition the final scheme so that further consideration can be given to planting in this area. Whilst PHP are satisfied with the scheme in terms of noise and lighting based on the proposed levels, officers are of the view that the applicant should give further consideration to reducing the finished ground levels at this part of the site rather than raise these with material from elsewhere on the site, and in order to reduce further and mitigate impacts in respect of visual amenity. On this basis, and notwithstanding the submitted plans and supporting information provided to date, a condition can be proposed requiring further approval of the finished levels of the pitches should Members be minded to grant permission. This would also require further consideration of impacts from light and noise as well as any required mitigation.

### *Access / Car Parking / Buses*

- 7.142 The proposals result in different arrangements for access and parking to the site compared to the existing QEHS use, which would result in potentially greater impacts upon adjacent properties in the immediate vicinity at Alexandra Crescent, Beech Avenue, Tynedale Terrace, Whetstone Bridge Road and Alexandra Terrace. This would include issues arising in respect of noise, lighting and visual impact. The noise assessment has looked at noise generated by car parking and buses under normal school use, and separate from the use as a wedding venue. The calculated noise level at the nearest noise sensitive receptor is calculated at 52dB LAeq, which PHP advise is acceptable and no further information is required on this specific issue.
- 7.143 With regard to wedding venue use, although the noise assessment addresses this aspect of the use of the site it does not form part of the proposed changes under this planning application, which would be considered as a continuation of an existing use. However, car parking will be restricted to the 80 space car park for this use, which is acceptable to the PHP and no further information is required on this specific issue. A noise barrier has been recommended along the northern and eastern edge of the car park nearest Alexandra Crescent. The application also outlines that close boarded fencing in this area will prevent light spill from car headlights towards residential properties. Suitable landscaping in the areas around the access, car and bus parking areas will also assist in mitigating visual and other impacts, which can be secured by conditions.
- 7.144 PHP have also considered the impact of the development in respect of air quality. Having regard to the existing school with associated operational vehicular movements and the proposal PHP state this would not appear to indicate a significant change in road traffic. The proposed inclusion of the Hexham Middle School is anticipated to increase traffic flows by 512 (256 two-way trips). PHP have advised that on the basis of the submitted air quality impact assessed this aspect of the development is acceptable. With regard to other potential elements of air quality, PHP have not raised any comments or issues in respect of air quality and the introduction of artificial grass pitches elsewhere within the site.
- 7.145 PHP have also considered potential impacts arising during the construction period and conditions are recommended in respect of limiting the days and hours of noisy activity, deliveries and collections and dust management. The construction period would be for a limited time only, however such measures would assist in mitigating the impacts during this period.
- 7.146 Given the nature and scale of the proposals it is clear that the development as a whole, including the relocation of HMS, the intensification of use, new sporting facilities, access and parking arrangements and wider community use, would have a greater impact upon the amenity of residents immediately adjacent to the site and in the locality. There are also existing effects on amenity as a result of the existing QEHS use, buildings and wedding function use.

- 7.147 In assessing the proposed impacts upon amenity consideration has been given to the existing situation and the fact that some impacts are experienced at limited peak times, as well as impacts reducing outside of school hours and during school holiday periods. Although there would be increased use given the relocation of HMS and new sporting facilities, some impacts would again be more limited to peak periods with impacts reducing outside of school operational hours and in the holiday periods, thereby mitigating to a degree the overall impacts.
- 7.148 Where there are impacts on the amenity of residents (i.e. visual impact, outlook, privacy, increased disturbance, noise, lighting), it is considered that these have been and can be mitigated through the layout and design of the development, retention of existing trees and new landscaping, boundary treatments, further consideration of finished levels as well as conditions that would look to reduce the effects of the proposals during the construction and operational phases of the development. Should permission be granted then it is considered appropriate to require the submission of a management plan that would cover the management of the site and the sports facilities outside of school hours, including a mechanism for dealing with complaints (i.e. floodlights left on after set time etc.) and review of the management plan. On this basis, subject to appropriate conditions as well as having regard to the comments of PHP, it is considered that the proposed impacts upon amenity would not result in significant or adverse impacts that would justify a refusal of the application.

#### Transport, Accessibility and Highway Safety

- 7.149 New development will need to deliver an appropriate form of development in terms of highway safety and infrastructure having regard to Policies GD4 and GD7 of the TLP, Policy GD4 of the TCS and the NPPF. Policy GD4 of the TLP states that development proposals will be required to conform to criteria including that safe access to the site and to the classified road system should be secured; and the development should not create levels of traffic which would exceed the capacity of the local road network or create a road safety hazard.
- 7.150 Policy GD4 of the TCS sets out principles for transport and accessibility, which are to:
- a) *Maximise conflict-free, sustainable access across the District, through the retention, management and maintenance of the existing transport network, its improvement where necessary and the integration of transport services.*
  - b) *Minimise the overall need for journeys, while seeking to maximise the proportion of those journeys that are made by:*
    - *public transport, bicycle and on foot, rather than private road vehicle;*
    - *rail, rather than road, (for both passengers and freight);*
  - c) *Ensure that the transport and accessibility needs of the whole community are fully taken into account when planning and considering development.*
- 7.151 Paragraph 108 of the NPPF looks to ensure that safe and suitable access to a site can be achieved by all users. Paragraph 109 states that development

should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

- 7.152 With regard to emerging policy, Policy TRA 1 of the NLP sets out criteria in respect of achieving and promoting sustainable transport connections, which should be demonstrated with any application. In addition, Policy TRA 2 sets out criteria in respect of assessing the effect of development on the transport network.
- 7.153 The application has been submitted with detailed supporting information, including a Transport Assessment (TA), and the proposals have been assessed in detail by the Highways Development Management team (HDM). When considering the impacts of the proposed development, consideration has been given in respect to the changes on the site and how these impact upon the local highway. In this application, the QEHS operations are already on the network and associated impacts with traffic, on-street car parking, pick up/drop off and bus/coach provision are deemed to be the base situation to which any additional impacts are measured from.
- 7.154 The additional impacts upon the highway are associated with the increase in pupil numbers on the site as a result of the relocation of HMS to this site and the area where Middle School trips will relocate to. HDM highlight that the redevelopment of the site allows for the opportunity for some existing issues to be resolved either as a direct consequence of the development and to mitigate against impacts over and above that generated by the Middle School relocation, but in planning terms the current situation on the ground is the base to which impacts are measured from.
- 7.155 Further to the initial comments from HDM on the application, additional information, clarifications, additional documents, revised layouts and updated proposals have been submitted. In highways terms these relate to clarifications made in respect to the previously submitted TA, a revised School Travel Plan, updated bus parking/drop-off/pick-up area, a detailed assessment of current and proposed bus routings and a Construction Management Plan.

#### *Transport Assessment*

- 7.156 In response to the comments made on the TA originally submitted with the application a response letter has been prepared and submitted to address points raised, as well as the other comments made within HDM's previous response. HDM are satisfied that the technical information submitted and clarified in relation to the TA addresses its previous comments and as such the assessment of impact as outlined in the TA and the response letter is deemed to be acceptable. No capacity mitigation is required to the junctions assessed in the Transport Assessment.

#### *Pedestrian Routes, Public Transport and Cycles*

- 7.157 Further details have been supplied in relation to access by pedestrians to the site with uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points to be included on Whetstone



Bridge Road. The highways works drawing submitted with the application indicates how this sits within the overall highway improvements in this area. The detail of the pedestrian connections and the works to the highway are requested to be secured by condition, which will also include the requirement to formalise a desire line observed by the existing controlled pedestrian crossing on Allendale Road near to Whetstone Bridge Road.

- 7.158 Further information and revised plans have also been submitted in relation to the provision of school transport to and from the site. The original bus drop off and pick up area has been revised to cater for the future needs of school transport provision for the combined development. Concerns in relation to the operation and maneuverability of this area have been addressed. Ongoing dialogue with the School Transport team and Health and Safety colleagues has ensured that this area is as safe as possible and protects school transport users and highway users. A review of school transport access has been undertaken within the Bus Parking Layout Note submitted with the application. Whilst it is accepted that there will be a slight increase in the number of school transport vehicles due to the increase in pupils coming to the site, this impact is spread across the morning period due to the more elongated arrival pattern of school transport at this time. In the afternoon period, the provision of the proposed bus drop off and pick up area to accommodate all buses allows buses to be “released” from the development in both directions without conflict. HDM are therefore satisfied that the figures and procedures presented in the Bus Parking Layout Note are achievable.

#### *Road Safety*

- 7.159 Having reviewed the additional information and revised plans HDM consider that there are no road safety implications over the development that would cause a demonstrable impact that the application be recommended for refusal. The detailed Bus Parking Layout Note indicates clearly how school transport will be managed and controlled minimising potential conflicts between road users, including vulnerable road users. The revised plans also demonstrate that barriers for the school car park and servicing access to Allendale Road are located sufficiently away from the highway to prevent overhanging vehicles on the highway whilst waiting at a closed gate. As part of the Highway Works proposed for Whetstone Bridge Road and Allendale Road, Road Safety Audits will need to be undertaken at the detailed design stage, at completion of the highway works and 12 months after completion. These will be tied into the S278 Agreement for the delivery of the highways works as detailed later in this response.
- 7.160 A Construction Management Plan has been submitted with the application. This document addresses the impacts of the development throughout the demolition and construction phase and includes details of how the school transport will be managed and contained throughout this period. The proposals are considered to be acceptable and enforceable and a compliance condition is therefore recommended to ensure that the details contained are adhered to throughout the demolition and construction period.

#### *Travel Plan*

- 7.161 The School Travel Plan has been reviewed by the sustainable transport team through numerous iterations and the final document submitted is deemed to be acceptable by HDM. This Travel Plan provides means and methods by which school travel by sustainable transport will be promoted. The Travel Plan commits the development to achieving Bronze Level of the Modeshift STARS programme within 1 year of the Middle School being relocated to the development site. The submitted Travel Plan will be required to form part of the approved documents for the application should Members decide to grant planning permission, and a condition is recommended to secure the Full Travel Plan being submitted within 6 months of the Middle School pupils and/or staff being relocated to the development.

#### *Car Parking*

- 7.162 HDM advise that the Highways Works drawings provide clarity in relation to the potential for parent pick up and drop off on Whetstone Bridge Road. The replacement restrictions ensure that junctions and areas where the school transport vehicles will turn are protected from on-street car parking. A condition is recommended to secure the previously agreed car parking within the site and that this is provided at the point in which the Middle School staff or pupils are relocated to the development site. A condition is also proposed that would secure electric vehicle charging points within the development.

#### *Cycle Parking*

- 7.163 It has been confirmed in the TA response letter that the cycle parking for the High and Middle schools will be covered and secure with the Hydro building spaces being short stay uncovered spaces. This addresses the outstanding information sought by HDM and a condition is recommended to secure the cycle parking as shown and that this shall be delivered prior to the Middle School staff or pupils relocating to the development site.

#### *Highway Works*

- 7.164 Highways works drawings for traffic management, and access works, to Whetstone Bridge Road and the extension of the existing 20mph limit on Allendale Road up to the traffic signal controlled junction at Temperley Place have been submitted as an Appendix to the TA Response Letter. The Highways Works proposed are primarily linked to traffic restrictions that need to be processed under a separate Traffic Regulation Order. As such, during consultation and ongoing design progression may be different to those presented at this stage. As such, a condition is recommended to account for potential change as a result of this process. The options in respect to a further extension of the 20mph limit to Temperley Place and Burnland Terrace will be determined as part of the detailed design process for the Highways Works.
- 7.165 HDM conclude that the clarifications, revised documents and updated layouts are acceptable in highways terms and demonstrate that the development will not result in impact that has demonstrable harm to the highway network or cause a severe impact that would warrant a reason for refusal under the NPPF. As such, there are no objections to the development on highway

grounds subject to the imposition of conditions. These conditions would secure matters in respect of car parking, highway works, cycle parking, surface water drainage, electric vehicle charging, Full School Travel Plan, Demolition/Construction Management Plan, temporary bus arrangements and school bus parking and drop-off/pick-up. In light of the above the proposal would result in an acceptable form of development that would be in accordance with the development plan and the NPPF.

### Ecology

- 7.166 The TLP, TCS and NPPF highlight the importance of considering potential effects upon the biodiversity and geodiversity of an area, including watercourses and impacts upon trees and hedgerows. Policies NE27, NE33, NE34 and NE37 of the TLP and Policy NE1 of the TCS are therefore relevant. Section 15 of the NPPF relates specifically to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including impacts on habitats and biodiversity.
- 7.167 The emerging HNP identifies a wildlife corridor along the northern boundary of the site and across part of the area to the north-west of the site where additional MUGAs are proposed. Policy HNP15 states that such corridors will be protected and enhanced, and opportunities will be taken in any new development proposals, to create and improve links between these corridors. Proposals must ensure that there is no negative impact on the integrity of the wildlife corridor, and they should take opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value. New exterior lighting must be avoided where it would be adjacent to, or have an impact on a wildlife corridor. Proposals that would result in the further fragmentation of existing wildlife corridors will not be permitted.
- 7.168 The application has been submitted with an ecological appraisal and survey work and consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Ecologists on the proposed development. In addition, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) submitted with the application summarises that a total of 211 individual trees, 15 groups of trees and 7 hedgerows were surveyed. It goes on to state that significant tree loss is required in order to facilitate the proposed development, including areas of woodland; and that the proposals seek to alleviate this loss through a comprehensive mitigation planting strategy.
- 7.169 Following their initial assessment of the application the Ecologists advised that the ecological and related survey reports submitted are extensive and the survey effort and extent are appropriate for this large and complex site. There were, however, issues that required further attention before the application could be considered for determination. This included the submission of further bat survey work due to the removal of trees. Natural England has raised no objection to the application and states that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes.
- 7.170 A number of bat roosts have been identified in the existing buildings and a Natural England European Protected Species Development Licence will be required before works commence. The LPA is required to assess the

proposals and any necessary avoidance and mitigation measures in order to be confident that a licence would be granted. It is unlikely that a licence would be granted without the physical mitigation measures being shown on the relevant architects drawings, and this information has now been provided. Further information has also been provided in respect of bird box mitigation and an amphibian method statement.

7.171 The Local Planning Authority has a duty to have regard to European protected species when discharging functions, including planning applications, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. There are three limbs to the derogation test for a licence to be issued by Natural England, which are:

1. preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment (IROPI); and
2. that there is no satisfactory alternative; and
3. that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

*Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest*

7.172 The test of imperative reasons of overriding public interest seems to be considered to have been satisfied if a proposal accords with the relevant development plan, and hence can be seen to be meeting an identified development need. Notwithstanding other matters that require consideration such as development in the Green Belt and other effects from development, in this case the principle of the development is considered to be generally acceptable in terms of the replacement and enhancement of education facilities to meet an existing and identified need, along with benefits associated with enhanced sporting facilities for the schools that would also deliver facilities for the wider community.

*No Satisfactory Alternative*

7.173 The second test concerns whether the development need that the application is seeking to meet can be met in any other way which has no or a lesser impact on the species concerned. As set out in earlier sections of this report, consideration has been given to delivering the replacement school facilities in alternative locations and with different options on the site. The redevelopment of the existing QEHS site, which is already in educational use, is considered to be the most suitable option by the applicant to deliver the educational requirements of the schools and in the form proposed. Given the requirements of the new schools, the scale of development and the constraints of the site, when weighing all of the issues in the balance it is not considered that there would be satisfactory alternatives in this instance.

*Not Detrimental to Maintaining the Population of the Species Concerned at a Favourable Conservation Status in its Natural Range*

- 7.174 The third of these is examined in terms of the mitigation proposals submitted by the applicants. Following assessment of the application, including the additional information provided by the applicant, the Council's Ecologists have raised no objection subject to conditions that would secure avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures as set out within the application documents, as well as conditions to cover tree works/protection and landscaping. On this basis it is considered that the relevant tests can be satisfied having regard to the above Regulations.
- 7.175 Furthermore, the Ecologists have also advised that notwithstanding the measures detailed within their response and proposed conditions as referred to above, a significant net loss of biodiversity is likely to occur as a result of the proposal, notably including habitats of principal importance in England (woodland, parkland, hedges, ponds) and species of principal importance in England (common toad, hedgehog and a range of bird and amphibian species). As the site is not large enough to accommodate adequate avoidance, mitigation or compensatory measures, or to secure a net gain for biodiversity overall, it is important that compensation and enhancement is secured in a suitable location off-site, as set out in Defra's 'net gain' approach. To ensure that a transparent and proportionate approach is taken to this, it is suggested that the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 is used to calculate losses and gains on-site and to ensure that adequate gains are secured off-site. A condition is therefore proposed that would secure this necessary mitigation.
- 7.176 On this basis, and subject to proposed conditions securing the necessary avoidance, mitigation and enhancement, although it is acknowledged that there would be impacts upon ecology and the biodiversity of the site as a result of the development, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in respect of ecological and other impacts having regard to the development plan and the NPPF.

#### Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.177 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, although there is an area around the junction of Whetstone Bridge Road and Allendale Road that lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3. On the basis that the site exceeds 1 hectare in area a Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted with the application. The application has been assessed having regard to Policy GD5 of the TCS and the NPPF in relation to ensuring development is directed to areas at a lower risk of flooding and that it would not increase flood risk elsewhere.
- 7.178 Consultation has taken place with Northumbrian Water (NWL) and the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) on the application. NWL have raised no objection to the application subject to a condition requiring the development to be undertaken in accordance with the submitted drainage information.
- 7.179 The LLFA had requested some further information and clarification regarding the proposed development. Following the submission of further details the LLFA raises no objection subject to conditions. On this basis the proposal is considered to be acceptable having regard to Policy GD5 of the TCS and the NPPF.

## Ground Conditions

- 7.180 In addition to matters relating to impacts on residential amenity (i.e. noise, lighting, construction works) the PHP has also assessed the application having regard to matters of ground conditions and contaminated land. Policy CS23 of the TLP is therefore relevant in this respect.
- 7.181 The applicant has commissioned and submitted a Phase 1 report and an initial Phase 2 report, and the latter has proposed further site investigations. This is acceptable and a condition has been recommended by PHP to secure these further investigation. Additionally, a condition has been recommended to address unexpected contamination should it be encountered during the development of the site.
- 7.182 With regard to ground gas PHP advise that the nearest mine entries are around 2 kilometres to the north-west and the nearest landfill is around 1.5 kilometres to the south-east. The northern part of the site lies within a Coal Authority Development Low Risk Area and this would normally be enough to consider the inclusion of gas protection. However, PHP advise that the retention of the older part of the existing structure would mean that any new buildings attached to this would essentially be extensions and fitting gas protection to only the extensions would not necessarily be practicable and could negatively impact upon the retained buildings.

## Sports Provision

- 7.183 As the proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of playing fields consultation with Sport England is a statutory requirement in this instance. Sport England has considered the application in light of the NPPF (in particular paragraph 97), and against its own playing fields policy, which states:

*Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:*

- *all or any part of a playing field, or*
- *land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or*
- *land allocated for use as a playing field*

*unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.*

- 7.184 The existing school contains two areas of playing field with the larger area to the west has an area of approximately 2.8 hectares. The smaller area of playing field lies to the east of the school buildings and is largely made up by an artificial grass pitch which is used for hockey. The eastern playing field has an area of 0.8 hectares. Sport England therefore concludes that the existing school therefore contains a total of 3.6 hectares of playing field.
- 7.185 In terms of proposed playing field area, the new consolidated area of school buildings encroaches onto the eastern fringe of the western playing field, whilst a new area of playing field is created close to the site's Whetstone

Bridge Road boundary. Two artificial grass pitches are proposed for the western playing field. In addition, three MUGA areas are proposed. A two court MUGA adjoins the eastern end of one of the proposed artificial pitches, and a second five court MUGA is created on land separated from the main western playing field by a watercourse. Finally a two court MUGA is created on land between the proposed new area of playing field and the school buildings. Sport England advise that MUGAs do not, in their own right fall within the definition of playing field, but if they immediately adjoin a playing field they are counted (and measured) as part of it. As such the two court MUGA adjoining the proposed artificial pitches has been counted as being playing field, whilst the remainder have not. In light of the above, Sport England has calculated that proposed layout would have 2.5Ha of playing field, and as such the proposal fails the quantitative test to its playing field policy exception E4.

7.186 Sport England advised there are occasions however where the qualitative gain in playing field is able to mitigate for the loss in playing field area. In evaluating whether suitable qualitative gains are proposed, Sport England would have regard to:

- whether replacement facilities are of a better quality than those they replaced
- whether the proposed facilities filled a strategic gap in provision within this part of Northumberland; and
- the benefits to community sport

7.187 Sport England has liaised with the national governing bodies of those sports affected by the proposals in respect of football, rugby, cricket and hockey. Following this its original comments on the application advised that in overall terms there is significant sporting value in the proposed artificial grass pitches proposed as they meet identified strategic need for both football and hockey. Sport England is content that whilst there is a small shortfall in playing field quantity that the quality of re-provision means that there is significant benefit to sport in considering that the purpose of playing field policy exception E4 is met.

7.188 Notwithstanding the above, Sport England advised it is clear that the respective sports are unequally affected by the development. Cricket and rugby pitches are currently set out on the western playing field, but the proposed layout does not allow for cricket to be formally played. The proposals also reduce the number of rugby pitches from the current two down to one, and the RFU are concerned that this pitch is to be shared with football. Further information and clarification was therefore requested in respect of these aspects, as well as small scale amendments in respect of hockey use, and a holding objection was placed on the application.

7.189 The applicant has been in further discussion with Sport England following the initial comments. Sport England has subsequently advised that the additional information consultation has confirmed that;

- the perimeter fence at the eastern end of the southern artificial grass pitch will be increased to 6 metres to protect the adjacent building from stray hockey balls; and
- the proposed long pile rubber crumb of the northern artificial pitch will have the necessary shockpad installed to allow it to be used for rugby training and matches

Consideration is still being given to cricket's suggestion for indoor nets to be created within the sports hall and the outdoor practice nets to be reduced in scale – dependant in part on the potential for funding from the ECB in February 2020. Should this amendment take place, it will be internal to the specification of the sports hall and will not necessitate the submission of amended plans.

7.190 In light of the above Sport England is now content that the qualitative improvements in the replacement playing field provision are of significant benefit to sport in this part of Northumberland such that they outweigh the proposal's failure to meet the quantitative arm of playing field policy exception E4. As such it concludes that the holding objection can be withdrawn, subject to conditions in respect of the construction specification of the new pitches, a community use agreement for the new facilities, and restriction on replacing the hockey pitch surface.

#### Other Matters

7.191 During the course of the application, in addition to concerns over the impact on residential amenity, concerns have been raised in respect of disruption to pupils during the proposed works. Further information has been provided in response to this aspect stating that HLT have been clear from their initial brief onwards that the project should not compromise the educational experience of current students, particularly those sitting exams. This goes on to state that the Lower School will be isolated from construction activity until the end of the 2021 summer term. The Hydro will also be outside the construction perimeter until after the exam period in 2020. Subject to planning approval, it is understood that HLT's Executive Head will be writing to parents early in the New Year to explain the details of the plans to ensure that students will continue to enjoy an outstanding experience and achieve excellent outcomes at QEHS.

7.192 Comments have also been made in respect of the site lacking potential for any required future expansion. In consultation with the HLT the agent has advised that the proposal is for both schools to retain their current Published Admissions Number (PAN), resulting in a total capacity for HMS of 600 and for QEHS of 1,308. Currently, QEHS is close to capacity (1,290 in the 2018/19 year), while HMS is 20% under capacity (455 in the 2018/19 year). Forecasts, based on detailed modelling, are that numbers in each school will remain similar for the foreseeable future. It is stated that this means that the site could accommodate an extra 163 pupils without any additional impact on factors such as traffic, as the Transport Assessment (and the whole application) has been based on the full PAN total of 1,908. School buses currently have approximately 20% spare capacity overall which could also accommodate such a level of uplift with no further bus numbers needed.



- 7.193 It is also stated that an important factor to take into account is that both schools currently attract a large number of students beyond their catchment areas - about 1/3 at QEHS. Therefore, should demand exceed supply, the admissions over-subscription criteria would apply, including distance from home to school. Therefore, it is stated that any increase in demand locally as a result of new homes / increased population could be accommodated without the need for school expansion.

#### Equality Duty

- 7.194 The County Council has a duty to have regard to the impact of any proposal on those people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act. Officers have had due regard to Sec 149(1) (a) and (b) of the Equality Act 2010 and considered the information provided by the applicant, together with the responses from consultees and other parties, and determined that the proposal would have no material impact on individuals or identifiable groups with protected characteristics. Accordingly, no changes to the proposal were required to make it acceptable in this regard.

#### Crime and Disorder Act Implications

- 7.195 These proposals have no implications in relation to crime and disorder.

#### Human Rights Act Implications

- 7.196 The Human Rights Act requires the County Council to take into account the rights of the public under the European Convention on Human Rights and prevents the Council from acting in a manner which is incompatible with those rights. Article 8 of the Convention provides that there shall be respect for an individual's private life and home save for that interference which is in accordance with the law and necessary in a democratic society in the interests of (inter alia) public safety and the economic wellbeing of the country. Article 1 of protocol 1 provides that an individual's peaceful enjoyment of their property shall not be interfered with save as is necessary in the public interest.
- 7.197 For an interference with these rights to be justifiable the interference (and the means employed) needs to be proportionate to the aims sought to be realised. The main body of this report identifies the extent to which there is any identifiable interference with these rights. The Planning Considerations identified are also relevant in deciding whether any interference is proportionate. Case law has been decided which indicates that certain development does interfere with an individual's rights under Human Rights legislation. This application has been considered in the light of statute and case law and the interference is not considered to be disproportionate.
- 7.198 Officers are also aware of Article 6, the focus of which (for the purpose of this decision) is the determination of an individual's civil rights and obligations. Article 6 provides that in the determination of these rights, an individual is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal. Article 6 has been subject to a great deal

of case law. It has been decided that for planning matters the decision making process as a whole, which includes the right of review by the High Court, complied with Article 6.

## **8. Conclusion and the Planning Balance**

- 8.1 It is clear from the scale and nature of the proposals as submitted, as well as the representations received and the appraisal of the many issues relevant to this application, that the proposed development would introduce a substantial form of development onto the site that will result in a wide range of impacts. This increase in the scale of development and intensification of use is also balanced and weighed against the baseline position of the existing QEHS use of the same site. The level of objection to the proposed development and concerns raised to the proposals is also fully acknowledged, and have been taken into account as part of the assessment, alongside consultation responses from relevant consultees.
- 8.2 As set out earlier, the general principle of the development in terms of the provision replacement and enhanced education facilities, along with significantly enhanced sporting facilities for the schools, as well as the wider community, is supported. The broad principle of development in this respect would therefore be in accordance with the development plan, emerging policy and the NPPF.
- 8.3 There is a conflict with planning policy with regard to the extent of new development within the Green Belt as a result of the new school buildings, sports pitches and associated structures. This part of the development is not considered to satisfy any of the exceptions at paragraphs 145 or 146 of the NPPF, and as such would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As set out at paragraph 143 of the NPPF, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 8.4 As set out earlier, paragraph 144 of the NPPF states that *“very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”*. The appraisal of the application considers whether there is other harm resulting from the proposals, including in respect of effects on the site and wider environment, impacts on heritage assets and the amenity of residents.
- 8.5 An intensification of development on the existing QEHS site would inevitably result in greater impacts relating to some aspects, as well as improvements in education and sporting provision and enhancements to heritage assets as a result of other elements. However, when considered as a whole it is considered that very special circumstances would exist to outweigh harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.
- 8.6 The proposal would secure delivery of a new and enhanced education and sports facilities for the benefit of the town and wider community. For these reasons it is considered that the development can be supported and, subject to necessary conditions that would also mitigate the impacts of development,

it would achieve sustainable development in social, economic and environmental terms. The specific additional requirements for a Travel Plan and a Community Use Management Plan will allow the sustainable use of the site to be promoted in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to the concerns of neighbours. On the basis of all the suggested provisions and the analysis set out in this report, the development would constitute sustainable development and be in accordance with the NPPF, adopted development plan and emerging policy.

- 8.7 Members are advised that should they be minded to grant planning permission for the development the application will need to be referred to the Secretary of State having regard to CLG Circular 02/2009 - The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009. This will establish if the SoS wishes to call in the application for their own determination on the basis that the proposal is deemed to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and having regard to the proposed scale of development in the Green Belt.

## **9. Recommendation**

That Members are minded to GRANT permission subject to referral to the Secretary of State under CLG Circular 02/2009 - The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 and the following conditions:

### Conditions/Reason

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

02. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans and documents. The approved plans for this development are:-

### Site Wide Plans

5092-OOB-ZZ-00-DR-L-0000 Rev. P03 – Site Location Plan  
HEX-RYD-ZZ-00-DR-A-0004-S2 Rev. P5 – Proposed Building Demolition Plan  
5092-OOB-ZZ-00-DR-L-0001 Rev. P10 – Site Layout as Proposed  
5092-OOB-ZZ-00-DR-L-0015 Rev. P06 – Circulation  
5092-OOB-ZZ-00-DR-L-0020 Rev. P08 – Indicative Contours and Tree Retention/Removal Plan  
5092-OOB-ZZ-00-DR-L-0030 Rev. P04 – Fencing  
5092-OOB-ZZ-00-DR-L-0040 Rev. P05 – Sections  
HEX-DES-XX-XX-DR-ME-9602 Rev. P02 – M&E External Services Proposed Layout  
HEX-DES-XX-XX-DR-ME-9604 Rev. P02 – M&E External Services Western Services Corridor  
HEX-BGP-XX-XX-DR-C-111 Rev. P04 – External Works Layout Sheet 1  
HEX-BGP-XX-XX-DR-C-112 Rev. P04 – External Works Layout Sheet 2  
Bat and Bird Box Locations (received 02/12/19)

## Mitigation in Retained Buildings (Figure E3a: E3 Ecology - 25/11/19)

### New Building Plans

HEX-RYD-00-00-DR-A-3000-S2 Rev. P25 - GA Plans - Level 00  
HEX-RYD-00-01-DR-A-3001-S2 Rev. P23 - GA Plans - Level 01  
HEX-RYD-00-02-03-DR-A-3002-S2 Rev. P23 - GA Plans - Levels 02 - 03  
HEX-RYD-00-RF-DR-A-3003-S2 Rev. P10 - GA Plans - Roof Level  
HEX-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3600-S2 Rev. P9 - GA Elevations - Education Block  
HEX-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3601-S2 Rev. P9 - GA Elevations - Walled Garden  
HEX-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3602-S2 Rev. P9 - GA Elevations - Sports Block  
HEX-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3800-S2 Rev. P4 - GA Sections

### Detailed Hydro Plans

5092-OOB-ZZ-XX-DR-L-0050 Rev. P01 - Detail Step  
5092-OOB-ZZ-XX-DR-L-0051 Rev. P01 - Detail Railings  
HEX-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-4100-S0 Rev. P1 - New Build Interface Section Details  
HEX-RYD-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1415-S2 Rev. P3 - Hydro to New Build Enlarged Sectional Elevations  
HEX-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3304-S2 Rev. P1 - Hydro Ceiling Finishes Plans  
HEX-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3406-S2 Rev. P1 - Hydro Floor Finishes Plans  
HEX-RYD-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1416-S2 Rev. P1 - Proposed Hydro Lift – Plans  
HEX-RYD-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1417-S2 Rev. P1 - Proposed Hydro Lift – Sections  
HEX-RYD-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1418-S2 Rev. P2 - Proposed Hydro Lift - Sections 02  
HEX-RYD-00-00-DR-A-6110-S2 Rev. P1 - Hydro Door Plan - Level 00  
HEX-RYD-00-01-DR-A-6111-S2 Rev. P1 - Hydro Door Plan - Level 01  
HEX-RYD-00-02-DR-A-6112-S2 Rev. P1 - Hydro Door Plan - Level 02  
HEX-RYD-00-03-DR-A-6113-S2 Rev. P1 - Hydro Door Plan - Level 03  
GA-01 Rev.1 - S&B Hydro GA-Level 00-P1  
GA-02 Rev. 1 - S&B Hydro GA-Level 01-P1  
GA-03 - S&B Hydro GA-Level 02 to Level Belvedere  
GA-04 - S&B Hydro North Elevation  
GA-05 - S&B Hydro South Elevation  
GA-06 - S&B Hydro East Elevation  
GA-07 - S&B Hydro West Elevation  
GA-08 - S&B Hydro Courtyard Elevation-West  
GA-09 - S&B Hydro Courtyard Elevation-North and South  
S&B Hydro New partition sketch D19  
4.8.22 Rev. P2 - Plant & Services Distribution Strategy, Level 00  
4.8.23 Rev. P2 - Plant & Services Distribution Strategy, Level 01  
4.8.24 Rev. P2 - Plant & Services Distribution Strategy, Levels 02-03

### Documents

External Lighting Assessment Report (Rev 05 - December 2019: received by email 17/12/19)  
School Travel Plan (46020/5501/TP01 Rev C - 02/12/19)  
Heritage Statement (HEX-RYD-00-ZZ-RP-A-1000-S1-P2)  
Flood Risk Assessment (19T2035 / FRA Issue 002 - 29/11/2019)  
Drainage Philosophy (19T2035 / DP Issue 002 - 29/11/2019)  
Dendra Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Oobe\_QEHS\_AIA1.4. – 02/12/2019)

Bus Parking Layout Note (46020/5501/TN1 Rev C – 27/11/19)  
Transport Assessment (46020/5503/TA Rev A - 26/9/19)  
Response to Highways Development Management Letter (Peter Brett Associates  
LLP ref: 46020 - 03/12/19)

#### Construction Related Plans and Documents

TEMPZONE Rev A – Temporary classroom location  
Construction Management Plan (V3 - 17.12.19)  
Dust Control Plan (HS&S-FRM-N02-XX Issue 01 Rev No.00, November 2019)  
19T2035 – Ground and Storm Water Management During Construction dated  
2019-12-16 produced by Billingham George & Partners  
HEX-BGP-XX-XX-DR-C-905 Rev P01 – Construction Surface Water Management –  
Phase 1  
HEX-BGP-XX-XX-DR-C-906 Rev P01 – Construction Surface Water Management –  
Phase 2  
HEX-BGP-XX-XX-DR-C-907 Rev P01 – Construction Surface Water Management –  
Phase 3

Reason: To ensure that the approved development is carried out in complete  
accordance with the approved plans and documents.

03. Notwithstanding any description of the materials in the application, no  
construction of any new buildings above damp proof course level shall be  
undertaken until precise details, to include samples, of the materials to be used in  
the construction of the external walls and roofs of the have been submitted to, and  
approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. All roofing and external facing  
materials used in the construction of the development shall conform to the materials  
thereby approved.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon  
completion and the character and appearance of the site and surrounding  
environment, in accordance with the provisions of Policies GD2, BE18, BE21 and  
BE22 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policies BE1 and NE1 of the Tynedale Core  
Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

04. Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, prior to their  
construction, details of the location, scale and appearance of any new retaining  
walls/structures, including details of materials, shall be submitted to the Local  
Planning Authority for approval. The development shall thereafter be undertaken in  
accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon  
completion and the character and appearance of the site and surrounding  
environment, in accordance with the provisions of Policies GD2, BE18, BE21 and  
BE22 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policies BE1 and NE1 of the Tynedale Core  
Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

05. Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, prior to their  
installation, full details of all acoustic fencing requirements within and to the  
boundaries of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local

Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion and the character and appearance of the site and surrounding environment, in accordance with the provisions of Policies GD2, BE18, BE21, BE22, CS19 and CS22 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policies BE1 and NE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

06. Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, a detailed landscaping scheme, showing both hard and soft landscaping proposals, to consist of a mix including locally native hedging, trees, shrubs and wildflowers and construction of pond before removal of any existing on-site ponds, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, and to include details for management and maintenance, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. This shall include the planting of trees and shrubs including a planting schedule setting out species, numbers, densities and locations, the creation of areas of hardstanding, pathways, etc. (including details of materials for areas of hardstanding), areas to be seeded with grass, and other works or proposals to achieve a satisfactory form of landscaping appropriate to the character of the area.

The scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details not later than the expiry of the next planting season following commencement of the development, or within such other time as may be approved with the Local Planning Authority as part of the approved scheme, and subsequently maintained in accordance with the approved management details.

The landscaped areas shall be subsequently maintained in accordance with the approved management details to ensure establishment of the approved scheme, including watering, weeding and the replacement of any plants, or areas of seeding or turfing comprised in the approved landscaping plans, which fail within a period up to 5 years from the completion of the development.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion, in accordance with the provisions of Policies GD2, NE37 and H32 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policy NE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

07. Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, prior to their installation/use, precise details of measures to incorporate renewable energy and/or energy efficiency measures in the design of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The measures shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the new school buildings being brought into use and shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To achieve a sustainable form of development, and in the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion, the character and appearance of the site and surrounding environment and the amenity of surrounding residents, in accordance with the provisions of Policies GD2, BE18, BE21 and BE22 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policies BE1, NE1 and EN3 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

08. All trees and hedges within, and to the boundaries of, the site identified on plan 5092-OOB-ZZ-00-DR-L-0020 P08 – Indicative Contours and Tree Retention/Removal Plan and the Dendra Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Oobe\_QEHS\_AIA1.4. – 02/12/2019) (AIA) shall be retained and protected throughout the course of development in accordance with the details within the AIA, and works shall be undertaken in accordance with the AIA and the guidance set out in BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Development: Recommendations (British Standards Institution, 2012), unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Protection measures shall be implemented in complete accordance with the approved scheme and shall be provided and remain in place throughout the course of the construction of the development.

Any trees or hedges removed without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority, or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased before the completion of development or up to 12 months after completion of the development shall be replaced with trees or hedging of such size, species in a timescale and in positions as may be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the protection of existing trees and hedges to be retained in the interests of visual amenity, in accordance with the provisions of Policies GD2, NE33 and NE37 and of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policies NE1 and BE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

09. Prior to the new schools and sports pitches being brought into use out of school hours, including for wider community use, a management plan for the operation of the whole site outside of school hours, including measures for reporting and responding to complaints and a mechanism for review, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The management plan and use of the site shall thereafter be implemented and operated in accordance with the approved details at all times.

Reason: To ensure that the use of the site outside of school hours remains compatible with the character of the area in the interests of residential amenity, in accordance with Policies GD2, CS19 and CS22 of the Tynedale Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. The sports lighting hereby permitted shall not operate and the pitches shall not be in use outside the following hours in respect of both artificial pitches:

#### Northern Pitch

Before 0800 or after 2200 Mondays to Fridays inclusive and before 0900 or after 1800 hours on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

#### Southern Pitch

Before 0800 or after 2100 Mondays to Fridays inclusive and before 0900 or after 1800 hours on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

The sports lighting for both pitches shall only be in operation when the pitches are in use.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the site and the surrounding area and the amenity of neighbouring properties, in accordance with Policies GD2, CS19 and CS22 of the Tynedale Local Plan and Policies BE1 and NE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy.

11. Prior to its temporary use during the construction phase, elevations and floor plans for the temporary classroom provision to be located in the temporary classroom zone identified on the submitted plan with reference TEMPZONE Rev A, and details of the anticipated time period for which it will be required, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details and the temporary accommodation removed when it is no longer required following occupation of the new school buildings.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion and the character and appearance of the site and surrounding environment, in accordance with the provisions of Policies GD2, BE18, BE21 and BE22 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policies BE1 and NE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. No development of the surface and base of the rubber crumb artificial grass pitch shall commence until details of its construction have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (after consultation with Sport England). The rubber crumb artificial grass pitch shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the proposed artificial grass pitch is capable of accommodating rugby in order to meet paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

13(a) Following the demolition of the relevant existing buildings, no works to develop the new grass playing field shall commence until the following documents have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England:

(i) A detailed assessment of ground conditions (including drainage and topography) of the land proposed for the area of new grass playing field which identifies constraints which could adversely affect playing field quality; and

(ii) Where the results of the assessment to be carried out pursuant to (i) above identify constraints which could adversely affect playing field quality, a detailed scheme to address any such constraints. The scheme shall include a written specification of the proposed soils structure, proposed drainage, cultivation and other operations associated with grass and sports turf establishment and a programme of implementation.

(b) The approved scheme shall be carried out in full and in accordance with the approved programme of implementation. The land shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the scheme and made available for playing field use in accordance with the scheme.



Reason: To ensure that the new area of replacement playing field is prepared to an adequate standard and is fit for purpose and to accord with paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

14. Use of the development shall not commence until a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement has been provided to the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply to the proposed indoor and outdoor sports facilities and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-school users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. The agreement shall be accompanied by a timetable of implementation including details of when each element of the new indoor and outdoor sports facilities at the site will be first available for community use. The development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement and the timetable of implementation.

Reason: To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facilities, and to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

15. No works to replace the new artificial hockey pitch's surface, once installed, shall be undertaken without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority, following consultation with Sport England.

Reason: To enable the needs of sports which require access to artificial grass pitches to be properly planned for, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

16. Prior to first occupation of the new school buildings, details of the adoption and maintenance of all SuDS features shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A maintenance schedule and log, which includes details for all SuDS features for the lifetime of development shall be comprised within and be implemented forthwith in perpetuity following the completion of each phase.

Reason: To ensure that the scheme to dispose of surface water operates at its full potential throughout the development's lifetime, in accordance with Policy GD5 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

17. Prior to the first use of each phase of the development, a verification report carried out by a qualified drainage engineer must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, to demonstrate that all sustainable drainage systems have been constructed as per the agreed scheme. This verification report shall include:

- as built drawings for all SuDS components - including dimensions (base levels, inlet/outlet elevations, areas, depths, lengths, diameters, gradients etc);
- construction details (component drawings, materials, vegetation);
- Health and Safety file;
- details of ownership organisation/adoption details.

Reason: To ensure that all sustainable drainage systems are designed to the DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, in accordance with Policy GD5 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

18. The noise from fixed plant shall not exceed the following noise rating levels when assessed at the specified locations, using BS 4142:2014+A1:2019:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Background Level (LA90)</b>	<b>Plant Rating Level at the NSR LAr, Tr, dB</b>
1. 29 Leazes Park	Daytime (0700 - 2300)	39	39
	Night (2300-0700)	36	36
2. Hydro Bungalow/Milestone Bungalow	Daytime (0700 - 2300)	40	40
	Night (2300-0700)	28	28
3. 10/11 Alexandra Crescent	Daytime (0700 - 2300)	36	36
	Night (2300-0700)	30	30
4. Craigie/Glenside	Daytime (0700 - 2300)	41	41
	Night (2300-0700)	26	26

where \*T shall be 1 hour between 07:00 and 23:00 and 15 minutes between 23:00 and 07:00.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise, in accordance with Policies GD2, CS19 and CS22 of the Tynedale Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

19. Once the new school buildings have been brought into use, the applicant/operator shall employ a competent acoustic consultant to assess the cumulative level of fixed plant noise emissions from the development at the nearest noise sensitive properties against the permitted levels in Condition 18.

The assessment shall be undertaken in accordance with the methodology described in BS 4142:2014+A1:2019. The applicant shall submit a validation report based on the consultant's findings to the Local Planning Authority for written approval within one month of the new school being brought into use.

Where the fixed plant noise levels from the development exceed the levels stated in Condition 18, at the nearest noise sensitive premises, appropriate mitigation measures shall agreed and implemented in full within a timescale approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise, in accordance with Policies GD2, CS19 and CS22 of the Tynedale Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

20. No further development shall take place following each phase of site clearance/demolition works until a scheme to deal with any contamination of land or pollution of controlled waters in relation to that phase has been submitted to and

approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and until the measures approved in that scheme have been implemented. The scheme shall include all of the following measures unless the Local Planning Authority dispenses with any such requirement in writing:

a) Further site investigations are recommended in the Phase 2 reports (Geoenvironmental Appraisal produced by Dunelm Geotechnical & Environmental, Report No: D9148/03 and dated 25/09/2019 and Phase 2: Site Investigation produced by Solmek Ltd, Report: S190945 dated November 2019) and shall be carried out to fully and effectively characterise the nature and extent of any land contamination and/ or pollution of controlled waters . It shall specifically include a risk assessment that adopts the Source-Pathway-Receptor principle, in order that any potential risks are adequately assessed taking into account the sites existing status and proposed new use. Two full copies of the site investigation and findings shall be forwarded to the Local Planning Authority without delay upon completion.

b) Thereafter, a written Method Statement (or Remediation Strategy) detailing the remediation requirements for the land contamination and/or pollution of controlled waters affecting the site shall be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and all requirements shall be implemented and completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. No deviation shall be made from this scheme without express written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

c) Two full copies of a full closure (Verification Report) report shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The report shall provide verification that the required works regarding contamination have been carried out in accordance with the approved Method Statement(s). Post remediation sampling and monitoring results shall be included in the closure report to demonstrate that the required remediation has been fully met.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and dwellings are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to any future occupants, in accordance with Policy CS23 of the Tynedale Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

21. If during redevelopment contamination not previously considered is identified, then a written Method Statement regarding this material shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The relevant phase of the development shall not be brought into use until a method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and measures proposed to deal with the contamination have been carried out.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and dwellings are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to any future occupants.

22. During the construction period, there should be no noisy activity, i.e. audible at the site boundary, on Sundays or Bank Holidays or outside of the following hours: Monday to Friday - 0800 to 1800, Saturday 0800 to 1300, unless otherwise agreed in advance in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any repeatedly noisy activity at any time may render the developer liable to complaints which could result in investigation as to whether a statutory nuisance is being caused.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise, in accordance with Policies GD2, CS19 and CS22 of the Tynedale Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

23. During the construction or demolitions phase of the development there shall be no construction deliveries or collections from the site outside the hours of Monday to Friday 08:00 to 18:00 and Saturday 08:00 to 13:00. Within these hours, construction deliveries or collections shall be in accordance with the approved Construction Management Plan.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise, in accordance with Policies GD2, CS19 and CS22 of the Tynedale Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

24. Public Footpath No.7 shall be protected throughout the construction of the development. No action shall be taken to disturb the path surface, without prior consent from the Highway Authority, obstruct the path or in any way prevent or deter public use without the necessary temporary closure or Diversion Order having been made, confirmed and an acceptable alternative route provided.

Reason: To maintain the public right of way, in accordance with Policy TP27 of the Tynedale Local Plan.

25. Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, prior to the commencement of works to the proposed artificial grass pitches and any changes to the levels in this area, full details showing the proposed finished levels of the new pitches and the existing ground levels, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include an updated external lighting report with regard to the proposed sports lighting, and updated noise assessment in respect of the use of the pitches, and measures to mitigate any such impacts as required having regard to the proposed finished levels. Any additional approved plans or documents listed in Condition 2 that require updating as a result of the proposed levels shall also be included with the submitted details. The development shall thereafter be constructed in complete accordance with the approved details with any required mitigation being implemented prior to the first use of the pitches and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion and the character and appearance of the site and surrounding environment and the amenity of residents, in accordance with the provisions of Policies GD2, CS19 and CS22 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policies BE1 and NE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

26. The development shall not be made available for use for Hexham Middle School staff or pupils until the car parking area indicated on the approved plans, including any disabled car parking spaces therein, has been hard surfaced, sealed and marked out in parking bays in accordance with the approved plans and shall not be used for any purposes other than the parking of vehicles associated with the whole development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policies GD4 and GD7 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

27. Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, and within 9 months of the commencement of development, details of the following proposed permanent highway works, including a timetable for their implementation, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- New and amended vehicular access points to Whetstone Bridge Road;
- Uncontrolled pedestrian crossings improvements to Whetstone Bridge Road;
- Footway connection along existing desire line on highway verge at existing controlled pedestrian crossing on Allendale Road to the east of its junction at Whetstone Bridge Road;
- Traffic and Parking Management Scheme on Whetstone Bridge Road and at its junctions with Tynedale Terrace, Alexandra Crescent and Hellpool Lane
- Extension of existing 20mph school zone on Allendale Road;
- Resurfacing of Whetstone Bridge Road; and
- All other associated works associated with the above.

The highways works shall be constructed in accordance with the approved plans, details and in accordance with the approved timetable of implementation.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable transport, in accordance with Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

28. The development shall not be made available for use for Hexham Middle School staff or pupils until the cycle parking shown on the approved plans has been implemented. Thereafter, the cycle parking shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans and shall be kept available for the parking of cycles for the whole development at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, residential amenity and sustainable development, in accordance with Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

29. Prior to any approved vehicular or pedestrian access on Whetstone Bridge Road, Allendale Road or the footpath along the northern boundary of the development, being brought into use for any access other than for construction or demolition works, details of surface water drainage to manage run off from private land at that location shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved surface water drainage scheme shall be implemented with the approved details before the said access is brought into use for any purpose of than for construction or demolition works.

Reason: In order to prevent surface water run off in the interests of the amenity of the area and to ensure suitable drainage has been investigated for the development and implemented, in accordance with Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policies GD4 and GD5 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

30. The development shall not be made available for use by Hexham Middle School staff or pupils until details of Electric Vehicle Charging for a minimum of 4no. cars have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved electric vehicle charging points shall also be implemented before the development is made available for use by Hexham Middle School staff or pupils. Thereafter, the electric vehicle charging points shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and shall be kept available for the parking of electric vehicles at all times.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable development, in accordance with Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

31. Within six months of occupation of the development by Hexham Middle School staff or pupils, details of a Full School Travel Plan (in line with the approved School Travel Plan) for both schools including an action plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. At all times thereafter the approved Full School Travel Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details. This Full School Travel Plan must include:

- i. details of and results from an initial travel to school survey;
- ii. clearly specified ongoing targets for pupil and staff travel mode shares;
- iii. a plan for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the Full Travel Plan; and
- iv. a scheme providing for a biennial monitoring report to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority regarding the implementation of the Full School Travel Plan

Reason: In the interests of Sustainable Development, in accordance with Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

32. Unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the approved Construction Management Plan shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction phases of the development.

Reason: To prevent nuisance in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety, in accordance with Policies GD2 and GD4 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

33. Unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the temporary school bus arrangements as set out in the approved Construction Management Plan shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction phases. This shall also include the provision of temporary accesses and temporary traffic management procedures and works as set out in the approved Construction Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, sustainable transport and residential amenity, in accordance with Policies GD2 and GD4 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

34. The approved school bus parking, drop off and pick up area, associated barriers and accesses, shall be brought into use in accordance with the construction phasing as set out in the approved Construction Management Plan and shall be

surfaced, sealed and marked out in accordance with the approved layout plans. Thereafter, the school bus parking, drop off and pick up area shall not be used for any other purpose other than for the use of the whole development for parking of buses and the pick up and drop off of pupils to and from the whole development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable transport, in accordance with Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

35. Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, prior to their construction/installation, full details of the scale and appearance of the new container and sprinkler tank, including details of materials, shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion and the character and appearance of the site and surrounding environment, in accordance with the provisions of Policies GD2, BE18 and BE22 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policies BE1 and NE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

36. No development shall take place unless in accordance with the avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures detailed within the ecological reports ('ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL QEHS HEXHAM -OCTOBER 2019', Version R05, 'BAT TREE ASSESSMENT QEHS - NOVEMBER 2019', Version R03, 'BAT SURVEY QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL HEXHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND - OCTOBER 2019', Version R04, 'GREAT CRESTED NEWT SURVEY QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL - SEPTEMBER 2019', Version R03, 'BREEDING BIRD SURVEY QEHS HEXHAM - SEPTEMBER 2019', Version R02, E3 Ecology Ltd..) AMPHIBIAN METHOD STATEMENT - NOVEMBER 2019, version R02) and as shown on the architect's drawings ('Bat & Bird Box Locations R02' and 'Bat Mitigation in Retained Buildings', Received 02/12/19) including, but not restricted to:

- obtaining a Natural England European Protected Species Development Licence;
- erection of bat boxes and inclusion of bat roost provision (as specified);
- adherence to timing restrictions;
- adherence to precautionary working methods and Method Statement;
- adherence to external lighting recommendations in accordance with '*Bats & Lighting in the UK*' Bat Conservation Trust/Institution of Lighting Professionals, 2018;
- erection of bird boxes (as specified);
- any deep (in excess of 300mm) excavations left open overnight to be either securely covered or provided with an earth or timber ramp not less than 300mm wide and no steeper than 45 degrees to provide an escape route for ground animals that might otherwise become entrapped;
- updating active season bat and bird nesting surveys to be carried out in the event that demolition/development works do not commence before the end of October 2020 with the results of those surveys together with any necessary modifications to avoidance, mitigation or enhancement measures to be forwarded to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before works commence.

Reason: To maintain the favourable conservation status of protected species, in accordance with Policy NE27 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policy NE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

37. No development /demolition, removal of vegetation or felling of trees shall be undertaken between 1 March and 31 August unless a suitably qualified ecologist has first confirmed that no bird's nests that are being built or are in use, eggs or dependent young will be damaged or destroyed.

Reason: To protect nesting birds, all species of which are protected by law, in accordance with Policy NE27 of the Tynedale Local Plan, Policy NE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

38. No development shall be carried out other than in accordance with <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pollution-prevention-for-businesses> for the protection of the watercourse and the prevention of pollution or contamination of the watercourse and it's associated habitat during construction works.

Reason: To ensure that a watercourse is not polluted or contaminated during development works, in accordance with Policy NE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

39. Prior to development reaching damp-proof course level, a biodiversity mitigation and net-gain scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, including timescales for implementation of the scheme. This shall utilise the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%. The approved scheme shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme and timescales.

Reason: To secure adequate mitigation/compensation for impacts on habitats and species of principal importance in England, and to secure biodiversity net gain, in accordance with Policy NE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy and as required by paragraphs 170 and 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Background Papers:** Planning application file(s) 19/03998/CCD