

## **Committee Presentation – 18 August 2020**

### **Prepared by Alistair Flatman (agent) in support of planning application**

#### **Demolition of swimming pool building and construction of 2 storey modular classbase building comprising 6 classrooms, toilets and circulation space @ St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy, Ridge Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland**

**LPA ref - 20/01693/CCD**

Good evening Chair and Members of Planning Committee.

I am the agent for the applicant and have prepared a short statement below summarising the key points in relation to the proposal.

Given the very thorough and comprehensive officer committee report which sets out a clear assessment of relevant issues, I do not propose saying too much. However, I have set out a couple of key points below.

The planning application is submitted on behalf of Northumberland County Council for a two storey modular classroom building at St Benet Biscop Academy, Bedlington.

The proposed classroom will have 6 classrooms and can accommodate up to 210 pupils to allow for future growth and / or delivery of flexible class sizes given current implications associated with the COVID19 pandemic. It will be located to the north of the main school buildings on the footprint of the existing swimming pool building which will be demolished.

The applicant has submitted documentation to confirm that the increase in pupil numbers (which is initially 122) is as a result of the change of organisation of Meadowdale Middle Academy from a middle academy to a primary academy with effect from September 2020

As set out in the committee report there is a clear need for the proposal to meet the forecast need/number of admissions for children in the locality from September 2020 and so thus discharging the L.A's statutory duty. Importantly, it is noted that the Council's Education and Skills Group acknowledge this need and support the proposal.

In terms of principle therefore, the proposal is consistent with national (para 94 NPPF) and local planning policy (CF2) and as such the principle of development is acceptable.

The officers report clearly assesses the appropriateness of the design of the building. The building is designed to reflect its purpose and surroundings with windows located to provide natural light to classrooms and circulation space. The northern elevation is blank to ensure no over looking of dwellings to the north.

It is noted that objections have been raised in regard of over looking and loss of privacy. Again, this is comprehensively addressed in the report before you. However, it is important to note this is a school use with the classroom in use during normal school

hours. As such the building will not be in use in evenings or weekends when residents may be more likely to be using garden areas. In addition, as set out in the officer report, there are no openings in the north elevation whilst the nearest garden boundary is 12m from the proposed classroom. It is worth noting that if this was a residential scheme, space about dwellings would normally require a distance of 10.5m from dwelling to the boundary to ensure no overlooking issues. As such this proposal is in excess of that at 12m to boundary. As such, a combination of the likely hours of use of the classroom, its orientation relative to adjacent dwellings, distance to the boundary and design / layout of the building ensures the living conditions of nearby residents is not adversely affected.

Matters relating to highways, trees and ecology are all dealt with in the report and it is noted there are no objections from any consultees.

In light of the above, and as set out in the report before you, the proposal is acceptable in principle and is consistent with all relevant national and local planning policies. There are no grounds to refuse and as such we respectfully request you support officer recommendation and grant planning permission.

Thank you for your time