



Northumberland County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries to: Judith Murphy

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Date: 31st March 2022

Dear Nicola,

Re: Elsdon Avenue Project

I write with regards to our meetings in January 2022 in respect of the Elsdon Avenue project and the relocation of Astley High School and Whytrigg Middle School. Two options were tabled.

Option 1 was to relocate the school, car parking facilities and all associated paraphernalia to an existing Green Belt site off The Avenue (to the north/north west) with access directly off The Avenue. Option 2 was to also to locate the school on this site with car parking located at the Seaton Delaval First School site. This would remove the need for access from The Avenue.

In Planning terms, given the Green Belt location, a 'very special circumstances' case would need to be presented to support the proposal. This should clearly evidence the outweighing benefits the school would bring when balanced against the harm to the Green Belt and the loss of the openness. Those benefits were discussed during our meetings, and from a planning perspective, the initial view was that the very special circumstances would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and could be supported.

As you are aware, there are many other considerations such as highways, ecology, ground conditions, archaeology, drainage etc which would all need to be considered within their own rights. Equally, the surrounding neighbours and wider area would be consulted. The outcome of that process cannot be anticipated at this stage. The application would also need to be considered at a Planning Committee and Members would ultimately determine the application, irrespective of officer recommendation.

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Notwithstanding this, provided the very special circumstances can be clearly and comprehensively demonstrated, and subject to all other matters mentioned, we could look to support either option of the proposals.

Yours sincerely

Judith Murphy

South East Area Manager
Development Manager

Name, Position, Department

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