



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Local Plan Part 2 Section 6.0 Proposed Additional Text – January 2020



Specialist School Site:
Higham Ferrers

Proposed new text [Local Plan Part 2: Section 6.0 Social Capital – additional subsection, “Education and training” at the end of section 6.0]

Proposed Special Educational Needs School.

The 2017 North Northamptonshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan and 2019 update for East Northamptonshire¹ identify strategic infrastructure requirements necessary to support growth. This is particularly relevant when considering education, learning and training, where a mixture of localised and strategic infrastructure projects may be required to support growth. Policy 10 of the Joint Core Strategy provides the principal mechanism by which development contributions towards education can be sought.

In addition to securing development contributions to mitigate the impacts of new development, Northamptonshire County Council and the Department for Education (DfE) have strategic responsibility for local authority maintained schools, academies and Free Schools, respectively. The Joint Policy Statement from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Education on ‘Planning for Schools Development’ (2011)² sets out the Government’s approach to support the development of state-funded schools and their delivery through the planning system.

The DfE identifies that the Plan should give consideration to evidence on education capacity and need, to ensure that developer contributions towards education infrastructure (school expansions or new schools) can be effectively secured in accordance with Policy 10 of the Joint Core Strategy. In this way, these obligations can be made clear to developers and other stakeholders in assessing both viability of this Plan and development proposals.

The Government (DfE) has considered Rushden’s Growth Town status and the Rushden East allocation (Joint Core Strategy, Policy 33). In light of the SUE proposals and strategic educational infrastructure requirements, the DfE and County Council have identified an overwhelming need for additional educational facilities for students aged 11-18 with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan for moderate learning difficulties to severe learning difficulties, including students with

¹ [To be finalised]

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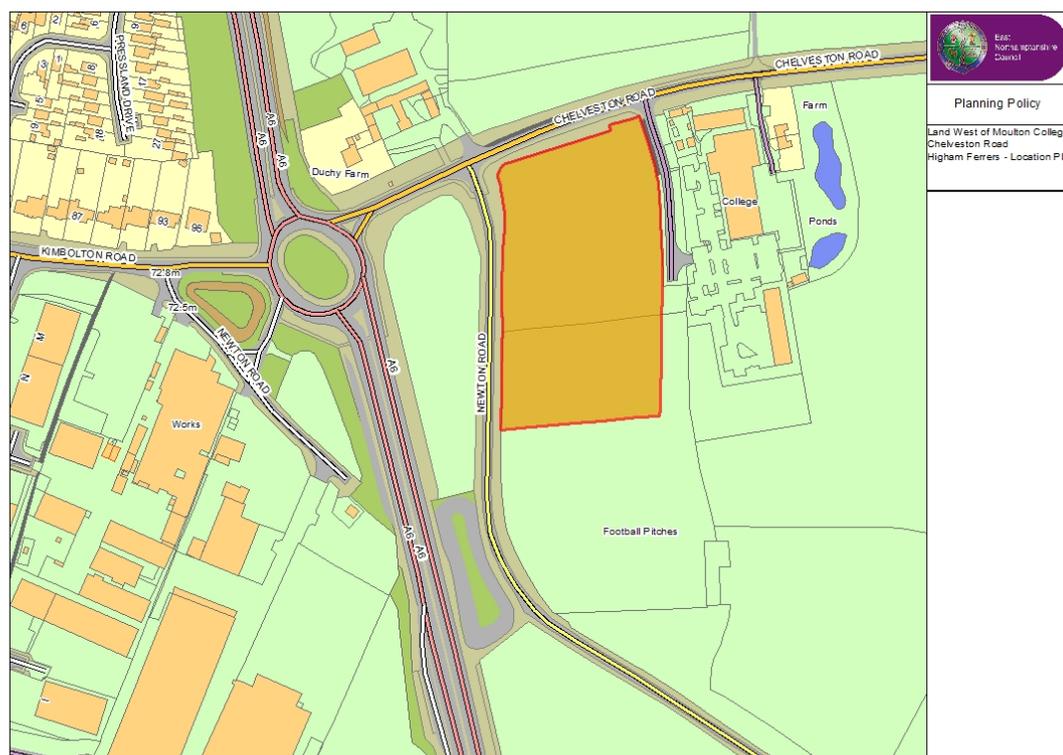
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6316/1966097.pdf

autism. This would be addressed by the development of a new Free School as part of the Friars East Academy, with a full capacity of 145 pupils.

The DfE has investigated 18 potential sites. Through this assessment, it identified land to the south of Chelveston Road /east of Newton Road, Higham Ferrers as the most suitable, deliverable site. The 2.1ha site is located on greenfield land to the west of Moulton College. It is situated just beyond the Higham Ferrers urban area and Rushden East SUE (as shown in figure 13).

The Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan sets out local direction and guiding principles for the protection and enhancement of community facilities and supports the development of new community facilities (including education) where appropriate. (Policy HF.CD2).

Figure 13: Land to the west of Moulton College, Higham Ferrers



[Replacement] Policy EN16:Special Educational Needs School, south of Chelveston Road, Higham Ferrers

Land to the west of Moulton College – south of Chelveston Road (2.1ha) – is allocated for the development of a new Special Educational Needs (SEN) Free School. The development should provide for:

- a) Development of a school building with capacity for 145 pupils and associated on-site infrastructure;*
- b) Primary vehicular and pedestrian access off Chelveston Road (north), with potential secondary access off Newton Road (west), to provide enhanced connectivity with the main Higham Ferrers and Rushden urban areas;*
- c) Improvements to pedestrian and cycle access for crossing the A6 Bypass;*
- d) Sufficient car parking and associated on-site servicing to meet the needs of employees and visitors;*
- e) Net gains to recreational open space provision and green infrastructure, including the sharing and enhancement of existing facilities with the adjacent Moulton College campus; and*
- f) Coordinated training and educational opportunities between the new school and Moulton College.*



Appendix 3 – SPECIALIST SCHOOL SITE PROVISION BACKGROUND PAPER

Local Plan Part 2 – Education and training

January 2020

This background paper has been prepared to:

1. Explain the background to the proposed site allocation for a new Special Educational Needs (SEN) school site within the District; and
2. Describe how the site selection process has been undertaken and applied to inform the chosen land allocation.

1.0 Introduction and background

1.1 During the 1st draft consultation for the District-wide Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2), the Department for Education (DfE) submitted a representation (17 December 2018), to promote the potential allocation of land for a new SEN school within the District. The DfE representation raised the following matters:

- Under the provisions of the Education Act 2011 and the Academies Act 2010, all new state schools are now academies/ free schools, with the DfE as the delivery body;
- Local education authorities retain the statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient schools; e.g. through managing S106 development contributions, so the DfE must work closely both with the education authority (Northamptonshire County Council) and planning authority (East Northamptonshire Council);
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that local planning authorities (LPAs) should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available (paragraph 94); e.g. through safeguarding land;
- The Council should also have regard to the Joint Policy Statement from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Education on '*Planning for Schools Development*' (2011) which sets out the Government's commitment to support the

development of state-funded schools and their delivery through the planning system; and

- The DfE encourages close working with local authorities during all stages of planning policy development to help guide the development of new school infrastructure, in accordance with the statutory Duty to Cooperate.

1.2 In its initial representation, the DfE questioned whether the implications of the additional housing site allocations on education infrastructure have been assessed, over and above the impacts of the strategic allocations in the NNJCS. The DfE argues that the LPP2 should go further than the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) 2011-2031 (Local Plan Part 1) in assessing education capacity and need, to ensure that any requirements for developer contributions are satisfactorily met.

1.3 The DfE has proposed a site specific land allocation for a new SEN school site for Friars East Academy. The remainder of this document summarises the DfE justification for this proposal.

2.0 Requirements for Friars East Academy SEN school site

2.1 The DfE has sought the allocation of a site within the vicinity of Rushden for a new SEN school. The DfE representation cites Rushden's status as a Growth Town in the JCS (Policy 11) and the importance of the Rushden East sustainable urban extension (SUE) as the principal single development scheme within the District.

2.2 The DfE explains that Friars Academy in Wellingborough (an Ofsted Outstanding academy) is over-subscribed and its current site does not allow for further expansion, and that it is working with the County Council to meet an overwhelming demand for additional SEN places. Friars Academy is a specialist SEN free school/ Academy and the DfE has set out the following criteria for the proposed school:

- Students aged 11-18 with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan for moderate learning difficulties to severe learning difficulties (e.g. autism);
- Full capacity for 145 pupils;

2.3 The requirements of the Friars East Academy have informed the DfE's proposed site allocation. Further details are set out below.

3.0 DfE proposed school site allocation – Land to the west of Moulton College, Chelveston Road, Higham Ferrers

3.1 The DfE has undertaken an extensive site assessment process. 18 potential sites were investigated, within a search area between Wellingborough and Raunds (A45 corridor).

- 3.2** The DfE has also appointed the consultant, Cushman and Wakefield (C&W), to prepare a detailed comprehensive site assessment, to provide a robust evidence base for the site selection. A draft was circulated during autumn 2019 and it is anticipated that the final C&W document will be published in early 2020.
- 3.3** The DfE has identified land to the South of Chelveston Road (B645) and east of Newton Road, near Higham Ferrers and Rushden, NN10 8HN as the most suitable, deliverable site. This land, to the west of Moulton College, has the following characteristics:
- 2.1ha greenfield site;
 - Rectangular shape;
 - Adjacent to Moulton College;
 - Close to the Rushden East SUE, Moulton College and Higham Town FC sites, and the emerging proposals for the Northamptonshire FA site (Newton Road, Higham Ferrers);
 - Currently part of the Duchy of Lancaster estate;
- 3.4** Overall, the DfE has emphasised that the proposed site ideally fulfils the requirements of the Friars East Academy for a new site.
- 4.0 Project plan – timescale for delivery of Friars East Academy new SEN proposals**
- 4.1** The proposals were also subject to a pre-application enquiry in 2018. This was accompanied by a range of site specific technical assessments, so it is likely that an application would be submitted during 2020. The DfE emphasised that to provide certainty around delivery of the school, the identified site should be formally allocated for D1 use to accommodate the proposed school.
- 4.2** The DfE also highlighted that it is critical that discussions take place as quickly as possible to agree an available and suitable site which can be delivered to meet the proposed school opening timetable (as at December 2018; a proposed opening date of September 2020) and taking account of site acquisition, planning and construction programme requirements.
- 5.0 Proposed draft LPP2 text**
- 5.1** The addition of Land west of Moulton College, Higham Ferrers as a site specific allocation for a new SEN school necessitates additional consultation in advance of the formal statutory Pre-Submission Draft (Regulation 19) consultation for the LPP2. This entails the addition of a site allocations policy and supporting text within section 6.0 (Social Capital) of the LPP2.
- 5.2** This background paper sets out the contextual information for the proposal to allocate land to the west of Moulton College, Higham Ferrers for the development of a new SEN school. It is supported by an Annex (below), which sets out the draft text that it is proposed should be incorporated into the

LPP2. This will consist of a new sub-section, “Education and training” at the end of section 6.0 (Social Capital).

- 5.3** The consultation is anticipated to take place over a 6-week period, during February and March 2020.