

Erection of two temporary classroom blocks on existing playground, with access to existing site compound.

Buckingham Park Primary School

Planning Statement



**Prepared on behalf of Kier Construction
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Buckingham Park Primary School is a school serving approximately 550 children between the ages of 4 and 11. The school is maintained by West Sussex County Council.
- 1.2 To accommodate a growing admissions roll, the school was expanded with the addition of new classrooms at the south east of the previous school layout. The new parts of the building were approved in 2016 under planning application reference WSCC/015/16/SU for the "Erection of new 2 storey modular teaching block, improvement of car park and footpaths, extension of hard play area and construction of new canopy to the main entrance".
- 1.3 The new building approved in the application above has experienced difficulty in terms of water ingress, and repeated attempts at remedial works of the fabric of the building have been unsuccessful. It has been determined now, as a result of the continuing issues with the buildings and the impact this has on the learning environment for the pupils at the school, that more radical interventions are required.
- 1.4 The works required are sufficiently extensive that they can only be completed with a level of disruption that cannot be done alongside the continuing use of the building, and would require a period of time for completion that cannot be assured outside of the school opening times. Consequently, the proposals submitted here are for the erection of new temporary classrooms, on the existing play area at the north side of the school compound.
- 1.5 The proposed temporary classrooms and refurbishment works to the existing buildings will not result in or facilitate any alterations to the long term management or capacity of the school. On completion of works, the school would provide for the same level of pupil access as at present, with no changes to building footprint.
- 1.6 The site compound required to support the erection of the temporary classrooms has already been approved as a part of the application for similar works to the nearby St Nicholas and St Mary's Primary School. The approved site compound

was approved for a period of two years under planning application reference AWDM/0649/23 (Adur and Worthing District Council) to allow for the completion of works at St Nicholas and St Mary's school in the first year, with work then switching to Buckingham Park School in the second year. It is this second phase to which the current application relates.

2.0 Site Location and Access

- 2.1 The school is located at the end on Hamfield Avenue, which comes off the east side of Buckingham Road. The school is located at the rear of residential properties on Upper Shoreham Road to the north, and Buckingham Road to the west. The wider area around the school is predominantly residential in character, and is close to the town centre, which lies to the south west. There are other public facilities in the area, with another school to the east (St Nicholas and St Mary's), across the playing fields, with allotments to the south of the green space shared with the adjacent school, and some nearby convenience stores.
- 2.2 The school is readily accessed by public transport with bus routes along the Upper Shoreham Road to the north, and along Buckingham Road – there is a bus stop at the end of Hamfield Avenue, immediately by the entrance to the school. However, being in the midst of a residential area, it can also be easily accessed on foot, and as a primary school, it is likely that most of the children attending live nearby.
- 2.3 Limited car parking is available on site – no changes are proposed for the car parking provision as part of this application. Onsite cycle storage is provided, and no changes are proposed for this as a result of the current application.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 As has already been stated, the most relevant planning history was the approval given under WSCC/015/16/SU for the “Erection of new 2 storey modular teaching block, improvement of car park and footpaths, extension of hard play area and construction of new canopy to the main entrance”. Of the different elements approved in that scheme, the most relevant part of the proposal from the perspective of the current application is the 2 storey modular teaching block. The temporary classrooms proposed here are required for teaching accommodation while the blocks approved in 2016 are renovated.
- 3.2 Also of direct relevance to this application, is the previously mentioned AWDM/0649/23 which was submitted to Adur and Worthing District Council on the 3rd May 2023, and approved on the 17th July 2023. This allowed the construction of a site compound for a period of two years, with access via Buckingham Close, and an approved Construction Environment Management Plan to minimise impacts. This site compound was approved for a period of two years so that the erection of temporary classrooms followed by remedial works to the main buildings could be carried out at St Nicholas and St Mary’s school in the first year (academic year 2023-2024), and following completion of those works, the intention would be for the works to relocate to Buckingham Park in the academic year 2024-2025.
- 3.3 Prior to the approved extension to which this application relates, there had been a previous approved extension under planning application reference WSCC/069/13/SU, for “New build extensions, and internal remodelling of the existing primary school to provide additional teaching, support and ancillary accommodation, complete with associated hard and soft landscaping works and amenity lighting to school entrance footpath”. That application provided an extension to which the part of the building which this application relates to was added.
- 3.4 The current application is linked to another application yet to be submitted. The temporary classrooms at Buckingham Park Primary School are to enable a continuity of education for the students at the school while works to refurbish the existing classrooms take place – the works are so extensive that the classrooms

will be unusable for that period. It is anticipated that an application for the remedial works themselves will be submitted imminently, while this application is still under consideration.

4.0 Proposed Development

- 4.1 As introduced above, this application forms the first of two applications which it is anticipated will result in refurbishment of existing buildings at Buckingham Park Primary School. The refurbishment works required will be subject to a separate application at a later stage, specific to the works required on the buildings themselves.
- 4.2 The description of the development proposed in this application would be "Erection of 2x two storey temporary classrooms on a playground, with temporary access to the site from the existing site compound". The period required for the development would allow the classrooms to be used for one academic year (2024-25), with time allowed during the summer holidays 2024 for the construction of the temporary classrooms, and during the summer holidays 2025 for the removal of the temporary classrooms, and an additional period following the commencement of the school year 2025 to allow for removing the site compound – taking the final required time to October 2025.
- 4.3 The current application is focussed on enabling works, utilising the existing approved site compound and access via Buckingham Close for vehicles associated with the proposed refurbishment, and the provision of temporary classroom accommodation for the school. When remedial works have been completed and the temporary classrooms removed, the site compound would no longer be required and will also be removed, with the current access from Buckingham Close closed up and the site made good. All of these matters are relevant to the approved scheme with Adur and Worthing District Council.
- 4.4 The modular classroom built under application reference WSCC/015/16/SU centred on the erection of a new modular teaching block on land to the south east of the main building. Since completion of this work, the building has experienced difficulty in terms of water ingress, and repeated attempts at remedial works of the fabric of the building have been unsuccessful. It has been determined now, as a result of the continuing issues with the buildings and the impact this has on the learning environment for the pupils at the school, that more radical interventions are required.

- 4.5 The proposed temporary classrooms would allow for teaching to be decanted out of the existing buildings for the period required to complete the refurbishments. These temporary classrooms would be located on an existing area of hardstanding play area at the north side of the school site, behind residential properties on Upper Shoreham Road. For the period of construction of the temporary buildings, the access from the approved site compound would run along the playing field, approximately parallel with the rear line of the residential properties at a distance of between 35 and 50m. The existing site compound is located behind a residential building at 7 Buckingham Close, and the proposed internal access route would run behind properties on Fairlawns.
- 4.6 The location of the buildings has been selected as being the most suitable position, after assessing other locations within the school grounds. The chosen location presented the only viable location based on a range of issues including proximity to the existing buildings, minimal impact from development by being located on existing hard standing, minimal loss of play area for the children, and preservation of fire safety/emergency vehicle access arrangements. Alternative locations would have compromised one or more of these considerations, such that the location set out represents the option which causes the least harm across a range of issues.
- 4.7 For the remedial works to the existing school building, there would be an alternative layout for the internal access linking the site compound to the work area. This would be positioned further to the south and follow a less direct path than the access set out here. Details of the alternative internal site access will be submitted as part of the planning application that will be submitted for the remedial works to the main school building. However, on completion of those works, the internal access detail within this application would again be required to allow for the removal of the temporary buildings.

5.0 Planning Policy Context and Consideration

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the policies in the development plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (September 2023) is a material consideration.
- 5.2 West Sussex County Council development plans are not relevant to the current application, as the principle responsibilities as an upper tier Authority are related to Waste and Minerals Planning and Transport Planning. WSCC responsibility for this application derives from their role as the Local Education Authority, and as freeholders of the land on which the application site is located. Consequently, there are no County level planning policies relating to detailed matters for the application.
- 5.3 As a result of the background of WSCC involvement in the application, and as the determining body, it can be considered that the relevant policy framework against which this application should be considered is in fact that of the District in which the school is located. In this case that is Adur and Worthing. The current development framework for Adur comprises 'Emerging Adur Local Development Framework' - a collection of documents to collectively deliver a spatial strategy for Adur, and the 'Adur Local Plan 2017', adopted in December 2017.
- 5.4 The particular circumstances of this application are for temporary measures to facilitate improvements to existing infrastructure that would not result in any change to the level and nature of education provision. As a result many of the policies in the NPPF which refer to schools in the context of long term planning and ensuring adequate provision are not relevant to this application. The substantive issues here are for design and impact on the immediate local area, but even this view is impacted by the understanding that the proposed development is temporary.
- 5.5 Section 4 of the NPPF considers the decision making process, with advice in paragraph 38 that decisions should be made in a positive and creative way. Paragraph 47 highlights that decisions should be made in accordance with the

development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and stresses that decisions should be made as quickly as possible.

- 5.6 The Adur Local Plan does not include any policy that specifically addresses amenity. However, there are references, for example in 'Policy 20: Housing Mix and Quality', which refers to the need for new housing to protect the amenity of neighbouring dwellings. This principle can be assumed to carry over into other forms of development such as proposed here.
- 5.7 Policy 33 of the Adur Local Plan deals with 'Planning for Sustainable Communities'. The policy begins with the phrase 'The Council will protect, and support improvements to, social and community facilities.'

TRANSPORT

- 5.8 The approved development at St Nicholas and St Marys Primary School included a Construction Environment Management Plan for the use of the site compound. This set out, amongst other issues, arrangements for site vehicles accessing the site, limits on numbers of vehicle movements per day depending on each type of vehicle required for the development, and timings for when the site could be accessed. The details submitted for approval by Adur and Worthing District Council were established with the understanding that the proposed level and nature of vehicle activity would be sufficient to meet the requirements of development on both sites.
- 5.9 Consequently, it is not proposed to include another CEMP here, as this would only relate to already approved matters. However, it is worth highlighting that the construction required for the erection and eventual removal of the temporary classrooms subject to this application, and subsequently the remedial works to the main school building itself, can be carried out within the constraints agreed by the approved CEMP.
- 5.10 Furthermore, there are no proposals to amend, remove or add to any of the existing car parking/cycle storage spaces and facilities at the school during the proposed development.
- 5.11 Therefore it is considered that there are no relevant transport implications arising from the proposals that would require amendment to the CEMP.

- 5.12 It is acknowledged that the new internal access routes has the potential to result in some impacts which have not previously been assessed, for neighbours north of the site. Principally, this could be of relevance to properties at the southern end of Fairlawns – numbers 7-22.
- 5.13 As already stated, the distance between the proposed internal access route and the site boundary is between 35 and 50m, although there is an additional distance between the boundary and the closest properties. For some of the properties in the block containing 7-16 Fairlawns, the approved site compound is closer than the internal access route would be.
- 5.14 While there is inevitably going to be some additional impact of the internal access route on neighbouring properties, by bringing vehicle movements closer that is currently the case, the distance is still significant, and in a very open site noise arising would not be 'trapped' by nearby buildings and can dissipate rapidly over distance.
- 5.15 It should also be noted that the phase of development that requires the route running closest to the residential dwellings on Fairlawns is for a period at the beginning and end of the development cycle. During the remedial works on the existing buildings, which would occupy the majority of the time allocated for the whole project, the internal access would be diverted to the south to serve the development area that will be the subject of a subsequent application.
- 5.16 It is considered that the internal access route would result in some harm to the amenity of neighbours as a result of noise arising – however, the impact would be minor, short-lived within the programme of works, and as a part of a time-limited construction phase. The impacts should be balanced against the clear and substantial public benefits of improving the educational facilities used by over 500 children daily.

NOISE AND DUST ARISING

- 5.17 The CEMP also set out measures for the control of other disturbances that may arise from the operations during construction such as noise and dust arising from the site compound and construction area. As above, it is considered that the measures approved previously for the control of construction vehicle movements and environmental impacts are acceptable in this case also.

IMPACT OF TEMPORARY CLASSROOMS

- 5.18 The proposed temporary classroom building would be a two storey building on the north side of the school site, behind the rear boundaries of some properties on Upper Shoreham Road. The location is currently an area of hardstanding playgrounds with a strip of grass between the playground and the residential boundary, on which are located some small sheds for use in the school – these will be relocated for the duration of the proposed works – the receptor site has yet to be identified but the sheds do not require planning permission, and as such it is possible to determine this application without full knowledge of this minor detail.



Area between temporary classroom location on the playground (left), and the residential boundary (right) with the sheds (to be relocated) on the grass divide.

- 5.19 The design of the temporary classrooms is similar to that of the existing buildings on site, and would not be out of character with the local area. The temporary nature of the proposed classrooms means that any concerns for appearance should be considered as a minor concern with no long term impact on its setting.
- 5.20 The temporary classrooms would be located in line with three properties on Upper Shoreham Road – numbers 259 – 263. While the gardens will be quite close to the temporary classrooms, the main dwellings are situated approximately 50m north of the development. While these three identified buildings are in line with the

proposed buildings and could be considered to be the most likely to experience any harmful impacts of development, similar (but lesser) impacts would be experienced by other nearby properties.

- 5.21 The temporary classrooms would be sufficiently distant from the nearest properties that no loss of light will be experienced in the main dwellings of neighbours, and it is likely that there would not even be any overshadowing on the gardens other than at the end of the gardens during periods of low sun – primarily the winter. It is likely that this will have no substantive impact on the ability of neighbours to enjoy natural direct light in their properties or gardens.
- 5.22 The development however would be visible from the main dwellings and from within the rear gardens. The height of the buildings would result in some visual intrusion for neighbours, but this would be for a time limited period, with no long term harm arising. In addition, any negative impacts must be balanced against the clear and substantial public benefits of improving the educational facilities used by over 500 children daily.
- 5.23 The temporary classrooms would be at a significant distance from the main dwellings. The distance is such that the potential for loss of amenity from overlooking into private space within the dwellings is negligible. It must also be noted that these buildings are for use as classrooms, and as such would be active only during school hours – i.e. time limited within the school day, as well as for a restricted number of days within the year. During the most sensitive times from the perspective of occupants of the neighbouring dwellings – evenings and weekends – the buildings will be unused.
- 5.24 There are unlikely to be any noise impacts from the proposed temporary buildings as they will house contained classrooms. Indeed there is the potential for a reduction in noise impacts through the displacement of children using that part of the playground for informal or formal outdoor play/PE lessons during the day.
- 5.25 In summary, there is potential for minor amenity impacts in terms of loss of light to the extreme ends of nearby gardens, no noise impacts or risk over loss of privacy from overlooking as a result of these proposals. The visual impact of the proposed buildings is considered minor as it is at a significant distance from nearest neighbouring properties. Any harms arising as a result of the erection of the

buildings is mitigated by the fact that it is for a temporary period and so would not cause long term harms. Any harms arising should also be weighed against the very clear public benefit that this proposal brings.

ARBORICULTURE

- 5.26 The arboricultural report highlights areas where there are potential conflicts between development and the existing trees. The report concludes that no trees of significance are impacted by the development.

6.0 Summary

- 6.1 Consideration of the details included in this application should be given in the knowledge that all the proposals are for temporary measures designed to facilitate essential refurbishment on the modular classrooms built following the 2016 application. The temporary site compound and access from Buckingham Close would be unchanged from the already approved scheme, while the additional internal access route that forms part of this application would only be in situ for a limited period at the beginning and end of the programme of works. The temporary classrooms proposed for the playground would be required for one year.
- 6.2 The temporary classrooms would not be out of character with the area being similar in appearance to other recent buildings within the school site. The impact on neighbours would be minimal in terms of overlooking, at the same time as potentially reducing noise impacts from the reduction in the extent of the play area close to residents on Upper Shoreham Road. Again, it is important to recognise that the development would be temporary, and that as an enabling development, these any harms arising would be outweighed by the public benefits.