



DMC2019-003

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Application No:

18NP0104

Proposed Development:

Construction of replacement single storey flat roof extension to western elevation to provide additional teaching space at Greenhaugh First School, Greenhaugh, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1LX

Applicant Name:

Northumberland County Council

Reason for Committee Decision:

An objection has been received from Tasset and Greystead Parish Council, in addition to eleven letters of objection from members of the public, contrary to the recommendation that Members approve the application

Recommendation:

That Members are minded to approve the application subject to the conditions set out in the report

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the proposed construction of a single storey extension to Greenhaugh First School.
- 1.2 Greenhaugh First School is located to the northern edge of Greenhaugh, positioned to the western side of the main road through the village. The site is presently surrounded by open fields, bordered by trees and hedging, with a cluster of residential properties to the north and the main village to the south.



Fig. 1: Location of application site



- 1.3 The site comprises the school building which is constructed from stone and slate and dates from the early 1990s and is set within school grounds. The building was extended to the north eastern corner under permission granted in 2008, with solar panels understood to have been added to the west-facing roofslope after 2011. The building also benefits from a white uPVC conservatory to the western elevation which was granted planning permission in 2003.



Fig. 2: View facing east towards school building and existing conservatory

- 1.4 The application proposes the removal of the existing conservatory and construction of a replacement single storey extension to the western elevation of the building.
- 1.5 The design of the proposed extension has been amended during the course of the application. As amended, this would project 4.5m from the western elevation of the building for a width of 14m (an increase of 5m relative to the existing conservatory) and would incorporate a mono-pitch roof with a 3° fall from a height of 4m to 3.5m. The extension would be finished in cream/buff coloured render atop a 0.8m high stone plinth with a dark grey coloured membrane roof, and would incorporate white uPVC windows along the western side. A stepped access would be created to the northern end of the western elevation, with an existing ramped access retained to the southern elevation, both served by white uPVC doors.
- 1.6 The application states that the proposed extension would provide additional classroom space, which as amended is proposed as a single open-plan room, to meet an anticipated increase in pupil numbers as the school develops into a primary school.

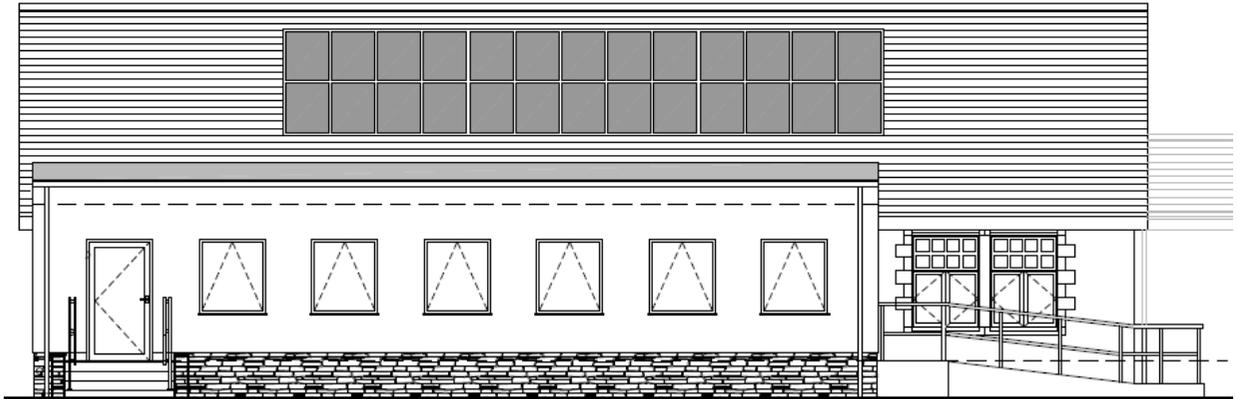


Fig. 3: Proposed western elevation (extract from proposed plans)

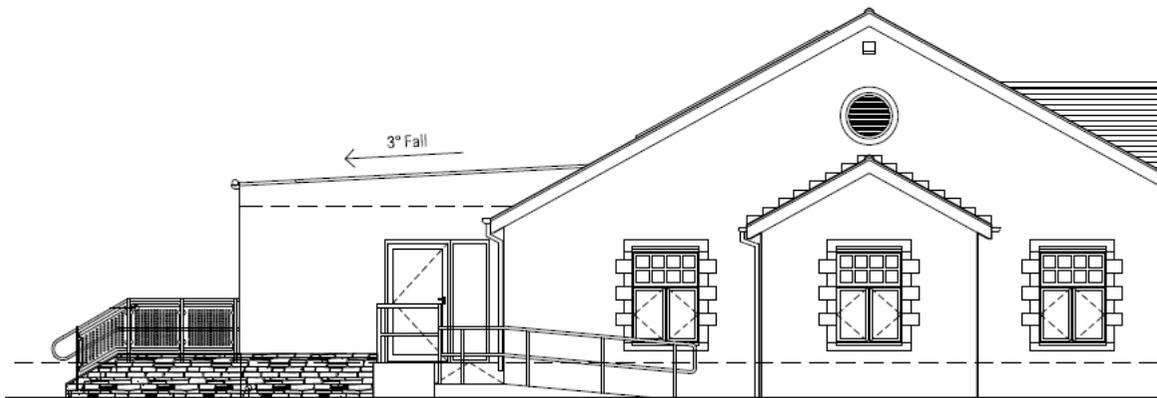


Fig. 4: Proposed southern elevation (extract from proposed plans)

- 1.7 The amendments made during the course of the application relate to the design and materials of the proposed extension. As originally submitted, the proposed extension was to be finished in white render atop a 0.4m high stone plinth with a 1° mono-pitch roof, incorporating a ramped access in place of the proposed steps, and was proposed to be contain 2no. separate classrooms divided centrally by a solid wall.

2. **Planning Policy & Guidance**

2.1 **National Policies**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018)

National Planning Practice Guidance

2.2 **Local Policies**

Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy and Development Policies Document (Core Strategy) (2009)



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|-----------|---|
| Policy 1 | <i>Delivering Sustainable Development</i> |
| Policy 3 | <i>General Development Principles</i> |
| Policy 5 | <i>General Location of New Development</i> |
| Policy 6 | <i>The Sequential Approach</i> |
| Policy 8 | <i>Community Facilities</i> |
| Policy 17 | <i>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</i> |
| Policy 18 | <i>Cultural Heritage</i> |
| Policy 19 | <i>Tranquillity</i> |
| Policy 20 | <i>Landscape Quality and Character</i> |
| Policy 25 | <i>Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency</i> |

2.3 **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

NNPA Building Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Design Guide SPD)

NNPA Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (Landscape SPD)

3. **Relevant Planning History**

3.1 *Application site*

91NP0056 Construction of a new primary school to replace the existing timber-framed school, demolition of existing school and resurfacing of playground. *Conditional planning permission granted 09.01.1992*

02NP0063 Construction of conservatory extension. *Conditional planning permission granted 14.02.2003*

08NP0037 Construction of single-storey extension to provide additional school office space. *Conditional planning permission granted 10.09.2008*

3.2 *Adjacent site*

15NP0101 Construction of 1no. detached two storey dwelling on land south east of Greenhaugh School. *Conditional planning permission granted 23.02.2016 (extant permission expires Feb 2019; unimplemented)*

4. **Consultation/Representations**

4.1 **Tarset and Greystead Parish Council: Objection.** *The flat roof extension will not be aesthetically pleasing or enhance the special qualities of the National Park; there is no provision for a disabled w/c facility; the construction of the extension over an existing drain could lead to major drainage problems in the future.*



- 4.2 **NNPA Ecologist: No objections.** *The Bat Risk Assessment is noted and I am in agreement that the proposed development poses little risk to bats.*
- 4.3 **NNPA Historic Environment Officer: No objections.** *Having consulted the Historic Environment Record, National Heritage list for England, Historic Village Atlas (in which the site lies just north of the area of medium archaeological sensitivity) and aerial imagery, the scale and location of the proposed works are unlikely to cause harm to heritage assets.*
- 4.4 Four neighbour notification letters were issued in associated with the application as originally submitted on 08.11.2018, in addition to a notice displayed at the site entrance on 20.11.2018. Eleven letters of objection have been received, raising the following matters:
- Detrimental visual impacts upon surrounding area resulting from design and materials (flat roof; lack of window on the road side face; white rendered walls; box-like/pre-fab design; discordant addition to existing building);
 - The development is contrary to the NNPA Building Design Guide SPD which requires the use of stone and slate;
 - Detrimental impacts upon landscape and far views of site;
 - The development is not in keeping with the National Park and would be detrimental to its special qualities contrary to Core Strategy policies;
 - The scheme should be revised to incorporate a gabled roof;
 - Extension design and removal of existing kitchen windows will reduce natural light;
 - The development does not meet the demands and needs of children and staff;
 - Lack of consultation with school staff and governors;
 - The application should be amended and revised to take account of the requirements/knowledge of the school and ongoing financial implications;
 - Budget wasted on design revisions/inappropriate use of financial resources;
 - Lack of outdoor access from Early Years classroom into existing designated outdoor teaching space (Ofsted requirement);
 - Proposed floor plan not fit for purpose;
 - Siting of extension over existing drains;
 - Long-term maintenance problems relating to proposed flat roof and subsequent financial implications;
 - Increased numbers of staff and pupils will result in a highway safety issue;
 - No disabled w/c facility is proposed;
 - Inadequacy of existing toilet facilities;
 - Failure to supply a Sustainability Statement, as required by Core Strategy policy 1;



- Failure to adequately consider energy efficiency, as required by Core Strategy policy 25

4.5 A period of re-consultation was undertaken following receipt of amended plans and documents on 12.12.2018, in which letters were issued by post and email to the neighbours originally consulted and eleven respondents to the original proposed scheme. No additional representations have been received.

5. **Assessment**

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The key material planning considerations are:

- The principle of the development;
- Design, appearance and impact upon visual amenity;
- Impacts upon amenity;
- Impact upon National Park special qualities;
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy provision; and
- Any other matters

5.2 **The principle of the development**

Location of new development

5.2.1 The application site is located to the northern edge of Greenhaugh and is regarded as forming part of the settlement, which is identified by Core Strategy policy 5 as one of the Local Centres in which new local needs development is to be focussed. The principle of the development in terms of its nature and location - providing an extension to an existing school building within an established settlement - is considered to be acceptable in accordance with the aims and objectives of policy 5 and the NPPF.

Sequential approach

5.2.2 Core Strategy policy 6 advocates a sequential approach to the identification of development sites within settlements using the following hierarchy:

1. Previously developed land and buildings within the identified settlement;
2. Other suitable sites within the identified settlement;
3. Previously developed land and buildings adjacent to the built up area of the identified settlement;
4. Other suitable sites adjacent to the built up area of the identified settlement.



5.2.3 The proposed development comprises an extension to an existing building within an established site to the northern edge of the identified settlement. The proposed site therefore falls within the category of most suitable land for the development and is therefore acceptable in principle in accordance with policy 6 and the NPPF.

Community facilities

5.2.4 Core Strategy policy 8 provides support for the provision, maintenance and safeguarding of new and existing community facilities where these are located within or adjacent to an identified settlement. The proposed extension to an existing school in order to facilitate its transition to a primary school is considered to accord in principle with policy 8 and the NPPF.

5.3 **Design, appearance and impact upon visual amenity**

5.3.1 NPPF Chapter 12 paragraph 124 states that “*good design is a key aspect of sustainable development...*”. Core Strategy policy 3 provides support for development proposals that protect and enhance local character through consideration of materials, scale and form, as reinforced by NNPA’s Design Guide SPD.

5.3.2 A large number of objections have been received to the application as originally submitted pertaining to design and impacts upon visual amenity; specifically the reported failure of the proposed development to meet with the requirements of NNPA’s Design Guide SPD in that the extension would not be constructed from sandstone and slate, alongside concerns over the proposed flat roof form, white render colour, pre-fab construction and overall discordance with the existing building.

5.3.3 As amended, the scheme proposes an increase of the extension’s roof pitch from 1° to 3°, alongside the substitution of white render for cream/buff render coloured and increased height of the stone plinth from 0.4m to 0.8m, and replacement of the proposed new ramped access with steps to the northern end of the western elevation, which would be finished in matching stone featuring a coloured handrail and balustrade. Full details of the amended and original schemes are set out at paragraphs 1.4 - 1.7 of this report.

5.3.4 The proposed extension represents a subservient addition to the existing school building, being of a lower roof height than the host structure and inset from its side elevations, and would be proportionate in terms of overall footprint. The proposed mono-pitch roof form and materials of the proposed extension (as amended) are considered to be acceptable within the context of the site and host building and



would not detract from the character or appearance of the site or its surroundings to such a degree so as to be detrimental to their visual amenity. Conditions are recommended in respect of the proposed render colour and stonework in order that these match the colour and appearance of the stonework of the host building, in order that the extension appears as an appropriately integrated addition to the existing building.

- 5.3.5 It is acknowledged that the use of stone and slate and inclusion of a gabled roof form would be preferable as these would more closely match the host building; however the use of such materials and roof form are not mandatory requirements of national or local planning policy, including the NNPA Design Guide SPD, and the application must be determined on the basis of the proposed scheme as submitted.
- 5.3.6 The proposed extension would not be prominent when viewed from the surrounding area as a result of its position to the rear of the building away from the road, which is screened from view by trees and hedging, and proposed use of cream/buff render atop a stone plinth which would match the form and colour of the stonework of the existing building, as recommended to be secured by condition.
- 5.3.7 The scheme as a whole is considered to be acceptable in terms of impact upon the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area, in accordance with Core Strategy policy 3 and the NPPF.

5.4 Impacts upon amenity

- 5.4.1 Taking into account the location and setting of the site away from neighbouring residential properties and nature of the development as an extension to an existing school building, it is considered that this would not have a detrimental impact upon residential amenity, in accordance with Core Strategy policy 3 and the NPPF.
- 5.4.2 A number of representations have raised concerns in respect of the impact of the proposed scheme upon the amenity of users of the school's kitchen as a result of the loss of the two windows within its western side; a single window to the northern elevation would however be retained. The representation received from the school's Chair of Governors does however acknowledge that they consider that, whilst natural light would be reduced within this room, this would be adequate as a work space. Taking into consideration the retention of the north facing window which serves this room and the comments provided on behalf of the school, this aspect of the scheme is considered to be acceptable in terms of impact upon amenity.
- 5.4.3 One representation received has raised concerns in respect of the impact of the proposed scheme upon the amenity of classroom users, which is understood to



relate to the design of the proposed extension relative to that of the existing conservatory. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed extension may not provide the same level of internal lighting as the existing conservatory, the amount of window and door openings within the proposed extension is considered to be sufficient so as to provide an adequate level of daylight for users and to be acceptable in terms of impact upon amenity.

5.5 Impact upon National Park special qualities

Biodiversity

5.5.1 The application is accompanied by a Bat Risk Assessment which provides an appraisal of the site, an assessment of the impact of the proposed scheme and recommendations for mitigation. The Assessment reports no evidence of bats and no potential roost features for bats or nesting birds however includes a precautionary recommendation for the avoidance of works between March and August unless a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed the absence of nests. The NNPA Ecologist has reviewed the report and raises no objections, concluding that the proposed scheme poses minimal risk to bats. Subject to the inclusion of a condition relating to the mitigation described within the Risk Assessment, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of impact upon biodiversity, in accordance with Core Strategy policy 17 and the NPPF.

Cultural Heritage

5.5.2 The application site does not incorporate any designated heritage assets however is located adjacent to the area of archaeological sensitivity as defined by the NNPA Historic Village Atlas. The NNPA Historic Environment Officer has been consulted on the application and has raised no objections; as such, the application is considered to be in accordance with Core Strategy policy 18 and the NPPF.

Tranquillity

5.5.3 The application does not include the installation of new external lighting as part of the scheme. A condition restricting the installation of any such new lighting without the prior approval of NNPA is however considered unreasonable in this case as the scheme comprises the construction of an extension to an existing building within an established settlement, to which external lighting could be installed without requiring the consent of NNPA. The development is considered to be acceptable in terms of impact upon tranquillity, in accordance with Core Strategy policy 19 and the NPPF.



Landscape Character

5.5.4 The proposed development represents a proportionate and subservient extension to an existing building, views of which (both from the adjacent road and distant views from the Public Right of Way approx. 700m west of the site) are limited as a result of the location of the extension away from the road and presence of mature vegetation along the site boundaries. Whilst visible at a distance from this Public Right of Way, the proposed extension would be viewed within the context of the site set against the host building and would not be a prominent feature within the landscape. The proposed use of cream/buff render would also reduce its contrast to the host building and thus any undue prominence when viewed from the surrounding area.

5.5.5 Having regard for the above, in addition to the guidelines set out within the Landscape SPD, it is considered that the proposed extension would have a limited impact upon the landscape character of the area, in accordance with Core Strategy policy 20 and the NPPF.

5.6 Energy efficiency and renewable energy provision

5.6.1 Core Strategy policy 25 requires all new developments to minimise the amount of energy used during construction and achieve high energy efficiency, and for all new units of residential, employment, community and tourism development to utilise renewable energy sources in order to offset at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements of the development.

5.6.2 As the proposed development comprises an extension to an existing school building, there is no requirement for 10% of predicted energy requirements to be provided through renewable sources.

5.6.3 The information submitted to support the application details that the position of the proposed extension has been determined so as to allow for the replacement of the existing conservatory, which is stated to experience issues of heat loss, with a more insulated structure, and to ensure that the existing solar panels fitted to the west facing roofslope of the main school building are not affected.

5.6.4 Having regard for the above, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable when assessed against the aims and requirements of Core Strategy policy 25 and the NPPF.

5.7 Any other matters

5.7.1 One representation received has raised an objection relating to the absence of a Sustainability Statement, as required by Core Strategy policy 1. The submission of a



Sustainability Statement is only required where this is considered proportionate and essential to the consideration of the application. It is considered that a Sustainability Statement would not be required in this case and would not contribute additional information that is not provided within the Design and Assessment Statement already submitted. The absence of this document therefore does not constitute a reason for the refusal of this application.

- 5.7.2 Whilst acknowledged, matters pertaining to a reported lack of communication and consultation between the school staff, governors and applicant/agent prior to and during the application process and subsequent financial implications are private matters separate from the planning process and do not represent material considerations in the determination of this application.
- 5.7.3 A number of representations received in response to the scheme as originally proposed raised objections in respect of a lack of adequate access from the 'Early Years' classroom into the adjacent outdoor teaching space, which was cited as an Ofsted requirement, and lack of suitability of the classroom layout as two separate rooms. The scheme as amended has sought to address these objections through the provision of a single, open-plan classroom (in place of two separate classrooms) from which direct access into the outdoor teaching space may be obtained via the proposed stepped access. It is therefore considered that this matter has been adequately addressed.
- 5.7.4 Concerns have been raised within objections relating to maintenance issues affecting the proposed extension roof and subsequent financial implications resulting from this. The maintenance of property does not constitute a material planning consideration and therefore this matter cannot be taken into account in the assessment of this application.
- 5.7.5 Objections to the scheme have raised concerns regarding the proposed siting of extension over the existing kitchen drain (understood to be located to the northern end of the existing conservatory); the objection received from the Chair of Governors does however acknowledge that they have been assured that this drain can be re-routed. The information contained within the Design and Access Statement submitted to support the application confirms that existing drainage is to be adapted to facilitate the proposed extension. Whilst not a mitigating factor in the determination of this application, it is considered that this matter has been adequately addressed.
- 5.7.6 Objections received to the application have raised comments in respect of the lack of inclusion of a disabled w/c as part of the proposed scheme, with one objection additionally citing that the existing toilet facilities are inadequate for both current and intended future increased school pupil numbers. The information contained within



the Design and Access Statement identifies that there is no requirement to increase toilet facilities or to provide a disabled w/c at present, which is also unfeasible due to budgetary constraints. Whilst the installation of a disabled w/c is desirable, there is no requirement within planning policy for this to be included as part of the proposed scheme and therefore its absence does not represent a material consideration in the assessment of this application.

- 5.7.7 One representation received has raised concerns that increased numbers of staff and school pupils will exacerbate perceived current issues of highway safety and problematic parking. The school is served by on-street parking only; the application confirms that there is no proposed increase in staff numbers and does not provide details of any proposed increase in pupil numbers although it is anticipated that this may occur as part of its transition to a primary school. Whilst issues of highway safety do represent material planning considerations, within the context of this application which seeks the proposed erection of an extension to an existing building only, it is not considered that the proposed development in itself would have a detrimental impact upon highway safety or parking.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposed development, as an extension to an existing school building within an established settlement, is considered to be acceptable in principle and would not be harmful to the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area or the special qualities of the National Park. Having regard for the objections received to the scheme it is not considered that these would warrant refusal of the application; it is therefore considered that, subject to the inclusion of planning conditions, the proposed scheme would accord with the national and local planning policies listed within the report.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 Following consideration of the information submitted it is recommended that the proposal should be granted planning permission, subject to the conditions and informatives set out below.

Conditions

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

Reason: To ensure that the development is commenced within a reasonable period of time from the date of this permission, as required by Section 91 of the Town and



Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Application form, received 12th December 2018
- Site Location Plan (Dwg. No. 100:01), received 26th October 2018
- Proposed Site Plan (Dwg. No. 200:01), received 14th December 2018
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Dwg. No. 210:01), received 12th December 2018
- Proposed Roof Plan (Dwg. No. 210:02), received 12th December 2018
- Proposed Elevations (Dwg. No. 220:01), received 12th December 2018
- Design and Access Statement – REV B, received 12th December 2018
- *Note of a Bat Risk Assessment Site Visit, Greenhaugh First School, dated 19th October 2018*, received 27th November 2018

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, to enable the Local Planning Authority to adequately manage the development and to ensure the proposal accords with Core Strategy policies 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 25 and the NPPF

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the mitigation described within the *Note of a Bat Risk Assessment Site Visit, Greenhaugh First School, dated 19th October 2018*, received 27th November 2018, in respect of:

- Timing restrictions to avoid works being undertaken between March and August unless a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed the absence of bird nests;
- Site worker briefing relating to legal responsibilities connected to the discovery of bats or nesting birds

Reason: To ensure that the development poses no risk of unacceptable harm to protected species and to ensure that the development is in accordance with Core Strategy policy 17, Chapter 15 of the NPPF, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

4. The colour of the render to be applied to the external walls of the extension hereby permitted shall match that of the colour of the stonework of the existing building, unless otherwise approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area, in accordance with Core Strategy policies 1 and 3 and Chapter 12 of the NPPF



5. The stone plinth wall to be installed to the extension hereby permitted shall match the appearance of the stonework of the existing building, unless otherwise approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area, in accordance with Core Strategy policies 1 and 3 and Chapter 12 of the NPPF

Informative Notes

1. This planning permission is granted in strict accordance with the approved plans. It should be noted however that:
 - (a) Any variation from the approved plans following commencement of the development, irrespective of the degree of variation, may constitute unauthorised development and may be liable to enforcement action.
 - (b) You, your agent, or any other person responsible for implementing this permission should inform the Local Planning Authority immediately of any proposed variation from the approved plans and ask to be advised as to the best method to resolve the matter. Most proposals for variation to the approved plans will require the submission of a new application.
2. This consent is granted subject to conditions and it is the owner and the person responsible for the implementation of the development who will be fully responsible for their compliance throughout the development and beyond. Some conditions may require work to be carried out, or details to be approved prior to the commencement of the development.

Where pre-commencement conditions are not complied with, the whole of the development could be unauthorised, and you may be liable to enforcement action. In some circumstances, the only way to rectify the situation may be through the submission of a new application. If any other type of condition is breached then you may be liable to a breach of condition notice.

Contact Officer:

For further information contact Rebecca Adams, Planning Officer on 01434 611552 or e-mail: planning@nnpa.org.uk

Background Papers

Application file 18NP0104
EIA Screening Opinion



Greenhaugh First School

Northumberland National Park Authority

