

Co-op Academy, Hyde Road, Manchester

Planning Statement

**Client: Manchester City Council and Sir Robert McAlpine
January 2021**

**Document prepared on Behalf of Tetra Tech Environment Planning
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1.0 Introduction

1.01 This Planning Statement (hereby referred to as the 'Statement') is prepared by Tetra Tech on behalf of Manchester City Council (the 'Applicant') and Sir Robert McAlpine (the appointed contractor) in support of a full planning application for the development of a new secondary school on land to the south of Hyde Road, Belle Vue, Manchester, to be named the Co-op Academy Belle Vue.

1.02 The application is submitted to Manchester City Council as Local Planning Authority. This Statement provides details of the proposed scheme and includes an assessment of the proposed development against the relevant planning policy framework.

1.03 The application seeks full planning permission for the following development description:

"Demolition of existing cinema building and the development of a new secondary school (Class F1) with associated sports facilities, access, car parking arrangements and landscaping."

1.04 This Statement should be read alongside the following plans and documents submitted in support of the application:

- Completed Application Forms and Certificates;
- Application Drawings;
- Planning Statement (Tetra Tech – this document);
- Design & Access Statement (Space Architects);
- Statement of Community Involvement (WYG/Tetra Tech);
- Transport Assessment (WYG/Tetra Tech);
- Framework Travel Plan; (WYG/Tetra Tech)
- Acoustic Design Strategy (BDP);
- Air Quality Assessment (WYG/Tetra Tech);
- Phase 1 Ecology Survey (BDP);
- Bat Survey (BDP);
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (BDP);
- Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy (BDP);
- Crime Impact Statement (Design for Security);
- Environmental Standards Statement (BDP);
- External Lighting Assessment (BDP);
- Geo-environmental Desk Study – Phase I (Arcadis)
- Geo-environmental Report – Phase II (Arcadis)

- Construction Method Statement (SRM);
- Waste Management Strategy Proforma;
- Ventilation and Extract Planning Statement (BDP); and
- Japanese Knotweed Report (Environet).

1.05 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides the background to the proposed development and provides information on the Co-op Academies Trust;
- **Section 3** describes the existing site and outlines any relevant planning history;
- **Section 4** provides details on the proposed development and the rationale behind the planning application;
- **Section 5** identifies the development plan and national planning policies of relevance to the planning application;
- **Section 6** considers the proposal's compliance with national and local planning policy; and
- **Section 7** provides a summary of the key considerations for the application and conclusions.

2.0 Background

2.1 Context and Local Education

- 2.1.1 Over recent years Manchester's population has experienced continued levels of growth from that recorded by the 2011 census figure of 503,000, with the population forecasted to reach approximately 604,000 by the mid-2020's. East Manchester has seen substantial levels of development over recent years, significantly increasing the resident population in the area.
- 2.1.2 There are presently large cohorts of primary school aged children in the area, as has been identified in the school census, and this will lead to a subsequent need and demand for future secondary school places. There is also a long-established trend of in-year applications for places at both primary and secondary schools in the area, with pupil cohorts increasing throughout the academic year. As a consequence of this demand, the Council has identified there is a need to establish and open a new secondary school in East Manchester by September 2021.
- 2.1.3 The Council's latest School Places & Admissions Report, published in February 2020, provided data relating to 2019 school admissions and pupil forecasts. Section 2 of the report states that the September 2019 Year 7 mainstream intake was 6,295 and that further demand was anticipated as families move into the city. This is projected to increase to 6,732 places for the September 2020 intake, 6,952 for the September 2021 intake and to 7,046 in September 2022.
- 2.1.4 The projected increases are linked with a noted rise in demand for, and a recorded trend of increasing pupil numbers entering primary school education.
- 2.1.5 The report notes the Council has been seeking to safeguard sites for future development to accommodate a new secondary school in East Manchester to meet the growing need for places, and specifically identifies the Showcase Cinema site as a preferred option to develop a secondary school. The increased demand within East Manchester was originally intended to be met through the development of a secondary school at Matthews Lane, however a decision was taken to abandon this site due to significant costs which would have exceeded the Department for Education's affordability measures. The decision to progress the Showcase Cinema site to provide a new secondary school has subsequently been taken to address the need within East Manchester.
- 2.1.6 The Council's report also notes that to open the school in time for the September 2021 admissions round will require the use of separate temporary accommodation whilst the permanent build is completed. This initial demand is identified to be met under separate proposals at the Connell Co-op College site.

2.2 The Trust

2.2.1 The Co-op Academies Trust (the 'Trust') is an established successful education organisation which successfully manages 25 academies in northern England, two of which are located in North Manchester and have been rated as 'good' as well as a 'good' rated 16-19 college in East Manchester. Locally the Trust operates six secondary academies and one college in Greater Manchester. The closest of the Trust's facilities to the application site is Connell Co-op College in Beswick.

2.2.2 The Trust exists to add social value, working with each of its academies to empower teachers and young people to work together for a better education and community. The Trust's desire is to create a thriving and ambitious academy, based on co-operative values, at the heart of its community. The Trust's vision for Belle Vue Academy will be

- A cooperative community where pupils from different backgrounds, beliefs and cultures grow and work together, developing the skills and character they need to be successful beyond their time at the academy;
- A community where staff work together to create an inclusive, welcoming and highly ambitious learning environment; and
- A community where local residents and organisations are empowered to work together for the success of all.

2.3 Co-op Academy Belle Vue

2.3.1 The Co-op Academy Belle Vue is a new, eight-form entry, mixed free secondary school planned to open in September 2022.

2.3.2 The Academy has started accepting applications for its first cohort of year 7 students in preparation for the 2021/22 academic year. This first cohort of pupils will initially be accommodated in temporary premises at the nearby Connell Co-op College from September 2021. Upon completion of the new school, the existing pupils as well as the second cohort of pupils will move into the new school accommodation for the 2022/23 academic year. Following completion, the Academy will accept 240 year 7 students each year until it reaches its full capacity of 1,200 in 2026.

2.3.3 Whilst the academy's primary function is to provide education and learning to 11-16 year olds, it is also intended that the premises will provide functions and facilities which can be used by the wider community throughout the week.

3.0 Site Description and History

3.1 Description

- 3.1.1 The application site is located in the Belle Vue area of Manchester and is approximately 5.4 hectares in size. The site is occupied by the former Showcase Cinema building, which is a large two-storey building which occupies approximately 6,000 sq.m of the site and fronts onto Hyde Road. The remainder of the site contains large areas of hardstanding, primarily accommodating surface car parking alongside areas of soft landscaping. The cinema closed in March 2020 and has been vacant ever since.
- 3.1.2 The western extent of the site is covered by a dense covering of mature trees and vegetation. Further trees and grass verges are in place along the southern and eastern boundary lines, as well as within the site as part of the soft landscaping scheme.
- 3.1.3 The site is bounded by Hyde Road to the north, Kirkmanshulme Lane to the south, residential properties to the west, (reached from either Scarcroft Road or Ellen Wilkinson Crescent) and the Buzz Bingo hall and its associated car park to the east. Adjacent the site to the north west is a parcel of vacant land where a standalone restaurant building formerly stood, which has since been demolished. This parcel of land is occupied by hardstanding and grass verges.
- 3.1.4 Opposite the site on the northern side of Hyde Road are two terraces of two-storey dwellings. Further retail and light industrial units are also situated in the local vicinity on the northern side of Hyde Road. Further to the north of the site is Gorton Park.
- 3.1.5 To the south and south west of the site on the opposite side of Kirkmanshulme Lane is the Belle Vue Sports Village which accommodates a speedway circuit with grandstand, indoor sports centre and a 4G all-weather sports pitch. To the south east of the site, also on the opposite side of Kirkmanshulme Lane is the Belle Vue Greyhound Stadium. This facility is planned for closure, with a recent extant planning permission in place for a residential development on the site (ref.122160/FO/2018). Belle Vue Railway Station is located approximately 550m to the east of the site along Hyde Road.
- 3.1.6 In terms of the wider context, the site is located approximately 1.0km to the west of Gorton District Centre, 2.8km to the north of Levenshulme District Centre and 3.4 km to the south west of Manchester City Centre. The A57 is a major route linking Manchester City Centre to the M67, which contains a mixture of commercial and residential uses on its alignment.
- 3.1.7 A review of the Council's adopted Policies Map has found the site falls within the 'Inner Area' and 'East Manchester' policy zones. It is not subject to any other Policy designations, nor is the site covered by any local or national environmental designations.

3.2 Site History

- 3.2.1 The site was formerly occupied by Showcase Cinema, a fourteen-screen cinema which was originally constructed in 1989 on part of the former Belle Vue entertainment complex. The cinema closed in March 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and has remained closed since this time. The site is now under the ownership of Manchester City Council.
- 3.2.2 The site was also previously surrounded by a number of units which were occupied by chain restaurants, including Pizza Hut and Burger King, however these closed a significant period of time ago.
- 3.2.3 The Council's Educational Authority and the Department for Education are supportive of the use of the site for educational purposes to address the aforementioned demand for secondary school places in East Manchester.

3.3 Planning History

- 3.3.1 A review of the planning records for the site has identified a limited recent planning history.
- 3.3.2 The site is understood to have previously formed part of Belle Vue Zoological Gardens prior to its development as a cinema complex.
- 3.3.3 The planning permission for the existing cinema development is identified as follows;
- Ref. 032047: Erection of 14 screen multiplex cinema with associated car parking for 1,000 vehicles and siteworks including landscaping. Approved September 1988.*
- 3.3.4 There are no recent planning history records for the site which are considered of relevance for the redevelopment of the site.

4.0 Proposed Development

4.1 Development Proposals

4.1.1 The description of development for the proposed development is as follows;

"Demolition of existing cinema building and the development of a new secondary school (Class F1) with associated sports facilities, access, car parking arrangements and landscaping."

4.1.2 The site currently accommodates the former Showcase Cinema building, alongside extensive surface car parking. The project will include for the demolition of the existing cinema building and a comprehensive redevelopment of the site. Consent for the demolition of the existing cinema building is to be dealt with through a separate prior approval for demolition application, made separately to this planning application which more specifically relates to the proposed works to redevelop the site.

4.1.3 The school proposals will provide a new free secondary school with a gross internal floorspace of 8,610 sq.m on a site of approximately 5.4 hectares. The area of the site to be developed amounts to approximately 4.1 hectares, with a significant part of the site parallel to the western boundary being subject to an easement and is therefore not to be impacted. The school building itself comprises a three-storey main building which would be linked to a sports hall block of two-storeys in height.

4.1.4 The school will provide an eight-form entry free secondary school catering for a maximum of 1,200 students once at full capacity across the Year 7 to Year 11 age groups, (ages 11-16). The new school is planned to open in 2022. The first cohort of 240 pupils to the Academy will be temporarily accommodated for the 2021/22 academic year at the neighbouring Connell Co-op College site. Upon completion, this first year group, as well as the new year 7 cohort will move into the new school for the 2022/23 academic year. The projected number of teaching staff is 75, with an additional 55 supporting staff.

4.1.5 In addition to the main school building and attached sports hall, external facilities would include;

- Car parking and pupil drop-off area;
- 1no. senior grass football pitch;
- 1no. junior grass football pitch;
- 1no. five-a-side grass football pitch;
- 1no. Multi-use Games Area (MUGA), (3no. tennis courts / 3no. basketball courts / 1no. five-a-side football court / 3no. net ball courts).

- 12no. grass training grids.
- Pupil outdoor recreational space.
- Landscaping and retained green spaces.

- 4.1.6 The existing vehicle access to the site from Hyde Road is to be retained in an adjusted format, providing an aligned signalised junction with Hyde Road and Belle Vue Street. This access will form the primary vehicle access for the site. An existing secondary vehicle access at the southern end of the site will be retained from Kirkmanshulme Lane to be used on an infrequent basis for some servicing vehicles and for emergency access. Pedestrian and cycle access would be possible from both Hyde Road and Kirkmanshulme Lane.
- 4.1.7 A staff and visitor car park will be provided as well as a designated pupil drop-off area on the site. Circa 93 vehicle parking spaces would be provided on site, including 6no. accessible bays. A further 18 drop-off/pick-up parking bays would be accommodated within the pupil drop-off area. A cycle parking hub with capacity for 120 bicycles is proposed alongside the car park. Provision is to be made for electric vehicle charging at the site.
- 4.1.8 A designated servicing and bin storage area to the rear of the school building will be incorporated.
- 4.1.9 Internally the school alongside teaching spaces will include a library/community hub, sports hall and changing rooms, assembly hall, dining hall, kitchen, and a drama studio.
- 4.1.10 The scheme will be supported by a comprehensive soft landscaping and planting scheme.
- 4.1.11 Outside of the site, necessary pedestrian safety improvement works will be implemented. Similarly, appropriated traffic control measures will be implemented locally to ensure the smooth operation of travel to and from the school. The specific design details of these improvement measures are to be agreed through further engagement with the local highway authority.

4.2 Pre-application Discussions

- 4.2.1 Substantial pre-application engagement has taken place with key stakeholders in advance of the submission of the planning application.
- 4.2.2 At the outset of the project, prior to the completion of the tender process and the subsequent appointment of the contractor and design team, initial input was provided from Manchester City Council's Planning and Highways departments respectively to inform and guide the key principles and requirements for taking forward the site for a new secondary school.
- 4.2.3 The project team have subsequently successfully undertaken detailed engagement at an early stage with the Local Planning Authority prior to the submission of the planning application. Pre-

application meetings and ongoing dialogue were had with the local planning authority during November and December 2020. Through pre-application discussions, the project team have been able to discuss the concept design with the Local Planning Authority, with the feedback received subsequently influencing the final proposed design. The technical submission requirements to support the planning application were also agreed in advance.

4.2.4 Separate pre-application engagement has been undertaken with the Local Highway Authority and Transport for Greater Manchester through meetings in November 2020. These meetings have been used to inform both the layout design presented as well as the scope of the transport assessment work carried out which supports the planning application.

4.2.5 Finally, pre-application discussions have taken place with Sport England and MCRactive in respect to the sports facilities to be provided. The discussions have focussed on agreement of the mix of sports facilities to be provided on site and the required specifications for the facilities, with consideration to local sport needs.

4.2.6 In summary, an extensive pre-application engagement process has been undertaken to strongly inform the final design presented for approval and the scope of the information submitted.

Environmental Impact Assessment

4.2.7 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion was submitted to the Council in December 2020 to establish if the proposed development would constitute EIA development.

4.2.8 It has subsequently been confirmed by the Local Planning Authority that the proposals would not require an EIA.

4.3 Community Consultation

4.3.1 The Co-op Academy Trust, as part of their responsibilities to fulfilling the Department for Education's requirements initially undertook public consultation in Autumn 2020 regarding plans to open the new Co-op Academy Belle Vue. The consultation process involved writing to local residents and business to inform them of the plans for the new school. The consultation was hosted on the Co-op Academy website, with opportunity provided for interested parties to leave their comments. This consultation ran from 30th September to 14th November 2020.

4.3.2 Manchester City Council also undertook a 1-month consultation via their website as part of the Local Authority's Free School Presumption process. The purpose of this consultation was to seek views on the type of school to be provided, the age range of pupils and the proposed capacity.

4.3.3 More recently, a public consultation on the proposals was undertaken in December 2020 prior to the submission of the planning application. This involved an online consultation hosted via Manchester City Council's website, with opportunity for interested parties to provide their

comments of the proposals. A mailshot was distributed to local residents and key stakeholders in advance of the consultation. This public consultation period ran from 7th December to 18th December 2020.

4.3.4 Full details of the consultation activity undertaken is included in the Statement of Community Consultation report.

5.0 Planning Policy Overview

5.1.1 In this section the key national and local planning policies and guidance of relevance to the proposals are outlined.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.2.1 The NPPF was originally published in 2012 and was revised in July 2018 and February 2019. The document sets out the overarching strategic planning policies for which all development proposals are to be assessed against and is therefore a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

5.2.2 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development which seeks to ensure development is pursued in a positive manner (paragraph 11).

5.2.3 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies three separate objectives which every development should consider in order to achieve sustainable development and states:

"Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways...:

- ***an economic objective*** – *to help building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- ***a social objective*** – *to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- ***an environmental objective*** – *to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change; including moving to a low carbon economy."*

5.2.4 Paragraph 11 sets out the approach to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. With regards to decision taking, this means:

- c. *"approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*

d. where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

5.2.5 Paragraph 94 specifically relates to the provision for school places and states

"It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- Give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter school through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and
- Work with school promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted."

5.2.6 Chapter 9 relates to transport considerations, with Paragraph 102 setting out that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of development proposals to ensure that the potential impacts of development on the transport network can be addressed, that opportunities for public and active transport are pursued and any environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be assessed.

5.2.7 Paragraphs 108 to 113 address the consideration of development proposals in respect to transport. The Framework establishes that all developments generating significant movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. It is also set out that account should be taken of whether safe and suitable access can be achieved, that consideration is provided to the take up of opportunities for sustainable modes of transport and that any significant impacts can be mitigated to an acceptable degree.

5.2.8 Paragraph 109 goes on to identify:

"Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."

5.2.9 Chapter 11 promotes the effective use of land, including promoting the use of brownfield land. To encourage and achieve this objective, Paragraph 118 states that planning decisions should:

- *"Give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict contaminated or unstable land; and*
- *Promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings."*

5.2.10 Paragraph 119 establishes that local planning authorities should take a proactive role in identifying and helping bring forward land which may be suitable in meeting identified needs.

5.2.11 Paragraph 120 goes on to identify that planning decisions should reflect changes in demand for land and in doing so should support proposals which would contribute to meeting an unmet need for the development in the area.

5.2.12 Chapter 12 of the NPPF seeks to achieve well designed buildings and places. Paragraph 124 establishes that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It also specifies that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, that it helps to create better places to live and work in and that it helps make development acceptable to communities.

5.2.13 Paragraph 127 sets out a series of design-based criteria which planning decisions should seek to ensure proposed developments adhere to. This includes ensuring that developments:

- Function well and add to the quality of the area for the lifetime of the development;
- Are visually attractive;
- Are sympathetic to the local character and history;
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate mix and amount of development; and
- Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible which promote health and well-being.

5.2.14 Paragraph 128 sets out that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution of proposed developments and that the early discussion of emerging schemes between applicants, the local planning authority and local community is important for clarifying expectations. Applications which can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked upon more favourably.

5.2.15 Paragraph 150 seeks to ensure that new development is planned in ways which help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through means such as through its location, orientation and design.

5.2.16 Paragraph 153 expects new development to comply with any relevant development plan policies

relating to decentralised energy, where viable, and take account of design based factors including landform, layout, building orientation, massing and other criteria to minimise energy consumption.

- 5.2.17 Regarding flood risk, Paragraph 155 seeks to direct development away from areas which are at the highest risk of flooding.
- 5.2.18 Paragraph 163 sets out that, in the determination of planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and that, where appropriate, planning applications should be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment.
- 5.2.19 Paragraph 165 specifies that major developments should incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. These systems should take account of advice from the lead local flood authority; have appropriate proposed minimum operating standards; have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development; and have multifunctional benefits, where possible.
- 5.2.20 Chapter 15 addresses the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, with Paragraph 170 setting out that planning decisions should enhance the local environment through means including:
- Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity;
 - Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water, noise pollution or land instability.
- 5.2.21 In relation to ground conditions, Paragraph 178 sets out that planning decisions should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use, taking into account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination.
- 5.2.22 Paragraph 180 states that planning decisions should also ensure that development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment. In doing so they should:
- Mitigate and reduce to a minimum the potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development;
 - Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity.

5.3 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 5.3.1 The NPPG was launched in March 2014 and provides a web-based resource for planning practice

guidance.

- 5.3.2 The NPPG should be taken as a material consideration in the determination of planning application. Of specific relevance to this application, is the guidance for '**Determining a Planning Application**' which at paragraph 028 states:

"Local authorities need to consider whether children's best interests are relevant to any planning issue under consideration."

- 5.3.3 Planning guidance includes the policy statement, 'Planning for Schools Development', published in August 2011 by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

- 5.3.4 The policy statement sets out the Government's strong commitment to support the development of state-funded schools and their delivery through the planning system.

- 5.3.5 The policy statement establishes;

"a presumption in favour of the development of state funded schools".

- 5.3.6 The strength of policy support for new state-funded schools is further emphasised by the following policy guidance requirements;

"Local authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state-funded schools in their planning decisions. The Secretary of State will attach significant weight to the need to establish and develop state-funded schools when determining applications and appeals that come before him for decision" and;

"A refusal of any application for a state-funded school, or the imposition of conditions, will have to be clearly justified by the local planning authority. Given the strong policy support for improving state education, the Secretary of State will be minded to consider such a refusal or imposition of conditions to be unreasonable, unless it is supported by clear and cogent evidence." (Emphasis added).

- 5.3.7 The NPPG and policy statement from the DCLG builds upon the policy position of the NPPF to emphasise the importance of considering the needs of children and ensuring that sufficient weight is provided to the need for state funded school places. The guidance in place therefore provides a strong support for the principle of supporting new school infrastructure and supporting the needs of children locally.

- 5.3.8 Other sections of relevance in the NPPG include the need to promote good quality design standards which respond to and reinforce the existing patterns of development within the local area.

5.4 Local Planning Policy Assessment

5.4.1 The Local Development Plan for the area comprises the adopted Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012) and extant policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP (1995)). Planning policies of particular relevance to the development proposals have been identified as the following:

5.4.2 Core Strategy;

- SP 1: Spatial Principles;
- CC 5: Transport;
- EC 5: East Manchester;
- H4: East Manchester;
- T1: Sustainable Transport;
- T2: Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need;
- EN 1: Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas;
- EN 4: Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development;
- EN 6: Target Framework for CO2 Reductions from Low or Zero Carbon Development;
- EN8: Adapting to Climate Change;
- EN 9: Green Infrastructure;
- EN 10: Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreation;
- EN 11: Quantity of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities;
- EN 12: Area of Priority for Open Space, Sport and Recreation;
- EN 14: Flood Risk;
- EN 15: Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- EN 16: Air Quality;
- EN 18: Contaminated Land and Ground Stability;
- EN 19: Waste; and
- DM 1: Development Management.

5.4.3 Manchester Unitary Development Plan;

- DC 26.1-26.6: Development and Noise; and
- E3.3: Environmental Improvement and Protection.

5.4.4 Ultimately, the planning strategy in Manchester will sit within the context of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), a document being prepared jointly by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA). Work has begun on the preparation of this document and consultation was undertaken on a draft in October 2016. However, following the mayoral elections in May 2017, a review of the draft GMSF was ordered. Further consultations on the GMSF have taken place in January 2019 and December 2020. Adoption of the Strategy is not expected until at least 2022. Until such time as the GMSF is adopted, its policies should only be

provided minimal weight in the determination process. Relevant policies from the draft version GMSF include the following:

- GM-Strat 14: A Sustainable and Integrated Transport Network;
- GM-S 1: Sustainable Development;
- GM-S 2: Carbon and Energy;
- GM-S 4: Resilience;
- GM-S 5: Flood Risk and Environment;
- GM-S 6: Clean Air;
- GM-P 1: Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth;
- GM-G 9: A Net Enhancement in Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- GM-E 1: Sustainable Places;
- GM-E 5: Education, Skills and Knowledge;
- GM-E 7: Sport and Recreation;
- GM-N 1: Our Integrated Network;
- GM-N 5: Walking and Cycling; and
- GM-N 7: Transport Requirements of New Development.

5.4.5 Manchester City Council intend to prepare a new Local Plan that will replace the extant UDP policies and Core Strategy in full. However, this document is not to be advanced until the direction of the GMSF is established and therefore this is currently on hold. As such, there is considered to be no local emerging planning documents of relevance to this proposal.

5.5 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Guide to Development in Manchester

5.5.1 The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in April 2007 and reiterates that new development schemes should have a high standard of design and make a positive contribution to the City's environment. In addition, the SPD specifically notes that the Council will encourage the most appropriate forms of development which will help to enliven neighbourhoods and sustain local facilities. The importance of considering the needs of children and young people in the proposed design of open space areas is also recognised, with particular reference given to the requirement for safe routes to schools needing to be an integral

feature of new development schemes.

- 5.5.2 Guidance within **Chapter 3** requires developments to be fully inclusive and accessible for all and take into consideration the requirements of disabled people. Chapter 4 seeks the adoption of energy efficient design. In respect to non-residential developments the guidance identifies that the City Council will encourage developers to use the BREEAM standards to assess the environmental performance of buildings and that development should achieve a post construction rating of 'very good'. However, the guidance indicates that alternative modelling tools that enable the developer to exceed the requirements of BREEAM are also encouraged. **Chapter 8** promotes consultation with Greater Manchester Police, to incorporate measures to help crime prevention through design

Our Manchester Strategy

- 5.5.3 The 'Our Manchester Strategy' (2016-2025) sets out our long-term vision for Manchester's future and provides a framework for action by the Council and their partners across the city. The overarching vision is for Manchester to be in the top flight of world-class cities by 2025. A key focus of the strategy is to expand and improve Manchester's schools and it promotes a major expansion programme to increase the capacity at the same rate as demand.

6.0 Compliance with Planning Policy

6.1 Principle of Development

Educational Need

- 6.1.1 The Core Strategy recognises the importance of education to the social and economic progress of the city. Objective 1 'Spatial Principles' (Policy SP1) refers to improving access to education by locating it in areas that reduce the need to travel and providing good access to sustainable transport provision.
- 6.1.2 Due to significant population growth in East Manchester over recent year there has been significant uptake in primary school places in the area. This growth is now starting to impact upon demand for secondary school provision in the area. The area has also seen a consistent trend of pupil cohorts increasing throughout the academic year, in both primary and secondary school class sizes. Growth projections from Manchester City Council's School Places and Admissions Report (February 2020) identifies that demand for secondary school places will increase in the immediate coming years, with the need for places anticipated to rise from the 2019 year 7 intake of 6,295 pupils to a need for 6,952 places in September 2021 and 7,046 places in September 2022.
- 6.1.3 The Council's education team has established the need to open a new secondary school for the East Manchester community for the 2021 academic year in order to meet demand. To satisfy this demand, whilst not subject to this application, the Trust plan on initially opening the Co-op Belle Vue Academy in temporary accommodation at the Connell Co-Op College site in time for the 2021/22 academic cycle with an intake of 120 students. This action establishes the critical need for additional secondary school places in the area.
- 6.1.4 Paragraph 94 of the NPPF identifies that the Government places great importance in ensuring a sufficient choice and supply of school places are available to meet the needs of existing and future communities. Given the identified need to provide additional secondary school places in East Manchester, it is clear that the proposed development aligns with the obligations of the NPPF to supporting educational development and the provision of school places.
- 6.1.5 The planning policy support for education development proposals and the need to ensure that sufficient school places are provided for is clear. Alongside the importance placed upon supporting educational needs of communities, supplementary guidance through DCLG's 2011 policy statement 'Planning for Schools Development' further enshrines this position, providing;
- "a presumption in favour of the development of state funded schools".*
- 6.1.6 The Secretary of State's position on the need to attach 'significant weight' to the need to establish

and develop state-funded schools when determining planning applications further compounds the starting position when considering applications for such proposals.

- 6.1.7 Locally, the proposals will contribute to the vision established within 'Our Manchester Strategy'. It will contribute greatly to its aspiration to improve Manchester's schools and the expansion strategy earmarked. More specifically, it will raise secondary educational opportunities and standards for the East Manchester community, helping to ensuring local access for all.
- 6.1.8 The proposed school would be run by the Co-op, which is a worldwide organisation which is well known for their support of social and community goals and programmes. The Co-op Trust works with their academies to empower teachers and young people to work together to provide better education and create better communities. The Trust is also passionate about providing education facilities and opportunities for those who face additional or unique barriers, such as those with an Educational Health Care Plan ('EHCP') or Special Educational Needs support ('SEND'), those who face socio-economic challenges, new international arrivals and those for who English is an additional language.
- 6.1.9 Once formed, Belle Vue Academy will benefit from the expertise of the Co-op colleges, which offers students the opportunity to learn about business and ethical issues. The new academy will also collaborate with other Co-op academies in the area.

Application Site and Proposed School Development

- 6.1.10 The proposed development wholly confirms to the three principles of sustainable development identified within the NPPF. The new school will provide substantial social, economic and environmental benefits to the local area and the wider catchment area in East Manchester which it would serve.
- 6.1.11 In terms of environmental benefits, the proposed development makes use of previously developed land, which accords with the Government's 'Brownfield First' approach to development (supported in Chapter 11 of the NPPF and outlined further in this statement). The proposed development is also located in a highly accessible location making journeys to the site via public and active transport an attractive option and reducing the need to travel outside of the area for education.
- 6.1.12 The application site is currently vacant following the permanent closure of the cinema complex. This brownfield site is therefore in need of investment to provide an alternative active use and to avoid it becoming degraded and detrimental to the area. The NPPF at paragraphs 118 and 119 identify that planning decisions should *"give considerable weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs"*, and that local planning authorities should take a *"proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs"*, which is the case in this regard.

6.1.13 The proposed development will result in significant economic benefits to the area. As well as providing employment opportunities directly at the school, the proposed development will provide a high-quality educational establishment, operated by a renowned and established organisation, which will provide students with qualifications they will need to secure employment, apprenticeships or to continue their education. Socially, through improving educational and community provision the development will contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the Gorton area.

6.2 Design

6.2.1 The proposed development has been designed in line with the good design principles identified in Paragraph 124 of the NPPF, with further detailed information on the design credentials provided within the submitted Design and Access Statement and the suite of architectural plans and drawings submitted.

6.2.2 The design for the school building has been formulated to assimilate appropriately to its surroundings and the host site. The main school building will be three storeys in height, with the sports hall element being two-storeys in height. This is in-keeping with the scale of neighbouring buildings in the surrounding locality. The school building itself would be set back within the site but retain a frontage and visual interest on Hyde Road.

6.2.3 The site is not considered to represent a particularly sensitive location in respect to visual amenity. The design proposed is considered to be appropriate for the existing character of the surrounding physical environment, using high quality materials to provide an improved visual amenity on Hyde Road through presenting a modern contemporary design. This includes for a distinctive expansive plaza to be created in front of the school's front elevation, providing an enlivened streetscene. The proposals will be supported by a complementary landscaping and planting scheme.

6.2.4 The proposals have been designed to the highest standard as demonstrated in the supporting Design and Access Statement. The school represents an appropriate form of development for the site and the guidance requirements set out within the Guide to Development in Manchester and Core Strategy Policy DM1 have been followed to ensure compliance.

6.2.5 There are no heritage assets which would be potentially impacted by the proposals. The application site is not within a Conservation Area and there are no Listed buildings in the neighbouring vicinity which the development proposals would potentially impact the setting of.

6.2.6 The design scheme has positively evolved throughout the design process as a response to feedback from Council Officers, consultees and stakeholders, as well as from the technical requirements of the Trust to provide a successful facility.

Residential Amenity

- 6.2.7 The proposed building is sited centrally between the western and eastern boundaries of the site. The orientation and siting of the school building has been designed to provide suitable set-back distances to the surrounding neighbouring properties in order to retain appropriate levels of privacy and amenity for all neighbouring occupants
- 6.2.8 The closest neighbouring properties to the proposed school building are residential properties found to the west of the site, the nearest of which are on Bracewell Close where a number of properties have private rear garden which share their boundary with the western site boundary. A distance of circa 25m would be retained between the rear boundary of the closest residential property and the eastern elevation of the school building. This would provide a minimum elevation to elevation separating distance of circa 30m. The vast majority of properties found to the west of the site would be sited a significantly greater distance away from the school building. In addition, mature trees and vegetation lines the western boundary of the site which will serve to provide screening between the school building and the neighbouring residential properties.
- 6.2.9 In the southern half of the site the sports pitches have been sited as far as feasible towards the eastern boundary, away from the neighbouring residential properties.
- 6.2.10 Through the measures incorporated, the design scheme will accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy DM1 in respect to ensuring appropriate protection for the residential amenity of all neighbouring occupants.
- 6.2.11 The appointed contractor will follow Considerate Constructors scheme practices during the course of the project, committing the development to being environmentally conscious, clean, safe and respectful to the site neighbours during the construction stage.

Noise

- 6.2.12 A noise assessment has been undertaken to support the planning application and inform the design of the building. This is provided within the submitted Acoustic Design Strategy. The assessment considers both the potential noise impacts upon the closest neighbouring occupants as well as to guide ensuring that an appropriate noise environment for teaching will be achieved at the site.
- 6.2.13 Existing ambient noise levels were found to be dominated by existing traffic noise within the area, primarily associated to traffic along Hyde Road and Kirkmanshulme Lane. The proposed school will not significantly influence or materially change this situation.
- 6.2.14 The results of the noise survey undertaken have been utilised to establish appropriate sound insulation requirements for the building fabric and to establish appropriate maximum noise limits

for any required external plant equipment. These are detailed within the assessment provided.

- 6.2.15 Noise breakout from necessary building services in respect to external plant will be suitably controlled, again to ensure an appropriate environment for teaching and to protect neighbouring residential amenity, in accordance with the acoustic consultant's recommendations and the Local Authority's understood typical criteria.
- 6.2.16 The use of the outdoor amenity spaces and sports facilities by pupils will create some noise within the site, primarily during school hours. However, it is not considered that the proposed scheme will lead to any significant adverse impacts in respect to noise.
- 6.2.17 The temporary impacts of noise associated to construction activity can be appropriately managed through construction management practices and controlled construction working hours.

Security and Crime Prevention

- 6.2.18 Greater Manchester Police's Design for Security team has been consulted on the development proposals and design details. A Crime Impact Statement has been prepared in support of the proposals. This report advises on the active safety and security measures which should be incorporated in the scheme to avoid the potential for crime to occur and to achieve Secured by Design accreditation.

Accessibility for All

- 6.2.19 The school building and its surrounding infrastructure have been designed to provide accessibility for all, including those with mobility difficulties and to be fully compliant with the Department for Education's accessibility requirements for schools. Suitable accessible disabled parking bays are incorporated to be positioned conveniently located for access to the building.

6.3 Transport

- 6.3.1 The application is accompanied by a comprehensive Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan. The scope of the Transport Assessment has been discussed and agreed in advance with the local Highway Authority and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) through detailed pre-application discussions.

Access Arrangements

- 6.3.2 The primary vehicle access to the site is proposed from Hyde Road, as is presently found to be the case on the existing site. Modifications to the existing access would be implemented to provide a more efficient arrangement to form a signal-controlled site access integrated into the existing Hyde Road/Belle Vue Street signal junction. Signal-controlled pedestrian crossings will be provided across all junction approaches to facilitate pedestrian access. This access from Hyde

Road would serve as the main point of entry and exit for all vehicles visiting the site.

- 6.3.3 An existing secondary vehicle access at the southern end of the site from Kirkmanshulme Lane is proposed to be retained. This would primarily serve as a pedestrian and cycle route of access, however, it would also be suitable for use on an infrequent basis for some servicing/maintenance vehicles and for emergency access when requirements arise. The design allows for both safe pedestrian and cycle access to be available from Hyde Road and Kirkmanshulme Lane.

Parking and Transport Infrastructure

- 6.3.4 A total of 93 vehicle parking spaces are proposed to be provided on site, including 6 accessible bays. In addition, a dedicated pupil drop-off/pick-up area would be provided within the car park with capacity for circa 18 cars at one time. This drop-off/pick-up area would also be used to accommodate coach parking when required. Provision for electric vehicle charging points is to be provided for on site. Additionally, provision for a dedicated drop-off/pick-up bay located adjacent to the site alongside the Kirkmanshulme Lane highway is identified to be provided which would have capacity for circa 10 cars at one time.
- 6.3.5 A cycle parking facility is incorporated to the rear of the school building with capacity for circa 120 bicycles. In addition, a small number of visitor cycle parking spaces are to be provided adjacent to the school entrance.
- 6.3.6 In terms of provision for pedestrians, the existing surrounding highway network provides suitable pedestrian connectivity to the site, including appropriate footpaths, dropped kerbs and safe crossing points to enable safe trips on foot to be undertaken.
- 6.3.7 As mentioned, signal-controlled pedestrian crossing points are proposed to be provided across all junctions in the revised site access/Hyde Road/Belle Vue Street junction. In addition, to the south of the site a pedestrian crossing with refuge island is proposed circa 140 metres west of the secondary site access on Kirkmanshulme Lane to aid pedestrian accessibility to the secondary access point. Furthermore, between the proposed pedestrian crossing and site access, Kirkmanshulme Lane would be narrowed in order to promote reduced vehicle speeds by using road markings and kerb buildouts.
- 6.3.8 It is noted that a traffic calming scheme is already presented along the section of Kirkmanshulme adjacent to the school site which is to be delivered to support Countryside Properties neighbouring planning permission for a residential development at the Belle Vue Greyhound Racing Track site (Ref.122160/FO/2018), which was approved in November 2020. This traffic calming scheme includes for the introduction of speed cushions on Kirkmanshulme Lane and would not be compromised by the highway works put forward under this application.

Sustainable Travel

- 6.3.9 Principally, the accessible nature of the site which is readily reached from public transport, will support the City Council's sustainable transport objectives outlined in Core Strategy Policies T1 and T2.
- 6.3.10 It is anticipated that the vast majority of the school's pupils will reside within the East Manchester area, many of which being local to the Gorton, Belle Vue, Beswick and Levenshulme areas which are within a 2km walking catchment of the site. The off-site pedestrian environment improvements presented will promote and aid users choosing to visit the site on foot.
- 6.3.11 The closest bus stops to the site are located on Hyde Road approximately 50m to the west of the northern site access. Additional bus stops are located on Mount Road, approximately 300m east of the southern site access. From these bus stops a number of bus services are available routing via the surrounding residential areas of Gorton, Longsight, Levenshulme, Ardwick and Hyde every day of the week, as well as destinations further afield including Manchester City Centre.
- 6.3.12 Within the wider area there is an established cycle infrastructure network to facilitate cyclists travelling to the site.
- 6.3.13 A Framework Travel Plan is provided in support of the proposals which would be implemented by the Trust to actively promote sustainable modes of transport.

Traffic Impact

- 6.3.14 The Transport Assessment provides analysis of the expected vehicle trips which would result from the secondary school. Analysing this data against the main junctions identified to be influenced by the new proposed use identifies that the development would have a negligible impact upon neighbouring junctions. No significant congestion issues are therefore envisaged to occur as a result of the proposed development.
- 6.3.15 The pupil drop-off/pick-up facilities to be provided will enable significant parking capacity at peak times to assist in minimising any disruption. Furthermore, it is noted that with Hyde Road being a busy principal road through the area which carries daily traffic of more than 25,000 vehicles, it is appropriate to assume that a proportion of vehicular trips generated by the proposed school would represent pre-existing pass-by vehicles movements which would already feature on the local highway network.
- 6.3.16 Any anticipated highway impacts associated to the proposed development will be capable of being controlled through normal planning condition.

Summary and Transport Policy Compliance

6.3.17 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that:

"Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."

6.3.18 The assessment undertaken of the proposals and the identified resultant impacts upon the highway network have been robustly considered within the Transport Assessment presented which confirm that there would be no material adverse impacts upon the local highway network. As such, compliance with the NPPF as well the requirements of Core Strategy Policies T1 and T2 would be achieved.

6.3.19 Through the measures incorporated to support and promote sustainable transport modes and to provide safe and suitable access for all users, the proposals are in accordance with the NPPF's requirements in these regards.

6.4 Air Quality

6.4.1 The Hyde Road highway is identified as an Air Quality Management Area. An Air Quality Assessment has been undertaken to support the planning application which has considered the local air quality environment.

6.4.2 The assessment concludes that all proposed receptors during the operational phase of the development are expected to be within acceptable limits and therefore mitigation measures are not identified to be required.

6.4.3 Sustainability measures are to be adopted through the implementation of a Travel Plan for the school which will promote active travel through walking and cycling to and from the school, thus supporting limiting air emissions from the use of private vehicles traveling to and from the new school.

6.4.4 The construction phase could generate some air quality impacts for a temporary period if not suitably mitigated. The Air Quality Assessment identifies mitigation measures which would ensure that there are no unacceptable impacts. The Construction Management Plan sets out the proposed mitigation measures for construction activities and this can be controlled by suitably a worded planning condition.

6.5 Ecology and the Natural Environment

6.5.1 A phase 1 ecological site survey has been undertaken by a qualified ecologist to establish the ecological value of the site, the potential for the site to support protected species and their habitat

and any ecological constraints for the redevelopment of the site

- 6.5.2 The site comprises predominately of hardstanding with amenity grassland, introduced shrub, plantation woodland, scattered broad-leaved and coniferous tree, and hardstanding. The habitats within the site are common throughout the UK and no nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the site survey. There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites within the Site or within a 2km radius thereof.

Protected Species

- 6.5.3 Limited potential for the site to support any protected species has been identified. A preliminary bat roost assessment of the cinema buildings and trees within the site has been undertaken. The former showcase cinema building and substation on the site have been assessment as presenting negligible suitability to support roosting bats. A small number of mature trees along the boundaries of the site have been identified to possess low and moderate suitability to support roosting bats. Suitable mitigation measures to mitigate for any potential habitat impacts can be implemented as part of the landscape strategy for the site.
- 6.5.4 There are no suitable waterbodies for Great Crested Newts within a 500m radius of the Site. The proposed development is considered to have a negligible impact on the local Great Crested Newt population.
- 6.5.5 No evidence of badger activity was identified during the ecology site survey. As such, the proposed development is considered to have a negligible impact on the local badger population.
- 6.5.6 Some potential suitable nesting bird habitat (plantation belts, scattered trees, introduced shrub and buildings) were identified on site. Appropriate measures to ensure for the protection of nesting birds would be implemented should site works be planned to be undertaken during the bird nesting season, in accordance with the appointed ecologist's recommendations.

Development Proposals

- 6.5.7 Efforts will be made to avoid disturbance to the natural wildlife during the construction period. The existing woodland alongside the western boundary of the site will be retained as a natural habitat area and will aid educational activities for the school. It is considered that the impacts of the development on local ecology will not be significant and can be appropriately controlled through planning conditions.
- 6.5.8 Through the implementation of the proposals a net gain in bio-diversity will be achieved, principally through the beneficial replacement of extensive areas of hardstanding which exist at the site and the introduction of new areas of green landscaping, native tree planting and the retention and improvement of existing green infrastructure. A 5 year habitat management plan

will be produced to ensure the biodiversity of the site is upheld and promoted. These measures together will ensure compliance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies EN9 (Green Infrastructure) and EN 15 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity).

6.6 Arboriculture

- 6.6.1 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been undertaken to inform the proposals. A site tree survey was undertaken in December 2020 in accordance with *'BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to Design'*.
- 6.6.2 Existing trees on the site are primarily concentrated along the western and eastern boundaries of the site, with further trees dispersed within the site as part of the existing soft landscaping scheme associated to the cinema development. Trees across the site are mostly early-mature specimens formally planted within low level shrub borders, the majority of which appear to be part of the original landscape planting for the cinema complex.
- 6.6.3 The most significant areas of tree coverage along the western and eastern boundaries are to be retained and will be largely unaffected. None of the trees surveyed on the site have been identified as being of individual importance, with their currently being no Tree Preservation Orders in place on the site, and the site not being within a Conservation Area. The majority of trees and tree groups surveyed on the site were assessed as category B and C quality (36 and 35 respectively), with 13 category U trees/groups and just 4 category A trees/groups.
- 6.6.4 To facilitate the proposed development some tree removal will be required. This will predominantly be of trees sited in from the site's boundaries. Necessary tree removals are identified on the supporting Tree Retention and Removal Plan provided. Trees requiring removal are identified in the Arboriculture Impact Assessment as mostly being internal early-mature specimens for which it is considered that appropriate replacements can be easily provided for. Any necessary tree removal will be compensated for through replacement new planting as part of a comprehensive planting scheme, appropriate for compliance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy EN 9 (Green Infrastructure). Suitable tree protection measures are outlined to protect trees to be retained on site during the construction period.

6.7 Flood Risk

- 6.7.1 The application is accompanied by a detailed site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. This confirms that the development site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 (land designated as having a less than 0.1% annual probability of flooding from rivers or the sea). There are no bodies of water located on the site or within the directly neighbouring vicinity and there have been no known historic flooding problems in the vicinity of the site. The site is identified as being of 'medium – low' risk of flooding from pluvial and groundwater sources. The risk from all other sources is assessed to be 'low'.

- 6.7.2 The residual flood risk on site from pluvial sources will be mitigated through appropriate drainage engineering and the application of SuDs which are identified within the drainage strategy presented. The development of the site will not lead to any increased flood risk to the wider catchment area. The proposals as such can be found compliant with the requirements of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy EN14 (Flood Risk).

6.8 Drainage

- 6.8.1 The application is accompanied by an outline drainage strategy design which incorporates the application of suitable SuDS. It is proposed that new surface water drainage and foul water drainage will be discharged via separate systems to the surrounding public network.
- 6.8.2 On site attenuation and storage is proposed to be incorporated, primarily underneath the school car park, MUGA courts and rear amenity space which will aid surface water run-off rates.
- 6.8.3 The proposals through incorporating the installation of significant new permeable grassed areas to provide the multiple grass sports pitches will achieve a significant reduction in the extent of impermeable hardstanding across the site compared to the existing situation which is dominated by car parking. The grass sports pitches are to be drained to Sport England standards.
- 6.8.4 The proposed surface water peak discharge flow rate will be limited in accordance with Manchester City Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Use Guide Level 2) requirements that *'Development should aim for a minimum reduction in surface water runoff rates of 50% for Brownfield sites'*. The proposed site surface water drainage system will be designed in accordance with current design guidance and standards to maintain the surface water flows below ground for up to and including the 1 in 30 year return period. The proposed surface water discharge rate is identified as an 82% betterment in comparison to the estimated existing discharge rate on site.
- 6.8.5 The information presented establishes that the drainage proposals will be compliant with the requirement of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy EN14 (Flood Risk).

6.9 Site Investigations

- 6.9.1 Phase I and Phase II Geo-Environmental surveys have been undertaken for the site and are provided in support of the planning application. The Phase I desktop assessment identified the overall environmental risk of developing the site for the proposed school use to be 'low to moderate'. The identified historical land uses identified at the site would not be expected to result in specific significant land contamination issues for the redevelopment of the site.
- 6.9.2 The intrusive Phase II ground investigation assessment identified low level contamination in made ground soils. Ground gas assessment has identified low gas risk on the site. The investigation reports identify that the site can be safely developed for the proposed use subject to the

implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, to be identified within a Remediation Strategy for the site.

- 6.9.3 The presence of invasive plant species (Japanese knotweed) has been identified in a number of locations on site. Arrangements to suitably contain, manage and remove such species are to be established and actioned accordingly prior to a start on site through a bio-security management plan.
- 6.9.4 The application is accompanied by a Japanese Knotweed Report which plots the stands of Japanese Knotweed identified on the site as well as setting out a strategy for the eradication of these stands.

6.10 Sustainability

- 6.10.1 In respect to sustainability and energy efficiency, the supporting Environmental Standards Statement sets out the sustainability credentials of the scheme and the measures incorporated into the design.
- 6.10.2 In accordance with the Council's guidance within the Guide to Development in Manchester, the scheme is targeting to achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'. Details of a BREEAM pre-assessment rating undertaken for the development is provided in the supporting Environmental Standard Statement. The BREEAM assessment targets a score of 71.15% which significantly surpasses the requirements for a score of 55% necessary to BREEAM 'Very Good' certification, therefore well exceeding the policy requirement.
- 6.10.3 Measures to incorporate energy efficient technologies and to reduce carbon emissions from the development are incorporated across the design. A photovoltaics array of 200 sq.m is included within the proposals, to be sited on the sports hall roof, providing a source of renewable energy. A 14.4% reduction in building emissions over Part L of the 2013 Building Regulation requirements is identified. This is equivalent to an improvement of 23.4% over the Part L 2010 regulations, achieving compliance with the requirement contained within Core Strategy Policy EN6 which requires a 15% reduction over Part L 2010.
- 6.10.4 A net gain in biodiversity will be achieved on site through the introduction of further green landscaping areas and the protection of existing green infrastructure. Within the external environment, additional planting will provide passive shading and localised cooling, aiding resilience to further climate change conditions.
- 6.10.5 In terms of the construction phase activities, Sir Robert McAlpine as the appointed contractor operate a third party certified environmental management scheme (ISO 14001) which requires them to work to strict guidelines with regards to resource efficiency (including energy and water) and waste reduction, both on and off site.

6.10.6 A sustainable and futureproofed design represents a fundamental component of the proposals. The sustainability measures to be incorporated as set out within the Environmental Standards Statement demonstrate compliance with the relevant Core Strategy planning policies, specifically DM1 (Development Management) EN4 (Reducing CO2 Emissions) EN6 (Target Framework for CO2 Reduction from Low or Zero Carbon Energy Supplies) and EN8 (Adaption to Climate Change).

6.11 Sports Provision

6.11.1 The proposals will provide a range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities at the site. The sports facilities to be provided are presented on the supporting site plans and include;

- Indoor sports hall; and
- 1no. Multi-use Games Area (MUGA), (3no. tennis courts / 3no. basketball courts / 1no. five-a-side football court / 3no. net ball courts).

Outdoor Winter Provision

- 1no. senior grass football pitch;
- 1no. junior grass football pitch;
- 1no. five-a-side grass football pitch; and
- 12no. grass training grids.

Outdoor Summer Provision

- 1no. junior cricket oval with grass wicket;
- 1no. rounders and softball field;
- 100m running track;
- 12. grass training grids;
- 1no. five-a-side grass football pitch; and
- 1no. rugby training pitch.

6.11.2 The mix of sports facilities to be incorporated have primarily been led by the curriculum requirements of the Trust as well as the requirements of the Department for Education. However, the facilities will also be made available for public use. The facilities will meet both the physical education and sports competition requirements of the school.

6.11.3 The sports provision has been developed in dialogue with Sport England and MCRactive, who have both respectively endorsed the proposals.

- 6.11.4 Sport England's playing pitch planning policies seek to retain and improve the provision of grass playing fields provision across the country. There proposals support this aspiration through the creation of new grass pitches. Furthermore, locally it is understood that there is an identified shortfall in both junior and senior grass football pitches, which the scheme would help to address, supporting the implementation of Manchester City Council's own Playing Pitch Strategy.

6.12 Community Benefits

- 6.12.1 The existing site is now vacant following the permanent closure of the cinema and is therefore in need a new lease of life and investment in order to avoid this prominent site becoming detrimental to the character of the area.
- 6.12.2 Through providing a new, modern educational facility the proposals will provide tangible and lasting benefit for the Belle Vue community, both in terms of educational attainment locally as well as through improving the visual amenity of the site and the character of the area. Critically, the new school will also ensure that sufficient secondary school places are provided locally to meet the demand for places.
- 6.12.3 The proposals wholly support the NPPF's '*brownfield first*' policy position, with paragraph 118 of the NPPF establishing that '*substantial weight*' should be provided to '*the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs*'.
- 6.12.4 As well as the educational benefits, the proposals will deliver wider community gain through parts of the school facilities being made available for community use. This would relate to the sports facilities as well as the library/community hub space. Establishing the available use of these facilities would be formalised through a community use agreement.

6.13 Summary

- 6.13.1 Having regard to the above, the technical reports submitted in support of this application conclude the development is acceptable subject to suitable mitigation where appropriate and as outlined in the various reports. The proposals meet the requirements of national and local planning policies as outlined in this Statement.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1.1 This Planning Statement has provided consideration to the relevant planning policies and material considerations relevant to the proposals to demonstrate that the proposed secondary school scheme presents a high quality and policy compliant development.
- 7.1.2 The NPPF is clear that the Government places great importance on ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. There is an established and evidenced need for additional free secondary school places in East Manchester. The proposals are being progressed in order to directly meet this identified need and to safeguard the necessary availability of secondary school places for the immediate coming years as part of the Local Authority's identified schools strategy.
- 7.1.3 The Co-op Academies Trust has an established reputation for providing a high standard of education at its existing schools and colleges and will transfer their vision and experience to the success of the new Belle Vue Academy.
- 7.1.4 The application site represents a suitable and viable location to locate the school development which is wholly capable of meeting the need for additional school places for September 2022 and beyond. There are no local site-specific policies which allocate the site for any specific uses, therefore the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied providing that granting approval would not result in any adverse impacts which would significantly outweigh the benefits of the scheme, (when assessed against the NPPF and the Local Development Plan as a whole).
- 7.1.5 In helping to bring a currently vacant brownfield site back into active use, the proposals support the NPPF's aspirations for the efficient reuse of land. The site is also located in a highly accessible and sustainable location, with excellent links to public transport connections thus capable of encouraging sustainable and active forms of travel from its users. The Transport Assessment undertaken in support of the proposals demonstrates that the school can be implemented successfully and safely without significantly impacting upon the surrounding road network.
- 7.1.6 The application submission is supported by a suite of technical documents which establish the acceptability of the site to accommodate the proposed school use and demonstrate that there would be no significant harm or disturbance to the amenity enjoyed by local residents.
- 7.1.7 This statement has identified that the development proposals are entirely compliant with national and local planning policies and will achieve significant positive benefits for the community.