



## EXECUTIVE

### 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Proposal to Relocate Wilby CE VA Primary School to the Glenvale Park Development</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	David Watts, Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships & Housing (DASS) & Children’s Services (Interim DCS)  Jo Hutchinson, Head of School Effectiveness
<b>Lead Member</b>	Cllr Scott Edwards – Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972</b>	

#### List of Appendices

- Appendix A** – Equality Screening Assessment (ESA)
- Appendix B** – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
- Appendix C** – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Appendix D** – Copy of Formal Consultation
- Appendix E** – Executive Report 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023
- Appendix F** – Public Consultation Analysis Report
- Appendix G** – Public Consultation Appendix Analysis Report

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1. To inform Executive of the outcome of the expression of interest, interview and selection process.
- 1.2. To inform the Executive of the outcome of the formal public consultation following the interview panel's recommendation.
- 1.3. To request that Executive approve the relocation of Wilby CE VA Primary School.

## **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1. The Glenvale Park site is in Wellingborough and once complete, there will be circa 3,000 homes. As part of the infrastructure and Section 106 (S106) proposals for the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), a 2-form entry, 60 places per year group, primary school was proposed to meet increased demand and serve the local community.
- 2.2. As part of the annual strategic Pupil Place Planning exercise undertaken in January 2023, it became clear that due to demographic changes, there would be insufficient demand to support the school opening until September 2025 or beyond.
- 2.3. Based on this position, work was undertaken to assess the options for the new school to ensure that the local community has access to sufficient school places. Local primary schools were invited to express their interest in relocating to the brand-new school building at the Glenvale Park site.
- 2.4. As part of the expressions of interest application process there was a requirement for the applicants to clearly set out how any move would support the existing school community as well as those living in the new Glenvale Park development.
- 2.5. Two expressions of interest were received. A robust interview process took place lead by a panel of representatives.
- 2.6. A formal 30-day public consultation was undertaken in September 2023, following the panel's recommendation that Wilby CE VA Primary should be the school that relocates to the Glenvale Site.

## **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1. Having regard to the formal consultation outcomes, it is recommended that the Executive:
  - i) Approve the relocation of Wilby CEVA Primary School to the Glenvale Park site
  - ii) Approve the continuation of the statutory process relating to the transfer of a school to another site in line with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance 'Making a Significant Change to a Maintained School.
- 3.2. Reasons for Recommendations:
  - To support children and young people and their families to access high quality sustainable education facilities that enable the achievement of the best outcomes.
  - To progress the relocation of the school in accordance with legislative requirements and Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance.

- To ensure the delivery of sufficient suitable school places that meet the needs of the community now and in the future.
- To make effective and efficient use of the education estate to meet the needs of all pupils.

### 3.3 Alternative Options Considered:

3.3.1 Alternative options were considered in section 5 of the 'Primary Education Provision at the Glenvale Park Development Wellingborough North' paper presented to Executive on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

3.3.2 The options were shared along with accompanying risks and advantages. A summary of the options that were outlined in the previous paper to Executive were:

- Option 1: Mothball the school build until demand for places increases
- Option 2: Repurpose the school building to meet an existing educational need
- Option 3: Relocate a local school into the newly built school at the Glenvale Park Development

3.3.3 The preference was to progress Option 3.

3.3.4 This preference was approved by the Executive on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Colleagues leading on the project then progressed to the initial stages of the relocation process.

## **4. Report Background**

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4.1 The reasons for the proposed relocation and subsequent expression of interest process were considered by the Executive on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

4.2 The relocation proposal was presented to the Executive following a place planning review of the existing demand for school places within Wellingborough, along with consideration of the progress of each housing development in terms of housing completions. The review determined that the view of the Council was that the new school will not be required in the town until September 2025 at the earliest.

4.3 The Executive approved the proposal to seek expressions of interest in relocating an existing local school to the Glenvale Park site and approved the commencement of preparation for the accompanying statutory process. The Executive report presented on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 can be found in section 8 of this report.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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5.1 Individual options were considered regarding the Glenvale Park school building prior to the request for an expression of interest proposal.

## **Outcome of Expression of Interest, Interview and Selection Process**

- 5.2 Two expressions of interest were received. These were from Little Harrowden Primary School and Wilby CE VA Primary School.
- 5.3 A selection panel was formed for the interview process. This panel was made up of three Council Officers - a Headteacher from a Local Authority (LA) Maintained School, the Executive Member for Childrens, Families, Education and Skills and three Ward Councilors representing the Ward in which the schools were situated.
- 5.4 Only three panel members were able to vote at the end of the process, selecting the preferred school. The voting panel members were the Assistant Director for Education (Council Officer), Headteacher and the Executive Member for Childrens, Families, Education and Skills.
- 5.5 Following a rigorous interview process, a recommendation was put forward by the voting members of the panel that Wilby CE VA Primary School should be the school that relocates to the Glenvale Park development to coincide with the start of September 2024.

## **6. Next Steps**

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- 6.1. The Executive is now invited to reflect on the outcome of the formal consultation when considering the request for approval of the relocation of Wilby CE VA Primary School to the Glenvale Park development.
- 6.2 The Executive decision must be made within a period of two months of the end of the formal consultation period. The reasons for the Executive decision must be published within one week of making a determination.
- 6.3 If the relocation of Wilby CE VA Primary School to the Glenvale Park development is approved, then the DfE guidance 'Making a Significant Change to an Academy or Maintained School' process will continue at pace. Simultaneously, the necessary preparations and planning for the relocation will begin immediately.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation**

- 7.1.1 Should the preferred option be approved by Executive, from September 2024, the Council will incur revenue costs in the year of September 2024 opening and in each of the subsequent academic years thereafter for the additional growth, against the 'Pupil Growth Fund' element of the Dedicated Schools Grant DSG.
- 7.1.2. The Council may also incur additional transport costs for a 2-year period to facilitate the relocation of existing pupils.

- 7.1.3. There may be some capital investment needed to undertake some refurbishment of the school being vacated to facilitate the repurposing of the Wilby CE VA Primary School building. This will be met from available DfE Basic Needs or SEND Grant as appropriate.
- 7.1.4. A strategic assessment of the Wilby school building will be undertaken to assess what the most appropriate educational use will be should the Executive approve the proposal to relocate Wilby CE VA Primary School to the Glenvale Park development.
- 7.1.5. The following options have been discussed and explored for the future educational use of the Wilby school building:

**Option 1:**

A co-located centre for SEND which will support NNC with the current shortage of SEND places, a creation of such a unit for pupils with complex needs will support sufficiency of SEND places. It will also support pupils in making good progress towards the outcomes described in their Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

**Option 2:**

A Hospital School is an Alternative Provision (AP) which provides educational support for children and young people aged 4 to 18 who cannot attend mainstream school due to a diagnosed medical/and or mental health condition.

Currently there are limited Alternative Provision (AP) places available to NNC pupils, with all major providers being based outside of the area. NNC is working proactively to establish a wider range of AP places for local pupils. The aim of is to ensure that the right provision is available locally to meet all needs.

## 7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. Legal implications relate solely to ensuring that the period of consultation on this matter is conducted in full compliance with relevant legislation and guidance that govern relocating to a new site. The relevant legislation is:

[Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools](#)

- 7.2.2. The statutory process that will be followed by the Council in relation to this proposal complies with all relevant DfE guidance on the subject and legislation that prescribes how school organisational changes of this nature must be enacted.
- 7.2.4. If the relocation is approved, the Wilby CE VA Primary School building would be transferred to the Council and Wilby CE VA Primary School would be issued a new 125-year peppercorn lease on the Glenvale Park Development.
- 7.2.5. Wilby CE VA Primary School is owned by the Diocese, they would need to sign the deeds over to the Council.

### 7.3. **Relevant Policies and Plans**

7.3.1. The specific DfE guidance which underpins the process is as follows:

Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers (January 2023) [Section: 'Transfer to a new site' page 17; and section: Statutory process: prescribed alterations page 35 for the process needed]

7.3.2. Consideration will need to be given to the support of existing pupils and their access to the new school at Glenvale Park.

### 7.4. **Risk**

7.4.1. The risks for the school relocation process have been explored fully in section 5 of the 'Primary Education Provision at the Glenvale Park Development Wellingborough North' paper presented to Executive on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

### 7.5 **Consultation**

7.5.1 Although the DfE guidance does not prescribe that a 'pre-consultation' stage is statutory, it does state that there is a 'strong expectation' that any LA would conduct this stage prior to any formal statutory process when making a significant change to a maintained school or academy.

7.5.2. As part of the expression of interest phase of the process, both schools were asked to conduct an informal consultation with their community. The schools were required to summarise the outcome of their informal consultation in a designated section within their expression of interest.

7.5.3 Following the recommendation that Wilby CEVA Primary School should be the school that relocates to the Glenvale Park development, a formal 30-day public consultation was held in line with the DfE guidance.

7.5.4. The formal consultation ran from 5<sup>th</sup> September to midnight 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

7.5.5. The consultation was hosted on the Council's [Consultation & Engagement Hub](#). The consultation was supported by information including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and a briefing paper containing a clear outline of the proposal.

7.5.6. Notification of the consultation was also published on the local BBC News website, sent to Councillors, Teaching and Support Staff Union Representatives, local Members of Parliament, town and parish Councils, partner organisations, members of the Council's Consultation Register, and members of the North Northamptonshire Residents' Panel who reside within the local area.

7.5.7 Consultees were able to have their say by:

- Visiting the dedicated consultation webpage and completing the questionnaire or requesting a paper questionnaire
- Emailing [schoolconsultation.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:schoolconsultation.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk)
- Writing to North Northamptonshire Council, Consultation: Wilby relocation to Glenvale Park, Bowling Green Road, Kettering NN15 7QX
- Accessing the questionnaire free of charge at any North Northamptonshire Council library. Alternative formats of the questionnaire are offered upon request

7.5.8 Formal Consultation Response -In total, 204 respondents filled out a questionnaire, either partially or fully. Respondents did not have to answer every question and so the total number of responses for each question differs and is shown in relation to each question. Included were two written responses.

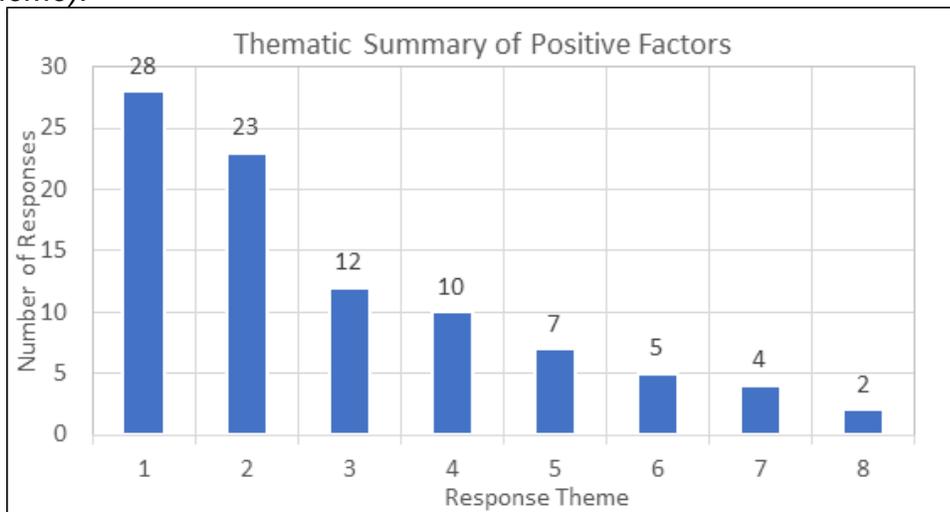
7.5.9 Details of how the respondents to the consultation was made up is included in the Public Consultation Analysis Report (**Appendix F**).

**7.6 Common themes emerging from responses from Parents/Carers/Guardians and Staff of Wilby CEVA Primary School**

7.6.1 The purpose of this section of the report is to give further clarification to the data by providing free text information aligned to common themes emerging from respondents during the consultation.

**7.6.2 Summary of responses to the question: “If you think the proposal will have a positive impact, then please tell us why here.”**

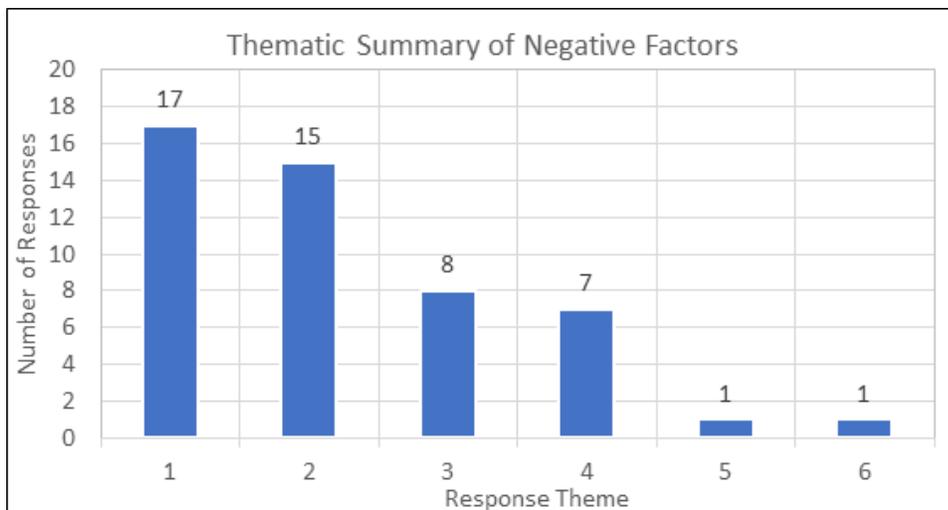
7.6.3 There were a total of 40 written responses to this question which raised positive themes. A summary of answers which mentioned one or more of the key themes identified is displayed below (*please note that a single response may cover more than one theme*):



Theme Number	Theme	Responses mentioning this theme	% of responses mentioning this theme
1	A new school site would have the benefits of a larger building and modern facilities	28	70%
2	A new school site would have more outdoor green space compared to the current site	23	58%
3	A new school site would facilitate greater opportunities for pupils	12	30%
4	A move is preferable due to the current site being unfit for purpose	10	25%
5	A new school site could have more space for 1:1 learning and dedicated space for SEN students	7	18%
6	A move would allow better parking and access at the new site, and reduce traffic in Wilby village	5	13%
7	A new school site would not require as much ongoing maintenance and associated costs	4	10%
8	A move would enable Wilby to maintain and improve its current academic strengths and reputation	2	5%

- 7.6.4 A majority (70%) of responses highlighted the positive benefits that a larger and more modern school site would bring, with many of these responses also highlighting the lack of space at the current site. A majority of responses (58%) also similarly noted that a new school site would have more green space which could be utilised for outdoor activities, breaktimes and physical education, contributing towards a better learning environment for pupils.
- 7.6.5 Approximately one-third of responses (30%) highlighted how a new, modern site would provide greater educational opportunities for pupils, as the new site could be built, for example, to incorporate dedicated spaces for different subject areas and extracurricular activities, including more modern technology and IT infrastructure when compared to the current site. One theme noted in 18% of responses was that the new site could provide dedicated space for SEN provision and smaller group work and 1:1 support sessions.
- 7.6.6 25% of responses specifically highlighted the physical and operational shortcomings of the current school site, noting that a move to a new site was necessary as the current site becomes more unfit for purpose; 10% of responses also noted that the current site is becoming increasingly more difficult and costly to adequately maintain. A related theme raised in 13% of responses was the positive impact that the move would have on relieving traffic and parking congestion in Wilby village, particularly during school opening and closing times.
- 7.6.7 Summary of responses to the question: “If you think the above proposal would have a negative impact, please tell us why, along with any suggestions on how any potential negative impacts could be reduced or avoided”**

7.6.8 There were a total of 26 written responses to this question which raised negative themes. A summary of answers which mentioned one or more of the key themes identified is displayed below (*please note that a single response may cover more than one theme*):



Theme Number	Theme	Responses mentioning this theme	% of responses mentioning this theme
1	Concerns about transport to/from Wilby to the new site	17	65%
2	Concerns that the new site would be too large and lose the character of a local village school	15	58%
3	Concerns about the effect of the move on current pupils	8	31%
4	Concerns that a loss of the local village school could damage the local community and identity	7	27%
5	Concerns that the school may become oversubscribed after moving to a new site	1	4%
6	Concerns about whether the new site would be a Church of England school	1	4%

7.6.9 A majority of responses (65%) raised concerns about transport between Wilby and the proposed new site. Of these responses, several noted that the location of the new site would necessitate driving, which was not an option available to several respondents, or would necessitate additional costs for parents who might need to arrange transport.

7.6.10 Several responses also noted that the new site is not within an easy walking distance of Wilby village. Several responses further raised concerns about the location of the new site near busy roads. A subset of responses who raised concerns about transport noted that either the school or the local authority should consider providing and running a transport link between the village and the new site.

7.6.11 Another significant theme raised by a majority (58%) of responses was that the proposed new site could cause the school to lose its character as a local village school.

Several respondents noted that they had specifically selected the school due to its small size and caring environment, with several further expressing concerns about increased class sizes at the new site.

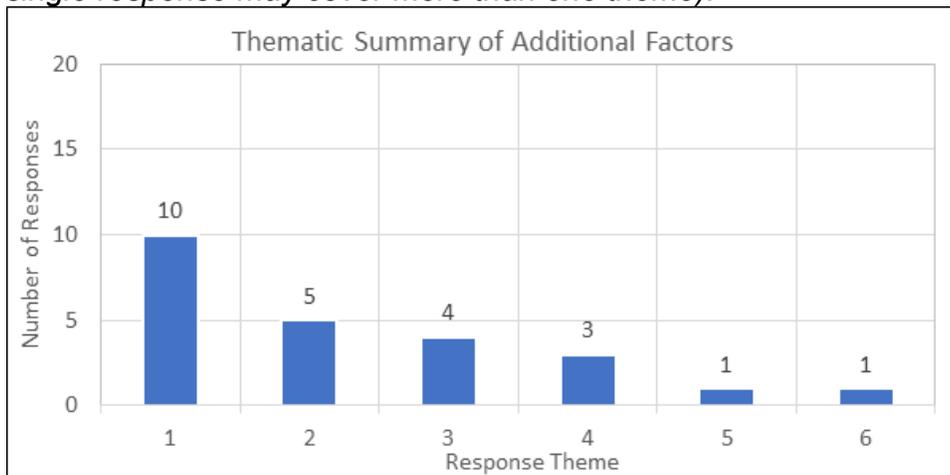
7.6.12 Approximately one-third of responses (31%) also expressed concerns that the move would negatively impact the educational experience of the children currently at the school and could lead to increased anxiety for children who struggle with change.

7.6.13 One response (4%) expressed concerns that the school could become oversubscribed in its new location. One response (4%) also raised concerns about whether the school would retain its status as a Church of England school following the move (several respondents who are residents of Glenvale Park but not parents/guardians of current pupils or members of staff, and therefore not included within the scope of this analysis, raised the inverse concern of whether the school on its new site should have a single religious character).

7.6.14 Just over a quarter (27%) of responses further noted that the school in its current location is a key component of the local village community, and expressed concerns that this would be lost as part of the move. Respondents noted that the current school is closely tied into the history of the village, and into the history of many village residents and families. Several of these responses noted that action should be taken to ensure the current site is repurposed for community use if the move proceeds.

**7.6.15 Summary of responses to the question: “If you have any other comments you would like to make that you have not already told us, then please tell us here:”**

7.6.16 There were a total of 22 written responses to this question. A summary of answers which mentioned one or more of the key themes identified is listed below (*please note that a single response may cover more than one theme*):



Theme Number	Theme	Responses mentioning this theme	% of responses mentioning this theme
1	Reinforcement of positive comments	10	45%
2	Reinforcement of negative comments	5	23%
3	Comments about the necessity of the move	4	18%
4	Concerns over consultation process	3	14%
5	Comments about the need for a dedicated school bus to transport pupils to/from the new site	1	5%
6	Comments from a parent noting that they would rather transfer their children to a different school rather move them to the new site	1	5%

7.6.17 Nearly half of responses (45%) were reinforcing their previous positive comments feeling that the new school would provide better opportunities and reiterated the need for more open space, SEN facilities and modern technology. Many mentioned that the current school is no longer “fit for purpose” and the pupils and staff deserve a new, purpose-built school.

7.6.18 However, 18% of responses questioned the need to move as they felt that the current school provided everything that the pupils needed, and queried whether there were enough pupils to justify a bigger school at Glenvale Park.

7.6.19 3 responses (14%) had concerns and criticisms regarding the consultation process, with two of these believing that the decision to move the school had already been made.

7.6.20 A further 5 responses (23%) reinforced previous negative comments. They felt that many parents had chosen a village school for their children and this move was taking away their decision.

7.6.21 Following on from the previous negative issues raised, one respondent suggested the need for a dedicated bus service to transport Wilby residents to the new Glenvale Park site.

7.6.22 One parent commented that they would transfer their children to another school rather than move to Glenvale Park.

7.6.23 For a detailed summary of the formal consultation, please refer to the Public Consultation Analysis Report (**Appendix F**).

7.6.24 For the full consultation results, please refer to the Public Consultation Analysis Appendix Report (**Appendix G**).

## 7.7 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.7.1. The Future Communities Executive Advisory Panel (EAP), at their meeting on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023, considered the ‘Wilby CE VA Primary School relocation to the

Glenvale Park Development, Wellingborough' and linked documents. There were no key issues raised at the meeting and its members supported the public consultation.

7.7.2. The Futures Communities Executive Advisory Panel (EAP), at their meeting on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023, considered the results of the public consultation and linked documents.

## 7.8 Consideration by Scrutiny

7.8.1 This report has not been considered by the Council's scrutiny function.

## 7.9 Equality Implications

7.9.1 An 'Equalities Screening Assessment' (ESA) has been completed in respect of this proposal and is attached as **Appendix A**.

7.9.2. The equality implications relating to the proposal to relocate Wilby CE VA Primary School has identified an impact on one of the protected characteristics as follows:

- Disability (characteristic) - the relocation to Glenvale Park may mean a longer walk for some pupils with SEND. Children and young people with SEND are potentially entitled to free transport where it is deemed unreasonable to expect them to be able to walk to school due to their SEND. The further distance of travel to Glenvale Park may have implications for this group.

7.9.3. In line with the Equality Act 2010 which places a general duty on all public bodies to have 'due regard' to eliminate discrimination and foster the opportunity of equality - the Local Authority in its responsibility through the North Northamptonshire Equalities Team stipulates that if an Equalities Screening Assessment (ESA) identifies a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics then an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) needs to be completed.

7.9.4. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was completed in respect of this proposal and is attached as **Appendix B**.

7.9.5. The Equality Impact Assessment confirmed that the further distance to travel to school may impact pupils with disabilities as a result, an Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan was prepared to address and where possible mitigate the potential negative impact identified.

7.9.6. Health and wellbeing were also considered as part of the Equality Assessment Screening and Equality Impact Assessment as recommended by the Equalities Team, and it identified that health and wellbeing as a characteristic could potentially be impacted by the further distance to travel to school.

7.9.7. The Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan is detailed below and is also located in **Appendix B**, it outlines what actions will be taken to eliminate or reduce the identified negative impact.

Negative impact	Action to eliminate/reduce negative impact	Review outcome
Further distance to travel to school for some children and their families.	<p>Review of the consultation responses once it closes, with a view to reviewing options for support with transport for impacted families who potentially have to travel further.</p> <p>Review of the admissions criteria to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged by the proposal.</p>	<p>To ensure that no pupil, group or family is negatively impacted as a result of the proposal.</p> <p>To ensure that no pupil, group or family is negatively impacted by the proposal.</p>

7.9.8. The school has been built to DfE standards to ensure the widest access to the curriculum and full accessibility for all of the community.

## 7.10 Climate and Environment Impact

7.10.1. New building regulations ensure that everything is directed at reducing carbon as a standard requirement.

7.10.2. All new builds, including Glenvale, incorporate the following as standard:

- Efficient electrical heating
- Overheating calculations which are now a requirement
- Insulation levels which have been increased
- The Simplified Building Energy Model (SBEM) will require solar photovoltaic (PV) system, mounted on the roof. This is an electrical installation that converts solar energy into electricity

## 7.11 Community Impact

7.11.1 This report seeks approval to begin the relocation of Wilby CE VA Primary School to the Glenvale Park Development, an initial consultation was undertaken by the applicants. A full formal consultation has run for four weeks, commencing from 5<sup>th</sup> September to midnight 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

7.11.2 A summary of the consultation is noted in section 7.5 in this report.

## 7.12 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.12.1. This proposal will have negligible, if any, crime and disorder impact.

## 8. Background Papers

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DfE statutory process that must be followed by the local authority if they wish to progress the relocation is laid out in the DfE guidance	<a href="https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1141117/making-significant-changes-prescribed-alterations-to-maintained-schools.pdf">Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>
Executive Report 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	<a href="#">Executive Report 8th June 2023</a>