

**A New School for Kingstone and
Holgate, Barnsley**

Planning Statement

March 2009

PREPARED BY

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Contents

Section	Page No.
1 INTRODUCTION	3
2 THE PLANNING APPLICATION	4
3 EDUCATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITE SIZE	5
4 SITE HISTORY	10
5 THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS	11
6 PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS	13
7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	19

Figures

1 Existing School Sites	6
2 Catchment Area for the Kingstone School	7
3 Catchment Area for the Holgate School	8

Tables

1 The Strategic Site Selection Process	11
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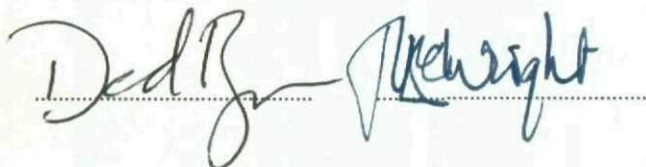
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19 MARCH 2009

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 GL Hearn were first instructed by Barnsley Metropolitan Council (BMBC) in accordance with planning advice relating to the identification of sites for new Advanced Learning Centres (ALC) in several areas of Barnsley in June 2004.
- 1.2 The ALC proposals are part of a wider national programme of secondary school improvements – Building Schools for the Future. The aim of Building Schools for the Future is to ensure that secondary education in every part of England has facilities of 21st Century standard within 10 to 15 years from 2005-06.
- 1.3 The performance of pupils in Barnsley's secondary schools compares unfavourably with the average level throughout the UK. There is therefore an urgent need to provide existing and future pupils with facilities and conditions that will give them the greatest opportunity to fulfil their potential.
- 1.4 The Metropolitan Borough Council have embraced Government policy under the Building Schools for the Future initiative, and are proposing the replacement of traditional secondary schools by new Advanced Learning Centres (ALC) in various locations throughout the Borough.
- 1.5 The proposed number and distribution of new ALCs is a response to meeting educational and community needs within financial limits. Each new ALC will provide facilities and teaching to:
- Help pupils gain a wide range of qualifications and skills;
 - Provide advice and support for children; and
 - Offer specialist education
- 1.6 This Planning Statement supports the fourth planning application for new Advanced Learning Centres which have been submitted by GL Hearn on behalf of Barnsley MBC. The previous applications at Royston Lane, Carlton and Engine Lane, Shafon Two Gates now have the benefit of outline planning permission.

2 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

- 2.1 The planning application is in outline form, with all matters reserved with the exception of access, the details of which are provided in the accompanying Transport Assessment.
- 2.2 A reserved matters application with details of design will be submitted by the appointed contractor in due course. It is necessary to secure outline planning permission prior to funding from the government being made available for the project.
- 2.3 This supporting Planning Statement explains the process and background to the choice of the application site, and goes on to explain how the choice of site is justified in planning policy terms. Section 3 explains the educational circumstances of the choice of site and the need for a site of this size, Section 4 justifies the site selection process, Section 5 explains the conclusions drawn from the Sequential Site Search exercise. Section 6 identifies and examines the planning policy pertinent to the proposals, and Section 7 provides a conclusion.
- 2.4 The form of the application drawing is an illustrative site plan; however in order to carry out the necessary assessments, we are required to specify the general parameters of the design. The site plan shows the area of the site where the building will be located, and the approximate location of the car parking and playing fields.
- 2.5 At this stage we are able to confirm that the maximum height of the proposed buildings will be in the range of 16 - 18 metres (50 - 60 feet approximately) above the former factory site level, although parts will be lower than this. The length of the crescent-shaped building will be in the range 115 – 125 metres (375 – 410 feet approximately) its depth will be between 45 – 55 metres (147 – 180 feet approximately).
- 2.6 The grant of outline planning permission is a pre-requisite for the funding for further instructions for the detailed design of the building.
- 2.7 Reserved matters to include full details of the scheme will be submitted at a later stage of design development and after the private sector development partner has been appointed.

3 EDUCATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITE SIZE

- 3.1 The framework of secondary schools in Barnsley is currently unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. At present, there are too many surplus places. The pupils on roll at secondary schools maintained by the council by 2012 will be 11,499 with 2,164 surplus places, amounting to almost 16% of the total secondary school capacity. Barnsley Council is required to manage the supply of school places so that the total level of surplus capacity does not exceed 10%. The effect of current trends for some schools is for school rolls to fall a level well below the school capacity. There are also many poor school buildings which need replacing. The primary goal of the new school building programme however is ultimately to improve school educational achievements in Barnsley.
- 3.2 The Education Sites Development Plan document which forms part of Barnsley's Local Development Framework has been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination via written representations. As part of this process the Council is proposing a number of minor changes to the Submission version of the Education Sites Development Plan Document. These changes have been formally advertised and are subject to a further period of public consultation for 6 weeks from 21st July to 1st September 2008.
- 3.3 The principle of the DPD is to establish a community facility that will serve the wider community which will include educational facilities for both school age and life long learning, and which in some cases will include related facilities such as libraries, health centres etc. This is in line with current Government thinking, not least to integrate efficiently the Government's income flows for the various functions of the Council.
- 3.4 The proposed pattern of ALCs will result in an Advanced Learning Centre in each Area Forum, thereby creating an opportunity to integrate other existing learning provisions into a single establishment. Each new ALC would provide each Area Forum with:
- 'A wide range of pathways to further education, training and employment and the flexibility to combine work-based training with learning in a centre or college.
 - Integrate Youth Service provision, allowing young people early access to personal advice and support, as well as exciting and enjoyable activities.
 - A full service provision, ensuring swift and easy access to a range of support services for the student and their family.
 - A school offering a specialism and a subsidiary and collaborate closely with Barnsley and Dearne Valley Colleges and training providers. Together they will provide a coherent offer to parents and learners in the community.
 - A range of extended provision to young people who access some or all of their daytime learning elsewhere.'

- 3.5 Barnsley Council are proposing to create 9 ALCs in all, to replace the 13 secondary schools currently in the Borough. Additionally, Elmhirst School is being replaced by a separate funding programme as a new academy.
- 3.6 Barnsley Council are also proposing to replace 6 existing schools on existing school sites. In addition there will be a new Special School (formally the Springwell Centre) and a major refurbishment to the remaining Special School at Greenacre.
- 3.7 Figure 1 below identifies the site in relation to the existing Kingstone and Holgate schools. The Kingstone School lies at the foot of Figure 1 below and is dissected by the A6133 Broadway, which separates the school playing fields from the main school buildings.
- 3.8 The Holgate School lies to the north of Figure 1 and fronts Shaw Lane. A large playing field sits to the immediate west of the school buildings while the site in its entirety is to be considered under this planning application.

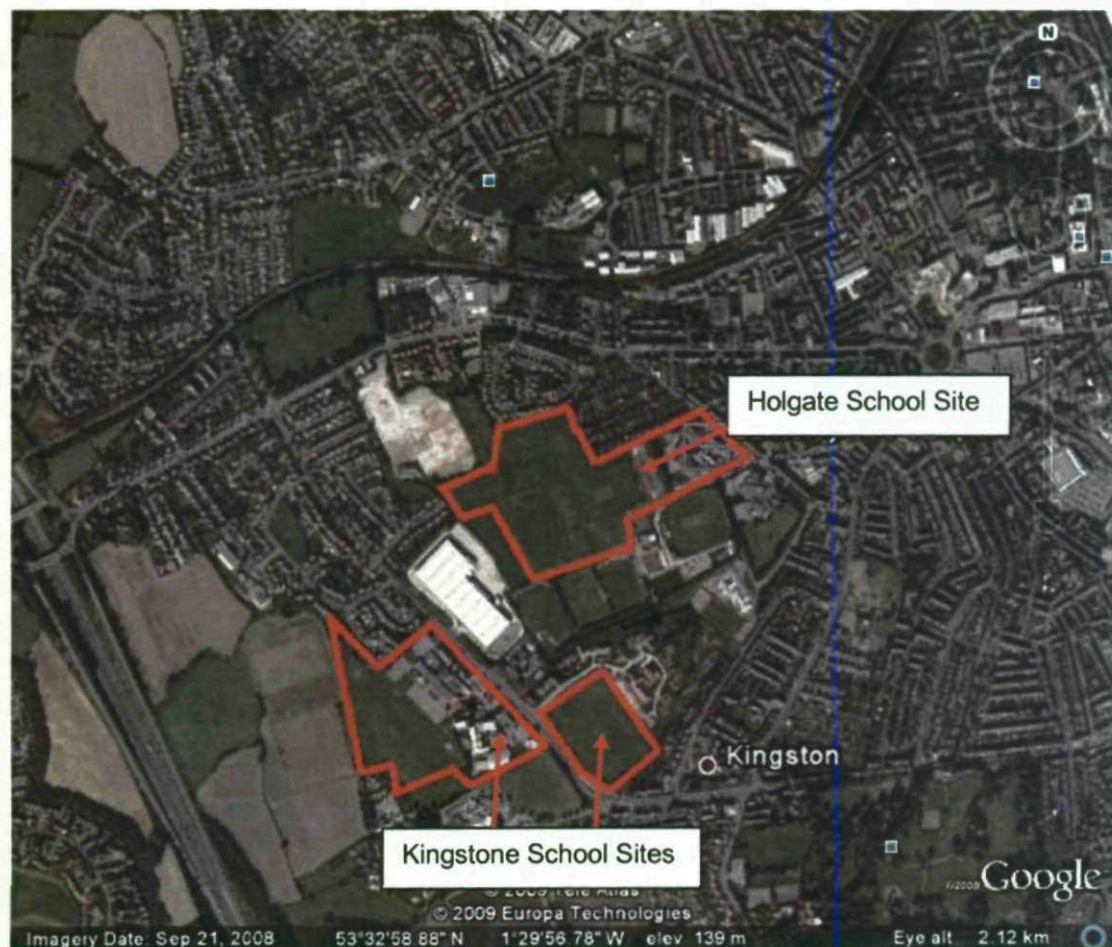


Figure 1 – Existing School Sites

- 3.9 There were three principal drivers leading to the decision to amalgamate Kingstone and Holgate High Schools on the proposed site. The first was an intention to provide the best educational opportunities for local children between the ages of 11 to 19. The second was to achieve a rationalisation of the school estate. The third objective was to ensure the most sustainable location for transport access, but also to ensure that established social and community links and groups are not lost through relocation.
- 3.10 The school roll for the new ALC is expected to be 2,200. This includes 200 sixth form pupils.
- 3.11 The Kingstone School draws its pupils predominantly from central Barnsley, although many also live in the nearby settlement of Dodworth (See Figure 2 below).

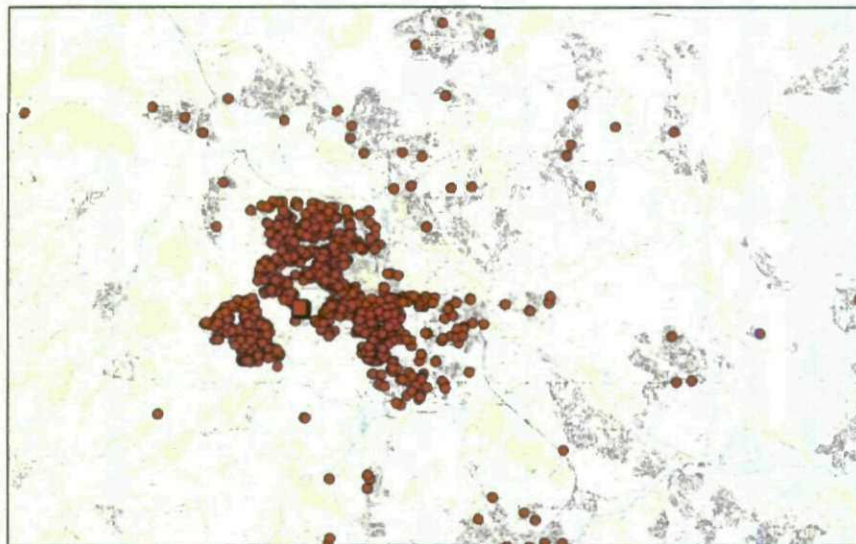


Figure 2 - Catchment Area for the Kingstone School

- 3.12 The Holgate School draws its pupils from central Barnsley however a large number of students reside in Monk Bretton. This is illustrated in Figure 3 below

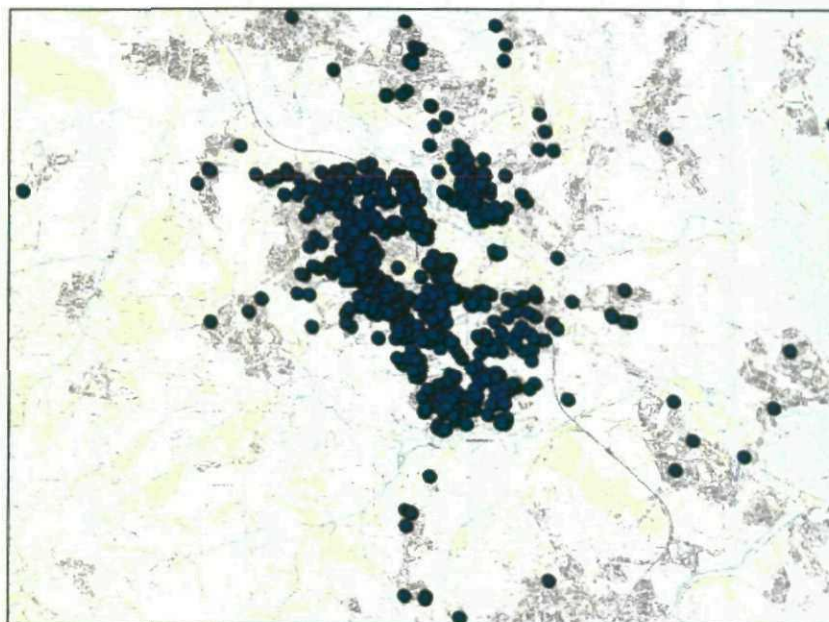


Figure 3 – Catchment Area for the Holgate School

- 3.13 The transferring primary schools for these secondary schools total two. These factors have helped influence the choice of location for the new ALC, and are critical, not only in terms of ensuring the most sustainable location for transport access, but also to ensure the social and community links and groups are not lost through location of an ALC predominantly in one or other communities, or outside areas which the population perceive as part of their local area.
- 3.14 A critical element of the proposed ALC is its size. Given the circumstances of replacing two schools and in order to make the replacement worthwhile a relatively large site is required. Government guidance explains that smaller sites, which may be preferable in planning terms, are not suitable. It is obviously not appropriate to provide such a facility on fragmented sites.
- 3.15 The Department for Education and Skills have issued Building Bulletin 98: Briefing Framework for Secondary School Projects as a guide. Interrogation of both the information contained in this document and the predicted school capacities for 11-16 year olds provided by Barnsley Education Department, has allowed for an accurate prediction of overall site size based upon Figure D3 of Building Bulletin 98.
- 3.16 The figures for this learning centre are as follows:

Total pupils	= 2,200 pupils
Total site area (inc. SR Gent site)	= 1,169,471sqm
Approx. area of playing space, car park etc.	= 1,151,821sqm
Approx. built development	= 17,650sqm

- 3.17 The inclusion of the additional land owned by the Council is vital in the delivery of the ALC as the overall site required is 168,970sqm. The existing Holgate school measures a net site area of 107,079sqm.
- 3.18 Therefore the size of the new ALC site is critical to the functioning of the facility for its purpose, and the educational circumstances have been one of the critical factors in choosing the location, since if these are not right, the project could fail.

4 SITE HISTORY

- 4.1 The recent planning history associated with the site is identified below. The site history identifies three planning applications, two of which relate to the entire site however the most recent sought planning permission upon the existing employment site to the north west (land off Dodworth Road – Former SR Gent site).
- 4.2 A planning application seeking full permission was submitted on 20 April 2007 (ref no. 2008/0542) by BMBC Directorate for Children, Young People and Families at the Holgate School, Shaw Lane, S70 6EP for the 'Development of an Advanced Learning Centre, excluding the SR Gent Land. This was withdrawn on 19 August 2007.
- 4.3 A further planning application seeking outline planning permission was submitted by BMBC Directorate for Children, Young People and Families within early September 2008 (2008/1422). This application also sought permission for an Advanced Learning Centre and incorporated the former SG Gent land.
- 4.4 Further information on this application was requested by the Case Officer and, following further consideration, it was withdrawn. This application is being made following a complete review of the proposals, and incorporates additional supporting material.
- 4.5 Separately from this process, a planning application was submitted in September 2008 seeking full planning permission for the erection of 166 dwellings (17 apartments and 149 houses) and associated works. The application site covered the extent of the former the former SR Gent site only, and was submitted by DW West Yorkshire Ltd/SR Gent UK Ltd, but withdrawn on 17 December 2008. A substitute application for 172 dwellings, with associated works was submitted on 16 February 2009 under ref: 2009/0232 and remained undetermined at the time of this submission.

5 THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS

5.1 The primary criteria in selecting suitable sites for ALCs were to: provide enough land to accommodate the ALC; allow students and staff to get to the ALCs by walking, cycling or bus rather than by car; and perform against a number of key sustainable development and deliverability criteria. The four step process used to sequentially assess the sites was as follows: Step 1 – Site Prioritisation; Step 2 – Site Appraisal; Step 3 – Site Constraints; Step 4 – Development Practicalities.

5.2 The strategic site appraisal from this process is set out in Table1 below.

Table 1: The Strategic Site Selection Process

School	Sustainable NOR	Optimum Size (900-2000 places)	Long term sustainability (Link to housing developments in UDP)	Location in community and access to transport links	Distribution fit within LA area	Ability to serve the community	Retain or replace?
Darton High	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Retain on Existing Site
Kirk Balk	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Retain on Existing Site
Penistone Grammar	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Retain on Existing Site
The Dearne High	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Retain on Existing Site
The Kingstone	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Consider Amalgamation with Holgate
Holgate	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Consider Amalgamation with Kingstone
St Michael's Catholic and COE High	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Retain on existing site and in size of 900
Edward Sheerien	N	N	N	N	N	N	Consider Amalgamation with Royston High
Wombwell High	N	N	N	N	N	N	Consider Amalgamation with Foulstone
Royston High	N	N	N	N	N	N	Consider Amalgamation with Edward Sheerien
Priory School and Sports College	N	N	N	N	N	N	Consider Amalgamation with Willowgarth High
Willowgarth High	N	N	N	N	N	N	Consider Amalgamation with Priory School and Sports College
The Foulstone	N	N	N	N	N	N	Consider Amalgamation with Wombwell High

- 5.3 In November 2008 a Joint Report by the Executive Director for Children, Young People and Families, The Borough Secretary and The Executive Director of Finance concluded that there was capacity to increase the student role at Kingstone/Holgate from 1,800 to 2,000 following the approval of reorganising the school structure in July 2006 (2,200 including the sixth form).
- 5.4 It was concluded that a new joint ALC should be established in Barnsley following the closure of both Holgate and Kingstone schools. This decision was conditional upon the basis that the new school occupied one site and was not split.
- 5.5 The decision to adopt the siting now being proposed resulted from the following factors:
- the limited availability of vacant sites in the area;
 - the costs of acquisition of new land;
 - the need to maintain continuity of service as far as possible;
 - a desire to provide playing fields close to the school site;
 - policies to restrict road traffic growth and make full use of "brownfield" opportunities;
 - the need to maintain and reinforce local community facilities;
 - the opportunity for continued efficiencies resulting from combined facilities with St Michael's and the Faith Lower School in Shaw Lane.
- 5.6 The latest borough-wide forecast of student numbers indicates that they are in line with the proposed size for seven of the nine schools. However for two schools (including Holgate/Kingstone) there are significant variances, to the original projected numbers on role.
- 5.7 It was therefore agreed that the student roll should be increased to accommodate the combined annual admissions for both schools, which total 470.

6 PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Under **Section 70(2)** of the Town and Country Planning Act, the development plan is the primary consideration in the determination of planning applications. In dealing with applications for planning permission the authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.
- 6.2 In this case the Development Plan is the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which was adopted in December 2000 (amended September 2007), the current draft Local Development Framework (LDF), and emerging DPDs including the Education Sites Development Plan Document, which was adopted on 29 January 2009.
- 6.3 The Yorkshire and The Humber Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) - adopted December 2004, also applies in this instance and will also be considered in referring to the proposal.
- 6.4 Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (PPS25) was published in July 2001. The aim of PPS25 is to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. The flooding issues have been addressed within the ES however for the purposes of the Planning Statement it should be noted that the applicants (the LPA) will support any adaptation and mitigation measures that maybe required to secure planning approval.
- 6.5 Part (a) of policy SOC2 (Education) of the RSS states that 'Development Plans should recognise the importance of the educational infrastructure in the recognition of promoting both social inclusion and economic growth and regeneration.' Part (b) of the policy also states that 'Development Plans should encourage the retention and development of education and learning facilities in locations that are accessible by good public transport and in accordance with the locational criteria in policies P1 and T2.'
- 6.6 Part (c) of SOC2, although not directly relevant to the proposal (as it refers to more remote areas), should also be considered in this instance as it promotes the '...opportunities for the delivery of learning through ICT and should consider how the multi-use of buildings and facilities can help in this provision.' Although the site has been assessed to be easily accessible, it is argued that the need to provide ALCs throughout the region (regardless of accessibility) is still very important, particularly in areas of poor academic performance.
- 6.7 The Barnsley Metropolitan Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which was adopted in December 2000, is now being replaced by the Local Development Framework (LDF). To avoid gaps, whilst the LDF is being adopted, the majority of the policies of the UDP were saved by the

Secretary of State on 28th September 2007. These saved policies remain in force as part of the development plan.

The Core Strategy Preferred Options October 2005

- 6.8 The Core Strategy is currently at the preferred options stage. This strategy sets out six key aims inter alia: to help create places where people want to live with convenient access to good-quality local services, including shops, education, health, open space, leisure, culture and countryside.
- 6.9 Paragraph 211 of the Core Strategy says that one of the borough's main ambitions is to promote education by developing new learning centres as part of a reorganised education system.

The Education Sites Development Plan Document

- 6.10 The development of new schools in Barnsley MBC has been the subject of extensive public consultation through the LDF process. The Education Sites Development Plan Document is part of the LDF and is a key to delivering the LDF Core Strategy Sustainable Communities Aim: *"To help create places where people want to live with convenient access to good quality local services including shops, education, health, open space, leisure, culture and countryside"*.
- 6.11 The Education Sites Development Plan Document (adopted on 30 January 2009) provides planning policy support for the Remaking Learning initiatives and explains the consultation process in detail.
- 6.12 The proposal also complies with the strategic aims (goals) of the BUDP2000, primarily *"To revitalise communities and lessen disadvantage"*.

Recreation and Community Facilities

- 6.13 Policies GS36, GS37, GS39 and GS40 to the UDP highlight the Council's support for indoor and outdoor sport and outdoor recreation facilities, and also new opportunities for outdoor recreation space; this supports this proposal which will include new sport and recreation facilities. Policy GS26 (Recreational Routeways & Networks) seeks to extend the network of public rights of way wherever possible, connecting new footpaths and bridleways to the existing system. This includes maximising the use of disused railways and routed between settlements into rural areas.

- 6.14 The School is allocated within the UDP as an Existing Community Facility while the playing fields to the east of the school toward the centre of the site are shown as Greenspace.
- 6.15 Policy CF1 refers to existing community facilities and states that the provision of community facilities will be encouraged where they :
- a) meet community needs
 - b) are convenient and accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport
 - c) have adequate car parking and access arrangements
 - d) are compatible with adjoining uses and do not adversely affect residential amenity.

Greenspace

- 6.16 Policy GS34 refers to areas designated as urban greenspace and states that "on the proposals map will normally remain open and undeveloped. proposals for the development of such areas will be assessed for their effect on the present and potential formal and informal function of the areas as :
- a) A facility for recreation
 - b) An area of amenity value
 - c) An area of nature conservation value; and
 - d) A link between adjacent areas
- 6.17 A proposal likely to have a significant adverse effect on the function of the area in any such respect will not normally be approved. Where material considerations nevertheless indicate approval, the adverse effects on urban greenspace must be offset by compensatory improvements or additions within or outside the development site, including where appropriate, through planning conditions or obligations.
- 6.18 The BMBC Green Space Strategy '*Barnsley Green Spaces – Part 1: Our Strategy*' was adopted in August 2006 and is underpinned by an audit of Green Spaces across the borough. The audit identifies over 1600 Green Spaces which include 'natural and semi-natural areas' (paragraph 18) such as the existing school site. Part 2 (*In Your Neighbourhood*) of this document is currently being prepared and will give a local assessment of green spaces for each town and village in the borough.
- 6.19 As part of the Green Space Strategy, each green space is given a value score based upon their benefits to; a towns identity; the character of an area; the ecology; education; cultural and heritage benefits; community and health, and; the economy. The findings of which will be presented in Part 2 of the document.

Employment Land Protection Policy

- 6.20 The former SR Gent site is designated within the UDP as an Employment Policy Area and is protected under policy ED7 which stipulates that:

"Areas defined on the proposals maps as employment policy areas will remain in employment use. Unless otherwise stated in community area volumes, development will normally be permitted for business, industry and storage and distribution. Other employment generating uses may also be permitted if they are compatible with adjoining uses. Class a1 (shops) and class a2 (financial and professional services) will not be permitted."

- 6.21 Supporting paragraph 2.41 states that:

"Existing employment areas will remain in employment use during the plan period so that the Borough's stock of employment land is protected. Only exceptionally will it be appropriate for an Employment Policy Area to be redeveloped for a use other than those set out in Policy ED7 in order to achieve overall environmental benefits which outweigh the loss of jobs from the site".

- 6.22 Following the closure of SR Gents in June 2006, there has been no effective market demand for the land as an employment-generating site. The factory buildings were cleared in April 2008 following an unsuccessful period of marketing during which interest was concentrated on redevelopment for housing purposes.

- 6.23 We understand that commercial agents, Eddisons of Leeds concluded that the location of the site discouraged potential employment uses, taking account of road access and the availability of alternatives.

Landscaping

- 6.24 Landscaping is a matter reserved for future consideration. However, the future development will include substantial planting and a full scheme of soft and hard landscaping will be provided for all parts of the site. This will be designed to complement the architectural treatment of the proposed buildings and will make a positive contribution to the local environment.

- 6.25 The requirements set out in the BMBC Supplementary Planning Guidance for Landscaping and Tree and Hedgerows have been taken into account in the indicative layout and suggested mitigation, and further consideration will be given a detailed stage.

- 6.26 The site is bordered by a dense mature vegetation of varying levels of amenity value - for example the western boundary has been subject to a short term reclamation scheme in order to reduce the visual impact of the sites former industrial use. Notwithstanding this, every effort will be made to retain as many of these trees and hedgerows as possible in the proposed development.

Transport

- 6.27 Policy T2 is concerned with the additional demand generated by new development being able to be accommodated on the highway network. A full Transport Assessment is being submitted with this application, the conclusion of which is that the proposal will comply with this policy. Car parking is dealt with in policy T22 and provision on site will meet the standards.
- 6.28 One of the primary qualities and advantages of the chosen site is that it is extremely well served by public transport as a number of bus routes serving pupil areas pass close by the site, *therefore complying with the aims of national policy PPG13, and Local Policy T14, which encourage sustainable development with good access to public transport to reduce reliance on private vehicles.*
- 6.29 There are also, we understand, specific school bus services which will be adjusted to serve the new site, thus providing an additional sustainable, convenient and safe way for pupils to travel to school.

Community and Education Facilities

- 6.30 In the Community Facilities chapter of the BUDP2000, one of the objectives set out is to "Encourage the provision of community facilities in locations which will enable social needs to be met."
- 6.31 Policy CF1 states that community facilities will be encouraged where they meet community needs, are convenient and accessible, have adequate car parking and access arrangements, are compatible with adjoining uses and do not adversely affect residential amenity. We consider that this proposal *will meet these requirements and is therefore in compliance with this policy.*
- 6.32 Volume 8 of the BUDP2000 considers community facilities within the area of Darfield where the proposed ALC is to be located. Paragraph 7.3 states that new facilities will be encouraged in appropriate locations in accordance with Policy CF1.

Design and Access

- 6.33 Policy BE6 deals with design standards. Whilst we expect the ALC to be of high quality design which will have minimal impact on the landscape, the detailed design and landscaping are reserved matters which will be addressed in detail at a later stage.
- 6.34 A Design and Access Statement has been provided and is separately bound. The architecture of the school, its internal and external environment will be designed to promote enjoyment of learning and improvement to the quality of life during important school years. The site has strong links with the green countryside and is in a primarily green setting (with a more recent short-term landscaping programme lying to the west). The rurality of the setting will be reflected in the architecture of both the school and the external space, in choice of materials, colours, textures, and form.
- 6.35 The site does not lie within, nor adjoining a Conservation Area. However as much of the developable area can be viewed from outside of the site to the north – due to the low lying land, particular attention will be given to the design ensuring that the architecture will appear sympathetic to the rural character of the area while ensuring that the building bulk is minimised to ensure for a subordinate form of development within the open context of the area.
- 6.36 Good design can make a major contribution to both the prevention of crime and reducing the fear of crime and must be the aim of all those involved in the development process. The new development will adopt design measures to reduce the opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour, taking into account the Association of Chief Police Officers publication 'Secured by Design – Schools', dated April 2004. Good surveillance will be a prime consideration in the design and layout and appropriate security measures will be an integral part of the design.
- 6.37 A Design and Access Statement is being submitted as part of the planning application. The later, more detailed design will be accessible to the disabled in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations.
- 6.38 The matter of access for vehicles and pedestrians has been carefully considered and is detailed in the Transport Assessment. Of particular importance in this case has been the availability of sustainable transport choice for staff, pupils and visitors, and one of the key considerations behind the choice of this site has been its proximity to local bus routes. The centre will also operate a dedicated bus service to transport pupils from key feeder areas. Accordingly attractive local access to encourage use of public transport will be a feature of the detailed design.

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposal for an Advanced Learning Centre in this location has been given thorough consideration for educational and planning aspects prior to the choice of this site at the existing Holgate School. Possible alternatives, particularly those in more appropriately designated land have been carefully considered in making the site choice and have been carefully scrutinised and discounted.
- 7.2 We believe that the unique circumstances in this case justify the loss of the site from potential employment uses. We have carried out a comprehensive site search exercise, as described in the *Education Sites DPD* as part of the permission should be granted, enabling the improvement of education facilities development, which will improve education for the many pupils living in the local community.