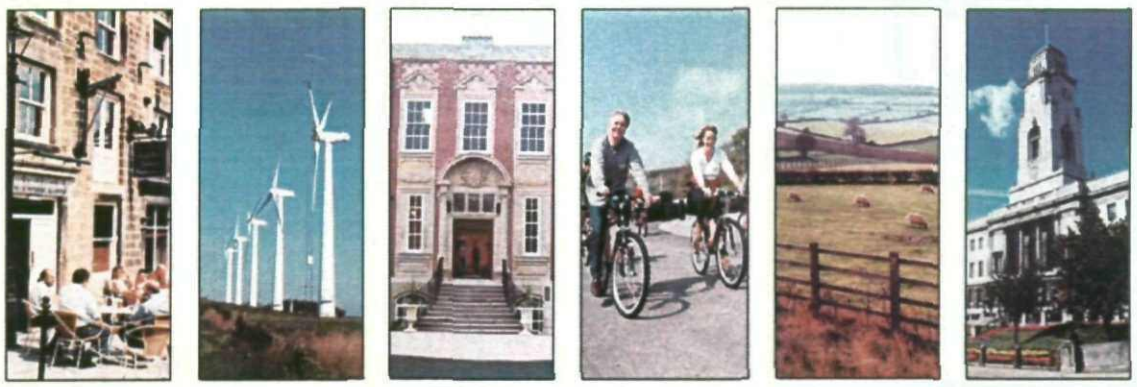
BARNSLEY
Local Development Framework



Barnsley Education Sites Development Plan Document

Adopted January 2009

Remaking Barnsley

BARNSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

Contacts

If you would like more information about the Barnsley Education Sites Development Plan Document or the Local Development Framework you can do the following:

Visit our website: www.barnsley.gov.uk

Email the Planning Policy Team: planningpolicy@barnsley.gov.uk

Write to the Planning Policy Team:

Planning Policy Team
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Westgate Plaza One
PO Box 604
Barnsley
S70 9FE

Phone the Planning Policy Team: 01226 772606

Yorkshire Planning Aid provides a free, independent and professional planning advice service to individuals and groups from within the Yorkshire and Humber region who cannot afford professional fees. Yorkshire Planning Aid is part of a network of nine Planning Aid Services throughout the country, all of which are part of the Royal Town Planning Institute, a registered charity.

Yorkshire Planning Aid runs a telephone advice line Mondays to Fridays between 9am and 4pm on **0870 850 9808**. The organisation also provides a community planning service which helps groups and individuals to understand the planning system and influence what happens in their area. The main parts of the programme include training events and presentations, such as a 'Planning Crash Course', and advice and support on contributing to development plans.

The service is targeted at disadvantaged communities, and at groups which represent or work with people who need support and guidance to get involved with the planning system, for example young people, disabled people or ethnic-minority communities. Planning Aid aims to raise awareness about the planning system within these communities, and help groups and individuals to work more effectively with local authorities and the development plan process.

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1 . Introduction

The Local Development Framework

1.1 The Government has asked us to produce a development plan which we will use when considering planning applications and proposals for developing or using land. The development plan in Barnsley includes the Development Plan Documents in the Barnsley Local Development Framework. These documents include the following:

- **The Core Strategy** (our overall strategic planning framework for Barnsley)
- **Barnsley Development Sites** (our specific plans for transport proposals and employment, housing and waste-management sites that we have set aside for development to meet Barnsley's needs)
- **Barnsley Town Centre Area Action Plan** (our specific policies and proposals to improve the town centre)
- **Education Sites** (the specific education sites we have set aside for development to meet Barnsley's needs)
- **Joint Strategic Waste** (a document being prepared with Doncaster and Rotherham Councils which will lay out specific policies and proposals for dealing with waste)

1.2 We will show the policies and plans from these documents on a **Proposals Map**.

1.3 The Barnsley local development framework also includes **Supplementary Planning Documents** (which provide more details on planning guidance for specific policies or sites). These documents are not part of the development plan for Barnsley.

1.4 The development plan for Barnsley also includes the Regional Spatial Strategy(RSS). This is prepared in draft form by the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Assembly and then approved by the Government. The current Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber to 2016 (which was published in 2004) will be replaced in 2008 by a Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber to 2026 (called the 'Yorkshire and Humber plan'). This draft RSS identifies Barnsley as a 'sub regional centre' (see the glossary) and aims to develop Barnsley and make its role as an important focus for growth stronger.

1.5 In our Local Development Scheme we have set out in more detail the purpose of these documents and how long we will take to produce them. The Local Development Scheme also provides information about resources and management arrangements (Section 12 and Appendix 3), pre-production work (Section 13 and Appendix 4) and stakeholder involvement and public consultation (Sections 11 & 15). (This document is on our website or you can get a copy by contacting us. Please see the inside of the front cover for our contact details.)

1.6 We have also published a 'Statement of Community Involvement' explaining how people and organisations can get involved in preparing the Local Development Framework.

2 . Relationship with the Core Strategy and other strategies

Development plan and Core Strategy

2.1 One of the borough's ambitions is to invest in education and skills to help develop the economy. One of the ways we are promoting this is by developing new learning centres as part of reorganising the education system.

2.2 The Education Sites Development Plan Document will form part of the Local Development Framework. We have prepared the Education Sites Development Plan Document alongside the Core Strategy. The Development Plan Document is made up of three site proposals and does not affect how we prepare or consider the Core Strategy.

2.3 The existing development plan is made up of the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (adopted December 2000) and the Regional Spatial Strategy (approved December 2004). The Development Plan Document and its associated processes - including consultation - puts UDP policies CF1 (Location of Community Facilities) and CF2 (Existing Community Facilities) as well as RSS policy SOC2 (Education) into practice.

2.4 Eventually, the Barnsley Local Development Framework will replace the Unitary Development Plan and become the legal development plan for the borough.

2.5 Together with the Development Plan Document, we have also produced a sustainability appraisal and background paper (which sets out the issues and options we have considered).

Other strategies

2.6 The Development Plan Document for Education Sites sets out planned sites for secondary schools across the borough which have come about due to the reorganisation as set out in:

- One Barnsley Community Plan; and
- The Barnsley Building Schools for the Future programme

3 . Background to the Remaking Learning programme

'Remaking Learning' and the Government's school-building programme

3.1 Through the 'Remaking Learning' programme, we are promoting the options for reviewing the secondary-school education we provide in Barnsley.

3.2 This will be supported by funding from the Government's 'Building Schools for the Future' programme. The conditions attached to the funding mean building will start in 2008/2009 and be finished by 2011/2012.

3.3 The time limits set for the Government's programme means that we have to put planning applications forward for the new advanced-learning centres before we adopt this Development Plan Document.

The reasons for reorganising Barnsley's secondary schools

3.4 There are too many school places in Barnsley which have not been filled. By 2012, the number of pupils enrolled at secondary schools we maintain will be 11,499, leaving 2164 empty places. This is almost 16% of the total secondary-school capacity (in other words, the maximum number of pupils a school can take). We must manage school places so that the total percentage of empty places does not go beyond 10%. The effect of current trends for some schools is for school rolls (the official record of the children that go to a school) to fall to a level well below the school capacity.

3.5 Some schools have poor-quality buildings which need replacing. We also need to improve pupils' educational achievements at school.

Advanced learning centres

3.6 We plan to create nine advanced learning centres to replace the 13 secondary schools currently in the borough. We are also providing a special needs advanced-learning centre and Elmhirst School is being replaced by an Academy which is not included in the Barnsley Schools for the Future programme.

3.7 See plan 1 (in the appendix) for where we plan to build these advanced-learning centres.

3.8 The proposed number and location of the new advanced-learning centres we have planned for is influenced by our responsibility to meet educational and community needs within our financial limits.

3.9 Each new centre will offer facilities and teaching to provide:

- advice and support for children;
- specialised education;
- longer hours for teaching;

3 . Background to the Remaking Learning programme

- extra learning and community facilities; and
- help to pupils to gain a wide range of qualifications and skills.

3.10 Six of the new advanced-learning centres will be developed on existing secondary-school sites where they serve the people who use them and there would not be any benefit in moving to a new site. These six sites are as follows.

- Darton High School
- The Dearne High School
- Kirk Balk Secondary School
- Holgate School / Kingstone School
- Penistone Grammar School
- St Michael's Catholic and Church of England High School

3.11 Three new advanced-learning centres will replace the following combinations of existing schools.

- Edward Sheerien School and Royston High School
- The Foulstone School and Wombwell High School
- Priory School and Sports College and Willowgarth High School

3.12 These new advanced-learning centres will need sites which are not currently used as schools. We have considered whether one of the existing school sites would best meet children's needs or whether we need to find new sites. We have considered each of the options to assess whether they:

- provide enough land for us to create the advanced-learning centre;
- allow students and staff to get to the centre by walking, cycling or by bus, rather than by car; and
- meet a number of important conditions for sustainable development (see the glossary) and 'deliverability' (how likely it is that we can develop the site).

3.13 Our consultants identified options for new sites and you can see their reports if you ask us. These documents are also on our website.

4 . The sites

4.1 This section sets out the new sites for the three advanced-learning centres.

Policy EDS1: Sites Proposed for the new advanced-learning centres

We plan to use the following sites to create advanced-learning centres to meet the conditions set out in the Barnsley Core Strategy.

- **14.06 hectares of land east of Royston Lane in Carlton.**
  11.40 hectares of this land will be used for playing fields.
- **13.69 hectares of land at Low Valley to the south of Pitt Street and currently within the Netherwood Country Park.**
  10.14 hectares of this land will be used for playing fields.
- **11.17 hectares of land west of Engine Lane in Shafton.**
  8.67 hectares of this land will be used for playing fields.

4.2 You can see plans of these three sites in the appendix. For each of the advanced-learning centres, the buildings, access and playing fields will be within the site shown on the plans.

Our reasons for choosing these sites

4.3 We have carried out consultation throughout the issues and options and preferred option stages of the preparation of this Development Plan Document. However, before these consultations, our education service appointed planning consultants to develop a system for assessing alternative sites. They then used that system to identify sites in line with the issues and options consultation.

4.4 For each advanced-learning centre which needs a new site, we identified and consulted on a number of options throughout the issues and options stage (the first stage in the preparation of a development plan document). The sites were chosen using information from that process and the preferred options (the second stage in the production of a development plan document) consultation we carried out together with the work Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Education Service carried out.

4.5 We have thoroughly assessed the alternative sites in line with our priorities for sustainable development. The results of these assessments were included as part of the issues and options stage and preferred options stage consultations we carried out.

4 . The sites

Development in the green belt

4.6 All three of the preferred sites are located in the green belt (see the glossary). Most of Barnsley's countryside is green belt. In the Education Sites Development Plan Document background paper we explain why we have partly reviewed the boundary of the green belt as part of preparing the overall Local Development Framework and identifying land for development within the period of time the plan applies to and in the future.

4.7 The initial findings of the partial green belt review are included in the green belt shown on the Local Development Framework Preferred Options Proposals Maps, which we consulted on, in accordance with our Statement of Community Involvement, in October and November 2005. This showed around 177 hectares of extra land we could allocate to the green belt.

4.8 Although we are planning to develop the three advanced-learning centres in the green belt, we will only develop 8.71 hectares of land with buildings and access. The 30.21 hectares of playing fields and green space at the advanced-learning centres will be in the green belt. This meets Government planning guidance on using the green belt, which you can find in 'Planning Policy Guidance note 2: Green belts (PPG2)'. This guidance note says that the green belt can be used to provide outdoor sport and play facilities near urban areas. As a result, the proposal to include the playing fields in the green belt does not go against national and regional policies.

4.9 In the 'Barnsley Policies Development Plan Document – Preferred Options' there is a policy specifically about where to build new schools. One of the factors we need to consider is the effect the proposal will have on the green belt. As mentioned above, 8.71 hectares of the 38.92 hectares of land we need to build the three advanced-learning centres will be built on, leaving 30.21 hectares to be used for sport and recreation.

4.10 The work and consultation we have carried out so far shows that there are exceptional circumstances which justify using green-belt land to provide sites for the three advanced-learning centres and allow the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme to go ahead.

5 . Mitigation issues

5.1 It is important that, when we develop the sites, we respect the area and the landscape as well as contribute to making places interesting and pleasant to work and live in.

5.2 National planning policies now say that applications such as the proposals for advanced-learning centres must also include design and access statements (see the glossary). The consultations have highlighted mitigation issues (see the glossary) for the three sites. We have set out these issues below and we will consult on them in line with our Statement of Community Involvement when outline and detailed planning applications are made.

5.3 Mitigation issues relevant to the advanced-learning centre replacing the Royston and Edward Sheerien schools include reducing the effect of development on:

- the green belt;
- Carlton conservation area; and
- living conditions of residents on Royston Lane and Cronkhill Lane.

5.4 Mitigation issues relevant to the advanced learning centre replacing Foulstone and Wombwell schools include reducing the effect of development on:

- the Green belt; and
- Netherwood Country Park.

Planning applications will need to show how any loss of woodland, habitat or country park land will be replaced. Any land lost will be replaced within the 'area of search' shown on plans 3 and 3a. Applications must also show how links to the local nature reserve will be created and how a separate access for vehicles coming from the Wombwell bypass will be included in any scheme.

5.5 Mitigation issues relevant to the advanced-learning centre replacing Willowgarth and Priory schools include reducing the effect of development on:

- the green belt; and
- living conditions of nearby residents.

6 . Implementation and Monitoring

6.1 The Development Plan Document will be implemented by the Remaking Learning initiative. Remaking Learning is a partnership between the Council and a range of key partners including education, health, social care, voluntary and business groups. More information about Remaking Learning can be found in Section 3 of this Development Plan Document (paragraph 3.1 – 3.3).

6.2 Each Advanced Learning Centre will be built through a public private partnership. The most common form of public private partnership is the private finance initiative which will be used to build and manage Barnsley's advanced learning centres. This involves the delivery of public services through private sector investment in infrastructure.

6.3 We will monitor how this programme is implemented and make sure we achieve the targets in table 1 below. We will report our progress towards these targets in the annual monitoring report.

	Target			
ALC	**Receive(d) Outline Permission**	**Receive Detailed Permission**	**Construction Starts / Finishes**	**ALC & Facilities In Use**
Carlton	12 December 2006	December 2008	January 2009 / May 2010	June 2010
Darfield	To Be Determined (expected Jan 2009)	November 2009	February 2010 / August 2011	September 2011
Shafton	28 August 2007	April 2009	July 2009 / December 2010	January 2011

Table 1: Monitoring Targets for the Implementation of the Education Sites Development Plan Document

7 . Flexibility

7.1 We have made the Development Plan Document flexible through extensive consultation and reference to strategic policy processes (such as the Regional Spatial Strategy) along with robust individual site appraisals to find out what we need to do now and in the future.

7.2 The Development Plan Document takes account of the Regional Spatial Strategy spatial priorities (see policy YH4: Regional cities and sub regional cities and towns; policy YH5: Principal towns; and Figure 2.3: The region's settlement network) and level of housing growth (see policy H1: Provision and distribution housing; and Table 12.1). The sites selected are associated with Barnsley Sub-Regional Town (Carlton ALC) and the Principal Towns of Cudworth (Shafton Two Gates) and Wombwell (Darfield Low Valley), as defined in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

7.3 The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly spoke to others about the Regional Spatial Strategy before it was adopted. By appraising sites and speaking to others about the DPD we have found sites that will be able to meet current and future requirements for the advanced learning centres.

8 . Glossary

Term	Explanation
Adopt	When the document has been considered by a government inspector, we produce a final version in line with the inspector's comments, which we will then 'adopt'. This means the document will fully come into force.
Advanced-learning centre	Secondary schools which have longer opening hours together with extra facilities.
Building Schools for the Future programme	The Government's investment programme for improving schools. You can find out more information about this programme on our Building Schools for the Future website at www.barnsley.gov.uk/bguk/education_skills/schools/bsf
Consultation	This is a process which involves asking people and organisations for their views about planning decisions, including the Local Development Framework.
Development Plan Document (DPD)	A document within the LDF which we use to make decisions on proposals for development. In Barnsley, DPDs are the same as the old Unitary Development Plan (UDP). Most DPDs include policies and proposals which apply to specific areas or sites – these are shown on a proposals map.
Green Belt	Land which is protected from development except in very special circumstances
Issues and options	This is the first consultation stage for producing a development plan document. It aims to ask for people's views on the issues the development plan document needs to deal with and the options for dealing with them
Local Development Framework (LDF)	A set of documents we will use to make decisions on proposals for development over the next 10 years or so. It will be made up of a number of different documents. The LDF will be made up of development plan documents, supplementary planning documents and a statement of community involvement. The documents in the LDF will set out how much development we plan to carry out in Barnsley and where it should be.
Mitigation Issues	Matters which need to be addressed to make sure any harmful effects of development are reduced or compensated (made up) for.
One Barnsley Community Plan	A document that sets out the long-term ambitions for the borough and provides an overarching framework for other

8 . Glossary

	plans and strategies such as the LDF. You can downloaded it from www.onebarnsley.com/pdf/communityactionplan.pdf
Preferred options	The second consultation stage for producing a development plan document. It aims to ask for people's views on our preferred policies and proposals. It also explains how we have chosen these options and gives reasons why we did not choose others
Proposals map	A plan which shows policies and proposals for specific sites and locations. These are shown on an Ordnance Survey map.
'Remaking Learning'	The programme for reorganising Barnsley's schools
Sustainability appraisal	An assessment of the social, economic and environmental effect of DPDs and SPDs
Sustainable development	Development that has a positive effect on the economy, the environment and social conditions, and which uses natural resources carefully.
Sub-Regional Centre	A term used to classify settlements in the regional spatial strategy

9 . Appendix - Plans

Plan 1
Where the advanced-learning centres will be

Plan 2
Location plan for the replacement advanced-learning centre for Edward Sheerien and Royston schools

Plan 2A
Site plan for the replacement advanced-learning centre for Edward Sheerien and Royston schools

Plan 3
Location plan for the replacement advanced-learning centre for Foulstone and Wombwell schools

Plan 3A
Site plan for the replacement advanced-learning centre for Foulstone and Wombwell schools

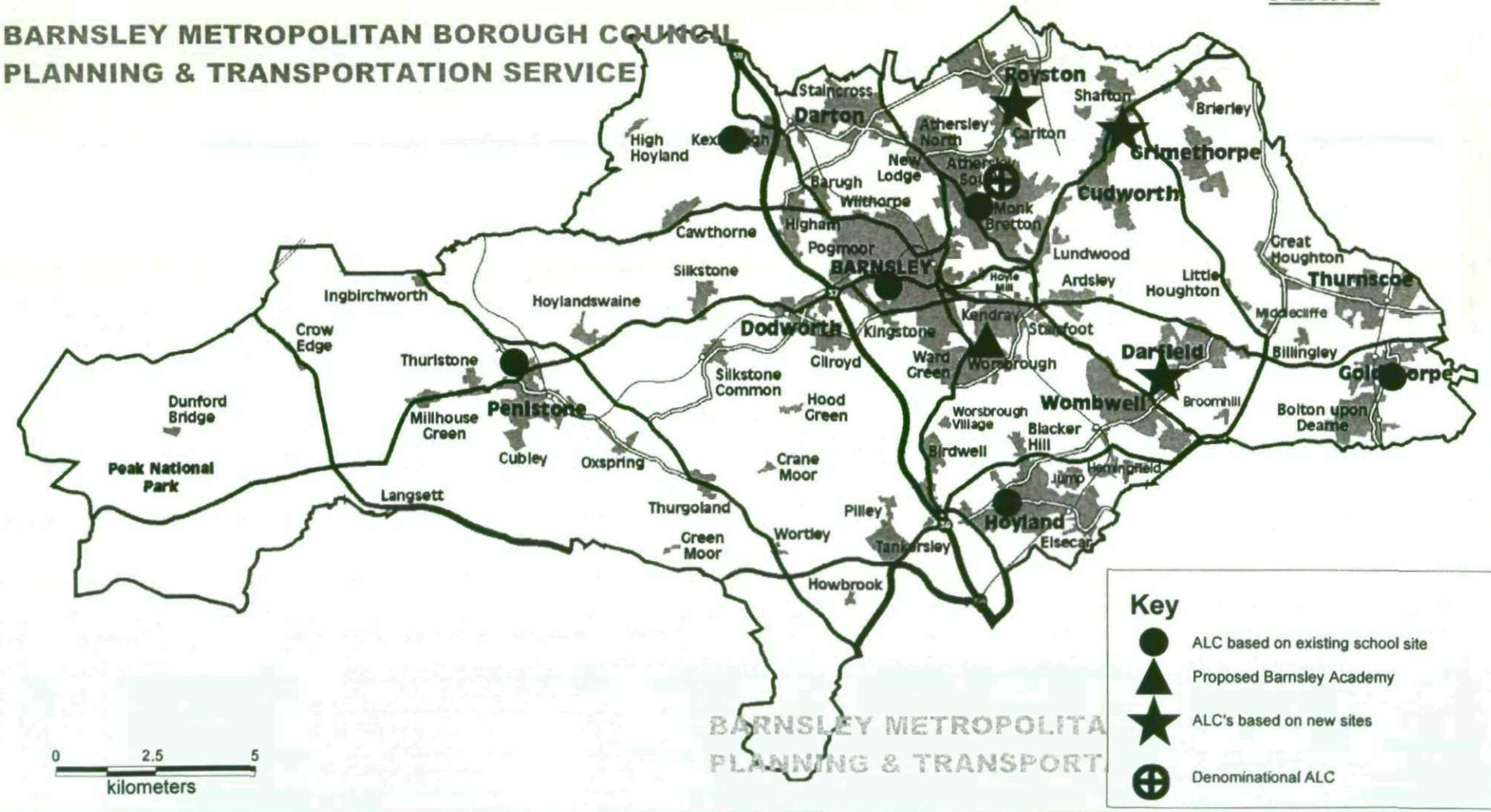
Plan 4
Location plan for the replacement advanced-learning centre for Priory and Willowgarth schools

Plan 4A
Site plan for the replacement advanced-learning centre for Priory and Willowgarth schools

BARNSLEY EDUCATION SITES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

PLAN 1

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION SERVICE



BARNSLEY METROPOLITA
PLANNING & TRANSPORT

Key

- ALC based on existing school site
- Proposed Barnsley Academy
- ALC's based on new sites
- Denominational ALC

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Drawn by: AKI
Drawing : T0085
Date: July 2008

PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION OF ADVANCED LEARNING CENTRES (ALC'S)

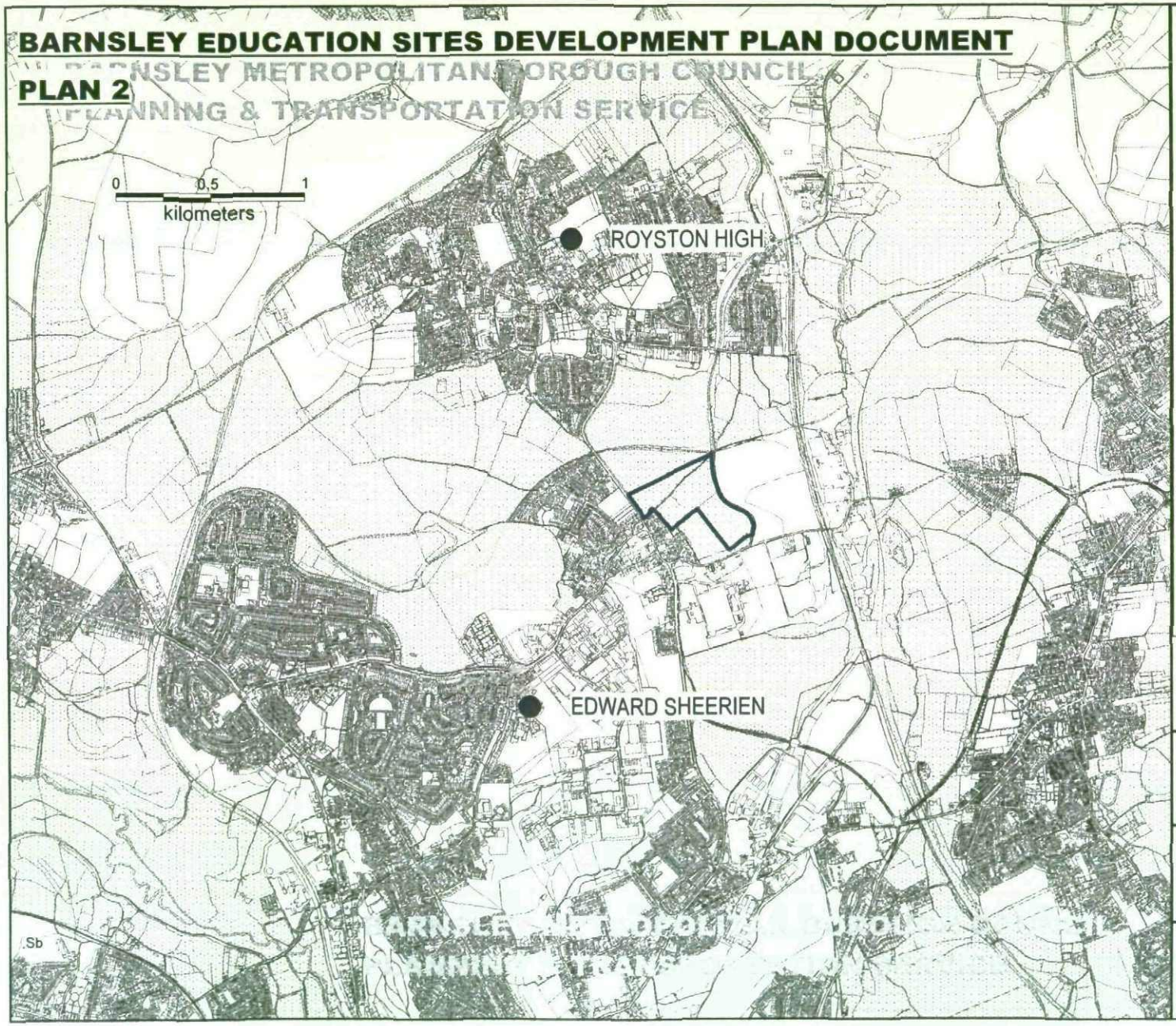
BARNSLEY Metropolitan Borough Council

Planning and Transportation Service
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BARNSLEY EDUCATION SITES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

PLAN 2



Key

- Existing School Sites
- Proposed New Site 14.06 Ha
- UDP Green Belt Area

REPLACEMENT ALC FOR EDWARD SHEERIEN & ROYSTON HIGH SCHOOLS

Drawn by: AKI

Drawing : T0085

Date: July 2008

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BARNSLEY Metropolitan Borough Council

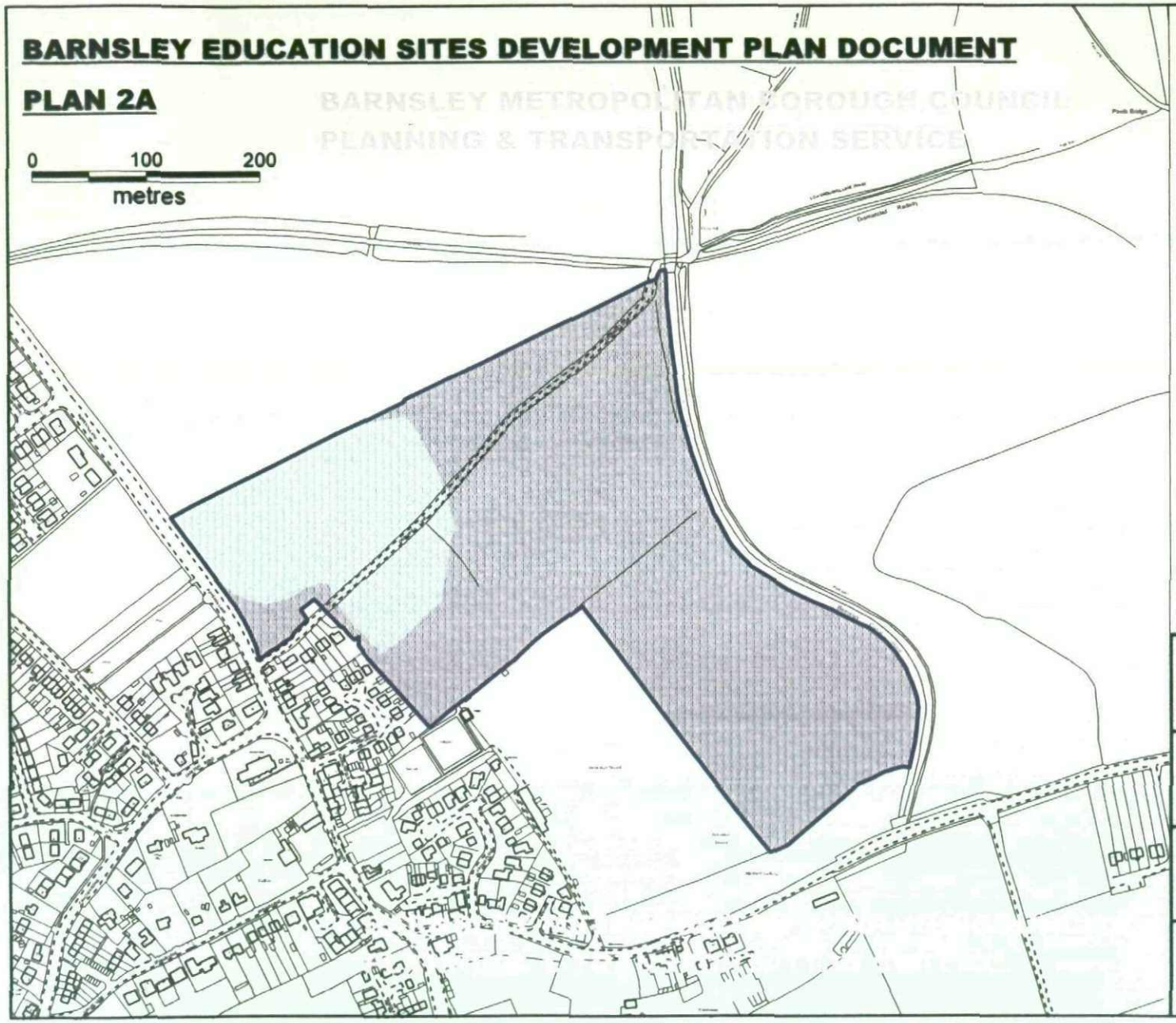
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BARNSLEY EDUCATION SITES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

PLAN 2A



Key

Proposed new site
14.06Ha

Buildings and access
2.66Ha

Playing fields and green space
11.40Ha

REPLACEMENT ALC FOR EDWARD SHEERIEN & ROYSTON HIGH SCHOOL

Drawn by: AKI

Drawing : T0085

Date: July 2008

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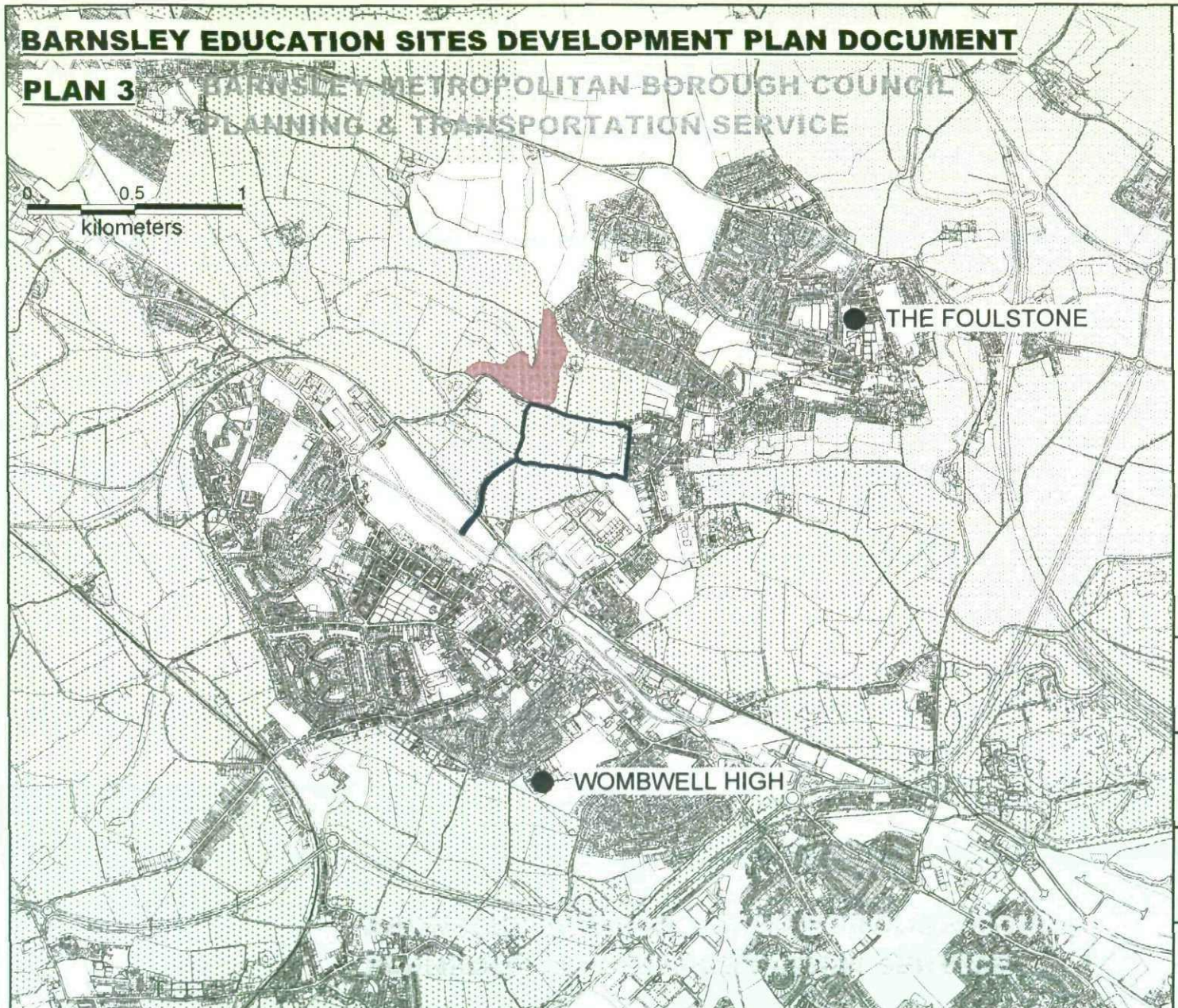
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BARNSLEY EDUCATION SITES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

PLAN 3



Key

- Existing school sites
- Proposed new site 13.69 Ha and access road
- UDP Green Belt Areas
- *Area of Search for* Addition to Netherwood Country Park/Nature Reserve

REPLACEMENT ALC FOR FOULSTONE & WOMBWELL HIGH SCHOOLS

Drawn by: AKI

Drawing : T0085

Date: July 2008

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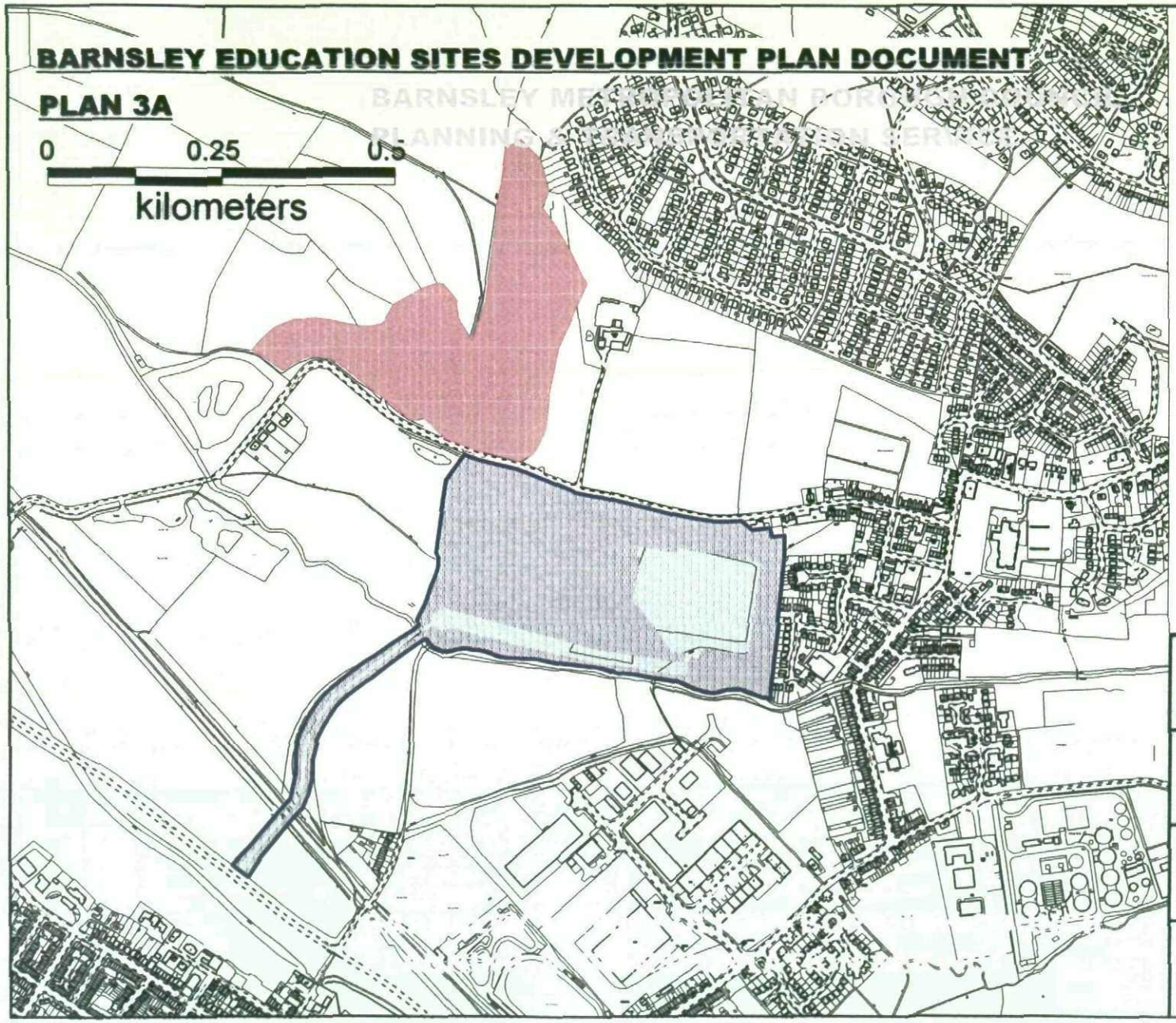
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BARNSLEY EDUCATION SITES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

PLAN 3A

0 0.25 0.5

kilometers



Key

- Proposed new site 13.69 Ha and access road
- Buildings and access 3.55Ha
- Playing fields and green space 10.14 Ha
- Area of Search for Addition to Netherwood Country Park/Nature Reserve

REPLACEMENT ALC FOR THE FOULSTONE & WOMBWELL HIGH SCHOOLS

Drawn by: AKI

Drawing : T0085

Date: July 2008

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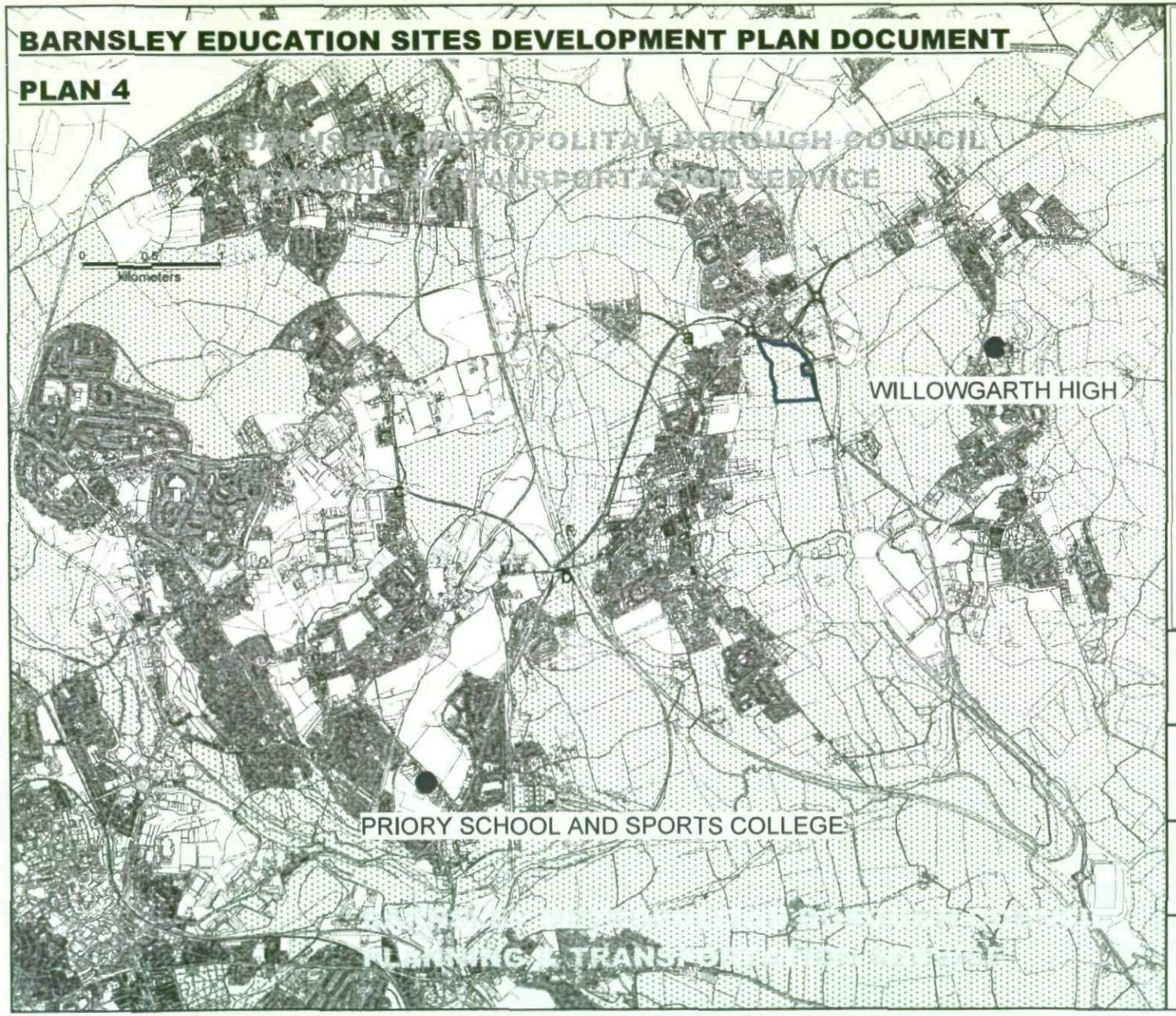
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BARNSLEY EDUCATION SITES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

PLAN 4



Key

- Existing school sites
- Proposed new site 11.17 Ha
- UDP Green Belt
- A-B-C Proposed Cudworth bypass and West Green Link Road

REPLACEMENT ALC FOR WILLOWGARTH HIGH AND PRIORY SCHOOLS

Drawn by: AKI

Drawing : T0085

Date: July 2008

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BARNSLEY Metropolitan Borough Council

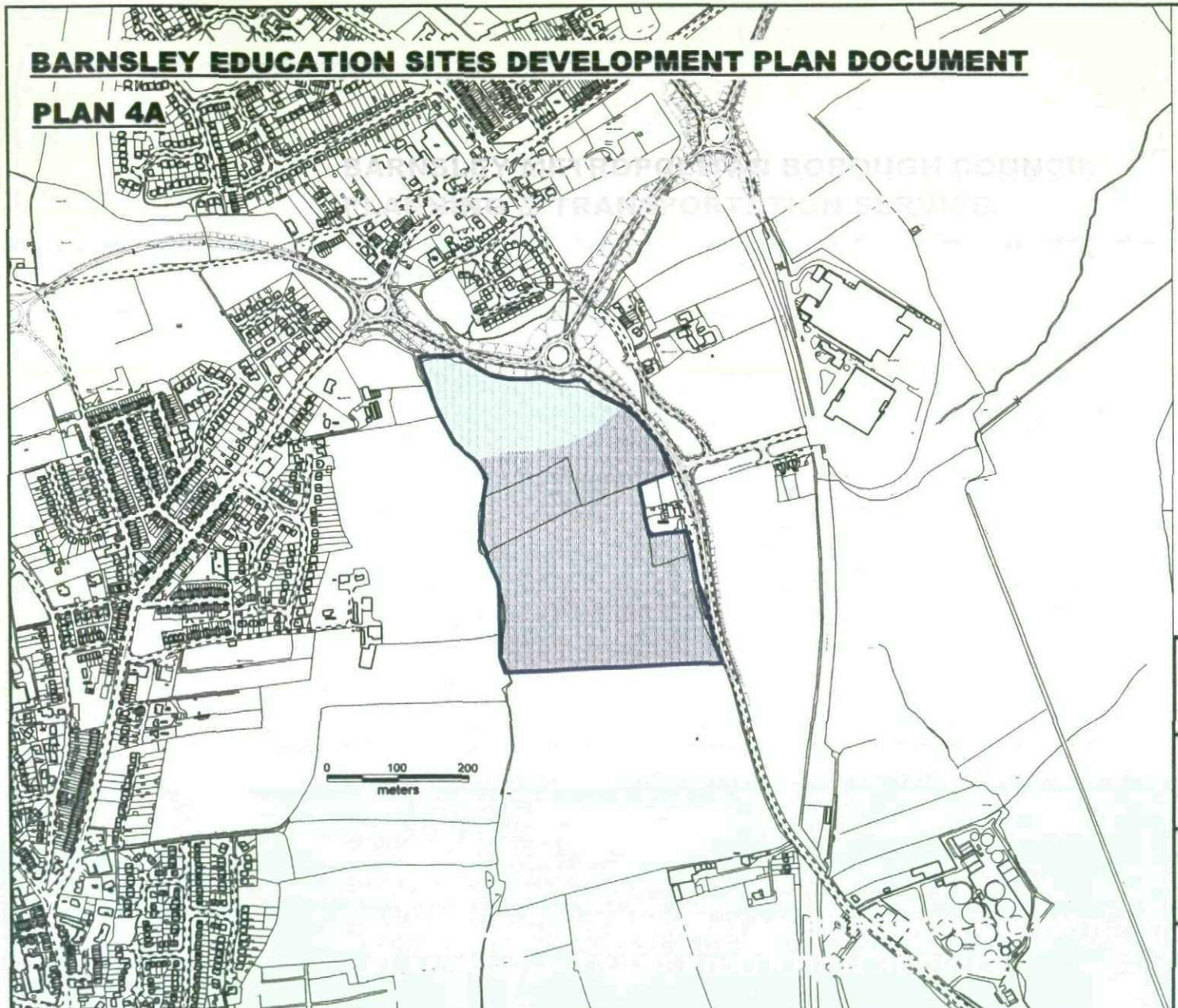
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BARNSLEY EDUCATION SITES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

PLAN 4A



Key

Proposed new site
11.17Ha

Buildings and access
2.5Ha

Playing fields and green space
8.67Ha

REPLACEMENT ALC FOR WILLOWGARTH HIGH AND PRIORY SCHOOLS

Drawn by: AKI

Drawing : T0085

Date: July 2008

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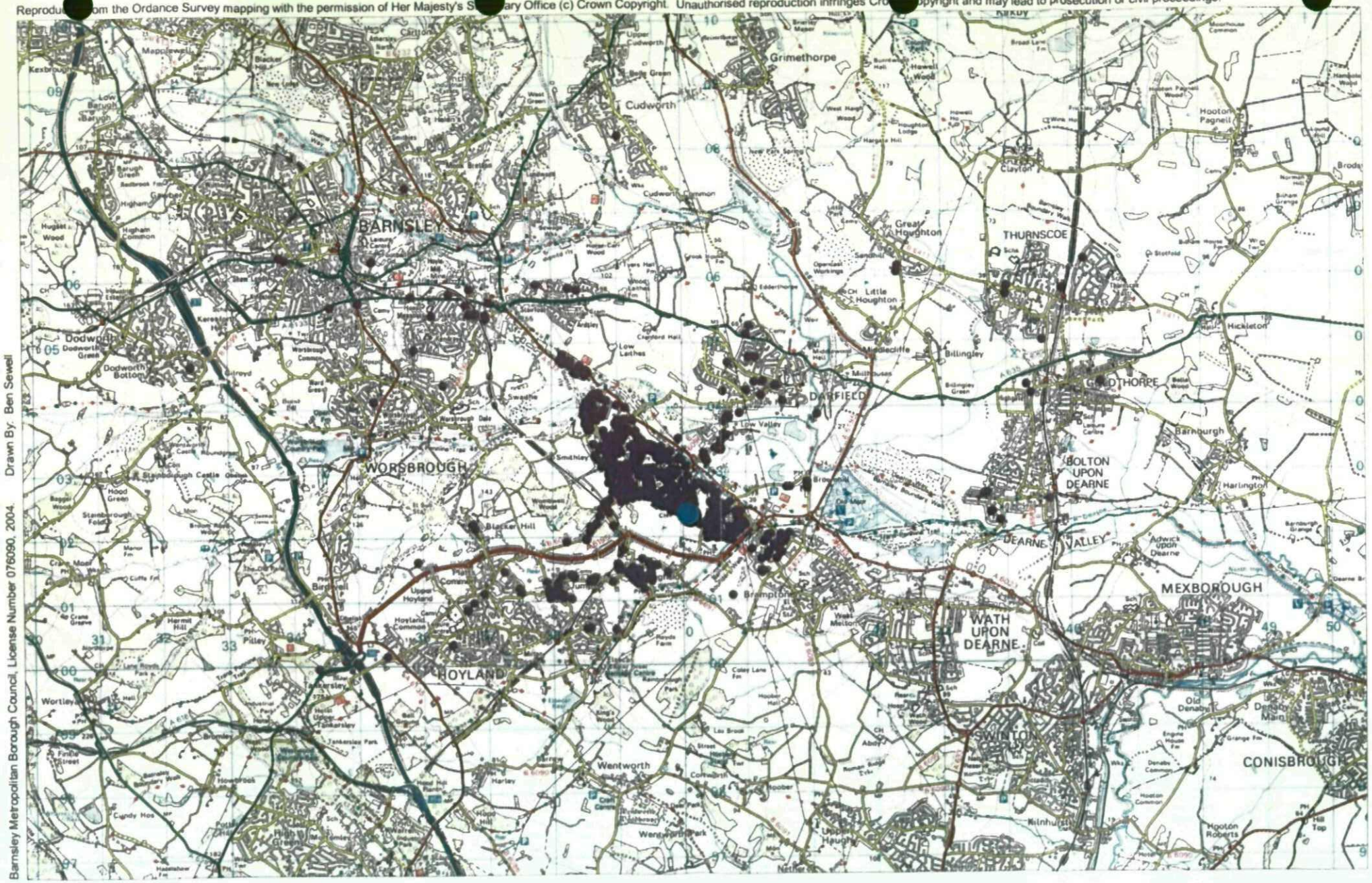
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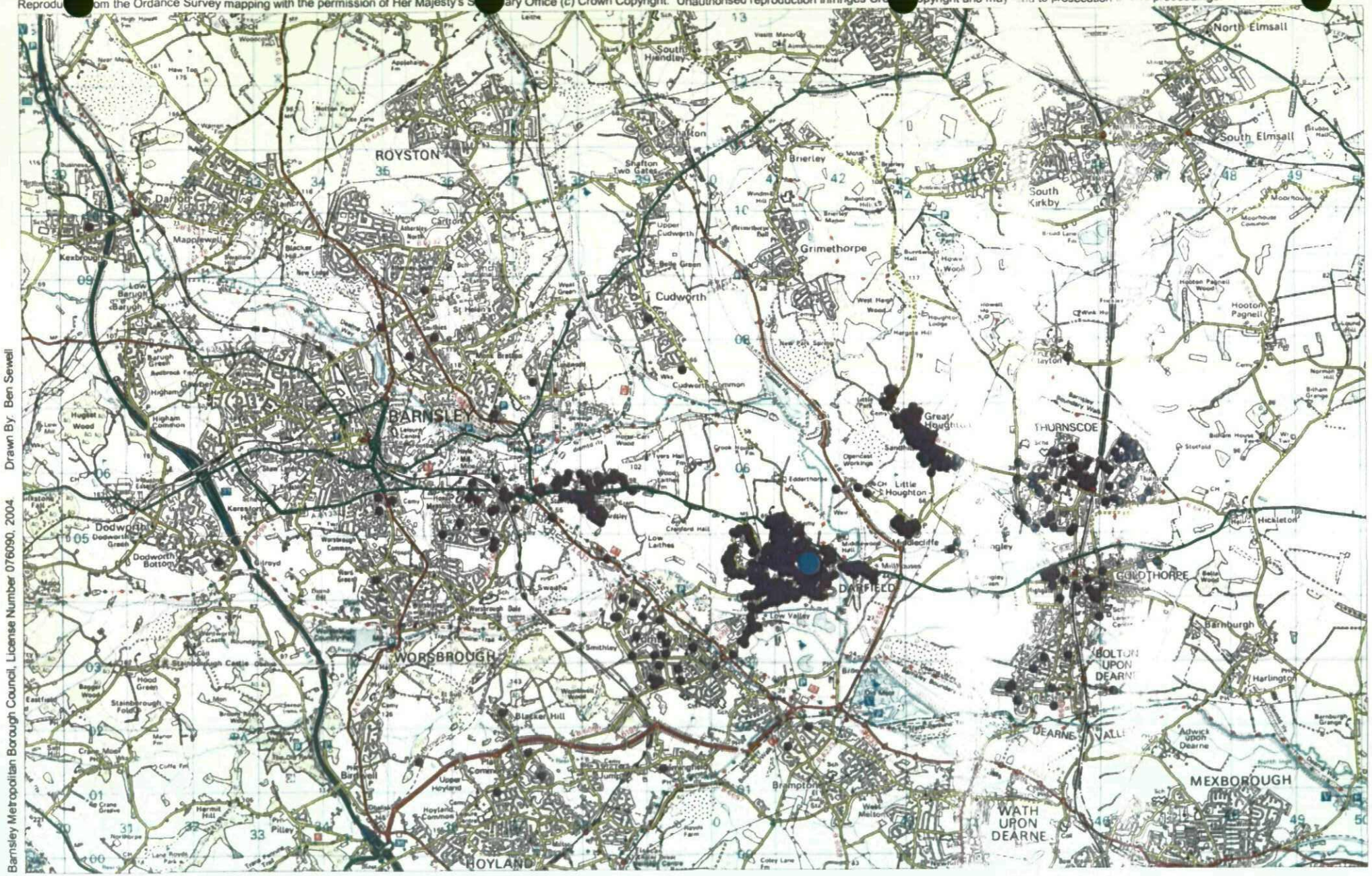


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Wombwell High School
Geographic Location of Students

- Wombwell High School
- Students (944)

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The Foulstone High School
Geographic Location of Students

- The Foulstone High School
- Students (1072)

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Education Site Selection DPD

Underpinning Document

October 2006

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October 2006
Ref: J\Planning\Job Files\J017231\Reports\Underpinning Document (Oct 06) FC

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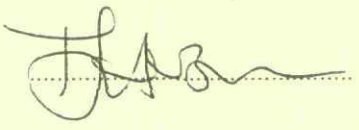
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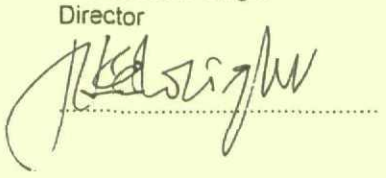
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DATE	ORIGINATORS	APPROVED
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Limitations

This document has been prepared for the stated objective and should not be used for any other purpose without the prior written authority of GL Hearn; we accept no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than for which it was commissioned.

1. Introduction

1.1 This document summarises the process by which sites have been selected for new Advanced Learning Centres in the following locations. The preferred sites are discussed in detail in the LDF Education Sites Preferred Options Development Plan Document consultation.

1. Royston High / Edward Sheerien School
2. Priory School / Willowgarth High
3. Wombwell High / Foulstone School

1.2 Essentially our understanding of the process was to provide a framework within which to select a site which was sequentially preferable in planning terms, but also suitable in practical and educational terms for each new Advanced Learning Centre (ALC).

1.3 The structure of this underpinning document is as follows: Section 2 provides a background to the site selection process, Section 3 the methodology and processes used, Section 4 the educational requirements; Section 5 sets out the site selection choices for the three sites, Section 6 discussed the very special circumstances for development in the green belt and Section 7 is a summary. Appended to the document are three tables which give an overview of the site selection process for each location, beginning with the 'long list' of sites, then the selection discussed in the site search report, followed by the preferred sites taken into the LDF process, and finally showing the chosen site. All these include notes of the reasons for favour or disfavour in each case.

1.4 The primary documents referred to in this underpinning report are: GL Hearn Site Search Methodology (January 2005), 3 x GL Hearn Site Search Reports (November 2004 Amended February 2005), Supplementary Site Search Report for Foulstone / Wombwell (April 2005) Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Unitary Development Plan (December 2000), Barnsley Education Sites Issues and Options (October 2005) and Barnsley LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options (October 2005).

2. Background to Site Selection

2.1 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) Education Department was included in the third wave of funding under the government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme in 2004. BSF is the biggest single government investment in improving school buildings for over 50 years. The aim is to rebuild or renew every secondary school in England over a 10-15 year period. Barnsley has suffered from poor educational results for a number of years and this programme is a chance to secure massive investment in Barnsley's schools.

2.2 BMBC Education instructed GL Hearn Planning Consultants to assist them in the site selection and planning process after they had agreed a strategy for rebuilding secondary schools in Barnsley. The programme was to replace on the same sites a number of schools, but in the case of 6 of the schools, these were to be rationalised onto 3 sites. This strategy was considered the optimum way to ensure the redevelopment could occur within the funding programme to provide the quality and size of facilities necessary for educational needs, and also ensure that the strategic locations for schools within Barnsley did not adversely affect pupil attendance and ensured that communities felt suitable 'ownership' of the facilities.

2.3 The BMBC Education Issues and Options Paper (October 2005) discusses the general schools reorganisation process and its rationale and this is not repeated here.

3. Methodology and Process

3.1 The GL Hearn site selection process was detailed and thorough and based primarily on a *sequential planning assessment* but also considered practical educational requirements. BMBC Education provided background information to assist with the initial site search process, and further information was gathered during visits to the three areas. Considerable discussion was had with the Education Authority to understand the pattern of pupil dispersal which was expected when the secondary school reorganisation had taken place, for example the new Elmhirst Academy was likely to draw some existing Priory School Pupils. With a basic understanding of the general geographical areas within which the new ALCs would need to be located, a minimum size criteria, using the DfES Building Bulletin 98, was used in developing a 'long list' of potential sites.

3.2 Following visits to the areas, these sites were then subject to further scrutiny based on simple locational, planning and practical considerations *(in no particular order)*:

- Location and Physical Restraints
- Educational Requirements
- Availability
- *Planning Suitability*
- Adjacent Land Uses

3.3 This assessment led to a short list of sites for each location which were potentially suitable within the above criteria. We were especially mindful of the locational preferences of Education since these would be critical to the success of the future school. Size was the major deciding factor in this 'long list' since it was considered unsuitable to develop such facilities on a split site. The short list of sites was taken through the detailed assessment explained in the GL Hearn Site Search Methodology and the Site Search Reports.

3.4 The Site Search Methodology involved four steps used to analyse the sites in a sequential manner:

1. Site Prioritisation – Greenfield / Brownfield, In / out of settlement
2. Site Appraisal – Size, public transport accessibility, UDP designation
3. Site Constraints – Access, visual, topography, ecology, ground conditions, *contamination, adjacent land uses, agricultural* land classification
4. Development Practicalities – Ownership, availability, planning history

3.5 This approach meant that the most important planning policy criteria were considered at the first step, moving down into more practical considerations at the lower steps. The process is explained in the GL Hearn Site Search Methodology:

> *"In practice steps 1 and 2 will be used to provisionally select the preferred sites ,whilst steps 3 and 4 will be used to ensure, as far as possible, that the preferred sites do not present any insurmountable obstacles, by highlighting the relative degrees of uncertainty in relation to their proposed development for ALC purposes. This process may result in some changes to the order of the preferred sites from steps 1 and 2."*

3.6 The methods used for carrying this out included information sources such as aerial photographs, the UDP, information available over the internet, information provided by BMBC Education and Planning Departments, site visits and photography, comments and discussions with BMBC Highway Officers and direct contact with relevant bodies including South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive who provided travel and transport information.

3.7 The later steps were in some cases not examined in detail as this was not possible due to time, cost and practical constraints. These included, amongst other factors: agricultural heritage, ecology and contamination. These were checked using the sources available such

as Ordnance Survey maps and the Unitary Development Plan - any features such as former mining works and nature conservation areas were picked up and included in the assessment, therefore we consider any major concerns would have been evident from this assessment. We did not have the benefit of detailed studies by specialists at this stage as the cost of this was prohibitive.

3.8 Whilst these are all important considerations which affect whether the site is sustainable, the basic information, such as transport accessibility and whether the site is near to a designated nature area or former mining works, which can be seen in the UDP and other GIS sources was available and was used to make an initial judgement. Further investigation as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment or detailed planning application was always intended to be carried out.

3.9 At the time of writing, the methodology was devised to sit as closely as possible within the existing planning policy framework in the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan 2000 (UDP), the Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber and national planning policy guidance primarily in PPG1 and PPG13. We were primarily looking for sites in appropriate sustainable locations which were within the settlements and had been previously developed. Sites of the size required which fulfilled this criteria were severely limited.

3.10 The objectives of finding a suitable site for improved education facilities which is achieved by the process is in line with one of the major objectives of the Council which is to invest in education and skills to support the development of the economy. This process ensures that the process of site selection follows national, regional and local planning guidance as closely as possible.

3.11 The sites identified for each location are set out in the appended tables. This shows the original long list considered (prior to Site Search Document), the Site Search Document shortlist, the Preferred Options, and the chosen site. Beside each is a brief explanation as to why the site was or was not suitable.

4. Educational Requirements

4.1 In addition to normal planning considerations, it was critical for whichever site is selected to be suitable for educational purposes. The following gives an idea of the general topics considered from an Educational viewpoint (some of these are also practical and planning considerations)

- BMBC Education pupil home location plans (for existing schools)
- Public Transport node location (bus and train)
- Access and parking practicalities
- Relationship to existing settlements
- Location of 'feeder' Primary Schools
- Location of other existing, new and redeveloped schools
- Size of Site (DfES Bulletin 98 was used - sets out minimum school site sizes)
- Advice from BMBC Education regarding need for educational requirements
- Existing use of site
- Financial viability
- Site characteristics (eg topography, ownership, adjacent land uses)

4.2 Each site on the GL Hearn short list was subject to detailed scrutiny by BMBC Education to assess whether it would be appropriate for the new school. Therefore some sites which were very suitable in planning policy terms, have not been successful as there would be little point progressing a site which would not fulfil educational requirements. Considerable weight was therefore given to Educational suitability from the outset. The relationship of each chosen site to each other chosen site, and to existing schools, was carefully examined to ensure that

these provided suitable coverage of the Borough and were close enough to each main pupil home area to be sustainable.

4.3 The educational requirements were critical at the final step of site choice. In addition to the summary tables provided overleaf, we have set out below the reasons for the final choice of site in each of the three new sites and the reasons for rejection of the other recommended sites: The Barnsley LDF Issues and Options (October 2005) consultation site references are shown in brackets in the following notes and also the summary tables:

1. <u>Royston High / Edward Sheerien</u>

4.4 There were four sites recommended in the Site Search report as being most suitable for this ALC:

- First Choice – Site 8 – Land West of Fish Dam Lane, Carlton (C
- Second Choice – Site 5 – Land East of Royston Lane, Carlton (B)
- Third Choice – Site 4 – Land South of Church Hill, Royston (A)
- Fourth Choice – Site 10 – Land at Memorial Park, Laithes Lane, Carlton (not taken forward to Issues and Options since it was not available)

4.5 The preferred site was Land East of Royston Lane. The other sites were unsuitable for the following reasons:

- Land South of Church Hill: In Green Belt but marginally less preferable than chosen site due to proximity of petrol station and other constraints, therefore fails.

- Land West of Fish Dam Lane: This site was not in the Green Belt, however it presented numerous development difficulties including topography which would have been prohibitively expensive to overcome to disabled access standards, and impractical for playing fields. The site is also less well connected to the public transport network than the chosen site. There is a waterway running along the middle of the site which would further complicate development. An industrial estate is located immediately adjacent to the site and this would not be desirable adjacent to the new ALC. Additionally part of the site is occupied by housing and access may not be straightforward given the surrounding land uses and development. Cumulative considerations mean this site is not viable.

- Memorial Park, Laithes Lane: This site is also Green Belt but has a further designation of Urban Greenspace which makes it less desirable than the chosen site. It is also some distance from Royston pupil home areas which is a strong consideration from an educational viewpoint.

- Chosen Site: Land East of Royston Lane - this site is in an ideal location in educational terms as it will site between the relevant communities, being as close as possible to all feeder schools and pupil home locations. The location is also a benefit in sustainability terms since it is in a central location being optimum location with regard to public transport accessibility and the second most preferred site in the Site Search report. Although Green Belt, the site can be developed in such a way that the buildings will be adjacent to the settlement, preserving the important Green Belt between the settlements and providing defensible boundaries.

- Summary: Although the most preferable site in planning terms is Fish Dam Lane, this has constraints which cannot be overcome. Therefore sequentially the next best site in planning terms which is also viable from practical and educational viewpoints is Land East of Royston Lane, the chosen site.

- The existing school sites in this case were both too small and more importantly locating on either site would in the view of the LEA have a significant effect on pupil and community perception of the new school such as to cause operational difficulties.

2. <u>Wombwell High / Foulstone School</u>

4.6 Four sites were recommended in the Site Search report as follows:

- First Choice – Site 7 – Wombwell High School, Wombwell (G)
- Second Choice – Site 5 – Land adjacent to Trans-Pennine Trail and A633, Wombwell (F)
- Third Choice – Land West of Upperwood Road, South of A635 (also referred to as Land West of Snape Hill Housing Area/South of Doncaster Road (A635)), Darfield (not taken forward to Issues and Options since it was not considered educationally suitable)

4.7 Additionally a further supplementary site search report was produced which investigated a site at Low Valley Farm which had previously been discounted as it was Greenfield and Green Belt, in contrast to the Darfield Colliery site which had a history of having been developed, although not formally considered brownfield. This site was also more exposed than the Colliery, however BMBC Education were of the view that its location between the settlements would make it ideal for the ALC.

4.8 Eventually the preferred site is Land at Darfield Colliery. Although initially this site was *considered impractical and not preferable due to its designation as a Country Park*, discussions with Countryside Officers and Highways Officers have led to a solution which is acceptable. Subject to suitable siting and landscaping, it is considered that the concerns regarding openness of the Green Belt could be addressed.

4.9 Other sites which were considered at the final stage were:

- Land West of Snape Hill: This site is Safeguarded Land and is initially appealing however it lies north of Darfield which presents considerable educational concerns as in order for the school to attract pupils from the two schools a location nearer to Wombwell is required. This would also create considerable trips for pupils from southern areas which would not be sustainable.

- Land adjacent to Trans Pennine Trail and A633: This site is dissected by a major road and slopes steeply. The costs of overcoming these major concerns would be beyond the funding means available and it is doubtful whether the sloping land could be used for any educational purpose without significant regarding. The site is also some distance from Darfield which raises educational and transport sustainability issues.

- Wombwell High School: This site has a suitable designation however access problems would be very difficult to overcome and the site is located well within Wombwell, which would be unattractive and some distance from existing Foulstone pupils.

- Low Valley Farm, Darfield: This site was examined following the initial site survey report as none of the recommended sites were found to be viable or suitable from an educational viewpoint. Although in the Green Belt, the quality of this land in landscape terms was less than certain other sites. Unfortunately, once investigations into access possibilities were examined this site was found not to be viable.

- Chosen Site: The Darfield Colliery site was eventually chosen for this location after considerable investigation into possibilities in the area between the settlements. An area of the colliery which can be suitably landscaped for the ALC has been identified without causing any significant harm to the existing Country Park. Although there were options outside of the Green Belt, these were not suitable in educational terms as BMBC Education considered they would be attractive only to one settlement and therefore would

be likely to fail. A suitable access solution has been devised. In this case the location of the school is of paramount importance to its success.

- Summary: Although initial difficulties prevented consideration of Darfield Colliery, this has emerged through a logical and practical process to be the chosen site. There were many financial and practical considerations affecting the choice of site in this case, and again the existing school sites were considered. Wombwell High fared better since it was on a large site, however access possibilities were limited and again, this would have affected the perception of pupils from more northerly areas.

- Mitigation of the Darfield Colliery site will involved extensive landscaping and visual improvements, which will be detailed in a full application in due course. There is considerable land available around the site to incorporate within the Netherwood Country Park, thus offsetting the land to be used for the school. There will also be considerable landscaping provided which will enhance the park and compensate for the loss of land and any habitat.

3. Priory School / Willowgarth High

4.10 There were three sites recommended in the Site Search report as being most suitable for this ALC:

- First Choice – Site 4 – Land off Burton Road, West Green (I)
- Second Choice – Site 5 – Land West of Carrs Lane, Cudworth (J)
- Third Choice – Site 2 – Land West of Engine Lane, Shafton Two Gates (H)

4.11 A further site, between the A628 and proposed Cudworth bypass was considered at Issues and Options stage, however it provide impractical for development and was therefore discounted. The chosen site is Site West of Engine Lane which is Green Belt. The remaining two recommended sites were also Green Belt and were considered not suitable for the following reasons:

- Land off Burton Road, West Green: This site has a major visual concern being located adjacent to a large industrial site, although it is designated Safeguarded Land. It is some distance from Grimethorpe and the existing Willowgarth School which is not desirable from an educational viewpoint. Added to this consideration is the likelihood that some existing Priory School pupils may attend the new Academy at Elmhirst meaning that in order to provide a sustainable location within the central pupil area, the site ought to be further towards Shafton Two Gates. The potential for contamination and proximity of industrial uses makes this site impractical for education development.

- Land West of Carrs Lane, Cudworth: This site is part Green Belt but has added topography and access difficulties. It is poorly located for access from all areas and is not a practical site from an educational viewpoint. Visual impact of works required to form a school would be high.

- Chosen Site: The Engine Lane site is in an ideal location close enough to the existing Willowgarth school to ensure that the community feel some degree of 'ownership', but also in an easily accessible location for Priory pupils. There is the added consideration in this instance that some of the pupils who would have attended the Priory School will now be likely to attend the new Elmhirst Academy, which has a wider catchment area. In educational terms therefore the location is ideal. It is also a sustainable location being easily accessed and although Green Belt, has defensible boundaries which can provide a site boundary.

- Summary: The chosen site, although Green Belt, is the most likely to provide a successful educational location, which is of critical importance to the aims of this project. Not only the location, but also the environment of the school is extremely important, hence the rejection of the West Green site. Mitigation is likely to include considerable landscaping to ensure the proposal sits in the landscape, however detailed submissions at a later stage will provide more information on this topic.

- The existing school sites in this instance were not in a suitable location for a combined school, being too far away from the central pupil area. This is not only an educational consideration but also affects transport and sustainability. Willowgarth school is located within the Green Belt and it may be possible to return at least part of this site to Green Belt, which is a positive planning gain. Mitigation of the new site will include suitable landscaping and carefully designed buildings.

5. Very Special Circumstances for Green Belt Development

5.1 It will be noted that in fact all three of the preferred sites are located in the Green Belt. The size requirements for each site are based on established DfES guidelines plus an additional allowance for the community aspects. The Site Search process revealed that, unsurprisingly, there were few sites of suitable size available for the ALC developments within the settlements. In the circumstances it is necessary for very special circumstances to be put forward to support proposals for Green Belt development of ALCs, since the majority of land outside the settlements is designated Green Belt.

5.2 We are aware of other decisions where the overriding educational need has been accepted as a very special circumstance. As has been explained, for the entire BSF redevelopment programme, the sites all relate well to one another and are suitable in their own right. If one of these sites fails it could create considerable difficulties in delivering the entire programme. Given that only the built development on the sites will be inappropriate in the Green Belt, and not the entire site, we are hopeful that this view will be accepted and special circumstances agreed.

5.3 There is an obvious conflict in that the Green Belt has been traditionally used to help retain the physical identity of the individual settlements and communities, yet the secondary school reorganisation needs schools which will serve more than one settlement and / or community. Great care has been taken to identify sites which will not undermine the physical separateness of the settlements, yet still provide a location which will be acceptable to all relevant communities. It is critical that the reorganisation offers high quality to all the Barnsley communities and avoids any part of the Borough having greater or lesser educational opportunity.

5.4 As well as examining the wider layout of school locations, which has affected the choice of site, an overview of the loss of Green Belt land has been undertaken. As part of the preparation of the LDF, a partial review of Green Belt Boundaries has been carried out. The Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options document (October 2005) shows the allocation of some 177 hectares of Green Belt land additional to the Barnsley UDP Green Belt. Although the preferred sites are located in the Green Belt, the ALC proposals involve a loss of only 8.71ha to built development and access, with approximately 30ha remaining open and undeveloped for use as playing fields. When considered against the overall additions to the Green Belt across the borough, the impact of these sites is considerably reduced. Some of the new Green Belt is in far more sensitive locations and of greater value than that which is to be lost.

5.5 Each of the three ALCs have associated playing fields and green space which will be located in the Green Belt. In total these spaces equate to approximately 30 hectares. The use of land for outdoor sport and recreation are approproriate Green Belt uses. Additionally care has been taken where Green Belt sites were recommended, that these were not the most critical areas which provide crucial gaps to prevent merging of settlements, and where possible the proposed built development could be sited within the site to cause least harm to the openness of the land.

6. Summary

6.1 In summary the choice of ALC sites has been greatly influenced by planning constraints and requirements; however it is clear that there are other considerations and the importance of the Building Schools for the Future programme for Barnsley cannot be underestimated. In order to achieve this vision it is apparent from the evidence provided that special consideration must be given to the release of Green Belt land to provide suitable sites. With the expected additional designation of 177 hectares in the LDF and the limited loss to built development in each case, we consider that the benefits of the BSF programme far outweigh other planning considerations.

Royston High / Edward Sheerien - GL Hearn - Site Search Process Diagram

Stage 1 'Longlist' of Sites		Stage 2 'Shortlist' of Sites		Stage 3 Preferred Sites		Stage 4 Chosen Site
Site	Comments	Site	Comments	Site	Comments	Site
Royston High School	In settlement, previously developed	Royston High School	Poorly located for Carlton pupils and insufficient size	Royston High School DISCOUNTED	Land S of Church Hill is a good site despite Green Belt, but not preferred site when compared to others with similar constraints. Land E of Royston Lane is comparable to other Green Belt sites but in ideal location with excellent public transport accessibility Land West of Fish Dam Lane is not Green Belt but complications of topography, access and proximity to industrial use make it less preferable Memorial Park is Green Belt, not best location for Royston pupils plus currently public park and not available On balance land East of Royston lane provides best defensible location in optimum position.	Royston High School DISCOUNTED
Land S of Wood Lane	Green Belt and very poor accessibility	Land S of Wood Lane DISCOUNTED		Land S of Wood Lane DISCOUNTED		Land S of Wood Lane DISCOUNTED
Land S. of Lee Lane	Safeguarded, good transport links	Land S. of Lee Lane	Too peripheral despite positive designation	Land S. of Lee Lane DISCOUNTED		Land S. of Lee Lane DISCOUNTED
Land S.of Church Hill (A)	Ideal location although Green Belt	Land S.of Church Hill (A)	Ideal location for ALC plus site is very accessible	Land S.of Church Hill (A)		Land S.of Church Hill DISCOUNTED
Land S of Shaw Lane	In commercial use, relatively well located	Land S of Shaw Lane	Impractical to remove existing use	Land S of Shaw Lane DISCOUNTED		Land S of Shaw Lane DISCOUNTED
Land N of Shaw Lane	Safeguarded but quite detached from settlement	Land N of Shaw Lane	Near to industrial uses and too remote from settlement	Land N of Shaw Lane DISCOUNTED		Land N of Shaw Lane DISCOUNTED
Land E of Royston Lane (B)	Ideal location although Green Belt	Land E of Royston Lane (B)	Ideal location although Green Belt	Land E of Royston Lane (B)		Preferred Site: Land E of Royston Lane
Land W of Fish Dam Lane	Sustainable location within settlement easily accessed	Land W of Fish Dam Lane	Sustainable location within settlement easily accessed	Land W of Fish Dam Lane (C)		Land W of Fish Dam Lane DISCOUNTED
Land S of Pools Lane	Green Belt, too peripheral	Land S of Pools Lane DISCOUNTED		Land S of Pools Lane DISCOUNTED		Land S of Pools Lane DISCOUNTED
Memorial Park, Laithes Lane	Green Belt but easily accessed and relatively well located	Memorial Park, Laithes Lane	Green Belt but easily accessed and relatively well located	Memorial Park, Laithes Lane		Memorial Park DISCOUNTED
Land SW of Royston	Green Belt with important settlement separation function	Land SW of Royston DISCOUNTED		Land SW of Royston DISCOUNTED		Land SW of Royston DISCOUNTED
Land N of Lee Lane	Safeguarded land but fairly peripheral	Land N of Lee Lane	Fails on accessibility criteria despite designation	Land N of Lee Lane DISCOUNTED		Land N of Lee Lane DISCOUNTED
Land E of Fish Dam Lane (C)	Green Belt and too far into Carlton to be educationally suitable	Land E of Fish Dam Lane DISCOUNTED		Land E of Fish Dam Lane DISCOUNTED		Land E of Fish Dam Lane DISCOUNTED
Edward Sheerien School	Preferable land use however too small and poorly located	Edward Sheerien School	Poorly located for Royston pupils and insufficient size	Edward Sheerien School DISCOUNTED		Edward Sheerien School DISCOUNTED

Wombwell / Darfield - GL Hearn - Site Search Process Diagram

Stage 1 'Longlist' of Sites		Stage 2 'Shortlist' of Sites		Stage 3 Preferred Sites		Stage 4 Chosen Site
Site	Comments	Site	Comments	Site	Comments	Site
Land west of Upperwood Rd, South of A635 (E)	Safeguarded and of suitable size	Land west of Upperwood Rd, South of A635 (E)	Positive planning designation and suitable size	Land west of Upperwood Rd, South of A635 (E)	Land west of Upperwood Rd is too far from Wombwell pupil home areas. Darfield Colliery initially rejected, however possibilities realised - ideal sustainable location Trans Pennine Trail site is split site, sloping and access prohibitive Wombwell High is simply too far from Foulstone pupil areas Low Valley is open Green Belt with access difficulties and high costs On balance Darfield Colliery provides best location and best opportunity to mitigate any harm	Land west of Upperwood Rd, South of A635 DISCOUNTED
Land between Barnsley Road and Bly Road, Darfield	Suitable designation and already in school playing field use	Land between Barnsley Road and Bly Road, Darfield	Not of suitable size for extended ALC	Land between Barnsley Road and Bly Road, Darfield DISCOUNTED		Land between Barnsley Road and Bly Road, Darfield DISCOUNTED
Land between Gt Houghton and Darfield	Green Belt, Washlands and poor location for Wombwell	Land between Gt Houghton and Darfield DISCOUNTED		Land between Gt Houghton and Darfield DISCOUNTED		Land between Gt Houghton and Darfield DISCOUNTED
Former Darfield Main Colliery, Pitt Street, Darfield	Poor road links but ideal location	Former Darfield Main Colliery, Pitt Street, Darfield	Development difficulties including Country Park	Former Darfield Main Colliery, Pitt Street, Darfield		Former Darfield Main Colliery, Pitt Street, Darfield
Land East of Darfield (Firth Ings)	Washlands, accessibility problems and Green Belt	Land East of Darfield (Firth Ings) DISCOUNTED		Land East of Darfield (Firth Ings) DISCOUNTED		Land East of Darfield (Firth Ings) DISCOUNTED
Land South East of Station Road	Poor access, washlands, nature conservation site	Land South East of Station Road DISCOUNTED		Land South East of Station Road DISCOUNTED		Land South East of Station Road DISCOUNTED
Land west of Station Road including Sport Stadium, Low Valley	Assembly difficulties but good location	Land west of Station Road including Sport Stadium, Low Valley	Assembly unlikely to be possible - existing facilities established	Land west of Station Road including Sport Stadium, Low Valley DISCOUNTED		Land west of Station Road, Low Valley DISCOUNTED
Land adjacent to Trans Pennine Trail and A633, Wombwell (F)	Good designation but sloping and split site	Land adjacent to Trans Penine Trail and A633, Wombwell (F)	Potential site subject to analysis of practical constraints	Land adjacent to Trans Penine Trail and A633, Wombwell (F)		Land adjacent to Trans Penine Trail and A633, Wombwell DISCOUNTED
Land south west of Broomhill, North of A6195	Green Belt and nature conservation - potential main road access	Land south west of Broomhill, North of A6195	Too far from central area, Green Belt and Nature Conservation	Land south west of Broomhill, North of A6195 DISCOUNTED		Land south west of Broomhill, North of A6195 DISCOUNTED
Wombwell High School, Wombwell (G)	Good size, already in educational use	Wombwell High School, Wombwell (G)	Potential subject to overcoming access difficulties	Wombwell High School, Wombwell (G)		Wombwell High School, Wombwell DISCOUNTED
Wombwell Foundry, Hough Lane, Wombwell	Brownfield site, currently derelict	Wombwell Foundry, Hough Lane, Wombwell	Too far from central area plus contamination issues	Wombwell Foundry, Hough Lane, Wombwell DISCOUNTED		Wombwell Foundry, Hough Lane, Wombwell DISCOUNTED
Low Valley Farm, Darfield (D)	Green Belt however good location	Low Valley Farm, Darfield (D)	Possible subject to access problems	Low Valley Farm, Darfield (D)		Low Valley Farm, Darfield DISCOUNTED

Priory School / Willowgarth High - Site Search Process Diagram

Stage 1 'Longlist' of Sites		Stage 2 'Shortlist' of Sites		Stage 3 Preferred Sites		Stage 4 Chosen Site
Site	Comments	Site	Comments	Site	Comments	Site
Willowgarth High School, Grimethorpe	Existing school site	Willowgarth High School, Grimethorpe	Too far from Priory - benefit of returning part of site to Green Belt	Willowgarth High School, Grimethorpe DISCOUNTED	Engine Lane is ideal location and Green Belt issues potentially could be overcome Proximity of industrial uses make Burton Road site unsuitable, also too far from Willowgarth Carrs Lane has access problems and is also too far south On balance, Engine Lane provides ideal location and Green Belt effects could be mitigated with suitable design and landscaping.	Willowgarth High School, Grimethorpe DISCOUNTED
Priory School, Cundy Cross, Barnsley	Suitable designation	Priory School, Cundy Cross, Barnsley	Too far from Willowgarth for educational purposes	Priory School, Cundy Cross, Barnsley DISCOUNTED		Priory School, Cundy Cross, Barnsley DISCOUNTED
Land west of Pontefract Road	Designated Greenspace, too far from Willowgarth	Land west of Pontefract Road DISCOUNTED		Land west of Pontefract Road DISCOUNTED		Land west of Pontefract Road DISCOUNTED
Land east of Pontefract Road	Green Belt, poor access and too far from Willowgarth	Land east of Pontefract Road DISCOUNTED		Land east of Pontefract Road DISCOUNTED		Land east of Pontefract Road DISCOUNTED
Land west of Engine Lane, Shafton Two Gates (H)	Green Belt but ideal location with good transport and access	Land west of Engine Lane, Shafton Two Gates (H)	Green Belt, however can be developed with defensible boundary	Land west of Engine Lane, Shafton Two Gates (H)		Land west of Engine Lane, Shafton Two Gates
Land between A628 and proposed Cudworth Bypass, Cudworth (K)	Only part Green Belt, defensible boundary	Land between A628 and proposed Cudworth Bypass, Cudworth (K)	Site impractical - poor for public transport	Land between A628 and proposed Cudworth Bypass, Cudworth DISCOUNTED		Land between A628 and proposed Cudworth Bypass, Cudworth DISCOUNTED
Land east of Engine Lane	Green Belt, not large enough for education purposes	Land east of Engine Lane DISCOUNTED		Land east of Engine Lane DISCOUNTED		Land east of Engine Lane DISCOUNTED
Land adjacent to A268 between Shafton & Brierly	Green Belt with no real defensible boundary	Land adjacent to A268 between Shafton & Brierly DISCOUNTED		Land adjacent to A268 between Shafton & Brierly DISCOUNTED		Land adjacent to A268 between Shafton & Brierly DISCOUNTED
Land off Burton Road, West Green (I)	Safeguarded land on major road	Land off Burton Road, West Green (I)	Reasonable location although slightly near to Priory	Land off Burton Road, West Green (I)		Land off Burton Road, West Green DISCOUNTED
Land west of Carrs Lane, Cudworth (J)	Safeguarded land	Land west of Carrs Lane, Cudworth (J)	Good designation and adequate size	Land west of Carrs Lane, Cudworth (J)		Land west of Carrs Lane, Cudworth DISCOUNTED
Dorothy Hyman Sports centre and land to east, Cudworth	Relatively good location with existing sports use	Dorothy Hyman Sports centre and land to east, Cudworth	Land assembly very difficult and existing sports facility	Dorothy Hyman Sports centre and land to east, Cudworth DISCOUNTED		Dorothy Hyman Sports centre and land to east, Cudworth DISCOUNTED
Land west of Park Spring Road, Grimethorpe	Industrial designation, good accessibility	Land west of Park Spring Road, Grimethorpe	Preferred for industrial use incompatible with school	Land west of Park Spring Road, Grimethorpe DISCOUNTED		Land west of Park Spring Road, Grimethorpe DISCOUNTED

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Remaking Learning – Identification of Sites for New Secondary Schools

Search Methodology

Consultants Report

January 2005

PREPARED BY

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January 2005
Ref: J:\Planning\Job Files\J013126\Reports\Methodology Report (Jan 05) FC.doc

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Appendix A – Copy of Brief prepared by BMBC

Appendix B – Copy of GL Hearn submission

Appendix C – Copy of document prepared by BMBC with Options A & B.

Appendix D – Plans showing locations of existing secondary schools subject of study, and proposed new academy.

Appendix E – BMBC Planning Advice Note 30 and Housing Development Sustainability Checklist (Annex 3)

Appendix F – Copy of Newton Mearns decision letter

Quality Standards Control

The signatories below verify that this document has been prepared in accordance with our quality control requirements. These procedures do not affect the content and views expressed by the originator. This document must only be treated as a draft unless it is has been signed by the Originator and approved by a Business or Associate Director.

DATE	ORIGINATOR	APPROVED
January 2005	Ross Jones	Tony Lamb
	Planning Director	Planning Director

Limitations

This document has been prepared for the stated objective and should not be used for any other purpose without the prior written authority of GL Hearn; we accept no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than for which it was commissioned.

1. Introduction

1.1 GL Hearn were instructed by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council in connection with the identification of sites for new secondary schools in June 2004.

1.2 A copy of the consultants' brief prepared by the Borough Council is included as Appendix A. A copy of GL Hearn's submission in response to that brief is included in Appendix B.

1.3 The first requirement is for a comprehensive report on the following:-

i) Client's requirements;
ii) Study methodology

2. Client's Requirements

i) Background

2.1 The Council requires consultants to undertake a survey of sites in Barnsley Metropolitan Borough to assist in the process of identifying up to four suitable sites for the construction of secondary schools, to be called 'advanced learning centres', which would have a wider function than that of the traditional secondary school.

2.2 Work on the identification of potential sites for the construction of learning centres is being pursued as a matter of priority by an informal working group of Local Authority Officers in the Council's Education and Planning Departments. This process is a necessary prerequisite for the Council's future bid for funding under the Government's 'Building Schools for the Future' programme.

ii) General Specification for each Learning Centre Site

2.3 The site area required will vary depending on specified capacity. We have based the required site areas on the areas indicated in Figure D.3 of Dfes Building Bulletin 98 (although the area can be reduced if all-weather pitches are incorporated into the playing field area). The learning centres will be full service schools serving both pupils aged 11-19 and adults.

2.4 It is the Borough Council's intention that in addition to educational facilities, other community uses should be included on the identified site (see paragraphs 2.23-2.29). At this stage, the Council are unable to identify the additional facilities in each case. We have therefore been asked by the BMBC Head of Learning Infrastructure to assume a 10% increase in site area to accommodate an enlarged education and community facility.

2.5 Each site must have ease of accessibility by public transport and ideally should be relatively level. A central location to serve the area from which pupils are to be drawn is preferred to facilitate access, although this would not be essential. There would be an advantage if the site was in Council ownership, although this should not preclude investigation of privately-owned sites.

2.6 Secondary schools/learning centres require large site areas to accommodate both school buildings and playing fields. This naturally suggests sites in what is at present open land near the urban area. Such areas are frequently designated as Green Belt. However, government guidance states clearly that the construction of new buildings

for a secondary school/learning centre is not appropriate development in the Green Belt.

2.7 If an application is to be lodged for a learning centre proposal on a site currently designated as within Green Belt, the supporting information would have to show that there were 'very special circumstances' to justify an exception to adopted Green Belt Policy.

2.8 If a site at present in the Green Belt is selected, it may be necessary to exclude that site from the Green Belt through the development plan review process. This could only be done if it can be demonstrated that there are no other suitable sites outside the Green Belt that can satisfactorily meet the specifications, and thus that 'exceptional circumstances' apply.

2.9 Thus, other non-Green Belt sites will have to be examined and rejected before a Green Belt site could be recommended.

iii) Broad Site Locations

2.10 The rationalisation of Barnsley's secondary schools is illustrated in Appendix C, which gives the capacities of the new schools in Option A and Option B.

2.11 In Option A, the following school sites are to be retained but with amended capacities:-

- Penistone Grammar
- Dearne High
- Kirk Balk
- Darton High
- Kingstone
- Holgate

2.12 The following schools will be closed and replaced by new advanced learning centres suitably located to serve the areas from which the majority of pupils at these schools are currently drawn (learning zones) (The new capacities do not include post 16 provision):-

- Edward Sheerien
- Royston High

To be replaced by learning centre 1 – capacity 1200 places

- Foulstone
- Wombwell High

To be replaced by learning centre 2 – capacity 1800 places

- Willowgarth High
- Priory

To be replaced by learning centre 3 – capacity 1400 places

2.13 Option B assumes the consolidation of the following schools on a single site:-

- Holgate
- Kingstone

Consultants are not required to consider this particular proposal.

2.14 Option B also assumes possible relocation of Darton High to provide an increased capacity of 1300 places.

2.15 It should be noted that a new Academy is planned to open in September 2006 at Kendray/Worsbrough with 400 surplus spaces, with a new building to be opened in September 2007. This is likely to draw pupils from the surrounding area who currently choose to attend Kingstone and Priory Schools, thereby reducing the projected numbers on roll at those schools.

2.16 The location of these existing secondary schools and the new Academy is shown on plans included in Appendix D.

2.17 The BMBC Head of Learning Infrastructure has advised that the schools which it is proposed will be replaced by new amalgamated secondary schools (to be known as advanced learning centres) are geographically unsuitably located in relation to the new learning zones. For example, Darton High is on the periphery of its learning zone at present. We are also advised that a new site would be preferred for operational reasons.

2.18 The Borough Council have provided plans showing the place of residence of current pupils of the schools to be closed, and this information will be used in the selection of

suitable sites. We have not been able to obtain at this stage from the planning authority information on housing allocations and on potential housing growth areas in the review of the development plan.

2.19 The informal catchment areas of the feeder primary schools and learning centres for each of the secondary schools to be closed will supplement the information on place of residence of pupils of those schools in determining the most suitable new locations. This should allow us to broadly identify primary learning zones so that the relative accessibility of each site can be considered.

2.20 The broad optimum site location requirements for the proposed learning centres are as follows:-

a) Learning centre 1 – Carlton area between northern outer neighbourhoods of Barnsley and the separate settlement of Royston;
Main pupil home area (Learning Zone) – Athersley North and South, St. Helens, Carlton, Cudworth, Royston;

b) Learning centre 2 – between Darfield and Wombwell, reflecting a preference for a location closest to the majority of potential pupils;
Main pupil home area (Learning Zone) – Stairfoot, Ardsley, Darfield, Great Houghton, Thurnscoe, Goldthorpe, Wombwell, Hemingfield, Jump;

c) Learning centre 3 – a location close to Cudworth, but at the same time so as to be convenient to Grimethorpe/Brierley;
Main pupil home area (Learning Zone) – Lundwood, Cundy Cross, Smithies, Monk Bretton, St. Helens, Kendray, Cudworth, Shafton, Brierley, Grimethorpe;

d) Optional Learning Centre 4 – a location primarily convenient to the main population in Staincross/Mapplewell, but also to residents of Kexbrough, Barugh and Wilthorpe;
Main pupil home area (Learning Zone) – Kexbrough, Darton, Mapplewell, Staincross, Barugh, Wilthorpe.

iv) The Advanced Learning Centre Model

2.21 The Council's brief includes the following:-

"Barnsley.. seeks to build a new vision for learning for the future that will lead to improved standards, raise achievement ambitions, promote a 'can-do' culture and cultivate change. The vision is about creating a network of multi-

dimensional learning centres across the borough, serving all learners in the community. This will result in a borough-wide infrastructure for learners and learning at every life stage which responds fully to current and future lifestyles, employment routes and workplaces, and leisure opportunities for Barnsley people. The vision requires rethinking learning for each life stage, recognising that learning has many functions – to learn new skills, gain further knowledge, specialise in particular areas, refresh existing skills, prepare for employment, give pleasure and enjoyment."

2.22 The brief continues:-

"The proposals will require rethinking approaches to the traditional concept of school, academic year, term times, length of school day. Furthermore, education in Barnsley will need to critically appraise what a school provides, how, where, when learning is accessed, the curriculum on offer, and the workforce needed to promote learning and provide support for the personal wellbeing, career and leisure prospects for every individual."

2.23 The advanced learning centres will differ from the conventional secondary school, not least in that they will require to be accessible through a longer school day. This has implications for the consideration of public transport accessibility/frequency.

2.24 In addition to the educational uses, the approach places emphasis on leisure opportunities and prospects, and this may include dual use of the school's recreational facilities by the general public, which is encouraged by government circulars. The concept of a family sports centre has been referred to by other authorities involved in the Building Schools for the Future programme.

2.25 Dual use of leisure facilities means that the recreational facilities included in the school may have to be more extensive, to allow simultaneous use by pupils and by the general public.

2.26 Additionally, it may be necessary to provide more extensive car parking to meet the needs of those visitors for whom use of public transport is not practical. These features increase the site area requirement.

2.27 In discussion with Officers, reference has been made to the inclusion within the Advanced Learning Centre sites of additional facilities, including, in some cases, the following:-

i) Library;
ii) Health centre;
iii) Job centre;
iv) Post office.

2.28 Other authorities involved in the 'Building Schools in the Future' programme have considered inclusion of cyber cafés and what is referred to as a 'community safety base'. All additional facilities are likely to further increase the required site area.

2.29 The amalgamation of these facilities on a single site leads to the creation of what has been referred to as a 'neighbourhood centre'. This has two implications; first, there is a need for an enlarged site; second, many of the non-educational uses included in these broader community facilities are uses which government policy seeks to direct to existing established town and district centres. They may be considered to be contrary to government policy, which is based on achieving sustainable development patterns. On the other hand, the advanced learning centres might be viewed as new nodes themselves where a combination of complementary facilities and uses are concentrated in accordance with policy.

2.30 We are advised by the Head of Leisure Infrastructure that it would be very preferable for the new advanced learning centres to have a strong visual presence when viewed from the Borough's main road network.

v) Site Size and Development Form

2.31 Figure D3 of Dfes Building Bulletin 98 provides total site areas and playing field areas for secondary schools of various capacities. The new capacities in Appendix C of this report give figures for 11 to 16 year olds. In addition, the advanced learning centres will accommodated 17-19 year olds and adults, and there are intended to be non-educational uses.

2.32 If a true community facility with additional uses as referred to earlier is to be created, then an extended area will be necessary. The Borough Council have been unable to give us details of the additional facilities in each of the 4 locations at this stage.

2.33 In the light of the above, we have used the upper limit from Building Bulletin 98 for the total site area (i.e. net area x 125%) for the educational uses, and in accordance with the advice from BMBC have added a further 10% to the calculated total to accommodate anticipated non-educational uses.

2.34 This results in the following site area requirements:-

Learning Centre 1 (Edward Sheerien/Royston High Replacement) – 1200 places

Total site area	=	8.7 hectares + 10%
	=	9.6 hectares
Approximate areas of playing fields, playgrounds etc.	=	6.9 hectares

Learning Centre 2 (Foulstone/Wombwell High Replacement) – 1800 places

Total site area	=	12 hectares + 10%
	=	13.2 hectares
Approximate area of playing fields, playgrounds etc.	=	9.6 hectares

Learning Centre 3 (Willowgarth High/Priory Replacement) – 1400 places

Total site area	=	9.9 hectares + 10%
	=	10.9 hectares
Approximate area of playing fields, playgrounds etc.	=	8 hectares

Learning Centre 4 (Darton High Replacement) – 1300 places

Total site area	=	9.3 hectares + 10%
	=	10.2 hectares
Approximate area of playing fields, playgrounds etc.	=	7.4 hectares

2.35 The site area required can be reduced if all-weather pitches are incorporated into the playing field area; if one all-weather pitch of approximately 60x100 metres (6000 sq metres) was included, the requirement could be reduced by approximately 0.6 hectares.

2.36 'Building Schools for the Future' includes architects exemplar designs. From the examples referred to in this document, it is anticipated that buildings in the advanced learning centres proposed in Barnsley in the broad site locations described at paragraph 2.20 above will be usually of 2 storeys, although parts such as sports halls may be the equivalent of 3 storeys.

2.37 Government policy would require that parking spaces are kept to the minimum, both for staff and for visitors, including those using the community facilities. On the limited

information available we would estimate that for a comprehensive learning centre with dual use sports facilities and with other community uses, between 100 and 200 car parking spaces would normally be required. To encourage access by coach and by public transport, generous areas need to be provided for coach parking and access for large vehicles from the public highway.

vi) Public Transport Accessibility

2.38 In order to meet the sustainable development requirements of Planning Policy Guidance notes nos. 1 and 13, the school site should have good public transport accessibility, and it may be necessary to develop a Green Travel Plan for each advanced learning centre location.

2.39 We have also been provided with route details of the bus services in the vicinity of all considered sites operated under the aegis of the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, from which we have derived an understanding of the locations best served and the main linkages.

2.40 For each of the selected sites, SYPTE have provided plans showing the location of bus stops and the routes serving those stops, and this has enabled us to refine our assessment of public transport accessibility in each case.

vii) Survey Site Information

2.41 The survey should identify all sites in the relevant areas of the borough that might be capable of meeting the specification for the learning centre site – if only in part – having taken account of the criteria in the BMBC Brief. The information for each site should collect information where possible on the following items not referred to in the BMBC brief:-

i) Ownership;
ii) Likely availability;
iii) Topography;
iv) Site planning history/decisions;
v) Adjoining land uses;

2.42 Sites should be ranked in order of preference. The best and most feasible sites should be covered in most detail.

viii) Form of Reports

2.43 An outline of the survey methodology should be included in an interim report following completion of stages (i) and (ii).

2.44 The final reports should be submitted containing details of the preferred sites identified in the survey. A concluding commentary containing a recommended site in each case should be included.

3. Criteria and Methodology

3.1 As a result of our preliminary work on these studies, and from our discussions with Planning Officers, we have revised the manner in which the criteria for the site searches will be applied. This has resulted in revisions to the criteria themselves, and to their use in site evaluation.

3.2 Before considering the methodology to be used in site selection, we have reconsidered the relevance of the criterion entitled 'Planning Policy Considerations' which we included in our Additional Criteria in our tender submission. This has now been divided into two issues, as follows:-

i) Past relevant planning decisions (a guide to context) and
ii) Planning history of identified sites.

3.3 Item ii) remains to be applied at the Additional Criteria stage. Item i) is now used to set the context for the initial consideration of suitable locations.

3.4 Past planning decisions, in particular for educational or large buildings in Barnsley's Green Belt, are useful as guidance on how planning applications for schools would be considered.

a) Relevant Past Planning Decisions

3.5 We have researched relevant appeal decisions for medium scale development in Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Green Belt, so as to understand how adopted UDP policy had been interpreted by the Inspectorate and the ODPM.

3.6 Officers of BMBC have provided details of two cases relating to development in Barnsley's Green Belt:-

i) New primary school at Great Houghton – The proposal was to relocate the existing primary school to playing fields within the curtilage of the school, but which were designated as Green Belt.

The application material included a supporting statement prepared by the applicants which suggested that 'very special circumstances' existed in this case to justify an exception to the application of Green Belt policy.

As the application was a departure from the adopted UDP, it was passed to the Government Office for Yorkshire & The Humber, who advised that in the circumstances they did not wish to intervene. Accordingly, planning permission was granted by BMBC.

ii) Burntwood Court Hotel, Brierley – this was a proposal for a new large hotel in the Green Belt surrounding Barnsley to the east of the settlement of Brierley.

The application was called-in by the Regional Office. In granting permission, the Secretary of State accepted that there was a need for a hotel in this area, which would also support the economic recovery of surrounding settlements. It was therefore concluded that there were 'very special circumstances' to justify an exception to Green Belt policy.

3.7 These two recent cases are helpful. They show that within the Green Belt surrounding Barnsley, applicants have been able to display "very special circumstances" that have led to the grant of planning permission, in one case interestingly for a new school.

3.8 Whilst Green Belt sites would only be recommended if there were no other genuinely suitable sites, these decisions indicate that secondary school development on a Green Belt site may be permissible where a thorough examination of alternative sites has been undertaken.

b) Primary Criteria

3.9 In our submission to the Borough Council, we divided the BMBC criteria into two groups, identified as primary and secondary criteria.

3.10 The primary BMBC criteria were listed as follows:-

i) Size of site available;
ii) Accessibility by all modes apart from private car;
iii) Site location – within settlement, peripheral or out of settlement;
iv) Site characteristics – brownfield/greenfield;
v) Green Belt impacts (where relevant).

3.11 All these criteria were seen as relatively inflexible.

(i) Site Location and Site Characteristics

3.12 In our discussions with Officers of BMBC since our appointment, we have found that criteria (iii) and (iv) derive from their requirement that the school proposals should conform as far as is possible with sustainable development patterns. Central Government Planning Guidance included in PPG3 refers to the application of a sequential test for the consideration of housing sites. PPG6 refers to a sequential approach for town centre uses, including in particular, retail development. PPG1 refers to the general requirement to ensure sustainable development patterns.

3.13 PPG13 refers specifically to education and health buildings, at paragraph 38. The advice is as follows:-

> *"Higher and further education establishments, schools and hospitals are major generators of travel and should be located so as to maximise their accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling. Similarly, proposals to develop, expand or redevelop existing sites should improve access by public transport, walking and cycling. (See also paragraphs 87-91 on travel plans). Where related accommodation is to be provided, it should have ready access to the site by non-car modes".*

3.14 The issues of whether a site is brownfield or greenfield and whether it is within settlement, peripheral or out of settlement, are normally applicable to the consideration of competing housing sites, but we have been asked by Officers of BMBC to consider these specifically in the choice of the learning centre sites.

3.15 Accordingly, in this instance, we have concluded that the sequential approach for the selection of sites for each of the four learning centres should first favour re-use of suitable previously-developed sites (brownfield land) within the urban area. The location of the brownfield sites should be favoured in the following sequence:-

1) Within settlement
2) Peripheral
3) Out of settlement

3.16 This should be followed by greenfield sites, in the same order as regards their location.

3.17 A greenfield site located within settlement should in our view, be less favoured than a brownfield site out of settlement, disregarding at this stage other considerations such as accessibility to pupils' homes.

3.18 This general approach would conform with the basic principles of sustainable development patterns, and with the advice in RPG12.

(ii) Site Area

3.19 The available site area for each advanced learning centre is obviously a critical factor. A school site of less than the calculated required area might be acceptable if the playing fields were to be located elsewhere. However, this would be a sub-optimal split-site solution, which in the circumstances of the challenge facing Barnsley's Education Department should not, in our view, be acceptable.

3.20 Even if the only suitable comprehensive sites are in the Green Belt, and where sub-optimal solutions might be available by building the school within the urban fabric, with playing fields on a separate site perhaps within the Green Belt, it is considered that the task in Barnsley is of such magnitude that nothing less than an optimal solution on a single site should be pursued. This is particularly so as the benefits of a comprehensive community facility will only be genuinely achieved on a single site in any event.

3.21 It is considered in this case that there are particular reasons for requiring a single site for each advanced learning centre which provides at least the minimum calculated required area.

(iii) Accessibility

3.22 The selected sites should have good accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and those using public transport, so as to minimise dependency on use of the private car. Practical accessibility can be improved by the inclusion of a Green Travel Plan within any legal agreement attached to planning permission for each advanced learning centre.

3.23 The Green Travel Plan can include initiatives such as the 'walking bus' for pedestrians, secure bicycle storage facilities for cyclists, concession arrangements to encourage use of public transport, bus and coach services organised by parents' groups, and where use of the car is unavoidable (for example, for access from rural, less populated areas), car sharing schemes.

3.24 Consideration may have to be given to a Safer Routes to School assessment, as the principles involved could conceivably be relevant to site selection (e.g. dangerous road/railway to cross).

3.25 Convenient walking and cycling distances to schools will be considered and radii enclosing homes within defined areas will be shown for each recommended site.

3.26 BMBC PAN 30 Annex 3 (See Appendix E of this report) includes in Step 2 distances regarded as convenient for access to local services and to public transport services within the context of achieving sustainable development patterns. These suggest that residents of BMB would be prepared to walk 400m to a bus stop, and that they would be prepared to walk or cycle 800m to local services including schools.

3.27 These distances are somewhat less than we would usually expect. They are, for instance, less than those used in PPG13, and also for PTAL assessments in the GLA area. However, we are considering the behaviour of school pupils, some of whom are only 11 years of age, sometimes carrying games kit, artwork portfolios etc., and also for example, access by young families to health centres.

3.28 In the circumstances, we have adopted the distances suggested by the BMBC material as follows:-

i) Convenient walking distance – 400 metres;
ii) Convenient cycling distance – 800 metres.

(iv) UDP Designations

3.29 We have examined the policies in RPG12 (October 2001) and the policies and notations in the Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Unitary Development Plan (adopted December 2000).

3.30 RPG12 Policy SOC2 refers to educational facilities which should comply with locational criteria set out in Policies P1 and T1. P1 refers to strategic patterns of development – locational principles, whilst T1 refers to land use and transport integration.

3.31 The sequential approach included in this methodology reflects the policy requirements in P1 and T1.

3.32 Whilst we have employed the site characteristics (brownfield or greenfield) and site location (within settlement, peripheral or out of settlement) criteria in the BMBC brief at the outset of analysis of each site, we have also included a criterion which we have introduced based on the adopted UDP land use designations.

3.33 The ordered consideration of sites reflects the designations, adopted policies and explanatory text included in the UDP of December 2000. Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act provides that where, in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination should be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The UDP is therefore a key document in dealing with planning applications and other matters under the Planning Acts.

3.34 In this case, the selection based on UDP policies would have the following order of preference:-

a) Existing school sites (and possibly extensions thereto) of sufficient size;
b) Urban Land to Remain Undeveloped (as designated in UDP December 2000);*
c) Safeguarded Land (as designated in UDP December 2000); *
d) Urban green space;
e) Land used or allocated for housing development;
f) Land used or allocated for employment (industrial) development.
g) Land designated as Green Belt.

(*These designations include land reserved for consideration for development at the time of review of the currently adopted UDP.)

3.35 The recommended order is based on our understanding of the UDP. We have considered Policies GS10 (Safeguarded Land) and GS11 (Urban Land to Remain Undeveloped) and the explanatory text at UDP paragraphs 3.53-3.57. We have also considered Policy GS34 (Urban Green Space).

3.36 Safeguarded Land and Urban Land to Remain Undeveloped are not directly affected by other policy objectives.

3.37 By contrast, Urban Green Space, housing land and industrial land would present an additional policy conflict in considering use for advanced learning centre purposes. Similarly, land generally beyond the urban area, most of which appears to be within the Green Belt, would also involve an obvious major policy conflict.

3.38 Policies GS10 and GS11 highlight the fact that there may be a need to instigate changes in development plan designations for selected sites, and this could be undertaken by BMBC at the same time as the preparation and submission of planning applications as anticipated.

3.39 This sequential approach and ordered consideration would ensure that we examine all suitable sites which would avoid conflict with Green Belt policy before if necessary concluding that use of a Green Belt site may be unavoidable.

3.40 If the only genuinely suitable sites are within Green Belt and thus 'very special circumstances' can be shown to apply, then it will be necessary to consider the proposed development against national and local planning policies. It will be essential to evaluate whether the proposal would cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt and also the effect on the Green Belt objectives listed in PPG2. It should be noted that even if the decision-maker concludes that the proposed buildings and development would have a harmful effect on the openness of Green Belt, the need may be so compelling that it would override the Green Belt policy objections, and permission could properly be given for what would be, in Green Belt visual policy terms, harmful development.

c) Secondary Criteria

3.41 As listed in our submission, these are generally criteria which are flexible, in the sense that design can frequently be used to overcome any constraint.

3.42 The secondary criteria as then listed were as follows:-

i) Site access and local traffic impact;
ii) Visual and landscape impacts;
iii) Impacts on ecology and biodiversity;
iv) Deliverability – ground conditions, drainage, flooding, contamination and mitigation costs.

3.43 From our experience, difficulties with site access and local traffic impacts can often be overcome by inclusion within the proposals of highway measures, including for example, improved roadways, the installation of mini-roundabouts, and possibly in some cases, traffic signals. Local traffic impacts can be reduced by the inclusion of traffic calming measures on the approach roads to the site. Obviously the

acceptability of the measures and the nature of the measures themselves will depend upon the particular site.

3.44 Visual and landscape impacts refer mainly to the appearance of the building in open land, and in Green Belt locations. (For this reason, we consider that Green Belt impacts (the effect on openness) should now be considered under ii) in the table above). Such impact is also a flexible criterion, in the sense that ameliorating works can soften the appearance of new buildings in such locations, making them more acceptable. Measures that can be used include the creation of bunds and land grading, extensive additional planting and vegetation, sympathetic building design, and the use of colour to soften the appearance of the building in the landscape. The exact measures used and design of the building will be dictated by its precise location.

3.45 In considering the visual and landscape impacts, we have taken account of the Character Areas identified in the ECUS Landscape Character Assessment Report commissioned by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. We have also taken account of the landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity of those character areas specified in that report. The proposals for new Advanced Learning Centres have been considered against the background of the content of the ECUS Report.

3.46 Impacts on ecology and biodiversity are generally more difficult to ameliorate, but we have been involved in cases where the habitat of protected species has effectively been relocated to allow development to proceed on the chosen site. Clearly it would be desirable to avoid impacts on ecology and biodiversity generally.

3.47 Problems with ground conditions, drainage and flooding are generally not easily overcome for relatively small scale developments.

3.48 We do not propose to rule out sites solely because they are believed to have poor ground conditions at this stage. Land previously mined, for example, may still have sufficient load-bearing capacity after reclamation, and if foundation design is modified. Also, former industrial sites will usually be capable of redevelopment after characterisation of contaminants and their treatment or disposal off site. We shall therefore retain such sites which we identify, while recommending appropriate further investigations as necessary.

3.49 Contamination can, in a large number of cases, be overcome, although the costs of mitigation have to be carefully considered. The requirements of Adopted UDP Policy ES7 will need to be addressed. At this planning stage, we can carry out an

Environmental Desk Study of any sites within the recommended shortlist/top 3 rankings. This will include a review of historic mapping, and guidance on the need for physical surveys if a site is progressed. Mining records can also be obtained from UK Coal where relevant although some information has been passed to us by the Council.

3.50 Sites known to be affected by high voltage electricity supply lines, or believed to be in close proximity to communications masts will be identified as such in our report so that similar consideration can be given to the local effects of these features (we shall seek information on these matters from Officers of the Council in the first instance). Current advice from the National Radiological Protection Board does not set any definitive guidelines in relation to proximity to electromagnetic field generators however, and so further technical assessment outside our competence may be required in relation to specific issues if such sites continue to be under consideration.

3.51 In the light of our discussions with Officers of BMBC, we have also introduced into these secondary criteria the following additional issues:-

1) Topography (in this case the consideration of the levels of the site and its suitability for school development and playing fields).
2) Adjoining land uses (for example B2 industrial uses).
3) Agricultural land classification where relevant.

3.52 Some identified sites are likely to be in farming use. Policies discourage the use of high grade agricultural land for development purposes. Sites which are Grade 1, 2 or 3A would be basically unsuitable.

3.53 The text below Adopted UDP Policy GS12 in the development plan at paragraph 3.58 confirms that the area of Barnsley Borough does not contain a great deal of high quality agricultural land. It advises:-

"In general, agricultural land in Barnsley falls within Category 3 and below..."

3.54 Discussion with Officers suggests that any pockets of higher grade land are located in the east of the Borough, remote from any of the Learning Zone search areas. This criteria will only be considered in any detail where relevant.

d) Additional Criteria

3.55 We recommended in our tender submission that the remaining criteria are considered where possible when basically suitable sites have been identified:-

i) Ownership – public/private;
ii) Likely availability;
iii) Planning policy considerations (now described in this report as relevant site planning history).

3.56 The 'planning policy considerations' criterion for identified sites should now be re-titled 'relevant site planning history' to avoid confusion, and will involve an overview of any past relevant planning decisions for that site.

3.57 Application of the primary criteria will lead to the identification of sites which can be preferred for the development of learning centres.

3.58 Application of the secondary and additional criteria will address the obvious constraints and the practicality of such development.

e) The Implications of a preferred site in the Green Belt – Guidance from Previous Decision

3.59 The Borough Council asked us to include within the criteria consideration of Green Belt impacts. This is in part covered under the issue of visual and landscape impact.

3.60 If a site is finally selected for a learning centre which is in Green Belt, then it will normally be necessary to justify the proposal by specifically considering the following issues:-

i) Need;
ii) Suitability of the chosen site/location;
iii) Lack of suitable alternative sites

leading to a conclusion that 'very special circumstances' exist to justify use of Green Belt land. Following this, it is necessary to consider

iv) Effect of the proposal on openness/visual impact.

3.61 If a Green Belt site is chosen, it will be necessary for the Education Department and the Planning Department to prepare statements to address the four key issues described above.

3.62 Appendix F includes a decision letter dated 14.7.99 on an application determined by the Scottish Executive Development Department on a proposal for a new school within the Greater Glasgow Green Belt at Newton Mearns. Whilst the case is in Scotland, and relates to a large primary school, the planning issues are very similar to those that can be anticipated in relation to proposals in Barnsley, and the decision therefore gives some useful guidance.

3.63 It should be noted that the matter was approached very methodically by the Local Authority, and attention is particularly drawn to the evidence provided by the Education Department on strategy and alternatives. It will be observed that consent was granted.

3.64 Whilst the decision at Newton Mearns is encouraging, it will be prudent in cases affecting Green Belt land to conclude at an early date that:-

i) There is no realistic or practical alternative means of providing the required learning centres, e.g. by use of existing secondary school sites; and

ii) There are no genuinely suitable alternative sites which are more acceptable in planning terms, although perhaps potentially less efficient.

3.65 We would point out that where it is proposed to proceed by way of planning application, and the site is notated as Green Belt, the proposal would be a departure from the development plan which would have to be referred to Central Government. It is possible that this would result in a Public Inquiry held by an Inspector appointed by the ODPM.

3.66 The Newton Mearns Decision Letter is a short document which succinctly deals with all the issues which require to be addressed for the development of educational buildings within the Green Belt. It is a useful guide to the approach that is required.

f) Initial Site Identification

3.67 Prospective sites for the four learning centres will be identified as follows:-

1) By examination of land use designations of sites on the adopted BMBC UDP Community Plan sheets for the relevant area.
2) Site visits and physical examination.

3.68 Such identified sites will be shown on Ordnance Survey plan extracts.

g) Ranking Analysis

Initial Elimination

3.69 Sites which have been identified but which clearly fail to meet either educational or environmental criteria should be eliminated at an early stage. Typically, this might include an existing school site surrounded by existing development with remote playing fields, such as is the case at Darfield (Foulstone School). In such instances, there would be no realistic opportunity to extend the existing school site to the required size.

3.70 Similarly, where suitably located industrial sites have been considered, if it were found that they included no obviously vacant buildings or sites of sufficient size, or where the remaining environment was unsatisfactory for a learning centre, they could be eliminated at an early stage.

Ranking Process – Primary Criteria

i) Step 1 – Site Characteristics and Location

3.71 The next stage will be to categorise each site within the BMBC site characteristics and site location criteria. This will show whether the site is brownfield or greenfield (or a combination of both), and whether it is located within the settlement, on the periphery or outside the settlement. The categorisation will be based on the Step 1 – Site Prioritisation table taken from BMBC PAN 30 Annex 3 (included in Appendix E of this report), using the same scores. The version we propose to use is set out on the following page. Scores will be based on comment on each site included in the text of the report.

STEP 1 – SITE PRIORITISATION											
	Selected Sites										Score
1. Reuse of Land	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
a) The site is brownfield (it is occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry) or has been cleared but any evidence of structures or activities has not yet blended into the landscape).											5
b) The site is a mix of brownfield and greenfield, such that school buildings are likely to be contained within brownfield area.											3
c) The site is greenfield, or a brownfield/greenfield mix where school buildings would be likely to be on greenfield area.											1
2. Location within Settlement											
a) The site is entirely within the built up area.											5
b) The site is on the edge of the settlement, school buildings on the site would not project into the countryside.											3
c) The site is on the edge of the settlement, school buildings would project into the countryside.											1
d) The site is wholly outside or is unrelated to any settlement.											-10
SITE PRIORITISATION TOTAL											

ii) Step 2 – Site Appraisal

3.72 The criteria in step 2 are as follows:-

1) Site size
2) Accessibility by modes apart from private car.
3) UDP land use designation.

3.73 It has been necessary to devise our own table based on these criteria.

3.74 In this particular case, the use of a sequential approach which is in part based on a criterion reflecting UDP land use designations means that there are seven possible responses to that criterion. In policy terms, an existing school site (and possibly an extension thereto) would rank as score 7 (highest) whereas a Green Belt site would have a score of 1 (lowest).

3.75 We have used judgement as to the probable location of learning centre buildings when considering UDP designations. If, for example, buildings can be contained within that part of the site designated for built development, then we have not marked the site down because the remainder is Green Belt.

3.76 The other criteria in the step 2 table should have a similar score range. For example, a site within a residential area, where a high proportion of pupils could walk or cycle to the site, and with a large number of well-linked bus routes, could have a score of 7, whereas a site in open country with no public transport services within easy walking distance would have a score of 1. It is unlikely that the number of possible scores within the range for other criteria will in practice be as extensive as for the land use designation criterion.

3.77 The Step 2 – Site Appraisal form is set out on the following page.

STEP 2 – SITE APPRAISAL	Selected Sites										Score
1. Site Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
a) The site is large enough to accommodate the comprehensive advanced learning centre and additional non-educational buildings.											7
b) The site is large enough to accommodate the advanced learning centre, but likely to be insufficient to accommodate non-educational uses.											4
c) The site is large enough to accommodate the advanced learning centre, on the basis that playing fields would be located elsewhere, or reduced in extent.											1
2. Public Transport Accessibility											
a) The site is served by a wide variety of public transport routes serving pupil areas, and has a relatively high percentage of pupils' homes accessible on foot or by bicycle.											7
b) The site is served by a moderate variety of public transport routes serving pupil areas, and has a relatively high percentage of pupils' homes accessible on foot or by bicycle.											5
c) The site is served by a wide variety of public transport routes serving pupil areas, and has a moderate percentage of pupils' homes accessible on foot or by bicycle.											3
d) The site is served by a moderate variety of public transport routes serving pupil areas and has a moderate percentage of pupils' homes accessible on foot or by bicycle.											1
3. Adopted UDP Land Use Designation											
a) Community use – existing school sites (and possibly extensions thereto) of sufficient size.											7
b) Urban land to remain undeveloped (as designated in UDP December 2000).											6

STEP 2 – SITE APPRAISAL (continued)	Selected Sites										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
c) Safeguarded land (as designated in UDP December 2000).											5
d) Urban greenspace.											4
e) Land used or allocated for housing development.											3
f) Land used or allocated for employment (industrial) development.											2
g) Land designated as Green Belt.											1
SITE APPRAISAL TOTAL											

3.78 It is desirable for there to be good public transport services to the site, and also that a large number of pupils could potentially access the site on foot or by bicycle. Diagrams are provided with each site showing the approximate cycling and walking distance from potential access points, and a judgement is then made as to approximately what proportion of pupils might be able to access the site in this way.

3.79 It is more desirable for pupils to access the site on foot or by bicycle, as these are the most sustainable transport forms, hence the higher points awarded for sites with good foot/cycle access but a moderate public transport access.

3.80 The scores used in the completed Step 2 tables will be based on comment on each site in the text of each report.

3.81 The total scores from steps 1 and 2, based on the listed criteria, will then be compared for each site. They will be used to assist an informed judgement on the overall suitability of each site. The sites can then be considered in order of suitability.

Ranking Process – Secondary Criteria

Step 3 – Site Constraints

3.82 Step 3 will involve consideration of the secondary criteria. These will be discussed for each site in the text of each report. The table for Step 3 is set out on the following page.

3.83 A judgement based on available information will be made of the qualities of the identified site against the specified criteria.

3.84 The table is in a more simplified form than that used in Steps 1 and 2. The criteria will be scored as follows:-

Score 5 – No constraint known
Score 3 – Identifiable constraint, but likely to be overcome
Score 1 – Major constraint, presenting more difficulty.

3.85 The scores can then be summed to give a total. This will allow identifiable site specific development constraints to be balanced against the merits of the sites based on the site prioritisation and site appraisal tests (Steps 1 and 2).

STEP 3 – SITE CONSTRAINTS	Selected Sites										Score
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
a) Site access/local traffic impacts.											5, 3 or 1
b) Visual and landscape impacts (including impact on Green Belt openness where relevant).											5, 3 or 1
c) Topography											5, 3 or 1
d) Impacts on ecology and biodiversity.											5, 3 or 1
e) Ground conditions, drainage and flooding.											5, 3 or 1
f) Contamination and mitigations costs.											5, 3 or 1
g) Adjoining land uses.											5, 3 or 1
h) Agricultural land classification where relevant.											5, 3 or 1
TOTAL (HIGHEST INDICATES LEAST CONSTRAINTS)											

Ranking Process – Additional Criteria

Step 4 – Development Practicalities

3.86 We have added a further stage (Step 4) which addresses the relative ease with which development might be achieved. In this step, the issues of land ownership, site availability and site planning history will be considered in the text. If the identified site is in private ownership, then it may be necessary to use compulsory acquisition to secure the land, with consequent delays and uncertainties. If it is known to be available for development at present and if it has a helpful planning history, then that will be beneficial. The table for Step 4 is set out on the following page, with the applicable scores. This will allow potentially advantageous features of the site to also be balanced against the merits of the sites revealed by steps 1 and 2.

STEP 4 – DEVELOPMENT PRACTICALITIES											
	Selected Sites										Score
1. Ownership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
a) Site owned by BMBC											5
b) Site or part site in other public ownership.											3
c) Site or part site in private ownership.											1
2. Likely Availability											
a) Site undeveloped.											5
b) Site developed but apparently vacant.											3
c) Site developed and in active use.											1
3. Relevant Site Planning History											
a) Consent granted for similar form of development.											5
b) No relevant decision.											3
c) Refusal given for similar form of development.											1
TOTAL (HIGHEST SCORE INDICATES MOST PRACTICAL SITE)											

3.87 In practice, steps 1 and 2 will be used to provisionally select the preferred sites, whilst Steps 3 and 4 will be used to ensure, as far as possible, that the preferred sites do not present any insurmountable obstacles, by highlighting the relative degrees of uncertainty in relation to their proposed development for advanced learning centre purposes. This process may result in some changes to the order of the preferred sites from steps 1 and 2.

3.88 At this stage we would expect to finally conclude which are the preferred sites (usually no more than 3) for each advanced learning centre; the preferred sites should be investigated fully with a view to site acquisition (where required), and the submission of planning applications.

4.0 Conclusions

4.1 Having examined the requirements of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council for three and possibly four advanced learning centres, we have concluded that the methodology should have the following features and stages:-

i) Specification and approval of the client's site and development requirements for each of the advanced learning centres, as far as is possible at this stage;

ii) An overview of relevant planning decisions, particularly those of the Inspectorate, in Barnsley MBC;

iii) An inspection of the UDP Community Plans coupled with on site investigations to first identify prospective sites.

iv) The adoption of a sequential approach to the selection of sites based on:-

a) National and regional policy and guidance which require the consideration of re-use of previously-developed land in urban areas in the first instance;

b) Adopted UDP designations and policies.

v) The application of a criteria-based analysis to provide further guidance in the selection of the most suitable sites;

vi) Preparation of a shortlist of suitable sites which would be produced for each of the learning centre zones, with a commentary on the qualities, features and suitability of the preferred sites.

vii) Subsequent in-depth examination of constraints and development practicalities of the site eventually selected by BMBC in each case.

4.2 If Green Belt site/sites are found to be the only suitable locations, then considerations of need, selected site qualities and the lack of suitable alternative sites (possibly sub-optimal) should be discussed at an early date with both the Education Department and the Planning Department of BMBC, whilst the effect on openness should be explored further by the consultants.