A New School
For Darfield Colliery

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY TO ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT



December 2007

Section		Page No.
1	Introduction	3
2	Description of the Proposed Works	4
3	Project Alternatives	5
4	Environmental Effects Table	8

Figures

1	Site Location Map	3
2	Application Proposals	4

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 A planning application has been submitted to Barnsley MBC for the development of a new school at Darfield Colliery.

1.2 This document is a summary of the Environmental Statement which accompanies the application.

1.3 The map opposite shows where the new school will be located.

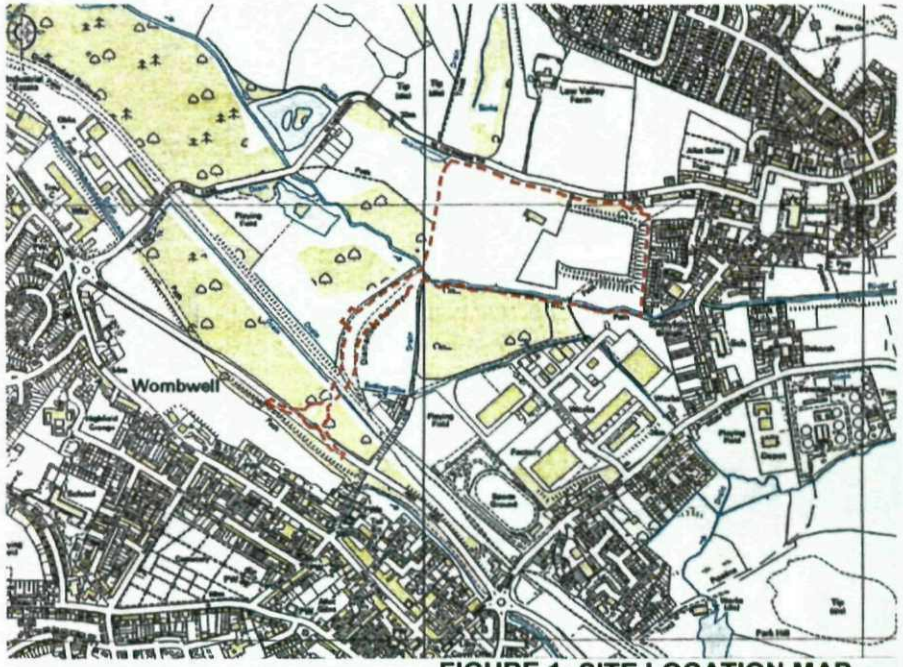


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION MAP

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED WORKS

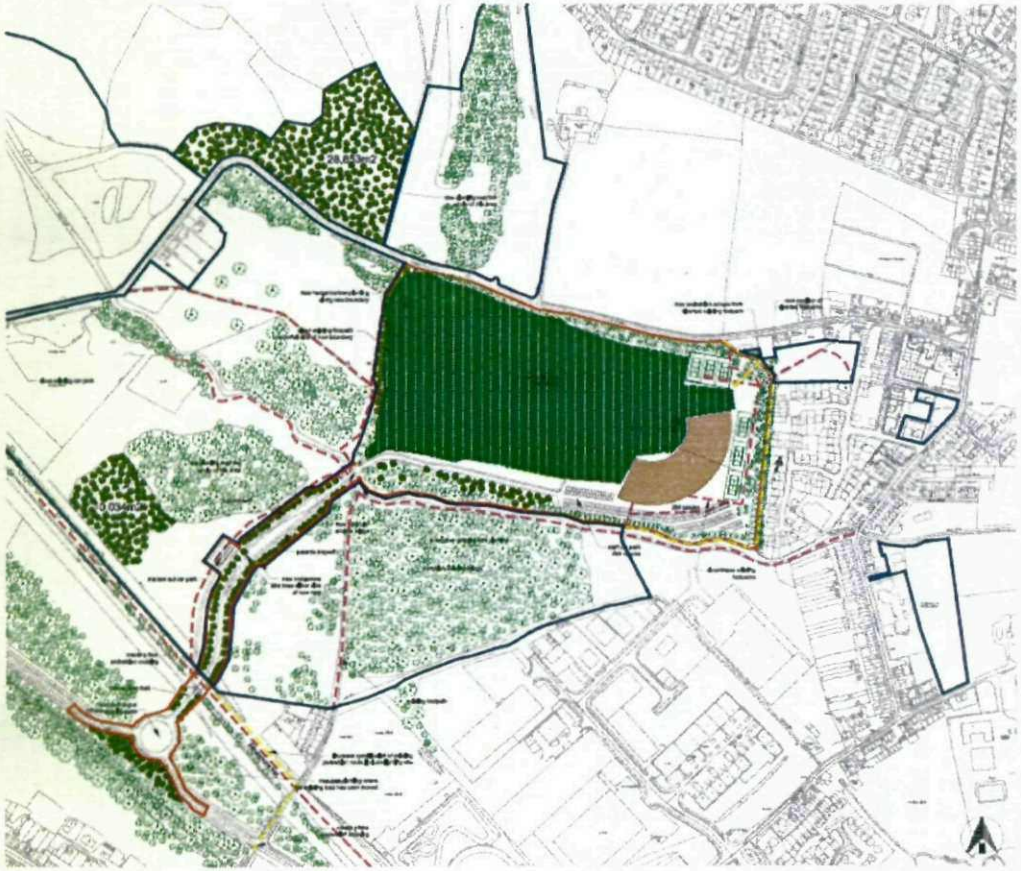


FIGURE 2: APPLICATION PROPOSALS

2.1 The proposed scheme comprises the development of a new state secondary school of 13.2 hectares, including playing fields 9.6 hectares, 296 car parking spaces and ancillary facilities on land off the A633 Wombwell Bypass, Barnsley, for Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, acting as local education authority.

2.2 The proposed school will form a modern replacement for two existing secondary schools at Foulstone and Wombwell High Schools, Barnsley. The proposals form part of the central government initiative under the title 'Building Schools for the Future' announced in February 2004.

2.3 The proposed school will be constituted as an Advanced Learning Centre. These are secondary schools which have extended opening hours,

to enable the provision of additional learning and other facilities for the community.

2.4 The new school will have a capacity of up to 1800 students in the age range 11-16 years. Subject to planning, the new school will open in September 2009, after a start on construction in April 2008.

2.5 A new vehicular access is proposed off the Wombwell bypass in the form of a priority junction. No footways are proposed at this junction given that no pedestrian movements are expected within the immediate vicinity of this junction. The access road leading into the site is proposed to incorporate a 'bus friendly' traffic calming measures. In addition a 3.6 metre wide footway/cycleway is proposed to run alongside the access road to the school grounds.

2.6 A network of footpaths will provide a high level of pedestrian accessibility. The traffic and transport section of this ES provides further details of the access arrangements proposed.

2.7 Since the application is being submitted in outline only at this stage, full details are not yet available. The plan reproduced on the following page is an indication of the proposed site layout.

3 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

3.1 The criteria for this learning centre were as follows:

Total Pupils	1800
Total Site Area	12 hectares + 10% **= 13.2 hectares**
Approximate area of playing fields, playgrounds	9.6 hectares
Built development	3.6 hectares

Site Search

3.2 The following four step process was used to inform the site selection:

Step 1 – Site Prioritisation

i) Site characteristics (brownfield/greenfield or mix)

ii) Site location (within, on edge, or out of settlement)

Step 2 – Site Appraisal

i) Size of site available
ii) Accessibility by all modes apart from private car
iii) Adopted UDP land use designation

Step 3 – Site Constraints

i) Site access and local traffic impact
ii) Topography
iii) Visual and landscape impacts (including impact on openness of Green Belt)
iv) Impacts on ecology and biodiversity
v) Ground conditions, drainage and flooding
vi) Contamination and mitigation costs
vii) Adjoining land uses
viii) Agricultural land classification where relevant

Step 4 – Development Practicalities

i) Ownership (public/private)
ii) Likely availability
iii) Relevant site planning history

Site Rankings

3.3 A total of 8 sites were considered in and around Wombwell and Darfield. These were:-

Site 1 – Land West of Snape Hill, South of A635
Site 2- Land Between Barnsley Road and Bly Road, Darfield
Site 3- Former Darfield Main Colliery, Pitt Street, Darfield
Site 4 – Land west of Station Road Including Sport Stadium, Low Valley
Site 5 – Land adjacent to Trans Pennine Trail and A633, Wombwell
Site 6 – Land south west of Broomhill, North of A6195
Site 7 – Wombwell High School, Wombwell
Site 8 – Wombwell Foundry, Hough Lane, Wombwell

3.4 Step 1 scored each site's locational characteristics. This gave the site's relative preference, having considered whether it was previously developed (brownfield) land and was it within the urban area. At this initial stage, three sites were identified as being the most suitable.

3.5 First Choice – Site 7 – Wombwell High School, Wombwell (G)

3.6 Second Choice – Site 5 – Land adjacent to Trans-Pennine Trail and A633, Wombwell (F)

3.7 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).

Conclusions of the Site Selection Process

3.8 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.

3.9 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.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS TABLE

TOPIC	IMPACTS DURING CONSTRUCTION	MITIGATION	IMPACTS AFTER OPENING OF THE DEVELOPMENT	MITIGATION
Traffic and Transport	There will be come disruption to the local highway network during construction work.	Construction working times will be limited to 8am to 1pm on Saturdays with no Sunday or Bank Holiday working. Restricted hours for piling activities are recommended. It is recommended that all construction traffic use the Wombwell by-pass to access the site. A temporary access may be required or alternatively the access should be built first to allow access to the site.	A proportion of vehicle trips associated with the new school will already be occurring on the local highway network resulting from the proximity of the old and new school sites. There will be a concentration of pedestrian and cycle traffic in the area at morning and evening school times, as well as some traffic generated by after school and evening activities.	Measures have been incorporated into the design which will improve facilities or pedestrians and cyclists in the local area, including a bus drop off, pick up and turn around facility. The speed limit on Wombwell Road will be reduced from 50mph to 30mph under procedures separate from the planning process. A Travel Plan is being prepared which will encourage non-car based school journeys by staff, visitors and pupils.
Landscape and Visual Impact	Construction work will be widely visible from the local area. Earthworks to regrade the site for building construction and playing fields will be prominent	Plant and parking areas will be stationed in less prominent parts of the site where possible. Security lighting will be selected	The new school buildings will rise to a maximum height of 18 metres above existing ground level, and will be visible from much of the local area.	The proposed scheme includes the provision of new planting to boundaries and adjoining the new school buildings interrupt views of the bulk of the buildings

	after the removal of surface vegetation. The stationing of plant, materials and site vehicles will introduce a new visual element to the area. Security lighting will be required during the winter working.	and positioned to avoid the escape of light beyond the site.	Activity around the school entrance and on adjoining roads will change perceptions of the area. The buildings and outside areas (but not the playing fields) will be lit for much of the day during the winter months, causing a significant change to the appearance of this location.	from nearby dwellings.
Socio-Economic Effects	During the 16 month construction period starting in April 2009 there will be new jobs generated both on and off site amounting to the equivalent of about 220 jobs for a year. (Many of these will be using existing construction staff.) The use of local services and facilities will also generate indirect economic benefits for local businesses.	The effects on social and economic conditions during construction will be short-lived and largely positive, so no mitigation is required.	Once open, the school will provide an important local focus for community activity, replacing the two existing sites. Employment at the school will consist of relocated existing jobs, and no significant change in total employment is predicted.	The effects on social and economic conditions on opening of the school will be largely positive, so no mitigation is required.

The Cultural Heritage	Excavation works for building foundations could destroy any buried remains or artefacts not salvaged. Groundworks to create playing fields and outside areas will be more limited in depth, but could still disturb any buried remains.	A programme of archaeological survey work will be carried out prior to starting work on site. Research to be carried out before construction will improve knowledge of the area's history. If any remains of heritage interest are discovered, consideration will be given to the need for excavation, recording or salvage.	Once the development is complete, no further impacts on the cultural heritage are predicted.	In the absence of identified impacts, no further mitigation is required.
Nature Conservation	Construction work will cause some loss of immature/semi-mature plantations woodland, seeded grasslands, disturbance to the banks of the river, and loss of nesting habitat. There will be increased disturbance to wildlife on neighbouring land as a result of increased human presence in the area.	Habitat corridors and edges dominated by trees such as along the boundaries of the central field and adjacent to the River Dove should be retained. A pre-works survey should be undertaken on the banks of the River Dove a short period before construction begins in order to check that no ecologically important species have colonised the banks since the	The presence of urban development will increase disturbance to the River Dove, and littering of the area. However, it will increase the potential for roosting bats, nesting birds, quality of terrestrial habitat for amphibians, and potential for grass snake within the site as well as the adjoining areas.	The school ground should be fenced from the River Dove where possible. Littering should be managed. Bird boxes and bat boxes should be erected. Ecological monitoring should be undertaken to assess the success of the mitigation measures.

		original surveys. Should any species be found then further mitigation work would be undertaken. A pre-demolition bat survey should also be undertaken to see if bats have begun roosting in the bridge over the River Dove. If bats are found then suitable mitigation would be designed and agreed under appropriate licences.		
Noise and Vibration	Construction on the site will generate noise from plant, vehicles and staff during the 16 month construction period. Traffic visiting the site could increase or prolong traffic noise from local roads. Ground-borne vibration could occur as a result of foundation or piling operations on site, but is unlikely to be noticeable in	Construction operations will be confined to agreed working hours during weekdays and Saturday mornings only (except in the event of short term urgent operations being required). Plant and machinery will be compliant with good practice guidelines for noise attenuation and all	Traffic noise will be generated by school traffic once the site is operational. There will be noise generated by pupils, staff and visitors, although this will mainly be confined to school start, finish and break times.	Operation of the school will generate no noise from activities capable of mitigation. Pupils and visitors will generate noise by talking and moving traffic, but this will be consistent with any community facility and no mitigation is appropriate.

	nearby residential properties.	equipment will be maintained in a fully operational condition.		
Air Quality	There is a risk of dust being generated by construction activities during dry periods, resulting in deposits on nearby properties and vehicles. No material change in air quality is predicted as a result of construction works.	Good working practices will be required of the chosen contractors, including measures to dampen down access roads and groundworks during dry weather.	The increase in local traffic will have a negligible impact on local pollutant concentrations, even at the worst-case location. The development is predicted to cause an insignificant increase in local nitrogen dioxide and small particle (PM_{10}) concentrations. This small decline in local air quality will be offset by a decline in these levels at the existing school sites and no statutory exceedences are predicted to occur.	No material air quality impacts are expected to occur at any local receptors, and therefore no mitigation is needed.
Ground Conditions	Ground excavations will disturb the existing geology and soils on the site and could disturb any	A geotechnical investigation will be carried out to confirm ground conditions before development	Once the school is completed and occupied, no further impacts will arise on Ground Conditions.	In the absence of identified impacts, no further mitigation is required.

	perched groundwater or undiscovered mine-working residues.	starts. If any contamination is discovered, a working method statement will be prepared and agreed with the Environment Agency to incorporate procedures for environmental health and safety during construction works.		
Surface Water Drainage	Construction operations could cause pollution of surface waters. Storm conditions could result in site waters entering adjoining land.	Good practice will be required of the contractors in relation to storage of potentially polluting materials and routing of dewatering pumps, etc. Provision will be made to detain any polluted waters discovered on site until safe disposal or treatment can be arranged.	On completion of the development, surface water drainage will be implemented to modern standards and no unforeseen problems are expected to occur.	In the absence of identified impacts, no further mitigation is required.

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