

COMMITTEE: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

DATE: 23RD APRIL 2008

**SUBJECT: NEW BEDFORD ROAD, BARNFIELD COLLEGE -
DEVELOPMENT OF LAND FOR EDUCATIONAL
PURPOSES – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING COLLEGE
AND ERECTION OF NEW FURTHER EDUCATION
COLLEGE WITH ASSOCIATED SPORTS FACILITIES,
PARKING AND ACCESS.
(APPLICANT: BARNFIELD COLLEGE)
(APPLICATION NO: 08/00172/OUT).**

REPORT BY: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MANAGER

CONTACT OFFICER: DAVID GAUNTLETT 546317

IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	COMMUNITY
	SAFETY
EQUALITIES	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL	CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING	OTHER

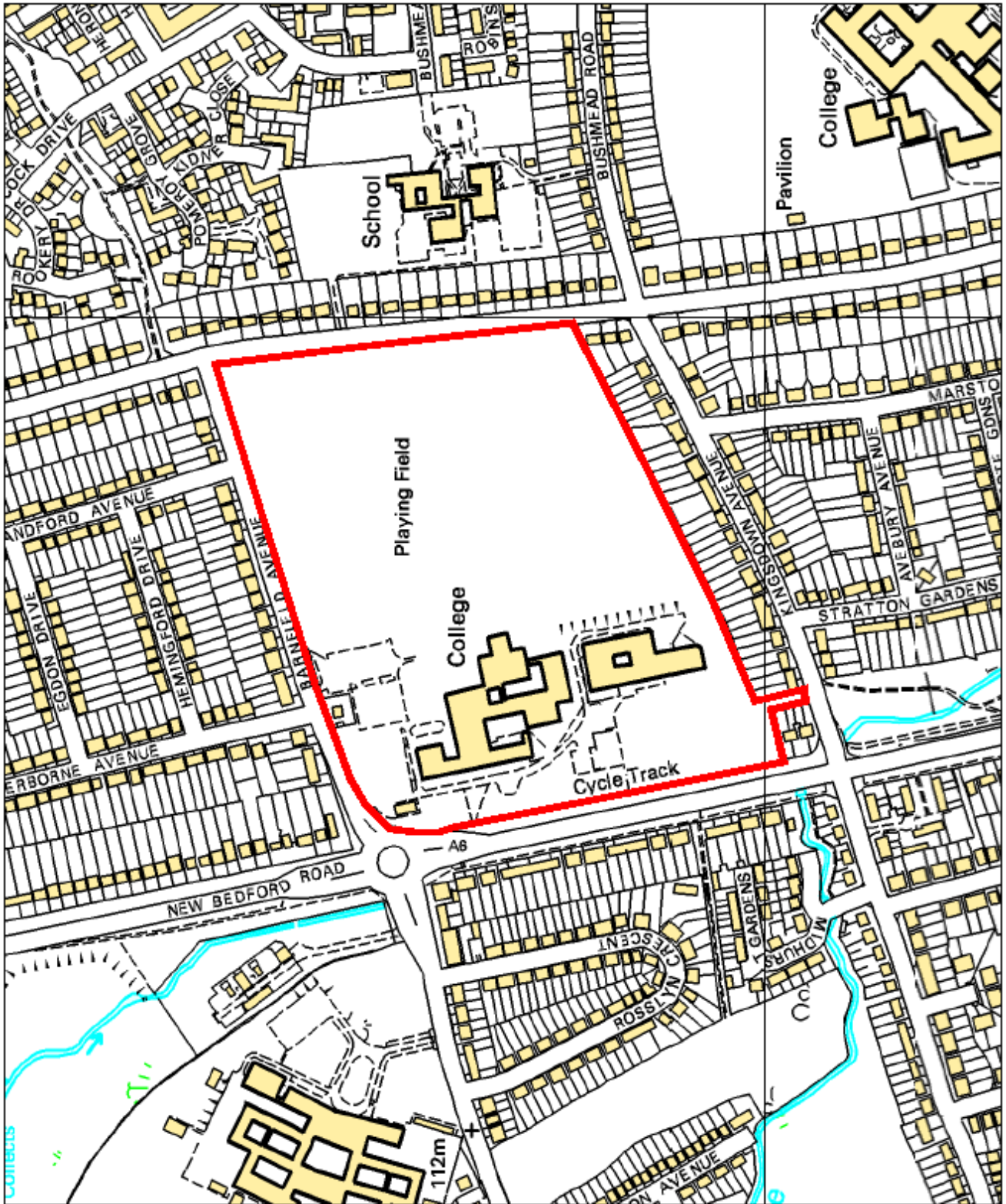
WARDS AFFECTED: BARNFIELD

PURPOSE

1. To advise Members of a current application for planning permission and to seek their decision.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That, subject to a further report to be made at the Meeting in respect of the traffic implications of the development, planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions: -



- (01) In the case of any matter hereinafter reserved for the subsequent approval of the Local Planning Authority, application for this approval shall be made not later than the expiration of two years beginning with the date of this permission and the development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than whichever is the later of the following dates:
- (a) The expiration of three years from the date of this permission
 - or
 - (b) The expiration of one year from final approval of the matters hereinafter reserved for the subsequent approval of the Local Planning Authority or in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.

Reason: :To limit the duration of the permission in accordance with the provisions of Sections 91-96 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.

- (02) Full details and particulars of all buildings and other works hereby permitted in respect of the appearance and landscaping of the site/development shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before any development is commenced.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to exercise proper control over the details of development in the case of an outline planning permission granted under Article 3(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order, 1995.

- (03) The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a planning obligation pursuant to Section 106 of Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in relation to the land has been completed and lodged with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations and the Local Planning Authority has notified the persons submitting the same that it is to the Local Planning Authority's approval. The said planning obligation will require a contribution to be made in accordance with the Supplementary Planning Document which shall be paid to the Local Planning Authority for the purpose of providing highway improvements around the site.

Reason: To accord with the objectives of Policy IMP1 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (04) All planting included in the scheme submitted in compliance with Condition No. 2 of this permission and approved by the Local Planning Authority shall be carried out by a date not later than the end of the full planting season immediately following the completion of that development. If within a period of five years from the initial date of planting of any tree or shrub, any such plant is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, or becomes in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged, diseased or defective, another tree or

shrub of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To enhance the appearance of the proposed development. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and ENV10 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (05) Before any building or engineering works are commenced on site the existing trees, shrubs and/or hedges to be retained shall be safeguarded against damage or injury by the erection of fencing or other suitable protection at a distance of not less than 1 metre from the tree trunk(s) or shrubs or hedging, and no plant, materials or other objects shall be stored or placed against any of the trees, shrubs or hedges.

Reason: To safeguard the existing trees, shrubs and/or hedges on the site. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and ENV10) of the Luton Local Plan.

- (06) No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a scheme for the improvement and/or extension of the existing sewerage system has been agreed with the sewerage undertaker to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. No buildings (or uses) hereby permitted shall be occupied (or commenced) until such improvements and/or extensions have been commissioned to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and ENV14 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (07) Prior to being discharged into any watercourse, surface water sewer or soakaway system, all surface water drainage from parking areas and hardstandings shall be passed through an oil interceptor designed and constructed to have a capacity and details compatible with the site being drained. Roof water shall not pass through the interceptor.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and ENV14 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (08) Surface water drainage works shall be carried out in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding and to prevent pollution of the water environment. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies)LP1 and ENV14 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (09) Surface water source control measures shall be carried out in accordance with details which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding and to prevent pollution of the water environment. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies)LP1 and ENV14 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (10) Any facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals shall be sited on impervious bases and surrounded by impervious bund walls. The volume of the bunded compound should be at least equivalent to the capacity of the tank plus 10%. If there is multiple tankage, the compound should be at least equivalent to the capacity of the largest tank, or the combined capacity of interconnected tanks, plus 10%. All filling points, vents, gauges and sight glasses must be located within the bund. The drainage system of the bund shall be sealed with no discharge to any watercourse, land or underground strata. Associated pipe work should be located above ground and protected from accidental damage. All filling points and tank overflow pipe outlets should be detailed to discharge downwards into the bund.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and ENV14 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (11) Prior to commencement of the development, details of the nature of any material to be used as infill (e.g. source, type) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the fill is appropriate for use within this development.

- (12) No external lighting shall be installed to the parking/service area(s) or to the perimeter of the building(s) hereby approved, other than in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the installation of any external lighting on the site.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and to safeguard the amenities of the surrounding area. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1, ENV9 and ENV15 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (13) Notwithstanding the submitted plans, triangular pedestrian safety visibility splay(s) of 1.8 metres x 1.8 metres shall be provided on each side of the vehicle access points to the site. The splay(s) shall be positioned within the site at right angles to the highway (measured at the highway/site boundary). The visibility splay(s) so described shall be maintained free of any obstruction to visibility exceeding a height of 600mm above the existing ground level.

Reason: In the interests of highway and pedestrian safety. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and T3 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (14) Full details of a scheme for the secure parking of bicycles on the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before any development is commenced, and the scheme thereby approved shall be fully implemented before use of the development commences.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision is made for the accommodation of bicycles on the site, and to accord with Policies LP1 and T8 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (15) Full details of the proposed boundary treatment of the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced and the approved treatment shall be installed before the building(s) hereby permitted is/are occupied.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and to safeguard the amenities of the surrounding area. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and ENV9 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (16) Full details of the materials to be used in the construction of the walls and roof of the college buildings shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and to safeguard the amenities of the surrounding area. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and ENV9 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (17) Details shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority of a scheme for renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements of the development, unless it can be demonstrated that there are overwhelming practical reasons why this is not appropriate. The scheme thereby approved shall be used, retained and maintained thereafter for so long as the development remains in existence.

Reason: In the interests of sustainability. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) U3 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (18) Before the development hereby permitted is commenced a scheme detailing security measures across the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in advance of the occupation of the building(s) and shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and in the interests of security and the prevention of crime. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) ENV9 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (19) A CCTV surveillance system shall be provided in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the development hereby permitted is commenced and the approved system shall be installed and fully operational prior to the occupation of the buildings.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and in the interests of security and the prevention of crime. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and ENV9 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (20) The all-weather pitch facility and floodlights hereby approved shall not be operated outside the following hours: Mondays to Thursdays, 7.30 a.m. to 10.00 p.m.; Fridays, 7.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m.; Saturdays, 9.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.; Sundays and Bank Holidays, 10.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Reason: To protect the amenities of neighbouring properties. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and LC5 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (21) Prior to commencement of the development a scheme setting out the type, design, lux levels and measures to control glare and overspill light from floodlighting and measures to ensure lights are switched off when not in use shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England. Thereafter the floodlighting shall be operated in accordance with the approved scheme and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Reason: To minimise light pollution in the interests of amenity and sustainability and to maximise opportunity for community use and/or secure the viability of the development.

- (22) Full details of the surfacing and drainage of the proposed all-weather pitch shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced.

Reason: To safeguard drainage interests. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies)) LP1 and ENV14 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (23) Before development hereby approved is commenced, a scheme providing for an integrated package of transportation measures to accord with the principles set out in current guidance to reduce car travel to the site (a School Travel Plan) shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval and in consultation with the Local Highway Authority, and the details thereby approved shall be

implemented prior to the use of the extensions to which this permission refers.

Reason: *In the interests of sustainability and encouraging reduced car travel. To accord with the objectives of Policies LP1, T1, T2 and T3 of the Luton Local Plan.*

- (24) A scheme for the monitoring of the Travel Plan referred to in condition 23 of this permission shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Local Highway Authority.

Reason: *In the interests of sustainability and encouraging reduced car travel. To accord with the objectives of Policies LP1, T1, T2 and T3 of the Luton Local Plan.*

- (25) No plant or equipment, including fume extraction ducting, shall be affixed to the exterior of the buildings without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: *To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and to safeguard the amenities of the surrounding area. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and ENV9 of the Luton Local Plan.*

- (26) No development shall take place within the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority beforehand.

Reason: *To ensure that any material of archaeological significance on the site is identified and recorded. To accord with Policy ENV6 of the Luton Local Plan.*

The Site and Surroundings

3. The application site is a large, almost square area of land measuring just over 14 hectares in size, located 1.8 miles north of Luton town centre. The site is Barnfield College's central campus and comprises various college buildings on the western side and a large open playing field on the eastern side. The site is adjoined by Barnfield Avenue to the north, Old Bedford Road to the east, residential gardens of properties in Kingswood Avenue to the south and New Bedford Road to the west.

4. The college buildings face out onto New Bedford Road, although they are set back from the boundary with an area of landscaping to the front, which consists of various tree species. The buildings themselves range from single storey to four storeys in height. The car park and principal access are located in the northwestern corner off of Barnfield Avenue. There is also a pedestrian access located just to the south of this car park.

5. There is a significant variation in levels across the site with a fall of around 12 metres from its eastern boundary to the southwest corner. The gentle east-to-west gradient is consistent throughout the site to a point halfway along where there is a 2 metre (approx) grassed bank running between the north and south boundaries. However this has no apparent impact on the good quality of the existing playing fields, which is utilised to good effect at weekends in particular.

Relevant Planning History

6. The original building on the site dates back to circa 1960's when the college opened, and whilst there have been various extensions and further additions to the site, there are no previous planning applications of specific relevance to this application.

The Proposal

7. The proposal seeks to redevelop the whole site. Following demolition, the redevelopment will include a new College building located further into the site, and alterations to the existing arrangements with regard to sports pitches and car parking.

Planning Policy

8. The site is within an area where there is no specific land use allocation. The relevant Policies and their assessment are dealt with in 'Main Planning Considerations'.

Consultation Responses

9. *Highway Development Manager:* Has provided a detailed response outlining that whilst the submitted Transport Assessment is generally satisfactory, it does have deficiencies. In particular, the estimated percentages given for existing car park occupancy are not supported with actual counts and therefore any underestimation will give rise to potential for the surrounding streets to be inundated with staff/student cars. Additionally, since trip generation is based on numbers of parking spaces rather than students, which in itself is acceptable, any underestimation could significantly increase the number of trips on the highway network. Car park counts to support the justification for parking provision and trip generation must therefore be provided.

With regard to the junction modelling included within the Transport Assessment, the PICADY model for the site access gives cause for concern. The flow figures for Barnfield Road east and west of the site access appear to have been transposed giving an optimistic result for junction performance. When correctly modelled, queuing occurs in Barnfield Avenue and the junction marginally exceeds the capacity trigger of 0.85 in the morning peak whereby improvement would be required. However, given the short time period in which that occurs, the Highway Authority will not require the junction to be upgraded provided that trip figures do not increase as a result of the review of car park provision.

In consideration of the above, the Highway Authority cannot presently recommend approval of the application. Would also advise that any grant of permission should include a Condition requiring the submission of the Final Travel Plan to the Local Planning Authority for approval not later than 1st July 2011.

10. *Police Architectural Liaison Officer:* The Design and Access Statement would appear to make minimal mention of security, particularly in respect of how access onto the site will be controlled. Nor does the application make any reference to Secured by Design standards. Request that any approval be conditional on both of these points being satisfactorily addressed (see *Conditions 18 and 19*).
11. *Environment Agency:* Has no objection in principle to the proposal, provided that certain conditions are imposed on any permission (see *Conditions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11*).
12. *Environmental Protection:* No response has been received. Any response received will be reported at the Meeting.
13. *Capital and Asset Management:* There is no enabling housing development listed. Accordingly, there are no comments with respect to Section 106 contributions.
14. *Thames Water:* Thames Water would advise that with regard to sewerage infrastructure there would be no objection to the above planning application.
15. *Three Valleys Water:* The site is located within an Environment Agency defined groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ) corresponding to Crescent Road pumping station. This is a public water supply, comprising a number of Chalk abstraction boreholes, operated by Three Valleys Water.
16. *Sport England:* Currently considering an amended plan, showing the layout of the sports pitch. Further comments will be reported at the Meeting.
17. *Strategic Planning (Local Plans):* The outline application appears to be in accord with all policies in the Luton Local Plan 2001 – 2011. It is clear that the applicants have gone to great lengths to identify potential issues and understand the most appropriate and sustainable methods of development. We commend the applicants in their approach, including the use of community consultation in the formulation of the application. The only aspect that does not appear to have been covered by the outline application is the incorporation of renewable power generation equipment to provide at least 10% of the predicted future energy requirements (Policy U3). This aspect should be properly investigated and reported on in the full application. Subject to the comments set out above, the view of the Local Planning Policy team is that this planning application should be recommended for approval (see *Condition 17*).
18. *Waste Management:* The Barnfield sites are actually very good at waste management and waste diversion, so I would expect them to take account of this continued requirement in their new plans.
19. *Regeneration:* No comments have been received. Any response received will be reported at the Meeting.
20. *Beds County Council Archaeology:* The proposed development will have a detrimental impact upon any archaeological deposits present. This does not however represent an over-riding constraint on the development provided that adequate provision is made for the investigation and recording of any remains that are affected. In order to secure this, please attach a condition as per para. 30 of PPG16 Archaeology and Planning to any permission granted in respect of this application (see *Condition 26*).

21. *Statutory Publicity:* The application has been notified to 272 local occupiers with Site and Press Notices being produced. Four letters of representation have been received in respect of the development. Objectors have raised concerns about excessive parking proposals, overlooking, and impact on privacy, increased traffic leading to increased noise, loss of playing fields, parking and cycling on pavements, and light pollution from floodlights.

Policy Implications

22. The Policies that are relevant to the proposal are LP1, ENV9, ENV10, ENV15, LC1, LC4, LC5, T1, T2, T3, T8, T13, U3, IMP1 and IMP2.

23. Policy LP1 sets out a sustainable development strategy.

24. Policy ENV9 is concerned with the design of new development and amongst other things expects proposals to respect the scale and proportion of existing buildings.

25. Policy ENV10 is concerned with landscaping proposals for all new developments and states that development will not be approved unless adequate provision is made for landscaping.

26. Policy ENV15 seeks to refuse planning permission if the proposed development is likely to generate or be subject to levels of pollution that threatens public health or safety, or jeopardises the quality of the environment.

27. Policy LC1 seeks to protect and preserve existing green spaces and states that development will not be permitted on playing fields unless certain criteria contained within the policy can be met. This is dealt with in more detail later in this report.

28. Policy LC4 states that new and extended community facilities will be granted planning permission provided that there is a demonstrable local need, it would not adversely affect viability and vitality of a shopping centre, and there would be no unacceptable effect on the amenity of adjoining dwellinghouses.

29. Policy LC5 is associated with the dual use of educational facilities, and states that permission will be granted for this unless the use would have an adverse impact on the educational use of the facility, and would have an excessive adverse impact on the character of the area or the amenity of nearby residential and other properties.

30. Policy T1 sets out the transport strategy for the town, stating that planning permission will be granted for development provided that it reduces the need to travel particularly by private car and enables the use of sustainable transport.

31. Policy T2 relates to the location of new development and developments with potential to have significant transport implications will not be permitted unless the site is adequately served by public transport.

32. Policy T3 is concerned with the traffic implications of development. Permission will only be granted if the proposal would not exacerbate road congestion; cause safety problems; or be likely to cause demonstrable harm to the quality of the environment.

33. Policy T8 relates to walking and cycling requiring new developments to take into account the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and to promote walking and cycling. It goes on to state that new developments will only be permitted if, amongst other things, existing routes are protected, safe, convenient and attractive access and through-routes are provided.

34. Policy T13 deals with parking and developments will only be permitted where the proposed parking provision is necessary and does not exceed the maximum standard set out in Appendix 4 to the Local Plan.

35. Policy U3 states that all proposals for new buildings totalling 1000 sq. metres floor space or more will be required to incorporate renewable power generation equipment to provide at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements of those buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that there are overwhelming practicable reasons why this is not appropriate (see *Condition 17*).

36. IMP1 states that, in granting planning permission, the Borough Council will, in appropriate circumstances, seek to enter into a legal agreement to secure the provision, or the financial cost, of facilities made necessary by the implementation of the development; and an appropriate level of provision, or contribution towards facilities for which there is either (i) a recognised need in the Borough; or (ii) a recognised deficit in the locality.

Principle of the development

37. Barnfield College is proposing a unification of its Rotheram Avenue, Enterprise Way and New Bedford Road campuses on the application site. This will result in overall student numbers (full and part time) increasing from 3,342 to 7,500 and staff numbers increasing from 280 to 656, providing the curriculum for 10 differing trades (*construction, hair and beauty, IT etc*) and requiring additional space for a nursery/crèche, cafeteria, student services, learning resources and administration offices on site. The College could extend the existing buildings on the site to cater for this, but have instead chosen a complete redevelopment. The principle of this is considered to be acceptable as the existing buildings are quite tired in appearance and due to the existing layout, a lot of the space around the site is underused. A complete redevelopment represents an opportunity to enhance the character of an important site alongside one of the town's principal gateways into and out of the centre and therefore should be encouraged.

Outline Matters for Consideration

Layout

38. The site layout is to be re-configured to provide areas of open amenity space including courtyards and meadowland, new college buildings and sports pitches. As a result of the need to keep the existing college open whilst development is going on, the proposed new building will be set behind the existing buildings, encroaching on part of the existing playing fields. The new building will be laid out in three linear blocks running north to south, which will be linked by a continuous glazed internal street. The central core of each block will have a cafeteria of some kind with external courtyards which have boulevards leading out onto a large open amenity space to the western side of the site facing the main New Bedford Road frontage. Within this open space it is intended to open up the culverted River Lea tributary and, when combined with tree and swale planting it will

provide a natural feature at the site's frontage intended to encourage the greater use of this space.

39. Car parks will be provided in the northwest and southwest corners sandwiching this open space but its large size is considered to ensure that the appearance of the car parks will not detract from the environment that it will create at the front of the College site. Both car parks will be accessed from Barnfield Avenue, with the north car park having a separate access and egress junction and the southern car park having a shared junction with a loop road going around the back (east) of the College buildings. The loop road will divide the buildings from the playing fields, which will remain on the eastern side of the site as they are now. The existing playing fields provide 5 high quality sports pitches and, whilst part of the playing field will be lost, the remaining space is still large enough to accommodate four grassed pitches with a floodlit all-weather pitch to be centrally located amongst these. There will also be a six-court gymnasium located close to the buildings' entrance, which is large enough to provide spectator seating. There is a lack of this size of facility in the Borough presently but this one will join another that was recently approved at Luton Sixth Form College, to improve the local sports facilities overall.

40. There was a lack of justification as to why the loss of playing fields would be considered acceptable by Sport England and, as a result, they have submitted a holding objection to the development. The applicants have provided a letter of justification as to why the loss of playing fields should be considered acceptable and this is currently being assessed, with a further report on their response to be made at the Meeting. Notwithstanding any response that may be received from Sport England, Policy LC1 is of particular relevance here. Consideration has to be given to the fact that, whilst an area of playing fields will be lost, green space will be reinstated around the buildings and will provide a much more appealing setting, particularly to the front of the College. At the same time the existing level of formal sports pitches will be retained on site, but the inclusion of a floodlit all-weather pitch will enable extended hours and usage throughout the whole year. Therefore the development is not in conflict with the objectives of Policy LC1.

41. The redevelopment proposals of the site will result in a need to remove a certain number of trees mostly around the existing buildings but some to the site's western boundary. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been carried out, which has surveyed almost every tree on the site discovering that some of the trees (particularly a group of Willows) are considered suitable for preservation. The trees to be removed do not have preservation orders and are considered to have only moderate amenity value. It is the applicant's intention to provide significant replacement planting around the College site to compensate for their loss, whilst retaining the good quality trees that do not need to be removed. The potential for preserving some of these trees will be investigated but, to date, no response has been received from the Council's Arboriculture Officers.

42. The layout will also include for a cycle parking facility, a nursery with playground, a materials yard near the construction block and a newly positioned dwellinghouse for the site Caretaker. Generally the layout of the site is considered to improve its appearance from the surrounding streets, its internal permeability and the overall environment of the College, and will provide a community facility that achieves civic pride and a focal point along the gateway into the town.

Scale

43. The proposed building is a mix of one, two, three and four storeys with a small element of plant being provided at fifth storey level. This will replace the existing building, which is of similar height but not as regular as that which is proposed. The four storey elements of the building will be restricted to the main part of the northern and central blocks where there will also be a small element of plant above. The projecting arms of these blocks and the southern block will be at three storey height with all central cafeteria cores being two storeys. Whilst the blocks are quite linear, their scales will be broken up by a 15 metre gap in between each, only linked by a two storey glazed street running through the building.

44. The condensed linear blocks will obviously create a noticeable increase in the scale of the building onsite, but its integrated uniform appearance suggests that this would not be inappropriate in this setting. The site is fairly open and the proposed set back from the New Bedford Road frontage lends itself to a larger building sitting on the site, without any significant detriment to the surrounding street scene.

45. As previously mentioned, the site is subject to levels changes and the building's position would fall within the existing 2 metre bank, which runs north to south. In order to provide a level surface at this point the 2 metre bank will be replaced by a similar gradient which will be formed further east of its current position, and will sit to the opposite side of the loop road. This will result in the building being elevated from the views of New Bedford Road, but less imposing on the street scene at Old Bedford Road. The context of the site is such that a development of the scale and mass proposed will be noticeable but will not be unduly prominent or out of place. The scale is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Access

46. There are currently two vehicular accesses leading into the site off of Barnfield Avenue which are located at its western end opposite 13 and 21 Barnfield Avenue respectively. It is the intention of the applicant to maintain the opening opposite 21 Barnfield Avenue as an "entrance only" junction and replace the other junction (opposite 13) with a new "exit only" junction further west in Barnfield Avenue opposite No. 7. The Highways Development Manager has stated that the Highway Authority will not require the existing junction to be upgraded provided that trip figures do not increase as a result of the review of car park provision (see 'Parking' below). The access/egress to be provided here will serve the northern car park, adjacent to the college entrance. A drop off lane will also be provided here to assist the free-flow of traffic and no concerns have been raised about this by the Highway Development Manager.

47. A further new junction is also intended for vehicular traffic approximately halfway along Barnfield Avenue opposite No. 37. This junction is to be a shared access/egress junction primarily intended to serve the newly positioned Caretakers residency, the materials yard and the southern car park. Again no concerns have been raised by the Highways Development Manager about the inclusion of this new access, which may act as a further filter of traffic generated by the college.

48. Pedestrian access will be obtained from Barnfield Avenue only, with the existing pedestrian points in New Bedford Road and Old Bedford Road being closed. A further access will be opened up in Kingsdown Avenue (already in place but not used) but this will

be for emergency vehicle access only. The reason for a single access is purely a security measure to stop casual intrusion into the College site.

49. Whilst the buildings have been laid out quite spaciouly spread across the site, the opportunity has arisen for a more prominent entrance into the building than is currently experienced at the College. This will be located on the northern elevation adjacent to the northern car park and its drop-off point. Details of its appearance would be forthcoming with submission of the reserved matters, but it has been shown indicatively adjoined by a large, part canopy-covered concourse to its northern side with the circular cafeteria building standing to the west leaving visitors in no doubt where the entrance to the building would be. Other secondary accesses are also to be provided around the building blocks.

50. The Police Architectural Liaison Officer has raised issue with the lack of details provided on site security and, in particular, in respect of how access onto the site will be controlled. Such details can be adequately controlled by condition but it should be noted that the design of the building is such that all areas are well surveilled and given its extended use for part-time students, the site would be well surveilled throughout most of the daytime and evenings. Generally the accesses into the site are not in dissimilar locations from those which currently exist and with the reduction in casual pedestrian entrances being available there are no major security concerns arising at this time.

Impact on street scene

51. The detailed design of the appearance of the building has been reserved for later approval but it is evident from the plans and elevations provided that the college will be set within impressive surroundings on its western side. The setting of the western boundary adjoining New Bedford Road is quite natural as existing but is somewhat let down by the lack of cohesion between the buildings. The idea of providing a building set back behind a series of paths and courtyards and an opened-up river are considered to provide the ambition that is needed along one of Luton's important highways and, for reasons explained previously related to scale and layout, this street scene is considered to be significantly improved by the development. It is important that the building achieves a high quality level of design and good quality materials that will reflect its setting.

52. The views from Barnfield Avenue across the site currently have the advantage of being open. Whilst a certain level of openness will be retained on the site, the inclusion of new College buildings closer to this highway will add to the visual interest of the road. This will be further aided by the new main College entrance, which will also increase the level of human activity in this location. The College building will be brought a little closer to Old Bedford Road but this street scene will still be dominated with views of the playing fields that will be maintained in this location.

Impact on adjoining occupiers

53. The site is subject to a complete redevelopment and unification of the College's campuses and so it is obvious that there will be some alterations to the environment surrounding the site. Traffic has been the cause of some concern raised in the letters of objection that have been received and in particular the level of noise and congestion that this causes. The level of traffic is set to increase, and so use of the surrounding highways will become more congested around peak times. However this is a community facility and it is considered that Old Bedford Road and New Bedford Road are important links into and

out of the town centre and so a significant degree of traffic should be expected along these highways anyway. The provision of three access junctions along Barnfield Avenue may filter traffic a little better and so congestion here may well be reduced as a result of this.

54. The buildings themselves will be moved closer to residential boundaries than is currently experienced at present. Properties in Barnfield Avenue will be subject to the new front entrance of the building and the sports hall but these will be 41 metres away at the nearest point and not dissimilar from current situations seen nearby in Riddy Lane at Icknield High School and also in Bradgers Hill Road at the Sixth Form College, where there is no apparent detriment to residents' living environments. The width of the frontage on Barnfield Avenue is also quite narrow and so some extended views will remain across the site from residencies in this location. The level of impact on these properties in terms of loss of privacy and outlook, overshadowing and noise and general disturbance is not considered to increase to an unacceptable degree.

55. Properties in Kingsdown Avenue will be affected by the positioning of new buildings being located approximately 32 metres from the rear boundaries, as well as the introduction of a new car park. This does give potential for some overlooking to occur, particularly as the building is to be three storeys in this location, but there is the intention to provide a 5 to 10 metre landscaped buffer on this boundary, which will be tree planted to reduce the impact of both the buildings and the car park. A number of the properties already have existing tree planting and hedges in the gardens and along the adjoining boundary with the College site and further screening here should adequately reduce the opportunities for overlooking and noise and general disturbance to arise on these occupiers. Details of the landscaped buffer are only shown as indicative at present with a more detailed plan to be submitted as a reserved matter.

56. It is anticipated that the facilities available on site will be utilised by both the College and the local community, and the inclusion of the floodlit all-weather pitch suggests that the use of the external areas will be intensified. Policy LC5 encourages the dual use of education facilities, provided that it doesn't adversely impact on the delivery of education or the adjoining occupiers. Whilst a community use agreement is likely to be expected by Sport England, further measures should be in place to ensure that the use of this pitch has a limited impact on residents of properties adjoining the site, particularly at unsociable hours. It is therefore considered appropriate to put an hours restriction on its usage and it is vital that minimal impact will occur as a result of light spillage. The plans show a lot of reinforced tree planting along the boundaries, which will act as a partial screen to the floodlights but further details of the lighting will need to be submitted in order to be sure that the impact on the adjoining occupiers will be limited. In light of the foregoing, the redevelopment of the site would not have a detrimental impact on the adjoining occupiers of the site, and therefore no conflict arises with Policy LC4

Parking

57. The level of parking provided on site is something that is still being assessed given that there are deficiencies with the submitted Transport Assessment. Presently 690 car parking spaces are proposed along with 20 motorcycle spaces and 200 cycle spaces. The maximum level of parking required for such a site would be 828 spaces and the Highway Development Manager has raised issue because estimates have been made as opposed to actual counts of the existing parking demand on site. It is vital that adequate parking is provided on site, to avoid an increased demand for on-street parking in the

surrounding streets, which would be unacceptable. As a result of the Highways Development Manager's position on this, the applicants are to carry out surveys and update the Transport Assessment for further consideration. A further report on this will be made at the Meeting.

CONCLUSIONS

58. The proposed redevelopment of the college site will make a better use of the space and will improve its general setting. The level of playing field lost at the east of the site will be reinstated by the layout to the west, fronting New Bedford Road. Whilst there will be some difference to the living environment experienced by some of the adjoining occupiers, this is not thought to be excessively different to the current situation with consideration being given that it is a community facility where some noise should be readily acceptable.

59. Details of the building's appearance and design are not submitted for approval at this stage but the redevelopment will provide an attractive and exciting opportunity for the built environment of the town and, at this stage, details relating to scale, layout and access (subject to the approval by the Highway Development Manager) are considered to be acceptable.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D

60. Luton Local Plan 2001 – 2011.