

**COMMITTEE: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

**DATE: 30TH JANUARY 2008**

**SUBJECT: 1 BRADGERS HILL ROAD. LUTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE. REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING COLLEGE FACILITIES ON EXISTING CAMPUS SITE WITH ASSOCIATED EXTERNAL WORKS TO CAR PARK AND SPORTS PITCHES.  
(APPLICANT: LUTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE)  
(APPLICATION NO: 07/00551/FUL).**

**REPORT BY: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MANAGER**

**CONTACT OFFICER: DAVID GAUNTLETT 546317**

**IMPLICATIONS:**

**LEGAL**

**COMMUNITY**

**SAFETY**

**EQUALITIES**

**ENVIRONMENT**

**FINANCIAL**

**CONSULTATIONS**

**STAFFING**

**OTHER**

**WARDS AFFECTED: BARNFIELD**

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**PURPOSE**

1. To advise Members of a current application for planning permission and to seek their decision. Members will recall that the application was originally assessed at the 12<sup>th</sup> September meeting but was deferred pending resolution of the Environment Agency's objection to the application on the grounds that the details of the Flood Risk Assessment did not achieve a sustainable drainage system. The applicants have now amended the scheme, to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. That planning permission is granted subject to: -

(a) The satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Agreement to secure a financial contribution of £25,000 towards the cost of funding improved traffic calming measures in the surrounding highways made

necessary by the development and to secure the completion of all new and improved indoor and outdoor sports facilities proposed in the development within the timescales set out by Sport England in its response dated 30th July 2007.

(b) The imposition of the following Conditions: -

- (01) The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

*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) No works or development shall take place until full details of a landscaping scheme to include all hard surfaces, grassed areas, tree and shrub plantings and the proposed times of planting, has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and all grassed areas shall be laid out and all tree and shrub planting shall be carried out in accordance with those details and at those times. Within one month of the completion of the landscaping scheme written confirmation of the completion date shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. 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.*

- (03) 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 *(insert)* 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.*

- (04) The existing hedge along the north, east and west boundary(ies) of the site shall be retained to a height of not less than 2.5 metre(s) and shall not be removed without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

***Reason: To protect the amenities of neighbouring properties. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and LC4 of the Luton Local Plan.***

- (05) Details of the surfacing and drainage of any parking service area(s) hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the development hereby permitted is commenced. The details thereby approved shall be installed prior to the occupation of any building on the site.

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

- (06) 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.***

- (07) 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.***

- (08) Samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the walls and roof of the college building 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.***

- (09) The construction of the surface and foul water drainage system shall be carried out in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Environment Agency and Thames Water Utilities before the development is commenced.

***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) Before the development is commenced, a drainage strategy for the playing fields shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Environment Agency and Thames Water Utilities.

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

- (11) 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, in consultation with the Environment Agency 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.***

- (12) The external sports pitches shall not be used for organised sports events, except cricket, at any time outside the following hours: 7:30 to 21:30 on Mondays to Thursdays; 7:30 to 19:00 on Fridays; 9:00 to 19:00 on Saturdays and 10:00 to 17:30 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

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

- (13) Prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted;
- (i) A detailed assessment of ground conditions of the land proposed for the playing field shall be undertaken (including drainage and topography) to identify constraints which could affect playing field quality; and
- (ii) Based on the results of this assessment to be carried out pursuant to (i) of this Condition, a detailed scheme to ensure that the playing fields will be provided to an acceptable quality shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England.

The approved scheme shall be complied with in full prior to the completion of the development unless otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority (in consultation with Sport England).

***Reason: To ensure that site surveys are undertaken for replacement playing fields and that any ground condition constraints can be and are mitigated to ensure provision of an adequate quality playing field.***

- (14) Prior to the opening of the new college, an agreement for the community use of the college's sports facilities (including the sports hall, all weather pitch, hard courts and playing fields) will be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England. The agreement will be implemented upon the opening of the new college.

*Reason: To secure well managed safe community access to the proposed sports hall.*

- (15) 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.*

- (16) 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.*

- (17) 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*

- (18) A scheme for the monitoring of the Travel Plan referred to in Condition 17 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.***

- (19) Before development is commenced, access to the buildings on the site shall be afforded to the Council's Environment & Heritage Team for the purpose of making a photographic record of the existing school buildings before they are demolished.

***Reason: To accord with Policy ENV6 of the Luton Local Plan.***

- (20) Before the development hereby approved commences, a scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority showing how the land identified for disposal for future residential development shall be made secure and maintained until such time as it comes forward for development.

***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.***

- (21) 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.***

### The Site and Surroundings

3. The application site is a large square plot measuring approximately 8.8 hectares and located 1.5 miles north of Luton town centre. The site is effectively split into two entities with Sixth Form College buildings and car parks on its southern side and playing fields on the northern side.
4. The school buildings face towards Bradgers Hill Road, which runs along the site's southern boundary. It is here where vehicular and pedestrian access is provided to the site. All other boundaries are adjoined by residential gardens of dwellings located on Fairford Avenue (east), Old Bedford Road (west) and Bushmead Road (north).
5. There is a significant variation in levels across the site. From the Design and Access Statement provided with the planning documents, research has shown that the site's high point is in the southeast corner (127.48 metres above Ordnance Datum), and its lowest point is in the northwest corner (118.83 metres above Ordnance Datum), with approximately 444 metres between the two points. This represents a difference of some 8 metres between the two points, with a gradient of 1:25.

## Relevant Planning History

6. The original building on the site dated back to 1935 and won awards for its design. It was also subject to an enquiry for possible Listing. However English Heritage concluded that the extensions that had taken place in the 1980's/90's had effectively removed this opportunity as they have materially altered the building's character. Whilst these extensions have been important in increasing the size of the College, none are of any particular architectural merit.

## The Proposal

7. The proposal seeks to demolish the existing college buildings and redevelop the whole site. This will include a new building for the College located further into the site, and alterations to the existing arrangements with regards to sports pitches and car parking. In order to fund the redevelopment, there is a proposal to release part of the site for residential development in the future. This is located in two parcels on the Bradgers Hill Road frontage of the site.

## 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:* Given there are no material alterations to the access and parking arrangements, the Highway Authority has no additional comments to make. Previous comments made on 17th July 2007 still apply. These comments were:

The amended transport assessment is generally satisfactory, although it is noted that no analysis of accident data has been carried out. The existing on site parking provision is only just sufficient to meet demand so the Highway Authority would support the replacement provision noted.

The proposed pedestrian access on Old Bedford Road may lead to drop off/pick up in that location. However, given that the proposed site layout includes for a good quality drop off/pick up point within the site, it is unlikely to have major traffic implications.

There is an existing problem with speeding traffic around and related to the site, generally in Fairford Avenue and Bushmead Road. Given that the proposals are for a complete redevelopment of the site, including residential uses which will generate further traffic, the Highway Authority considers that any grant of permission should be subject to a Section 106 Agreement requiring the applicant to meet the costs of extending the current traffic-calming scheme in Bradgers Hill Road into Fairford Avenue and Bushmead Road. Those costs are estimated to be in the region of £25,000.

Any grant of permission should be conditional upon the submission of a Travel Plan in accordance with the Borough of Luton Local Plan.

10. *Police Architectural Liaison Officer:* Following a meeting at the school, concerns regarding the building footprint has been overcome. Still outstanding however are the access arrangements. The current access arrangement for students is via turnstiles, with individual ID cards permitting access through them. It is strongly recommended that this be replicated on the new build, as they are reliable. The school are looking at other systems, such as automated doors which open when ID cards are in sufficiently close proximity. These are considerably less reliable as 'tail-gating' is virtually impossible to stop.

In addition to turnstiles, it is strongly recommended that metal detectors are incorporated into them, which could be achieved easily. The school would appear to be strongly opposed to this as it would (in their view) send 'the wrong message'. There is surprise and disappointment at this, especially as they would appear to accept that, realistically, some pupils doubtless bring knives to school. Making hand-held metal detectors available to staff (which the college does) is relatively unreliable and ineffective as a preventative measure. Given that knife crime is a serious problem amongst the same age group which the facility by definition caters for, access arrangements and hardware should be a condition of any approval given.

11. *Sport England:* Sport England has no objection to the proposed amendments to the planning application as a statutory consultee. Their position on the planning application would remain as set out in the response to the consultation dated 30th July 2007. These comments were as follows:

There is no objection towards the proposed development subject to conditions and the completion of a Section 106 Agreement securing the completion of the sports facilities within a suitable time period.

12. *London Luton Airport:* No safeguarding objections.
13. *Three Valleys Water:* You should be aware that the proposed development site is located within an Environment Agency defined Groundwater Protection Zone (GPZ) corresponding to Crescent Road pumping station.
14. *Thames Water:* Thames Water would advise that with regard to sewerage infrastructure we would not have any objection to the above planning application. With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer.
15. *Waste Management:* No response received.
16. *Capital and Asset Management:* No response received.
17. *Environmental Protection:* The Building Schools for the Future programme in Luton is going to involve a high degree of intensification of the use of our secondary school sites, many of which are either totally locked in by, or at least share boundaries with residential development. How such intensification will affect



residential neighbours is a matter for serious consideration, and a very fine balance will need to be found between the social benefits of this 'reasonable use of land' and the potential impingement on the lives of people who may have for many years enjoyed the relative quiet of having a traditional school for a neighbour.

18. *Strategic Planning (Local Plans)*: Consideration should be given to the following items:-
  - Effects on surrounding land-uses during construction and operation.
  - Ensuring that there is no overall loss of green space/ plans are put in place to mitigate any loss.
  - Effects on traffic flow during construction and operation/ promotion of 'green' travel.
  - Dual use of facilities for the wider community is to be encouraged.
  - Effectiveness of Swale shown on the amended plans.
19. *Environment and Neighbourhoods*: Require a photographic record to be made of the existing school buildings before they are demolished.
20. *Environment Agency*: Can remove their original objection subject to conditions being attached to any permission granted.
21. *Statutory Publicity*: The application has been notified to 298 local occupiers with Site and Press Notices being issued. Fourteen letters of representation have been received in respect of the development. Objectors have raised a number of issues as follows: visual intrusion, loss of visual amenity, noise/light pollution, highways concerns (congestion and safety), loss of privacy, location of the Astro Turf Pitch, trespassing, increase in student numbers, litter, extent of community use, opening of new pedestrian entrances, car-parking and security.

#### Policy Implications

22. The Policies that are relevant to the proposal are LP1, ENV9, ENV10, ENV15, H2, H3, LC1, LC2, LC4, LC5, T2, T3, T13, U3 and IMP1.
23. Policy LP1 sets out a sustainable development strategy
24. Policy ENV9(C) 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 H2 identifies the sites on which planning permission will be granted for housing, and offers advice for residential developments on sites with no allocation. The proposed development has identified two parcels of land located on the southern part of the existing site, which may be developed for residential housing in

the future. Whilst this is speculative at present, it is considered prudent to establish the principle of residential on this land at this stage, given its importance to the scheme.

28. Policy H3 is concerned with the density at which residential schemes are being built, requiring that all new residential schemes be built at a net density of at least 40 dwellings per hectare or, in an area with good accessibility to public transport links, at a net density of at least 50 dwellings per hectare.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. 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.
32. 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.
33. 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.
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 16*).
36. IMP1 states that, in granting planning permission, the Borough Council will, in appropriate circumstances, seek to enter into a legal agreement to secure:
  - (A) the provision, or the financial cost, of facilities made necessary by the implementation of the development; and
  - (B) 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. There is a general feeling at the college that its site is not being used to its full potential, and that redevelopment may help achieve a better utilisation of the land. In addition, release of part of the site for residential development will help to fund the changes to the College campus now being proposed. The existing College comprises a variation of extensions surrounding a once award-winning art-deco building, with no clear circulation between spaces. Every small parcel of land surrounding these buildings has been transformed to provide additional parking areas, and the existing playing fields suffer from various land gradients, which hamper the quality of the pitches and prevent partaking in year-round sports events.
38. The proposed redevelopment of the site is anticipated to improve circulation around the site, by grouping the different facilities together. The new building will have a more definitive circulation core. Whilst part of the playing pitch is to be lost, the quality of the pitches will benefit from levelling and improved drainage, and will thereby be available for use all-year round. The principle of the redevelopment is therefore considered to be acceptable.

#### Impact on Existing School Site

##### Layout

39. The proposed development seeks to completely re-configure the site layout. The new school building will be moved into the site further north; some 185 metres back from the highway and will be located in the middle of all ancillary facilities. The footprint of the building will be reduced in size compared to the current building, and its location results in space being left on its north, south and eastern sides.
40. The playing fields will be of a suitable size to accommodate a rugby pitch, two mini football pitches, an all weather-playing surface, a hard surfaced court for tennis (x3) or netball (x3) and two senior football pitches, which can convert to a cricket pitch in the summer.
41. To the southwest of these football pitches will be the new car parking area, providing a 100 space student car park, 172 space staff/visitor car park (including 12 disabled spaces) and 160 cycle parking spaces. A new road, complete with roundabout and a drop-off lay-by will be formed within the existing site with access from Bradgers Hill Road. An existing access on Old Bedford Road (currently used for emergency vehicles) will also be opened up during opening and closing times for pedestrians to gain access to the site from this location. This entrance will also be available to emergency vehicles.

##### Playing fields

42. The current site benefits from 8 grass playing pitches with a hard-surface court providing 3 tennis or netball courts or a 5-a-side football pitch. The re-configuration of the site would provide 5 grass playing pitches, a new all-weather playing surface

and a hard-surfaced court similar to the existing. Therefore the proposal represents a shortfall of 2 pitches.

43. The applicant contacted Sport England at pre-application stage regarding the amendments to the playing fields and, whilst it was recognised that there would be a reduction in the area and number of playing pitches provided, the quality of the pitches would be significantly improved by reason of the new drainage and levelling of the land. The Environment Agency objected to the original scheme due to Flood Risk. As a result the scheme has been amended to provide a stormwater swale to the south of the refectory. This will allow for the playing fields to drain, with the water being stored on-site within the swale as well as providing the college with a feature of interest. The Environment Agency is satisfied with this proposal subject to conditions being attached to any permission (*see Conditions 9 and 11*).
44. Another amendment to the original scheme is the size of the new gymnasium. This was to be a four-court gym originally but now a six-court gym is proposed, which will allow for a wider range of indoor sports and will allow for spectator seating. Such a facility will be capable of providing a competition facility, which Active Luton has confirmed is lacking in the town at present. Sport England has commented that if it is to be implemented, the sports hall would provide a sports facility of strategic importance for indoor sports.
45. The effect of the overall development on the existing playing pitches results in Policy LC1 being pertinent to the outcome of this application. Although part of the playing fields will be lost, this will be counterbalanced by significant improvements to levels and drainage of the remaining space, which will allow for better use of the pitches than can be enjoyed in their current state. This will be further aided by the inclusion of a non-illuminated all weather surface, which can be used for multiple outdoor sports. The loss of part of the playing field is therefore overcome by the significant improvements to that which will remain.
46. Generally the proposed layout and associated playing fields is considered to be a more efficient utilisation of the site and one which will significantly improve the access, circulation, appearance and playing space available to visitors. It should be noted that there is no intention to provide floodlights to any of the proposed outdoor sports facilities

#### Impact on Street Scene

47. The building will be set quite a way back from Bradgers Hill Road but visitors to the college will enter the site via a new access road, landscaped on both sides to provide a boulevard style approach to the new college building. As a result of the requirement to provide an on-site storm water swale, this access road has been shortened from that previously proposed. It runs for approximately 62 metres before adjoining a roundabout and leading off to the west into the car parks. At the roundabout, the boulevard will continue as a pedestrian link to the entrance of the building.
48. Two areas of land, which will be subject to a future application to provide residential development, have been omitted from the current application for redevelopment of the site. Subject to the consideration of any future proposals for the development of

these two areas, it is likely that the view of the new college from Bradgers Hill Road would be restricted and only really possible from points along the new access road.

#### Impact on Adjoining Occupiers

49. The proposed building will be 100 metres away from the nearest residential property in Bushmead Road, 110 metres in Fairford Avenue and 63 metres in Old Bedford Road, and the building's height is predominantly restricted to two storeys, with the central core projecting from the roof to a three-storey height, with windows in the east and west elevations only.
50. Despite such significant distances, there will be an impact on the visual amenities of the adjoining occupiers to a certain extent. Some occupiers will lose their view across the open playing fields, which will be replaced by new buildings. However, the scale of the new building and the amount of space that will surround it, both suggest that a significant level of openness will remain and will not adversely affect the outlook from the adjoining dwellings. Furthermore, the presence of the existing hedgerow coupled with the distance between new and existing buildings will limit the level of overlooking that will occur.
51. Should the application be approved, the site facilities will be utilised by both the college and the local community, which suggests 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. The *Open Space Assessment*, provided as part of the application, details that the facilities will only be available to the local community on a pre-booked basis and that they will not be used during college hours, although the community use will be increased from 889 hours to 1000 hours per annum.
52. The relocation of sports pitches and a new all-weather playing surface to a position close to the ends of gardens in Bushmead Road and Fairford Avenue has raised some concern amongst adjoining residents who feel that an additional acoustic enclosure is necessary. However the playing fields have been present in this location since the site was established and, in recent years, they have been used by a number of local community sports clubs as well as the college. The wide open space does dull the noise down somewhat but increased intensity of use of the playing fields will give rise to the potential for a greater noise source emanating from the site. Therefore a restriction on the hours of use of the external pitches is considered to be an appropriate method of limiting the impact that this will have on the adjoining residential properties (*see Condition 12*).
53. One of the letters of representation requested the relocation of the all-weather surface. However, should this be done, it is unlikely to have any different an impact than it will in its selected location. It is approximately 10 metres away from any boundary and there are no floodlights proposed. This will restrict its use outside of what is considered to be sociable hours, and this will also remove concerns relating to light pollution.

54. On the subject of lighting, a rather large glazed atrium to the front of the proposed building and a glazed wall to the rear, serving the Learning Resource Centre, are proposed and so there is potential for light spillage into the surrounding area. However the building is a significant distance away from residential properties and, as previously stated, the beech hedge provides a significant screen to the development. It is considered inappropriate to request an alteration to an attractive design, as the light from the building will have a minimal impact. It is presumed that the development will be subject to site-wide lighting, and further details of this will need to be submitted for approval (see *Condition 6*).
55. Whilst it is acknowledged that there will be an intensification of the use of the facility, the level of impact on the adjoining occupiers is not anticipated to exceed significantly the current situation.

### Design

56. The building has taken a contemporary form incorporating a centrally located curved glazed entrance, which will be embellished by the large boulevard style access leading up to it. Three individual 'wings' projecting out of both the east and west sides will adjoin the entrance core, which will accommodate a refectory, the new gym, and various teaching spaces.
57. Set back from the front entrance will be a central circulation core, standing three-storeys in height, which will incorporate an external garden and internal balconies overlooking the lower level. The form of this core will be visible from outside the building through the glazed entrance and above the predominant two-storey roofline, with its mass being emphasised by a bold bright colour.
58. The materials proposed will be a modern blend of facing brickwork, complemented by a mix of cladding and smooth render. The front and rear of the building will stand out in particular through the effective use of large sections of glazing, which will break up and soften the building's elevations. The building is well designed in terms of its appearance and circulation, and will provide a positive space where people want to be.

### Parking

59. The parking provision is set to increase by 18 spaces overall, providing a total of 272. The provision for teaching staff will exceed the maximum standards set out in Appendix 4 of the Local Plan, as a maximum of 82 spaces should be provided. The *Transport Assessment Report* has stated that student numbers are expected to increase to approximately 2,300 by 2012/13, which will increase staff numbers by approximately 5%. Notwithstanding this, current staff parking is at 145 spaces, and so is only set to increase by 5 to accommodate the 9 additional staff. Student parking numbers will be significantly lower than the maximum standard and the overall provision is therefore considered to be acceptable.

60. In addition to car parking levels, the proposed development makes significant provision for cycle parking, which exceeds the minimum standards for both staff and students, as set out in Appendix 5 of the Luton Local plan.
61. The proposed car parking to the rear of properties in Old Bedford Road is not considered to have an adverse impact on the living environment of these occupiers. There is a significant hedge standing between 2.5 – 3 metres in height, which is quite thick running the full length of this boundary. This is also assisted in places by the existence of a number of trees in both the gardens of these properties, or located on the site boundary. The gap between the parking and the boundary is as much as 3 metres in some locations, whereas it is as little as 1.5 metres in others. Therefore as part of any landscaping scheme associated with the development, some additional planting should take place in this location in particular, to aid the existing hedge in reducing the impact on adjoining residents.

#### Highway implications

62. The anticipated increase in student and staff numbers attending the site for the coming years will result in an inevitable increase in traffic in the area. The source of the residents' concerns is the level of traffic descending on Bradgers Hill Road at opening and closing times, where parking and traffic movements in the area become problematic. Whilst the redevelopment will not reduce the number of vehicles travelling to the site, a number of methods are proposed to mitigate traffic impacts.
63. The access road into the site is one of the methods being proposed to mitigate traffic impact. This will be a one-way system, which will have a designated drop-off/pick-up lay-by, which will run the length of the access road. This will bring traffic into the college site and away from Bradgers Hill Road, which will reduce congestion in this area. The provision of the pedestrian "boulevard" will also allow students to safely access the site and is anticipated to improve highway and pedestrian safety.
64. The college also plans to open up the existing emergency access on Old Bedford Road, in the northwest corner of the site. This will be resurfaced and open to pedestrians a short while before the college day starts and until a short while after it ends. It is to be locked at all other times unless required by emergency vehicles. The residents in close proximity have raised concern about this as it may increase haphazard parking from parents who will drop their children off in this location, which is close to traffic lights and a bus stop. Discussions have taken place with the Highway Development Manager regarding these concerns, who has responded that the highway is very wide in this location, enough for cars to pull-up. It is to work in a similar way to the situation at Bushmead Primary School further along Old Bedford Road where limited highway detriment occurs. This is not a major concern and will, to some extent alleviate some of the pressure within Bradgers Hill Road.

65. The Highway Development Manager has commented that students tend to drive quite fast, sometimes racing along Fairford Avenue, which has been echoed in a letter of objection. Therefore a contribution towards traffic calming improvements in the area is required and can be secured through a Section 106 Agreement.

#### Site Security

66. The site has always been quite well organised in terms of its security, with a turnstile system in place for students and a secure office in place for visitors. The Police Architectural Liaison Officer would like to see a comprehensive security regime for the site. In light of this, it is considered acceptable that detailed site security measures can be dealt with at a later stage, once the detailed site proposals have been established as being acceptable (see *Condition 15*).

#### Future Residential Proposals

67. The proposed residential parcels to the front of the land are pivotal to the success of the scheme and the principle of establishing their acceptability is very important at this stage. The identified plot to the southeastern corner measures approximately 0.78 hectares and the site in the western corner measures approximately 0.38 hectares (*originally 0.52ha but reduced to make way for the stormwater swale*). Policy H2 supports the provision of housing on unallocated sites provided it is on previously developed land, doesn't lead to a loss of a recognised use, there would be no unacceptable affect on the environment and that there is good access to public transport. Both sites are part of the existing college site and have therefore been previously developed, and the acceptability of the loss of this space as part of the available playing fields has been previously addressed in this report. Aside from the college, the surrounding area is predominantly residential in character.
68. The college site has been designed so that little detriment will occur to the amenities of any future housing with a significant landscaped buffer dividing the western site from the college car park, and playing fields adjoining the northern boundary of the eastern site. The impact of the college site on any future residential properties is therefore not considered to be any different to that will occur on existing residents, which has been established as being acceptable. Old Bedford Road is served by good bus links and the new college will provide a series of facilities that are available to the public.
69. Provided that the residential standards in Appendix 2 are adhered to, the creation of two new housing developments in this location should integrate into the site with little detriment to the surrounding environment. Therefore the use of these two sites for residential development is considered to be acceptable as a matter of principle. Any development would be expected to satisfy the criteria of Policies H3 (relating to density) and H5 (relating to affordable housing).

#### CONCLUSIONS

70. The proposed redevelopment of the college site will make a better use of the space and will improve both indoor and outdoor sports facilities that will be available for use by the college and the community all year round. 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 school site where some noise emissions should be readily acceptable.

71. The building is of an attractive design and the access road will alleviate transport pressures in the surroundings, creating an exciting new environment with limited detriment to that existing.

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

72. Luton Local Plan 2001 – 2011.