

# Planning Brief

**Neale-Wade Community College**

**March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 9PX**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Planning Brief is to provide guidance on the redevelopment of Neale-Wade Community College incorporating a substantially rebuilt secondary school to meet current standards for both curriculum provision and the school's wider community role under the Building Schools for the Future programme.

### Background to Building Schools for the Future

- 1.2 Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is a national programme to raise educational attainment through a complete transformation of England's secondary schools. This 15-year programme will see schools rebuilt or upgraded to meet the needs of learners and communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Local Authorities, working in partnership with Partnerships for Schools<sup>1</sup> (PfS) and the private sector, are responsible for this investment in new and enhanced education facilities in their areas.

- 1.3 Fenland in Cambridgeshire is in Wave 4 of the national BSF programme and includes the modernisation of four secondary schools, one special school and one new build Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

- 1.4 The six schools are programmed in two phases as follows:

#### **Phase 1**

Neal Wade Community College,  
March

Thomas Clarkson Community  
College, Wisbech

#### **Phase 2**

Sir Harry Smith Community  
College, Whittlesey

Cromwell Community College,  
Chatteris

Meadowgate Special School,  
Wisbech

Fenland Junction PRU, March

- 1.5 Construction is expected to commence at the phase 1 schools<sup>2</sup> in Spring 2010 and complete at the last of the Phase 2 schools in 2013.
- 1.6 The remaining four District Council areas of Cambridgeshire are in later BSF waves, the timetable for which is currently being reviewed by PfS.
- 1.7 The key dates associated with the process to select the Private Sector Partner (PSP) who will be responsible for designing and building the redeveloped school are as follows.

<sup>1</sup> the Government agency responsible for delivering BSF nationally

<sup>2</sup> Also called the 'Sample Schools' as the detailed designs for these schools will be developed by bidders during the BSF procurement process

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Indicative Date</b>
Start of BSF procurement process	Jul-08
Selection of Preferred Bidder	Sep-09
Commercial and financial close	Feb-10
Construction start at Phase 1 schools	Apr-10

1.8 Further information about BSF in Cambridgeshire, and the Council's vision for education, is available at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/fenlandbsf](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/fenlandbsf)

1.9 Neale-Wade Community College is a specialist Maths and ICT College.

### The Proposal

- 1.10 The school currently occupies a collection of buildings which make it challenging to deliver a modern, ICT rich curriculum. However, the size of the school, and the extent of BSF funds available, mean it is not possible to propose an entirely new-build school to replace it.
- 1.11 The proposal, therefore, is to rebuild and modernise the school on its present site, retaining existing buildings where possible and adding purpose built new buildings to create a more coherent, flexible and appealing design. In some instances it will be necessary to demolish and rebuild in order to address long-standing issues relating to condition and suitability.
- 1.12 Existing buildings which, with modest refurbishment, can be improved will be retained. New buildings will be added to meet the total area requirement for a 10 Form of Entry 11-18 school and to deliver modern curriculum requirements.
- 1.13 The proposal includes refurbishment of the existing sports hall and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and the addition of enhanced sixth form / diploma study and SEN facilities.
- 1.14 From a planning perspective it is envisaged that the redevelopment on the site could encompass:
- Demolition of existing buildings
  - Construction of new buildings
  - Remodelling and refurbishment of existing buildings
  - Refurbishment of existing sports facilities
  - Enhanced sixth form and SEN facilities
  - External works
- 1.15 It is envisaged that the enhanced facilities on the site would act as a focal point for community leisure and learning. The school buildings

and facilities would be available for a wide range of community uses including:

- Adult Education
  - Community sports
  - Access to computers and technology
  - Language support
  - Community meetings and social events
  - Community drama groups
  - Faith groups
- 1.16 Careful consideration needs to be given to the way in which development works on the site are to be carried out as the school will need to continue to operate during the redevelopment.
- 1.17 It is anticipated that a detailed planning application will be submitted to Cambridgeshire County Council as a Joint Regulation 3 application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 once the preferred bidder has been appointed in Autumn 2009. Work on site will commence as soon as practicable after the award of detailed planning consent (assuming this is granted) and contract award.
- 1.18 Public consultation on the emerging proposals for the school will be an integral part of the BSF programme. This has already started. The BSF Newsletter attached at Appendix 3 is an example of information already widely distributed in the local area. In addition, statutory consultation would occur as part of the detailed planning application process.

### Scope

- 1.19 This brief draws together all the relevant saved Council planning policies for this site as set out in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan adopted in 2003. Reference should also be made to Fenland District Council and their Fenland District Wide Local Plan adopted in 1993. Whilst Fenland District Council are a consultee in the submission of a planning application any comments given by the District planning authority may be material and will be taken into account by the determining authority.

### Role of Council

- 1.20 The Council is the freeholder of the site. Cambridgeshire County Council is also the statutory Planning Authority for planning applications associated with the site.
- 1.21 A separate team within the Office of Children and Young People's Services at Cambridgeshire County Council is working with the BSF schools to deliver the BSF programme in Fenland.

### Status

- 1.22 This Planning Brief is non-statutory advice for development control purposes, to support Cambridgeshire County Council in determining an application for development within the school grounds of Neale-Wade Community College. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 should be referred to for the Council's policies and proposals for the use of land in Fenland District.
- 1.23 This Planning Brief provides planning and design advice for the development of the school and draws together facts and information relevant to the development of a detailed planning application in due course. As such, designers and developers are encouraged to study this brief in detail.
- 1.24 Consultation has been carried out with the pupils, teachers and extended school community on how they would like to see the school developed. A number of pupils also visited the Sorrell Foundation in London to view architecture and to develop their ideas. A newsletter is sent out to all parents to keep them informed on the Building Schools for the Future programme. The latest edition is attached in Appendix 3.
- 1.25 This document cannot be considered as formal supplementary guidance as it has not gone through a structured programme of consultation and examination; however it can be used to inform people of the possible development as well as seeking in principle endorsement by the Local Planning Authority and their members.
- 1.26 The Development Control Committee of Cambridgeshire County Council and the Shaping Fenland's Future Policy Development Group of Fenland District Council have considered this Planning Brief. Both committees have confirmed their "in principle" support for the redevelopment of Neale-Wade Community College on its present site.

### Development Objectives

- 1.27 This Brief advocates a high quality secondary school with specialist facilities within a high quality, sustainably designed and fully accessible environment. The modernised school should integrate with the surrounding local community both in terms of uses available within the site and the design approach.

## 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

### Site Location

- 2.1 Neale-Wade Community College is located to the south of March on Wimblington Road (B1101). Appendix 1a illustrates the location of the school within its immediate surroundings and within March.
- 2.2 March is a market town approximately 88 miles north of London, 29 miles north of Cambridge and 14 miles west of Ely. It is a town that sits on the river Nene, which has 14 places of worship, cinema, museum, library, police station, health clinic and swimming pool. There are approximately 18,000 people living in the town. There are rail and bus services operating. These include rail links to Peterborough and London and a local bus service. There are 5 schools within the town, with Neale-Wade Community College being the only senior school.
- 2.3 To the south of the site is a large nursery which has a small pond and some residential development. The concentration of residential development becomes sporadic as you leave March towards Isle of Ely Way (A141).
- 2.4 To the north and east of the site is a large modern residential development, characteristic of modern housing development of the 1990s.
- 2.5 To the west of the site is the Stars Public House, Mace petrol garage and convenient store, with the Grade II Listed Building, St Wendredas Church, just beyond.

### Site Description

- 2.6 The site is approximately 10 hectares. From a topographical perspective it is consistently level throughout. The school is enclosed to the front with black railings approximately 1.5m high set in front of a well kept beech hedge. The rear and side boundaries are enclosed with 2m high silver mesh fencing. Vehicular access is gained at the front of the site with combined pedestrian access with a secondary access for pedestrians to the northern boundary.
- 2.7 The school has a variety of architectural styles, heights and layout. The most prominent and visually appealing building accommodates the reception/administrative facilities of the school. It is a two storey building. To the south of this building there are a number of more modern buildings which are single storey with pitched roofs. These buildings are surrounded by a network of hard landscaped areas which support pedestrian circulation around the school. To the rear is a 1970's stand alone building which is flat roofed and 3 storeys high. To the northern boundary is the sports hall. This building is single storey, providing only one level of accommodation however its height is similar to that of a two storey building.

- 2.8 A photographic survey of the site has been carried out and is provided at Appendix 1c. This illustrates the buildings on the site and those that adjoin the site. A map accompanies the photographs in order to identify where the photographs have been taken. Where existing landscaping provides partial screening of the site from external vantage points, it has been shown on the accompanying plan (Figure 1 of Appendix 1c). There are a number of mature trees close to existing buildings which contribute to the landscape setting of the school and the street scene.
- 2.9 To the southern boundary is a floodlit Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) which is enclosed with 2m high mesh fencing. This facility was granted consent in 2001 with a condition which places restrictions on the use of the flood lights.
- 2.10 The playing field to the rear of the site is separated from the main school by a drain, hedging and fencing. This area would appear to be used however kept separate from the main school. There are pedestrian links at the northern boundary with gate access to the southern boundary.
- 2.11 Four trees within the site are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). There are 3 TPOs in a cluster to the north of the main access directly off the main road adjacent to the nearest residential property. (2 chestnuts and 1 oak). There is an additional TPO to the south, directly off the main road. This is an ash tree. It is unlikely that any of these trees would be affected by any development.
- 2.12 Appendix 1e illustrate the constraints in and around the site. This should be read in conjunction with Fenland District Wide Local Plan.

### Landscape Description

- 2.13 March is located within the fens, a topographically featureless area accommodating many drainage ditches. In the open countryside, views are often uninterrupted for miles. The school does have views into the open countryside to the east and south of the site where it is more open, whereas the west and north are restricted due to the development on these boundaries.
- 2.14 The key characteristics of the Fens are:
- Large-scale, flat, open landscape with extensive vistas to level horizons and huge skies.
  - A hierarchy of rivers, drains and ditches provide a strong influence throughout the area. Embanked rivers and roddons create local enclosure and elevation. Banks provide good grazing and grassland habitats.
  - Modestly elevated 'islands' within fens provide isolated higher ground for most settlement. A higher proportion of grassland, tree cover and hedgerows are associated with these areas.

- Settled Fens or 'Townlands', in arc set back from the Wash, exhibit an ancient medieval and irregular field pattern. Typically smaller-scale with scattered farmsteads and dispersed ribbon settlements along the main arterial routes.
- Peaty Fens drained in 17th century comprise large rectilinear fields of black soil. A geometric road and drainage pattern with major high-level drains, washes and associated pumping stations. Roads and rail links often on elevated banks.
- Area south of Lincolnshire Wolds most recently drained with Wolds providing marked 'Upland' horizon to north.
- Woodland cover sparse. Occasional avenues to roads, elsewhere isolated field trees have marked significance. Shelter belts including poplar, willow and *leylandii* hedges around farmsteads. Numerous orchards in Wisbech area.
- Fragments of relic wet fen areas at Wicken, Woodwalton and Holme.
- Built forms exhibit strong influence ranging from historic cathedrals and churches, like Ely and Boston to large agricultural and industrial structures. Domestic architecture displays combination of elegant Georgian brick houses and bland 20th century bungalows.
- Marshes directly adjacent to the Wash exhibit an exceptionally open aspect, broken only by a series of sea walls. Associated river outfall structures, tidal saltmarshes and mudflats.
- Rich and varied intensive agricultural land use including wide range of arable, root crops, bulbs, vegetables and livestock. Field labourers prevalent at harvesting. Horticultural glasshouses and general agricultural clutter a significant feature.
- Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman landscapes emerging from below the falling peat. Very rich archaeology especially on fen margins.

*This information has been extracted from 'Natural England – The Fens', (Chapter 46)*

### **3 POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and adopted Fenland District Wide Local Plan (1993) are the documents to be used in the determination of planning applications relating to school developments under Regulation 3 of Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992. Regulation 3 applications are made by the County Council for Development it proposes to carry out itself.
- 3.2 There has been a significant change to planning policy and the use of development planning documents following the emergence of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act in 2004. This Act introduced the new spatial planning regime.

#### *The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004*

- 3.3 The Act represented a reform of the planning system and introduced a new-look local plan regime. LPAs are now required to prepare Local Development Frameworks (LDFs), a folder of development documents (LDDs). Collectively, these documents need to comply with strategic advice provided in Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). The LDFs will effectively replace local plans, unitary development plans and structure plans.
- 3.4 To allow for transition to the new system, the Act automatically extended the lifespan of all existing Local, Unitary and Structure Plans by three years from its enactment to 27th September 2007.
- 3.5 In August 2006, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published a Protocol for Councils to follow should they wish to extend the life of their adopted local planning policies beyond 27th September 2007. The Protocol explained how requests to save policies in old style plans would be handled and set out how decisions would be made on whether or not to save policies. Only policies that reflected the principles of Local Development Frameworks (LDF) and were consistent with current national policy could qualify for saving.
- 3.6 Fenland District Council applied for a direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to save a number of policies of the Adopted Fenland District Wide Local Plan in April 2007. The Secretary of State subsequently issued a Direction to the Council, dated 14 September 2007 extending the life of policies it prescribed. Only the policies listed in the Direction have the status of adopted local planning policies.
- 3.7 Similarly, the East of England Regional Assembly also applied for a direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 in respect of policies in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan. A Direction was issued by the Secretary of State on 26th September 2007.

- 3.8 In view of the above, Fenland District Council considers applications on the basis of the saved policies contained within its adopted Local Plan and the Structure Plan. Likewise, under Regulation 3, the County Council should only consider saved policies when determining applications. Unsaved policies have no weight and have been disregarded.
- 3.9 In view of the implementation of the above Act, the development planning framework for the area is under a period of transition, pending the emergence of an adopted Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England. This will inform the Development Plan Documents prepared by Fenland District Council under the new Local Development Framework process.
- 3.10 In the absence of up to date local plan policies, it is likely that material considerations, in particular the emergence of new national and regional policy and also new evidence, will be afforded considerable weight in decisions.

### National Planning Policy

#### **Planning Policy Statement 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development**

This sets the Government's objectives for the planning system and how it can deliver sustainable forms of development. It reinforces the importance of a plan led system and encourages participation and consultation with the public, stakeholders and Local Planning Authorities whilst having regard for the environment. Paragraphs 33-37 relate to design. Reference should also be made to the supplement to PPS 1 Planning and Climate Change which was published in December 2007. This document refers to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change with regard to development.

#### **Planning Policy Statement 9 – Biodiversity / Geology**

This is to ensure all development enhances and protects existing biodiversity and geological resources. Any species protection should be incorporated into any design and it may be necessary in some circumstances to carry out surveys and provide mitigation and compensatory measures.

#### **Planning Policy Guidance 13 – Transport**

PPG 13 promotes the sustainable integration of transport with development. It identifies that traffic management measures can contribute to planning objectives and that measures should be drawn up with key stakeholders, be sympathetic to the character of the area and maintain accessibility, ensure acceptable levels of amenity and preserve the viability of local businesses.

#### **Planning Policy Guidance 14 – Development on Unstable land**

Provides guidance on building on unstable land. May be applicable to significant buildings in a Fenland context.

**Planning Policy Guidance 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment and Planning Policy Guidance 16 – Archaeology and Planning**

Neale-Wade Community College is within an area that may have features of archaeological interest. On this basis an archaeological assessment programme will be required. In addition, the proximity of a Grade II Listed Building opposite - St Wendreda's church. The school will require an assessment of possible affects that any development could have on the setting of this building. As such, consideration of PPG 15 will be required. PPG 16 looks at the development and how its physical operation can be damaging to potential archaeology. It provides guidance relating to the protection and excavation of sites.

**Planning Policy Statement 17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

Any proposal for development should have respect for high quality and well managed open spaces. Careful consideration will always be given when proposal encroach onto open space. There is a general policy presumption against development of adopted recreational or amenity land.

**Planning Policy Statement 23 – Planning and Pollution Control**

PPS 23 refers to the potential impacts from various pollutants, such as contaminated land, noise, air and how they should be addressed in developments.

**Planning Policy Statement 25 – Development and Flood Risk**

PPS 25 relates to the potential of a flood risk from development. The site has already been identified to have a low flood risk. This document (and its companion guidance) identifies the types of sites that require Flood Risk Assessment.

**Regional Planning Policy**

There is one Regional Strategy for the area to which Local Plans and Structure Plans should have regard - Regional Planning Guidance 6 – East (2000)

This document will be replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England published in May 2008.

**County Planning Policy****Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)**

Saved Policy P1/3 of the Structure Plan relates to 'Sustainable Design in Built Development'. This policy promotes the reduced use of the car. It promotes the development of a sense of space relating to the environment whether it is rural or urban in character. It makes it clear that efficient use of energy, either by introducing recycling measures or

by using sustainable methods of construction and use of materials, is important. Any development should have respect for the community by representing their needs and the importance of maintaining a safe environment in which to live and work.

### Local Planning Policy

#### **Fenland District Wide Local Plan**

There are 7 planning policies relevant in the Fenland District Wide Local Plan which have been saved from September 2007.

Policy TR2 refers to the implementation of traffic management measures to ensure townscape and environmental improvements.

Policy TR3 is there to ensure all developments have adequate parking and comply with the parking standards set out within the Local Plan.

Policies CF1 and CF2 refer to educational establishments. CF1 refers to improving existing facilities for schools. Whilst CF2 is in favour of developing school sites and community facilities, both policies presume that they do not conflict with other policies in the Local Plan.

Policy E3 refers to landscaping and how schemes should retain trees and hedgerows whilst improving the appearance of the site.

Policies E6 and E7 refer to archaeology and how development's should retain and preserve archaeology. This can be by a condition either requiring a watching brief or full excavation.

### Emerging Local Plan Policy

#### **Fenland District Council – Core Strategy and Development Policies – Preferred Options 2.**

This document was published in September 2007 and although its weight is limited, it is considered important to have regard for the content of the policies as they may be relevant for future developments.

Policy CP1 refers to Sustainable Development Principles and how all development should have regard to sustainability. Ensuring there is an efficient use of land, encouraging sustainable methods of transport and minimising the impact on the environment.

Policy B1 refers to design and having respect for the built environment, creating safe and secure development with a good layout promoting a network of footpaths and cycle ways.

Policy B2 is reference to ensure that any development has regard to the adjoining neighbour's amenity.

Policy B5 relates to Listed Buildings and how the setting of a Listed Building is not affected by any proposals for development.

Policy B6 relates to archaeology and if there are known sites how an evaluation should be prepared.

Policies N1, N2, N3 and N4 refer directly to the natural environment and how any development should respect the landscape character, biodiversity and habitats, tree and hedgerows.

### Planning History

3.11 This section provides information on recent planning applications on the school site:

Application No: F/2021/02/CC  
Description: A kitchen extension  
Decision: Granted

Application No: F/ YR04/ 0037/ F  
Description: Retention of 1 x 6-bay mobile unit used for educational purposes  
Decision: Granted

Application No: F/ YR03/ 0272  
Description: Works to 1 no. Horse Chestnut Tree covered by TPO M/ 2/ 465/ 17  
Decision: Granted

Application No: F/ YR03/ 2002/ CCC  
Description: Erection of single-storey extension to school to include 4 no. classrooms, 2 staff offices, store and plant.  
Decision: Deemed consent (CCC)

Application No: F/ YR02/ 2021/ CCC  
Description: Erection of kitchen extension.  
Decision: Deemed consent (CCC)

Application No: F/ YR01/ 1017/ REG3  
Description: Variation of Conditions of planning consent F/ 95/ 0350/ REG3 (Conditions 06 & 07) now to read: Condition 06- The pitch shall not be used after 9.45pm weekdays and 6.00pm on weekends.  
Decision: Deemed consent (CCC)

Application No: F/ YR01/ 0315/ REG3

Description: Erection of drama room extension, retention of mobile classroom and paving over of existing redundant swimming pool

Decision: Deemed consent (CCC)

Application No: F/ YR00/ 1123/ F

Description: Retention of 1 no. 6-bay mobile unit used for educational purposes.

Decision: Granted

Application No: F/ YROO/ 0365/ REG3

Description: Enclosure of existing open air swimming pool

Decision: Deemed consent (CCC)

Application No: PEND/ 40/ 00177/ 20

Description: Retention of 2 x 1-bay, 1 x 3-bay, 1 x 6-bay

Decision: No further information available

Application No: PEND/ 40/ 00178/ 01

Description: Erection of extension to kitchen

Decision: No further information available

## 4 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

### Key Planning Objectives

- To create a high quality environment to encourage and support learning
- To provide new purpose built, environmentally sustainable school buildings and associated facilities which will assist in the transformation of education envisaged in Cambridgeshire's Vision for Education, the BSF Strategies for Change Parts 1 & 2 and Neale-Wade's Strategy for Change
- To provide for sports provision in line with Sport England specifications and guidance
- To provide high quality, sustainable architecture which integrates with the environment and contributes to the quality of the streetscape as well as respecting the light, privacy and outlook of nearby properties
- To minimise the impact on the environment and climate change through sustainable design, energy efficiency, use of renewables and other appropriate measures
- To support and develop biodiversity through construction and planting schemes within the overall development
- To achieve a development that is compatible with the residential nature of the surrounding area
- To maximise the space available to pupils for play, sport and other cultural activities
- To provide full access to buildings and the external environment for pupils and adults with disabilities. The school should promote inclusivity for children with special educational needs whilst providing a safe welcoming environment suited to their specific needs
- To achieve development that addresses wider community issues such as crime reduction, community safety, community cohesion and social inclusion
- To provide a pedestrian and cycle friendly environment
- To encourage a lesser dependency on the car as a means of transport to school
- To provide facilities/measures to encourage cycling, walking and the use of public transport

### Key Planning Issues

- The effect of any development on the character of surrounding area, including the spacious, well landscaped qualities of the area, and the setting of nearby conservation areas
- The trees within the school's site boundaries and on the surrounding footpaths contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area. Students have also confirmed that they wish to see the parkland setting at the front of the site retained.
- Effects on residential amenities - scale and massing of buildings.
- Parking and access.
- Potential noise and disturbance issues for surrounding residential properties from weekend and evening uses on the site.
- Ensure that any archaeology within the site is preserved.
- Ensure that any development does not affect the setting of St Wendreda's Church and tombs which are Grade II Listed Buildings.
- Ground conditions where buildings higher than a single storey are proposed.

### Land uses

- 4.1 The existing land use is education. It is proposed that this land use be retained on the site. There are therefore no "in principle" planning concerns regarding the proposed redevelopment.
- 4.2 Other than the relocation of existing caretaker's accommodation that may be necessary, it is not considered that residential units would be acceptable. The need to provide accommodation for a caretaker will need to be agreed with the school and the Council.
- 4.3 For education use, the following elements are required.
  - A secondary school for up to approximately 1,800 pupils of approximately 14,700 square metres total building area which at least meets the requirements of DCSF guidelines (BB98 in particular)
  - An enhanced 6<sup>th</sup> form and diploma studies facility to accommodate approximately 280 pupils in accordance with DCSF guidelines (BB98 in particular)
  - Learning support facilities to ensure that the school can meet the needs students with a wide range of special educational needs, including outreach support from Meadowgate School in Wisbech. The Council is committed to ensuring that as many students with special educational needs as possible can have their needs met in their local school
  - The school should be large enough to accommodate the required number of teaching spaces such as classrooms, laboratories,

rooms, studios and halls set out in the school's schedule of accommodation

- The buildings should accommodate and provide specialist facilities including ICT suites, learning resource areas, music/group room, medical room, sports facilities and specialist teaching rooms as required by BB98
- Appropriate staff work areas and administration areas for both curriculum areas and central support as required by the schedule of accommodation
- Appropriate kitchen and food serving areas, together with associated dining and social spaces
- Appropriate toilets and personal care facilities
- Flexible spaces with adequate storage which enable rooms to be used flexibly for school and community use
- A variety of hard and soft formal and informal outdoor spaces to meet the needs of a variety of uses as set out in BB98

#### Site Layout

- 4.4 A priority for the school is to improve internal circulation and communication, with clearer and more accessible entrances.
- 4.5 Any new buildings should adopt a layout, and be of a scale and massing which represents a positive development of the current building design and respects that of the surrounding street pattern, and should be designed to take into account any impacts on the privacy and surrounding residential properties, as well as avoiding any undue overshadowing or enclosure relative to nearby residential properties.
- 4.6 The design should seek to ensure any new elevations reflect a human scale which express the function of the new buildings as school and community buildings. Care should be taken in the articulation of all frontages to create both interest and a sense of order.
- 4.7 There should not be any unacceptable overlooking or overshadowing impacts on the nearby residential properties. Any proposals would need to be carefully designed to ensure that impacts on existing residential properties are kept to a minimum.
- 4.8 The school should be designed and maintained with security as a key consideration. Buildings should foster a sense of safety and promote well being. There should be no 'blind spots' or hidden recesses which make inappropriate behaviour difficult to detect.
- 4.9 The school should be designed to take account of provision for satisfactory and sustainable ventilation / temperature control.

### Design Approach

- 4.10 The Council expects all new premises to be fully accessible and demonstrate a high standard of architecture. BSF expects developments to be in line with the aims of the Commission for Architecture and Built Environment (CABE) which include that every child should be educated in a well-designed school. High quality contemporary design is sought. The Council is keen to see the use of energy efficient design and technology (see the Sustainability paragraphs later in this section).
- 4.11 There have been many alterations and additions to the fabric of the school over the years. There is a great variety of building styles and external finishes across the site. There is a compelling need for a coherent vision and design. As such, there is no objection in planning terms to demolition of existing buildings where appropriate.
- 4.12 The Council expects that developers would adopt a participative and inclusive design approach, including end users, and involving the school and local community, and should demonstrate an ability to work with young people.

### Building Heights

- 4.13 While the size of the site would allow for a reasonable scale of development, any new buildings would need to respond to the existing scale of remaining buildings on site and those on surrounding streets.
- 4.14 From an operational point of view the school would prefer the development not to exceed two storeys in height. This is consistent with the planning authority's view that the modernised school should not need to exceed two storeys in height.

### Sunlight and Daylight

- 4.15 Sunlight and daylight studies may be required to ensure that there would be no adverse impacts on existing residential properties. The impact on overshadowing on the open space and play areas within the site also needs to be taken into consideration.

### Massing

- 4.16 The development of the site should seek to maintain the current aspect of the main school buildings behind a parkland frontage, which presents the buildings to advantage. The design should aim to achieve a suitable balance between compactness and a sense of space. This is likely to involve a significant two-storey development to avoid an excessive building footprint on the site, and lengthy walking distances between different parts of the buildings. Whilst some separation of building elements is acceptable, particularly the sport complex, the design should aim for maximum physical integration so that students and staff have options in respect of internal and external circulation routes when the weather is suitable. Spaces should be provided that

promote a range of social activities and interactions as well as the more traditional physical sport and play activities. The main entrance should be prominent to visitors.

#### Materials and Boundary Treatments

- 4.17 Materials, externals and boundary treatments should be of demonstrably high quality, relate well to the chosen architectural style in colour and texture and provide an appropriate relationship to the surrounding area.
- 4.18 Boundaries need to achieve a proper balance between security and avoiding an inappropriately defensive and hostile aspect to the wider community.

#### Accommodation whilst works are carried out

- 4.19 Many of the existing buildings will need to continue in use whilst works are carried out. Some temporary accommodation is also likely to be required during the works. A balance therefore needs to be struck between the two objectives of minimising disturbance to normal school activities and local residents during the construction period, whilst also maintaining educational attainment levels at the school during this time. Development proposals would need to address this matter having regard to construction impacts and duration, including phasing and hours of work.
- 4.20 An application for planning permission should also demonstrate how the school's sports and outdoor play needs would be met during this time.

#### Access and Inclusive Design

- 4.21 Cambridgeshire County Council expects an inclusive and best practice approach to the design of school buildings. Recent educational and civil rights legislation leads to a presumption that children with disabilities and special educational needs will be included in all mainstream schools. It is essential that the school development takes this into account.
- 4.22 A Design and Access statement would be required with any application. This would need to be based on the document produced by CAGE. However it is important to include key principles related to pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs and how they have been integrated into the development of the school. These principles are outlined below:
- Identify any other special needs group that the school can cater for and how this can be met
  - How will the design reflect the needs of all pupils
  - As well as physical needs can the emotional needs for pupils be accommodated within the new school

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- 4.23 The planning authority will expect to see all new buildings to be designed to the highest quality of accessibility, and actively designed to assist all pupils to participate fully in school activities. BS8300, Part M of the Building regulations and Building Bulletin 77, Designing for Pupils with Special Needs and Disabilities in Schools (2005) are the standard reference points for accessible design. Sports England 'Access for Disabled People' provides valuable additional material for sports facilities.
- 4.24 The school buildings, routes between buildings and external sports and play areas should be wheelchair-accessible; and provision made for washrooms and specialist facilities to be wheelchair-accessible.
- 4.25 Building Bulletin 77 identifies the need for additional 'resourced provision' (i.e. smaller withdrawal or teaching rooms), and additional storage space for teaching and personal assistance aids for most SEN pupils. These should be identified.
- 4.26 Existing and new buildings should demonstrate a high quality acoustic environment, including sound insulation between rooms and corridors in accordance with Regulation E4 of the Building Regulations which also refers Building Bulletin 93 (Acoustic Conditions in Schools). Room layouts should prevent teachers having to stand with their backs to the window.
- 4.27 Arrangements for means of escape should rely as little as possible on assistance for disabled staff and pupils. Where independent means of escape is impossible, refuges and emergency communication arrangements should be designed in from the start.
- 4.28 Details of how consultation with disabled people will be undertaken should also be included. Refer to p43 ODPM Good Practice Guide 'Planning and Access for Disabled People'.
- 4.29 Additional guidance on designing facilities that are accessible to all users (including disabled people) should be referred to. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 imposes a Public Sector Duty on schools relating to equality of opportunities for disabled pupils. Other relevant guidance is as follows:

**General**

BS 8300: 2001- Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people  
Building Regulations, Part M 1998, Access and facilities for disabled people.

**Schools**

Building Bulletin 94 'Inclusive School Design'  
Building Bulletin 91 'Access for Disabled People to School Buildings'  
Building Bulletin 77: Designing for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Schools 2005  
The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA)

**Sports facilities**

Sport England design guidance note 'Access for Disabled People'

**Children's play areas**

Developing Accessible playspace Published ODPM

Access and Circulation

- 4.30 The priorities for traffic management for the development site should be:
- Ensuring safe access for children and staff to the school; and
  - ensuring that the operational needs of the school and any additional land uses, including community uses, on the site are met efficiently and in a sustainable manner.
- 4.31 Adequate loading bays for deliveries and servicing requirements for the school must be provided within the site, as well as emergency vehicles. Access to these should be located away from the main pedestrian entrances and routes to the school. There should be adequate service vehicle manoeuvring areas to enable vehicles to turn and exit in forward gear.
- 4.32 Drop off options for children with disabilities as well as any bus drop off requirements for visiting pupils from other schools will need to be carefully considered. An on-site bus drop off area could be combined within the required on-site servicing area. There would need to be conditions attached to any planning permission granted on the permitted servicing hours, to ensure the safety of school pupils.
- 4.33 Existing cycle routes on the surrounding streets should be retained and enhanced where possible.
- 4.34 All work to roads surrounding the site should complement works being carried out by the Council to encourage safer routes to school.

Access & Egress Points

- 4.35 The existing circulation, pedestrian and vehicular routes are identified in Appendix 1f. This plan identifies the existing circulation routes in the school, whilst identifying the vehicular and pedestrian links into and out of the school.
- 4.36 There is one vehicular access point from Wimblington Road which has associated car parking which extends to the northern boundary of the site adjacent to the sports hall. There is a clear 'IN' and 'OUT' system operating which would appear to be adhered to. The parking area to the front has railings to separate it from pedestrian routes and is clearly for the use by parents picking and dropping off pupils. It will be necessary to ensure this system remains in operation in order to ensure the safety of pupils and other pedestrians.

4.37 There is a bus stop lay-by to the front of the site.

#### Pedestrian Routes

- 4.38 There are two pedestrian access points to the site; the main entrance is located adjacent to the 'IN' vehicular access on Wimblington Road. This is screened with some planting and has a gate.
- 4.39 A second access is to the northern boundary which links to the adjacent development. This has a gate approximately 2m high for security and is locked.

#### Parking

- 4.40 There are approximately 140 existing car-parking spaces on the site, located at two primary locations both accessed via the main vehicular entrances off Wimblington Road. There is informal parking space to the east of the site near to the sports hall. The school is seeking to increase this level of provision to address:
- an increase in student numbers;
  - the impact of the government's workforce reform strategy, which has seen an increase in the number of adults working with students in school;
  - advice from the highway authority which has expressed concern about the amount of parking on nearby streets.
- 4.41 The existing parking provision at Neale-Wade is shown on the accompanying site photos (Appendix 1c).
- 4.42 Provision will need to be made for essential users, disabled staff and visitors, parents, emergency vehicles and visiting specialist staff where appropriate. It is expected that these spaces will not be used for child drop-off and are only available for the use of authorised users.
- 4.43 An applicant would need to submit a Transport Assessment which should include information such as the number and approximate frequency of visits and approximately how many staff members might be teaching across the site.
- 4.44 Proposed numbers of school and visitor car parking spaces should be indicated, together with a justification for this number. Additional measures to encourage the use of sustainable transport options will be encouraged, such as additional cycle parking, car club facilities, and a School Travel Plan will be required.
- 4.45 Secure, covered cycle parking should be provided on-site in accordance with relevant cycling parking standards. Convenient and visible cycle parking should also be provided for visitors.
- 4.46 On site coach parking and mini-bus parking should be provided, together with adequate manoeuvring space. An applicant's Transport Assessment would need to assess these requirements and ensure that adequate provision is made to meet this need.

### Landscaping

- 4.47 Landscaping forms an integral part of the development of the school. It should create an attractive environment in which to work and play providing areas for different activities whether they are formal or informal, hard or soft landscaped.
- 4.48 It is suggested that a landscape architect who has experience in playground design should be appointed to work with the scheme architect and school.
- 4.49 It will be important in the submission of any application that a comprehensive tree survey is carried out. Details of these requirements can be found in section 5 and Appendix 2.
- 4.50 Where it is not practical for these trees to be retained (if they are located within the proposed construction area of the new facilities) it may be necessary to carry out commensurate replacement planting. This will also apply to the existing courtyard areas where there are small shrubs and plants where they are to be affected by the development proposals. This will ensure that there is a varied and interesting landscape.
- 4.51 To reduce the impact of development on trees it may be necessary to protect them during construction, compensate for the loss of trees by planting new ones and/or introduce a variety of tree species to enhance the biodiversity in the area. The applicant may assess the appropriateness of alternative vegetation, naturalisation and screening schemes such as the introduction of green roofs and walls as part of the development process.

### Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Green Construction

- 4.52 In order to promote sustainable development, new developments should take account of the impact they have on the region's natural resources and environmental assets. Developments can achieve this by improving energy efficiency, increasing the proportion of energy use from renewable sources, minimising the use of treated water, using rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling schemes and incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS). SUDS should be particularly applied to introduce permeable paving materials instead of large areas of impermeable hard landscaping.
- 4.53 The Council will expect the developer to submit a Sustainability Assessment as part of the planning application. The Assessment should demonstrate how the impacts of any new development as well as refurbishment on environmental, social and economic factors have been taken into account, including how the above measures would be incorporated into the development proposal. Refer to CIRIA and the Environment Agency for details of SUDS best practice manuals.
- 4.54 The Council will require that the project be designed and built with due attention to environmental impacts and will require that in accordance

with the council's key priority of sustainability, new development requires a Design and Procurement BREEAM for Schools score of 'very good' as a minimum. Maximum possible additional specific carbon reduction measures to achieve improved carbon reduction performance should be included. A BREEAM for Schools post construction review will be required to verify delivery of specification.

- 4.55 Developers and builders should:
- reduce energy use in developments (construction and operational phases);
  - increase energy efficiency in buildings;
  - reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from developments;
  - increase the use of renewable energy technologies in developments.
- 4.56 The proposal should be accompanied by an energy assessment. Heating and cooling systems should be selected in the following order of preference:
- passive design;
  - solar water heating;
  - combined heat and power, preferably fuelled by renewables;
  - community heating for heating and cooling;
  - heat pumps;
  - gas condensing boilers and gas central heating.
- 4.57 In terms of renewable energy, the Council has a target that 10% of the energy demand for the site should be met from renewable sources. The scheme should, through design and incorporation of other measures, meet this target.
- 4.58 The integration of at least one form of renewable technology should be considered as this would have direct educational value, for example the renewable technology could be connected to a display board which shows live energy saving and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions savings.

## **5 PLANNING REQUIREMENTS**

- 5.1 Observance of Council Planning Policies will be necessary when submitting applications.

### Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 5.2 Fenland District Council has adopted an SPG for Education provision. For the most part this deals with contributions from developers when building large residential developments. However it is worth having regard to this document.

### Construction Impacts

- 5.3 Cambridgeshire County Council requires all its construction sites to be registered with the Considerate Constructor Scheme. Contractors should acquaint themselves with the requirements of CDM Regulations and the duties that they must perform to enable them to comply. Generally, compliance with the recommendations of the associated Approved Code of Practice - "The Management of Health and Safety on Construction Sites" will be the measure used to establish that the requirements of the Regulations are being met.
- 5.4 Contractors should allow for registering the site with the Considerate Constructors Scheme, including the appropriate fee, and for using best endeavours to comply with the scheme's Code of Considerate Practice. ([www.ccscheme.org.uk](http://www.ccscheme.org.uk))
- 5.5 During construction the Council will expect the builder to minimise the amount of construction traffic, to reduce vehicle emissions, noise, and traffic flow on the County's roads. This will contribute to improving both air quality and quality of life for residents.
- 5.6 A Construction Management Plan would be required with any planning application in order to mitigate impacts on nearby residents and the surrounding street networks.

### DCSF and other relevant standards

- 5.7 Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) - Accommodation Standards and Building Bulletins. In particular but not limited to:
- Building Bulletin 95: Schools for the Future;
  - Building Bulletin 98: briefing framework for secondary school projects;
  - Building Bulletin 87 (Guidelines for Environmental Design in Schools), Building Bulletin 77 in relation to Special Schools;
  - Regulation E4 of the Building Regulations which also refers to Building Bulletin 93 (Acoustic Conditions in Schools);

- Regulation L2 of the Building Regulations, Conservation of fuel and power, which refers to limiting energy use/ limiting CO2 emissions;
- Building Bulletin 100 in relation to Design against risk of fire;
- Schools for the future: transforming schools an inspirational guide;
- Creating excellent buildings: a guide for clients CABE 2003;
- Being involved in school design: a guide for school communities, local authorities funders and construction teams CABE 2004;
- Secured by Design Schools, Revised April 2004.

5.8 Other relevant standards and guidance includes:

- Sustainable Construction in Cambridgeshire: A Good Practice Guide, Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire Horizons
- Creating Excellent Secondary Schools: A Guide for Clients, CABE 2007
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Active Design, Sport England
- BS 5837:2005 Trees in relation to Construction

### Waste Management

5.9 Provision should be made within the site for secure and easily cleaned waste and recycling storage. Waste collection arrangements should accord with Building Regulation H6.

5.10 A Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) should be prepared covering the duration of the works. This should set out how waste will be minimised during construction, how reuse of waste on site will be maximised and ensure that any waste for disposal is disposed of in properly authorised sites.

### Planning Application Requirements

5.11 Applications should be submitted in accordance with the information requirements set out in the Council's FORMCM/CC1/1 Guidance Notes and the Planning Advice Note – Validation of Planning Application.

### Validation Checklist

The application must include all of the following. The Council can refuse to register an application if it does not have all of the correct and relevant information submitted with it.

1. 1 original and 10 copies of the completed forms, signed and dated
2. 1 original and 2 copies of the completed, signed and dated ownership certificate.
3. Where applicable details of any pre application discussions with the Local Planning Authority should be attached.
4. 10 copies of the location plan Ordnance Survey based, at a scale of 1:1250, showing the direction of North. The site should be clearly edged in red and any land within the ownership but not part of the application edged in blue.
5. 10 copies of any other drawings. All drawings must be dated, labelled, numbered and drawn to a metric scale.
6. The requisite fee.

The following checklist provides details on the type of plans required as part of the submission.

1. Existing and proposed elevations at a scale of 1:50 and 1:100
2. Existing and proposed sections, illustrating finished floor plans at a scale of 1:50 and 1:100
3. Site survey plan at a scale of 1:100 or 1:200 which illustrates all existing structures, gardens, open spaces, landscaping, trees, existing car parking arrangements.
4. Proposed site plan illustrating all of the proposals including any alterations to public highway or public right of way.
5. Details of materials, style and finish of windows and doors at a scale of 1:20
6. Street scene plan illustrating the proposed development and how it is sited within the existing street scene.
7. A plan illustrating where applicable where demolition is to take place.

The following checklist provides details of the supporting information that will need to be submitted with an application. Appendix 2 provides additional notes in respect of some of these elements and includes comments from Cambridgeshire County Council planners on the control option designs prepared as part of the Outline Business Case for Fenland BSF.

1. **Supporting Planning Statement.** This should include how the proposal accords with policies within development plan and national planning policies.
2. **Design and Access Statement** – based on the guidance from CABE
3. **Sunlight and Daylight Assessment** – this is applicable for all applications where there is a potential adverse impact on the existing levels of sunlight/daylight enjoyed by adjoining neighbours.
4. **Transport Assessment** which should address whether there are any significant transport implications. It is important to include accessibility, sustainability and access to public transport, car and cycle provision and the mitigation of transport impacts.
5. **School Travel Plan** – this should include how the transport implications are to be managed by the school. Whilst knowing the modes of transport pupils use in getting to and from school and how they can be encouraged to use alternative methods which are more sustainable.
6. **Statement of Community Involvement.** This should address how the school has involved members of the community, pupils, staff and governors on how the school should be developed.
7. **Utilities Statement.** This would detail how the proposed development will connect to existing utility infrastructure.
8. **Site and Waste Management Plan.** The management details of the disposal and recycling of waste from the site during and after construction.
9. **Landscape Plan.** A plan illustrating the existing planting on site and how it is to be protected during development. Illustrating where trees are to be lost or replaced and an overall scheme for landscaping the site and management of landscaping over 5 years. With inclusion with the landscape plan, a full tree survey should be attached, accurately plotting the trees, species, height, trunk diameter, crown spread and condition that they are in.
10. **Lighting Assessment.** Being a school and having a MUGA there may be issues relating to flood lighting and these need to be assessed. The MUGA has planning permission and includes the provision of flood lighting; however any additional lighting of the school premises will need to be considered. This site is on the very edge of a settlement which is surrounded by countryside which is flat in nature and could potentially be a source of light pollution.

11. **Heritage Statement.** Adjacent to the school is a Grade II Listed Building which is St Wendredas Church and tombs, it is important to assess the impact on the setting of the Listed Building. In addition it is acknowledged that there may be archaeological remains within the site and it is important to have regard for these and the possibility that any planning permission granted will require some form of archaeological investigation.
12. **Construction Management Plan.** In order to mitigate impacts of development on nearby residents and pupils during construction and how they are to be addressed. It will be necessary to seek advice from the Health and Safety Executive.
13. **Structural Survey** will be required on the basis that substantial demolition is proposed.
14. **Biodiversity Survey and Report.** This is to identify the existing biodiversity on the site including species and the possible impacts of any development.
15. **Sustainability Appraisal** – outline elements of the scheme that address sustainable development issues, including the positive environmental, social and economic implications as well as regeneration.
16. **Noise Impact Assessment.** Proposals that raise issues relating to noise should have a supporting Noise Impact Assessment. This should be carried out by a suitable qualified acoustician. Further guidance can be found in PPS 23.
17. **Photographic Survey.** This would give a clear indication on the setting of the school and would be well supported by a scaled model of the proposals.

## 6 CONTACTS

Issue	Contact
Further advice on planning matters contained in this Planning Brief	<p>Richard Wilkinson Development Strategy Manager Cambridgeshire County Council 01223 712716 <a href="mailto:Richard.Wilkinson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">Richard.Wilkinson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Chris Hodson Strategic Planning Manager Fenland District Council 01354 622318 <a href="mailto:chodson@fenland.gov.uk">chodson@fenland.gov.uk</a></p>
Advice in respect of planning applications for this site	<p>Helen Wass Development Control Officer Cambridgeshire County Council 01223 717616 <a href="mailto:helen.wass@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">helen.wass@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></p>
Advice on the BSF programme	<p>Alan Kippax BSF Programme Manager Cambridgeshire County Council 01223 699266 <a href="mailto:alan.Kippax@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">alan.Kippax@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></p>

## 7 GLOSSARY

BB98	Building Bulletin 98
BSF	Building Schools for the Future
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CD	Competitive dialogue
D&B	Design and Build
DBOM	Design, Build, Operate and Maintain
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
FBC	Final Business Case
FM	Facilities Management
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
ITPD	Invitation to participate in dialogue
ITCD	Invitation to continued dialogue
ITSFB	Invitation to submit final bids
LA	Local Authority
LEP	Local Education Partnership
OBC	Outline Business Case
OJEU Notice	A notice in the Official Journal of the European Union
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PfS	Partnerships for Schools
PID	Project Initiation Documentation
PIN	Prior Information Notice
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PQQ	Pre-qualification Questionnaire
PSP	Private Sector Partner
PUK	Partnerships UK
SfC	Strategy for Change
SPV	Special Purpose Vehicle