

15 DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR WHITECROSS HIGH SCHOOL, HEREFORD

Report By: Forward Planning Manager

1. Wards Affected

Three Elms

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To consider and agree the development brief for the Whitecross High School site in Hereford, as amended, for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document. The brief has been amended following an extensive consultation exercise, including two public meetings. Whitecross High School is proposed for redevelopment in Policy H2 of the Revised Deposit Draft Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

3. Background

- 3.1 Planning Committee will be aware that Whitecross School is being relocated to a new site at Three Elms Road, Hereford – to be completed in June 2006. Members will also recall a report to them on the 30th September 2005 regarding the current school site, requesting the brief be agreed for public consultation purposes.
- 3.2 The six-week consultation period took place between 27 October and 8 December 2005 when all relevant statutory bodies and local residents were invited to make comment. A total of 19 responses were received.
- 3.3 In addition, a public meeting was held at the existing school on the 21 November 2005, at which the proposals for the site were highlighted. Approximately 50 people attended that meeting. Many concerns were raised regarding the proposals and these as well as the responses to the written consultation, are summarised in Appendix 1. From this summary it can be seen that whilst there was some support for new housing and an educational establishment at the site, there was also considerable concern at the traffic implications of the proposals on the local environment of Baggallay Street.
- 3.4 Prior to the meeting, the traffic aspects of the proposals had already been addressed by your officers with the commissioning of a Scoping Transport Assessment. Consultants who were asked to consider the traffic implications of five different options at the site, undertook the study. These options were: -
- 60 dwellings (of which 21 affordable housing)
 - 60 dwellings plus 420 pupil primary school
 - 60 dwellings plus 630 pupil primary school
 - 60 dwellings plus 50 place special school
 - 60 dwellings plus a children's centre

- 3.5 The Scoping Transport Assessment concluded that, in principle, all five options could be accommodated at the site using Baggallay Street as the sole access into the site. This was based on an assessment of the different levels of trip generation of the five options and any impact of additional traffic on waiting times at the Baggallay St/Whitecross Rd junction. However, the assessment revealed that the 60 dwellings plus 630-pupil primary school option would result in significantly greater trip generation at the site than the existing situation. It is considered that this greater level of traffic generation would result in an unacceptable increase in noise and disturbance to the residents of Baggallay St and adversely detracts from the character of the area. For these reasons and because of the restricted area that a new educational facility could occupy at the site without encroaching further on existing open space, it is considered appropriate to limit the scale of development proposed in the brief to 60 dwellings plus a **maximum** of a 420-pupil primary school. The Scoping Transport Assessment is available as a Background Paper.
- 3.6 Unfortunately, the results of the Scoping Transport Assessment were not available at the time of the November public meeting. It was therefore agreed that officers would hold a further meeting, in January, to feedback the results of the Transport Assessment.
- 3.7 This second meeting was held at the school on the 26 January 2006. Approximately 18 members of the public attended. The results of the initial public consultation exercise were fed back. Suggested amendments to the brief following the first consultation and the results of the Scoping Transport Assessment were also explained. Comments from this meeting were noted and added to the preceding comments received. All the comments received as a result of the public consultation exercise, as well as your Officer's responses to them and recommendations for changes to the brief are summarised in Appendix 2.
- 4.0 **Main changes**
- 4.1 No major changes to the main thrust of the brief are recommended as a result of the public consultation exercises. There are, however, limited-wording changes suggested for clarification as well as expanding on extra information required of any developer. In summary, these include references to:
- Scoping Transport Assessment carried out and clarification that, in principle, a maximum of a 420 pupil school could be accommodated at the site in addition to the proposed housing;
 - Consideration of any possible alternative or additional vehicular access to the site;
 - Shared pedestrian/cycle spaces and requirement to improve Yazor Brook path;
 - Safer Routes to School, drop-off and pick-up areas, traffic calming;
 - Access for all;
 - Need for changing facilities (integral with any new educational provision) for public use of playing fields;
 - Temporary access via Harrow Rd for construction/demolition traffic;
 - Requirement for Draft Heads of Terms for S106 agreements to be submitted with any application; and
 - Requirement for Statement of Community Involvement to be submitted with any application.

- 4.2 In addition, the Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 2 of the brief) has been redrafted to incorporate the Revised Deposit UDP Sustainability Criteria.
- 4.3 It is considered that the brief, as amended, fully describes Herefordshire Council's vision for a sustainable redevelopment of the current Whitecross School site for housing, new educational provision and open space and will help prospective developers achieve a high quality development and maximise the site's contribution to the local area.

5. Process

- 5.1 All the comments received as a result of the extensive consultation on this development brief have been taken into account in the preparation of the final document, which is reproduced in Appendix 3 (proposed alterations are shown as underlined and marked in the margin).
- 5.2 In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004, the original Statement of Consultation has been updated to include a summary of the representations received as a result of the consultation exercise and how these issues have been addressed in the SPD (Appendix 4). In addition an Adoption Statement has been drafted (Appendix 5) which will be sent out to all those interested parties who have requested notification of adoption. Both the Consultation Statement and the Adoption Statement will be posted on the Council's web site when the brief has been formally agreed.
- 5.3 When agreed by Committee and Cabinet Member, the brief will form the basis of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Whitecross School site and will be a weighted, material consideration in the determination of planning applications for its redevelopment.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Cabinet Member (Environment) be recommended to approve the development brief for Whitecross High School, as amended, for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Background paper

Revised Deposit Draft Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP).
Scoping Transport Assessment, Whitecross School, Hereford

