

PART 5: Developments Presentations

Item 5.1

1 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION DETAILS

Ref: 18/03453/PRE
Location: Timebridge Community Centre, Field Way
Ward: New Addington North
Description: The redevelopment of the site to provide a new 150 place Special Educational Needs (SEN) free school for children between the ages 2-19 with autism and learning difficulties.
Drawing Nos: Pre-application pack
Applicant: Saheed Ullah - Capital Delivery for Homes and Schools
Case Officer: Laura Field

1.1 This pre-application report aims to provide Members with sufficient information for effective engagement with the scheme and the report covers the following points:

- a. Executive summary
- b. Location details
- c. Proposal
- d. Place Review Panel feedback
- e. Material planning considerations
- f. Specific feedback requested
- g. Procedural matters

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The site contains the Timebridge Community Centre, parking and an historic playing field.
- 2.2 The development has been discussed at a series of pre-application meetings. Several options have been reviewed by the Council's planning officers, with a scheme presented to the Place Review Panel (PRP) together with a subsequent PRP design workshop.
- 2.3 Discussions have focused on accommodating the SEN school on the site, the design and layout, parking and landscaping, as well as the critical relationship with the new community centre (see 3.4 below).
- 2.4 The views of members are sought on the SEN school proposals with particular regard to the following key issues:

Design and massing

- 2.5 Having reviewed the applicant's latest plans and PRP comments, officers feel that the massing is an appropriate response to the context. The layout of the building has moved on significantly since the PRP presentation and in officers' view would create a much more positive school environment for pupils and teachers, as well as a more positive addition to this part of New Addington.

- 2.6 The Committee's views are sought on the proposed indicative design and massing of the proposed school.

Layout, parking and landscaping

- 2.7 Officers support the general layout of the site, with the building to the frontage and parking to the side/rear. Further to officers and PRP challenging the layout and the legibility of learning space, the scheme has evolved in the right direction. In officers' view the layout, anchored around the central garden space and facing onto the wider landscape, would create a positive learning environment for pupils and teachers. Furthermore, the landscaping would link more successfully with the Community Centre.
- 2.8 The Committee's views are sought on the layout of the building, the location of the parking and the landscaping approach.

3 LOCATION DETAILS

Site and constraints

- 3.1 The application site lies on the north-western side of Field Way. The site contains the Timebridge Community Centre, parking and an historic playing field. Further to the north east is a separate building for a Children's and Family Centre and a Multi-Use Games Area. This forms part of Timebridge Community Centre planning application.



Image 1: Visual of the site and immediate surroundings

- 3.2 The site is surrounded by Metropolitan Green Belt to the north and south-west. On the opposite side of Fieldway (a classified road) lies residential properties, predominantly in the form of four storey flats and two storey terraced houses. The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Rating (PTAL) of 2, lies within an Archaeological Priority Area and an area at risk of surface water and critical drainage flooding.

- 3.3 The site falls within the Proposal Site 120: Timebridge Community Centre which is allocated for a school.

Planning history

- 3.4 There is no relevant planning history for this site.
- 3.5 It is important to note that this scheme forms part of the wider site redevelopment with the Timebridge Community Centre which was presented at Planning Committee as a pre-application on 25th October 2018 (under application number 18/03718/PRE). This application has now been submitted and officers are dealing with the new Community Centre under reference 18/05350/FUL. Due to delivery programme and construction timescales, the two schemes have been separated. Whilst this situation is not ideal, officers have been challenging the applicants to make sure the schemes evolve together.

4 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This scheme proposes demolition of the Community Centre to facilitate construction of the new school with associated landscaping, car park, widened access road, highways improvements and service connections. The replacement Community Centre is being delivered under the planning application above.
- 4.2 The new school would be built in close proximity to the existing Timebridge Community Centre, which will be retained throughout the construction period. The replacement Community Centre will provide accommodation and encompass all uses from the Timebridge Centre and Family Centre currently on site. Following completion of Phase 2 (the main school building), the Timebridge Centre will be demolished and replaced by the parking for the school and build of Phase 2a.

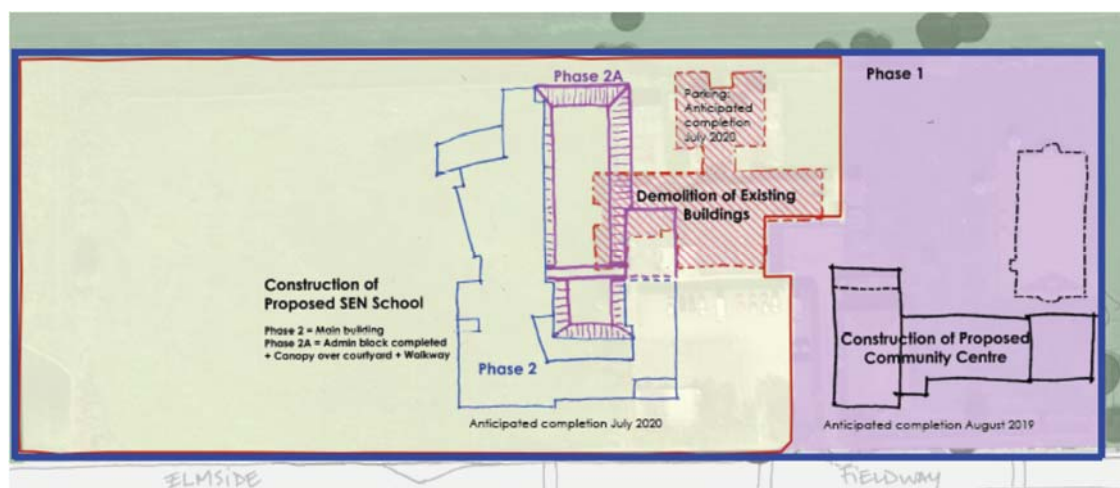


Image 2: Proposed Phasing Plan

- 4.3 The proposal is for an all through SEN school for pupils aged 2 to 19. This is a 150 place school.
- 4.4 The access and servicing would take place from Fieldway. The proposed car parking would total 41 spaces with 12 mini bus spaces.

5 PLACE REVIEW PANEL (PRP) RESPONSE

5.1 The scheme was presented to PRP on 20th September 2018. The Panel felt the site has wonderful opportunities to deliver a high quality school and supported the design team's ambition to provide good connectivity between high quality external amenity spaces and the teaching rooms. However, the design at that time was not delivering this ambition and the Panel considered it would unduly detrimentally impact the quality of life of the special educational needs pupils and staff. The Panel's key recommendations and observations were as follows:

- The design team should start the design process again with a brief for the scheme tailored to the special educational needs school and the site context.
- A masterplan should be developed to include both the school site and the adjoining Timebridge Community Centre site.
- A landscape architect should be engaged at the earliest opportunity to inform all stages of the design to completion.
- Car parking should be minimised and not harm visual and physical connectivity with the greenbelt.
- Car parking should be moved, potentially to the road frontage, to allow for a garden with useable soft-landscaped space in between the school and community centre.
- Long internal corridors should be designed out: the school could be divided in to two or three unit cluster blocks.
- All teaching spaces should have good access to high quality external amenity spaces.
- Journey distances between the school facilities should be minimised.
- Areas of the building for different age groups should have their own distinct identity and entrances.
- Public access to the school facilities should be maximised and integrated in to the design.
- The visual appearance of the buildings should relate better to local character.

5.2 Further to the PRP review, a series of officer meetings and a subsequent PRP design workshop have taken place in an attempt to evolve the scheme in response to feedback. The following information and amendments were provided to facilitate discussion at the PRP design workshop:

- Understanding of the design ethos, the learning spaces and inter-relationships between these spaces.
- Sketches of the entrances and view from classrooms.
- Exploring the concept of a courtyard and the students' journey through the school.

5.3 At the PRP design workshop on 17th October 2018, PRP felt the scheme is progressing in a positive direction, taking into consideration feedback from the previous session. The Panel's key recommendations and observations were as follows:

- Should be a strategic masterplan that establishes a set of key design principles for the whole site so the two schemes can be considered holistically.
- Should be a "landscape-led" strategy, and the applicant should appoint a Landscape Architect as soon as possible. The expression and footprint of the

building should be simplified so the richness of the landscape is the primary focus.

- Introduction of a large central courtyard a positive feature, but greater clarity required as to what the spatial strategy is that underpins this.
- Consideration to further breaking up the massing of the “U shaped courtyard” into several cluster blocks. These blocks may work better with the site topography than the current single block and could further enhance the idea of each Key Stage having its own distinct entrance and identity.
- May be merit in providing smaller open spaces within or around the courtyard (where soft boundaries are clearly visible) as this could make children feel more secure.
- Introducing covered external walkways which traverse the courtyard will provide more indirect/scenic and informal routes between the principal spaces.
- Further development of the class base arrangements with reference to the precedents. The Panel would strongly support each class base at ground and first floor to have direct access to a high quality external space.
- Further development of internal planning and adjacencies with a focus on the “journey” from the drop-off in the car park to the individual classroom.
- Modifications to car parking layout and quantity are required to reduce its impact on the Greenbelt.
- The main visitor entrance should be on the corner of Field Way to make it more prominent from the street. Similarly, widening the entrance into the site to give a landscaped “boulevard” would create a more welcoming public approach.
- The visual appearance of the building and its relationship with its immediate landscape must be further explored.
- Sport England advised the applicant that it would be contentious to build on the existing playing fields, which may affect the program and must be taken into consideration.
- There should have been time allowed for a thorough RIBA Stage 1 architectural report carried out.

5.4 The following amendments have been made as a result of that workshop:

- A courtyard layout to provide a better quality of educational space
- Changes to the form of the building
- External covered walkways to provide links between key spaces
- Enhanced landscape proposals including a greater buffer between the school and carpark

6 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main planning issues raised by the application that the committee must consider are:

1. Principle of development
2. Townscape and visual impact
3. Trees and landscaping
4. Residential amenity for neighbours
5. Access and parking
6. Sustainability and environment
7. Mitigation

Principle of development

- 6.2 Proposal site 120 (Timebridge Community Centre, Field Way) is identified for use as 'secondary school buildings' within the Croydon Local Plan 2018. Justification for this option states 'the site is a suitable size for accommodating secondary school buildings and adjacent to existing playing fields which can be used by the school. The secondary school would make a significant contribution towards meeting the demand for secondary school places'. The timing provided for this allocation is 2016-2021.
- 6.3 Relocating the community centre to the eastern portion of the site allows for its consolidation and frees the remainder of the site for the allocated school to be built.
- 6.4 The application for a school aligns with the site allocation and is therefore acceptable in principle.
- 6.5 Paragraph 97 of the NPPF seeks to protect playing fields from development and inevitably, the proposal would result in a loss of playing field area. There is scope in this instance to justify development on part of the playing fields as the site is a proposal site in the Croydon Local Plan 2018. The current playing field provision appears to be of very poor quality and the applicants have indicated little usage by the local community. The applicant is undertaking a detailed assessment of how the existing playing fields are used, which will need to justify any loss. The redevelopment would enhance facilities by providing a new community centre with hall, a new sports hall within the school and an upgrade of playing field facilities within the school. This would be made available to the community. Officers have told the applicant they must ensure the scheme benefits as broad range of the community as possible and to increase local community participation in sport through a community use agreement.
- 6.6 Sport England have been engaged and have raised initial concerns about loss of playing fields area. They recognise that this site is for SEN provision and therefore may be willing to accept, on the playing field, some uses that support the student's physical activity. However, this would only be acceptable if additional space is provided for playing field/sports facilities to benefit both the new students as well as community users.
- 6.7 Sport England have stated they will reconsider its position if the following are addressed:
- The proposals are amended so that development does not take place on the playing field unless it is for new sports facilities. The location of sports facilities on the playing field has the potential to be acceptable. A footpath/separate access will be required to access the playing field and MUGA (and sports hall) after hours, to ensure that the rest of the school remains secure. The location of the allotments, sensory garden, mini farm etc. should be more carefully considered to allow for a larger area of playing field. Landscaping could also be reduced to allow for the accommodation of replacement playing field.
 - Further details of the proposed MUGA and sports hall, which should comply with Sport England design guidance.
 - Clarity regarding the current and future use of the playing field and its existing relationship with the community centre. Will a community use agreement be put in place to allow the community to use the new school's sports facilities?
 - Could additional land be purchased/rented next to the centre to provide additional outdoor space for the school and the community? Providing additional playing field

land could provide replacement for that which would be lost and would meet exception 4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy.

- Could the car parking for the site be reduced or the car parking shared with the new community centre, thus reducing the car parking requirement for the site overall and thus reducing the impact on the playing field?
- Floodlighting for the Multi-Use Games Area could extend its use by the community after hours.

6.8 The applicant will need to continue to work with Sport England to ensure as much playing field land is safeguarded as possible and that the community has access to the new facilities. Sharing of facilities with the Community Centre, particularly car parking (see 6.10), is critical to limit loss of playing field land.

Townscape and visual impact

6.9 Design discussions have been on-going and the scheme is still very much a work in progress. Officers are of the view progress is being made in the right direction and are broadly content with the emerging proposals.

Design and massing

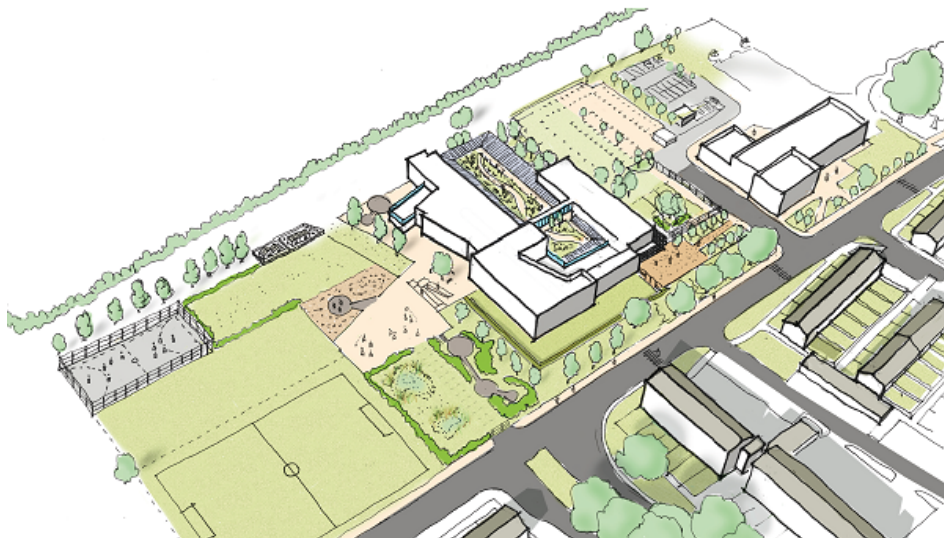


Image 3: Proposed massing and relationship between SEN School and Community Centre

6.10 The indicative height and massing relates to the wider street scene and the character of the area. A courtyard approach has been taken and officers support the general design approach subject to the correct selection and detailing of materials. A simple palette of materials has been agreed. Earlier versions proposed extensive use of render; this is not supported.

6.11 Further work must be undertaken to show the development from key viewpoints from the Green Belt, Addington Village Conservation Area, Addington Palace and beyond. There is some concern that the form is overly complex and may need further refinement and rationalisation.

Links to the community centre

- 6.10 The SEN school is at an earlier stage than the Timebridge Community Centre. As has been advised to the applicant, the Community Centre and SEN school need to take advantage of synergies between the schemes and successfully integrate with the neighbouring residential area and greenbelt. All opportunities for sharing spaces, such as car parking, must be explored for the two facilities. The design, materiality and landscaping of both the community centre and the school buildings should relate positively to each other and be distinct from the surrounding local housing.

Layout, parking and landscaping

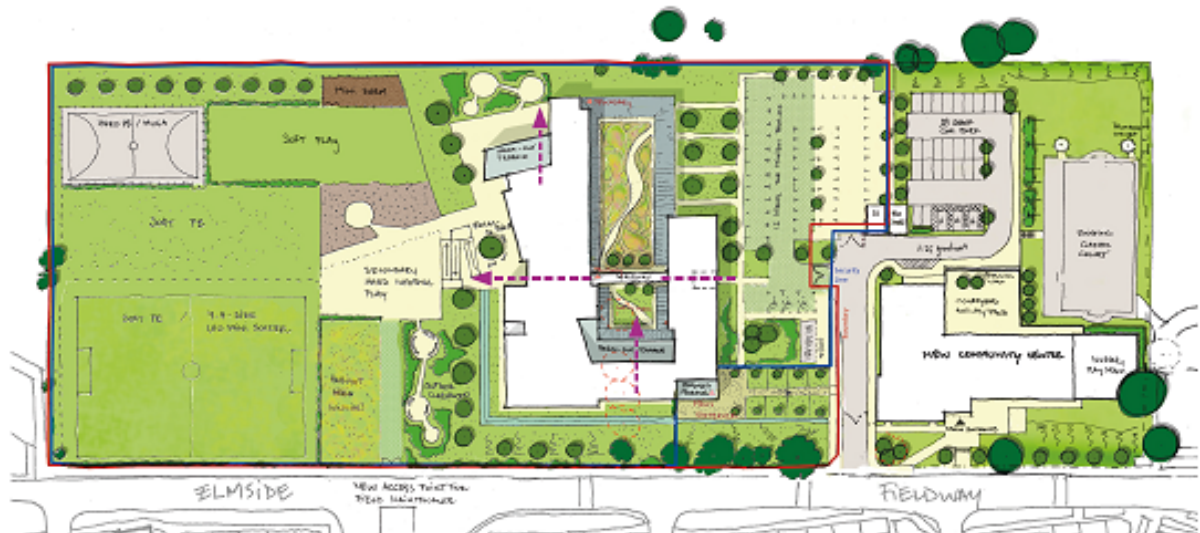


Image 4: Proposed site layout

- 6.11 Officers have encouraged the applicant to think carefully about the school functions and internal spaces to make sure they make the most effective use of the building. The applicant has made significant changes to scheme since the first PRP review and workshop, providing more of a courtyard building which can provide calm, quiet and protective spaces that are necessary for some pupils with SEN. The proposal also includes playing fields, a hard court, outdoor learning areas and a mini farm. The current proposal creates a positive school environment for pupils and teachers.

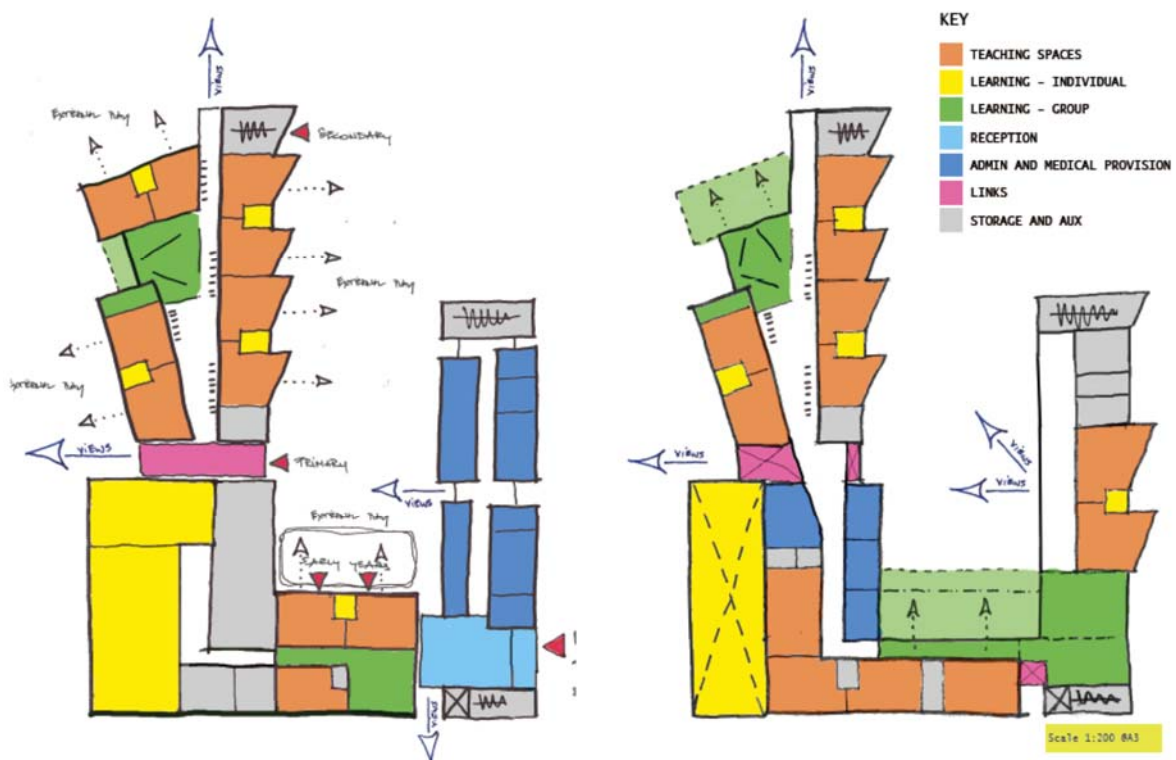


Image 5: Concept internal layout plans

- 6.12 The internal spaces are grouped together according to function (teaching and learning; therapy and medical; dining and social; staff/admin). This is broadly acceptable.
- 6.13 Whilst the car parking remains to the side/rear of the site, officers consider this to be an appropriate location. However, the applicant needs to deliver shared car parking with the Community Centre. The applicant has been encouraged to increase the extent of soft landscaping to the parking area to soften views both from within the building, but also from the adjoining Green Belt. The applicant has begun to make positive improvements in order to achieve this.
- 6.14 The landscape proposals broadly aim to provide a setting for the new building whilst at the same time providing functional spaces and outlook for the users of the school, as well as making a contribution to the street scene. The landscaping scheme has been further developed since PRP and officers are encouraged by the changes proposed. The landscaping scheme, particularly on the frontage, allows for spaces which better link the site into the surrounding area.

Trees

- 6.15 There are no in principle arboriculture objections. However, the applicant must retain those trees around the boundary particularly the very large prominent specimens. Construction and works must ensure these important trees are safeguarded. The indicative layout appears to have scope for the retention of these boundary trees which should be achievable as part of any formal planning application.
- 6.16 Any full application should include a detailed tree survey, a tree removal and retention plan, an arboricultural constraints plan and a tree protection plan. The proposal should include a comprehensive landscape scheme and an ecology survey submitted to

ascertain if there are any protected/priory species that need mitigation or will delay the programme.

Residential amenity for neighbours

- 6.17 Given the significant separation distances to the nearest residential properties, the closest of which are on the opposite side of Field Way to the south, the scheme is likely to be acceptable in terms of residential amenity.
- 6.18 The applicants have been advised that the hours of use and any potentially noise generating activities (such as music amplification) would need to be defined and controlled, as well as a detailed Community Use Agreement to ascertain any potential impacts on residents on the opposite side of Field Way.

Access and parking

- 6.19 The site is located within an area with PTAL of 2 which is poor. It is, however, within close proximity of bus service routes of T31 and 130.
- 6.20 Officers support the general layout of the site, with the building on the frontage and parking to the side/rear. The applicants have been advised of the importance of landscaping to help break up the car park.
- 6.21 The proposed scheme access would be from Field Way, serving a total of 41 car parking spaces with 12 mini bus spaces. Servicing and deliveries would take place from this access road. It is anticipated the majority of pupils will arrive by minibus.
- 6.22 To advance process for this application, additional information including the submission of a Travel Plan and a Transport Assessment document covering the expected trips generated would be required. Information on the mode of travel/mode share to and from school for pupil and staff together with the School's catchment area and any associated traffic impacts on the road network, transport services and road users within close proximity of the site are required.
- 6.23 The Applicant must take into account the 80% Sustainable Travel Mode Share target in the recently published in the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) and the draft London Plan for the trips associated with the school, as there appears to be high level of parking. That said, it is acknowledged that a SEN school has different parking demands, so this must be justified.
- 6.24 The provision of the access from Field Way is accepted in principle and the applicants have been advised further work is required on trip generation, traffic impact and parking activity.

Environment and sustainability

- 6.25 The applicant has been aware of the requirements for BREEAM "Excellent" and 35% reduction in CO2 emissions beyond the target required by Building Regulations.
- 6.26 The site is within an area prone to surface water flooding and as such a sustainable urban drainage system will have to be incorporated. A flood risk assessment and drainage strategy are required to support any future planning application. The applicant has been encouraged to engage with the Lead Local Flood Authority, a statutory consultee on any future application.

6.27 Given the location in an Archaeological Priority Area, the applicant has been advised that an archaeology report is required in support of the application.

Mitigation

6.28 As this stage it is envisaged that planning obligations will be required to mitigate the impacts, with the following Heads of Terms:

- Local employment and training strategy (no contribution required)
- Carbon off-set contribution (only if 35% CO2 reduction not met)
- Travel Plan
- Potential highway works
- Potential public realm works

7 SPECIFIC FEEDBACK REQUESTED

7.1 In view of the above, it is suggested that members focus on the following issues:

- I. The design and massing of the proposed school building
- II. The internal layout, particularly how the SEN school would function
- III. How the external spaces work and the landscaping proposed
- IV. The location of the parking and quantum of spaces
- V. How the development can embrace and relate to the community centre
- VI. The extent to which the school and community centre could/should share facilities, particularly car parking

8 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

8.1 The proposal is reported to Planning Committee to enable Members to view and comment on it prior to submission of a formal application. The proposal is not a planning application. Any comments are provisional and subject to full consideration, including public consultation and notification as part of any subsequent application.