
**Development Application - Development of
New College Campus and Access Works,
Associated Parking and Sports Pitches,
part of Sports Ground, Cambridgeshire
Constabulary, Hinchingsbrooke Park,
Hinchingsbrooke Park Road, Huntingdon**

Report by the Head of Planning Services

Case No: 0703432OUT (OUTLINE APPLICATION)
Applicant: HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGIONAL COLLEGE
Grid Ref: 522814 271837
Date of Registration: 16.10.2007
Parish: HUNTINGDON

RECOMMENDATION - MINDED TO SUPPORT

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 The application site is located within Huntingdon and is surrounded by established public institution uses such as the Hospital, Police headquarters and the Hinchingsbrooke Community School Campus and associated facilities. Situated west of Brampton Road and north of Hinchingsbrooke Park Road, the land is currently owned by the Constabulary and was previously used as a private sports pitch.
- 1.2 The site benefits from being approximately 1km from the Town Centre, with good pedestrian and cycling links, frequent public transport services also located on the proposed Huntingdon to St. Ives Bus Priority measures serving the forthcoming guided bus route and only 500m from the main line railway station.
- 1.3 The application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of a new College Campus comprising approximately 9,600m² of gross floor area, approximately 220 car parking spaces, a MUGA and 90m x 57.5m football pitch. As an outline application, the applicant is at this stage seeking consent for the principle of the use of the land and the acceptability of the proposed access. Appearance, layout and scale are to be considered at a later time following the determination of this application, as reserved matters.
- 1.4 In support of the application, the applicant has submitted a Transport Assessment, proposed access details from Hinchingsbrooke Park Road and an indicative layout plan.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 **PPS1: “Delivering Sustainable Development” (2005)** contains advice on the operation of the plan-led system.
- 2.2 **PPS9: “Biological and Geological Conservation” (2005)** sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system.
- 2.3 **PPG13: Transport (2001)** provides guidance in relation to transport and particularly the integration of planning and transport.
- 2.4 **PPG15: “Planning and the Historic Environment” (1994)** sets out Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment. It explains the role played by the planning system in their protection.
- 2.5 **PPG16: “Archaeology and Planning” (1990)** sets out the Secretary of State's policy on archaeological remains on land, and how they should be preserved or recorded both in an urban setting and in the countryside.

For full details visit the government website <http://www.communities.gov.uk> and follow the links to planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Policy.

3. REGIONAL POLICY

3.1 **Regional Spatial Strategy: East of England Plan (May 2008)**

East of England Plan - Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008) Policies viewable at <http://www.go-east.gov.uk> then follow links to Planning, Regional Planning then Related Documents

- ◆ SS4: “Towns other than Key Centres and Rural Areas” – Local Development Documents should define the approach to development in towns. Such towns included selected Market Towns and others with potential to increase their social and economic sustainability.
- ◆ T2: “Changing Travel Behaviour” – to bring about significant change in travel behaviour, a reduction in distances travelled and a shift towards greater use of sustainable modes should be promoted.
- ◆ T3: “Managing Traffic Demand” – Demand management measures for highway use should be pursued to tackle congestion and, as a consequence provide more reliable journeys.
- ◆ T13: “Public Transport Accessibility” – public transport should be encouraged throughout the region by increasing accessibility to appropriate levels of service of as high proportion of households as possible, enabling access to core services.

- ◆ T14: “Parking” – controls to manage transport demand and influencing travel change alongside measures to improve public transport accessibility, walking and cycling should be encouraged. Maximum parking standards should be applied to new residential development.
- ◆ ENV6: “The Historic Environment” - Within plans, policies, programmes and proposals local planning authorities and other agencies should identify, protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of the region including Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
- ◆ ENV7: “Quality in the Built Environment” - requires new development to be of high quality which complements the distinctive character and best qualities of the local area and promotes urban renaissance and regeneration.

3.2 **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)**

Policies from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk> follow the links to environment, planning, planning policy and Structure Plan 2003.

- ◆ **P6/1** – Development Related Provision – development will only be permitted where the additional infrastructure and community requirements generated by the proposal can be secured.
- ◆ **P9/8** – Infrastructure Provision – a comprehensive approach towards securing infrastructure needs to support the development strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region. The programme will encompass: transport; affordable and key worker housing; education; health care; other community facilities; environmental improvements and provision of open space; waste management; water, flood control and drainage and other utilities and telecommunications.

4. **HDC CORPORATE POLICIES**

- 4.1 **The Huntingdonshire Community Strategy** – the adopted Community Strategy, which was prepared by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership, defines supporting ‘Good Opportunities for Learning’ as one of its key desired outcomes with the related objectives seeking to deliver further opportunities for local people to access learning opportunities, develop new skills and to train for work.
- 4.2 **The Emerging Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy** – the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy also supports enhancing opportunities for lifelong learning, the provision of improved education and training opportunities for young people and the enhancing of skill levels to support economic prosperity (via various initiatives aimed at encouraging young people to access learning and training opportunities).

- 4.3 **Growing Success – Our Corporate Plan** – HDC’s corporate plan also supports, as an acknowledged community aim, the delivery of improvements of access to training and development activities

5. **PLANNING POLICIES**

Further information on the role of planning policies in deciding planning applications can also be found at the following website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk> then follow links Planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Information and Guidance, Planning Guidance and Advice and then Creating and Better Place to Live.

5.1 **Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995)**

Policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan95.

- ◆ **T18:** “Access requirements for new development” states development should be accessed by a highway of acceptable design and appropriate construction.
- ◆ **En12:** “Archaeological Implications” – permission on sites of archaeological interest may be conditional on the implementation of a scheme of archaeological recording prior to development commencing.
- ◆ **En13:** “Archaeological Implications” – in areas of archaeological potential planning application may be required to be accompanied by the results of an archaeological field evaluation or desk-based assessment.
- ◆ **En14:** “Open Spaces, Frontage and Gaps in the Built Up Framework or immediately adjacent” - development will not normally be allowed.
- ◆ **En15:** “Open Spaces and Gaps for Protection” – as defined on the inset map, development that impairs their open nature will not normally be allowed.
- ◆ **En20:** Landscaping Scheme - wherever appropriate a development will be subject to the conditions requiring the execution of a landscaping scheme.
- ◆ **En25:** "General Design Criteria" - expects all new development to relate sensitively to its surroundings.
- ◆ **R1:** “Recreation and Leisure Provision” – will directly promote district wide recreation and leisure projects and generally support leisure and recreation facilities commensurate with population levels, housing developments and identified need.

5.2 **Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations (2002)**

Policies from the Huntingdon Local Plan Alterations 2002 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan - Then click on "Local Plan Alteration (2002).

- ◆ **OB1** – Nature and Scale of Obligations – will relate to the size of development and the impact on physical infrastructure, social and community facilities and services.
- ◆ **OB2** – Maintenance of Open Space – contributions may be sought for the maintenance of small areas of open space, children’s play space and recreational facilities, woodland or landscaping to benefit the development.

5.3 **Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007**

Policies from the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning, then Planning then Planning+Policy then Informal policy statements where there is a link to Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007

- ◆ **P1** – Sustainable Development – development proposals should contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development.
- ◆ **P2** – Natural Resources – development proposals should contribute to the efficient use of natural resources by: making best use of land and existing infrastructure; minimising the use of non-renewables; minimising water consumption; no adverse impact on water resources and flood risk; curtail pollution; encourage waste reduction and recycling.
- ◆ **P3** - Social and Economic Well-being - development should contribute to the social and economic well-being of the district.
- ◆ **P4** - Settlement Strategy - describes the settlement strategy for the district.
- ◆ **P5** – Settlement Hierarchy – Market Towns: St Neots, Huntingdon, St Ives, Ramsey and Bury.
- ◆ **P11** – Infrastructure Requirements – Development proposals should provide or contribute towards the cost of providing infrastructure, and of meeting social and environmental requirements, where these are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
- ◆ **G1** – Open Space and Recreational Land – development proposals should not entail the whole or partial loss of open space within the settlements, or of outdoor recreation facilities or allotments.
- ◆ **G2** – Landscape Character - development proposals should respect and respond appropriately to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape
- ◆ **G3** – Trees, hedgerows and Other Environmental Features - development proposals should minimise risk of harm to trees, hedgerows or other environmental features of visual, historic or nature conservation value.
- ◆ **B1** – Design Quality - developments should demonstrate a high quality of design in terms of layout, form and contribution to the character of the area.
- ◆ **B2** – Street scene – development proposal should make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of streets and public spaces.

- ◆ **B3** – Accessibility, Adaptability and Security – the location and design of new development should enable ease of access, have convenient and appropriate facilities and minimise the extent to which users feel at risk of crime.
- ◆ **T1** – Transport Impacts - development proposals should be capable of being served by safe convenient access to the transport network and should not give rise to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity of the local transport network.
- ◆ **T2** – Car and Cycle Parking - development proposals should limit car parking and provide cycle parking facilities to the levels set out in the Council's parking standards.
- ◆ **T3** – Rights of Way and Other Public Routes - Lists the criteria which should be considered in relation to Rights of Way.

5.4 **Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD – June 2007**

5.5 **Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment 2007**

5.6 **Huntingdon West of Area Action Plan – Issues and Options**
(consultation period commencing 8th May 2008 – 5th June 2008)

5.7 **Huntingdonshire Housing Land Assessment**

5.8 **Huntingdon Town Centre Vision**

6. PLANNING HISTORY

6.1 The site has been previously used as a football pitch predominately in association with the Police Headquarters. There has been no development on the site historically and there is no relevant planning history.

7. CONSULTATIONS

Initial Consultation

7.1 **Huntingdon Town Council – OBJECTION**, the proposed development, which has only one access is considered to be an 'overdevelopment of the area' and is at odds with the existing highways infrastructure, which is currently inadequate for existing traffic levels **(copy attached)**

Following the receipt of additional and amended details the Town Council have maintained their **OBJECTION** to the proposed development.

7.2 **Environment Agency – NO OBJECTION** subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

7.3 **Wildlife Trust – NO OBJECTION** subject to the imposition of appropriate safeguarding conditions.

- 7.4 **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** – Whilst not objecting, there are concerns regarding the road layout into the Police Headquarters. The Campus doesn't have a vehicular access onto its land adjacent to the main reception to provide a drop off point. The new access road from Hinchingsbrooke Park Road to the bypass, will have an access off used by emergency vehicles, any obstruction of this roadway entrance could endanger life by hindering response times. Recommend consideration of an access for emergency vehicles only.
- 7.5 **English Heritage** – Happy to defer to the advice of the Council's conservation team on the details of the application in relation to the impact of the setting of the proposed development on Hinchingsbrooke House.
- 7.6 **HDC Conservation Team – NO OBJECTION.** Given the context of this site and the nature of surrounding development it is concluded that the proposals put forward will not compromise or impinge on the setting of Hinchingsbrooke House or its associated listed structures. There are no views or vistas looking from or to the house and taking the land in question. Indeed on the north side of the house just outside the 16th Century gatehouse and walls (grade I listed) there is a significant area of parking which serves the school and this area has a rear service function to it and no longer affords any key views of Hinchingsbrooke House.
- 7.7 **Cambs Fire and Rescue Service – NO OBJECTION** subject to the provision of fire hydrants being secured by way of a S106 Agreement or condition.
- 7.8 **East of England Ambulance Service** – Concerns that to allow construction traffic to utilise this primary route will impact on our ability to respond to our local population in a timely and potentially life saving manner. Particular times of concern will be mornings and afternoon 'rush-hours', especially during school term time.
- 7.9 **Cambs PCT – NO OBJECTION** to the proposed development.
- 7.10 **Sport England – NO OBJECTION** as the proposed development seeks to mitigate against the loss of play facilities at the California Road site.
- 7.11 **CCC Archaeology – NO OBJECTION** to this proposed development, in light of the presence of early settlement in this land plot, the construction requires mitigation and there is no alternative than to excavate in the part of the development containing the most important archaeological remains. It is therefore recommended that a condition be imposed on any grant of planning permission.
- 7.12 **Natural England – NO OBJECTION**, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions relating to protected species. Encourage biodiversity in accordance with the Design and Access Statement and lighting should be kept to a minimum.

- 7.13 **CCC Highways Authority – NO OBJECTION.** Are now satisfied that the Transport Assessment adequately demonstrates that both the access proposed is practical and that there will be no detrimental affect on existing or potential traffic flows. Conditions are requested.
- 7.14 **Highways Agency – NO OBJECTION.** Have withdrawn the holding direction. The Transport Assessment is now considered adequate and they are satisfied that the proposed access arrangements would not prejudice the A14 redevelopment. Recommend appropriate planning conditions to safeguard the A14 buffer zone during reserved matters stage.
- 7.15 Any additional comments will be reported to Council.

8. REPRESENTATIONS

- 8.1 **Hinchingbrooke School** – Fully supportive of the rejuvenation of the College but cannot support its relocation to the planned site. Objection on the following grounds:
- ◆ Concerns regarding the level of traffic surrounding the school at peak times and the difficulties faced by students walking and cycling towards the town centre. Increased traffic will only make matters worse.
 - ◆ Concerned regarding the construction traffic and conflict with students coming to and from school. Even post construction the use of this right turn will increase congestion.
 - ◆ Concerned regarding the assertions in the Transport Assessment with regards to the quality of pedestrian and cycle access. We regard current provision as inadequate and planned improvements will only marginally improve the situation.
 - ◆ College relocation will increase car journeys into the area of Brampton Road and will further impinge upon access into and out of the school grounds by car.
 - ◆ The school currently suffers from an increasing number of cars being parked on the school site to avoid station parking fees. It is clear there is an insufficient amount of parking at the college site and will add to the parking problems at the school site. Creating barriers at the school will only divert funds from children's education.
 - ◆ Grave concern regarding the impact on Hinchingbrooke House.
 - ◆ Any road layout may be in place for several years prior to the future A14 re-development and it is noted that the Highways Agency have expressed concerned about development in the area in advance of A14 alterations in its response to the West Huntingdon Area Action Plan in August 2007.

8.2 **20A Post Street – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Grave concern to the traffic levels in this area. The Transport Assessment is flawed.
- ◆ Insufficient consultation with all parties concerned. In particular the school with concerns a) the safety of pupils, b) impact on Hinchingsbrooke House.
- ◆ The proposed site is smaller than the existing site and parking is already a problem at the existing site.

8.3 **39 Sallowbush Road – OBJECTION**

- ◆ The removal of the college sends out a clear signal that the residents on the Oxmoor do not deserve a college fostering vocational and further educational skills. The demographics of the Estate make the College on its present site more important.
- ◆ The present site allows for cohesion between the College, local school and Special Needs Pupils at Spring Common School, which will not be met by this new site.
- ◆ The arrangements for transport are inadequate and will add to congestion on Brampton Road. Will lead to Brampton Road being congested for much of the working day.
- ◆ Hinchingsbrooke is one of the few open spaces on the fringe of Huntingdon. The loss of the playing field and its replacement will only harm the visual environment and impact on Hinchingsbrooke House and its historic setting.

8.4 **5 Laurel Court – OBJECTION**

- ◆ How will all the staff and students be getting to and from the proposed site? Traffic is already a problem.
- ◆ There is nothing wrong with where it is.
- ◆ The main reason for this move is that the land the College currently occupies is worth more money as housing. There is nothing wrong with this but chose a better location closer to where many students need it around the Oxmoor not Hinchingsbrooke.
- ◆ All this town seems to do at the moment is waste money moving things to new premises.

8.5 **134 Hartford Road – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Whilst recognising the College's need to improve its existing facilities, mostly 60's build are now not fit for purpose, it should remain on its existing site. As it will benefit the local community and lead to a greater long term integration for them and the education facilities.
- ◆ Removing the College and replacing it will further housing attached to the 'Old'Town could re-awake the Oxmoor Isolation and reduce the facilities so essential for continued integration.
- ◆ Moving the College will also mean that many disadvantaged young people will find it difficult to access the courses by

increasing the distance to travel with no convenient bus service available.

- ◆ The access is likely to conflict with emergency vehicles, the hospital traffic and school traffic, careful regard must be given to the access arrangements.

8.6 **38 South Road – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Increasing an already congested through route.
- ◆ Increased road traffic hazards to pedestrians and cyclists especially young people.
- ◆ Restricting emergency vehicle access from Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.
- ◆ Not taking account of the non-cash costs.
- ◆ Not having a fully funded A14 development scheme.

8.7 **11 Budge Close – OBJECTION**

- ◆ The road congestion we have to contend with is already appalling, I can only see foresee matters deteriorating if the College relocates to this site.
- ◆ The changes to the A14 are many years away.
- ◆ Moving the college from an area devoid of much needed services is ill-planned and unfair. Any new building could be re-built on the existing location.
- ◆ The relocation will increase the need to travel to the College
- ◆ Consultation for this major work is inadequate.

8.8 **Friends of Hinchingsbrooke House – OBJECTION**

- ◆ The vistas to and from the house will be seriously disrupted.
- ◆ The proposal is not in keeping with the ambience of the land surrounding this important building and will have an effect on the house as a major tourist attraction.
- ◆ The impact on the traffic flows will be detrimental to the area.

8.9 **20 Post Street, Godmanchester – OBJECTION**

- ◆ The roads are already busy to add the Huntingdon College with its many students is madness.

8.10 **25 Snowdonia Way – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Traffic congestion at rush hour is already a problem.
- ◆ How can concentrating so many facilities in one location be a good idea?
- ◆ Surely the current site makes more sense.
- ◆ Hinchingsbrooke Park Road is a dead end, it's not as though traffic can filter through.

8.11 **66 Christie Drive – OBJECTION**

- ◆ College Traffic will only make the existing traffic congestion worse.
- ◆ The existing green belt and parks are slowly being eroded.
- ◆ If parking is going to be charged this will result in more parking on the access to the park and Christie Drive.
- ◆ Christie Drive is supposed to be two way but due to parking it is only a single track.
- ◆ Why can't the College stay where it is, it seems to work fine.
- ◆ Also there are no facilities or amenities on Hinchingsbrooke Park Road and the College will be very isolated.

8.12 **36 Dartmoor Drive – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Congestion in Hinchingsbrooke Park Road is already a major problem. Traffic is gridlocked at peak times.
- ◆ Whenever there is an accident or incident on either the A14 or in Huntingdon itself, Brampton Road reaches a standstill.
- ◆ The current location of the college is ideal why move it.

8.13 **7 Dartmoor Drive – OBJECTION**

- ◆ Traffic gridlock is already obvious and will get worse.
- ◆ How are the ambulances going to get through?
- ◆ Access too close to large secondary school and cutting across a street where children as young as 11yrs are walking and cycling past.
- ◆ Emergency helicopter has been using the field for landing and taking off.
- ◆ Surface water pooling regularly on Brampton Road and Hinchingsbrooke Park Road. Building on this field will only make it worse.
- ◆ This small green field should be left untouched and is a delight to walk past.
- ◆ The present site is surely adequate to re-build on.
- ◆ Do we really need another institution spilling out cars at peak times?

8.14 **15 Brecon Way – OBJECTION**

- ◆ The hospital should have good access at all times.
- ◆ Traffic is already an issue.
- ◆ Car parking in the area is becoming a problem.
- ◆ We must retain green areas.
- ◆ Walking is good for children, do they need to be near to the station?

9. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 9.1 The main issues for consideration are the acceptability of the relocation of the existing college, the principle of the use of this

application site as a location for a new Regional College; whether the Design and Access Statement is sufficiently detailed; the effect on residential amenity; the impact on the character and appearance of the area, including the impact on adjacent listed buildings; and the impact on highway safety and drainage.

The acceptability of the relocation of the existing college

- 9.2 The corresponding application for the development of the California Road site (the existing college site) has been supported by the Development Control Panel, and whilst this application must be determined on its own merits, it does highlight Central Government advice, which advises that the first choice of location for new community facilities should be within Town Centres or in sustainable locations. Whilst the existing College site is accessible by a number of means of transport, it is located approximately 800m from the town centre and a greater distance from the railway station. When having regard to the widespread College's catchment area, it is not considered that the existing site is necessarily the most appropriate location for such a use.
- 9.3 It is therefore considered that the principle relating to the proposed relocation of the college is acceptable subject to the new premises including a replacement playing field.

Principle of use of this site for a Regional College

- 9.4 The application site is currently designated by the 1995 Local Plan as being an 'Open Space and Gap for Protection'. The associated Local Plan policies En14 and 15 normally resist development on such areas which have intrinsic environmental qualities in themselves or by virtue of longer distance views which they allow, or developments that would impair their open nature. Accordingly, should Council be minded to grant this planning permission, they should be aware that it would be a departure from the Local Plan which is required to be referred to Go East in order for the Secretary of State to consider whether he would wish to intervene
- 9.5 The question is therefore are there any material considerations which indicate that the application should be supported as a departure from the development plan? Whilst full consideration must be given to the development plan policies, Members must also have regard to the emerging Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community and Core Strategy and the emerging Huntingdon West Area Action Plan.
- 9.6 The emerging area action plan includes this application site within an area defined as being the 'Hinchbrooke Community Campus Area', following the initial consultation period, the Council has now identified three development options for this area, which include the potential development of new, enhanced, education facilities on this site.
- 9.7 In addition to this, the Huntingdon Town Centre Vision was undertaken by the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit on behalf of the

District Council in 2000 and an update published in September 2006. This Vision document considered the constabulary land as a potential development site and observes that the site will be affected by the removal of the A14 viaduct and that a link from Hinchingsbrooke Park Road to the severed part of the A14 will be needed. It advised that this site was unsuitable for residential development and that it was better suited to development that respected the parkland setting and accordingly does not allocate this entire site for new development. However, it emphasises the need to strengthen the appeal of the area for arts, sports, educational and recreational uses, as well as those existing uses.

- 9.8 Whilst existing policy indicates that this site should be preserved in its current form, it is clear that recent assessments of the site have indicated that at least part of the land would be suitable for development of an institutional nature.
- 9.9 Many residents have raised concerns regarding the movement of the College from its existing location and the disadvantage that this will have on existing students from the Oxmoor area. However, the applicant has provided data from the 2006/07 intake, which demonstrates that the larger proportion of students travel to the existing site from outside of the Oxmoor Estate, thereby emphasising the need for a more sustainable location.
- 9.10 It is clear that this application site is well served by a number of sustainable transport links being within approximately 500m of the railway station, with good pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre, and will benefit from the Huntingdon to St. Ives Bus Priority measures, that will serve the forthcoming guided busway, which will pass directly past the site. In direct comparison to the existing College site, the proposed location is far more sustainable in transport terms..
- 9.11 The site has been identified as the location for the creation of a new road network following the demolition of the A14 viaduct as part of the wider new A14 proposals, therefore the existing character of the site would be substantially lost. On this basis, the introduction of a focal institutional building would create a focus for any new junction created and meet the potential future aspirations for the site. Additionally, the development of a college building in this location would be clearly read in association with the constabulary buildings and hospital.
- 9.12 Setting aside the issues of impact on the character and appearance of the area, listed building, local residents and highway safety which will be considered below, it is considered that this proposed site would be an appropriate site for the relocated college, being in a far more accessible location than its existing location.

Acceptability of the Design and Access Statement

- 9.13 The Design and Access Statement is comprehensive and should help to ensure a high quality scheme at reserved matters stage, that incorporates a well designed, contemporary building of a mix of two

and three storey elevations, with an opportunity to promote active and animated elevations that clearly address the public vantage points of the site.

- 9.14 Should Members be minded to resolve to grant planning permission it is recommended that certain elements of the Design and Access Statement be conditioned. These would include the indicative layout plan, proposed scale, biodiversity proposals and public art strategy. This will ensure that any subsequent reserved matters schemes achieve an appropriate scale of development, sustainable development and enhance biodiversity, whilst encouraging the use of public art.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 9.15 The proposed development site is a substantial distance from any residential development, it is not therefore likely to result in any detrimental loss of amenity to any neighbouring properties.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area, including the listed building

- 9.16 The existing site is currently laid to grass and benefits from a wildlife belt to the north-west and a dense tree belt to the south fronting Hinchingsbrooke Park Road. Additionally, the existing constabulary buildings and associated car parking is to the west and to the north lies the remainder of the existing grassed field owned by the constabulary.
- 9.17 As a result of the dense established tree belts, the views of the site from Hinchingsbrooke Park Road are limited. Whilst the application proposes amended access arrangements, the applicant proposes minimal works to these tree belts. The main view of the site from Hinchingsbrooke Park Road would be at the newly formed junction, allowing a view of the main college building. It is important to note that to date the Highways Agency have not finalised the potential routing of the new road network that will run adjacent to this site. Accordingly, there is a potential risk of the loss of part of the existing landscape belt fronting Hinchingsbrooke Park Road, therefore increasing the views of the proposed buildings and its presence within the street scene, emphasising the need to ensure good design and integration into its setting.
- 9.18 From the north the site is much more open, however, as a consequence of this being private land, there are only minimal public views of this perspective and these are primarily from the public footpath located within the 'wildlife belt' to the north-west. Upon completion of the new link road, the views of the site from this angle will significantly increase, as a new right of way is formed, it is accepted that the proposed development will be seen from this new link road, but careful regard must be given to the nature of the road link, the extent of works necessary to construct it and the impact that will also have on the character of this area.

- 9.19 The site at present is a pleasant open space, but as private land is not available for public use. The future of the openness of the site is already limited, as mentioned above. Following the creation of any new A14, it is highly likely that a link road from Brampton Road to what will become the old A14, will be created. Following any removal of the viaduct, a new road is likely to pass through a substantial part of this site, severing it from the constabulary buildings and potentially introducing a new junction of significant scale and 7-9m wide road, the exact details of which are currently being developed by the Highways Agency and will be subject to a Public Inquiry in approximately late 2009/10.
- 9.20 Additionally, the proposed development will clearly be read in association with the Hospital and constabulary buildings which are large dated institutional building fit for purpose. The proposed indicative innovative contemporary design proposed for the college would be an attractive addition to the locality and add a landmark feature to what is likely to become a major junction.
- 9.21 Overall, it is considered that the protection previously afforded to this site via Policies En14 and 15 has already been prejudiced by the Highway Agency's aspirations and as such the proposed development would ensure the retention of some open space to the north, whilst introducing a development that is aesthetically in keeping with surrounding development.
- 9.22 Turning to the impact on the listed building, Hinchingsbrooke House, whilst local residents have raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development on the vistas to and from the House, the Council's Conservation Team have comprehensively assessed the proposal and its impact on the listed building. In their professional opinion, when having regard to the context of the site and the nature of the surrounding development, the proposal would not compromise or impinge upon the setting of Hinchingsbrooke House or its associated listed structures. Of particular note is the lack of views or vistas looking to or from the house. Having regard to this professional advice it is not considered that the proposed development would be detrimental to the listed building, its associated structures or its setting.
- 9.23 Whether or not this development goes ahead, the character and appearance of the area will change in the future. The proposed College development looks to retain a large area of open space to the north and accords with the emerging policy for the development of this area. The benefits of the scheme, namely a substantially improved, state of the art Regional College, in a highly sustainable location, providing modern, efficient and inspired learning for the District's young adults are also considered to outweigh any further loss of the openness of this area.

Highway Safety

- 9.24 Because the precise alignment of the changes to the road network in the immediate locality following the completion of any potential new

A14 has not been finalised, the application as originally submitted could have prejudiced the future of the A14 development proposal and possible viaduct removal. The applicant subsequently amended the scheme to ensure these proposals were no longer prejudiced. Likewise, the Highways Agency (HA) has worked to review its original safeguarding zone and to protect this position, the HA has requested that any permission includes a condition to ensure that there is no essentially required development associated with this application within this designated zone associated with the formation of a new road alignment.

- 9.25 Additionally, the applicant has now submitted a revised Transport Assessment that has regard for the existing and proposed traffic flows, the Market Town Transport strategy, sustainable transport measures and the likely implications arising from the A14 development.
- 9.26 Whilst local residents have raised concerns regarding the existing traffic situation on Brampton Road and have stated the detrimental impact such a development would have on the existing situation, both the Highways Authorities, namely the Highways Agency and the County Council, are advising that the traffic generated by the proposed development could be accommodated within the new access road and junction and that the impact on the existing road network would be acceptable in design capacity terms.
- 9.27 It is accepted by both bodies that at peak hours there is some delay on the existing road network and this is reflected in the submitted Transport Assessment. However, both Brampton Road and Hinchingsbrooke Park Road are below the maximum capacity for the traffic flows for which they were designed to accommodate. Any network of this nature in this type of location that is subject to the level of traffic, both existing and proposed is going to suffer from some degree of congestion at peak hours. However, the nature of the local road network is such that congestion only generally occurs during peak hours and that both Brampton Road and Hinchingsbrooke Park Road do not suffer generally from congestion at other times. As such it is difficult to argue that the road network is incapable of accommodating the additional traffic movements associated with the Regional College proposal. Furthermore, it is noted that the college is willing to enter into a travel plan that will seek to minimise traffic impact during peak hours and maximising the sustainable transport options that exist in the vicinity of the site..
- 9.28 It should also be noted that in reaching their recommendation, the Highway Authority has considered the impact of the development on access for emergency vehicles. Furthermore, they have advised that a condition should be attached to any permission requiring a travel plan to be submitted, incorporating methods of encouraging sustainable travel, enforcement and monitoring, as all new development should seek to encourage sustainable modes of transport.

Other Matters

- 9.29 Some residents have raised concerns regarding water pooling on the existing road network in times of heavy rainfall. The site does not fall within an indicative flood plain but following consultation with the Environment Agency, it is recommended that appropriate planning conditions be attached to any grant of planning permission requiring methods of surface and foul water drainage to be submitted and approved to prevent an increased risk of flooding in the locality.
- 9.30 As stated above the site is located adjacent to a 'wildlife belt' known to contain protected species habitats. Following consultation with Natural England, the Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency, it is not considered that the proposed development would be detrimental to these protected species subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions and informatives.
- 9.31 In addition to this, in accordance with PPS9, it is essential that the development has minimal impact on biodiversity and enhances it wherever possible. This development offers a good opportunity to improve the biodiversity of the site, if measures to enhance habitats and increase habitat variability are incorporated at the design stage. This can be conditioned accordingly.
- 9.32 In conclusion, the proposed development, whilst a departure from the Local Plan, accords with the emerging spatial vision and strategy for this area, would be well sited amongst other similar uses, and would present an opportunity for a vastly improved, more accessible state of the art College development that would benefit the wider community. Accordingly, it is recommended that, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, Council recommend that planning permission be granted as a departure from the adopted Development Plan, and allow the application to be referred to the Secretary of State for his consideration.

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10. **RECOMMENDATION** - It is recommended that the Council indicates that it is minded to approve the scheme and that the application be referred to Go-East. Should the Secretary of State decide not to call-in the application, then outline planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions to include the following:

01017 Details reserved minus access

01003 Reserved matters within three years

01004 Dates for submission of details

Nonstand Design and Access Statement

Nonstand Travel Plan

Nonstand	A14 Buffer Zone
Nonstand	Access details and Implementation
Nonstand	Sport England requirements
Nonstand	Protective Fencing during Development
Nonstand	Foul and Surface Water Drainage
Nonstand	Archaeology
Nonstand	Fire Hydrants
Nonstand	Wheel Cleaning
Nonstand	Construction Vehicle Compound

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Application File Reference: 0703432OUT
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003
Huntingdonshire Local Plan, 1995
Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration, 2002
Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007
Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD, June 2007
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2007)
Huntingdon West of Area Action Plan
Huntingdonshire Housing Land Assessment
Huntingdon Town Centre Vision

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