

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

13th January 2010

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services)/Corporate Manager
(Planning and Sustainable Communities)

S/1435/09/F - COTTENHAM

Extension & Erection of New Building to Form New 6th Form Facility with Associated Car/Cycle Parking, Landscaping & Drainage. Relocation of 3 Existing Temporary Classrooms at Cottenham Village College, High Street for Cottenham Village College

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

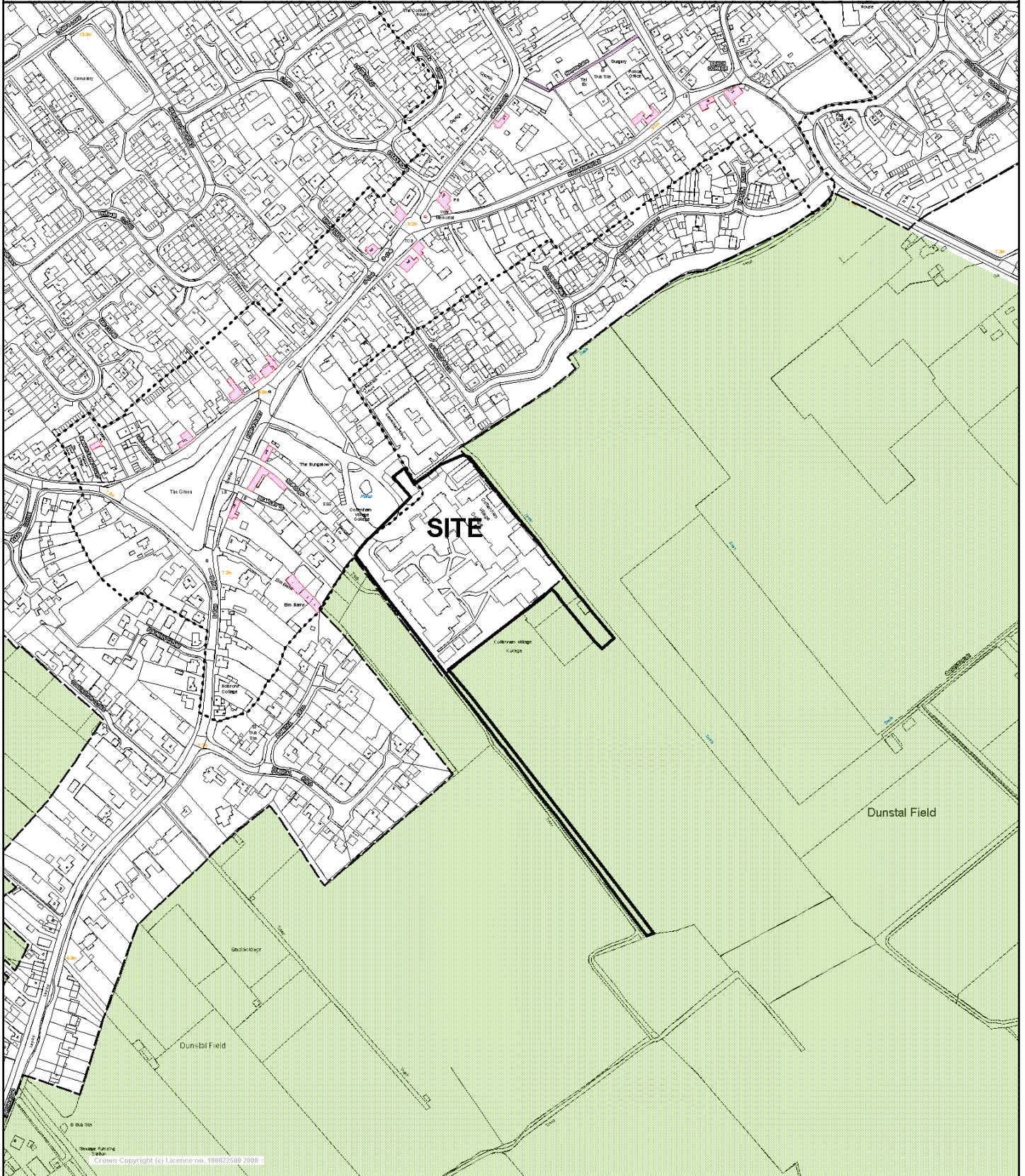
Date for Determination: 28th January 2010 (Major)

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination as the recommendation to approve without a Section 106 Agreement would conflict with the recommendation of the Parish Council

Site and Proposal

1. Cottenham Village College is located on the south side of the High Street. The school buildings are sited approximately 150 metres back from the road and, between the college buildings and the road, is a grassed, well-treed area that provides vehicular access and parking facilities for the College. The buildings are sited inside the village framework. These back onto school playing fields directly to the south that are sited outside the framework and within the Green Belt. The college grounds abut open countryside to the east and south whilst, to the west, beyond an approximately 50 metre wide strip of land, are residential properties sited within Dunstal Field. Abutting the north-western corner of the site, adjacent to the access road and parking areas, are two residential properties, Nos.2 and 3 Morgans. The open area between the school buildings and High Street lies within the Conservation Area and is also designated as a Protected Village Amenity Area. The Village College comprises a number of predominantly brick buildings ranging in height from single storey to a tall, three-storey element running in a north-south direction in the centre of the site.
2. The full application, registered on 29th October 2009, proposes the following:
 - Erection of an extension to an existing building at the rear/southern end of the Village College's grounds. This would measure 2100m² and would be a two-storey structure stepping down to single-storey height at its southern end adjacent to the school playing fields and Green Belt. Materials would comprise buff brick, render and cedar boarding for the walls, and sedum and zinc for the roof. Window openings would be aluminium or timber framed.
 - Erection of a new building, providing courses in construction and technology, adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. This would be a 292m² two-storey structure comprising cedar boarded walls and a sedum roof, with a tensile roof proposed to provide cover to the courtyard area. Window openings on this building would also be aluminium and timber framed.
 - Relocation of three existing temporary classrooms. These temporary buildings (a construction classroom, hearing impairment classroom and language classroom) are presently located on the site of the proposed 6th form extension. It is proposed



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to relocate two of the buildings (the hearing and language classrooms) to an area within the school grounds sited adjacent to existing portable buildings and a hard surfaced play area. These are intended to remain in place during the course of the building works but would be removed upon completion of the development. The third (the construction classroom) would be relocated to a position currently occupied by existing storage containers (that would be removed from the site), and is proposed to remain on a site for a longer, albeit still temporary, period. This position is within the Green Belt between the existing tennis courts and eastern boundary of the school grounds.

- Associated car/cycle parking, landscaping, drainage and refuse facilities. It is proposed to provide 9 parking spaces on the north-west side of the main building and 16 spaces adjacent to the north-eastern corner of the building. Both of these areas are presently used on an informal basis as parking areas at present but have no formal permission to be used as such. An additional 7 spaces are proposed within the school grounds and a further 5 spaces within the Green Belt adjacent to the position of the proposed relocated mobile classroom. The proposals would result in the loss of 8 existing spaces, 5 on the footprint of the proposed technology building and 3 in order to create access to the proposed 9 spaces. With regards to cycle parking provision, the application proposes an additional 50 spaces adjacent to the western boundary of the site. The proposal also seeks to provide: additional landscaping within a courtyard area adjacent to the east side of the proposed 6th form extension; the provision of a new French drain along the western edge of the playing fields in order to cater for the surface water drainage demands of the development; and an enlargement of the existing fenced refuse area sited towards the north-eastern end of the college grounds.
3. The application includes the following additional documents - Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, Arboricultural Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment, Transport Assessment and School Travel Plan.

Planning Statement

4. The planning statement explains that the proposals are seeking to provide a new 6th form facility catering for up to 240 additional students. The Village College currently provides education for approximately 980 11-16 year olds, but has no existing 6th form facility. In addition to mainstream provision, the Village College has units for students with learning and language impairment and for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties, most of whom have been excluded from local secondary schools and out of county centres. The Village College is classified as a High Performing Specialist School and, in April 2008, the Department for Education and Skills granted a presumption to the College, this stating that high performing specialist schools should seek to provide post-16 opportunities.
5. The proposals seek to provide vocational courses for 16-19 year olds, specialising in the following subject areas: Construction and the Built Environment, Hospitality and Catering, ICT, Sport and Leisure, and Hair and Beauty. Standard academic subjects are not proposed within this application. It is intended that the 6th form facility would build on the College's existing specialism by providing a high performing specialist facility for 16 to 19 year olds who have learning difficulties, mental and physical disabilities, emotional and behavioural issues, and for those who have simply underachieved in exams.
6. The Village College presently has 114 full time equivalent employees and the proposal would result in an additional 19 full-time equivalent posts, bringing the total number up to 133 full-time equivalent.

Transport Assessment/School Travel Plan

7. The Transport Assessment aims to encourage sustainable transport:
- **Cycling** – It is noted that the numbers of people cycling to the Village College are presently very low due to an absence of safe cycling routes in the area (there are no current dedicated cycle lanes except between Cottenham and Rampton) and the dangerous condition of the local road network. It is argued that existing storage (35 spaces) is more than adequate for the predicted number of cyclists, but an extra 50 spaces are proposed with an additional area set aside for further provision if the need arises.
 - **Pedestrian Access** – It is noted that pedestrian access is very good within Cottenham, with two pedestrian crossings in the vicinity of the site, but that there is a lack of safe pedestrian routes between the villages.
 - **Public/Shared Transport** – the Guided Busway passes through two nearby villages, Longstanton and Oakington. The school has 8 dedicated bus services for students to nearby villages - Willingham, Longstanton, Waterbeach and Landbeach. Cottenham is also served by 4 public bus routes to Ely and Cambridge, but has no public bus links to nearby villages.
 - **Taxis** - Special Needs students presently arrive by a fleet of 20 taxis.
8. Cottenham Village College presently has a catchment area confined to the immediate Fen-patch villages. The proposed 6th form facility would have a County-wide catchment area, with class times being distributed sporadically over the day. Due to the nature of the proposed facility, it is not anticipated that many students would drive or that there would be any increase in the use of the dedicated bus service. The best guess modal split (based on the existing Special Needs Centre) is 3% walking, 3% cycling, 14% single occupancy car, 5% car sharing, 12% public bus, 10% school bus, 50% taxi, and 3% moped. The Village College plans to exploit any spare bus capacity on bus services currently operated by Cambridge Regional College to provide more opportunity for proposed students to travel by bus.
9. The objectives of the Travel Plan are to: encourage walking, make cycling safer, improve the reliability of school buses, establish a school bus for students who live outside the catchment area and encourage more car sharing for staff, and to achieve the following by 2011:
- Reduce the % of parents/students who come to school by single occupancy car from 6% to 4%
 - Increase the % of students taking part in car sharing schemes from 5% to 8%
 - Increase % of students walking to school from 32% to 34%
 - Increase % of students cycling to school from 2% to 3%
 - Increase % of students coming by public bus from 1% to 2%

Planning History

10. The site has an extremely extensive planning history and, as part of this application, only a very brief outline of the history, rather than to explain the details of every application, is provided. Planning permission was originally granted for the college in 1960 (reference **C/0521/60**) and, since its construction, numerous applications to extend the premises have been approved. There have also been successive temporary consents for the siting and retention of the mobile units on the site. This includes a recent application, reference **S/1498/09/F**, for the retention of three mobile units on the site, including one of those in the area of the proposed 6th form extension, until 2014. Other notable permissions are a 2001 consent for 26 parking bays on the

north side of the College (**S/0375/01/F**), a further consent in 2002 for parking bays near to the main entrance to the site (**S/0223/02/F**) and consent for the construction of an all weather pitch in the Green Belt in 2008 (**S/0046/08/F**).

Planning Policy

11. **Local Development Plan Policies**

East of England Plan 2008:

SS1 Achieving Sustainable Development

SS7 Green Belt

ENV6 The Historic Environment

ENV7 Quality in the Built Environment

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies
DPD 2007:

DP/1 Sustainable Development

DP/2 Design of New Development

DP/3 Development Criteria

DP/6 Construction Methods

DP/7 Development Frameworks

GB/1 Development in the Green Belt

GB/2 Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt

GB/3 Mitigating the Impact of Development Adjoining the Green Belt

NE/1 Energy Efficiency

NE/3 Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development

NE/6 Biodiversity

NE/11 Flood Risk

NE/12 Water Conservation

NE/14 Lighting Proposals

CH/5 Conservation Areas

CH/6 Protected Village Amenity Areas

TR/1 Planning for More Sustainable Travel

TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards

TR/3 Mitigating Travel Impact

12. **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Cottenham Village Design Statement 2007

Conservation Areas SPD 2009

Trees and Development Sites SPD 2009

Biodiversity SPD 2009

13. **Circulars**

Circular 11/95 (The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions) - Advises that conditions should be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

Circular 05/2005 (Planning Obligations) - Advises that planning obligations must be relevant to planning, necessary, directly related to the proposed development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and reasonable in all other respect.

Consultation

14. **Cottenham Parish Council** recommends approval, stating:

“Cottenham Parish Council recommends approval and supports the application for an extension to include a 6th form facility at the Village College.

The Parish Council though does have areas of concern and would ask that they be addressed prior to planning permission being granted.

Even without the presence of a sixth form the College already acknowledges that the pedestrian crossings in the vicinity of the facility are inadequate; the Principal actively discourages students from cycling to school for reasons of safety. The College are exploring the possibility of having the ‘Safer Routes to School’ scheme implemented which the Parish Council actively supports. Statistics shown within the Department of Transport Reported Road Casualties, Great Britain 2008 Annual Report, and page 18, shows that the highest rate of killed or seriously injured pedestrians are aged 2-15 years. This clearly shows the need for safe crossing places near to the College. The Parish Council has, for sometime, held the view that the streets of Cottenham per se are unsafe, but for the purpose of this application it restricts comments to road conditions in the vicinity of the College only.

Within the Travel Plan a survey is shown detailing how students currently access the College site, it states that 32% of students walk to the College, some 303 students (this is in itself an inaccurate figure as Year 11 students were absent on the day the survey was undertaken, so therefore one can presume that the number is actually higher than that stated). Only 4% cycled the remainder arrived by designated bus, car or via the local bus service. The survey stated that some 10% arrive by car/car sharing but no figures are given for the number of cars involved. Of the staff 87% arrive by car/car sharing but again no figures are given in regard to the actual number of cars involved. Within the Travel Plan indications are given in regard to how the students attending the sixth form will access the site. Table 12 ‘Best Guess’ modal split sees 94% arriving by vehicles be it solo car (14%), taxi (50%) car share (5%), moped (3%) and school/public bus service (22%). Only 6% are anticipated to arrive by foot or on bike. The report does acknowledge that it is difficult to predict student travel mode and that it will only be ascertained once the students enrol and begin to attend. Regardless of the mode of transport what is transparently clear that there will be a large increase in both pedestrian movements and vehicular movements by 2015.

As currently 64% of students and 87% of staff access the site via a vehicle and it is proposed that an additional 94% of 240 students (by 2015) and 100% of new teaching staff will be doing likewise it is extremely important that measures are put into place to safeguard those who walk to school.

As such Cottenham Parish Council categorically asks for an S106 Agreement to be agreed in conjunction with any planning permission being granted. This S106 Agreement to state that there will be provision for a traffic light controlled Pelican Crossing on the High Street adjacent to the College and it is to be installed prior to any works being undertaken at the College and that the ‘Safer Routes to school be implemented, again prior to any works being undertaken at the College with a 20mph speed limit during school hours from the Histon Road junction to the Lyles Road interchange.”

15. **The Cottenham Village Design Group** states the application will extend the range of educational opportunities available to the local community and increase the level of employment within the village. However, the site is becoming overcrowded, reducing the options available for access to and through the site and leaving little outdoor space to accommodate existing and new student communities. A plan for the longer

term redevelopment of the site should be submitted to allow the proposal to be fully assessed. Development within the Green Belt may be a better solution than forcing overdevelopment within the current village framework. The options available for future development of the site will reduce if the development is completed as proposed. Eg – the technology building location will limit development options for the sports centre as well as making access to the existing sports facilities more difficult. The split 6th form accommodation seems undesirable and a solution which co-located the 6th form buildings would be preferable. A sustainable approach to transport policy is supported. However, no net additional parking is proposed to support the new accommodation. All new parking spaces replace existing spaces lost during the development or formalise existing informal provision. Given the large expected catchment area for the new provision and the limited public transport into the area, it is a mistake to assume that no students will drive. The level of parking provision falls very short of what will be needed to support the additional staff and students leading to overflow parking onto village streets. The level of cycle parking proposed is also minimal. It is hoped that the upgrading of the cycle path to Histon and beyond committed for 2010 and the new provision associated with the guided busway together with the college's sustainable transport policy would see the proportion of students that cycle increase beyond the level assumed. In addition, no provision has been made for moped parking which is a popular choice of transport within the age group targeted.

The imaginative designs and materials chosen are generally supported, particularly for the main sixth form building. There are minor concerns regarding the use of so much brown cedar on the technology building, and maintenance difficulties arising from this and the white fabric roof. The solar panels, air circulation chimneys and sedum roofs are all positive devices that reduce the carbon footprint of the development. The removal of the two cedar trees, numbers 66 and 67, is not supported. These must not be removed as the green space to the front of the village and the many trees within it are of significant visual importance to the wider village.

16. **The Conservation Officer's** comments will be reported in an update prior to the Committee meeting.
17. **The Trees Officer** objects to the removal of T66 (a Blue Atlas Cedar), which can be accommodated using no-dig construction. T67 (a Himalayan Cedar) has had the top removed and has therefore been compromised. However, its removal could be negated and it could be retained. No objections are raised to the removal of other trees identified on the drawing.
18. **The Landscape Design Officer** would like to see a landscape plan and some tree planting on the SW of the new parking to compensate for the loss of a tree. Tree 66 should be retained. A single tree (lime suggested) between 66 and 67 would be sufficient. More seating should be provided in the revised area NE of the 6th form building. A wider path along the south east side would allow more seating to be incorporated against its side. Some of the cycle parking will need to be relocated due to the proximity to trees and major roots. If the cycle parking is uncovered, grass paving would not be a suitable surface because of maintenance. The cells should be filled with gravel.
19. **The Ecology Officer** welcomes the length of new open ditch, and requests confirmation that this will be an open habitat and further details to show typical cross sections. However, the location of the proposed contractors compound causes concern. It is currently proposed for an area of what appears to be rough ground about 100 metres from the pond. The pond is reported to contain great crested newts. The compound area should be relocated so that it is further away from the pond in an area of less suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts (can an area of

currently mown grass be used?). A holding objection is placed until this matter is discussed in further detail.

20. **The Building Control Officer's** comments will be reported in an update prior to the Committee meeting.
21. **The Environmental Health Officer's** comments will be reported in an update prior to the Committee meeting.
22. **The Strategic Sustainability Officer's** comments will be reported in an update prior to the Committee meeting.
23. **The Drainage Manager's** comments will be reported in an update prior to the Committee meeting.
24. **The Local Highways Authority** raises no objections, but would like to make the applicant aware that cycle facilities are available between Cottenham and Histon. A 'movement diagram' to show how the applicant proposes to access the new parking spaces is requested, whilst it is also requested that the applicant confirm whether the dedicated bus service is available for use by new 6th formers. A condition stating that students shall not be permitted to park motor vehicles within the college grounds should be attached to any permission for highway safety reasons. A method statement relating to the process of construction and demolition, and any effects this may have on the adopted highway, should also be provided.
25. **The Environment Agency** states that the application falls within Cell F5 of its flood risk matrix but that, in view of other environment related issues, it will not be necessary for the Council to respond on behalf of the Agency. It is recommended that the Council's Drainage Manager be consulted on the proposals.
26. **Anglian Water's** comments will be reported in an update prior to the Committee meeting.
27. **The Internal Drainage Board's** comments will be reported in an update prior to the Committee meeting.
28. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** raises no objections subject to a condition or S106 agreement to ensure adequate provision is made for fire hydrants.
29. **The County Archaeologist's** comments will be reported in an update prior to the Committee meeting.
30. **The Police Architectural Liaison Officer's** comments will be reported in an update prior to the Committee meeting.

Representations

31. No.3 Morgans:
 - Objects to the removal of mature trees 66 and 67 in order to develop new parking spaces. These are mature trees and are visible from the PVAA and from adjacent properties.
 - Objects to the development of car parking spaces adjacent to the eastern boundary of garden as this would result in increased noise disturbance.

32. No.2 Morgans:
- Was not invited to the community consultation referred to in the documentation supporting the application.
 - The submitted site plans fail to show neighbouring houses in Morgans and notes them as 'agricultural buildings.'
 - It is understood that surface water run off and sewerage from properties in Morgans discharge into the combined sewer at the Village College. It is not clear if the Flood Risk Assessment has taken account of other inputs to the combined sewer in coming to a conclusion. If this is the case, the FRA may be underestimating the risk of flooding.
 - Object to extra 16 parking spaces adjacent to the garden boundary. The current spaces on the north boundary of the property are used by college staff during college hours and used by coaches at weekends and evenings. Staff use has not caused any issues, but use by coaches at weekends causes some periodic disruption (5-10 times per year). These can be parked as close as 2m to bedroom windows and start as early as 5.30am. Disturbance from noise and fumes has been experienced from coaches parked and leaving engines running for long periods. This occurs a few times a year during the summer.
 - Proximity of spaces to boundary fence has resulted in some damage from cars hitting the fence.
 - The 16 extra parking spaces will result in the property being surrounded on two sides by college parking spaces. This will result in increased disturbance and possibly further damage.
 - The 16 spaces would also result in the loss of trees visible from the Protected Village Amenity Area. These are the most mature and tallest trees in this part of the college providing habitat for birds and wildlife. The 16 spaces would also degrade the character of the PVAA.
33. A local resident in High Street, Cottenham has also raised concerns in respect of the traffic implications of the proposed development. It is pointed out that, at several events run at the Village College, cars have parked illegally on the High Street and on pavements between the College and War Memorial. This obscures the view of pedestrians who use the nearby crossing, and driver's views of pedestrians trying to cross the road. There is hatching in the road to dissuade car parking on the High Street. 6th form students, who may arrive later than other students due to timetabling etc, may seek to park on the High Street as close to the Village College as possible. It would seem likely that a significant element of the new students will arrive by car. The provision of double yellow lines on both sides of the High Street around the area of the refuge-crossing and for a reasonable distance from the College towards the war memorial and Green should be considered to ensure optimum visibility for pedestrians using, and drivers approaching, the refuge crossing.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

Principle of the development

34. The proposed location of the extension and new building, together with the relocated positions of two of the temporary classrooms, fall within the existing built up part of the Village College grounds and inside the village framework. This aspect of the proposed development therefore complies with Policy DP/7 of the Local Development Framework, which seeks to direct new development to sites inside village frameworks.
35. The application also proposes to relocate one of the temporary classrooms and to provide five additional parking spaces on a strip of land sited between the tennis courts and the eastern boundary, which lies within the Green Belt. The use of land in the Green Belt for car parking is not classified as inappropriate development by

definition providing it would not result in harm to the character and openness of the area. In this instance, the car parking spaces would be sited between tennis courts, which are floodlit and enclosed by high fencing, and a belt of trees forming the eastern boundary of the site. The spaces would be demarcated using grasscrete in order to minimise their visual impact and would not extend beyond the southern edge of the existing tennis courts. As such, the use of the land for such purposes would not result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

36. The siting of a portable building on Green Belt land is inappropriate by definition and Planning Policy Guidance 2 on Green Belts makes it clear that such development should not be granted unless very special circumstances have been put forward to justify the proposal. Officers had queried with the applicant whether, in view of this situation, it would be possible for one of the temporary classrooms planned for removal upon completion of the 6th form extension, could be sited in this position instead (i.e. - so that there would be a guarantee the structure would be removed from the Green Belt in the foreseeable future). The applicant has responded stating that it has strong reasons for the situation as proposed. The two mobile classrooms that would be relocated during the construction period would be sited on a hard surface used for informal play/ball games etc. There is a very large playing field but very little hard play space that can be used by students during break time. To lose this space for a longer period would therefore have a significant impact on the day-to-day operation of the school. The Centre Special School, which is located on the site, is planning a rebuild (subject to planning permission) in 2012. If permitted, the mobile unit would be removed from the site, at an estimated date of 2015/16 depending on the availability of funding.
37. The above reasoning makes it clear that Cottenham Village College only wish to retain the third temporary classroom on the Green Belt land for a temporary period, albeit for a longer temporary period than the other two classrooms, and approving the classroom in this location would not therefore result in long-term in-principle harm to the Green Belt. During a meeting with the applicant, it was considered that a five year temporary permission would be appropriate as this should allow sufficient time for the submission and determination of any future application, as part of which the permanent removal of this classroom would be proposed. In the event funding does not become available or planning permission is not granted, the structure would need to be removed and/or an alternative location within the village framework sought.

Impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area, upon the Protected Village Amenity Area and upon the Openness of the Green Belt

38. The proposed development would be sited within the southern part of the Village College grounds. This part of the site does not lie within the Conservation Area or Protected Village Amenity Area - the boundaries of both lie on the north side of the front of the Village College. As such, the main issue to consider relates to the impact of the development upon the setting of both these areas.
39. The Village College is extremely well concealed in views of the site from the High Street as there are many mature trees within the area designated as a PVAA to the front of the school. When viewed from the southern extent of the access drive, the development would be largely concealed from view by the existing buildings along the frontage of the site and are not therefore considered to result in harm to the character of the Conservation Area. Whilst the Conservation Officer has not commented to date, no in-principle objections were raised during pre-application discussions, to the scale, location or general design of the buildings, and the main area of concern related to how well the 6th form extension would tie into the existing building.
40. Officers consider the proposed buildings to be of an extremely high architectural quality incorporating a range of contemporary materials such as zinc and sedum roofs

for the 6th form extension and cedar cladding and sedum/tensile roofs for the new technology building. The Cottenham Village Design Group has expressed general support for the imaginative designs and materials chosen, although has raised some minor reservations about the use of so much brown cedar for the technology building. These concerns, however, relate to potential maintenance difficulties of such a material, as well as of the white fabric roof, rather than to their impact upon the character of the area.

41. The application also proposes to create 9 additional parking spaces at the front of the College, on an area of land that falls within the Protected Village Amenity Area. This area is presently used for parking (albeit not authorised as such). Due to the distance of this area from the main road, together with a number of mature trees within the immediate area, the use of this land for parking is not considered to harm the character of this part of the Conservation Area or the Protected Village Amenity Area.

Location of the Development and Sustainability Issues

42. The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan submitted with the application highlight some problems with the accessibility of Cottenham, referring to poor access by modes other than the car (particularly by public transport and cycling) and indicating that some 94% of new students are anticipated to travel to the site by car. This proposal would have a far larger catchment area than the existing Village College, being County wide rather than catering for the nearby Fen villages, and this therefore raises concerns as to whether Cottenham is an appropriate location for such a facility, and whether, for sustainability reasons, this would be better located in a larger settlement such as Cambridge or Ely. The comments of the County Council's New Communities Team, in respect of the Travel Plan and Sustainability issues, are presently awaited and any comments received will be reported to Members in an update prior to the meeting.
43. In the meantime, the applicant has provided a response to these concerns, and has set out the following justification for siting the development at Cottenham Village College.
 - *Educational expertise* – The Village College has a long history of providing for students with a wide range of abilities. The proportion of special needs students is high at 10%. Results show these students perform better than similar students at other schools. The Village College also has specialist resources for students with a hearing impairment, language impairment and The Centre, a specialist provision for students with extreme emotional and behavioural difficulties. This has resulted in a talented team of staff giving the capacity to deliver the proposed vocational 6th form facilities.
 - *Funding* – The Village College has been judged as a high performing specialist school, a status given to only the top 30% of schools nationally and, with it, the College is able to assume new specialist roles and to apply for presumption arrangements, designed to enable successful 11-16 schools to extend provision to 11-18. Presumption was granted in April 2009 and funding secured to cope with the extra students. The College has worked closely with a wide range of bodies to develop a proposal that best meets the needs of the local area. Presumption arrangements aren't transferrable to another school or site and are time limited.
 - *Local Needs Assessment* – Studies have confirmed a need for enhanced vocational provision for 6th form students. Provision for able students is very good. Provision for less able students and those needing additional support is not so good. Proposals have a clear link to that provided by Cambridge Regional College and a strong working partnership between CRC and CVC has been established. The proposal would result in students with specific needs receiving a personalised

curriculum within a smaller-scale facility, and securing routes though to further education, training or employment.

- *Conclusion* – The Village College is not seeking to retain the majority of its current 11-16 year olds. They will continue to feed into other forms of further education in the city. Through the College's success as a High Performing Specialist School, they have been able to enhance provision for young people of lower ability and for those in need of additional or specialist support. If the application is unsuccessful, these needs will not be met elsewhere and the funding will be withdrawn.

Highway Safety

44. The Local Highways Authority has raised no objections in respect of the highway safety implications of the development but has requested that a condition be added to any permission preventing students from parking cars within the college grounds. The intention behind this condition would be to discourage students from driving to the college. Such a condition, however, would be virtually impossible to monitor and enforce, and would also force any students that drive to the College to park on adjacent streets. It is considered that such a condition would not be appropriate in this instance and the Highways Authority has indicated that it considers the approach set out in the following section would be an acceptable compromise.
45. The Local Highways Authority has been consulted about the Parish Council's request for a Section 106 Agreement requiring the provision of a traffic light crossing, implementation of the Safer Routes to School scheme and installation of a 20mph speed limit during school hours prior to commencement of development. A formal response is presently awaited. However, the LHA has explained that none of these measures would receive its support. Firstly, there is a zebra crossing nearby, which is preferred to a light controlled crossing. In addition, on street parking and traffic bumps in the area help to slow traffic speeds so the introduction of further limits is deemed to be unnecessary.
46. The LHA has also commented on a local resident's request for double yellow lines to be painted on the High Street in the vicinity of the Village College. Double yellow lines are not generally considered to be effective as it is legal to park and pick up/drop-off for a 20 minute period within these areas. They are normally only introduced for genuine highway safety reasons and not as a measure to control traffic flow.
47. The Village College presently has 111 parking spaces. Whilst this may be deficient to serve the needs of the existing facility, it would be unreasonable to expect the College to make up for any existing shortfall. It should, however, ensure that sufficient spaces are provided for the proposed development. The parking standards set out in the Local Development Framework require 1 space per 2 members of staff and 1.5 spaces per classroom. The development comprises 15 new classrooms and would employ 19 additional staff resulting in a requirement for a maximum of 32 additional spaces. An extra 29 spaces are proposed within the application which is broadly comparable to the required standards.
48. Cycle standards require 60% provision for pupils over 12, resulting in an official requirement for 144 spaces for the proposed scheme. Only 50 spaces are proposed, but, in view of the relatively low number of cycle trips that take place at present, this is considered to be adequate to cater for the use anticipated within the Travel Plan.

Residential Amenity

49. Concerns have been raised by the residents of Nos. 2 and 3 Morgans in respect of the implications in terms of noise and disturbance arising from the proximity of the proposed 16 additional parking spaces to their rear gardens. This has been discussed

with the applicant particularly with regard to some of the problems highlighted by the residents of No. 2 Morgans. In order to alleviate these concerns, it is considered that these spaces should be allocated for staff use only. This would minimise the amount of manoeuvring in and out of these spaces during the day, and would prevent this part of the site from being used by buses during the evenings and weekends.

Trees

50. Concerns have been raised by the Trees and Landscape Officers, the Parish Council, Cottenham Village Design Group and local residents to the loss of trees 66 and 67. The applicant has agreed to amend the plans in order to ensure the retention of both these trees and is intending to liaise with the Trees Officer regarding appropriate methods of no-dig construction for the parking areas.

Biodiversity

51. Further to concerns raised by the Council's Ecology Officer in respect of the proposed contractors compound, the applicant's agent has agreed to revise the shape of the compound such that no part of it would fall within 100 metres of the pond. The Ecology Officer has responded, stating that 100 metres is a reasonable distance from the pond (given that it is currently surrounded by a relatively built-up area). There is still a risk they may be impacting upon the habitat of great crested newts but, in the absence of any information to the contrary, the applicant's approach is considered to be acceptable providing it accepts an element of risk that, if the compound is found to provide a habitat for great crested newts, the operation would need to be suspended and a license secured. An informative should be added to any consent advising the applicant of its obligations in this respect.
52. The applicant has confirmed that the French drain would be covered. The Ecology Officer has stressed that an open drain would be preferred as it would be less prone to blockages and provide a habitat corridor. However, if a French drain is necessary, could there be a sunken swale/long grass feature above it to provide a habitat link? This issue will be raised with the applicant and Members update on the outcome of any discussions prior to the meeting.
53. The Design and Access Statement states that new bird and bat boxes will be installed in order to enhance biodiversity, and this could be secured via a condition of any planning permission.

Flood Risk/Drainage

54. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low risk) within which the surface water drainage implications of new development must be considered. The submitted FRA explains that soakaways are unlikely to be economic due to low infiltration rates of the soil. As such, it is proposed that a French drain be constructed along the southern boundary of the playing fields, providing both a SUDS compliant scheme and to allow for attenuation of flows before discharging into the ditch.
55. With regards to foul drainage, this is currently carried by local gravity sewer to a pump chamber and then discharges toward the site entrance via a pumping main. The new buildings would be connected into the existing system without the need for upgrading.
56. Comments are presently awaited from the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Council's Drainage Manager and the Internal Drainage Board in respect of the foul and surface water drainage proposals and Members will be updated on any comments received prior to the Committee meeting.

Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy

57. The proposed development has attained a BREEAM rating of excellent for the whole project. The supporting Design and Access Statement explains that insulation has been maximised in order to reduce heat loss and minimise heating requirements. The development has a reduced requirement for mechanical ventilation and the design seeks to achieve high daylight levels throughout in order to reduce the need for electrical light. The buildings have been orientated in order to maximise solar gain, and also incorporate natural stack ventilation using wind catchers. Software analysis has shown that emission rates would be lower than target emission rates.
58. The application initially proposed the use of an air source heat pump. The applicant then expressed an intention to omit this from the scheme and substitute it with a high efficiency gas fired boiler as the heating source for the 6th form building. This was due to the fact that the College was not convinced there was sufficient in-use experience of air source heat pumps to feel confident about their efficiency and reliability in winter months.
59. Following a meeting with this Council's Sustainability Officer, it was explained that the gas fired boiler approach would mean that the requirements of Policy NE/3 could not be satisfied. As a result, it is now proposed to replace the air source heat pump and photovoltaic panels with a ground source heat pump. A report and supporting calculations for the energy performance of the 6th form buildings based on the inclusion of a ground source heat pump has been submitted.
60. With regards to the issue of renewable energy, the proposed development incorporates photovoltaics and solar thermal hot water to heat the building and natural ventilation windcatchers to cool the building. These are claimed result in carbon emissions being reduced by 11%.
61. Any comments made by the Council's Sustainability Officer in respect of the above will be reported to Members in an update prior to the Committee meeting.

Archaeology

62. No comments have been received to date from the County Council's Archaeology team. However, in pre-application discussions it was indicated that they would be unlikely to raise any in-principle objections to the proposed development.

Other Matters

63. The application does not include a site waste management plan and advises that the contractor will develop one when appointed. The applicant anticipates that the provision of such a plan would be required as a condition of any planning permission. General site practices to be included as part of any plan would be: monitoring of water consumption on site, monitoring of construction waste, adoption of best practice policies relating to air pollution, adoption of best practice relating to ground and surface water, restriction of hours of noisy operation.
64. The application proposes external lighting which would be limited to fittings mounted on the faces of the new buildings ensuring no light spillage above the horizontal. The comments of the Environmental Health Officer in respect of the proposed lighting are presently awaited. Providing no objections are raised, any consent should be subject to a condition requiring details of any additional lighting to be submitted prior to installation.

Recommendation

65. Delegated approval subject to receipt of amended plans to resolve comments made by the Trees, Landscape Design and Ecology Officers as well as the Local Highways Authority:

Conditions

1. Standard Condition 1 - Full planning permission time limit
2. Sc5 – Landscaping
3. Sc6 - Landscape Implementation
4. Sc7 – Trees
5. Sc8 – Tree protection
6. Sc12 - Boundary Treatment
7. Sc13 – Materials
8. Sc15 - Car Parking to be provided in accordance with plans before occupation of the development
9. Sc16 – Cycle parking to be provided in accordance with plans before occupation of the development
10. 16 additional spaces adjacent to north-western boundary to be dedicated for staff use only
11. Sc38 – Noise during construction
12. Sc51 – Scheme of ecological enhancement
13. Sc57 – Fire hydrants
14. Sc58 – No external lighting other than that shown within the application
15. Sc64 – Temporary permission for the 3 mobile classrooms – 5 years
16. Sc93 – Site waste management plan
17. Highways method statement during the construction period.

Informatives

1. Great crested newts

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- East of England Plan 2008
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Documents 2009
- Circular 11/95 Circular (The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions) and Circular 05/2005 (Planning Obligations)-
- Planning File references S/1435/09/F, C/0521/60, S/1498/09/F, S/0375/01/F, S/0223/02/F and S/0046/08/F.

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