

## Item 11 Appendix 2

### Draft Education / Schools Position Statement for The Bishops Stortford High School Outline Planning Application

#### Context of existing site condition

The Bishop's Stortford High School (TBSHS) currently resides at London Road, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 3LU and has been located there since 1950. The school offers single sex (male) education to 11-16 year olds and has a large coeducational sixth form. The school has a determined PAN of 156; although in recent years it has regularly provided 168 Year 7 places as its own admitting authority, to help meet high demand.

The overall condition of the existing school's buildings is generally considered to be poor and not conducive to providing a continued high level of education into the future. This has been acknowledged by the school being successful in obtaining a Priority School Building Programme Phase 2 (PSBP2) grant from the Department for Education (DfE). The purpose of the PSBP2 programme is to 'undertake major rebuilding and refurbishment projects in those schools and sixth form colleges in the very worst condition'. The School's existing site is also constrained and technical property advice has concluded that expansion beyond the school's current capacity could not be achieved.

Typically under the PSBP2 project the grant funding would provide for a number of blocks or the entire school to be re-built or refurbished on its current site. For TBSHS the PSBP2 project was originally proposed as a total re-build of approximately 70% of the existing site, which would not have allowed for the entire school to be rebuilt and would not provide future expansion potential at the School.

#### Why the relocation and expansion is required

Contained within the recently adopted East Herts District Plan there is an allocation for a significant sum of housing, approximately 5,200 new homes, across the Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth secondary education planning area (EPA). The pupil yield anticipated to arise from this scale of growth is expected to peak at around 12 forms of entry.

These yield figures are based on 2011 census data, using the most up to date information from town planning applications and, where this is not available, assumptions around build trajectories and the type and size of new homes, as provided through the planning process, in compliance with the District Council's Local Plan policy.

Although this peak is not expected to be achieved until beyond the Plan period, the County Council needs to ensure sufficient expansion capacity is available to meet this level of future need.

There are currently six secondary schools within the EPA, between them offering around 35 forms of entry. The schools are varied, popular and full and, as a result of their various admissions

arrangements, recruit from a wide area and thus there is a significant inflow into the EPA at secondary transfer.

Technical property analysis of the existing school sites concludes there are a number of town planning, site size and highways challenges and constraints to expansion of the existing school sites. The limited identified expansion potential is insufficient to meet the anticipated scale of growth likely from the proposed new housing.

In light of this and in response to the proposed scale of growth, the County Council has supported site allocations within the District Plan for two secondary schools within Bishop's Stortford. The first of these sites is at Bishop's Stortford North, where it is proposed to provide a new 6fe secondary school, the other site is at Bishop's Stortford South where provision has been made for an (up to) 8fe secondary school. The site at Bishop's Stortford South has been specified as being for the relocation of TBSHS.

TBSHS's current site has also been allocated for housing development within the Plan. The sale of its existing site will provide it with a capital receipt which, combined with the PSBP2 grant, will allow for the school to be re-built on its new site with the capacity to expand, which would not have been possible at its existing site. Access to this PSPB2 grant is time limited.

The site allocations within the District Plan support the County Council's strategy to ensure sufficient secondary places to serve the Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth Education Planning Area for the long term.

As part of the relocation project it is proposed to expand The Bishop's Stortford High School immediately to 6fe. This will allow for the mitigation of male yield from the Bishop's Stortford South housing development and therefore contributions from this development are sought towards the expansion to 6fe, with remaining contributions going towards the eventual further expansion of the school beyond 6fe. The equivalent s106 contributions are being sought for the eventual expansion of the Herts & Essex High School (HEHS) to mitigate female yield from the Bishop's Stortford South housing development.

The County Council is supporting TBSHS's and HEHS's aspirations to create for themselves the potential for future expansion which does not currently exist. Should TBSHS and HEHS aspirations be achievable, this would enable both schools to be capable of providing an additional 2fe capacity, thus enhancing the suite of options available to provide additional expansion capacity to meet future secondary needs across the area for the long term. The County Council set out this strategy in a report to Cabinet in February 2014.

<https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?CommitteeId=146&MeetingId=376&DF=24%2f02%2f2014&Ver=2>

The timing, scale and location of secondary expansion beyond the new 6fe school at Bishop's Stortford North will be determined by local conditions at that time, informed by the needs arising from the proposed new housing.

The benefits the new school will bring including new sustainable buildings and learning environments

For many years The Bishop's Stortford High School has managed to achieve not only excellent academic outcomes for its students and outstanding recognition from Ofsted, but it has also been able to provide those students with a truly all-round education. The School has focused on developing the qualities and characteristics in its students that will prove invaluable to them for the rest of their lives and prepare them to contribute positively to the local and wider communities.

The school has managed to achieve this success in buildings that were designed and constructed almost 70 years ago for a 3fe school and are now simply no longer fit for purpose and not able to fully meet the needs of its students.

With the proceeds of the sale of its existing site, together with the PSBP2 grant mentioned above, the school has a fantastic opportunity to provide its students with the first-class learning environment and enrichment facilities they deserve that will allow them all to flourish and succeed.

The School has always been keen to provide facilities for community use and has actively engaged with a significant number of local organisations to provide lettings space for a variety of different local groups including: Recreational indoor football; Warwick Badminton Club; Forever Active (Senior Citizens) Table Tennis Club; Pauline Quirke Academy Performing Arts; BS Musical Theatre; Cantata Choral Society; Takely Cricket Club; Clubbercise Fitness club; Elsenham Youth FC; Grove Cottage Youth Club and Get Active; Soccer Development; Little Scrummers Mini Rugby and ad hoc bookings for social events.

The scale of available funding will ultimately determine what facilities the new school will hold, though it is planning to deliver a six court sports hall; an athletics track; a 4G Rugby Astro turf; a separate 4G Football Astro turf; Tennis Courts; A large performance hall with stage and semi-permanent seating; A drama studio with raked seating and a well-equipped strength and conditioning centre. Each of these great new facilities would significantly enhance the provision for community use and give local organisations a chance to operate in purpose built surroundings.

Using the most up to date specifications, the design and construction of the new School will meet the current regulations that minimise environmental impact and optimise sustainability. The School is very keen to explore renewable energy sources that not only make the new site more economical to run, but significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the school. TBSHS intends to coordinate the development of these new facilities in conjunction with the relevant associations and regulatory bodies, to ensure they meet the necessary standards.

TBSHS has a great opportunity to capitalise on a substantial grant from central government that will allow it to relocate, expand and provide fantastic facilities for its students and the community. It would provide a great boost to the town's sporting and performance facilities.