

Subject:	Planning Brief: Former Falmer High School Released Land		
Date of Meeting:	2 February 2011		
Report of:	Strategic Director of Place		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Alan Buck	Tel: 29-2287
	Email:	alan.buck@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No	Forward Plan	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 A planning brief has been prepared to help guide future development proposals on land that was part of the former Falmer High School. The site was deemed surplus to requirements and did not form part of the land leased to the Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (which has now replaced the former High School). This report explains the context for the planning brief, summarises its contents and seeks permission for its approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the planning brief be approved as a means of helping guide future development proposals on the former Falmer High School released land.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

Background

- 3.1 The site comprises the remaining (southern) building of the former Falmer High School, together with surrounding land, now deemed surplus to requirements due to the recently completed Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA). The site is currently home to The Bridge Community Education Centre, which is seeking to remain in the area and which has submitted a business case to the council for replacement accommodation.
- 3.2 Through a now lapsed agreement between the council and Brighton & Hove Albion FC (B&HAFC) 1,000 car parking spaces were to have been provided on the High School playing fields for the Amex Community Stadium on event days. The closure of the High School and its replacement by the Academy has meant that parking on the playing fields is no longer an option. However, it is anticipated that in disposing of the site the council (as current landowner) will be seeking a development package that will include replacement facilities for The Bridge Community Education Centre, as well as car parking facilities to service the Amex Community Stadium on event days.

- 3.3 Although a degree of temporary car parking has been provided close to the stadium through agreements between the football club and other landowners, the need for additional local car parking to meet the full requirements of the planning permission remains and is heightened by the current planning application to increase the spectator capacity of the stadium.
- 3.4 Primarily in response to concerns raised with the council's Cabinet Member for Transport & Public Realm by local residents about the effects of event-day parking on streets in the Moulsecomb and Coldean areas, the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive of B&HAFC jointly agreed to the preparation of an independent study of the current and future use, and impacts, of different forms of transport used by supporters to reach the Amex Community Stadium at Falmer.
- 3.5 In considering the wide range of transport issues, parking has been a key issue. The report has considered on-street problems, and the use and availability of parking both on-site (e.g. Bennett's Field) and off-site (e.g. University of Sussex and the Falmer Released Land). Consideration of the released land is important given the original allocation of 1,000 spaces on the former Falmer High School Playing Fields as part of the original planning permission. In its overall conclusions and recommendations, the independent report has indicated that the case for the use of the released land for up to 800 spaces could be supported, and that this could form part of a wider package of proposals that would help to enable effective and efficient transport options for supporters to access the Amex Stadium both now and in the future. Safe access to the released land site on event-days should be a primary consideration in the design of the parking spaces and the management of movement to and from them by club stewards.
- 3.6 The independent study's conclusions will be considered by the stadium's Travel Management Group [TMG], which has been set up as a requirement of the planning permission and considers and addresses event-day transport issues. The views of the TMG will be reported verbally to this CMM meeting.
- 3.7 If agreed and implemented, the provision of these parking spaces could enable further consideration to be given to the potential opportunities that they may offer (outside the times that they would be used on event days and for other outdoor events) in terms of achieving an efficient use of such land within the city and addressing existing and future transport issues.
- 3.8 In the light of the above, a planning brief has been prepared in order to:
- assist the council in its strategic objectives of securing a new home for The Bridge Community Education Centre and additional car parking for the Amex Community Stadium;
 - help guide future development proposals by highlighting and applying the council's planning policies at a site specific level.

The planning brief

- 3.9 The brief takes the form of a 'light touch' advisory document that promotes the following potential uses on the site, whilst highlighting the need for environmental, design and other planning and sustainability concerns to be properly addressed in any development proposals:

- Around 800 tiered car parking spaces to serve the Amex Stadium on event days (and with potential to provide further strategic benefits in respect of sustainable transport issues)
- Provision of community facilities (e.g. to accommodate The Bridge Community Education Centre)
- Buildings linked with Higher Education and the Academic Corridor, including the potential for student accommodation, teaching and learning space, business enterprise and start-up business units.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 External consultation has been undertaken with the Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (immediate neighbours of the site) and Brighton & Hove Albion FC. Comments from these bodies have informed the contents of the brief. Further and wider consultation will be a necessary requirement of any future planning applications.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The cost of preparing the Planning Brief only consists of officer time and this has been met from within existing Planning revenue budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Karen Brookshaw Date: 09/01/12

Legal Implications:

Although the Planning Brief is a material planning consideration it cannot be afforded full statutory weight as it has not undergone full statutory consultation. However, the Brief complies with relevant Local Plan policies and national planning guidance and is a material planning consideration to which Members should give some weight in the determination of a planning application relating to the site.

- 5.2 A report will be going to the February Cabinet meeting regarding further appropriate decisions to be made by the council as owner of the released land.

*Lawyers Consulted: Hilary Woodward & Bob Bruce
Date: 5 and 16 January 2012*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The brief promotes community uses including a replacement facility for The Bridge Community Education Centre, in line with the corporate objectives of the council to ensure the retention of this facility in this area of the city.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Any development proposals will need to accord with council planning policies, which seek and promote sustainable developments. This issue is highlighted in the brief.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Security issues would be examined as a matter of course in any future planning application relating to the site.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 These are issues for the council as landowner and any future developer of the site to assess.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 As referred to above, the brief promotes the re-provision of The Bridge Community Education Centre, which provides a valued services in this part of the city.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The planning brief reflects the council's corporate and strategic commitment to replace The Bridge Community Education Centre, as well as ensure that the Amex Community Stadium is properly provided for in terms of a wide range of transport options.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 An alternative would be to not provide a planning brief. It is, however, considered helpful in this instance to provide a brief to provide guidance on the council's corporate aspirations regarding future land uses on the site.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The recommendations should be approved in order to provide increased weight to the planning brief as a material consideration in the planning process.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Planning Brief: Former Falmer High School Released Land