
Report of the Head of Planning and Development

STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

Date: 31st March 2021

Subject: 2020/20364 Pre-application for demolition of some existing buildings and the construction of a new police station at the former Kirklees College, Halifax Road, Dewsbury, WF13 2AS

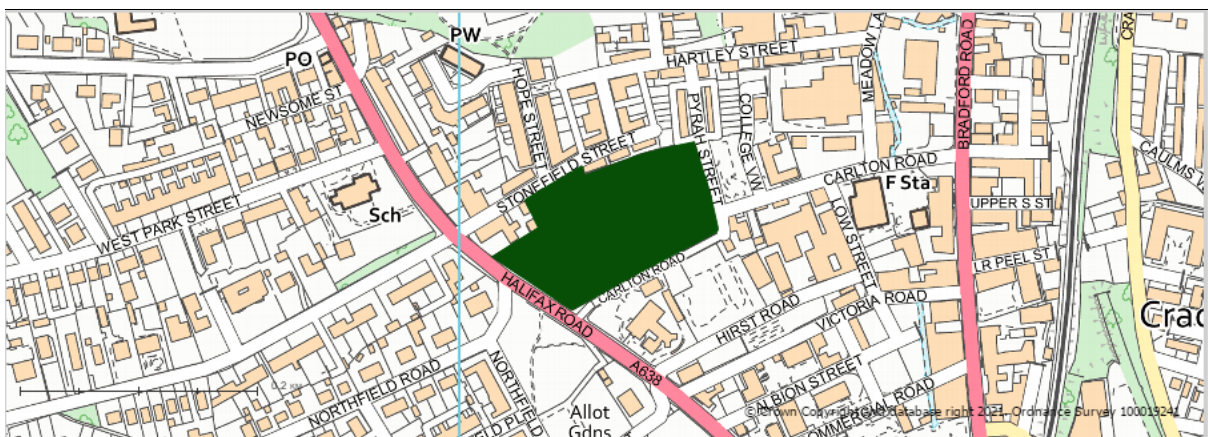
APPLICANT: West Yorkshire Police

DATE VALID
21-August 2020

TARGET DATE
09-December 2020

EXTENSION EXPIRY DATE
-

LOCATION PLAN



Map not to scale – for identification purposes only

RECOMMENDATION: That members note the contents of this report for information.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This pre-application enquiry is brought to the Strategic Planning Committee to inform members of a potential planning application for a new Police Station on the former Kirklees College site on Halifax Road in Dewsbury,

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The proposed site, presently occupied by the former Kirklees College facility, is bounded by Halifax Road to the west, Carlton Road to the south, Stonefield Street to the north and Pyrah Street to the east. It is in a prominent location on a main arterial route in and out of Dewsbury, approximately 0.5 miles north of Dewsbury Town Centre. The Kirklees College operation previously accommodated 100 staff and 1,200 students. It has since relocated to Dewsbury Town Centre.
- 2.2 The majority of buildings on site were constructed in the 1960/70s but it also includes the Oldroyd Building, built in 1889 and used as the Dewsbury and District Technical School of Art and Science (1893). An existing surface car park on Pyrah Street is also within the red line boundary.
- 2.3 Pedestrian access to the site is currently from Halifax Road and Carlton Road. Vehicular access is provided from Stonefield Street to a surface car park to the north of the existing buildings. There is a further restricted access route to Carlton Road.
- 2.4 Topographically, the site slopes steeply from west to east. In terms of landscaping, there are existing self-seeded trees and scrubland to the rear of the site at Pyrah Street. There are also several large trees in the corner of the site, adjacent to the bus stop on Halifax Road.
- 2.5 The surrounding area is mixed. To the north and east, it is principally residential, typically characterised by stone terraces along Stonefield Street and red brick terraces on Pyrah Street. There are further residential properties on Carlton Road. Opposite the site on Halifax Road is a small park, with further houses beyond.
- 2.6 The site is unallocated in the Kirklees Local Plan. The Oldroyd Building lies within the Northfields Conservation Area, which also adjoins the northern boundary of the site. To the south of the site, on the opposite side of Carlton Street, is the Grade II Listed former Dewsbury Infirmary, an impressive stone building constructed in Gothic Revival style.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This pre-application proposes extensive site clearance and demolition across the former Kirklees College site, the retention, extension and conversion of the Oldroyd Building and the construction of new facilities (circa 5800m² gross internal area) to provide a new Police Station for Dewsbury.
- 3.2 The facility would include new office and meeting spaces, a custody suite, public and secure landscaping and a mix of deck and surface car parking. The indicative plans indicate the re-use of the Oldroyd Building. It proposes the demolition of two small single storey extensions to the rear and the construction of a contemporary addition to the Carlton Road elevation to enable the Oldroyd Building to function as a modern office space. A new

single storey public entrance and meeting room building would face onto Halifax Road with a substantial custody suite behind that. Towards the rear of the site, a new decked car park would be constructed. This would be segregated from Pyrah Street by a landscaped edge. The existing car park on Pyrah Street would be retained for that function.

- 3.3 The site would accommodate Dewsbury Patrol, neighbourhood policing teams and a public help desk facility, which is presently located at Dewsbury Police Station. It would also house the District's investigative teams, support staff and the custody suite.
- 3.4 It would be a 24-hour facility that would operate 7-days a week. The applicant advises that it would accommodate just over 600 staff with 290 officers and staff working Monday to Friday, reducing to approximately 130 at the weekends.
- 3.5 The existing site access points from Carlton Road (via a restricted access route) and Stonefield Street would be utilised in addition to the car park on Pyrah Street. A separate pedestrian access and a limited accessible parking area will be provided for visitors from Halifax Road.
- 3.6 The pre-application clarifies that the proposal forms part of a strategic estates plan by West Yorkshire Police to invest in Kirklees. It includes a proposal to replace the existing out of date Huddersfield and Dewsbury Police Stations with new developments to support modern policing practices and continuous improvement for safer communities.
- 3.7 In addition to this proposal at Dewsbury, West Yorkshire Police have recently purchased the former Nissan/Fiat site adjacent to Broadway in Huddersfield to accommodate approximately 200 police officers and staff. These make up the Huddersfield South Patrol and Neighbourhood Police Teams, which currently deploy from Castlegate in Huddersfield. The applicant states that the new Huddersfield facility, which will ensure a continued presence in Huddersfield Town Centre, will be subject to a separate planning application process. The existing Police Stations on Castlegate in Huddersfield and Aldams Road in Dewsbury would remain in full use until the new stations are operational.

4.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 4.1 As part of the pre-application enquiry process the following key consultees within the Council have been contacted to seek their advice on the potential implications of such development in this location, and the measures required to mitigate any associated impacts. The advice provided by these consultees is set out within the appraisal below:

- KC Highways Development Management/KC Highway Design:
- KC Conservation and Design (including site meeting)
- KC Lead Local Flood Authority
- KC Environmental Services
- KC Ecology
- Police Architectural Liaison Officer

4.2 The applicant has recently undertaken a 3 week public consultation exercise. This was in the form of a virtual public exhibition comprising a series of display boards that could be navigated by the viewer and setting out details of the proposals. The applicant also held a Q&A session for any person that wished to engage with them in that more direct format.

5.0 MAIN ISSUES

5.1 The main issues are:

- Principle of development
- Highway issues
- Urban design and heritage issues
- Residential amenity
- Drainage and flood risk issues
- Ecology
- Air quality and land contamination issues
- Other matters

Principle of development

5.2 A new Police Station comprising the mix of uses proposed within this pre-application (including offices, meeting facilities and a custody suite) would be considered a sui-generic use. The site is unallocated in the Kirklees Local Plan and its re-development for this purpose would result in the re-use of a vacant Brownfield site. As such, there is no objection in principle to the proposal in land-use terms, subject to a full and detailed assessment against all other relevant policies in the Kirklees Local Plan.

Access and Highways

5.3 The site is located approximately 600 metres from Dewsbury Town Centre. It therefore remains close to the services and public transport links within the Town Centre.

5.4 Vehicular access would utilise the existing site access points from Carlton Road (via a restricted access route) and Stonefield Street. These would provide access points for operational vehicles and for parking. The current indicates the provision of 196 car parking spaces within a multi-storey car park (MSCP), including accessible and electric vehicle charging bays and secure cycle storage for staff. An additional 9 motorbike parking spaces would also be provided within the MSCP. Surface car parking accessed from Carlton road would provide 14 parking spaces whilst surface parking off Pyrah street would provide an additional 32 parking spaces. 3 accessible visitor parking bays and a public cycle storage would be located off Halifax Road, close to the public entrance. Pedestrian access to the site is currently provided from Halifax Road and this would be retained, in addition to a new vehicle access to accommodate accessibility requirements for all.

- 5.5 Highways Development Management have advised that to make a proper and meaningful assessment of the proposal, a future application will need to include a Transport Assessment. This will consider matters such as the proposed traffic generation, access to the site by various travel modes, accident analysis, a parking standards justification and a site access design and service arrangements.
- 5.6 It has been requested that further consideration also be given to visibility when exiting from both Carlton Road and the new access onto Halifax Road.
- 5.7 Highway Safety have also been consulted on the proposal. They note that despite the presence of safety cameras, this stretch of the A638 remains prone to collisions, some of which involve excess speed. Highway Safety have studied these and have not presently identified any further mitigation measures, although those under consideration would not impact on the proposed development. However, these matters will be fully considered as part of any future application.

Urban design and heritage issues

- 5.8 Policy LP24 of the Kirklees Local Plan includes a criterion that development should ensure that it respects and enhances the character of the townscape and heritage assets. This will need to be demonstrated as part of a future planning application submission. It must also have regard to Policy LP35 of the Local Plan, which requires, amongst other matters, that development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (such as a Listed Building or Conservation Area) should preserve or enhance the significance of the asset.
- 5.9 As a consequence of the site's location partly within the Northfields Conservation Area (CA) and its proximity to Listed Buildings, the heritage impact of the proposal will be a relevant consideration to the determination of any planning application. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in Section 66(1) and Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (PLBCAA) respectively, the Council will be required to pay special attention to considering the impact of the proposal on the special architectural and historic interest of the nearby Listed Buildings and the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the CA.
- 5.10 The former Kirklees College buildings at Halifax Road originated as the Dewsbury and District Technical School of Art and Science (Oldroyd Building) in 1889, which at that time, sat in spacious grounds to the north and east. The Technical School was extended in the late 19th Century to the east. Then in the early 20th Century, it was extended to the north and a new block was added to the east. This latter part is not within the Northfields Conservation Area (NCA). Further new blocks were added to the north east of the site in the mid-20th century and to the North West in the late 20th century.

- 5.11 The original Technical School, and its late 19th century extension, are of greatest architectural interest and for that reason, included with the CA. The Oldroyd Building forms an important part of the setting of the Grade II Listed former Dewsbury Infirmary to the south east and is considered to be an undesignated heritage asset. The remainder of the buildings are deemed to be of little interest.
- 5.12 The proposed re-development of the site for a new police headquarters, would result in the loss of the buildings outside of the CA, including the early 20th century additions to the rear of the Oldroyd Building. The Council's Conservation Officer considers that the loss of these buildings is not of concern on heritage grounds.
- 5.13 The retention of the Oldroyd Building is welcomed. It is acknowledged that it can be challenging to find new uses for such institutional buildings and this would be a significant public benefit of the proposal. It would ensure that the setting of the former Dewsbury Infirmary would be preserved. It is also considered that the scale and dense grain of the current college complex does not relate particularly well to the character of the Northfields Conservation Area.
- 5.14 The detailed design of the new build elements of the scheme are continuing to evolve. They will require careful consideration to ensure that they relate appropriately to the Oldroyd Building and the wider Conservation Area. This includes a consideration of detailed design and the selection of materials appropriate to the scale and form of the proposal and the locality.
- 5.15 The relationship of the proposed development to the surrounding properties in terms of its massing and appearance will also be key. Due to the nature of the development, there may be long stretches of reasonably blank elevations, which need to be detailed/treated in some form. In this regard, the Council have encouraged the introduction of green walls as a possible solution. The applicant has raised safety concerns in this regard and the discussion is on-going.
- 5.16 Careful consideration will also need to be given to the design of any counter terrorism boundary wall treatments required to protect the building, particularly on Halifax Road and Carlton Road. In principle, the provision of a larger landscaped area between Halifax Road and the new-build block custody suite is however, welcomed, as is the provision of further soft landscaping around the perimeter of the site. These discussions are on-going with the applicant and Members will be presented with the latest iteration of the scheme at the Planning Committee.

Residential amenity

- 5.17 A key consideration in the assessment and determination of any future planning application will be the impact of the proposal on the living conditions of existing residential occupiers that surround the site, particularly given the 24-hour operation and the nature of the proposal. This is acknowledged by the applicant.

- 5.18 With the exception of the extension to the Oldroyd Building, the new elements that will provide new accommodation across the site will be single storey in scale. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposal would result in any issues of overlooking for existing residents along Stonefield Street, Pyrah Street or residential development on Carlton Street. The scheme will require an assessment of the scale of the multi-storey car park in relation to existing properties and cross-sections will be required as part of any future application. Details of lighting will also be necessary to assess the impact on surrounding properties.
- 5.19 With regard to noise, the Council's Environmental Health Officer advises that there is a risk that the amenity of the occupiers of these properties will be adversely affected by noise, from vehicles accessing the site in particular, which will operate 24 hours a day. It is noted that the vehicle entrance off Stonefield Street is in a similar position to an existing entrance and is opposite the junction with Hope Street. It is considered that it is therefore probably the best position regarding noise. It is understood that this will need to be a secure entrance and if there is to be a barrier to restrict vehicles entering at this point, it needs to be positioned in a location that prevents vehicles stopping / waiting near to existing dwellings. The applicant has been advised that any barrier should therefore be set back into the site, possibly with some acoustic screening.
- 5.20 The proposed vehicular access off Carlton Road is immediately adjacent to an existing residential property. It has been raised with the applicant that any significant increase in vehicle movements near the other houses on Carlton Road and also on also Pyrah Street, particularly throughout the night could cause a loss of amenity.
- 5.21 Noise from any external plant and equipment at the development could also have an adverse impact. However, because of the size of the development it is expected that any such plant could be located away from any noise sensitive locations.
- 5.22 To assess these matters, a full Noise Assessment would be required with any future application. This would consider the potential impacts arising from noise from 24 hour a day vehicle movements and external plant and equipment. It will be required to assess the existing noise climate around the site and predict the future noise that will be caused by the proposed future use and also, to detail any necessary noise mitigation measures.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 5.23 The site is in Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning. This means that it is land that is at the lowest risk of flooding from main river sources.

- 5.24 The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) advise that Kirklees surface water flood maps suggest that the site is at risk of surface water flooding in the 1:100 year event and the 1:1000 year event. There have been no reported flood incidents on or off that site that could have impacted the site. However, this does not mean that flooding has not occurred, but rather that flooding has not been reported to Kirklees LLFA.
- 5.25 The applicant has been advised that the Council aim to promote sustainable drainage throughout the district. The LLFA therefore expect developers to follow the drainage strategy hierarchy, as described in National Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change.
- 5.26 The LLFA usually expect developers to investigate the feasibility of soakaways/infiltration techniques and the majority of the site (except the eastern area) appear to be suitable for infiltration. However, the gradient of the site carries a risk of water re-emergence and therefore, infiltration features are not considered suitable in this location.
- 5.27 The next option, being connection to a watercourse, is also unfeasible in this instance due to the distance to the closest watercourse, at approximately 150m east of the site and with existing properties and infrastructure in-between. The most likely option is therefore a connection to a surface water sewer or to a combined sewer, which are located in the immediate area, including along Carlton Road.
- 5.28 As this is a brownfield site, the LLFA require a minimum of 30% reduction of discharge rate on existing connection points (for the 1:1 year event). If a new connection is proposed to an alternative network, restrictions to at least Greenfield rate would be required.
- 5.29 A full Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy will be necessary to support a future application.

Landscape and Ecology

- 5.30 Policy LP33 of the KLP advises, amongst other matters, that proposals should normally retain any valuable or important trees where they make a contribution to public amenity, the distinctiveness of a specific location or contribute to the environment. Where tree loss is deemed to be acceptable, developers will be required to submit a detailed mitigation scheme.
- 5.31 In this case, there is some existing planting around the edges of the site, albeit of varying quality, including to the rear boundary of the parking area on Pyrah Street. The retention of existing planting is encouraged where practicable, and supported by new native species. The Tree Officer has also advised that the group of mature trees in the North West of the site, on the Halifax road frontage, need to be taken account and retained in any design. These trees are an important feature of the landscape and provide significant public amenity value along the busy main road. The latest proposals would retain them.

- 5.32 Turning to Ecology, Policy LP30 of the KLP confirms that the Council will seek to protect and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of Kirklees. In the absence of any baseline ecological information to date, the applicant has been advised of potential ecological constraints, including the site's location within a Bat Alert Zone, being within an area suitable for foraging bats and also, there are records of nesting Swifts within 250m of the site, which provides an opportunity to establish new colonies on the site. This should be considered within any ecological enhancements proposed. The applicant has therefore been advised to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report, which should be used to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment to support a future planning application. The applicant will also be required to demonstrate a bio-diversity net gain.

Air quality

- 5.33 The West Yorkshire Low Emissions Strategy (WYLES) -Technical Planning Guidance divides applications into 3 impact types (Minor, Medium and Major) using specific criteria to determine the type. Actions and mitigation requirements are dependent on the development use class and which impact type it is classified as. The proposed development has been reviewed in accordance with WYLES and because of the size of the development, the application would be classified as at least a 'Medium' impact type.
- 5.34 The site is adjacent to the busy Halifax Road, which has an annual average daily traffic (AADT) level of over 15,000 and it is considered to be a 'road of concern' regarding air quality less than 200m to the south east of the site boundary. There is also an existing Air Quality Management Area on part of the nearby Dewsbury ring road. Depending on the traffic volumes / compositions generated by the development it may meet the 'Major' impact type criteria.
- 5.35 It is important that the proposed development does not adversely affect local air quality and/or impact the nearby existing Air Quality Management Area. Therefore, a full detailed Air Quality Impact Assessment will be required with any future application. The Council would also expect the details of the provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) to be included with any future application.

Contaminated Land

- 5.36 A small part of the site near the eastern boundary is considered to be potentially contaminated because of its historical use as a sub-station. Because of this, and also because of the scale of the development, the Council will expect a Phase 1 Contaminated Land Desktop Study Report to be submitted with any future application. If that report recommends further investigations then a Phase 2 Contaminated Land Intrusive Site Investigation Report will also be required and, if necessary, a Remediation Strategy Report.

Other Matters

- 5.37 The applicant has been advised that the Council approved a Climate Emergency at its meeting of full Council on 16/01/2019. They have also been advised of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's pledge for the Leeds City Region to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2038 such that any forthcoming applications must respond positively to these policies and initiatives.
- 5.38 It is acknowledged that the extensive demolition required to deliver the proposal would have a notable environmental impact. It would involve the use of energy for on-site demolition and the transport of materials off-site, to which might be added the impact of the abandonment and potential demolition of existing facilities elsewhere. The applicant has therefore been encouraged to consider replacement buildings with high levels of sustainability to minimise the carbon footprint of the development, both in its construction and operation. It has been recommended that this should include consideration to the use of Green Roofs, given the potential extent of flat roofs within the site. These would obviously have a number of benefits, including reducing the need for artificial cooling in hot weather, attenuating or capturing rainwater runoff, as well as providing a range of habitats for urban wildlife.
- 5.39 The Council's 'Designing out Crime' Officer has also considered the pre-application submission and has advised that from a security perspective for the site, consultations are ongoing so that 'Secured by Design' can be incorporated into the design plans for any future application.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This pre-application is brought to the Strategic Planning Committee to inform members of a potential planning application for a new Police Station on the site of the former Kirklees College on Halifax Road in Dewsbury. This report sets out the key considerations for any future planning application.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That members note the contents of this report for information.