



Unsworth Academy, Parr Lane

Client: Unsworth Academy

Date: 20/12/21

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Enabl on behalf of the applicant, Unsworth Academy. The statement accompanies a planning application for new classroom block at Unsworth Academy, Parr Lane, Bury.
- 1.2 This statement sets out the conformity of the proposals with the development plan and relevant national policy, as well as any other material considerations having regard to Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Scheme Description

- 1.3 The submitted planning application is seeking planning consent for:

New classroom block (Use Class F1) and associated landscape works including relocated car parking, playground and athletics facility.

Unsworth Academy

- 1.4 Unsworth Academy is an academy within the Shaw Education Trust, a multi academy trust. The trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee (registration number 09067175).
- 1.5 Opening on 1st February 2017, the school operates a non-selective mixed admissions approach and achieved a good Ofsted rating at the last inspection on 13th November 2019 (one of only two schools in Bury to have such a rating). The school currently has 873 pupils out of a capacity of 935 and is continuing to see a growing enrolment register.
- 1.6 Shaw Education Trust was incorporated on 2nd June 2014 and now has 25 academies which it supports across both primary and secondary education sectors.

Application Documents

- 1.7 This Planning Statement should be read alongside the Architectural plans / drawings and supporting documents submitted to accompany the planning application. The application documents comprise:

➤ Design and Access Statement;

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- Drainage Strategy;
- Phase 2 Site Investigation; and
- Planning Statement (This document).

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The site is located at Unsworth Academy, Parr Lane, Bury. Figure 2.0 sets out Unsworth Academy school campus boundary, see Appendix A for this planning application boundary.
- 2.2 The site is accessed off Parr Lane within the settlement of Unsworth and in close proximity to Sunny Bank.



Site Characteristics and Surroundings

- 2.3 The site is currently comprised of the existing Unsworth Academy, following the relocation and new build of the school facilities at the site. The former school buildings have now been demolished and the new school has been built and has been in operation since it opened in 2017.
- 2.4 The new build school consists of a 3 storey building which is supported by 3 new MUGA's and new car park. The design to the new build is L shape, with the main entrance positioned at the north west corner to facilitate access and legibility for students, teachers, parents and visitors.

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- 2.5 The surrounding area is predominantly residential to the north and west of the site comprising of the residential areas of Unsworth and Sunny Ban respectively. To the south west of the site is a local centre within Unsworth, comprising of the Unsworth Cenotaph, local pub, restaurants, takeaways, convenience stores, dentists and other community facilities.
- 2.6 To the immediate south of the site is the Unsworth Cricket and Tennis Club and beyond this further to the south is open land towards the M62. To the east the site is bounded by the M66 as a hard physical boundary which separates the school site from open land including associated playing field for the school, Pike Fold Golf Club and surrounding agricultural land alongside Castle Brook.
- 2.7 The overall Unsworth Academy school site is partially within the Green Belt and partially outside. The site of the former main school is outside of the Green Belt boundary and the new main school building is within the Green Belt, which following its development and implementation of the planning consent (Ref: 61515/FULL) is now previously developed land within the Green Belt.
- 2.8 The site has a public right of way PROW (Ref: 7WHI / 101BUR) running through the centre of the school, between the school buildings and the planting fields, leading to the motorway and the playing fields on the other side.
- 2.9 The site has no statutory wildlife designations within the boundary, neither is it immediately adjacent to any such designated sites. The nearest wildlife site is the Hollins Vale Local Nature Reserve located circa 650m to the north. There are no listed buildings within the site boundary or immediately adjacent, the nearest listed building is the Grade II Unsworth War Memorial (Cenotaph) located circa 100m to the south west.
- 2.10 The site is entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is outside of the coal mining development high risk areas.

3. Proposed Development

Background to the Development

- 3.1 Shaw Education Trust manage and support 25 academies currently, of which Unsworth Academy is one. Unsworth Academy commenced due to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) who are tasked with identifying poor quality school buildings which have a negative effect upon education provision, considering Castlebrook (former main school on site) was one of the 277 schools where the condition need was most acute.
- 3.2 In response to the identification of Castlebrook as a school built in the 1970s which was dilapidated and not fit for purpose in terms of heating and ventilation, along with poor internal accessibility and safety issues linked to asbestos, the new main school was proposed and to be located on the same site, running concurrently with the demolition which meant this would be within the Green Belt.
- 3.3 The new school is of modern design, allowing temperature control and the latest facilities in terms of interactive white boards, Wi-Fi, specialist classroom areas, flexible spaces, lifts and ramps. The building was designed to meet the ESFA Facilities Output Specification which required a BREEAM Very Good rating. Overall, the new main building has contributed to the recent achievement of a Good Ofsted rating for Unsworth Academy.
- 3.4 Following the opening of the school in 2017 it has continued to increase the pupil roll count, with the most recently taken consensus being that there were 873 active pupils in a capacity of 935. This is as a consequence of the wide catchment area which the school has including central Bury, Radcliffe and Salford and becoming the school of choice within the local and wider community due to improved facilities and positive Ofsted results.
- 3.5 As a result of this positive growth, from September 2021 the school will be oversubscribed, in years 7, 8 and 9 with the trend set to continue to full capacity by September 2022, see Table 3.0 below:

Table 3.0: Pupil Roll Census						
	October 2018 Census	October 2019 Census	October 2020 Census	October 2021 Census	October 2022 Census	October 2023 Census
Number of students	740	831	863	918	982	1000

- 3.6 Options were assessed including extending the associated Construction Centre to add additional classrooms but this proved not to be financially viable and would leave a section of the site unused. Furthermore, the Construction Centre will be available for use by learners attending the new SEN school.
- 3.7 To meet this demand from pupil number increases, an additional 4 teachers have been appointed in September 2021 who are currently sharing classrooms or teaching in less than satisfactory environments outside of the main school building.

Planning History

- 3.8 The planning history is focused upon that surrounding the planning permission as amended for the new main school building which is occupied by Unsworth Academy. Table 3.1 summarises this planning history:

Table 3.1: Relevant Planning History			
Application Reference	Description of Development	Address	Date of Decision
61515/Full	Demolition of existing main school building and erection of new (relocated replacement) main school building, relocated hard surface games areas, car parking and landscaping and new substation.	Castlebrook High School, Parr Lane, Bury, BL9 8LP	11/09/17
63378/FUL	Variation of condition of planning permission 61515 for erection of new main school building: Revised site layout plan to show amendments to the habitat zone and parking layout.	Castlebrook High School, Parr Lane, Bury, BL9 8LP	15/01/19

Scheme Details

- 3.9 In response to the pressing need as a result of increasing pupil roll, capacity challenges within the existing main school building and new teacher recruitment there is a need for a new separate classroom building which can accommodate this increased demand and ensure that the quality of the educational experience provided remains at a high level.

Design

- 3.10 The approach to the location for the proposed new building has been informed by careful consideration of various sites within the school boundary. Six different locations within the boundary were investigated as part of the design process, all of those assessed were identified to have inherent hazards / issues regarding supply and installation of a modular building. The issues encountered were:

- High pressure water pipes owned by United Utilities (UU);
- Overhead power lines;
- Public Right of Way;
- Poor marshy ground conditions;
- Proximity to the M66; or
- Access through the school's main in/out point.

- 3.11 The proposed location was therefore selected as it was close to the main building, and was able to be orientated so as to face the main entrances towards one another assisting journeys between both buildings for students. The site also did not have any of the other associated technical issues and is sited outside of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

- 3.12 The proposed new building will be a long, low construction with the elevation punctuated by large windows. The new classroom block will provide six classrooms of 61m² each. The scheme is to be of one storey with a monopitch roof contrasting with that of the adjacent 3 storey new main school by being subservient and reflecting the change in topography between the existing new main school and the proposed development site.

- 3.13 The materials are intended to be using an off-white render and fine gauge engineered timber cladding mixed with a durable red-brick cladding around the entrances and below floor level. The approach to the materiality is to complement the existing school building and provide a robust structure for the new school. The timber element will reflect the lightweight cladding on the new build school and the darker redbrick elements and large punctuated windows will reflect the similar openings, glazed elements and brick façade on the existing main building opposite, as seen in Figure 3.0 below:



Figure 3.0: School Building Comparison – Existing School Building Above / Proposed Classroom Block Below

- 3.14 The new building is proposed to be constructed using a modular system which will provide a building with good standards of energy efficiency and a long service life. Additionally however and important in the context of the school enrolment position is that the construction programme is able to be reduced and importantly the associated related disturbance from construction within a school is able to be dramatically reduced.

- 3.15 Reducing the impact of construction works upon the learning environment for current pupils is an important consideration to the approach to the design so that the capacity can be provided in the most efficient timeframe and least impact upon the current learning environment.

Supporting Features

- 3.16 In addition to the main classroom block, the proposals include for additional area for play and outdoor sports facilities. The additional area for play is comprised of an extended breakout space in tarmacadam finish and a habitat / eco space to provide a choice of areas for play for the increasing pupil numbers.
- 3.17 The sports facilities to be provided will consist of a shot put and long jump to complement and add to the range of sports facilities within the school, diversifying the choice of activities for students during their time at the school. This will also support the athletics provision within the school by being able to provide additional facilities which are associated with the athletic discipline such that pupils have greater exposure to choice in this regard.

Access

- 3.18 The site has a well-established access way from Parr Road, which is to be retained. This access driveway leads to the main school buildings and carparks all the way to the new building. The site is well provided with tarmac paths which similarly are to be retained to provide level access to the proposed new classroom block. Around the proposed building a similar tarmac surface path is to be used.
- 3.19 The site is relatively flat which allows wheelchair users and those with mobility issues to reach the building independently. All entrances to the building will have flush, level thresholds from outside to inside. The building is designed on a single level and all rooms can be accessed via the lobbies and corridors.
- 3.20 The building is designed with a dedicated accessible WC. This design is in accordance with Part M of the building regulations providing an independently accessible facility.
- 3.21 The position of the proposed building means that 7 no. disabled parking spaces will need to be relocated. The new position will be across the driveway from their current position, with no loss of amenity.

- 3.22 Additionally, as some of the current overflow parking is in the position of the new playground, this will be relocated so that all 30 spaces are in the same place, adjacent to the Sports Hall.
- 3.23 The PROW which traverses the site will also be relocated as part of the scheme design. The revised route ensures that there is continued access via a PROW without impacting upon the operation of the school and reduces safety concerns in relation to pupils and an open route running through the school. The PROW is required to be altered in order to accommodate the much needed new educational facilities on site. The PROW diversion application is being applied for under a separate application running concurrently with this planning application.

4. Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 state that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The relevant parts of the adopted development plan for Manchester City Council comprise:
- Bury Unitary Development Plan (1997)
- 4.3 Other planning policy documents relevant to this proposal that are capable of being a material consideration in the determination of this planning application comprise:
- National Planning Policy Framework (“the Framework”) (July 2021), and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG);
 - Places for Everyone (August 2021) – Joint Development Plan Document – Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) / Guidance prepared by Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

Unitary Development Plan

- 4.4 Bury’s Unitary Development Plan (Adopted 1997) sets out the strategic planning policies controlling development within this administrative boundary. Table 4.0 has set out those policies which are relevant to the proposals within this application:

Table 4.0: UDP	
Policy	Summary
EN1/1 - Visual Amenity	Development will not be permitted where proposals would have a detrimental effect on public views of prominent or important buildings or visual amenity both within or viewed from areas of environmental interest such as the Green Belt.
EN1/2 - Townscape and Built Design	Council will give favourable consideration to proposals which do not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the particular character and townscape of the Borough's towns, villages and settlements.
EN1/3 - Landscaping Provision	Development proposals will be required to make provision for incidental open space and landscaping to the Council's satisfaction.
EN1/5 - Crime Prevention	Council will encourage development proposals which include environmentally sensitive design features aimed at discouraging crime.
EN4/2 - Energy Efficiency	The Council will encourage energy efficiency in development proposals through: The promotion of energy efficient modes of transport; Seeking location of new development in areas easily accessible to public transport and local facilities; and Promoting the efficient use of energy in the design and layout of development.
EN5/1 - New Development and Flood Risk	The Council will not permit new development, where such development would be at risk from flooding, would be likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, or would adversely affect river flood defences.
EN6 - Conservation of the Natural Environment	The Council will retain, protect and enhance the natural environment of the Borough particularly in relation to areas of ecological, wildlife and geological importance.
EN6/4 - Wildlife Links and Corridors	The Council will seek to ensure that new development within or adjacent to identified links or corridors contributes to their effectiveness through the design, landscaping and siting of development proposals and mitigation works, where appropriate.
EN7 - Pollution Control	Council will seek to control environmental nuisance and minimise pollution levels associated with development by limiting the environmental impact of pollution, wherever possible.

EN7/1 - Atmospheric Pollution	In seeking to limit atmospheric pollution the Council will not permit development which: Would result in unacceptable levels of atmospheric pollution.
EN7/2 - Noise Pollution	Council will not permit development which could lead to an unacceptable noise nuisance to nearby occupiers and/or amenity users; Development close to a permanent source of noise.
EN7/5 - Waste Water Management	In seeking to limit surface water pollution the Council will not permit development which: Does not have satisfactory arrangements for the disposal of foul sewage; Will exacerbate existing problems, such as premature or increase frequency of discharges through storm sewer overflows.
EN10/1 - Derelict Land	The Council will encourage the reclamation and beneficial use of derelict land by the public and private sectors, including the redevelopment of derelict sites.
OL1 - Green Belt	The Council will maintain a Green Belt, ensuring that it fulfils the following strategic purposes: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; To assist in safeguarding the countryside from further encroachment; To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
OL1/2 – New Buildings in the Green Belt	The construction of new buildings inside the Green Belt is inappropriate development, unless it is for one or more of the following purposes: Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it
RT2 - New Provision for Recreation in the Urban Area	The Council will encourage the provision of additional land and facilities for recreation in the urban area
RT3/3 - Access to the Countryside	The Council will seek to improve and extend opportunities for all to gain access to the countryside, in particular at focal points identified for informal recreation, by: Maintain, improving and where appropriate extending the existing network of Public Rights of Way

HT2/4 - Car Parking and New Development	The council will require all applications for development to make adequate provision for their car parking and servicing requirements in accordance with the Council's car parking standards.
HT4 - New Development	In considering the location of new or intensified development the Council will encourage proposals which: Support the principles of sustainable development; Assist the implementation of a balanced transportation strategy; Minimise the environmental impact of traffic.
HT5 - Accessibility for those with Special Needs	The Council will seek to improve accessibility, and the means of movement for the mobility impaired and those with special needs
HT5/1 - Access for those with Special Needs	The Council will encourage the provision of satisfactory access to public transport, car parks, pedestrian areas and public and private buildings for the mobility impaired and those with special needs.
HT6 - Pedestrians and Cyclists	The Council will seek to provide new and improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
CF1 - Proposals for New and Improved Community Facilities	Proposals for new and improved community facilities will generally be looked on favourably by the Council
CF1/1 - Location of New Community Facilities	Proposals for new and improved community facilities will be considered with regard to the following factors: Impact on residential amenity and the local environment; Traffic generation and car parking provision; The scale and size of the development; If the use is intended to serve a local community or catchment area, the suitability of the chosen location in relation to that community or catchment area; Accessibility by public and private transport; and The needs and requirements of the disable.
CF2 - Education Land and Buildings	The Council will, where appropriate, consider favourably proposals for the provision, improvement and dual use of educational facilities.

Material Considerations

4.5 Bury Metropolitan Borough Council has several SPDs of which the following are considered pertinent to this application:

- SPD6 – Alterations and Extensions to Residential Properties;
- SPD8 – New Buildings and Associated Development in the Green Belt

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.6 As part of the determination process, material considerations inform the acceptability of planning proposals. The Framework sets out the nationally controlling policies which inform development, these cover the various topics underpinning the presumption in favour of sustainable development which runs through the whole of the framework captured by paragraph 11 and as the Framework read as a whole.
- 4.7 Paragraph 38 seeks that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way, using the full range of planning tools available, working with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
- 4.8 Section 8 of the Framework seeks the promotion of healthy and safe communities, with schemes providing for green infrastructure, providing legible routes and encouraging walking and cycling.
- 4.9 Section 9 promotes sustainable transport to ensure potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed. Schemes should seek to promote walking, cycling and public transport where possible. To support development proposals safe and suitable access should be achievable for all users. Paragraph 109 stipulates that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
- 4.10 Section 11 supports efficient use of land by giving substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for identified needs. Promoting and supporting development of under-utilised buildings especially if to meet identified needs. Paragraph 122 sets out that development which takes into account different forms of development required, availability of infrastructure and services, importance of securing well-design, attractive and healthy places making efficient use of land should be supported.
- 4.11 Section 12 of the Framework seeks to achieve well-designed places with the creation of high-quality buildings, good design as a key aspect of sustainable development. Proposals should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture being sympathetic to local character, while not preventing increased densities.

- 4.12 Section 13 of the Framework protects Green Belt land. Paragraph 138 sets out the 5 purposes of Green Belt and paragraph 149 considers what proposals meet the exception to inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- 4.13 Section 14 meets the challenge of climate change and flooding. New development being planned to avoid increased vulnerability to range of impacts arising from climate change and being sited to reduce greenhouse gas requirements. Developments should be positioned in areas of least risk of flooding when with proposed end users who would be at risk.
- 4.14 Section 15 sets out the protection and enhancement of the natural environment with development proposals enhancing sites of biodiversity value, recognise wider value from natural capital.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.15 The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is Governments supporting guidance which consolidates a series of advice documents into one online database. The PPG provides a guide for all development according to the relevant sectors / locations to which are relevant. The proposed development has had consideration of the various pertinent guidance sections within the progression of the scheme.

5. Development Plan Compliance

- 5.1 The proposed development compliance against the development plan in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning Act 2004 is set out within this section.

Principle of Development

- 5.2 Provision of the new school class block and associated facilities has been informed by specific assessment of the increasing pupil roll at the school and consideration of the current capacity within the as built main school. Currently the school has an OFSTED Good rating, one of two in Bury to have such a rating, and is on a 3 year programme to achieve good to great, to move towards an OFSTED rating of Outstanding.
- 5.3 At present, the increasing pupil roll is putting pressure upon the educational capabilities of the academy with teachers having to rotate in classrooms and lessons also being taught in sub-optimum locations to balance the capacity on site as it is currently. Unsworth Academy following recent investment has become a school in high demand which combined with the wide catchment area is resulting in increasingly large intakes.
- 5.4 The contribution Unsworth Academy is therefore making to the quality of education within the borough is important and the ability for the school to continue to make that contribution with as limited impact upon students will be an important contributor to the continuing progression upon the Good to Great programme. Following recent investment into the academy to provide these enhanced facilities the ongoing investment able to be made to ensure that quality of education can be provided is critical to ensure that the previous investment is not undermined by an inability to continue to provide the quality of learning which has been done to date.
- 5.5 In addition to the specific classroom spaces and overall capacity, the provision for supporting facilities recognising the increasing demand on external facilities such as break out spaces, recreation and sports areas allows the academy to provide a well-rounded curriculum.

- 5.6 Providing the additional capacity within the school grounds ensures that the proposed use would be entirely appropriate to the existing use, and would support current and future students from remaining within the current school campus without the need for travel. It is able to be served by the current highways operations as previously approved and now operational.
- 5.7 The current school campus has as a result of the demolition of the Castlebrook High School former main building, a significant amount of derelict / previously developed land which is located outside of the green belt. Whilst the majority of this site is protected for future growth across the academy, there is capacity within the previously developed site area to accommodate the new classroom block required as part of this proposal.
- 5.8 The proposed new classroom block has been informed by an assessment of 6 different locations within the school boundary, each in turn ruled out due to technical matters as set out in section 3 of this statement. The chosen location is as aforementioned, outside of the Green Belt boundary and located on previously developed land, comprising of the former disabled parking spaces serving the current new school, on land which was reclaimed from the former main building of the Castlebrook High School.
- 5.9 The new classroom block is in a sustainable location, able to benefit from the existing access arrangements and used by the community and wider catchment already attending or due to attend Unsworth Academy. The parking provision is not detracted as a result of the proposed new building and the site is able to continue the established public transport links inclusive of extant school bus routes supporting sustainable modal choices of travel.
- 5.10 Due to the positioning of the proposed development, part of the application boundary is within the green belt, however only a very limited amount of the proposal is positioned within the green belt boundary. There are no buildings proposed within the green belt, with the elements crossing over in part comprising:
- Part of the extended break out space in tarmacadam finish;
 - Long jump sand pit and associated track;
 - Shotput markings for the shot put area;
 - Habitat / Eco Space

- 5.11 Those elements listed above do not comprise a building within the green belt, and remain within the site boundary and same use as the consented, now operational Unsworth Academy. The facilities provide outdoor recreational and sport facilities to support the wider education of the school, and furthermore they do not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

- 5.12 The proposed elements are entirely within the consented school grounds and do not lead to further encroachment beyond the school boundary. Furthermore, the proposals do not constitute new buildings and as such do not lead or give cause towards the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas such that they do not conflict with this purpose.

To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- 5.13 Unsworth Academy is located within Unsworth and is already an established developed site within the Green Belt. The site is bounded by the M66 to the east such that it presents a hard barrier to the open pasture beyond. The site does not form a linking site between to towns and the elements proposed to be within the Green Belt do not involve new buildings such that the proposals do not conflict with this purpose.

To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

- 5.14 The lack of buildings present within the Green Belt as part of these proposals is such that the layout does not lead to encroachment into the countryside. The site is also bounded by the M66 which is a hard physical barrier which prevents further encroachment into the countryside beyond the already established Unsworth Academy site within the extant Green Belt. It is therefore considered that the proposals do not conflict with this purpose.

To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 5.15 The proposals are not located within or adjacent to historic towns and therefore are not in conflict with this purpose.

To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

- 5.16 The proposed layout has ensured that this purpose is complied with. The proposed new building is located on derelict and other urban land located outside of the Green Belt and recycling this so that it can be progressed for a new class room block to meet a specific need. To service this with wider outdoor recreational and outdoor sport opportunities to ensure the academy is able to meet both the classroom and wider needs of future pupils, the new facilities have been located within the Green Belt.
- 5.17 Positioning these facilities in this manner ensures that the built form is positioned within the urban area and on previously developed land and results in no new buildings being proposed in the Green Belt. Taking this approach ensures that the proposals are not in conflict with this purpose.
- 5.18 The elements located within the Green Belt are not considered to be inappropriate development, not do the conflict with the purposes for keeping land within the Green Belt and therefore are considered to be acceptable in this instance.
- 5.19 It is therefore considered, that the proposals accord with policies EN10/1, OL1, OL1/2, RT2, CF1, CF1/1 and CF2 of the Unitary Development Plan and paragraphs 138 and 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Design

- 5.20 The proposed design has responded to the extant site context and the relationship to the existing building on site. The current main school building is 3 storeys in height, however it is positioned on a lower part of the site topography, such that the proposal for this scheme is for a single storey building in a linear 'L-shape' to respect the adjacent main building and views from within the Green Belt.
- 5.21 The design has responded to the ques provided from the modern elements of the main school building. The design incorporates a mixture of walls with the south elevation comprised of an off-white render and red brick punctuated with large glazed openings. The north elevation utilises the red brick which is carried round on all facades as a tying and grounding element, alongside a fine gauge engineered timber.

- 5.22 The use of these materials both balances the current building and complements that of the adjacent main building by reflecting the large glazed elements, predominantly brick façade and lighter weight cladding element by approaching this in similar material palette but differentiating to assist wayfinding for students.
- 5.23 Supporting this integration the scheme has considered the positioning of the access points so as to respond to that of the main school building. Given the high levels of footfall in this location it is intended to be predominantly hard surfacing, continuing the balance between hard surfacing and soft planting as already delivered on site. The wider proposals include provision for an eco-space which presents scope for both outdoor recreation and native, biodiversity enhancing ecological landscaping to complement the adjacent recreational opportunities.
- 5.24 The design has also considered the views of the new building from within the Green Belt. The majority of those views, due to the single storey nature of the proposed development are from within the school site only and therefore it is the relationship with the existing built-form on site which is pertinent. There is additionally a PROW, proposed to be diverted as part of this application, which will have a route circumnavigating the school and be afforded views of the new building from particular locations.
- 5.25 In the context of views from the PROW the building will either be seen with the existing former Sports Hall in context which is of greater scale circa 2 storeys, or the context of the former main school building site. The single storey scale of the proposed building would in conjunction with its siting within the school site ensure that there are no detrimental impacts upon views from the Green Belt. In addition, the building is so situated that views from the wider town will be glimpsed and over a long distance such that it would not have a detrimental impact upon the character of the existing town.
- 5.26 The approach to the new class room block is to benefit from and utilise the existing school site as far as possible and be positioned within it without impacting upon the operations of the school as far as possible. One such element which the classroom block continues to benefit from is the wider site security associated with the school. The majority of this security protection is secured by the existing infrastructure at the school boundary, however the new class room block will also have secure locking features to ensure that the building presents a deterrent to crime additionally.

- 5.27 The proposals are therefore considered to accord with policies EN1/1, EN1/2, EN1/3 and EN1/5 of the Unitary Development Plan, SPD8 and section 12 of the NPPF.

Sustainability

- 5.28 As the proposals are providing for additional students, the scheme has sought to consider modern methods of construction to provide a building with a long service life. Firstly, as aforementioned, careful consideration was undertaken to arrive upon the appropriate site within the school campus, selecting previously developed land ensuring that there is not a loss of greenfield land and associated trees and ecology.
- 5.29 Positioning the site within the centre of the campus and on previously developed land, ensures that it is distant from the wildlife corridor which runs adjacent to the M66 towards the eastern boundary. Keeping distant from this corridor reduces risk of potential impact upon the wildlife and habitat therein.
- 5.30 The site is also located within Flood Zone 1 as an area of least risk of flooding and therefore the most sustainable from a flooding perspective to locate development within. The proposals are utilising the existing and previously approved drainage strategy to ensure that the proposals will not increase the run off rate beyond current levels and will not lead to an increase in frequency of discharges through storm sewer overflows. This is evidenced in the support drainage layout.
- 5.31 The principle modern method of construction proposed has informed the approach with a modular build to be used in this instance. Utilising modular building allows for the majority of the development to be built off-site in safe, weather tight conditions reducing build time and increasing efficiency. The approach also facilitates the careful consideration of proposed materials, construction and finishes so as to support reductions in energy production required during the lifetime of the building.
- 5.32 More widely modular construction is able to better plan and incorporate impacts to the supply chain as it is less dependent upon progressing subject to weather conditions, this allows the construction to programme these aspects into the overall scheme design and reduce the associated carbon emissions with the construction process.
- 5.33 It is therefore considered that the proposals accord with policies EN4/2, EN5/1, EN6 EN6/4, EN7/5 and HT4 of the Unitary Development Plan and sections 14 and 15 of the NPPF.

Amenity

- 5.34 The location of the proposed new classroom block is such that it is distant from the edge of the school site boundary whereby residential or other receptors are located. The nearest residential accommodation is that of the apartments associated with Pole Lane Court which are circa 90m to the south west. Whilst there are no fixed policies controlling separation distances, SPD 6 sets out a general guide in this respect of a distance of 20m between habitable rooms. The distance would be in excess of 4 times that amount such that it is not considered that there would be any impact upon residential amenity.
- 5.35 The proposal has also considered the potential impact upon the amenity of the current students during construction and that of the future residents once occupying. The site is positioned distant from the M66 such that noise emissions emanating from the motorway would not be cause a significant impact upon students during the education, this is in part informed by the successful operation at a similar and close location of the existing main school building.
- 5.36 During construction, the potential noise and dust emissions impacts are mitigated principally by the choice of modular construction. Using modular construction ensures that the majority of the building works can be completed off-site so that both time on the site and the nature of works undertaken can be reduced significantly compared with traditional, meaning that students would have significantly less impact upon their day-to-day experience.
- 5.37 In addition to the use of modular construction, there would be a supporting Construction Environmental Management Plan provided during detailed design which would outline the contractors approach to the construction in this respect and include measures to control aspects such as dust suppression.
- 5.38 It is therefore considered that the proposals accord with policies EN7, EN7/1 and EN7/2 of the Unitary Development Plan, SPD6 and sections 8 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Access

- 5.39 The proposal is able to benefit from the existing services which facilitate sustainable modes of transport for students to attend the school. These include the following bus routes:

Unsworth Academy, Parr Lane

- 889 – Farnworth – Kearsley – Ringley – Outwood – Whitefield;
- 890 – Bradley Ford – Little Lever – Radcliffe – Outwood – Stand – Whitefield;
- 92 – Bury – Redvales – Hollins – Prestwich – Salford – Shudehill;
- 94 – Higher Crumpsall – Kersal – Prestwich – Hollins – Prestwich; and
- 97 – Bury – Hollins – Lower Broughton – Salford - Shudehill

- 5.40 The broad range of bus routes which serve Unsworth Academy both school bus and commercial bus services are such that there is a wide proportion of the catchment which is able to travel via this mode of transport.
- 5.41 Separately, the school is closely linked to Sunny Bank and Unsworth such that students from these areas are able to walk or cycle to school. The cycle stores are relocated and retained positioned in close proximity to access to either the newly proposed classroom block or that of the main building. This approach increases the numbers who are able to travel to school via sustainable modes of transport and reducing reliance upon the private car.
- 5.42 The proposal also results in no loss to parking numbers on the site. The proposed developed is sought to integrate within the existing school and results in limited changes to the as built layout to accommodate. There is an adjustment to the location of the disabled parking bays which are flipped to the other side of the main vehicular route through the site to where they are currently located and the overflow parking is consolidated adjacent to the sports hall, but there is no reduction in parking quantum on the site.
- 5.43 Siting the disabled parking spaces between the two classroom buildings facilitates accessible access / egress for those of impaired mobility. The new classroom block has also ensured this is incorporated within the design with flat level access provided both onto the surrounding landscaping and across the threshold into the building itself. As the building is only across one storey there is no requirement for a lift and supports disabled access.

- 5.44 Separately, there is a PROW currently within the site which was not re-located during the time of the original application. The PROW (routes Bury 101 and 7WHI) has become a potential safety concern during the operation of the school. As the PROW runs through the middle of the school site currently running across the landscaping for the new main school building and in future splitting the two main parts of the whole campus, it reduces the schools ability to control its security.
- 5.45 To accommodate this new six classroom modular building and associated outdoor recreational and sports facilities it is proposed to re-route the PROW so that it has a safe and secure route around the perimeter of the school.
- 5.46 The diversion application is being submitted separately and will run concurrently with this planning application to establish the preferred route for the diversion. The suggested route is included in Appendix B, which identifies the PROW being amended from shortly before the main entrance to the main school building to travel to the south around the school MUGAs and playing fields before re-joining the PROW at the underpass of the M66 to continue east beyond the school boundary, ensuring that access to the countryside is maintained.
- 5.47 The route has considered the technical constraints of the site and the simplest route involving the least amount of the extant PROW being diverted, the details of which will be subject to the separate application.
- 5.48 It is therefore considered that the proposals accord with policies RT3/3, HT4, HT5, HT5/1 and HT6 of the Unitary Development Plan and section 8 and 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Planning Balance

- 6.1 The proposal, has been considered to be in compliance with the Development Plan and any Material Considerations. To summarise this position, the below sets out the scheme against the three dimensions of sustainable development as defined by paragraph 8 of the Framework.

Economic Benefits

- The proposed development would mark a significant financial investment into the existing education facility at Unsworth Academy;
- The proposal would consolidate and continue to support the ongoing investment at Unsworth Academy and support future investment proposals;
- The new classroom block would support the new intake of teachers and further the ability to recruit increasing local expenditure within the locality and number of jobs at Unsworth Academy;
- During the construction phase, the proposed development would support a number of direct and indirect jobs within the construction industry and associated supply chains.

Social Benefits

- Delivering a new classroom block would allow Unsworth Academy to continue on its progression from good to great in an effort to achieve OFSTED outstanding rating and retain the good rating as one of only two schools in Bury to have such a rating;
- Improve the ability for the school to continue to take on further pupils and offer the best education within Bury to a greater cohort;
- Support the wider learning environment for students with the provision of outdoor recreational and sports facilities within the site;
- Secure a new safe and secure diverted PROW, maintaining access to the countryside without the detriment to school security.

Environmental Benefits

- The proposed development is sited on an existing brownfield site, within a sustainable location and not impacting upon any statutory wildlife sites. The proposal is therefore

ideally situated to provide a betterment in education without negatively impacting upon the immediate environment;

- The site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 as an area of lowest risk of flooding and consequently preferable to direct development towards;
- The proposal is sustainably located, able to rely upon an established bus network, providing cycle storage provision without increasing parking provision such that the scheme would continue to support modal shifts in transport and reduce reliance on the private car;

6.2 In considering the planning balance on the proposals, the scheme has been evidenced to providing a sustainable development for a sector of society with specific needs such that the benefits of allowing the proposal would outweigh any adverse impacts which may arise as a result. It is therefore considered that the proposals accord with the Development Plan and any Material Consideration such that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply in the determination of this application.

Appendix A – Site Location Plan

Appendix B – Proposed PROW Route