

Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning Agenda

Date: Tuesday 2nd August 2016
Time: 3.00 pm
Venue: Room G3 - Ground Floor, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Public Speaking Time/Open Session**

In accordance with Procedure Rules Nos.11 and 35 a period of 10 minutes is allocated for members of the public to address the meeting on any matter relevant to the work of the body in question. Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes but the Chairman or person presiding will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned where there are a number of speakers. Members of the public are not required to give notice to use this facility. However, as a matter of courtesy, a period of 24 hours' notice is encouraged.

Members of the public wishing to ask a question at the meeting should provide at least three clear working days' notice in writing and should include the question with that notice. This will enable an informed answer to be given.

For requests for further information

Contact: Cherry Foreman

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E-Mail: cherry.foreman@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies

4. **Reaseheath College Local Development Order** (Pages 1 - 16)

To consider commencing formal consultation on this proposed Local Development Order.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND PLANNING

Date of Meeting: 2 August 2016
Report of: Interim Executive Director of Place
Subject/Title: Reaseheath College Local Development Order
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ainsley Arnold

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 In line with current and emerging national thinking, Cheshire East Council (CEC) is committed to enabling the continued strengthening of the rural economy across Cheshire East. Traditional land based businesses, the wider countryside and its rural tourism assets all form an important part of the wider areas character and prosperity.
- 1.2 It is not surprising that key sectors are focused on the land and landscape, including agriculture and food enterprise, which are important to the economy, character and communities of the area. Diversification is also crucial in today's rural environment. Rural businesses need to innovate and develop in order to be viable. The creation of a Food Enterprise Zone (through the adoption of an LDO) will enable continued development of these important sectors.
- 1.3 During March 2015, Cheshire East was successful in their bid for funding to DEFRA, in the order to £50,000 was awarded to assist in the preparation of an LDO at the College location. The award of funding is to cover the costs of producing the detailed information required to prepare an LDO (mostly technical advice and survey work) as well as to facilitate key stages including Public Consultation and related exercises.
- 1.4 LDOs are ordinarily made by Local Planning Authorities (LPA) and give a grant of planning permission to specific types of development within a defined area. They streamline the planning process by removing the need for developers to make a planning application to a LPA. They create certainty and save time and money for those involved in the planning process. The primary function of an LDO is to accelerate delivery of much needed development. In this case in line with the continued development and expansion of Reaseheath College and continued support by CEC of this facility.

Reaseheath College Context

- 1.5 Reaseheath College is one of the leading specialist land based Colleges in the UK. Based on the outskirts of Nantwich in Cheshire, the College sits

amongst in the region of 272 hectares comprising farms, parklands, woodland and numerous sports facilities. Reaseheath's growth is being supported by a £40 million plus capital investment programme, the site has seen a number of new buildings opened since 2009, this includes the following:

- A learning resource centre;
- State of the art IT centre;
- A cutting edge £4 million animal management teaching centre;
- Purpose built construction trades workshop;
- £2.3 million upgrade of equine facilities, including an world class indoor riding arena and round pen for natural horsemanship;
- £7 million food innovation centre; and
- A £3 million investment into the existing commercial working college farm.

1.6 Reaseheath College has continued to expand over recent years and has a number of aspirational projects which they are seeking to deliver through the remit of the LDO, once adopted. The site plan (at **Appendix 1**) identifies the 6 sites which have been earmarked for development through extensive consultation with the College and within CEC, the outline proposals for which are as follows:

- Site 1 – Teaching & Workspace;
- Site 2 – Centre Point Extension;
- Site 3 – Sport Science & Performance Academy;
- Site 4 – Extension to teaching space;
- Site 5 – Extension to Engineering Shed; and
- Site 6 – Employment Hub

1.7 The LDO will have a lifespan of 15 years; ordinarily LDOs are in existence for 5-7 years but in this case this has been lengthened given the complexities of the site given its location adjacent to the Kingsley Fields development and the proposals for the realignment of the A51. Whilst sites 1-5 (shown at **Appendix 1**) are expected to come forward quickly, site 6 can only be delivered in years 10-15.

LDO Process to Date

1.7 Since the commencement of the LDO process, a number of stages have taken place to inform the LDO; these can be summarised as follows:

- Extensive consultation and collaboration with Reaseheath College to determine appropriate sites for development and timescales for their delivery as well as an appropriate lifespan for the LDO;
- Appointment of external consultants to assist with the required elements to inform the LDO including preparation of a Transport Assessment, Travel Plan, Design Statement, Heritage Impact Assessment, Ecological Appraisal (and related survey work). The list of the full evidence base to support the LDO can be found at **Appendix 2** within the Statement of Reasons;

- Consultation with colleagues at CEC (in November 2015, March and June 2016) to discuss the numerous inputs to the LDO to ensure that they are adequate to allow CEC to make an informed judgement and ultimately sign off the LDO; and
- Members of the Wards which adjoin or lie within the proposed neighbourhoods have been suitably briefed on the LDO process and its aspirations; and
- Meeting with Local Residents to discuss the LDO and its imminent period of Public Consultation.

Timescales

1.8 The next milestones, following approval at Portfolio Holder are as follows:

- 8th August – 9th September 2016 – **Public Consultation on draft/proposed LDO and supporting evidence;**
- 12th September – **Processing of Representations and modifications;**
- Mid-Sept – Early Oct – further **21 days consultation on LDO as with normal planning applications;**
- 29th October – **Final LDO to be submitted to SPB; and**
- 1st November – **Adoption of LDO / LDO comes in to force.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that:

2.2 The Interim Executive Director of Place to be granted permission to begin the process of formal Public Consultation on the proposed LDO at Reaseheath College ahead of its submission to Strategic Planning Board (SPB) during autumn 2016.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 Public Consultation is a crucial and required step of the LDO process and once carried out will enable the Council to formally submit the LDO for consideration and potential approval by SPB during autumn 2016.

3.2 It is intended that this LDO will assist in streamlining the process for development and delivery at the Reaseheath College site and is fully in line with Cheshire East's emerging Local Plan Strategy (LPS) at **Policy EG2 – Rural Economy** where the LDO will assist in this policies implementation.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 Bunbury

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 Cllr Michael Jones has been briefed as Ward Member for Bunbury.

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 The Council has within the emerging LPS, Policy EG2 which supports the strengthening of the Rural Economy; specifically it sets out:

“Planning has a key role to play in ensuring that the rural economy is viable, meets the needs of existing residents of rural areas and that growth and development is appropriate to the scale of each area and that it has a positive impact upon biodiversity; geodiversity; the landscape and the historic environment.”

- 6.2 The preparation of an LDO in this location further supports these policy aspirations and seeks to create a stronger, working relationship with Reaseheath College through the collaboration on this project.
- 6.3 **Appendix 2** to this report is the Statement of Reasons which discusses in more detail the legal and policy framework to which the preparation of an LDO is based upon.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 In March 2015 the Council was successful with a bid for £50,000 to assist in the preparation of an LDO at this location.
- 7.2 Any costs to the Council which are as a result of the Public Consultation process will be deducted from the funds acquired from DEFRA. There is a potential financial risk should the project spend exceed this amount. However this is considered a small risk in this case as the project is currently coming in under budget and the consultation process is the final budgetary commitment ahead of the LDO's adoption.
- 7.3 Establishment of the LDO effectively grants detailed planning consent for future commercial development to come forward without the need for further individual planning applications. This will represent a loss of future planning fees but this is viewed as a beneficial step to help promote and speed up new delivery on the site and its continued growth as a highly rated Agricultural College facility, both in Cheshire East and the wider region.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There is a legal process through which the bringing into effect of LDOs is achieved. There is a potential risk of challenge in the event that the process is deemed to have not been followed, but that can be adequately managed by having full regard to the necessary requirements. In the case of the Reaseheath LDO, CEC have appointed a consultant who has been acting as a 'critical friend' to ensure the process is robust and transparent as a result.

- 8.2 Legal Services have not been consulted on any risk attached to the grant funding terms and are operating on the basis that no advice is required in respect of the same.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 The conditions of the bid to DEFRA require that the LDO process keeps to certain agreed milestones. The project has already been delayed due to the need for further environmental surveys but the project now risks going out of time if Public Consultation is not able to begin soon. Similarly, the College is likely to have to submit separate applications for those developments that they need to commence quickly due to available funding and this may undermine the LDO objectives and process.
- 9.2 Whilst DEFRA have so far shown their understanding with regards to the time that the project has been taking to deliver, it should not be assumed that this leniency is boundless. DEFRA has extended the terms of the funding to the end of July 2016 – where we need to be able to identify that this project is nearing the final stages. Whilst the delays have so far been managed through regular communication with DEFRA there is always the chance, if the project stalls further, that the funding for this project could be lost or rescinded.

10.0 Background

- 10.1 Following a successful bid, in March 2015 the Council secured £50,000 funding from DEFRA to become a pathfinder authority to assist CEC in preparing an LDO to facilitate 'Food and Farming' uses at the Reaseheath College site.
- 10.2 The Council has carried out the necessary Pre-Consultation with stakeholders and landowners in order to establish support and to compile the evidence base required for the LDOs. There have been a number of meetings with internal CEC colleagues to assist in shaping this process and to ensure that the LDO is both transparent and robust, as well as, above all being entirely fit for purpose for both CEC and Reaseheath College.
- 10.3 Now that these stages in the LDO process have been completed the Council is seeking to begin the process of formal Public Consultation to move closer to adoption during autumn 2016.
- 10.4 Please note, **Appendix 2** is very much a 'working version' and whilst it has broadly been agreed there is input required from CEC colleagues and other statutory planning consultees over the course of the upcoming Public Consultation period and this document will be further shaped and refined following this process. It will be presented alongside the formal LDO Consent Order to SPB later this year.

11.0 Access to Information

11.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the Report writer:

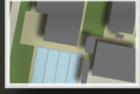
Name: Sophie Williams

Designation: Senior Planning Officer

Tel No: 01270 685678

Email: Sophie.Williams@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Key

-  Local Development Order Site Boundaries
-  Conservation Area
-  Recent Built Form/Setting
-  New Sports Pitches
-  A51 Relief Road



 n*ORTH

0m 50m 100m 200m 300m

Scale 1:5,000 (@A3)

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e*SCAPE
urbanists

Project Title
Reaseheath LDO Design Statement

e*SCAPE Job No.
016-009

Client
Cheshire East Council

Drawing Number
016-009-P001

Revision
REV A

Drawing Title
LDO Development Site Locations Plan

Scale
1:5,000 @ A3

Date
July '16

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1. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The rural economy plays an important role in and across the Cheshire East Council (CEC) and the wider Borough is committed to supporting diversification of the economy and encouraging growth in rural enterprise. Reaseheath College is one of the leading specialist land Colleges in the UK. Situated on the outskirts of Nantwich and comprising some 330 hectares of farms, parklands, woodland, sports and teaching facilities, the College supports nearly 5,500 students and staff and has excellent links with rural businesses throughout the region.

Supported by Cheshire East & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, Reaseheath was identified by DEFRA (February 2015) as a pathfinder project to create a Food Enterprise Zone (FEZ) and to develop a Local Development Order (LDO) to encourage investment and business growth.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK GOVERNING THE LDO PROCESS

LDOs were introduced through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and, in effect, grant planning permission for the specific form/type of development detailed in the order. These primary powers were amended by the commencement of section 188 of the *Planning Act 2008* in June 2009 and more detailed legal provisions on LDOs are contained in sections 61A to 61D and Schedule 4A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended and articles 34 and 37 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, as amended (the 'DMPO'). The DMPO came into force in October 2010 as a consolidation of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 and instruments which have amended that Order.

The Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013 removed the requirement to formally consult the Secretary of State prior to adoption enabling local authorities to approve an LDO immediately after reviewing the results of local consultations. This was replaced by a requirement to notify the Secretary of State, via the National Planning Casework Unit, as soon as practicable after adoption.

The Act also removed the requirement for LDOs to be reported on as part of Authorities' Monitoring Reports. However, CEC will closely monitor development progress.

3. PROPOSED LDO AT REASEHEATH COLLEGE

The LDO is proposed to cover six individually identified sites spread across the Reaseheath College Campus as highlighted in the aerial photograph opposite (Figure XX) and outlined briefly below:

- Site 1 – Teaching & Workspace;
- Site 2 – Centre Point Extension;
- Site 3 – Sport Science & Performance Academy;
- Site 4 – Extension to teaching space;
- Site 5 – Extension to Engineering Shed; and
- Site 6 – Employment Hub

The majority of these sites (1-5) are contained within the main College Campus and feature in the College long-term masterplan designed to support continued growth and academic excellence. Additional development at Site 6 is proposed to stimulate local employment

opportunities in food and farming related activities where employers can also benefit from proximity to the College.

4. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The vision behind the project is to create a Food Enterprise Zone (FEZ) that enables full integration of innovation, skills, business support and growth from field to plate. The primary ambitions of the FEZ will be to:

- Strengthen Research, Technical Development and Innovation and Skills;
- Support collaborative working along the food supply chain to access new market places;
- Help increase the Competitiveness of SME's, stimulating Economic Growth and creating new Employment Opportunities;
- Encourage new entrants into the sector; and
- Increase awareness of the impact of food and nutrition on health.

The purpose of the LDO is to provide confidence in the proposed developments and attract the necessary investment, building on the success of Reaseheath College to date. This in turn has a number of strategic implications for the wider borough as well as wider economic benefits:

- It will help to increase local employment opportunities and investment in the area;
- It will assist in the creation of employment opportunities and the retention of graduates from Reaseheath College and nearby FE / HE institutions;
- It seeks to reduce the time and costs associated with the planning application process and increase certainty for the development of sites;
- Collate and summarise baseline site information to provide upfront information on development considerations and constraints; and
- Contribute to a strategic approach to planning for key employment sites.

5. PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

Each of the six sites has particular uses proposed and development will be permitted under the LDO for the land uses in the Use Classes Order 1987 (amended) shown in the table below:

LDO Site ref.	Function	Maximum Floorspace	Use Class
Site 1	Teaching and Workspace for specialist engineering workshop / teaching facilities.	2,500 sq.m	D1 (education and training)
Site 2	Centre Point Extension to extend the College's Higher Education Centre and forming a multi-purpose employer hub to encourage engagement with employers.	600 sq.m	D1 (education and training)
Site 3	Sport Science and Performance Academy to provide year round sports facilities including sports science and performance labs. Including provision to demolish the existing pavilion on site.	1,850 sq.m	D1 (education and training) and D2 (assembly and leisure)
Site 4	Extension to teaching space to provide new teaching accommodation for vet nursing, small animal and equine students. Includes provision to relocate the kennels on the site.	450 sq.m	D1 (education and training)

LDO Site ref.	Function	Maximum Floorspace	Use Class
Site 5	Extension to Engineering Shed comprising an enclosure to outside storage area as an extension to existing workshops adjacent.	200 sq.m	D1 (education and training)
Site 6	Employment Hub on a 1.5 ha site comprising new commercial floorspace together with a new access road from the A51 to the north and other site infrastructure.	5,800 sq.m	B1 (business), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution)

6. LIFESPAN OF THE LDO

The LDO and the terms within it will be active for a period of 15 years following the day of its adoption and will expire following this period. It will therefore cease to apply on the day following the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of this order.

CEC propose to review progress with the LDO on the tenth anniversary of its adoption to be able to fully reflect on the continuing suitability of the order in light of any changes to planning policy. The review will be completed within 28 days of the tenth anniversary and at the end of the review the Council will determine whether to:

- a. Retain the LDO as it stands for the remaining 5 years of its life;
- b. Retain but revise some elements; or
- c. Revoke and Cancel the LDO

Development which has commenced under the provisions of the LDO can be completed in the event that the LDO is revoked, or revised or expires. Development which has commenced under the provisions of the LDO can be completed following expiry of the LDO after the end of the 15 year period; provided it still complies with the established conditions and criteria for development.

7. PLANNING CONDITIONS OF THE LDO

All development taking place within the area covered by the LDO will need to adhere to the following general conditions:

Prior to the commencement of development on a plot, detailed plans shall be submitted to the local planning authority. Within 28 days of their receipt, the local planning authority will confirm, in writing, whether the proposed development is in conformity with the LDO or if further information and/or changes to the plans are required to secure conformity with the LDO. If the latter is the case, the Council will contact the developer and determine whether there is a need to agree an extension of time in which to consider the additional information to be submitted.

The plans to be submitted must include the following:

- A site layout plan to an appropriate metric scale;
- Detailed elevations and floor plans of all buildings to an appropriate metric scale;
- A schedule of external facing materials;
- A detailed landscaping scheme;
- A scheme for all external lighting;
- A scheme for the attenuation of surface water with accompanying pollution

- prevention measures; and
- A foul drainage discharge and treatment assessment.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details and meet all requirements set out in these conditions. Development shall be commenced within 12 months of the date of the Council's confirmation that it is in conformity with the LDO otherwise further information will need to be provided to confirm compliance with the LDO.

8. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out in a comprehensive document the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. It was published in March 2012 and Local Authorities are required to take its contents into account when preparing Development Plans and also when making decisions on planning applications and appeals.

The key principle of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, taking into account the economic, social and environmental benefits that development can bring. It states that the planning system should be used to play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions through building a strong and competitive economy, ensuring the vitality of town centres, supporting a prosperous rural economy, promoting sustainable transport and requiring good design.

Paragraph 19

"The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system."

The NPPF continues to say that investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations and that local planning authorities should consider using Local Development Orders to relax planning controls where impacts are acceptable, and in particular where this would promote economic, social or environmental gains for the area, such as boosting enterprise (Paragraph 199).

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (Submission Document May 2014)

The Submission version of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (May 2014) is in accordance with the NPPF and supports the ambitions of the Food Enterprise Zone under **Policy EG2 – Rural Economy**. This addresses areas outside the Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres, and encourages development that:

- Provides opportunities for local rural employment development that supports the vitality of rural settlements;
- Encourage the creation and expansion of sustainable farming and food production businesses and allow for the adaption of modern agricultural practises; and
- Are considered essential to the wider strategic interest of the economic development of Cheshire East, as determined by the Council.

Furthermore, the Policy confirms support for development where the development:

- Meets sustainable development objectives as set out in policies MP1, SD1 and SD2 of the Local Plan Strategy;

**Reaseheath College – Food Enterprise Zone
Local Development Order – Statement of Reasons**

- Supports the rural economy, and could not reasonably be expected to locate within a designated centre by reason of their products sold;
- Would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations;
- Is supported by adequate infrastructure; and
- Is consistent in scale with its location and does not adversely affect nearby buildings and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity.

Presently, Cheshire East's Local Plan Strategy (LPS) is currently progressing through the Examination in Public (EiP) with hearings expected to re-commence during September 2016. Through a recently held period of Public Consultation the policy referred to above was not amended from the Submission Version and as such is still relevant in this case.

9. PLANNING HISTORY

Reaseheath has been in educational use since 1919 and has seen considerable expansion and new development in recent years. Reaseheath Old Hall is a Grade II listed building (designated in 1952) and sits within the Reaseheath (The Green) Conservation Area, which was designated in 1994. The landscaping and planting of the Conservation Area is a major element of the character of the college campus and integral to its intrinsic character and sense of place. The Conservation Area extends outside the main campus and includes the equine centre and adjacent fields and is much more informal in landscape character and setting.

The development contained within the proposed LDO will have no impact on the setting or context of the listed building status of the Old Hall.

None of the proposed LDO sites sit within the Conservation Area although Sites 4 and 6 are the closest to the Conservation Area Boundary it has been concluded within the supporting Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) prepared by Cass Associates that the sites will have a negligible impact on the setting of the conservation area through their development. The document suggests actions to be taken to mitigate any potential impact which will be adhered to at the detailed design stages.

Access to site 6 is to be provided via a 7.3 m wide single carriageway road to be constructed from the current A51 through the open field adjacent to the Equine Centre within the Conservation Area boundary. The reason for the siting of the access in this location is to reduce the impact on the adjacent conservation area to maintain its character and setting fronting the A51. There is already a 'farm track' in existence and the proposed access will purely be a formalising of this route. A clear buffer zone will be maintained between the development footprint of Site 6 (which is outside the Conservation Area) and the Conservation Area boundary itself.

There have been well over 30 individual planning applications within the College grounds since 2006 covering a wide range of minor alterations and major additions to College facilities and teaching space all of which have been consented. The most significant applications to date include:

Planning Application Reference	Description of Development
08/1126	New student hub with dining, retail and student amenity facilities
08/ 1142	New horticulture department
08/1136	A new animal management centre
08/1134	New food processing department
08/1140	Minor alterations to form a new farm interpretation centre
08/1129	New horticulture and animal management training and education

Planning Application Reference	Description of Development
	resource
09/0025	New facilities for arboriculture, construction and engineering Removal of Gas Cylinder And Erection of New Shed for Teaching Accommodation and Storage Extensions for Teaching Office and Storage Space
09/1155N	Demolition of the Cross College Building including Student Union Office
09/2160N	Refurbishment and Extension of the Existing Food Processing Department to Accommodate New Student Training Facility.
09/2675N	Demolition of Single Storey Teaching/ Amenity Block and Erection of a New Two Storey Food Centre of Excellence to Facilitate Business Innovation and Research Areas
10/0279N	Demolition of Single Storey Teaching/Amenity Block and Erection of New Two Storey Food Centre of Excellence for Business and Research Use
12/3548N	Proposed 3 storey, 150 bed residential student accommodation building
13/0674N	Proposed internal re-use of existing accommodation for delivery of Food Engineering courses, extension to provide teaching rooms and proposed new build storage barn for Food Engineering & Engineering use
13/5091N	Outline application for new sports hall, 3G and MUGA pitches
13/5093N	New teaching facility, national centre for food futures and the environment and associated outbuildings including glasshouses and maintenance block
15/3852N	New access road to serve college faculty building (s.278 Agreement now signed)
15/5545N	Change of existing grass sports pitch to 3G and MUGA pitches (new as yet undetermined)

NB. Many of the applications detailed above have since been built out.

Planning permission has also been granted for a development referred to as the NW Nantwich Urban Extension to the south of the main College campus / A51 which will provide 1,100 dwellings and up to 1.82 hectares of employment / incubator space (Planning Application Ref. 13/2471N). The uses proposed as part of the NW Nantwich development are entirely complimentary to that of the LDO, with the employment area of the NW Nantwich development being located directly adjacent to the Employment Hub development proposed as part of the LDO on Site 6.

10. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE BASE

LDOs are subject to the same technical scrutiny of planning applications and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has to be satisfied on the suitability of an area for the proposed development and its future sustainability.

The LDO has drawn on the comprehensive technical studies previously completed by Reaseheath College in support of other recent developments on the Campus site and a range of surveys and studies completed by developers promoting the adjacent Kingsley Fields urban extension where these have extended into the proposed LDO area. The critical supporting evidence is set out in the following documents:

- Traffic Impact Assessment & Outline Travel Plans prepared by SCP;
- Ecological Assessment & Review prepared by Reaseheath College;
- Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) prepared by Cass Associates;
- Design Statement incorporating Landscape Strategy prepared by e*Scape; and

- Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy prepare by SCP.

Copies of all these documents can be inspected at Cheshire East Council's office and will also be made available on Cheshire East's / Reaseheath College's website (TBC)

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT – SCREENING OPINION

The Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2015 set out the thresholds for new development that may need to be screened to determine whether a full Environmental Impact Assessment is required. The new thresholds provide for industrial estate development over 5 ha automatically requiring assessment. Within the LDO, Site 6 provides industrial estate type development on a site measuring 1.5 ha, which is below the threshold for screening purposes.

The other development sites within the College Campus total XX ha overall (5 ha threshold – not clear if as individual sites or total combined).

Even so the development is considered not likely to have significant effects on the environment and does not, therefore, require a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

12. CONSULTATION PROCESS

It is a requirement that LDOs are the subject of local consultation. LDO consultation procedures are set out in article 34 of the *Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010* (Statutory Instrument 2010/2184). Consultation must include any person with whom the LPA would have been required to consult on an application for planning permission for the development proposed to be permitted by the LDO.

The draft LDO has been prepared by Cheshire East Council in partnership with the Reaseheath College as the affected landowners.

The Draft LDO and this Statement of Reasons report were approved “in principle” as suitable for consultation by Cheshire East Council's Portfolio Holder on 2nd August 2016 subject to the completion of the required technical studies.

The Cheshire East & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has been advised of the intent to prepare an LDO and is supportive of the ambitions for growth.

All statutory stakeholders have been consulted informally as the technical appraisal work was developed. Initial comments have been addressed in the draft document and will be subject to further formal consultation once published. Details of these and other stakeholders consulted in the preparation of the draft LDO are presented in Appendix XX.

Informal presentations have also been made to local parish councils to outline the purpose of the LDO and the process for its adoption, management and delivery.

11. CONSULTATION TIMETABLE

The Draft LDO and Statement of Reasons Report will be placed on the Council's Planning Register, be available for inspection on-line and at the Council's offices and open to formal consultation responses between 8th August and 9th September 2016. This provides a slightly longer consultation period than the statutory 28 days due to the timing over the school holidays. Further presentations will also be provided to the immediate local communities during this period and there will also be a number of drop-in sessions organised and facilitate by the College to allow for comments to be made and representations suitably recorded.

All responses will be recorded and analysed according to material considerations and reported within a Statement of Consultation document for initial consideration prior to making a formal recommendation on any changes to the Strategic Planning Board for consideration in accordance with normal planning procedures ahead of the LDOs ultimate adoption during autumn 2016.