



# PLANNING STATEMENT

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## COLEG GWENT

COLEG GWENT CROSSKEYS CAMPUS SITE AT RISCA ROAD,  
CROSSKEYS, NP11 7ZA





An isometric line-art illustration of a cityscape with various buildings, streets, and vehicles, rendered in a light teal color. A large teal rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

# PLANNING STATEMENT

**On behalf of:** Coleg Gwent

**In respect of:** Coleg Gwent Crosskeys Campus site at Risca Road,  
Crosskeys, NP11 7ZA

**Date:** December 2024

**Reference:** R002.5315CA

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## Executive Summary

This Statement has been prepared by DPP Planning on behalf of Coleg Gwent to support the proposed phased redevelopment of the Coleg Gwent Crosskeys Campus, located at Risca Road, Crosskeys, NP11 7ZA.

The application is hybrid, seeking full planning permission for the development of Phase 1, which includes a three-storey teaching building, a single-storey energy centre, and associated access, parking, landscaping works. The application also seeks outline planning permission for the subsequent phases (2-4), involving the phased demolition of existing buildings and construction of new facilities, alongside associated access, parking, and landscaping improvements.

The proposals are underpinned by Coleg Gwent's Net Zero Carbon Masterplan, which aims to transform the campus to achieve net zero carbon in operation. This redevelopment is essential due to the poor condition of many existing buildings, which cannot meet modern education standards or sustainability targets. The transformation will not only enhance education facilities but also improve the interface between the campus and the local community in Crosskeys.

Key public benefits of the proposal include:

### Phase 1:

- A modern, three-storey teaching block, designed to be net-zero carbon in operation, which will enhance the educational experience for pupils at the Crosskeys Campus.
- A new energy centre to support low-carbon technologies and advance the net-zero goal.
- High-quality design, enhancing the streetscape of Risca Road.
- Improved active frontage along Risca Road, fostering greater engagement.
- Relocation of the campus restaurant and catering department, increasing interaction with the public while providing students a great place to gain experience.
- A welcoming entrance gateway to improve wayfinding and create an inviting environment for students and staff.
- Significant landscaping improvements, including a landscaped 'campus heart'.

### Phases 2-4:

- A new suite of modern teaching facilities to enhance the educational experience for pupils at the Crosskeys Campus.
- All new buildings designed to be net zero carbon in operation.
- High-quality design that contributes positively to the local streetscape, particularly along Risca Road.
- Relocation of additional public-facing activities to Risca Road, further strengthening community ties.
- Continued landscaping improvements across the site, focused around the 'campus heart'.



The application has been informed by extensive community engagement and consultation with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and other key stakeholders. In February and March 2024, consultations were held with college staff and the local community regarding the Masterplan. Pre-application advice was sought from the LPA under reference SPA/24/0021, followed by statutory PAC consultation with neighbours and consultees.

The proposed development aligns with national planning policy and the adopted local development plan. As detailed within this Statement, there are no material considerations that outweigh the significant public benefits of the proposed development. In line with PPW Edition 12 (paragraph 1.18), it is considered that planning permission should be granted without delay.

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Coleg Gwent (the 'Applicant') in support of a hybrid planning application for the redevelopment of the Coleg Gwent Crosskeys Campus, located at Risca Road, Crosskeys, NP11 7ZA.

### Proposed Development Description

- 1.2 The application seeks:

*Full planning application for Phase 1 of the redevelopment of Coleg Gwent Crosskeys Campus, Risca Road, Crosskeys, NP11 7ZA. This phase includes the construction of a three-storey teaching building and a single-storey energy centre, together with associated access, parking, landscaping works.*

*Outline planning application for Phases 2-4, comprising the phased demolition of existing buildings and their replacement with new buildings, along with associated access, parking and landscaping across the campus site.*

- 1.3 The above description is referred to as the 'Proposed Development', and the college lands subject to this application is referred to as the 'Site'.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement provides a detailed overview of the Proposed Development and its compliance with relevant national and local planning policy. It should be read alongside the comprehensive suite of plans and supporting documents submitted with the application, as listed in the accompanying Covering Letter.

## 2.0 Site Location and Context

- 2.1 This section of the Statement provides an overview of the site location and context, and a summary of relevant planning history.

### Site Location and Context

- 2.2 The site is the existing Coleg Gwent Crosskeys Campus located on Risca Road, Crosskeys, NP11 7ZA. The Coleg Gwent main entrance is located on Risca Road (B4591).
- 2.3 The site extends to an area of approximately 4.8 hectares and is located in the village of Crosskeys, which falls within the County Borough of Caerphilly.

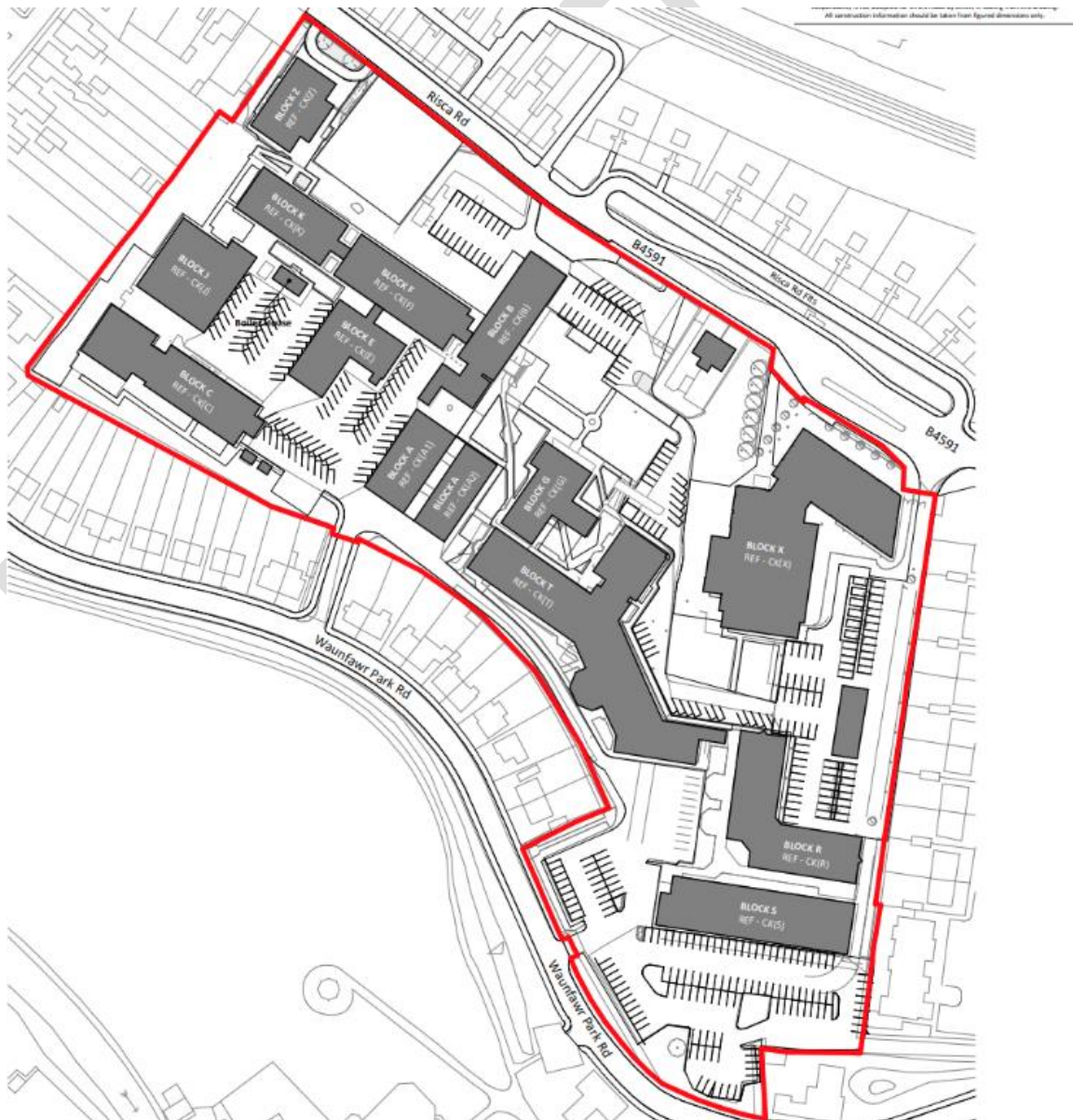


Figure 1: Figure 1: Application Site Red Line Boundary

- 2.4 The site is located in the village of Crosskeys, approximately 10km northwest of Newport and 6.5km south of Newbridge. The town of Risca, designated as a principle town in the LDP (Policy CM1.4), is situated approximately 2.5km east of the site.
- 2.5 The site is currently in use as a further education college and is the largest of the five Coleg Gwent campuses within the wider region. The college site covers an area of over 48,500 sqm and comprises several teaching blocks including traditional classrooms as well as buildings for vocational courses including an automotive engineering block; the existing buildings total 20,794.28 sqm of floorspace. This comprises all existing college buildings, Blocks A-Z, as detailed below.
- 2.6 The college campus also contains two semi-detached, vacant, residential properties which will be demolished under permitted development rights.
- 2.7 The immediate vicinity of the site largely comprises of low-rise residential dwellings, particularly to the north, west and east.
- 2.8 To the south, beyond the row of houses along Waunfawr Park Road, is Waunfawr Park, which includes a children's playground, bowls club and cricket club. Beyond this, the Ebbw River flows alongside the southern boundary of the park some 200m south of the site. Further south across the river is a large industrial unit with allotments to the west.
- 2.9 To the north there is a row of residential development on the opposite side of Risca Road, with steep hills beyond. The Ebbw Vale railway line runs behind these houses, along with the Crumlin arm of the Brecon & Monmouthshire canal above, some 150m north; this is subject to a significant level change from the college site.
- 2.10 Waunfawr Primary School is located approximately 100m west of the site.

### **Existing Crosskeys Campus Buildings**

- 2.11 The site comprises 15no. buildings shown on plan within the existing site plan. These are titled as follows and have been graded based on their existing structural condition in a condition survey undertaken by the project team in 2023.
- 2.12 The grading system is categorised as follows:
- Grade A buildings require no major construction work
  - Grade B buildings require internal and external improvements
  - Grade c buildings are considered to be end of life and in need of replacement.



Table 1: Existing Building Details

Building Title	Building Details	Condition Grade	Proposal
A1 Block	Assumed 1950 – 1965 490 sqm 1-storey	Grade B	Demolish
A2 Block	Assumed 1950 – 1965 490 sqm 1-storey	Grade B	Demolish
B Block	Assumed 1950 – 1965 800 sqm 2-storeys	Grade C	Demolish
C Block	Assumed 1970 – 1980 1,000 sqm 2-storeys	Grade B	Retain
E Block	Assumed 1950 – 1965 625 sqm 1-storey	Grade B	Demolish
F Block	Assumed 1960 - 1980 750 sqm 2-storeys	Grade C	Demolish
G Block	Year Unknown 550 sqm 1-storey	Grade C	Demolish
J Block	Year Unknown 780 sqm 1-storey	Grade B	Retain
K Block	Assumed 1966 – 1970 580 sqm 2-storeys	Grade C	Demolish
R Block	Assumed 1980 – 2000 1,080 sqm 2-storeys	Grade A	Retain
S Block	Year Unknown 1,080 sqm 2-storeys	Grade A	Retain
T Block	2,180 sqm 2-storeys	Grade B	Retain
X Block	2010 2,265 sqm 3-storeys	Grade A	Retain
Z Block	Year Unknown 480 sqm 1 storey	Grade B	Demolish
Boiler House	Area/year Unknown 1 storey	Grade C	Demolish



Figure 2: Existing Site Plan

### Access and Parking

- 2.13 The Coleg Gwent Crosskeys campus site is located in the heart of Crosskeys fronting onto Risca Road (B4591), the main access route through the village. The site is also situated some 300m southeast of the village centre and train station, which provides services to Ebbw Vale and Cardiff every 30 minutes throughout the week. Risca Road is a key bus route with a stop directly outside the main college campus building, with services to Tredegar (56), Blackwood (151) and Brynmawr (X15), all terminating at Newport.
- 2.14 The main access to the site is located on Risca Road (B4591) at the northern boundary of the site, with an access road running along the eastern boundary towards the car park to the south of the site. There are a further two access routes into the site from Risca Road to access other parking areas are dispersed around the campus. A further two accesses are located on the south side of the site adjoining Waunfawr Park Road, one being an exit from the car park at the south, another providing access to the automotive block in the western side of the site.

### **Flood Risk**

- 2.15 According to the Flood Map for Planning Wales, the Site is located within Flood Zone 1, indicating the lowest risk of flood from rivers and the sea. In contrast, the area immediately beyond the southern boundary of the Site falls within Flood Zone 3 due to the proximity to the River Ebbw, approximately 150m from the Site boundary. However, the Site benefits from natural protection provided by the level change between Waunfawr Park and Waunfawr Park Road, along with existing flood defences to the east.

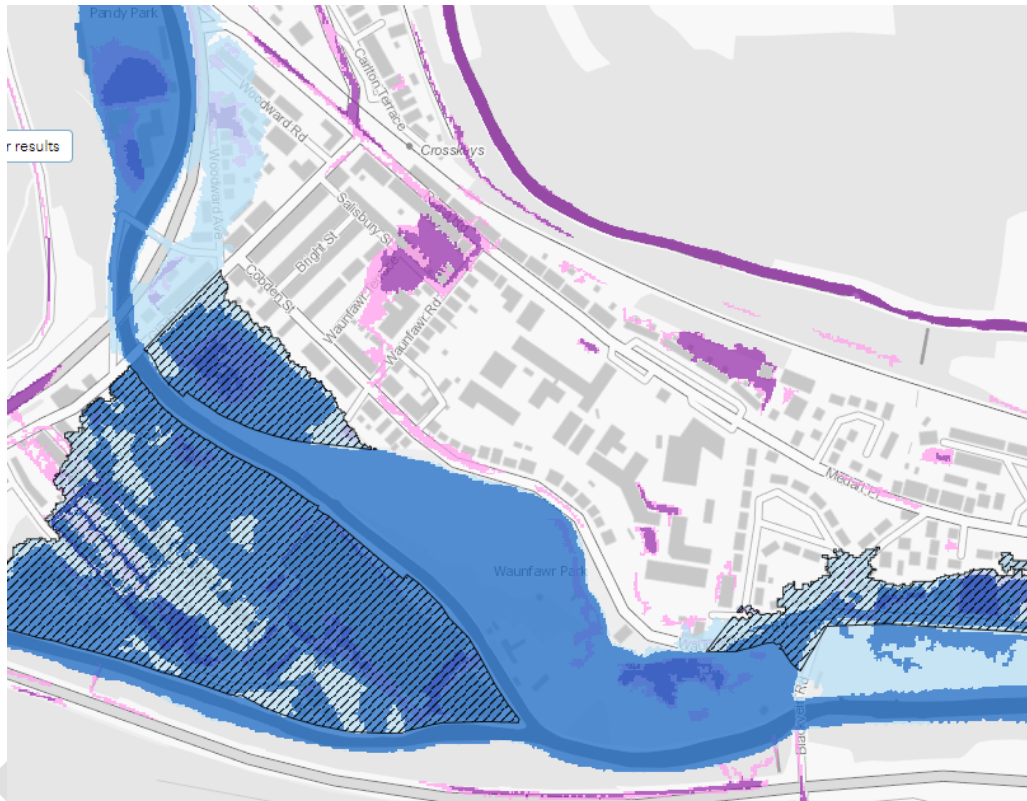


Figure 3: Flood Map for Planning Wales Extract

### **Trees**

- 2.16 There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on the site. There are established trees and vegetation dispersed around the site and the location of these is shown on the landscape plan.
- 2.17 A tree survey undertaken by Arbtech confirms there are a total of 37no. individual trees, 12no. groups of trees and 4no. hedgerows. These include 10no. category B and 43no. category C. It will be necessary for some tree clearance in order to make way for development. The proposed landscape scheme will include replacement planting.
- 2.18 A copy of the tree survey is submitted with this submission.

## Ecology and Open Space

- 2.19 The site is predominantly composed of existing buildings and hardstanding used for parking, with a few small pockets of soft landscaping located between the existing buildings and access roads. Currently, the site provides minimal opportunities for wildlife.
- 2.20 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, produced by Acer Ecology in May 2023, identified the site as having limited ecological value. Consequently, no significant ecology concerns were raised.
- 2.21 As part of the Appraisal, the potential of the existing buildings to support bat roosts was assessed. The buildings were found to have low to moderate potential for bat roosting.

## Other Matters

- 2.22 The site is not within a designated heritage or landscape area. There are no statutory or identified non-statutory heritage assets on the Site or within its immediate setting that would constrain the proposed development. The closest scheduled monuments are situated at the summits of Machen Mountain, approximately 1km to the south, and Twmbarlwm, approximately 2km to the northeast.

## Planning History

- 2.23 The Site's planning history primarily pertains to its existing educational use and associated buildings. Under planning application reference 21/0054/FULL, permission was granted in March 2021 for partial cladding of the exterior of J Block and the construction of a modest extension; however, it is understood that these works were not carried out. X Block, which remains part of the Masterplan proposal, was constructed following approval under reference 7/1279/FULL in January 2008. A summary of the Site's planning history is provided below:

Table 2: Site Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision
21/0511/COND	Discharge conditions 04 (land and surface water drainage), 05 (site control - dust suppression) and 06 (site control - noise suppression) of planning consent 21/0054/FULL (Partially clad the exterior of J Block and form a modest extension to equalise male and female changing spaces)	Approved 01/10/2021
21/0361/FULL	Replace cladding and new roofs and windows to Blocks B, F & K	Approved 27/09/2021
21/0054/FULL	Partially clad the exterior of J Block and form a modest extension to equalise male and female changing spaces	Approved 29/03/2021
14/0346/FULL	Replace Existing Boiler Flue Chimney	Approved 04/08/2014



Reference	Description	Decision
11/0520/FULL	Provide One Smoking Shelter	Approved 08/11/2011
10/0864/FULL	Provide Cycle Shelter	Approved 11/01/2011
09/0898/FULL	Demolish and reconstruct 2.4-metre-high brick boundary wall and erect 25 square metre glasshouse on second floor roof	Approved 09/02/2010
07/1279/FULL	Redevelop Campus - Phase 1; Change use of former bus station site, demolish existing buildings and erect new educational buildings	Approved 24/01/2008

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## 3.0 Proposed Development

- 3.1 This section provides an overview of the proposed development. The description of development is as follows:

*Full planning application for Phase 1 of the redevelopment of Coleg Gwent Crosskeys Campus, Risca Road, Crosskeys, NP11 7ZA. This phase includes the construction of a three-storey teaching building and a single-storey energy centre, together with associated access, parking, landscaping works.*

*Outline planning application for Phases 2-4, comprising the phased demolition of existing buildings and their replacement with new buildings, along with associated access, parking and landscaping across the campus site.*

- 3.2 In summary, the proposal seeks a phased redevelopment of the college site across four phases. Outline planning permission is sought for all phases, with detailed planning permission requested separately for Phase 1.

### The Vision

- 3.3 The College's vision is to establish a net zero-carbon campus that exemplifies sustainable learning. The key principles guiding this vision include:

- Creating a welcoming, attractive and safe environment;
- Rationalising external spaces and parking areas;
- Reducing the maintenance backlog;
- Addressing wayfinding challenges and establishing a more defined entrance;
- Redefining routes throughout the campus;
- Enhancing learning spaces; and
- Meeting Welsh Government's net-zero carbon targets.

### The Proposal

- 3.4 The application is a hybrid submission, seeking full planning permission for Phase 1 and outline planning permission for the remaining three phases. This phased approach is necessary for two key reasons:

1. To ensure the campus remains operational during development, minimising disruption to education.
2. To allow each phase to be delivered independently, aligned with the availability of funding for each stage.

- 3.5 In addition to the detailed Phase 1 proposal, the application includes outline plans – reserving all matters – for the phased redevelopment of the entire site over a 10-15 year period.

## Phase 1 (Full Planning Application)

- 3.6 This application seeks full planning permission for Phase 1 of the development. The Phase 1 boundary of Phase 1 encompasses the area directly northwest of X-Block, southeast of B-Block and north of G-Block.

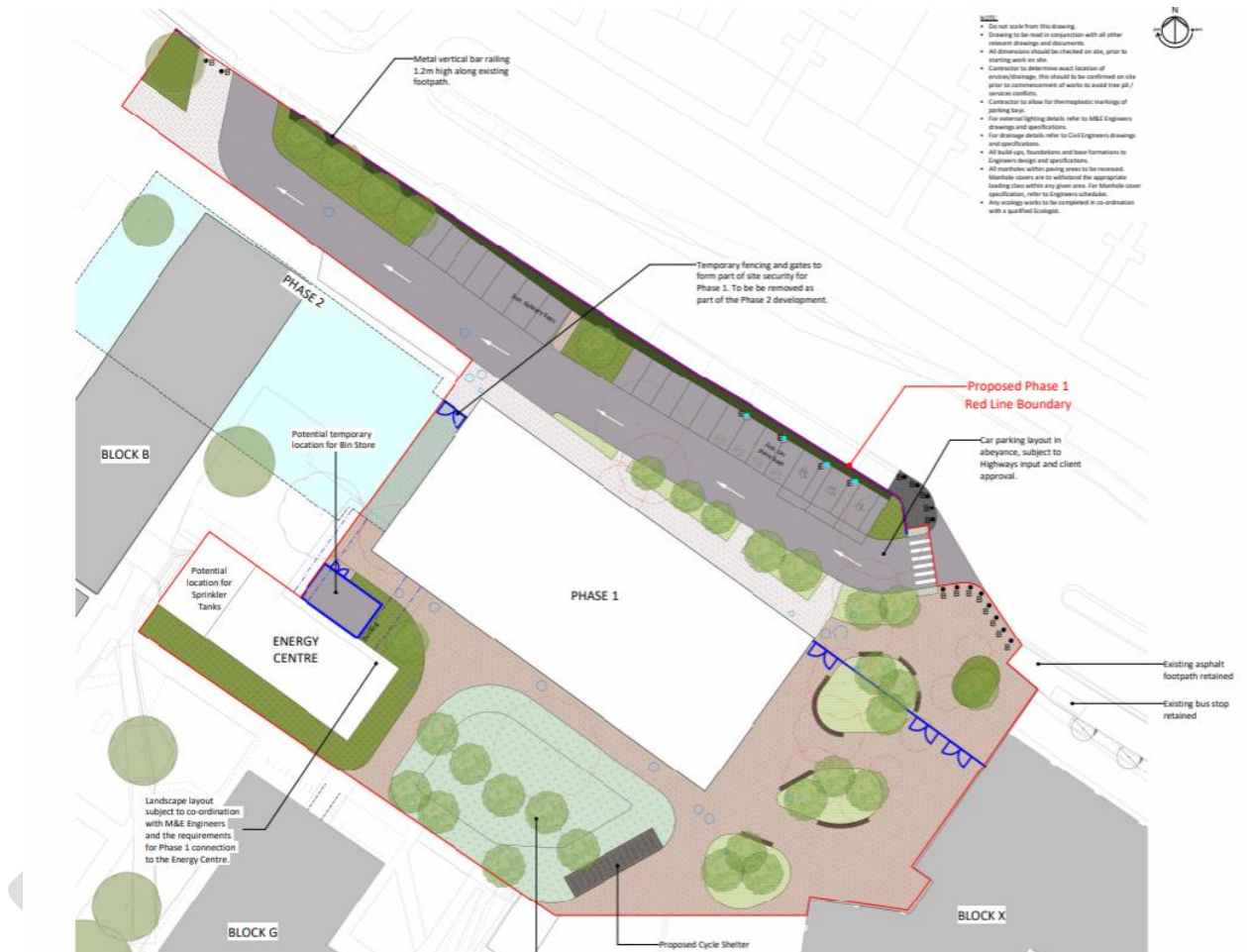


Figure 4: Phase One Red Line Boundary

- 3.7 Phase 1 fronts Risca Road and includes the construction of the first of three, three-storey buildings along the northern boundary. This development will create an active frontage onto the street, enhancing the connection between the college and the wider community.

### Phase 1 – Demolition

- 3.8 Enabling works for Phase 1 include the demolition of two semi-detached houses, with demolition approved under a separate application (reference 24/0633/NOTD). These houses are scheduled for removal in Spring 2025. No additional is proposed as part of Phase 1.

### Phase 1 – Layout

- 3.9 Phase 1 involves the construction of the new 'Y-Block', fronting Risca Road and located between the existing B-Block and X-Block. A new energy centre, serving the wider college, will also be built to the southwest of the Phase 1 area, southeast of B-Block, and will house the sprinkler tanks.
- 3.10 The Y-Block will create a more defined entrance to the campus, forming a gateway between X-Block and the wider site. This enhanced entrance will be supported by landscaping improvements at the southern end of the Phase 1 boundary. To the north of Y-Block, a small parking area will be provided adjacent to Risca Road, alongside a turning area for delivery vehicles to the west. Additionally, the existing vehicular access point from this location into the central campus will be closed to prioritise pedestrian movement.

### **Phase 1 – Y-Block**

- 3.11 The proposed Y-Block will front Risca Road as the first of three similar blocks to be developed along this boundary in future phases. It will be a three-storey building with an approximate Gross Internal Area (GIA) of 2,100 sqm.
- 3.12 Y-Block will include a mix of specialist teaching spaces, traditional classrooms, and smaller seminar and group study areas. The ground floor will feature the campus restaurant, while the first floor will house traditional classrooms, and the top floor will accommodate exam spaces and staff offices. Flexible social hubs, learning commons, and welfare areas will be integrated throughout the building's circulation areas to support student and staff needs.

### **Phase 1 Y-Block Ground Floor**

- 3.13 The ground floor is laid out in two main sections, separate by a central corridor running the length of the building. It will primarily house the catering department, with the campus restaurant, kitchen and food preparation areas located along the northern side. The restaurant features full height glazing fronting Risca Road to create an active frontage and encourage community engagement, as restaurant will also be open to the public.
- 3.14 The southern half of the ground floor will include changing rooms for catering students and a catering classroom at the western end, along with supporting infrastructure such as WCs, caretaker and first aid facilities, and plant rooms.
- 3.15 The primary entrance to the building will be located at the eastern end, leading into a student social space and the main stair core at the southeastern corner, which will also include a large Hellerup staircase with informal social space for students. An additional stairway will be located at the northwestern corner. The western elevation will feature an entrance designed to connect seamlessly to a future building constructed in Phase 2. Additional entrances will open on Risca Road to enhance active frontage and facilitate maintenance of specialist kitchen equipment.

### **Phase 1 Y-Block First Floor**

- 3.16 The first floor will have a layout configured similar to the ground floor, featuring traditional classrooms, including several ICT-equipped rooms. A second catering classroom will be



positioned in the northeastern corner, while a staffroom will be situated adjacent to the main southeastern stair core.

### **Phase 1 Y-Block Second Floor**

- 3.17 The second floor will mirror the general layout of the floors below. The western section will feature a large multifunctional classroom for exams, ICT rooms for online assessments, and PC repair spaces. The eastern section will house staff offices, including agile working space for up to 25 people along the northern side of the corridor and individual offices for departmental heads on the southern side. This area will also contain a staff boardroom, kitchen facilities, and WCs.

### ***Phase 1 – Landscaping and Trees***

- 3.18 The existing entrance plaza area will be expanded as part of Phase 1, creating a unified, identifiable entrance to improve site legibility. This enhanced space will integrate with the recently relocated main reception, now housed in the existing X Block, further improving wayfinding and accessibility.
- 3.19 The cohesive entrance plaza will extend into the initial stage of the proposed 'campus heart', a central landscaped area designed as the core of the campus. Phase 1 will include a pond directly area directly south of the new Y-Block, surrounded by landscaped areas with significant tree planting to enhance the aesthetic and ecological value of the site.
- 3.20 As part of the Phase 1 works, 14 existing trees and a small hedgerow within the red line will be removed. The landscaping proposals include the planting of 26 new trees around the new building, within the entrance plaza, and along the new car park. A row of trees will be planted along the frontage of Y-Block and the new access road, providing screening and softening the visual impact from Risca Road. Ornamental shrubs and groundcover planting are also proposed along the car park boundary adjoining the pavement, further enhancing the visual appeal.
- 3.21 While the proposed tree planting does not meet the 3:1 replacement ratio required by Paragraph 6.4.42 of PPW, this standard will be achieved across the entire site as part of the wider redevelopment plan.
- 3.22 The entrance plaza will feature three landscape islands, each planted with a cluster of trees within a raingarden. These islands will enhance the Site's visual appeal, aid drainage and surface water management, and include timber seating for student and staff use, creating a welcoming social space.
- 3.23 The landscaped pond area to the south of the Y-Block will include additional tree planting and a nearby bike shelter. This pond will function as a raingarden to manage surface water while serving as a central visual feature within the campus.
- 3.24 The entrance plaza and southern areas will be paved with block materials, with distinct colours to demarcate the public and student areas of the site.

### ***Phase 1 – Access & Parking***

- 3.25 Phase 1 involves the removal of existing car parking at the Risca Road frontage, eliminating vehicle through traffic into centre of the Site and facilitating the development of improved open spaces. A small car park will be created north of the Y-Block, providing 19 parking spaces, including 4 EV charging bays and 3 accessible bays, which will also contain EV charging capability. This car park will be a one way access which will lead to an egress point where vehicles can rejoin Risca Road further to the northwest. Tracking for a large refuse vehicle has been undertaken which demonstrates that the parking area can accommodate refuse pickups.
- 3.26 A cycle shelter will be installed south of the Y-Block, offering convenience for students and benefiting from passive surveillance. A new zebra crossing will connect the gateway plaza to the Risca Road pavement and bus stops, further enhancing the Site's accessibility and wayfinding.

### ***Phase 1 – Drainage***

- 3.27 A drainage strategy has been prepared by Atkins-Realis and sets out that Phase 1 will include various SuDS strategies to manage surface water and will achieve a 96.7% betterment on existing discharge rates in a 1 in 100 year flooding scenario, including a 40% allowance for climate change. Surface water is to be attenuated at a rate of 2.85l/s and storage will be provided by attenuation basin within the pond area to the south of the proposed Y-Block. Further bioretention systems in the form of raingardens will be installed surrounding the proposed energy centre, as well as the three landscape islands within the main entrance gateway; these will both maximise green infrastructure on site and improve water quality. Permeable paving will be installed at the pathway north of Y-Block, along with further bioretention systems being situated within the car park directly adjacent to Risca Road.
- 3.28 In terms of foul sewage, a new connection is proposed to the existing on-site sewer system in front of the new building. The new connection will be routed such that no below ground drainage will be impacted by the erection of future blocks as part of subsequent phases. Finally, given the catering department will be housed within the new Y-Block, grease traps will be installed at all sinks, floor drains and cooking equipment. These will be located externally adjacent to the proposed kitchen at the northwest corner of the new block. This will then combine with the rest of the foul flows and discharge to the existing on-site sewer system.

### ***Phase 1 – Sustainability and Energy Measures***

- 3.29 Sustainability is a central driver of the campus redevelopment, with Phase 1 featuring the construction of a new energy centre to support the heating strategy for the entire site. The energy centre will provide heating for the new Y-Block and, in the future, will have the capacity to service additional blocks along the Risca Road boundary. The system will utilise air source heat

pump technology, ensuring an energy efficient and environmentally friendly solution. This plant area has been designed to serve Phase 1 with spatial allowance to serve future Phases, in future, the centre will serve an ambient heat loop district heating system, which will be installed across 4 phases.

- 3.30 The Y-Block will incorporate localised heating solutions, with air source heat pumps housed in a plant room at the western end of the roof. The roof space will also be equipped with solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, enabling the generation of renewable energy to support operations across the wider campus.
- 3.31 As required by the conditions of the funding received for the project, the construction of Phase 1 will create a maximum of 600kgCO<sub>2</sub>/m<sup>2</sup> embodied carbon, will utilise at least 15% recycled content, and the finished building will be Net Zero Carbon in Operation. Overall, the new block is projected to require just 55% of the typical energy use of a similar building, and is projected to reduce space heating energy demands by 35kWh/m<sup>2</sup>.yr against a typical building.

### ***Phase 1 – Noise***

- 3.32 A noise report was undertaken by Acoustic Consultants Ltd which established that the typical background noise level across the site is 51dB during daytime hours and 44dB at night. Given these noise conditions the external noise is therefore such that windows cannot be opened as part of the ventilation strategy within teaching spaces, aside from during the hottest 200 hours of the year. The report then sets the plant noise limits for the site as 5dB below the existing background sound level at nearby receptors, which is set out at 46dB at nearby dwellings and teaching spaces during the day (07:00 to 23:00), and 39dB at night (23:00-7:00).

### **Phases 2-4 (Outline Planning Application)**

- 3.33 This hybrid application also seeks outline planning permission for the phased redevelopment of the wider college campus over the next 10-15 years. Due to the extended timeline and reliance on securing funding for individual phases, only outline permission is sought at this stage, with all matters reserved. Detailed plans for each phase will be submitted through subsequent reserved matters applications.
- 3.34 The outline proposals include the retention of key existing buildings, including X-Block, R-Block and S-Block (Grade A Condition). Refurbishment works are also proposed for C-Block and J-Block, with an extension for C Block as part of the redevelopment.
- 3.35 Several buildings are proposed for phases demolition, including A-Block, B-Block, E-Block, F-Block; G-Block, K-Block, Z-Block; and the Boiler House. These will be replaced over time to make way for new, modern college facilities.
- 3.36 The proposal will, over time, see the erection of four new replacement college buildings on site. These are listed as M Block, I Block, G Block, and H Block. The buildings will front Risca Road,

creating a stronger site frontage and interface with Crosskeys. The proposed layout would see the opening out of the central part of the site with improved external spaces.

- 3.37 The redevelopment plan includes the construction of four new college buildings: M-Block, I-Block, G-Block, and H-Block. These building will be positioned along Risca Road, enhancing the Site's frontage and creating a stronger connection with Crosskeys. The campus layout will feature an open central area, improving external spaces and creating a cohesive 'campus heart'.
- 3.38 The proposal will increase the college's visibility, accessibility, and community interaction by incorporating active frontage along Risca Road. Public facing facilities such as an ancillary salon and gym will improve the streetscape and showcase college activities. The existing car parking areas at the south and west of the Site will be retained, while parking in the Site's centre will be removed to allow for enhanced landscaping. A central area will also be reserved for a potential additional building in Phase 6. Importantly, the student capacity of the college will remain consistent with current levels.

### ***Phases 2-4 – Phasing***

- 3.39 The campus redevelopment is anticipated to following the following phased order:

#### **Phase 2 (2027-2029)**

- **Key Actions:** Demolition of the existing B-Block and construction of the proposed Z-Block, along with an extension to C-Block.
- **Z-Block Details:** This block will match the size and specifications of Y-Block, comprising up to three storeys and offering 2,000-2,999sqm of floorspace. Z-Block will enhance the active frontage along Risca Road and house the relocated health and beauty department on the ground floor.
- **C-Block Extension:** An extension to the existing C-Block will be constructed to the southeast, providing additional facilities for automotive engineering. This building will be up to the 1.5 storeys tall, with 100-999sqm of floorspace.
- **Landscaping:** Landscaping will be extended through the south of the new blocks from Phase 1, including raingardens being extended around the north and western edge of the energy centre, as well as tree planting directly south of the proposed Z-Block.

#### **Phase 3 (2030-2032)**

- **Key Actions:** Demolition of K, F and Z-Blocks, along with the former B-Block boiler House, followed by construction of the new B-Block.
- **Demolition Details:** Removing these structures will free up space on the western side of the Site for new development.
- **B-Block Details:** The new B-Block will be located at the site of the former Z-Block in the northwestern corner. It will feature up to three storeys and 2,000-2,999sqm of floorspace, housing motor vehicle teaching facilities.



- **Access and Parking:** A new access point will be created off Risca Road, with a parking area provided to the east of the new block on currently vacant land.

#### Phase 4 (2032-2034)

- **Key Actions:** Demolition of the existing A, E, and G-Blocks and construction of the proposed new A-Block.
- **A-Block Details:** The new block will be located along Risca Road in the northwestern part of the Site, between the proposed Z-Block and B-Block. It will be up to three storeys tall, containing 4,000-4,999sqm of floorspace. This block will house the sports and public services departments, adding active frontage to Risca Road.
- **Access and Parking:** Temporary parking from Phase 3 will be replaced by a larger parking area south of the new A-Block, on the site of the former E, F and K-Blocks.
- **MUGA Playing Pitch:** A Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) playing pitch will be installed on the footprint of the former A2-Block, providing outdoor facilities for the sports department.
- **Landscaping:** Enhancements will include areas around the MUGA pitch and southern edge of the new A-Block.

#### *Phases 2-4 – Access & Parking*

- 3.40 The primary access roads to the Site will remain unchanged, with the main vehicle entrance at the northeastern corner, adjacent to X-Block, being reconfigured as entrance only. The existing access point at Waunfawr Park Road proposed to function as exit only. Existing car parking areas will be retained along the eastern and southern edges near X-Block, as well as around R and S-Blocks. Additional parking spaces are planned at the former location of E-Block, centrally within the Site. A visitor car park will be located at the front of the Site, adjacent to Risca Road featuring both ingress and egress points. A new access point is proposed at the northwestern corner, adjacent to the planned B-Block providing access to the new automotive block and the central parking area. Secondary access to the central parking area will be available via the existing entrance at Waunfawr Park Road, adjacent to C-Block.
- 3.41 A total of 527 parking spaces will be provided across all phases, 18 of which will be accessible; given there is no proposed increase in student numbers on site, no additional parking is proposed. Vehicle parking will be removed from the current main entrance along Risca Road to accommodate new blocks. This redesign ensures that the entrance prioritises pedestrian and cycle access, creating a more welcoming and accessible gateway to the campus. A temporary car park will be included as part of Phase 3 on an area of currently vacant land, this is to maintain parking availability throughout the build and this area of parking will subsequently be removed to allow for the erection of A-Block as part of Phase 4.
- 3.42 The rationalisation of the campus will focus on a central landscaped pedestrian spine, enhancing connectivity between academic buildings, student areas, and open spaces. This spine will extend east to west along the southern edge of the new blocks near Risca Road and continue southward past T-Block toward S-Block. At its core, the spine will feature a central square and a main pedestrian gateway, positioned west of X-Block.

- 3.43 Cycle storage will be strategically placed across the campus, particularly in high-traffic areas such as the campus heart and at other congregation points. Three cycle shelters are proposed: one south of X-Block, and one near J-Block at the western edge of the Site. These shelters will offer safe, convenient parking with passive surveillance at key locations within the college.
- 3.44 Active travel routes across the Site will be enhanced providing improved connectivity between Waunfawr Park Road and Risca Road via centre of the campus. Updated wayfinding signage will also be installed to improve navigation.

### ***Phases 2-4 – Landscaping and Trees***

- 3.45 The demolition of the aforementioned blocks will create opportunities to enhance the Site by increasing open spaces and introducing new landscaping. A prominent feature will be the creation of a new 'campus heart' outdoor teaching and social space, serving as a central focal point for the college. Efforts will be made to retain existing trees where possible, complemented by new tree planting to achieve a biodiversity net gain. Trees will be retained along the southern boundary of the site, providing screening for nearby residents, along with T36 at the northwest of the site also being retained and providing similar screening. Detailed landscaping proposals in respect of each phase will be provided in subsequent reserved matter applications, but across all phases a total of 39 trees are proposed to be removed as part of Phases 1-4, while a total of 189 trees are proposed to be planted on site.

### ***Phases 2-4 – Drainage***

- 3.46 The drainage strategy for the wider campus will incorporate a variety of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to effectively manage surface water runoff and enhance site drainage. Proposed features include raingardens positioned near buildings and two attenuation basins to store surface water. The central landscaped area, once cleared and expanded during the initial three phases, will also integrate various SuDS features. The primary aim of the drainage strategy will be to maintain surface water runoff rates for rainfall events up to a 1 in 100 year event, plus 40% allowance for climate change and urban creep. Detailed drainage strategies for each phase will be outlined in subsequent reserved matters applications.
- 3.47 Foul sewage will be discharged via a new connection to the mains sewer on site, avoiding any off-site connections to the public sewer network. All below ground drainage will be routed such that any conflict with the locations of future phase buildings.

### ***Phases 2-4 – Sustainability and Energy Measures***

- 3.48 The overarching strategy for the wider campus aims to achieve net-zero carbon in operation and attain BREEAM "Excellent" rating. Detailed plans and measures will be provided within subsequent reserved matters applications.

## 4.0 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 This section outlines the relevant planning policy context for the application, which consists of the relevant national and local policy documents.

### Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 4.2 The Well-Being and Future Generations (Wales) Act (WBFGE) 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 4.3 To ensure we all work towards the same purpose, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals which public bodies are required to work towards achieving. The Act is a material consideration in planning terms and therefore its goals are considered relevant to this proposal. These are as follows:
- A prosperous Wales;
  - A resilient Wales;
  - A healthier Wales;
  - A more equal Wales;
  - A Wales of cohesive communities;
  - A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh Language;
  - A globally responsible Wales.

### National Planning Policy and Guidance

#### *Planning Policy Wales*

- 4.4 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) (February 2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for Wales and how these are expected to be applied. The relevant chapters from PPW are as follows:

#### Chapter 2: People and Places: Achieving Well-being Through Placemaking

- 4.5 **Paragraph 2.3** dictates that the planning system should create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all.
- 4.6 **Paragraph 2.8** outlines that proposals must seek to promote sustainable development including seeking to maximise the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits of developments.
- 4.7 **Paragraph 2.16** sets out the Key Principles which represent a guiding vision for all development plans, including Future Wales. These principles support the culture change needed to embrace

placemaking and ensure that planning facilitates the right development in the right place. The relevant principles include:

- Growing the economy in a sustainable manner,
- Making best use of resources,
- Facilitating accessible and healthy environments,
- Creating & sustaining communities; and
- Maximising environmental protection and limiting environmental impact.

### Chapter 3: Strategic and Spatial Choices

- 4.8 **Paragraph 3.3 Good Design Making Better Places** states that good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places.
- 4.9 **Paragraph 3.5 Access and Inclusivity** outlines that good design is inclusive design and sets out that development proposals should place people at the heart of design, emphasising that proposals should provide flexibility in use and create buildings that are convenient for all to use.
- 4.10 **Paragraph 3.7 Environmental Sustainability** states that good design promotes environmental sustainability and contributes to the achievement of the well-being goals. Developments should seek to maximise energy efficiency and the efficient use of other resources (including land), maximise sustainable movement, minimise the use of non-renewable resources, encourage decarbonisation and prevent the generation of waste and pollution.
- 4.11 **Paragraph 3.11 Community Safety** outlines that proposals should consider the need to prevent and reduce crime and disorder. The aim should be to produce safe environments that do not compromise on design quality in accordance with the cohesive communities well-being goal.
- 4.12 **Paragraph 3.12 Movement** conveys that good design is about avoiding the creating of car-based developments, minimising the need to travel and reliance on the car whilst maximising opportunities to make healthy and sustainable travel choices.
- 4.13 **Paragraph 3.20 Promoting Healthier Places** explains that proposals should therefore seek to maximise proactive and preventative measures to reduce health inequalities, including enabling opportunities for outdoor activity and recreation, reducing exposure of populations to air and noise pollution, promoting active travel options and seeking environmental and physical improvements, particularly in the built environment.
- 4.14 **Paragraph 3.30 Sustainable Management of Natural Resources** outlines the importance of managing natural resources following the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, meaning decarbonisation of the energy system and transition to a low carbon economy is increasingly important.



- 4.15 **Paragraph 3.55 Previously Developed Land** concerns the desire to reuse previously developed land wherever possible.
- 4.16 **Paragraph 3.61 Supporting Infrastructure** sets out that adequate and efficient infrastructure, including education facilities, underpins economic competitiveness and opportunities for households and businesses to achieve socially and environmentally desirable ways of living and working.

#### Chapter 4: Active and Social Spaces

- 4.17 **Paragraph 4.1.9 Sustainable Transport** sets out that active travel and public transport should be prioritised over the private car to reduce the adverse impacts of motorised transport on the environment and health.
- 4.18 **Paragraph 4.1.51 Car Parking** states that a design-led approach to the provision of car parking should be taken, which ensures an appropriate level of car parking is integrated in a way which does not dominate the development. Parking provision should be informed by the local context, including public transport accessibility, urban design principles and the objective of reducing reliance on the private car and supporting a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport.
- 4.19 **Paragraphs 4.4.1 Community Facilities** outlines that community spaces provide an important focus for sustaining communities and their well-being. They cover a broad range of activities and services that can be delivered by the public, private and third sectors. Such facilities contribute to a sense of place, which is important to the health, well-being, and amenity of local communities.
- 4.20 **Paragraph 4.5.1 Recreational Spaces** Highlights the importance of networks of high quality, accessible green spaces and recreation spaces which will also promote nature conservation and biodiversity. These spaces provide a place for play, sport, healthy physical activity and a place to relax often in the presence of nature, and they contribute to our quality of life.

#### Chapter 5: Productive and Enterprising Places

- 4.21 **Paragraph 5.4.13 Steering Economic Development to The Most Appropriate Locations** stipulates that in order to direct development and investment to the most efficient and sustainable locations, planning authorities should aim to:
- Co-ordinate development with all forms of infrastructure provision such as transport and utilities;
  - Support national, regional, and local economic policies and strategies;
  - Align jobs and services with housing and sustainable transport infrastructure, to reduce the need for travel, and dependency on travel by car;
  - Promote the re-use of previously developed, vacant and underused land;
  - Deliver physical regeneration and employment opportunities to disadvantaged communities;
  - Control and manage the release of unwanted employment sites to other uses;

- Propose specific locations for locally and strategically important industries which are detrimental to amenity and may be a source of pollution; and Productive & Enterprising
- Identify protection zones around land and premises that hold hazardous substances and protect the ability of existing businesses to operate or expand by preventing the incremental development of vulnerable uses in the locality.

**4.22 Paragraph 5.8 Reduce Energy Demand and Use of Energy Efficiency** establishes that the planning system should support new development that helps tackle the causes of climate change and supports decarbonisation, the Welsh Government's policy also seeks to secure zero carbon buildings.

**4.23 Paragraph 5.9 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy** States local authorities should facilitate all forms of renewable and low carbon energy development and should seek cross-department co-operation to achieve this. In doing so, planning authorities should seek to ensure their area's full potential for renewable and low carbon energy generation is maximised and renewable energy targets are achieved.

**4.24 Paragraph 5.12 Design Choices to Prevent Waste** Outlines that using the best choice of materials and energy efficiency go hand in hand. The use of fewer resources in the first place will help to avoid the creation of waste which cannot be effectively reused and waste prevention is key to the efficiency use of natural resources. Opportunities to reduce or recycle waste as part of the design, construction and operation of new buildings should be identified at an early stage.

## Chapter 6: Distinctive and Natural Places

**4.25 Paragraph 6.2.4 Green Infrastructure** emphasises that the planning system must maximise its contribution to the protection and provision of green infrastructure assets and networks as part of meeting society's wider social and economic objectives and the needs of local communities.

**4.26 Paragraph 6.3.12 Characteristics of Local Landscapes** states that planning authorities should provide for the conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of local landscapes.

**4.27 Paragraph 6.4 Biodiversity and Ecological Networks** states that a proactive and creative approach towards facilitating the delivery of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience outcomes must be taken by all those participating in the planning process. This section outlines the step wise approach to enhancing biodiversity, planning applications must use this approach in order to deliver biodiversity gains.

**4.28 Paragraph 6.4.31 Protection of Non-Statutory Designations** outlines that non statutory designations, such as SINC sites, can play an essential role in protecting, maintaining, connecting and restoring biodiversity and contribute to nature recovery and a net benefit for biodiversity. These sites should therefore be protected.

- 4.29 **Paragraph 6.4.42 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows** sets out that where trees are proposed to be lost they must be replaced, preferably onsite, at a ratio of at least 3:1 of a similar type and compensatory size.
- 4.30 **Paragraph 6.6 Water and Flood Risk** highlights that the Welsh Government aims to secure the provision of water services whilst minimising adverse impacts on the environment, amenity, health and communities, in light of the consequences of climate change. Development which is poorly designed or badly located can exacerbate problems associated with resource depletion, exposure to surface water flooding and diffuse pollution. The planning system should:
- protect and improve water resources and quality by promoting and encouraging increased efficiency and demand management of water as part of new developments, particularly in those areas where water resources may be under pressure or may not be available and where failure of water quality standards needs to be addressed;
  - Ensure that the infrastructure networks, including nature based solutions on which communities and businesses depend is adequate to accommodate proposed development, and takes into consideration the impacts of climate change, so as to minimise risk to human health and the environment and prevent pollution at source;
  - Ensure sustainable drainage systems are an integral part of design approaches for new development; and
  - Ensure the protection of the quantity and quality of surface and ground water supplies is taken into account as part of development proposals.

#### ***Future Wales: The National Plan 2040***

- 4.31 Provides the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

Relevant policies include the following:

- 4.32 **Policy 1 Where Wales will grow** conveys that the Welsh Government supports sustainable growth in all parts of Wales with Cardiff recognised as a national growth area.
- 4.33 **Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking** states that the growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lives, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure. A key principle includes creating a rich mix of uses within urban centres.
- 4.34 **Policy 6 – Town Centre First** outlines that significant new commercial, retail, education, health, leisure and public service facilities must be located within town and city centres. They should

have good access by public transport to and from the whole town or city and, where appropriate, the wider region.

## Local Development Plan

4.35 Planning Policy Wales ('PPW') sets out that planning law requires applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. PPW is itself a material consideration.

4.36 In this case, the Development Plan comprises the following:

- Caerphilly Local Development Plan 2010-21 (Adopted November 2010)

4.37 The Caerphilly Local Development Plan was adopted in November 2010 and was intended to guide development up to the year 2021. However, the emerging local plan is still yet to be adopted and as such the 2010 LDP is still in place and carries significant weight in determining applications. The most relevant policies within the LDP include the following:

- SP3 Development Strategy in the Southern Connections Corridor
- SP4 Settlement Strategy
- SP5 Settlement Boundaries
- SP6 Place Making
- SP8 Minerals Safeguarding
- SP10 Conservation of Natural Heritage
- SP21 Parking Standards
- SP21 Parking Standards
- SP22 Community, Leisure and Education Facilities
- CW1 Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion
- CW2 Amenity
- CW3 Design Considerations: Highways
- CW4 Natural Heritage Protection
- CW5 Protection of the Water Environment
- CW6 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerow Protection
- CW7 Protection of Open Space
- CW8 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities
- CW15 General Locational Constraints
- NH2 Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILLs)
- NH3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
- MN2 Minerals Safeguarding
- CF1 Community Facilities
- LE1 Protection of Formal Open Spaces



## Proposals Map

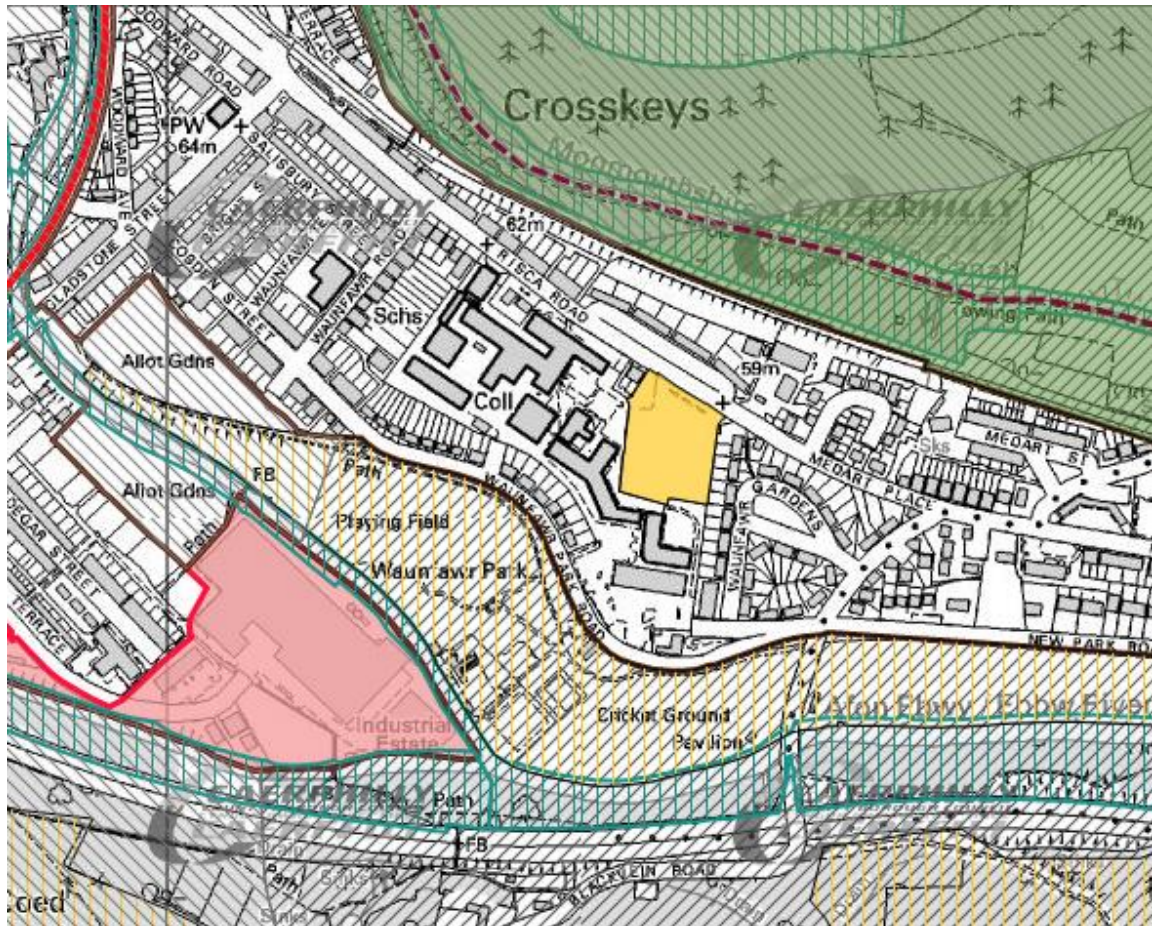


Figure 5: Caerphilly Council Proposals Map Extract

- 4.38 An analysis of the proposals map indicates that the Site is not subject to any specific statutory designations. The entire site falls within the settlement boundary of Risca (outlined by the brown line), with the northeastern corner designated for Crosskeys College expansion under Policy CF1.35 (highlighted in yellow). This designation relates to an earlier masterplan 2008, under which Phase 1 was developed following planning permission 07/1279/FULL for the redevelopment of the current X-Block, completed in 2011. As such, the designation is outdated, and further redevelopment proposals for the college should not be considered contrary to Policy CF1.35.
- 4.39 Several adjacent designations are noteworthy. Waunfawr Park, located directly south of the site, is designated as a park under Policy LE1.21 (indicated by the yellow hatching) and as a minerals safeguarding area under Policy MN2.9 due to the underlying Southern Outcrop coal seam. Approximately 150m south of the site, the River Ebbw is designated under Policy NH 3.12. To the north, the countryside is identified as a Visually Important Local Landscape under Policy NH2.3



(highlighted in green), while the Crumlin Arm of the Monmouth to Brecon Canal, about 150m to the north, is designated as a Site of Importance Nature Conservation (SINC) under Policy NH3.136 (marked with vertical blue hatching and a purple dashed line).

### Constraints Map

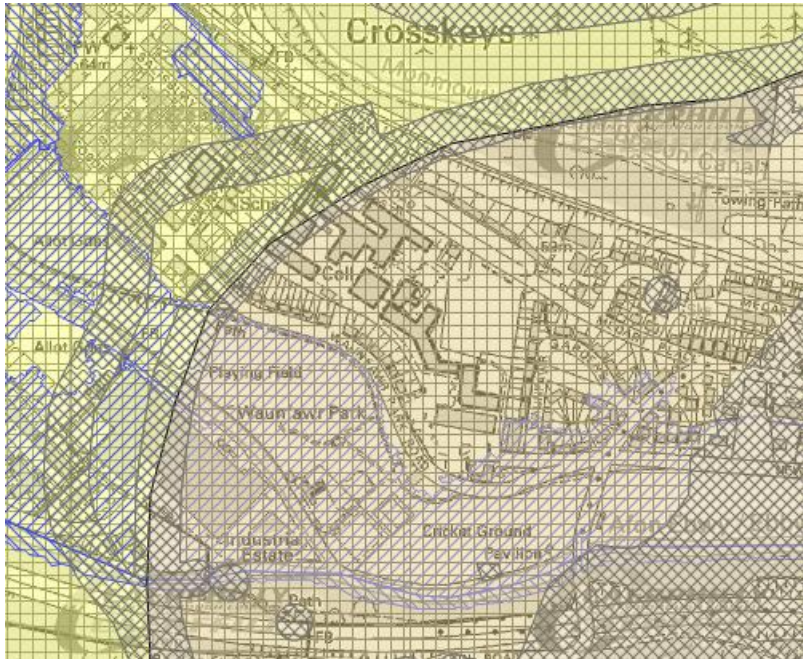


Figure 6: Caerphilly Council Constraints Map Extract

- 4.40 The Council also provides a constraints map highlighting the constraints across the county borough. According to this map, most of the Site falls within a secondary coal resource area (indicated by light orange shading). Additionally, the northwestern corner of the Site lies within a coal mining development referral area (marked by diagonal grid lines) and a sandstone area (shown in yellow shading).
- 4.41 Based on the above designations and the nature of the proposals, the most relevant policies include the following:
- 4.42 **SP3 Development Strategy in the Southern Connections Corridor** sets out that development proposals in this strategic area will promote sustainable development that reuses previously developed land, promotes sustainable transport options, makes efficient use of existing infrastructure, has regard for the social and economic function of the area, and protects the natural heritage of the area.
- 4.43 **SP4 Settlement Strategy** identifies Risca as a Principal Town within the borough, which is to be supported and enhanced based on their current function.
- 4.44 **SP5 Settlement Boundaries** define the area which development would normally be allowed, taking into account material considerations, and promote the full and effective use of urban land.

- 4.45 **SP6 Place Making** Outlines that developments should contribute to creating sustainable places by having full regard to the context of the local, natural, historic and built environment and its special features. Proposals should be of a high standard of design, in accordance with best practices of designing out crime, with a layout that reflects sustainable transport and accessibility principles. Resource efficient features are also encouraged such as passive solar gain and Suds systems, along with higher densities nearby key transport nodes such as rail stations.
- 4.46 **SP8 Minerals Safeguarding** States that the Council will contribute to the regional demand for a continuous supply of minerals by safeguarding known resources of coal and other minerals through preventing permanent development that would impact the future working of such resources.
- 4.47 **SP10 Conservation of Natural Heritage** Sets out that the Council will protect, conserve, enhance and manage the natural heritage of the County Borough in consideration of all development proposals. Natural Heritage constitutes geology, geomorphology, biodiversity, landscape and amenity value; it also includes features such as trees, rivers and hedgerows. The policy further states that Natural Heritage is not confined to the countryside but includes urban areas and can help promote the regeneration of an area.
- 4.48 **SP21 Parking Standards** Outlines that the Council will implement the parking standards set out in the CSS Wales Parking Standards 2008, including the hierarchy of parking zones including town centres, urban areas and suburban areas at the top of the hierarchy.
- 4.49 **SP22 Community, Leisure and Education Facilities** Establishes the need to ensure an adequate network of community facilities such as education facilities are accessible to the wider community within the County Borough. Providing a range of community facilities that are accessible to as many people as possible is fundamental in terms of securing sustainable communities and such facilities are valuable not only in terms of the facilities they provide, but also in terms of the employment they can generate.
- 4.50 **CW1 Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion** States that proposals which are likely to generate a significant number of trips will only be permitted where active travel has been encouraged for short trips, and provision has been made for cycling including safe storage. The use of Green Travel Plans is also encouraged.
- 4.51 **CW2 Amenity** Sets out that proposals must not harm the amenity of adjacent properties or land, does not constitute overdevelopment, is compatible with surrounding uses and does not constrain the development of neighbouring sites.
- 4.52 **CW3 Design Considerations: Highways** Outlines that all development proposals must satisfy the highways requirements, including to have regard for the safe, effective, and efficient use of the transportation network. Proposals must ensure that new access roads are appropriate for the class of road and are designed to a standard that promotes the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

- 4.53 **CW4 Natural Heritage Protection** Stipulates that development that affects locally designated natural heritage features will only be permitted where they conserve or enhance the distinctive characteristic of the VILL, and where proposals affect SINC sites, the development conserves or enhances the ecological importance of the designation. The policy further states that proposals where the need outweighs the ecological importance of the site will also be acceptable where harm is minimised by mitigation measures such that there is no overall reduction in the value of the area.
- 4.54 **CW5 Protection of the Water Environment** Outlines that proposals will only be permitted where they do not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment and where they would not pose a risk to the quality of controlled waters.
- 4.55 **CW6 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerow Protection** Establishes that where trees are located on site, development will only be permitted where proposals have made all efforts to retain, protect and integrate these natural assets into the development. The policy further states that arboriculturally surveys must be submitted where required, including mitigation if necessary. The requirements are set out further in Supplementary Planning Guidance *A Guide to incorporating Trees in Proposals for Developing Land*.
- 4.56 **CW7 Protection of Open Space** States that proposals for development on areas of open space within settlements will only be permitted where the amount of open space remaining in the area would still be adequate to serve local needs, and where the site has no recreational resource value.
- 4.57 **CW8 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities** Sets out that proposals that would result in the loss of a community facility will not be permitted unless a comparable replacement facility can be provided.
- 4.58 **CW15 General Locational Constraints** establishes that within settlement boundaries proposals must accord with the role and function of the settlement within which they are located.
- 4.59 **NH2 Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILLs)** VILLs are non-statutory designations that seek to protect the distinctive features of the visual and sensory landscape of the County Borough. Development will only be permitted where it conserves and, where appropriate, enhances the distinctive visual and sensory landscape features or characteristics of the VILL.
- 4.60 **NH3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)** Identifies the sites within the County Borough that are designated as SINC sites which development proposals must conserve and, where appropriate, enhance in line with Policy CW4. This includes NH3.39 which identifies the area surrounding the Crumlin Arm of the Monmouth to Brecon canal as an SINC site.
- 4.61 **MN2 Minerals Safeguarding** Identifies the sites subject to minerals safeguarding that proposals must ensure are not prejudiced from future extraction in line with Policy SP8. This includes MN2.9 which identifies the Southern Outcrop, adjacent to the site, as a site for the safeguarding of coal resources.

- 4.62 **CF1 Community Facilities** Identifies the sites allocated for new community facilities including CF1.35 which identifies the former bus station at Crosskeys College as a site for expansion of the college.
- 4.63 **LE1 Protection of Formal Open Spaces** Identifies open spaces within the County Borough which are to be protected under Policy CW7, including LE1.21, which identifies Waunfawr Park as such a site.

## **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

### ***LDP4: Trees and Development***

- 4.64 The Caerphilly Trees and Development SPD was adopted in January 2017 and set out the details of the requirements for various tree surveys to be undertaken where development affects existing trees. The document also sets out details of how replacement planting should be treated within developments.

### ***LDP5: Car Parking Standards***

- 4.65 Caerphilly Council adopted their Parking Standards SPG in 2017. The Crosskeys Campus is located in Zone 4, which covers areas identified as being 'suburban or near urban'. Colleges of higher education within Zone 4 are expected to provide a maximum of one commercial vehicle space and one space per each member of teaching staff, one space per two ancillary staff, one space per three students and five visitor spaces.
- 4.66 Note that, given the Campus is an existing operational Campus, redevelopment with the same quantum of existing parking should be considered acceptable.

### ***LDP 6: Building Better Places to Live***

- 4.67 This design guide SPD was formally adopted by the Council in January 2017. The document sets out details for the design of developments, it includes specific standards for details such as accessibility, legibility and the public realm. This document will be considered carefully in the context of the detailed design of all phases.

### ***Technical Advice Notes (TAN)***

- 4.68 Planning Policy Wales is supplemented by a series of 21 topic based Technical Advice Notes (TANs) which provide practical guidance relating to various forms of development and the role of the planning system in dealing with the determination of planning applications. The following TANs are considered relevant to this application:
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 11: Noise
  - Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design
  - Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16: Sport, Recreation And Open Space

- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18: Transport
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 23: economic development

## **Emerging Policy**

### ***Emerging RLDP 2***

- 4.69 The adopted LDP for Caerphilly was due to be replaced by the end of the plan period in 2021, however, we understand that the emerging RLDP is currently on hold while an assessment of regional growth and migration is undertaken, meaning the adopted LDP continues to form the basis of planning policy within the area.

DRAFT



## 5.0 Statement of Community Involvement

- 5.1 This section outlines the discretionary pre-application engagement undertaken prior to submitting the application and summarises the feedback received.
- 5.2 Extensive pre-application engagement took place between the Applicant team, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), and local stakeholders in preparation for this planning application.
- 5.3 A separate Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Statement detailing the statutory pre-application process accompanies this application.

### Planning Pre-Application Engagement

#### *Pre-Application Meetings*

- 5.4 A pre application meeting with planning and highway officers was held on-site on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024. During this meeting, the applicant and design team discussed the development and the proposed planning strategy with LPA officers. It was agreed that hybrid application would be appropriate for a development of this scale. The principle of redeveloping the campus was broadly supported, subject to the detailed proposals.
- 5.5 A follow-up meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024, further refined the outline application plan and provided updates on the application's progress.

### Public Exhibition

- 5.6 Details of the Coleg Gwent's public consultation exercise are included here. The Applicant organised internal public engagement before submitting this application, including two public consultation events held across two days in January 2024 from 4-8pm. Over 1,500 households and businesses were notified via post about the consultations and an estimated 50-60 people attended each event. Senior directors of Coleg Gwent and members of the project team, including architect and project managers, were present to address public queries. Information about the proposed development was displayed on several consultation boards.
- 5.7 Overall, public feedback was positive. Both local residents and staff expressed enthusiasm for the plans, describing the project as an 'exciting development' that would 'massively improve the experience for local learners'. Attendees also appreciated the proposed measures to reduce carbon emissions and achieve net-zero, as well as the landscaping improvements, particularly the creation of the 'campus heart'.

## 6.0 Planning Assessment

### Principle of Development

#### *Phase 1 (Full Application)*

- 6.1 The principle of development is considered acceptable, as the site is already in use as a further education college campus. The Proposed Development retains the Site's educational use under Use Class D1, meaning there is no material change of use. The proposed construction of the new Y-Block aligns with **Policy SP22**, which promotes the enhancement of community facilities, including education buildings. This policy highlights the value of such facilities not only for their functional role but also for their contribution to employment and their potential to attract people to the area.
- 6.2 The Phase 1 site lies within the settlement boundary of Risca, a principal town identified in the Local Development Plan (LDP), and therefore complies with **Policy SP5**, which directs development to such areas. Additionally, the proposals represent the redevelopment of previously developed land, aligning with the development strategy under **Policy SP3**. The scheme will also enhance the sense of place within Crosskeys by creating an active frontage along Risca Road, consistent with **Policy SP6**, which requires development proposals to contribute to the creation of sustainable and vibrant places.
- 6.3 The construction of the new facility will significantly enhance the college's education offer in line with **Policy SP22**. Furthermore, the addition of a new energy centre, alongside the installation of solar PV panels and heat pumps, will enable the college to achieve NZCiO standards, supporting national net zero targets as set out in **Paragraph 5.8.2 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW)**.
- 6.4 Overall, the proposal represents the redevelopment of previously developed land, delivering substantial social and educational benefits. While the number of students attending the campus is not proposed to change, the development will positively impact both the college and the wider Crosskeys community. Consequently, the proposal aligns with the objectives of delivering sustainable development as outlined in **PPW Edition 12** and the **LDP**.

#### *Phases 2-4 (Outline Application)*

- 6.5 As outlined above for Phase 1, the principle of development with for the wider redevelopment of the site is considered acceptable. The Proposed Development ensures that the Site will remain as an educational facility under Use Class D1. This aligns primarily with **Policy SP22**, which seeks to enhance community facilities, including those for education.
- 6.6 The Masterplan identified many existing buildings on the Site as Grade B or Grade C. Grade B buildings require both internal and external improvements, while Grade C buildings are at the end of their lifecycle and need of replacement. The outline proposals aim to address these deficiencies, aligning with both national and local planning policies. At the national level, the **Well-Being of Future Generations Act** and **Planning Policy Wales (PPW)** emphasise the

importance of quality education facilities in sustainable locations with good access to alternative forms of travel. PPW also highlights the necessity of adequate and efficient infrastructure, such as education, to support economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Locally, the LDP includes a specific aim to improve education facilities to 'up skill' the population. The proposed redevelopment will significantly enhance the educational provision within the County Borough, in line with **Policy SP22**.

- 6.7 Consistent with Phase 1, the wider site is developed land situated within the Settlement Boundary, in accordance with **Policies SP3 and SP5**. Policy SP5 also encourages higher-density development at key transport nodes, supporting the principle of increased building heights in the proposed blocks. The Site's location – just 300m from the train station and adjacent to a key bus corridor – reinforces its suitability for this.
- 6.8 The Site currently has fragmented layout, and its rationalisation offers an opportunity to introduce more open space and landscaping. This includes creating a 'campus heart' at the centre of the Site, in line with **Policy CW7** of the LDP. The replacement of the poor-quality buildings with new facilities will represent a key improvement in the offer of the college in line with **Policy SP22** and national targets on net zero as outlined in **Paragraph 5.8.2 of PPW**. Overall, the proposals constitute the redevelopment of previously developed land and will deliver significant social and educational benefits to students, as well as the wider community of Crosskeys over the next decade and beyond. As such, the site fully accords with the objective of delivering sustainable development contained within **PPW Edition 12** and the **LDP**.

## **Layout and Design**

### ***Phase 1 (Full Application)***

- 6.9 The detailed proposals for Phase 1 demonstrate a high standard of design in line with **Policy LP6**, as proposals will reinforce the attractive qualities of local distinctiveness. Primarily, the erection of the new Y-Block will provide active frontage along Risca Road which will contribute positively to the street scene and improve engagement of the campus with the wider community. Situating the restaurant in ground floor of the block will help to achieve this stronger link with the community in line with **Policy SP22** and **LP6**, while also providing opportunities for students to gain valuable experience with the public. Currently, the campus restaurant is located at the south of the site, at the first floor of C-Block; relocating the catering department to such a prominent location will significantly improve its useability and provide a valuable public facing facility on the main road through the village.
- 6.10 In terms of design, the new block will utilise modern construction techniques and contemporary materials to enhance the visual appeal of the campus overall in line with **Chapter 3 of PPW**, and the **Building Better Places to Live SPG**.

### ***Phases 2-4 (Outline Application)***

- 6.11 In line with **Policy SP6**, the wider redevelopment will also have high standard of design that reinforces attractive qualities of local distinctiveness. The increase in the active frontage along Risca Road will contribute positively to the local area, while the rationalisation of the campus footprint will allow for the creating of increased open spaces within the campus for the benefit of users.
- 6.12 Details of the appearance will be brought forward via subsequent reserved matters applications, but illustrations are included within the Masterplan to demonstrate quality and a contemporary approach.

## **Highways and Parking**

### ***Phase 1 (Full Application)***

- 6.13 Given the scale of the proposals, any application will be accompanied by a Transport Statement and Green Travel Plan. Careful consideration is being given to parking to reprovide within the campus site where areas of existing parking are affected. The existing accesses are proposed to be retained with minimal alterations to their use, while rationalisation of the internal campus footprint will reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflict in line with **Local Plan Policy CW3**, ensuring that the proposals have regard for the safe, effective, and efficient use of the transportation network.

### ***Phases 2-4 (Outline Application)***

- 6.14 The masterplan has been split into phases and further details will be provided on a phase by phase basis for each future reserved matters application.

## **Amenity**

### ***Phase 1 (Full Application)***

- 6.15 The proposed Phase 1 development will lead to an increase in amenity within Crosskeys, primarily by creating a new, modern, well-designed block providing active frontage onto Risca Road, along with increased engagement with the wider community. The relocation of the restaurant to the frontage with Risca Road from its current location in C Block will bring a community facility to the forefront of the College site and will increase footfall along the main road through the village. Rationalising the entrance to the College site at the north of the new block will also improve amenity for neighbours by introducing a more streamlined vehicular and pedestrian access into the site, meaning egress to and from the site by students will be enhanced. The proposed Phase 1 will serve the same number of students overall at the campus, meaning there will be no additional impact on the area, while the proposed block also being situated at the centre of the campus, set back from adjoining neighbours. Visually, the proposed new Y-Block will be in keeping with the existing X-Block to the east in terms of height and

cladding, with [insert] materials proposed. Finally, the existing use of the site being an education facility establishes that the proposed use is compatible with neighbouring uses.

### ***Phases 2-4 (Outline Application)***

- 6.16 In terms of amenity of the wider site, this will also be improved for local residents through the further increases in active frontage and high-quality design of the Proposed Development, which is supported within **Policy CW2**. The proposals would also not constitute overdevelopment with the proposed 5 new blocks across all phases replacing 8 blocks scheduled for demolition. Finally, as above, the existing use of the site establishes that the proposed use is compatible with neighbouring uses.
- 6.17 The proposed new blocks, whilst reconfigured to front onto Risca Road, will still be set suitably far enough away from neighbouring residential uses to minimise overall impact on residents.

## **Trees and Ecology**

### ***Phase 1 (Full Application)***

- 6.18 The proposed development set out in the proposals for Phase 1 will see the removal of a total of 14 trees. A Tree Survey conducted by Arbtech listed all but one of these trees as Category C, meaning they are 'unremarkable specimens of very limited arboricultural value'. The only other tree is T10, situated directly south of the proposed Y-Block, which is considered Category B; however, it is necessary to remove this tree due to its proximity to the proposed block, along with it being planted within a bund, which would impact on the surrounding landscaping.
- 6.19 The loss of the above 14 trees would be mitigated by significant tree planting within the Phase One site, and further planting is proposed as part of subsequent phases. In total, 26 trees are proposed to be planted in respect of Phase 1 which represents a significant reprovision and aligns with **Policy CW6**. The 3:1 ratio will be achieved across the whole site through the wider redevelopment proposal.

### ***Phases 2-4 (Outline Application)***

- 6.20 In terms of the wider site, there are a number of existing trees across the site, none of which are under TPO, and all phases of development will carefully consider **Local Policy CW6**. Existing trees will be retained where possible in line with this policy, while the rationalisation of the college's footprint will enable an increase in open space which will facilitate more tree planting across the site. In line with **Policy CW6**, a tree survey has been undertaken by Arbtech, which outlined that predominantly the trees on site are of limited arboricultural value. Mitigation, compensation, or management requirement can be provided as part of each reserved matter application when details of landscaping for each phase are provided. Across all phases, a total of 39 trees are proposed to be lost, which will be replaced with a total 189 new trees; this replaces lost trees at a rate of 4.84:1 and therefore meets the requirements of **Paragraph 6.4.24** of PPW.



## Landscaping, Open Space, and Biodiversity

### *Phase 1 (Full Application)*

- 6.21 A Green Infrastructure Statement proportionate to the development has been developed by Stride Treglown and accompanies this submission. The proposed development follows the step-wise approach a biodiversity net gain will be achieved across the site.

### *Phases 2-4 (Outline Application)*

- 6.22 In terms of landscaping, rationalisation of the college's footprint will enable opportunities for increased landscaping which will align with **Local Policy CW7** and **paragraph 6.2.3 of PPW**, which outlines the health and well-being related benefits of open space. The creating of an outdoor sports area, amphitheatre, retention, and expansion of the ILS garden along with other soft landscaping across the site will create an opportunity to provide a biodiversity net gain in line with **section 6.4 of PPW**, which stipulates the need to follow the step wise approach to enhancing biodiversity. The improved frontage and overall design of the campus will positively impact the area in line with **Local Policies NH2 and NH3**.

## Energy

### *Phase 1 (Full Application)*

- 6.23 The erection of the new energy centre and Y-Block will improve the energy performance of the college in line with the aim to achieve NZCiO across the whole site in future. While the LDP does not have specific requirements for energy, it does have an objective to improve energy efficiency while promoting environmentally acceptable renewable energy to maintain a cleaner environment and help reduce our impact on climate change. The new block has been designed utilising the latest technology and building methods, and has a strong energy performance, being heated using energy from the new energy centre. The proposed air source heat pumps and solar PV technology utilised within the energy centre and Y-Block is in alignment with **Policy SP6**, which outlines that the Council will support applications which incorporate such technologies. Nationally, PPW states that the planning system should support new development that has very high energy performance, at **paragraph 5.8.2** the document further states that the Welsh Government's policy is to secure zero carbon buildings; the proposals therefore align strongly with these policies.

### *Phases 2-4 (Outline Application)*

- 6.24 As stated above, while the LDP does not have specific requirements for energy, however it does have an objective to improve energy efficiency, renewables and measures that reduce our impact on climate change. Throughout the wider site, the new blocks will be designed in order to help achieve net zero, utilising the latest technology and building methods, and these will replace

Blocks that are now at the end of their life and demonstrate a very poor energy performance. The use of renewable technology such as solar PV panels along with air source heat pumps aligns with **Policy SP6** and **paragraph 5.8.2** of PPW, which also establishes that the Welsh Government's policy is to secure zero carbon buildings. Ultimately, details of energy will be considered as part of reserved matters proposals in respect of subsequent phases, and these phases will be designed with energy performance and net zero targets at the forefront.

## **Assessment of the Planning Balance**

- 6.25 The proposed development will deliver significant public benefits which can be summarised as follows:

### ***Phase 1 (Full Application)***

- A modern, three-storey teaching block, designed to be net-zero carbon in operation, which will enhance the educational experience for pupils at the Crosskeys Campus.
- A new energy centre to support low-carbon technologies and advance the net-zero goal.
- High-quality design enhancing the streetscape of Risca Road.
- Improved active frontage along Risca Road, fostering greater engagement.
- Relocation of the campus restaurant and catering department, increasing interaction with the public while providing students a great place to gain experience.
- A welcoming entrance gateway to improve wayfinding and create an inviting environment for students and staff.
- Significant landscaping improvements, including a landscaped 'campus heart'.

### ***Phases 2-4 (Outline Application)***

- A new suite of modern teaching facilities to enhance the educational experience for pupils at the Crosskeys Campus.
- All new buildings designed to be net zero carbon in operation.
- High-quality design that contributes positively to the local streetscape, particularly along Risca Road.
- Relocation of additional public-facing activities to Risca Road, further strengthening community ties.
- Continued landscaping improvements across the site, focused around the 'campus heart'.

- 6.26 The proposed development will be a significant public benefit to the local community as a result of wholesale improvement to the educational facilities and engagement with the wider community within the college.
- 6.27 As set out within this Section, the proposed development has been appropriately designed to ensure there are no unreasonable adverse impacts arising from the proposal that cannot be appropriately mitigated.

- 6.28 In the context of **paragraph 1.18 of PPW** and the presumption in favour of sustainable development, this Section has demonstrated that the proposed development is compliant with the development plan and national planning policy guidance when taken as a whole and should, therefore, be approved without delay.

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## 7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Department for Education in support of a hybrid planning application for seeking full planning permission for the development of Phase 1, which includes a three-storey teaching building, a single-storey energy centre, and associated access, parking, landscaping works. The application also seeks outline planning permission for the subsequent phases (2-4), involving the phased demolition of existing buildings and construction of new facilities, alongside associated access, parking, and landscaping improvements.
- 7.2 The proposed new facilities will deliver new, modern teaching facilities fit for the future, as well as rationalising the campus to enable an increase in legibility and improvements to landscaping. The proposed development will also utilise several measures to enable the college to become net zero carbon in operation.
- 7.3 Overall, this statement demonstrates that the proposed development is entirely in accordance with the development plan and the planning application should therefore, in line with Paragraph 1.18 of PPW, be approved without delay.





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