

**WESTMINSTER KINGSWAY COLLEGE
KING'S CROSS CENTRE**

**STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT**

**Prepared for and on behalf of
Westminster Kingsway College**

By Weber Shandwick Public Affairs

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consultation

Westminster Kingsway College has sought to implement a strategy which takes into account the principles of engagement and participation in the planning process, looking to develop methods of ensuring consultation with all interested parties within the community.

An informal consultation programme was commenced in 2004 including early discussions with the Learning and Skills Council as well as representatives from statutory bodies.

Over the course of the first six months of 2005, the project team held meetings with local representative bodies and individuals. In advance of the exhibition in June 2005, presentations of the proposals were given to a series of interest groups.

Exhibition

The exhibition was held in June 2005 and widely publicised to the local area.

The purpose of the exhibition was to give the general public and interested parties the opportunity to view and comment on the proposals. Following on from the earlier consultation meetings, it also gave those stakeholders with whom the project team had already met the ability to view the updated proposals and see how the plans had progressed and been amended – taking into account some of their comments – since the initial meetings.

Withdrawal of Initial Application

The College submitted a planning application in June 2005 but withdrew it in October 2005 in order to allow further revisions to the proposed design.

Changes to the Scheme

In drawing up a revised scheme, the College has taken into account where possible both to the issues raised by Camden's Officers and the formal objections and comments made by individuals and organisations in response to the original application.

Re-consultation on the Revised Scheme

The College has sought to re-consult all the interested parties before finalising the revised scheme and submitting a new application. To this end a public meeting has been held, along with a series of meetings for local representatives and organisations. There have been specific meetings held with the College's most immediate neighbours who are most directly affected by the scheme.

Next Steps

Following the submission of the new planning application we will continue to consult with the local community and interested parties to ensure that an effective channel of communication is maintained throughout the process.

Westminster Kingsway College is willing to meet and consult with all interested parties in relation to the redevelopment of the King's Cross Centre.

SECTION ONE – BACKGROUND

1. Westminster Kingsway College

Westminster Kingsway College is one of the largest colleges in London with centres in Camden and Westminster.

The college has approximately 20,000 students across all age ranges and offers a wide range of lifelong learning, vocational and adult education courses as well as traditional 16-18 year old education.

The college is proud of its reputation for providing programmes that meet the needs and interests of a diverse range of students.

Westminster Kingsway College are the applicant for the site. All documentation relating to the application will be issued under the Westminster Kingsway College name.

Westminster Kingsway College appointed Weber Shandwick Public Affairs to draw up and implement a comprehensive community consultation programme to guide the development of the proposals.

The College is committed to undertaking a full consultation and engagement programme to support the planning process.

2. Background to the Site

Currently, the college is split across six sites with the main centres being the Victoria Centre in Vincent Square, Westminster and the King's Cross Centre on Gray's Inn Road, Camden. In addition, the College makes extensive provision in the community with a programme of neighbourhood learning in partnership with Camden LEA.

The King's Cross Centre is less than 10 minutes' walk from King's Cross station and is a landmark centre in a highly visible location.

The existing building does not reflect the College's aspirations for its students. Areas highlighted in the College's recent Inspection that needed improvement were the quality of accommodation and access for people with restricted mobility.

The current design of the building hinders the effective running of the college, doesn't make a proper contribution to the community and is increasingly more expensive to maintain.

The College now have a real opportunity to create a development which will both serve the needs of the College to the best effect and contribute to the rich architectural and social fabric of the surrounding area.

Rationalising the College's sites means it can focus a large proportion of its education provision on the King's Cross site, reconfiguring the centre to respond to the changing needs of its students and the educational experience.

SECTION TWO – CONSULTATION PRIOR TO INITIAL PLANNING APPLICATION

1. Stakeholder Meetings prior to initial application

The Objective:

The objective of the consultation process is to seek to ascertain the views and participation of members of the community and stakeholders in the process of re-development of the Westminster Kingsway College King's Cross Centre.

Westminster Kingsway College has used the ongoing engagement process as a means of generating support, highlighting key issues and addressing any potential problems within the proposals.

The consultation process is taking place within the guidance set out by Government for effective community involvement, stating that:

“We would expect the SCI (Statement of Community Involvement) to encourage developers to undertake pre-application discussions and early community consultation on significant applications, but the SCI cannot prescribe that this is done.

“The aim of the process should be to encourage discussion before a formal application is made and therefore to avoid unnecessary objections being made at a later stage.”¹

Strategy:

In line with the emerging Government policy outlined above, Westminster Kingsway College undertook to implement a comprehensive consultation programme with a view to engaging stakeholders in the process at the early stages and understanding views of the proposals.

As recognised by the Government, the ‘community’ is a diverse and varied concept:

“Within any area, the ‘community’ is likely to be made up of many different interest groups, which will come together for a whole variety of reasons. Community groups may focus on ‘place’ – the area where they live and work; or may focus on interests, principles, issues, values or religion. Both types of group may have an interest in planning issues. Some of these groups will be well established and represented. In other cases, however, interests may not be organised and therefore be less able to engage with the formal processes of planning. Individuals may be part of several different groups. Some groups may not be homogeneous, for example large and small businesses. Effective involvement cannot happen without a good understanding of the make up, needs and interests of all those different groups and their capacity to engage. An inclusive approach is needed to ensure that different groups have the opportunity to participate and are not disadvantaged in the process.

¹ Community Involvement in Planning – The Government's Objectives; February 2004 (Amended August 2004)

Identifying and understanding the needs of groups who find it difficult to engage with the planning system is essential.”²

Westminster Kingsway College has sought to implement a strategy which takes into account these principles and looks to develop methods of ensuring engagement with all interested parties within the community.

Westminster Kingsway College commenced an informal consultation programme in 2004 including early discussions with the Learning and Skills Council as well as representatives from statutory bodies.

Over the course of the first six months of 2005, the project team held meetings with local representative bodies and individuals. In advance of the exhibition in June 2005, presentations of the proposals were given to a series of interest groups.

Below is a brief summary of the groups which have been actively involved in the consultation and presentations:

Statutory/Strategic Bodies:

- CABE:
 - CABE were invited to the exhibition and to comment on the plans but declined at the present time.
- English Heritage
 - English Heritage were invited to the exhibition and to comment on the plans but declined at the present time
- Greater London Authority
 - A meeting was held with the GLA and TfL on 26th May to discuss the application.
 - The GLA was supportive of the concept of development, the use of the site and of the housing and density proposals.
 - Of particular interest was the provision and type of affordable housing. Discussions will continue in conjunction with Camden Council.
 - TfL discussed appropriate levels of car and cycle parking provision. Comments will be discussed and reviewed.
- London Development Agency
 - A briefing meeting was held with Tony Winterbottom of the LDA at an early stage in the process. The meeting was mainly for information purposes though there was discussion about how the College's proposals could synergise with the main development proposals in King's Cross.
- Transport for London
 - See GLA above.
- London Borough of Camden

² Community Involvement in Planning – The Government's Objectives; February 2004 (Amended August 2004)

- Regular meetings have been ongoing with the London Borough of Camden to discuss the requirements of the College and the priorities and requirements of the Council.
 - Officers' comments have been central to the development of the proposals and planning application.
 - Camden was consulted on the necessity for a screening opinion. It was Camden's official opinion that an EIA was not required.
 - Constructive discussions will be continued throughout the planning process.
 - As well as the Planning Department, the LEA was engaged through a meeting with Cllr Smith (then the relevant Executive Member) and subsequent correspondence with Officers; and the Regeneration Department through the presence of the Council's Head of Regeneration at a meeting with Cllr Blackwell. The LEA indicated that it does not object if part of the site was removed from educational use. The Head of Regeneration made a number of suggestions regarding community and employment benefits of the process.
- Learning & Skills Council
 - Extensive ongoing meetings have happened with the LSC as the College's main funding body.

Representatives:

- MPs
 - A briefing meeting was held on 12th July with the local MP, Rt Hon Frank Dobson
 - Mr Dobson was supportive of the College's proposals.
- GLA member
 - An invitation to the exhibition was sent out to Brian Coleman, London Assembly Member for Camden & Barnet.
- Local Police
 - A meeting was held with Terry Cocks, Crime Prevention Design Adviser for the Police in Camden to take him through the plans and discuss safety by design issues.
 - He was pleased with the attention that had already been paid to security issues, but gave the architects additional advice on the security aspects of the design of the housing element, the need for the route through the site to be gated/controlled, the gym and the college's perimeter.
- London Borough of Camden Councillors
 - Councillor Sue Vincent assisted in organising the community group meeting on 11th April in her capacity as Executive Member for Community Engagement. Councillor Vincent attended as an observer only in order not to prejudice the consultation and planning process.
 - A meeting was held with King's Cross ward Councillors Barbara Hughes and Nick Smith on 20th May. Cllr Smith is also the Executive Member for Education.

- Cllr Hughes also attended the Exhibition.
- A meeting was held on 28th June with Cllr Theo Blackwell, Executive Member for Social Inclusion, Equalities and Regeneration.

Feedback from the ward councillors was positive, although they expressed a preference for less density on the site, concerns about the loss of the College's in-house nursery/childcare provision and Cllr Smith hoped the College was working with the LEA and dovetailing with Camden's 14-19 strategy.

Community and Interest Groups:

The College invited all the community and interest groups with a potential interest in the site to meetings. Representatives of the following were met:

- The Friends of St George's Gardens
- The Calthorpe Project
- The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee
- The Sidmouth Mews Tenants and Residents Association
- King's Cross Residents Action Group
- King's Cross Community Partnership Sector Group
- Seaford Street Residents Association
- Judd Street Residents Association
- King's Cross Street Wardens
- Medway Court Tenants and Residents Association
- The Garden History Society

Records of all meetings which took place are on file in addition to further correspondence relating to follow-up information and enquiries subsequent to meetings.

Staff and Students:

The design was developed in consultation with staff and student user groups.

SECTION THREE – PUBLIC EXHIBITION

1. Venue and Publicity

The Venue:

The King's Cross Centre itself was selected as the ideal venue for the exhibition.

The opening times and staffing of the exhibition was organised to ensure accessibility for all sectors of the community.

The exhibition was held in the entrance to the King's Cross Centre at the following times:

- Thursday 9th June, 2pm-8pm
- Friday 10th June, 11am-4pm
- Saturday 11th June, 10am-2pm

Following the staffed public exhibitions, the materials are being held by the College and can be viewed on request or used at further meetings or events.

The Publicity

The exhibition was well publicised to residents, community groups and stakeholders in the area to ensure maximum awareness and encourage turnout and participation throughout.

The following publicity activities were undertaken:

- Invitation letters were sent to over 60 key stakeholders (local politicians, community and amenity groups and statutory consultees)
- An advert was placed in the Camden New Journal, the local free newspaper.
- Over 2,200 invitation letters were direct mailed to local residents using the electoral register to ensure that all residents in the local area were contacted and informed.
- A5 Advertising flyers were displayed in local shops and community centres.

2. Attendance and Materials

During the course of the three days, the exhibition was visited by a variety of stakeholders and members of the public. Visitors were invited (but not required) to sign in and leave contact details with the staff at the exhibition in order to be kept informed on the applicants proposals.

Attendees included:

- Judd Street Residents Association
- Whidbourne House Residents
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee
- Sidmouth Street Residents
- Grayland Court Residents
- London Borough of Camden Officers
- King's Cross Ward Councillors
- Sidmouth Mews Tenants and Residents Association
- Regent Square United Reform Church
- Friends of St George's Gardens
- Regent Square Residents
- Harrison Street Residents
- Other Members of the public

All visitors were encouraged to fill in the comments forms, available at the exhibition. Visitors were able to either fill the form in at the venue or take the forms away to be returned.

Explanatory storyboards were designed and produced to display the proposals at the exhibition focusing on the core elements of:

- The local context
- The education issues
- The need for improvement
- The benefits
- The proposals
- Urban design
- Next steps

The boards gave an overview of the scheme, enabling visitors to the exhibition to gain an understanding of the proposals and stimulating questions. The boards will be used as a reference point once the developed proposals are submitted as a planning application.

Hand-outs of the exhibition boards were available to take-away from the exhibition.

An email address, contact name and telephone number was included on all materials for the exhibition.

In addition, follow-up letters were sent at the end of the exhibition to the stakeholder database enclosing the summary leaflet and comments card.

A detailed analysis of the comments received is contained within the next subsection. This is a combination of notes taken at both the exhibition through discussions with attendees and at the previous consultation meetings, notes made by visitors in the attendance book, and returned comments forms.

3. Analysis of Comments Forms

The comments forms were intended to give an insight into the views of those attending the exhibition, allowing the project team to assess opinions of the proposals from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective.

Below is a summary of the responses received following the exhibition.

Overview:

Responses to the proposals were balanced. The majority of respondents both at the exhibition and during the consultation process preceding the exhibition were supportive of the need for redevelopment of the college buildings.

Positive comments were received in respect of the proposed college buildings themselves. Concerns were expressed over the residential elements of development.

As is to be expected, housing and density of development formed a key issue for respondents, in particular the manner in which different types of housing will be integrated into the development as well as the additional facilities and 'mixed-use' elements which will be provided.

The comments have been summarised into the key issues which arose during the course of conversations and subsequently from the comments forms and additional correspondence.

Existing Building:

A number of visitors were keen to see a change to the existing buildings recognising that the quality of the buildings and design is not as good as it could be:

- "not worn that well"
- "expensive space not well used"

One local resident expressed a liking for the existing building, suggesting some architectural merit.

Design:

The majority of respondents expressed favourable opinions of the new design as creating a more attractive outlook than the existing buildings.

One respondent was unhappy with the modernist approach taken by the design team.

With the exception of the representatives of the Calthorpe Project, the proposals to relocate the entrance to Gray's Inn Road were received positively. The Calthorpe Project expressed concerns over the likely increase in student numbers using the facilities.

Visitors to the exhibition emphasised the need to ensure that the design of the redevelopment would improve the security on the site.

Education and Student Facilities:

Some concerns were expressed over the proposals to sell part of the site for non-educational use. However, the majority recognised the need for the college to raise funds for the redevelopment works.

- “Have you looked into selling part of the site to other educational organisations?”
- “Selling the land for development will prevent any future expansion of the college, but I appreciate the need for the funds that selling the homes would bring.”

Visitors were keen to see an improvement to the educational facilities offered by the College, particularly in respect of the 14-19 strategy of the LEA.

Consultees welcomed the proposals for improved eating areas, gym facilities and amenity space for students. This was regarded as addressing some of the problems currently experienced in relation to litter and the lack of facilities currently.

Concern was expressed over the loss of the Early Years and childcare provision on the site.

Students currently studying at the College welcomed the prospect of improved facilities. Some concerns were expressed regarding the decant process during the building works but there was excitement at the prospect of the completed facilities.

Environmental:

The majority of visitors expressed support for the improvements the landscaping would bring to the area.

The Friends of St George's Gardens received positively the changes to the proposals meaning that the configuration of the housing had moved away from the original 'three fingers' proposal and that a green buffer zone had been created between the housing and the Gardens.

The Garden History Society were pleased that there would be a green buffer between the proposed buildings and St George's Gardens, and that vehicle access would not be adjoining the Gardens. They asked that the green buffer between the College's site and the Gardens be laid-out and maintained in a manner that is sympathetic to the Gardens, neither competing with them, not giving the impression that it is part of them. Their main concern was over the height of the new buildings on the Heathcote Street side of the development.

Density and Housing:

As expected, the residential element of the proposals stimulated the most comment from visitors to the exhibition.

Concerns were expressed over density of development. Visitors expressed a desire to ensure that the residential element is appropriate to the surroundings. In particular, The Friends of St George's Gardens expressed concerns over the potential for overlooking of the Garden's and a resulting loss of privacy.

Some visitors were keen on the residential element as being able to deliver much needed housing in the area. All respondents were keen to emphasise that the design and type of any housing on the site would need to be carefully considered to ensure that it is appropriate to the area.

Key questions centred on the number of units, types of housing and prospective developers.

Community Facilities:

Some respondents expressed concern at the current lack of facilities in the area for children and young people in terms of both indoor and outdoor space. Questions were asked as to whether or not the College could seek to address part of this problem as part of the redevelopment proposals.

One respondent indicated a preference for the land not being used by the College to be retained as open space or as a childrens' play area. However, it was acknowledged that this was unlikely to be financially viable.

In particular, consultees were keen to know if the College will be able to work with the community to allow the use of facilities during college holiday periods.

General:

Visitors to the exhibition – and the earlier consultation meetings – expressed appreciation at having the opportunity to discuss the proposals in advance of the application being submitted. It was requested that the high level of consultation be maintained throughout the process.

Other issues included questions about the anticipated number of future students and the types of materials used as part of the building process.

Requests for more information were made on some of the key aspects of the proposals. These were followed up by the appropriate team members.

SECTION FOUR – RE-CONSULTATION FOLLOWING WITHDRAWAL OF INITIAL PLANNING APPLICATION

1. Process

The Objective:

Following the decision to withdraw the initial application, the College recognised that if a revised application was to be successful, the scheme would have to be changed further to address the issues raised formally in response to the initial application, in so far as was possible.

Strategy:

As well as systematically seeking to address the issues raised by interested parties during Camden's formal consultation on the initial application, the College sought to re-engage neighbours and other stakeholders in a dialogue through a series of meetings.

The intention was to ensure that all interested parties were involved from the outset in the development of the revised proposals. The second stage of consultation gave the opportunity for stakeholders to obtain clear information regarding the proposed revisions to the scheme, express their views and have input into the amended scheme iteratively.

This approach also facilitated an awareness within the College of the level of support for the revised application.

A series of meetings have been held during November and December 2005 and January 2006.

Below is a brief summary of the groups which have been actively involved in the consultation and presentations:

Statutory/Strategic Bodies:

- English Heritage:
 - English Heritage has decided not to list the existing building.
- Greater London Authority, London Development Agency, Transport for London
 - Although the revised scheme is no longer referable to the GLA because it involves less floor space, a further meeting was held with GLA Officers, the LDA and TfL to explain how the College is addressing the issues they raised regarding the initial application.

- London Borough of Camden
 - Regular meetings have been ongoing with the London Borough of Camden to discuss the requirements of the College and the priorities and requirements of the Council.
 - Officers' comments have been central to the development of the proposals and planning application.
 - Constructive discussions will be continued throughout the planning process.
 - As well as the Planning Department, the LEA was engaged through a meeting with Cllr Lucy Anderson and Cllr Phil Turner (now the relevant Executive Members for respectively schools and further education) and discussions with Officers; and the Regeneration Department through a second meeting with Cllr Blackwell.
- Learning & Skills Council
 - Extensive ongoing meetings have taken place with the LSC as the College's main funding body.

Representatives:

- MPs
 - Rt Hon Frank Dobson MP as the local constituency MP has been offered a second meeting in order to provide an update on the amendments to the proposals since the first meeting last year. This is being scheduled for later in January.
- GLA member
 - Brian Coleman, London Assembly Member for Camden & Barnet, met the College on 11th January. He was supportive of the application.
- Local Police
 - Copies of the draft plans and drawings for the revised scheme have been sent to the local Police for comment.
- London Borough of Camden Councillors
 - A second meeting with King's Cross ward Councillors Barbara Hughes and Nick Smith was held on 17th January. They were supportive of the revised scheme.
 - Meetings were held on 29th November with Cllr Lucy Anderson, Executive Member for Schools) and Cllr Phil Turner (Executive Member for Culture). Both expressed support for the application.
 - A second meeting was held on 19th December with Cllr Theo Blackwell, Executive Member for Equalities and Social Inclusion.
 - A meeting was held on 9th January with Cllr Raj Chada, Leader of the Council.

Community and Interest Groups:

All of the community, amenity and interest groups who attended meetings or the exhibition prior to the initial application were re-invited to meetings during November, December and early January.

Representatives from the following attended:

- Grayland Court Residents Association
- The Friends of St George's Gardens
- The Calthorpe Project
- The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee
- Sidmouth Mews Tenants and Residents Association
- Holborn & St Pancras Secondary School Campaign
- New Calthorpe Estate Tenants and Residents Association
- Regent Square Estate Tenants Association

Records of all meetings which took place are on file in addition to further correspondence relating to follow-up information and enquiries subsequent to meetings.

Immediate Neighbours:

The College was particularly keen to ensure that any concerns that its immediate neighbours had about the initial application were addressed before the submission of the second application.

- The Calthorpe Project and the Sidmouth Mews TRA attended a meeting for local groups held on 29th November.
- The Principal of the College attended a committee meeting of the Friends of St George's Gardens on 5th January.
- The College met with William Goodenough College and the Secretary of the Grayland Court Residents Association during December. The Warden of William Goodenough House attended the meeting with Grayland Court residents described below.
- All residents of Grayland Court were invited to a meeting on 10th January. This included a presentation and an opportunity to review the plans for the revised scheme in detail and discuss and comment on them. 12 residents attended. Responses to comments made at this meeting are detailed later in this document.

Feedback received from the meetings on the revised proposals is contained in the next sub-section.

The General Public:

The College adopted a different approach in the run-up to the second application to that taken in the first. This was in order to focus on those most affected by the proposed development and the local neighbourhood.

Therefore, instead of a public exhibition over several days, residents in the neighbourhood were invited to a public meeting on the evening of 7th December.

Invitations were hand delivered through to every residential property in the following streets and estates:

- Doughty Street north of Guilford Street
- Mecklenburgh Square
- Sidmouth Street
- Sidmouth Mews Estate
- Seaford Street
- St Peters Court
- Regent Square
- Regent Square Estate
- Grays Inn Road between Acton Street and Wren Street
- Trinity Court, Grays Inn Road
- Ampton Street
- New Calthorpe Estate
- Frederick Street

The meeting was attended by 15 residents and a full record of all comments made is on file.

Feedback received at this meeting is contained in the next sub-section.

Future Actions:

Contact is to be maintained with the key stakeholders as the plans for the site progress, thus the meeting and briefing programme will be continually updated and engagement with statutory bodies, stakeholders and other representative or interest groups will continue.

The input of stakeholders has been a critical component of developing the proposals to the point where the planning application is ready for submission.

Westminster Kingsway College are committed to ensuring that all interested parties are informed and involved in the development process. The applicant has, and will continue to, accept guidance from stakeholders and statutory bodies as to the direction and implementation of the consultation process. In particular, Westminster Kingsway College is keen to ensure that additional community groups and representative bodies are brought into the consultation process – particularly “hard to

reach” groups such as local BME communities - and will continue to work on this basis.

A database of key contacts has been compiled. This will be continually updated and used as a tool to ensure that communication is maintained.

2. Analysis of Comments Made

Below is a summary of the responses received during the re-consultation process in November, December and January.

Overview:

Responses to the proposals were balanced. The majority of consultees during the re-consultation process were supportive of the need for redevelopment of the college buildings.

Existing Building:

A representative of the Bloomsbury Consultation Area Advisory Committee said that although the existing buildings were brutalist he had seen worse examples of the style. He accepted they are held in low regard but said this was because brutalism was out of fashion. He said he believed the current buildings were higher quality architecture than that of the proposed scheme.

One consultee said they like the existing College library building as it is set back and has an introverted shape.

A Grayland Court resident described the existing buildings as “awful”.

Design:

A representative of Sidmouth Mews TRA said they thought the “new plan is better than the first. Neater, tidier, greener and more compact”.

The Bloomsbury Consultation Area Advisory Committee disliked the architectural style of the revised scheme.

Concerns were expressed about the security implications of having a road through the site. Residents of Grayland Court particularly asked for the Heathcote Street end of the road to be gated at night. This view was supported by Brian Coleman LAM.

The Calthorpe Project remain concerned about the impact the relocation of the main college entrance to Gray’s Inn Road will have on their site. They remain concerned about students using their site and would like a strategy to be developed to keep students from overusing/misusing Calthorpe.

Residents of Grayland Court were critical of the design of the façade on Heathcote Street.

One of the local ward councillors commented that the colour of brick chosen matched surrounding buildings better than the current building and that the windows on Heathcote Street matched those on William Goodenough House. They also said that although the building looked larger than the current one viewed from St George’s Gardens, the new colour and design improved this view.

Brian Coleman LAM said he was happy with the proposed building, and that the Gray's Inn Road façade was not out of keeping with Grayland Court.

Education and Student Facilities:

Representatives of the Holborn & St Pancras Secondary School Campaign expressed a strong wish that the whole of the site (or a portion of it large enough for a secondary school) should be handed over for use for a new secondary school to service the area south of Euston Road, with the College changing its estates strategy and intensifying the use of other sites it owns instead.

The Bloomsbury Consultation Area Advisory Committee supports the view that the whole site should remain in educational use.

One consultee suggested the College should become a VIth form college rather than a General FE college.

Environmental:

Concerns were raised about the view from Sidmouth Street through to St George's Gardens being obscured.

Density and Housing:

A view was expressed that the housing could be provided off-site thereby leaving the whole site in educational use. Unfortunately this is in conflict with the policies of both Camden and the GLA.

The location of the social housing within the blocks was a concern.

One consultee wanted 100% social housing.

Consultees wanted to know how much of the housing would have disabled access.

The Bloomsbury Consultation Area Advisory Committee was concerned that a potential housing developer might be able to get permission to build higher blocks on appeal. They would like a legal covenant restricting the height of the residential element.

Community Facilities:

Residents continued to emphasise the need for community access to College facilities.

3. Applicant Response to Key Issues

Westminster Kingsway College has endeavoured to respond to all of the issues raised either individually with the respondent in question or by way of this consultation report.

Early Revisions:

Between the initial round of consultation meetings and the exhibition, the project team worked to incorporate many of the comments made during the consultation process.

This resulted in a major change to the configuration of the housing to respond to concerns about the level of overlooking of St George's Gardens.

The former proposals to have three 'fingers' of housing was replaced by a proposal to have two blocks, set back from St George's Gardens to reduce the overlooking and to create a green buffer zone between the Gardens and the housing.

In response to Councillors' concerns about the loss of on-site nursery provision and subsequent correspondence from the LEA, Westminster Kingsway College has explored with the Council ways of funding equivalent provision.

Further Revisions following Withdrawal of the Initial Application:

The revisions to the proposed planning scheme are detailed below relative to the aspects noted and in response to the issues raised regarding the original planning submission and at subsequent consultation meetings.

General Comments:

- The scheme has been redrawn and greater levels of detail have been provided on the drawing to describe the scheme more comprehensively.

Residential scheme:

- The height of both residential blocks has been reduced by one storey, whilst also maintaining the step back at the top storey to reduce the visual impact on St. Georges Gardens.
- The residential block on Sidmouth Street is set back to match the line of the frontage of No. 51.
- The southern residential block has been pulled back from the edge of street to improve the visual openness to St. George's Gardens from Heathcote Street.
- The reduced height and footprint of the residential blocks has reduced the number of flats from 66 to 37. This includes 10 social rented units. 10% of the units are wheelchair accessible. This provides a residential site density of 450 habitable rooms per hectare based on the reduced site development area.

- The number of below-ground parking spaces has been reduced to 19 car spaces, 4 of which are for disabled parking. The car park entrance is protected with full height automatic security gates.
- The residential units are to be constructed of a high quality facing brick from ground to second floor with sections of timber cladding. The top floor is clad with vertical terracotta tiles set in a steel framework with projecting brise soleil to the roof.
- The principle of the green landscaped buffer zone to St George's Gardens has been maintained and the landscape design has been developed to respond sensitively to the grade 2* listed gardens.

College scheme:

- The southern block on Heathcote Street has been moved to the west creating a visual gap between the stair tower and the gable wall of Grayland Court. A single storey greenhouse has been provided between the college and Grayland Court.
- The college has been reduced in height by a storey and the central block has been moved back from Gray's Inn Road and cut back at the fourth storey to improve the light amenity and views to the residential properties of Grayland Court, the communal garden and patio areas bounding the college site.
- The central block has been extended to the west over five storeys. This additional area has allowed the accommodation at the 6th storey to be relocated at the lower floors and the upper floor omitted except for the northern stair core providing access to roof plant areas.
- The southern block has been cantilevered over the service yard to screen the goods-in area and waste storage to a greater extent.
- The relocation of the southern and central blocks to the west and removal of the top storey and setting back of the fourth storey has significantly improved the amenity and light to the residential units in Grayland Court.
- The height and design of the two storey green roof area has been reduced to minimise the impact to Grayland Court.
- The reduction in height of the college by one storey significantly reduces the developments impact on Mecklenburgh Square.
- Cycle parking is provided for 54 spaces initially with space for future expansion to increase this to 108 spaces if required.
- The college will be constructed in high quality facing brickwork as noted on the revised drawings.

Landscape scheme:

- Granite setts are to be provided to the new access road.
- A clearly defined pedestrian route is provided through the site to the side of the mews road.
- A children's play area is to be provided in the residential amenity space.

Sustainable drainage design:

- The area of soft landscaping has been significantly increased from the existing college site layout due to the inclusion of the green buffer zone to the residential development. This will help in the overall sustainable drainage strategy by reducing surface water run off.

- The grey water recycling of the roof drainage will further reduce the levels of storm water drainage.

At the meeting with residents of Grayland Court on 10th January a number of additional issues were raised and subsequently addressed:

- The stair tower on Heathcote Street has been stepped back at the upper floor and the roof overhang carried through to reduce the height relative to Grayland Court.
- Consideration has been given to inclusion of gates to one end of the new Mews Road, however this has not been currently included on the plans which will be submitted to Camden. We were requested by Camden to provide pedestrian permeability through the site and by the 'Secured by Design' Police Liaison officer to make this safe by the use of good lighting, CCTV and natural surveillance from the residential units. Further discussions will be held with the Camden, residents and police to ensure the best solution is found.
- Development of the design of the landscaped area to the south east corner, between the college and the western boundary of Grayland Court garden area is under consideration and will be discussed with residents during the consultation period.

Key Issues:

Westminster Kingsway College has sought to design out potential problems and respond to other concerns as appropriate.

Design Issues

The design of the scheme has had regard to the emerging plans for the wider area, including the major regeneration of King's Cross. The scale and type of development is consistent with these plans and has evolved in consultation with key bodies such as the local planning authority, the GLA and the Learning & Skills Council.

Open space accounts for a large proportion of the development to create a sequence of high quality public and private areas and walkways to establish permeability throughout the site.

The proposals have been presented to the local police to ensure that they are engaged in the processes of development from the point of view of security by design.

Education Issues:

The change of use of part of the site from education to residential has been determined following an in-depth analysis of the educational and residential needs within the area, the most effective use of the site and the financial viability aspects of development. The College is committed to maintaining its presence in Camden and to developing this as its main general FE site.

In response to suggestions from consultees that the whole site should remain in educational use, Westminster Kingsway College has written to the LEA to explore whether it requires the land for educational purposes. The LEA has replied indicating that this is not the case. The College also discussed with the LEA the specific suggestion that the whole site should be used for a new secondary school. The LEA did not have this aspiration for the site.

The College's decision to dispose of part of the site for housing is primarily driven by planning policy requiring a proportionate increase in housing provision when other floorspace (in this case educational) is increased. The sale of the land will help fund the improvements to the College but is not critical to the viability of the project.

Traffic

The application is supported by a full transport assessment which gives a high PTAL rating, concluding that the development benefits from good levels of public transport accessibility, pedestrian provision and cycling provision. This supports the sustainability of the mixed-use design of the development.

Community

The College will work with the Council and local community groups to seek a mutually convenient arrangement to allow local residents and groups appropriate access to some of the College facilities.

The College will brief new student intakes on appropriate usage of Calthorpe Project and other local open spaces as part of induction process.

Housing

During the course of the consultation, a number of questions were put to the representatives of Westminster Kingsway College relating to the type of housing which is likely to be developed on the site.

The detailed application for this part of the site is for 37 residential units, 12 of which would be affordable (all social rented). This equates to 32% of units and 30% of floorspace, due to the inclusion of large units and was based on toolkit analysis, agreed with the GLA and Camden.

Environmental Issues

The orientation of the buildings has been designed to maximise natural lighting and ventilation to both internal and external spaces and to ensure the highest standards of energy efficiency and low carbon dioxide emissions.

As mentioned above, following earlier consultations, the design of the site has been reconfigured to respect the environmental integrity of St George's Gardens.

SECTION FIVE – NEXT STEPS

1. Consultation

Assessment:

The consultation process has been invaluable in securing feedback, gauging key issues and guiding the development process.

The issues and concerns raised have been taken into consideration as the proposals evolved, seeking to 'design out' any potential issues.

As the consultation has gone on, a database of contacts has been compiled. The database will be utilised in order to update interested parties on developments in the planning process.

The literature distributed both prior to and during the June exhibition and prior to the December public meeting contained contact details for further communication. All enquiries are dealt with through a single source and will continue to be responded to as quickly as possible.

Westminster Kingsway College are willing to meet with and keen to hear the views of any interested parties and will continue to maintain the channel of communication throughout the planning process.

2. The Planning Application

This report forms an appendix to the second planning application which has now been submitted. Any further consultation information and updates will be submitted in advance of the determination of the application at a planning committee.

Westminster Kingsway College will be working with the Council to process the planning application. Information and details of any amendments which are made to the scheme during the course of the planning process will be fed back to all those consultees who have requested to be kept updated with proposals.

The consultation process will be ongoing throughout.