

Cassidy⁺Ashton

Architecture + Building Surveying + Town Planning

Ash Grove AP Academy, Milton Road, Radcliffe

Stage 3 Design Report

For **Bury Council**

September 2026

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cassidy + Ashton have been appointed as Architect and lead designer on This report outlines the developed design for the proposed construction a new alternative provision (AP) educational facility, on land at Milton Road in Radcliffe, Bury.
- 1.2 The development proposes the construction of a two-storey alternative provision (AP) educational facility, alongside the installation of MUGA facilities, parking areas, new access points, external play space, enhanced community open space provision and boundary and landscaping works.
- 1.3 The Oak Learning Partnership currently operates their AP facility, Ash Grove School, from three temporary locations at the New Kershaw Centre on Deal Street, Park House on Chesham Road and modular premises on Whittaker Street. It is considered that the amalgamation of these facilities onto a single site will be hugely beneficial to the operations and efficiency of the facility.
- 1.4 The Local Authority has a statutory requirement to make arrangements to provide suitable education for all children of school age, including where, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons they would not otherwise receive such education. The existing AP sites are not suitable to accommodate this provision long-term nor is it preferable to provide education across three separate sites. Therefore, Bury Council has identified the application site for redevelopment to serve as the location for a new stand-alone AP facility.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 This application relates to land located on the northern side of Milton Road in Radcliffe, Bury, as identified in Figure 1. The site extends to **15,284sqm.**



Figure 1 - Site Location (Source: Google Earth)

- 2.2 The site comprises an area of open space with unmaintained grass and substantial trees and hedgerows along its boundaries. The southern boundary of the site is open, with planters, a substation and signage located along it. There are limited instances of littering across the site.
- 2.3 The wider area is predominantly residential, with existing residential properties bounding the site on all sides. The rear of terraced and semi-detached properties on Kilburn Road adjoins the site to the north, whilst to the east bungalows are located along Wordsworth Avenue, with two-storey terraced properties on Coronation Road. To the south are two-storey terraced and semi-detached properties located along Milton Road and to the west are semi-detached properties on Chaucer Avenue.
- 2.4 Land levels within the site appear to rise from west to east towards a formalised pedestrian pathway which runs north-south, linking Milton Road with Kilburn Road. The southern boundary of the site is entirely open for pedestrian access with access also possible from the

west of the site, with a ginnel present outside of the application site boundary connecting Chaucer Avenue to Kilburn Road.

PLANNING DESIGNATIONS

- 2.5 The site is currently designated within the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) under Policy RT1/1 as a site protected for recreation provision in the urban area, as identified in Figure 2 below. This designation is retained in the Publication version of the emerging Bury Local Plan.
- 2.6 The Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Plan does not explicitly designate the site, concentrating on strategic policy objectives.

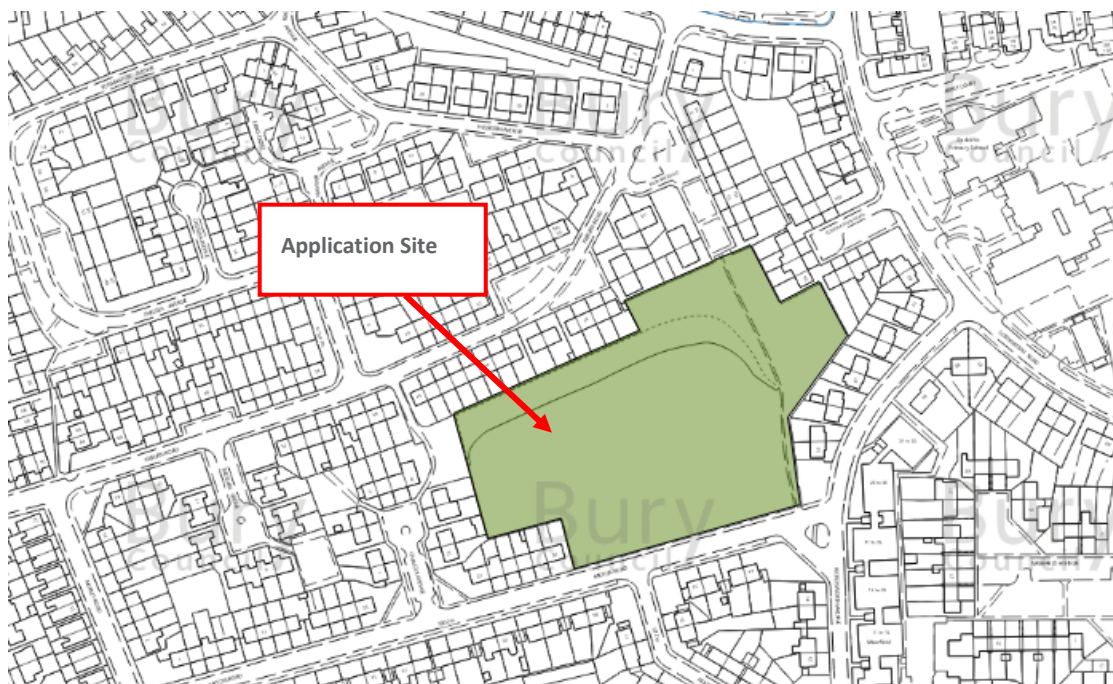


Figure 2 – Planning Policy Designations for the site under the UDP (Source: Bury Council)

- 2.7 The site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1 and there are no heritage assets, nor ecological or landscape designations associated with the site.

PHOTOGRAPHIC APPRAISAL

- 2.8 As existing, the application site comprises a grassed area which appears unmaintained. The photographs provided in Figures 3-5 illustrate this, with a detailed photographic appraisal provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

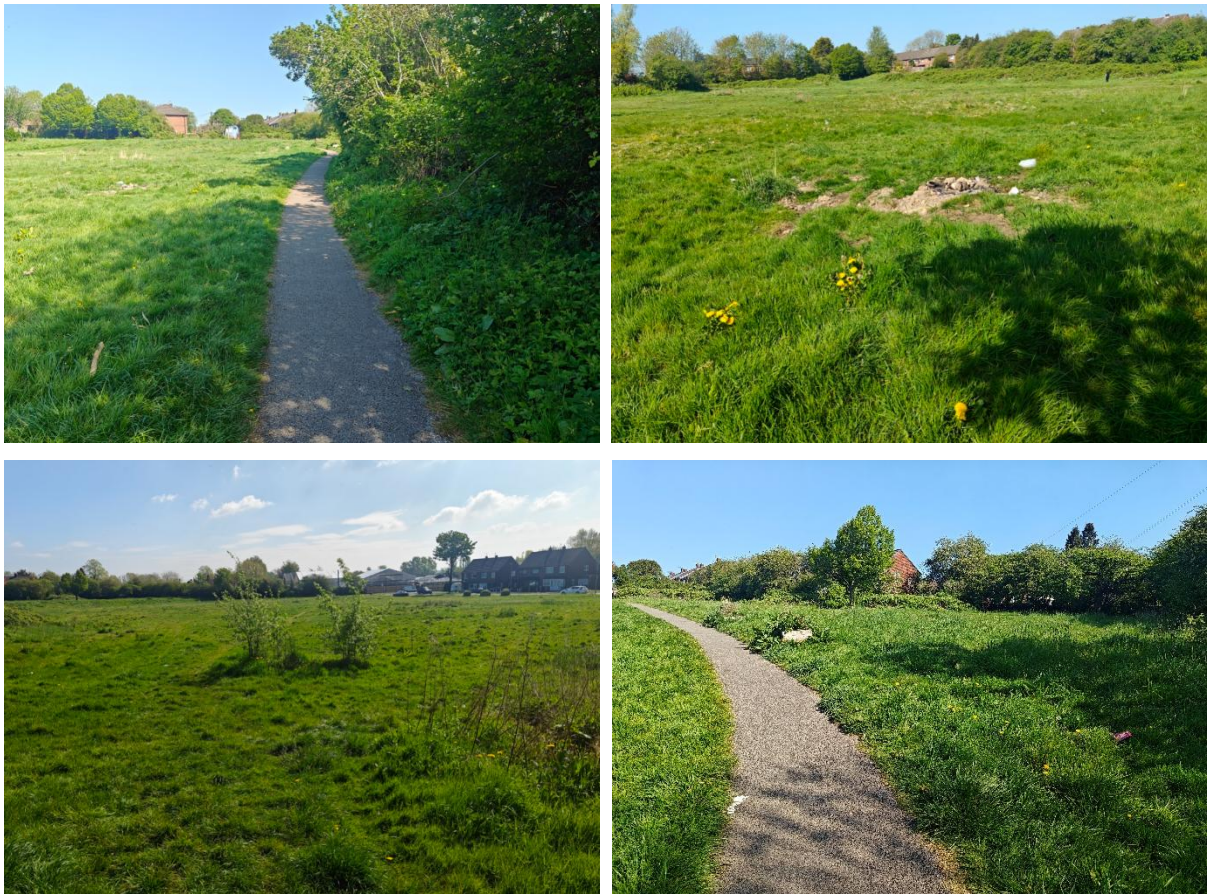


Figure 3 – Photographs of Application Site (Top Left: from within site looking north along footpath on eastern boundary, Top Right: from within site looking north-west, Bottom Left: from within site looking south-east, Bottom Right: from within site looking north-east on footpath)

3.0 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Engagement has been a key part of the design process. Regular meetings have been held with both Bury Council and the Oak Learning Partnership to ensure a full understanding of client and end user requirements. These discussions have directly shaped the developing scheme and its alignment with regulatory frameworks. Design responses have generally been developed in drawing form, documented in the appended general arrangement drawings.

A number of design team reviews have been undertaken with Bury Council + OLP including site visits to the existing premises at New Kershaw and Whittaker Street, where engagement meetings were held directly with vocational leads to ensure spatial and functional compliance.

The design team has maintained active dialogue with sub-consultants and key stakeholders to ensure a coordinated and responsive approach across all design disciplines.

A Public Consultation was carried out with the local community on Tuesday 29 September. Due to the proximity of the consultation to completion of this report, the findings have not been included but will be published separately.

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Stage 3 design work further developed the agreed Stage 2 layouts through client and stakeholder discussions and the developed knowledge of existing site and structural constraints. These documents include:

Key Design / Layout Principles

- The existing building comprises a total Gross Internal Area of 3,028m². 1,805m² at Ground Floor and 1,223m² at first floor.
- The total proposed school site area is 9,723m² including entrance areas and arrival areas, car parking, external play / Multi-Use Games Areas. This includes an area of 1,929m² of community garden space.
- A further 5,562m² of existing land outside of the red edged boundary could potentially form further community / landscaped areas subject to ongoing review with Bury Council in regard to community involvement.
- The main entrance to the building is located on the principal faced to Milton Road and serves as a staff and visitor entrance, with associated parking areas.
- The building is designed with the requirements for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils in mind, to aid learning and ensure shared access to facilities, whilst aiding operational matters in regard to circulation and segregation:
 - Two pupil entrance features within the design. KS3 Pupil entrance is located on the east side of the development, whilst KS4 entrance is focused to the west. This allows sufficient management of arrival / exits points and allows the building to be laid out in a manner which is relevant for the needs of each key stage.
 - KS3 is solely contained with the eastern single storey element of the building with access to centrally located shared spaces such as a gym, main hall and the occasional use of 1st floor classrooms.
 - KS4 is focused over the two-storey element of the building, also with shared use of central spaces. KS4 consists of 9 independent Classrooms and 4 Practical Vocational Spaces each with an associated theory / learning space. Vocational Spaces include:

- Construction – Brickwork – with access to external construction yard + store
 - Construction – Joinery
 - Hair and Beauty
 - Hospitality and Catering
- A further vocation in Horticulture is addressed through a dedicated external space;
 - KS3 access to Food Technology spaces is offered at first floor, in close proximity to Hospitality + Catering areas;
- The arrangement of the building footprint is also influenced through operational requirements to provide segregation between KS3 and KS4 areas. The 'L' shaped arrangement permits the positioning of associated external spaces with segregation in mind:
 - Key Stage 3 external spaces are limited to the width of the single storey structure within which KS3 is accommodated; this allows the external spaces to be contained within a zone directly behind the classroom areas and permits clear lines of segregation.
 - KS3 MUGA is accessed primarily from Classrooms via. sensory gardens;
 - The 'L' Shape return leg of the building on a north-south axis allows KS4 spaces to be formed to both the east and west elevations. The eastern space forms garden spaces and covered activity areas whilst the west forms a MUGA and smaller ancillary spaces.

Appearance

The external appearance of the building is considered against the context of the neighbouring residential area, with an emphasis on reducing the perception of building mass. This was developed in consideration of a 'layering' of the building, through a mix of single and two storey elements and two-tone brickwork breaking down the main two storey elements into sensitively contrasting horizontal bands.

The window fenestrations and arrangements, based on 900mm wide variations of one, two and three pane opening widths, give the building an appearance more domestic in scale and appearance which better reflects the adjacent residential areas and minimises the perception of a commercial or corporate feel.

The buildings siting in a green open space necessitates a sensitive touch and the design approach has been to use natural and warm tones in material choice to both soften the appearance of the building, relate better to the retained existing green spaces and to better contribute to a developing landscaping proposal, whilst appearing as a naturalistic and welcoming venue.

Brie soleil is used to the principal south elevation and western return, to assist with protection against overheating.

Brickwork facades are utilised to ensure robustness whilst contributing to natural tones and considered building details to assist in providing visual relief to the façade:

- A two-tone brick is used at low level which steps to add visual interests
- String courses are used to add definition between two-tone and single brick areas of façade
- A lighter brick is proposed to the upper levels of the building to promote a '*lighter*' aesthetic.
- Simple, linear protruding brickwork courses are provided within the upper parapet levels to the principal facade, for visual interest and to visually dissolve the parapet mass.

Windows and doors are intended to be provided in light bronze powder coated aluminium to respond to and compliment the natural brickwork tones.

5.0 STRUCTURE + CIVILS

A comprehensive Stage 3 Report Structural Report has been issued by KODA Ref. 240171-KOD-Z1-ZZ-T-S-0005. Summary points are highlighted below

- **Building design:** Two-storey, steel-framed education facility with a suspended ground floor and coordinated external works.
- **Ground conditions:** Variable made ground, approximately 0.40–2.65 m deep, over natural cohesive soils and weathered bedrock; deeper made ground and softer organic material occur locally in the north-east.
- **Groundwater:** Encountered locally and will need to be managed during excavation, foundation construction and below-ground works.
- **Mining risk:** Historical coal mining creates a residual ground-instability risk. Proof drilling and grouting are recommended beneath buildings and highways in the northern and western areas.
- **Contamination:** Elevated lead and PAHs were found in near-surface made ground, with trace asbestos in one shallow sample. Remediation, clean cover, worker protection and suitable waste management will be required.
- **Ground gas:** Precautionary **CS₂ gas protection measures** are recommended unless further monitoring confirms they are unnecessary.
- **Ground floor:** Proposed as a **250 mm suspended reinforced-concrete slab**, with deeper perimeter and local thickenings, to reduce settlement risks associated with the variable made ground.
- **Foundations:** Pad foundations are proposed in competent natural strata or bedrock. Unsuitable material should be removed and replaced with lean-mix or mass concrete.
- **Structural frame:** Hot-rolled **S355 steel frame**, generally to Execution Class 2, with vertical bracing in both principal directions.
- **Floors and roof:** **200 mm precast hollowcore planks** with a **100 mm structural concrete topping**, designed to act as diaphragms transferring lateral loads to the braced bays.
- **Structural robustness:** The building is classified as **Consequence Class 2b** and will include horizontal and vertical tying to address disproportionate-collapse requirements.
- **Design loads:** Allowances cover teaching, office, circulation and assembly spaces, plant, partitions, ceilings, services, photovoltaic panels, wind, snow and local accumulation effects.

- **Specialist design:** Contractor-designed items will include steel connections, holding-down systems, precast units, temporary works, lightweight framing, curtain walling, masonry supports, balustrades and secondary steelwork.
- **Site levels:** The building platform will be raised where practical to minimise excavation and material removal. External levels will fall away from the building and provide safe exceedance-flow routes.
- **Drainage:** Separate foul-water and surface-water systems are proposed, ultimately connecting to the existing combined public sewer.
- **Surface-water management:** On-site attenuation will combine below-ground storage with permeable construction in parking and MUGA areas. Discharge of up to **8 litres per second** may be acceptable, subject to Lead Local Flood Authority approval.

6.0 MEP, SUSTAINABILITY + ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

Sustainability is embedded within the design through the following factors:

1. Fabric-First Energy Strategy

- Building elements (walls, floors, roofs, glazing, doors) are designed to be approximately 30% more thermally efficient than minimum regulatory standards, reducing energy demand at source.

2. Net Zero Carbon Operational Target

- The scheme aims for low Energy Use Intensity (EUI) and strives to achieve or approach Net Zero Carbon in operational energy, following DfE and local policy targets.

3. Onsite Renewable Energy Generation

- Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels are specified to generate at least 45 kWh/m² annually, covering a minimum of 60% of the building's total energy use.

4. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) for Heating and Hot Water

- High-efficiency electric ASHPs provide heating and hot water, eliminating the need for gas and reducing carbon emissions.

5. Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR)

- Each classroom and key space is equipped with MVHR units, recovering heat from exhaust air to pre-warm incoming air, improving energy efficiency and indoor air quality.

6. Advanced Building Management System (BMS)

- A central BMS monitors and controls energy use, optimizes system performance, and enables real-time energy metering and fault detection for ongoing efficiency.

7. Daylight and Lighting Controls

- Internal lighting is designed for energy efficiency, with daylight dimming, presence/absence detection, and anti-ligature, low-glare luminaires to minimize energy use and support wellbeing.

8. Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure

- Active EV charging points are provided for at least 10% of parking spaces, with passive provision for an additional 10%, supporting the transition to low-carbon transport.

9. Natural and Passive Ventilation Strategies

- Where possible, natural ventilation is used in circulation spaces and perimeter rooms, reducing reliance on mechanical systems and associated energy use.

10. Compliance with Local Policy Standards

- The design targets align with Greater Manchester's carbon neutrality goals for 2038, including whole life cycle emissions consideration.

The above measures collectively ensure the scheme is designed with sustainability as a core principle, addressing energy efficiency, carbon reduction, and future resilience.

7.0 ACCESS + HIGHWAYS

7.1 Principal access is from Milton Road as follows:

A new access is formed to the south-west extremity of the site and allows for the following:

- Access to 21No. Staff Parking Spaces
- Access for pupil related vehicles at drop of times and pick up times
- Access for a small construction supplies vehicle (7.5 tonne)
- The entrance is also provided with a new pedestrian access for KS4 pupils

A further access is formed centrally on the site from Milton Road. This provides access as follows:

- Access to 20No. Staff Parking Spaces
- Access for pupil related vehicles at drop of times and pick up times
- Access to small delivery vehicle
- Access for visitors
- The entrance is also provided with a new pedestrian access for KS3 pupils, staff and visitors

7.2 Milton Road has been confirmed as sufficient width at 7.3m by our Highways Consultant:

"The carriageway width of Milton Road measures 7.3m which is a standard width even when accommodating high proportions of commercial vehicles, which is the not the case with the proposed Academy and is clearly sufficient to serve the proposed development. Notwithstanding this, it is an existing highway which operates without any record of highway safety concerns, which will be fully assessed as part of the Transport Assessment to be submitted with the planning application. The Transport Assessment will also consider the effects of the additional traffic generated, which will be assessed in relation to the policy requirements of NPPF."

7.2 The existing pedestrian footway running along the eastern boundary of the site will be retained and enhanced, with the additions of community gardens and ecological upgrades.

7.3 It is understood that the north-west corner of the site contains an access route from Chaucer Avenue, the feasibility of retaining this access for community use needs to be reviewed.

8.0 INCLUSIVE DESIGN

The proposed design prioritises inclusive access for all users. Three new entrance points have been created with level access. Disabled parking bays are positioned close to the main entrance with appropriate gradients provided to the main entrance.

Internally, circulation has been designed to comply with Approved Document M2 and relevant Building Bulletins, ensuring accessible horizontal and vertical movement. Facilities, including WCs and breakout spaces, are appropriately sized and equipped. Secure cycle storage and clear signage further enhance the accessibility and functionality of the site.

9.0 ECOLOGY + LANDSCAPE DESIGN

9.1 PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND BNG

A preliminary ecological assessment of the site was undertaken by Rachel Hacking Ecology in July 2026. The report Reference is RHE.4805 and the finding of the report are summarised below:

- **Site baseline:** The approximately 1.1 ha site is mainly **poor-condition modified grassland**, with edge scrub, outgrown hedgerows and occasional trees. No irreplaceable habitats were identified.
- **Ecological importance:** Grassland, scrub and trees are of **site-level importance** only. There are no statutory designated sites within 1 km, and no effects on designated sites are expected. Although the site falls within Ashclough SSSI's Impact Risk Zone, Natural England consultation is not required for this proposal.
- **Protected species:** No further species surveys are required. The site has low suitability for bats, amphibians, reptiles, badgers, rare plants and aquatic species. Trees, hedgerows and scrub may support common nesting birds; scrub also provides potential shelter and foraging habitat for hedgehogs.
- **Development impacts:** Construction would remove most modified grassland and minor areas of scrub. Retained trees and hedgerows could be damaged by compaction or machinery unless protected. Scrub removal could affect nesting birds and hedgehogs.
- **BNG position:** The current baseline is **4.69 area units**, while the proposed development provides **3.88 area units**: a net loss of **0.81 units (17.32%)**. The proposal also fails the metric trading rules because it loses medium-distinctiveness scrub. Hedgerow figures remain incomplete in this draft.
- **Key mitigation:** Use a Construction Environmental Management Plan and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan; protect retained trees and hedgerows through a Tree Protection Plan; and avoid scrub clearance during the March–August bird-breeding season unless an ecologist confirms there are no active nests.
- **Recommended enhancements:** Include **native scrub** in landscaping to reduce the BNG deficit and meet trading rules; consider a small wildlife pond as an educational and

ecological feature; install nesting features for birds, including house sparrows; and incorporate integral bat boxes in the new building.

- **Residual BNG requirement:** If landscaping cannot eliminate the deficit, remaining biodiversity units would need to be purchased from a habitat bank.
- **Overall conclusion:** The scheme is considered ecologically feasible without further surveys, subject to protecting retained habitats, managing vegetation clearance appropriately, and delivering sufficient on-site or off-site BNG compensation.

It should be noted that the above recommendations are being reviewed in light of recent changes to the site plan and red edge boundary drawing which will accompany the planning application. The BNG baseline will therefore be impacted however, it is expected that due to the reduction in site area, this should have a positive impact on the BNG baseline, meaning that off-site contributions may potentially be reduced.

The amended PEA is due for completion on 2 October 2026.

9.2 LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The scheme comprises substantial soft landscaping input in terms of provision within the school grounds, community spaces outside of the school boundary and contributions to the required 10% biodiversity net gain.

TEL Landscape Architects drawing numbered MR26-043/102 Rev. B describes the current inclusions for the landscaping scheme within the site boundary of the school.

Further discussion is ongoing in regard to the development of the community spaces particularly through the public consultation process which was carried out on the evening of 29 September 2026. The proximity of the consultation to the Stage 3 submission date dictates that the findings of the consultation cannot be included within this report.

It is expected that the Landscaping scheme will be updated in due course, in consideration of the developing community needs and the requirements of the amended BNG assessment being prepared by the project ecologist.

10.0 PLANNING CONTEXT AND STATUS

10.1 PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

A pre-application advice request was submitted to Bury Council's Planning Department on the 18th August 2026, with a written response issued on the 26th August 2026.

Comments were received from the responding officers regarding the principle of development on this designated site, which is identified in the Local Plan for recreation provision. It was concluded that the proposed specialist educational facility could deliver substantial social and educational benefits which can carry considerable weight in considering the balance against the loss of designated protected open space. However, to support the Council in assessing the proposals they requested that the following information be provided to accompany any planning application:

- A Planning Statement setting out the policy justification for development on protected recreation land
- A demonstration of the benefits arising from and the need for the unit and the consequences of not providing the facility
- An Open Space Assessment demonstrating the recreational value of the site and the effect of its loss, informed by the findings of the Bury Open Space Assessment (March 2026) and the latest NPPF (2026)
- Evidence that alternative suitable sites have been considered, particularly previously developed land and existing educational sites
- Details of any proposed replacement or enhanced open space provision, where appropriate
- A high-quality landscape strategy demonstrating how the development will retain as much green infrastructure as possible and enhance biodiversity
- A Transport Assessment or Statement addressing accessibility by sustainable modes, pupil transport arrangements, parking and highway impacts

Each of the above will be thoroughly evidenced in the full planning application when formulated.

Further comments were raised in respect of technical matters pertaining to the proposals which will be addressed through the provision of supporting documents, drawings and reports which comprise the proposed application.

10.2 FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

A full planning application is prepared and ready for submission upon Client Approval to submit. We understand that a decision on submission of the planning application will be made at Bury Council Cabinet meeting on 14 October 2026.

The submission will be made as soon as reasonably practical following approval and instruction to proceed.

11.0 ACOUSTIC DESIGN

A Noise Impact Assessment Ref. R2498-REP01-PC has been undertaken by Red Acoustics.

The report concludes as follows:

“An assessment of the existing environmental sound climate and the potential noise impact of the proposed school development has been undertaken. The assessment indicates that suitable internal noise levels can be achieved through appropriate facade, roof and ventilation design. Noise from the proposed MUGA areas and future mechanical plant can also be controlled to acceptable levels at the nearest NSRs.

Subject to the recommendations set out in this report being incorporated into the detailed design, the assessment concludes that noise should not be a constraint to the proposed new school development.”

12.0 FIRE STRATEGY

The fire strategy has been developed in accordance with BB100 and the functional requirements of Approved Document B of the Building Regulations.

The strategy is currently being documented in drawing form and will be available for review within Cassidy + Ashton drawing series, 8000.

13.0 STAGE 3 APPROVAL

We understand that Bury Council Cabinet Meeting on 14 October will determine the progression of the project beyond Stage 3, to Stage 4 – Technical Design.

We therefore await Cabinet Approval to proceed with submitting a full Planning Application to Bury Council and await instruction to commence Stage 4.

Appendices

This report should be read in conjunction with the following Architects Drawings:

EXISTING

- 13921-ASH-CAA-ZZ-ZZ-D-A-1001 P2 – LOCATION PLAN
- 13921-ASH-CAA-XX-XX-D-A-1002 P1 – EXISTING SITE PLAN
- 13921-ASH-CAA-ZZ-ZZ-D-A-1003-P2-EXISTING SITE SECTIONS
- 13921-ASH-CAA-ZZ-ZZ-D-A-1008-P1-PROPOSED SITE VISUALS

PROPOSALS

- 13921-ASH-CAA-ZZ-ZZ-D-A-1004-P10-PROPOSED SITE PLAN
- 13921-ASH-CAA-ZZ-ZZ-D-A-1005-S3-P4-PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS
- 13921-ASH-CAA-ZZ-ZZ-D-A-1006-P2-BOUNDARY + HARDSCAPE TREATMENTS
- 13921-ASH-CAA-V1-00-D-A-2001-P8-PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN
- 13921-ASH-CAA-V1-01-D-A-2002-P8-PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
- 13921-ASH-CAA-V1-02-D-A-2003-P5-PROPOSED ROOF PLAN
- 13921-ASH-CAA-V1-XX-D-A-2004-P5-PROPOSED ELEVATIONS 1 OF 2
- 13921-ASH-CAA-V1-XX-D-A-2005-P5-PROPOSED ELEVATIONS 2 OF 2
- 13921-ASH-CAA-V1-XX-D-A-2004-P5-PROPOSED VISUALS 1 OF 2
- 13921-ASH-CAA-V1-XX-D-A-2004-P5-PROPOSED VISUALS 2 OF 2