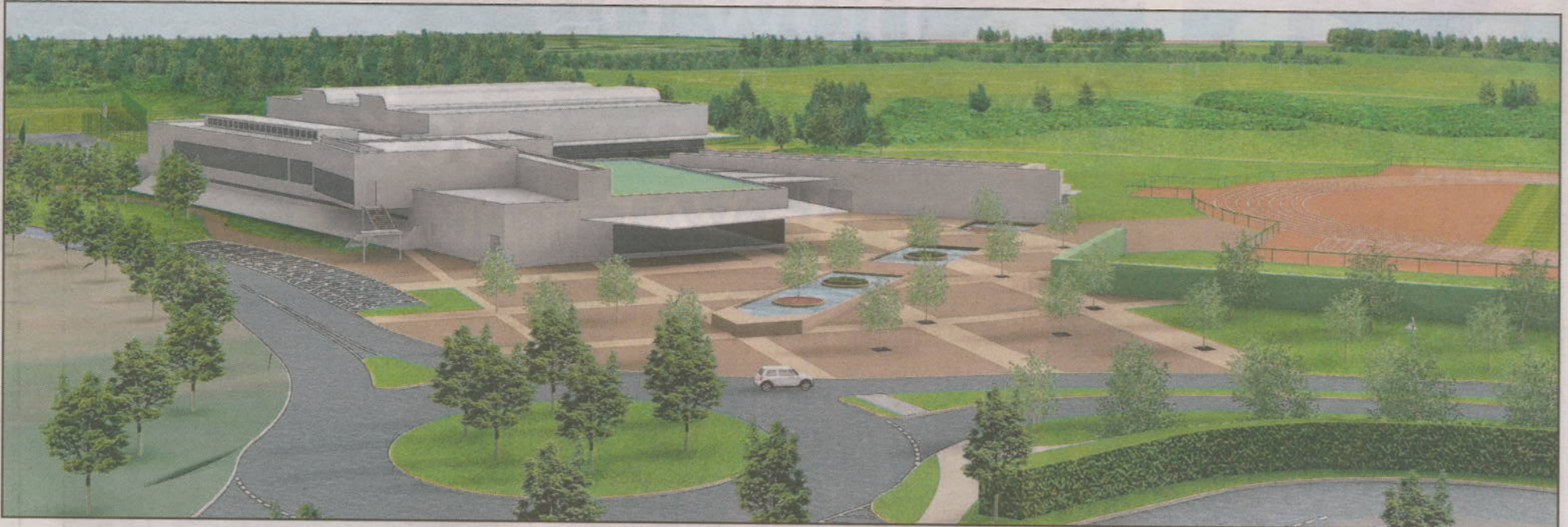


University aims to become leading regional sports centre



● The proposed new sports hall at Edge Hill University

Code NA

Edge Hill's £25m dream

By MICHAEL BYRNE

EDGE Hill University has unveiled its plans for a £25m new state-of-the-art sports complex at its Ormskirk campus.

The proposed outdoor facilities will include running tracks, rugby, hockey and football pitches, athletics field, netball and tennis courts and a trim trail with exercise stations.

A single storey building will accommodate an eight-court sports hall with viewing gallery for basketball, netball, badminton, and five-a-side football.

There will also be a 25-metre swimming pool, a 100-station fitness suite, aerobics studio, health suite with sauna and steam rooms, a café and lounge area.

The facilities will be open to the public and a university spokesman said they hope it will help Edge Hill become a regional sports centre as well as attracting more local clubs.

The development will be served by a new access road and junction formed onto the A570 St Helens Road, together with new cycle lane and pedestrian routes, and a bus-drop off point.

The people of the town will get the chance to see the plans for themselves at a public exhibition next month.

This will explain the proposals and give members of the public the chance to speak to Edge Hill representatives and the design team.

The public exhibition will take place in Grinders Café, adjacent to Sporting Edge at the University, on



● New artificial sports pitches, the athletics track and the new entry way into Edge Hill University's sports



Code NA

Friday, February 5 from 10am to 7pm, Saturday, February 6 from 11am to 5pm and Sunday, February 7 from 11am to 5pm.

The exhibition will be also available to view until Friday, February 12.

The need for further expansion of the University's facilities was identified

in 2005 by the Government Planning Inspector appointed to conduct the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan public inquiry.

To allow further academic growth, and the expansion of these valuable community facilities, the University is proposing the creation of a purpose-built modern sports complex on land to the east of the present campus.

Dr John Cater, University Vice-Chancellor, said: "With an increasingly competitive Higher Education market place, the continued enhancement of University facilities is critical.

"All redevelopment opportunities on the campus have been exhausted, so we need to relocate and improve the current sports facilities to enable further development.

"These proposed facilities will be unrivalled in the area and be fully

available for use by the local community."

New ecological features and wildlife habitats will be created, including mixed-woodland areas and footpaths linking to Ruff Wood, wildflower meadows, open grassland.

A new wildlife pond will be created, and there will also be structural screen planting and hedgerow replacement.

The whole development will incorporate sustainable drainage and low carbon design and building technologies.

Members of the public can send their views about the project by email to newsport@edgehill.ac.uk, via the website at www.edgehill.ac.uk/newsport or by writing to Edge Hill Sports Development, Edge Hill University, St Helens Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 4QP. All comments should be received by Sunday, February 28.

A planning application will be

submitted to West Lancashire Council for the project after the public consultation.

West Lancashire Council Planning committee approved a separate scheme to extend the current sports hall at its meeting last Thursday.

● Dr John Cater, University Vice-Chancellor

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