



Note

To: Kristina King – Planning and Development
From: Ben Clifton – Highway Development Planning
Our Reference: 6/3/5MIN (3778)
Copies to:
Date:

Subject: **Application Ref: 12/02686/HCS
Temporary Primary School, Whiteley**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the planning application, and in particular the Transport Statement (TS), for the above site.

The comments made in this note reflect the DfT's *Guidance on Transport Assessment* (March 2007) and the DCLG's publication, *National Planning Policy Framework* dated March 2012.

Background

In establishing the context of the overall Statement, it would be useful to provide an overview of the development. In particular to note that the application is for a temporary school for a period of seven years to meet growing demand for primary education in the area. The intention is to construct a permanent new school in north Whiteley as part of a larger and later development.

The overview should also include a map showing the proposed catchment area of the new primary school together with its location. This would aid understanding of the assumptions used and confirm the robustness of pedestrian/cycling desire lines and links.

It should also be noted that permission was granted for 75 residential units for the site in 2012.

Baseline situation

Existing site information

The Statement provides an overview of the development site. It is located in a residential area with the M27 in close proximity to the southern boundary. The site is located in a 20mph zone with traffic calming, although it is noted that there are no parking or traffic controls in force at present.

Pedestrians and cyclists

Although located on the edge of Whiteley, there is a relatively good network of footways and cycleways across the settlement. The quality is generally regarded to be good in terms of crossing points, layout and lighting.

It is important to show the most important walking and cycling desire lines from the school site. It would be useful to merge the information within the Sustrans and Parish Council maps to illustrate the desire lines to the proposed school. This would confirm the opportunities that exist to travel to and from the school on foot or by bicycle.

Public transport availability

The Statement confirms that public transport provision in the vicinity of the development is relatively poor. The nearest bus route is some 800 metres to the northwest and has an hourly frequency. Rail services are further afield and do not serve the catchment area. The Statement suggests that the opportunities to use existing public transport services to the development are likely to be limited.

Strategic and local highway network

Leafy Lane/Bader Way/Bleriot Close are narrow residential streets with traffic calming measures. Whilst residential in character, these roads also provide an alternative access from Fareham to Whiteley and receives a high level of commuter related traffic during peak hours for access to Whiteley Business Park .

The nearest Motorway access is M27 Junction 9, this provides the main access to Segensworth and beyond to Fareham.

Road safety

An analysis of the surround highway network site for the three year period between October 2009 and September 2012 shows that there was one serious accident involving a pedal cyclist with no vehicles involved. A five year accident survey should have been carried out in accordance with Hampshire County Council's requirements and therefore this additional information should be provided.

Traffic data analysis

Automatic traffic count data is provided for traffic flows along Leafy Lane, Bleriot Crescent and Bader Way. The Transport Statement summarises the traffic count data by highlighting that there are 584 vehicles in the morning peak between 08-00 and 09-00 and 579 vehicles between 17-00 and 18-00. However it is not clear how this data is derived from the turning count information presented in Appendix B. Further information on the counts undertaken, including location of the count and the hourly totals on Bader Way, Bleriot Crescent and Leafy Lane, should be provided in the main report.

An analysis of vehicle speeds indicates that 85th percentile speeds along Leafy Lane of 17.9mph in the southbound direction and 19.7 in northbound.

However there is no reference to speed surveys at the location of the proposed access to the school which are required to establish suitable visibility splays. These should therefore be provided.

Proposed development

The proposed school will have one form of entry over seven academic years with a capacity for 210 pupils. Initially four classrooms will be constructed but the building will be extended in a second phase with a further three classrooms in later years. Information is provided in relation to the catchment area which will largely replicate the existing Whiteley County Primary. It is understood that a number of potential sites were assessed in determining the location for the proposed school, and a summary of this process should be provided in order to ensure that the optimum location has been identified in terms of accessibility to the site.

Access to the school will be through a combined vehicle and pedestrian entrance at the corner of Bleriot Crescent and Bader Way. This is in accordance with the access approved under planning permission 11/02328/OUT for a development of 75 residential units. However the use of the access for a school will differ from residential use, particularly with an increase in vehicle and pedestrian movements at the start and end of the school day. A comparison of the traffic profile between the permitted residential site and the proposed school should be undertaken to identify any material differences in traffic generation. This can then be used to assess if the form of access approved in principle for the residential site is appropriate for the proposed school use.

Consideration should be given to potential alternative access arrangements which account for the particular travel characteristics of a school as opposed to residential development. It is noted that the layout of Bader Way and Bleriot Crescent where the access is proposed is constrained as part of a design layout that supports the low speeds in the area. Introducing an access arm at this location may give rise to difficulties for traffic to pass two way, particularly if there are a number of vehicles waiting to turn right into the access. It would be useful to provide a review of how the access will operate and whether another form of access would be achievable and desirable.

It is also noted that the proposed pedestrian crossing points are located close to the sharp bend of Bader Way and Bleriot Crescent. From on site observations it is noted that pedestrians will be required to look over their shoulder in order to view traffic approaching from the direction of the bend. It has also not been demonstrated that acceptable visibility splays for the crossings can be achieved. An alternative would be to locate the crossing further north on Bader Way and provide footway on the western side of Bader Way so that pedestrian crossings are further removed from the turning movements at the proposed access. This should be considered.

An additional pedestrian access to the proposed school should be considered from the north west corner of the site from Gibson Close via a footpath that terminates at the site boundary. An access here would appear to have

considerable merit in providing a more direct walking route from areas to the north and west of the school. The use of the gate would need careful management by the school to ensure that it does not result in additional parking taking place to make use of the gate. This point will need further consideration, but a commitment by the school to monitor and manage the use of an entrance in this location would be appropriate.

Given the information contained in the accompanying design and access statement, it is essential to understand the proposed drop off and pick up arrangements for those taking children to school or collecting them in motor vehicles. The Statement does not indicate any traffic controls in the vicinity of the school nor how they will be managed on a day to day basis. Apart from a dropped kerb to ease pedestrian crossing, it is not known if there will be any other interventions that will mitigate the effects of the vehicle traffic that will be generated.

Multi modal trip accessibility

Approach

In calculating the likely level of trips, the Statement assumes a school roll of 210 pupils over the seven academic years. This is appropriate and assumes a worse case scenario, given the school is unlikely to reach its capacity until the end of the temporary period of the development.

The Statement refers to the modal splits of existing primary schools within the area but does not provide data in relation to this. In calculating a suitable modal split proxy for the new school, it would be helpful to show this data as a comparator.

The Statement assumes a very low modal split of 1% each for cycling and for bus/taxi and 0% for rail. This is realistic given the poor provision of public transport in the immediate vicinity of the development. Whereas the cycling percentage could ideally be higher, it is important to note the ages of the pupils, particularly in the first few years of the development. There should be an aspiration to increase the cycling percentage, particularly amongst the older cohort of pupils, in the later years of the development.

It is noted that, according to pupil home postcode data, 101 pupils live within the 400 metre catchment area of the proposed school and could therefore reasonably be expected to walk to school based on the accessible walking distance. This equates to 48% walking to school which is then reduced by 8% to account for some parents driving to school as part of a linked onward journey. The mode share may be slightly high as not all pupils in this area will necessarily attend this school and therefore 40% of pupils walking to school should initially be viewed as a target based on the available post code data.

On this basis, it is important that the measures identified in the sustainable transport strategy are given priority, particularly as the cohort numbers increase in later years.

Proposed trip generation

The Statement applies the likely modal split to the maximum capacity of the school. This suggests that, in terms of pupil journeys, there will be 101 single pupil car trips and 21 car share trips in both the morning and school afternoon peaks. The methodology assumes that the waiting times will on average be 5 minutes per space for both peak periods, resulting in 25 car alone arrivals and 5 car share arrivals every 5 minutes. Although it is acknowledged that waiting times may be longer, further information is required in order to support this assumption that the turnover of arrivals to the site will be every 5 minutes. Experience from other school sites suggests that waiting times can be significantly longer. It would also be helpful to assess the affect that extra curriculum activities may have in staggering the arrival and leaving times of pupils and mitigate some of the traffic impacts.

Section 6.16 highlights that it is expected there will be a high demand for on street and on site car parking or drop off facilities. This statement needs further explanation to examine what the impact will be on local roads from additional parking and whether this will be acceptable. It will also need to explore the opportunity that the temporary school presents in terms of its capacity to provide for on site parking and whether additional parking should be provided on site. It is noted that an overflow car park is identified on the site plan, and further details should be provided as to how this will be used and the number of additional spaces it provides for.

There is also a need to reduce vehicle journeys where possible through the sustainable transport strategy, and to consider other mitigation effects. One possible recommendation for later years could be to slightly stagger the start and finish times of the infants and junior elements of the school. This would spread the peak effects of traffic generation over a longer period.

The proposals indicate that the school will not be fully operational from the start and that only four of the seven classrooms will be in use, until year groups build up over the next 2-3 years. This gradual increase to full capacity should be fully exploited so that for example travel mode splits and car parking demand are assessed in the first year and applied to forecast traffic impact when the school is fully occupied. This will help to identify any potential future issues relating to traffic impact and car parking provision for action to be taken in advance.

Staff trip generation

In calculating the expected number of staff journeys, the Statement utilises staff modal split data from neighbouring primary schools and it would be useful to provide this data as a comparator.

The methodology assumes 88% of staff will travel to the site by car alone with a further 2% car sharing. This is realistic given the opportunities to travel by alternative modes are limited, particularly for staff members living greater distances away from the site.

For both pupil and staff generated journeys, there is no indication of the assignment to the local highway network. This is essential to understanding the localised impacts of the traffic in the immediate vicinity of the school site.

Parking

Staff parking

It is proposed that there will be 26 staff employed at the proposed school, including 17 full time and 9 part time staff, equating to 22 full time equivalent staff.

A total of 16 staff car parking spaces and 1 disabled space is proposed in order to meet staff parking demand. This is based on 2 spaces per class room with an additional 20% to reflect the limited accessibility to the site. However applying the forecast staff modal split data of 88% for staff travelling by car alone indicates that 15 spaces will be required for full time staff. However this would leave a shortfall for part time members of staff. Assuming the part time staff associated with lunchtime duties (7 in total) overlap in their arrival times (and therefore would be seeking a parking space at the same time) then they would require 6 parking spaces. Combined with the parking requirements for full time members of staff, a total of 21 parking spaces may be required to provide for staff parking needs on site, leaving a shortfall from the proposed of 5 parking spaces. It will need to be demonstrated that if this additional demand is realised that the additional parking can be accommodated. It can be assumed that part time staff will be able to use the parent drop off car park, but this will need to be confirmed.

Pupil Drop-Off and Pick-Up

A 25 space drop off/pick up car park will be provided within the school site. The car park will aim to limit the extent of on-street parking taking place on local roads, some of which experience high levels of peak hour traffic such as Leafy Lane, Bader Avenue and Bleriot Crescent.

Concerns have already been expressed at how the calculations for the forecast occupancy and turnover times for these spaces was arrived at. This will need to be examined further in order to understand the number of cars that will be parking on street when the car park is full. The constraints that prevent additional parent parking being provided on site should also be identified.

Cycle parking

The site will benefit from a secure store for 38 pupil's bicycles and a further 14 cycle stands for staff and visitors. This appears to be an over provision, given some of the modal split assumptions outlined in chapter 6, and should be reviewed to provide a level of cycle parking in keeping with expected demand.

Sustainable transport strategy

This chapter highlights a number of possible measures that can promote travel by sustainable means. These are grouped under four headings of

promoting walking, promoting cycling, reducing car use and promoting public transport. The measures in themselves are realistic and give a good indication of ways of reducing vehicle journeys.

Draft Framework School Travel Plan

The draft Framework School Travel Plan for the temporary school is a comprehensive plan and there is only one issue that needs to be clarified before it is approved. The action plan mentions both a Working Group and a School Travel Champion but there are limited details on either of these roles. More information is therefore required on the likely resource to be dedicated to the TP in terms of staff time and numbers.

Conclusion

In many respects, the location of the proposed school in the south east corner of its catchment area provides certain challenges. Relatively long home to school distances will act as a barrier to increasing the number of walking and cycling journeys and the opportunities to use existing public transport are limited.

In utilising a maximum capacity of 210 pupils throughout, the Statement assumes a worse case scenario that is unlikely to be realised until the end of the seven year period of the development when a replacement school north of Whiteley could be built. The Statement, in addition, does not discount for shared or linked journeys or take into account the diversion of existing trips on the local highways network.

However, the Statement assumes in these local conditions a relatively high 40% pupil modal share for walking which may underplay the number of vehicle journeys. On this basis, the intervening period will be critical in monitoring the traffic impacts of the school and putting in place both mitigation and sustainable travel measures.

Recommendation

It is not possible to provide a positive recommendation for approval of the planning application on highways and transport matters at this stage, pending submission of further information requested above and summarised here:

- *Information on and comparison of the transport characteristics of the permitted residential development;*
- *Additional accident information;*
- *Clarity on the location of traffic counts undertaken and speed surveys at the proposed access;*
- *Information on the assessment process used to identify this location;*
- *To provide more detail on the characteristics and conditions of the local highway network such as on street parking levels and local junctions;*
- *Provide details of the assignment of development related traffic to the local highway network.*
- *Assess the impacts of vehicle movements and pedestrian safety on the access junction to the development, and a consideration of alternative forms of access;*
- *Consider an additional pedestrian access point from Gibson Close;*

- *Provide information on modal split data from existing primary schools in the area;*
- *Information to support the assumption that parking space turnover time will be an average of 5 minutes;*
- *Further details on the constraints to providing additional on site parking and the size and use of the overflow car park;*
- *Assess the impact of school related parking on the local highway network;*
- *Demonstrate that additional staff parking can be provided in accordance with forecast staff trip data;*
- *Review the level of proposed cycle parking; and*
- *Provide further details on the School Travel Plan.*

I trust that the above is clear and should you wish to discuss any of the above do not hesitate to contact Ben Clifton on 01962 846761.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Clifton', written in a cursive style.