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7th February 2020

Your contact is: Mr Jonathan Markwell, Planning

Dear Jeanette,

FURTHER CONSULTATION RESPONSE on application no: 191655

Application type: Adjacent Authority Consultation

Address: Crosfields School, Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 9BL

Proposal: Full planning application for the proposed erection of a new senior school building, re-configuring of two entrances and demolition of existing white building.

Applicant: Crosfields School

I refer to the Committee Report to be presented to the Planning Committee on Wednesday, 12 February 2020 for the above development. On review of the Committee report further comments have been received from the RBC Transport Development Control Manager, and I confirm that the Local Planning Authority continues to formally object to the proposal.

The further observations received from Darren Cook, RBC Transport Development Control Manager, are provided in full below:

I have read the conclusions from the Wokingham Borough Council Highway Officer and I note the following inconsistencies with other statements made within the Committee Report.

It is noted that the Highway Officer states at paragraph 40 that:

‘the pupils will already be on the highway network and continuing a similar pattern of travel to that proposed. Should pupils remain at the school, they will provide relief elsewhere on the network.’

This has previously been disputed by RBC but I also note that this conflicts with paragraph 25 of the Committee report in relation to the education provision which states:

Location is thought to be less sensitive than would be the case for state schools, where there is a need to promote school places within walking distance of homes, where this is practical. Independent schools are necessarily more dispersed than state funded schools and are likely, therefore, to recruit from a wider area, with higher proportions of children being driven to school, across the sector as a whole. It is a reasonable assumption that if development was stymied in one location (for example, if traffic impacts were judged to be unacceptable), most parents would ensure their children were able to travel to alternative independent schools, rather than turn to the state sector.

It is therefore clear that the trips associated with the school expansion are unlikely to already be on the network surrounding the site as they would be travelling to an alternative school which as stated are ‘*more dispersed than state funded schools*’. No evidence has been provided to accompany the planning application of the current travel origins of pupils and staff, although it is acknowledged within the application that some pupils travel from as far as Henley, 10 miles from the school. It therefore cannot be assumed that pupils would or would not be travelling along or even in the vicinity of the A327 Shinfield Road on route to an alternative school.

It is noted that paragraph 43 of the Committee report also states:

The Highway Officer considers that the obligations placed on Crosfields School are adequately addressed by Condition no 15, relating to the provision of a Travel Plan: a document which provides a strategy for encouraging sustainable travel to schools and for reducing reliance on cars for the school run.

However, given that no travel origins for pupils and staff have been provided it cannot be assessed whether the pupils and staff would be within the recommended distance guides of 2km for walking and 5km for cycling to help encourage the use of alternative modes. There is therefore insufficient evidence to support this application that a travel plan would or could mitigate the impacts of the development.

It is also interesting to note that the Highway Officer confirms at paragraph 41 that ‘*on a typical day, there are traffic problems at both Whitley Wood Road and Elm Road junctions during the peak periods, leading to slow moving vehicles south- and north-bound. He states that this will worsen as traffic flows are forecast to grow over the years with development in Reading and Wokingham*’.

The Officer continues at paragraph 42 that:

However, highway works, including the installation of traffic lights, were undertaken about ten years ago by Reading BC to the two junctions of Shinfield Road with Elm Road and Whitley Wood Road, which resulted in both a reduction in the number of traffic lanes, and in the removal of mini-roundabouts at both junctions. This resulted in a reduction in the ability of the traffic to flow freely with a reduction in highway capacity; both sets of works have therefore complicated congestion issues.

The road safety scheme undertaken ten years ago at the junctions mentioned above are not a material consideration of this planning application and therefore not assessing the impacts

to the Highway Network would be contrary to CP6 of the Wokingham Core Strategy and Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 42-015-20140306 dated 06 03 2014 of the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Based on the above and previous representations on the planning application, Reading Borough Council objects to the proposed development on the following grounds:

Insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. From the information submitted, it is considered that the additional traffic likely to be generated by the proposal would adversely affect the safety and flow of users of the existing road network within Reading, contrary to Policies CC6, TR1 and TR3 Reading's Adopted Local Plan and Policies CP6 and CP10 of the Wokingham Core Strategy.

Should you wish to discuss any matter in relation to this objection further, please contact Darren Cook (Transport Development Control Manager - 0118 937 2612 - Darren.cook@reading.gov.uk) in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Markwell

Jonathan Markwell
Principal Planning Officer