



Chris Carr
Hertfordshire Transport Programmes and Strategy
Hertfordshire County Council

Sent by email

23rd January 2023

Dear Chris,

I have contacted David Elmore, Principal Major Development Officer at WHBC and he suggested that I write to you to formalise my response to your comments to the planning application 6/2022/2582/FULL.

I have summarised your points below:

- As you correctly pointed out, the school provides 103 car parking spaces and the planning application proposes to increase this number to 118.
- You have also correctly captured that the school expansion should not have had a significant impact on the number of employees at the school. You note that the original number of employees at the time of the approved application (6/2019/0085/MAJ) was 137. As you know, it is broadly speaking the same, with 146 employees (including 10 Herts Catering staff) now employed at the school. Therefore, the point that it is reasonable to suggest that school expansion will have a negligible effect on staff trip generation is clearly evidenced as we approach the end of the period of the planned school expansion.
- You also state that LHA are concerned that an increase in parking would encourage more sixth formers to drive to school, as such this would be against the aim of the School Travel Plan of encouraging sustainable travel. This is not true as sixth formers have never been able to park at the school. Currently, sixth form students are able to use private cars to drive to school because there are no parking restrictions on Pine Grove.
- You add that this would be contrary to the Highway Authorities Local Transport Plan Policies 1 and 5. Given that it is not true that the proposals aim to provide additional Sixth Form parking and no parking is available on school grounds for Sixth formers then I do not believe it is true that the proposals contravene Policies 1 and 5. The additional parking is not to encourage further school related journeys but simply to provide parking for those staff members already travelling to the school.

As you will be aware, we have worked hard to achieve and maintain the Bronze Modeshift Stars Accreditation. This is despite the challenges presented by promoting sustainable methods of travel through the various phases of the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, we have engaged in other work, and aim to achieve the silver accreditation by Easter.

What has become clear over the last few years is that there is not adequate parking at the school. The 33 approved additional parking spaces have made a significant difference to the school parking available to staff, as it represents a 50% increase of our previous parking capacity and we are extremely grateful for this. However, while it is clearly a huge improvement, it does not adequately

address the historic deficiencies. Currently, roughly 75% of school staff are able to use parking. The rest of staff have to use the school access road and Pine Grove to park. This, combined with other parked cars, presents issues for road users and residents alike.

Safeguarding the education of the Chancellor's and ensuring the school is able to remain fully staffed are the very special circumstances that should be considered when determining whether to approve the planning application.

As you know, Chancellor's is situated in Brookmans Park village and, while there are some transport links, they are limited, particularly for those accessing the school and for teachers whose working days routinely start before 8:15am. Our unique location means that the overwhelming majority of staff access the school by private car and will continue to do so due to the limited public transport links. While we routinely encourage car sharing, and have had some success, it is also clear that the variability of arrival and departure times (because of extra-curricular activities, personal reasons including childcare and more flexible working arrangements arising from the pandemic, etc.) presents significant challenges for staff, which is partly the reason that car sharing has had limited success to date.

You will be aware that there has been for some time a recruitment and retention crisis in Education. At this time, not having adequate parking, will put another barrier to being able to fully staff Chancellor's School. Therefore, if the decision not to approve parking is made, it will put education at Welwyn Hatfield at risk.

You may also be aware that Pine Grove residents have strongly requested that they are consulted on residents' parking. In my mind, this would be a good idea as it would prevent students parking on Pine Grove while they attend school and encourage them to use the public transport links and school buses as per our travel plan, but only if there is adequate parking on school for staff. As I have already stated, sixth form students are not allowed to park on school property and neither will they be in the future. Our planning application is purely to provide adequate staff parking to be able to fully staff the school and therefore safeguard the education of the students attending Chancellor's. These are the very special circumstances that we are arguing.

My colleagues and I will continue to work hard to do our best to reduce the number of school related journeys and I would ask you to support us with this by reconsidering your objection, recognise that very special circumstances exist and help us support the education of the Chancellor's school community.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



David Croston
Headteacher