

Planning Application 6/2019/0085/FULL Extension of Chancellor's School

As a resident in Pine Grove I wish to object to the proposal to expand Chancellor's School.

Chancellor's School is within the Green Belt. The application admits that the proposed development is not one of the forms of development that are appropriate within the Green Belt as laid down by the National Planning Policy Framework. It is accordingly inappropriate development that is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and which should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The applicants assert that the very special circumstances exist because the County Council says that it has a need for additional secondary school places in Hertfordshire in the "short to medium term" which is defined as 2018 to 2021.

Other than referring to County Council reports which declare the need for additional places and the County Council's desire to see expansion at Chancellor's as a convenient solution, the applicants offer no evidence of very special circumstances which might justify the inappropriate development.

The County Council's assertions do not amount to "very special circumstances". What is required is evidence that the only way of meeting the County Council's responsibilities is to build on Green Belt land. It is not enough that it just happens to suit them.

How many places are required and for how long? Is this just for pupils in Hatfield or for elsewhere in Hertfordshire? Why isn't the Council seeking to expand provision in Potters Bar where approaching half the school's pupils live? Additional provision in Potters Bar could free up places in Chancellor's for pupils from Hatfield. The County Council has closed secondary schools in Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City in recent years. What plans are there to re-establish schools in these areas – particularly in the light of anticipated population increase from the Borough Council's Local Plan. How will the change of the school to Academy status affect things?

Without any evidence on these questions it is impossible for the Borough Council, which consistently declares its support for the Green Belt, to form a considered judgement on whether "very special circumstances" exist.

Without expansion, there is already considerable traffic congestion at peak times in the roads around the school. Pine Grove is a cul-de sac, its northern end closed off by private roads. In the mornings particularly, between 8.00 and 8.35 the junctions of Pine Grove with Georges Wood Road and of Georges Wood Road with the A1000 are extremely busy. It can take as many as ten minutes to exit Pine Grove to head north on the A1000. Even though the Transport Plan is aspirational rather than realistic it should be adopted now for the current traffic never mind the anticipated future traffic. And Pine Grove was not built for busses.

The Transport Assessment blithely concludes that the proposed expansion will not make traffic conditions any worse. This is a very dubious conclusion and the statistical calculations obscure. It is hard to ascribe any credibility to a report that at para 3.12 mis-describes the rail services from Brookmans Park (would that we did have six trains an hour) and, para 3.9, includes as available bus

services the 200 and 201 which are shown as running on one and two days per week respectively. Furthermore it make no allowance for the construction traffic which will be around until 2020.