

Wed 13/02/2019 20: 45

Response to Application 6/2019/0085/MAJ

I am a resident of 65 Pine Grove, one of the closest homes to Chancellors School and I strongly oppose the recent application (6/2019/0085/MAJ) on the following grounds:

1. Chancellors has no concern for its neighbours, and previous supporters, in this residential area as evidenced by:

a. The school makes no efforts to improve the daily inconvenience residents suffer during term times of the appalling traffic in Pine Grove especially at school opening and leaving times. In fact those driving to collect students begin to congregate in the no-waiting area over 1 hour prior to the school finishing time. The supposed traffic calming measures are ineffective as they are rarely policed. I am not convinced that when making applications, whether for planning or for a change of status, the school provides information on the dangerous situations that occur on a daily basis as parents transport their children to the school. I am certainly aware of 2 recent road traffic incidents, fortunately neither of which resulting in injury.

b. There is little regard for the noise, pollution and congestion that residents and visitors endure during the school run but also outside of school hours when the school premises and land are rented out for commercial purposes, the most extreme of which is as a car park and refreshment area when filming in the local vicinity. Specifically during the summer of 2018 there were several instances involving car transporters, generators, high performance vehicles and coaches going back and forth throughout the night. One disturbance continued for approximately 72 hours, with no respite. This included refreshment breaks for the film crews in the early hours of the morning. The availability of additional parking, larger and more modern sports halls and additional hard-standing will presumably make such commercial opportunities more attractive to the School in the future.

c. The fact that I did not receive from the school a copy of a letter dated 28 September 2018 to Residents and Neighbours headed Consultation about joining a Multi-Academy Trust - and as stated above I am one of the closest neighbours to the school. As a result I was not invited to the related question and answer session with the headmaster on 15th October 2018. We were not the only close resident not to receive the letter.

2. Having seen the increase in students over the last 20 years and its effects on the safety and environment of this residential neighbourhood, I strongly believe that the school is already at full, if not excess, capacity.

The vast majority of pupils coming from Potters Bar, Hatfield or further afield arrive and leave by private vehicle. The School Travel Plan, dated January 2019, refers to in excess of 650 pupils being driven to and from school in cars. I query whether this is truly acceptable in the current environment and in this residential street.

Reference is made to car sharing schemes being promoted. I suspect this is just paying lip service to the objections raised by residents after the previous application for expansion. I sincerely doubt the success rates of the proposed campaign involving emails and newsletters.

Cycling to school is said to be encouraged and will increase in the future; the addition of 30 cycle stands is supposed to assist with this. I query the true intent behind this, when the Application also refers to an additional 33 car parking spaces. And I doubt that parents would be happy to see their children cycle to school on the busy surrounding roads in the absence of any current or proposed cycle paths in the vicinity.

3. There has been no further indication from the school with regards to its proposal to change to Academy status. It is clear that one of the principal reasons for its previous proposal is to benefit from expertise in expansion and I therefore believe that the intention will be to continue the expansion of Chancellors, which has not been completely disclosed at this stage.

As an Academy with less reliance on local authority funding, Chancellors is unlikely to have to account to the local county authority in respect of the management of the school. We believe that it is in the interests of residents local to the school that there should be greater not less influence and local control over what happens to Chancellors especially in respect of its Expansion Plans.

I also believe that as an Academy Chancellors will need to become more commercial and this will mean increased traffic, pollution, danger and noise from the school inside and outside of school hours. In addition its catchment area will be substantially extended and this will lead to even more traffic in Pine Grove and surrounding insufficient road infrastructure. Previous experience as detailed above leads me to believe that the school will ignore the rights and wishes of local residents and authorities and work in its sole interests.