



Solihull
METROPOLITAN
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Ann Pearson,
Team Leader – School Place Planning,
Children's Services and Skills.

14 December 2020 (Via email).

Re: Representation regarding consultation to expand Cheswick Green Primary School.

Dear Ann,

Please accept this letter as my representation in respect of the consultation to expand Cheswick Green Primary School.

The need for a designated school within a catchment area for the new residents living on the new developments at Blythe Valley Park (BVP) is essential. In making this representation I acknowledge that several local schools sought the opportunity to expand to become a two-form entry school and from these Cheswick Green Primary School was selected for further consideration.

In accepting the decision for Cheswick Green Primary School to be the designated catchment school and therefore needing to be expanded to become a two-form entry school I wish to make the following comments and identify the issues I feel need to be addressed before any construction phase begins. It is accepted that some of these issues will not manifest themselves immediately but they will do so on an incremental basis and strategies to mitigate their impact on the local community are essential.

The main issues I believe the local authority needs to address are Traffic impact, Travel to and from school, Parking, School Playing field provision.

Traffic/Travel:

The distance between BVP and the school means pupils will be driven to and from school either by private motor car or public transport. Pupils will not be expected to walk to school via a narrow and unlit country lane – to even think so is preposterous. As a keen cyclist I also wish for more pupils to cycle to school but the country lanes



do not lend themselves to safe cycling throughout the year, especially in late autumn and winter. Therefore, unless a safe direct and shorter walking/cycling route from BVP to Cheswick Green is identified and resourced the expectation is all children attending the school from BVP will travel by motor vehicle.

Vehicle parking around our schools is problematic, not just in Solihull. There are already existing problems in and around Cheswick Way at school drop off/pick up times and additional traffic will only exacerbate the problem. Measures to address the existing and additional impact must be identified before the school does expand. These should include the identification and provision of car parking for school traffic or the creation of a safe drop off/pick up point. We can not rely on the existing access roads to cope and need to prepare to ensure a safe environment around the school.

Solihull Council has led the way nationally through the 'School Streets Project', where some local streets are out of bounds to school traffic at certain time of the day. This is a successful project and I suggest it would certainly require Foxglove Close and Badger Close to be included in the project once the school does expand. An increasing number of motor vehicles at drop off/pick up time will create substantial nuisance to the local roads and measures to ameliorate the problem can be identified now. We should also examine the provision of restrictive parking on Cheswick Way, either side of the school entrance and plan for measures if parking is displaced to other parts of the village. The establishment of a 20mph zone should be included in these plans/measures.

To dovetail with this proposal a 'Park and Stride' may be able to address both traffic and healthy lifestyle issues whereby an agreed parking place just outside the village may be arranged and pupils/parents/carers walk to the school. There are locations that could be considered for this scheme. Any commitment to this must not be piecemeal and must be planned and resourced initially.

A safe environment around the school is essential and problems/risks through parking can not be underestimated.

Public Transport:

When considering the impact on vehicle traffic in and around the school at drop off/pick up time it brings into question the need for provision of an effective and efficient school bus service to serve the school from the BVP homes. Such a service will have a positive impact on addressing highway safety and associated problems. The establishment of a 'right turn' from Creynolds Lane onto the main A34/Stratford Road took into consideration the requirement of public transport to and from the school within the Section 106 funding provision.

The planning report to committee (in 2016) referred to the provision of a bus service stating, 'The service would complement the existing X20 service (which also serves site) and provide frequent public transport connections to local services and facilities, including local schools, in Cheswick Green, Hockley Heath and Dorridge'. The maintenance of this service to meet the needs of school pupils and help mitigate traffic issues is essential.

School Community:

It is essential pupils have the requisite space to play, both hard surface and grassed. It is also essential the school is supported throughout the process while school spaces increase to ensure all pupils needs are met.

With parents now having more of a choice of school than preference we know parents/carers do travel to other areas for education provision for their children. Parents do seek schools with favourable Ofsted/Sat's results and schools with wrap-around provision. Therefore, it is possible that as parents will need to travel a few miles by motor vehicle to take their children to school consideration of other schools in and around Solihull might be considered. I would like to know how the local authority will address a slow or low uptake of children wishing to attend Cheswick Green Primary School. The impact on reduced anticipated pupil numbers could result in financial difficulties for the governing body.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V. H. O.', written in a cursive style.

Blythe Ward Councillor.

FAO Ann Pearson
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16 December 2020

Dear Ann

Re: Proposal to Expand Cheswick Green Primary School

I am very concerned that the proposal to double school places at Cheswick Green Primary School would have a huge and unwelcome impact on the highway network, especially on Cheswick Way which is already very congested at school drop off/pick up times.

Doubling the number of children arriving and departing from the school, almost exclusively by car due to poor public transport links and no safe walking route from Blythe Valley to the school, would bring absolute chaos. Not only would this bring traffic congestion, it would also worsen the air quality on Cheswick Way and surrounding roads.

The report presented to the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills states that the expansion is to cater for the additional housing development at Mount Diary Farm (now Cheswick Place) and Blythe Valley, both of which have very high levels of car ownership. Blythe Valley is several miles away and not connected to Cheswick Green by a regular and reliable bus service, nor is it feasible to expect children to walk to and from school from there. There is actually no bus service that runs from Blythe Valley to the school site in Cheswick Way, as the hourly A7/A8 services run directly down Creynolds Lane and miss out the school altogether. The bus operator has cited the congestion outside the school as the reason for not routing the bus service along Cheswick Way.

Earlier this year the Council launched a 'young lungs' campaign to encourage parents not to idle their vehicles outside schools, but even if this campaign proves to be successful, there will still be increased pollution from the much-increased vehicle movements on Cheswick Way, and it will add pressure to surrounding roads.

In conclusion, my view is that Cheswick Green School is not a sustainable location to double in size, and the obvious alternative is a new one form entry Primary School at Blythe Valley itself, which would be a sustainable location.

Yours sincerely

Tim Hodgson

Councillor Tim Hodgson
Green Group Spokesperson – Environment and Highways