



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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12 July 2018

18/02804/FULL1 | Temporary use of part ground floor/part first floor of existing office building as a school at 1 Westmoreland Road, Bromley, BR2 0TB

I write to place on record my support for application 18/02804/FULL1, which seeks to secure the temporary use of parts of the ground and first floor of 1 Westmoreland Road for Bullers Wood School for Boys. As you will know, both from your involvement in related applications involving the school, and from the large number of comments the Council has received since this particular application was validated on 21 June, the scheme enjoys significant support across our community.

Although, for a raft of reasons, I remain firmly opposed to the proposals put forward for the Westmoreland site by the SHaW Futures Academy, which were recently rejected by Bromley Council, it is important to recognise the material differences that separate these two schemes. As well as being considerably smaller (up to 180 pupils, compared to 1,260), Bullers Wood would only make use of the site temporarily whilst permanent accommodation is sought at St Hugh's playing fields – a site allocated in the Council's draft Local Plan as suitable for a new secondary school – and would retain the existing building, making no noteworthy alterations to the current footprint.

Having carefully scrutinised the documents submitted by the applicant, I believe any impact on neighbouring residential amenity will be minimal, and of course, due to the scheme's temporary status, limited. Indeed, the Harris Primary Academy provides a precedent for a school of a comparable size operating on the site successfully. Despite Bullers Wood having fractionally more pupils, given the respective age profile of the two schools, I believe the latter would in fact generate less traffic than the former occupants. This has also been demonstrated in the applicant's comprehensive Transport Statement, in which it is estimated that 57 per cent of the school's pupils will travel to the site by bus, with 22 per cent walking and 13 per cent taking the train. Additional pressure on the local road network will therefore be negligible.

The application is compliant with all relevant planning considerations, and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) have taken steps to consult local residents, both via a letter



drop to the surrounding area and through two public consultation events. From my discussions with the Council and the ESFA, I believe the applicants have adopted an amenable approach, undertaking considerable pre-application advice from officers to help ensure the scheme is acceptable to everyone involved.

The urgent need for a new school has been acknowledged in successive Council committee reports, as well as by the Planning Inspector during the recent appeal for the St Hugh's site. This is a modest, temporary solution that will provide accommodation for the first intake of pupils from the newly formed Bullers Wood School for Boys. It is widely supported, both by parents, and indeed residents with no formal association with the school, and certainly has my full backing.

Were the application to go before a committee, I would be most grateful if you would circulate this letter to members in advance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Neill'.

Bob Neill MP