



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Inspector
c/o The Planning Inspectorate
Room 319
Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

6 August 2018

Dear Inspector,

Bullers Wood School for Boys, St Hugh's Playing Fields, Bickley Road, Bromley, BR1 2NE – Reference: APP/G5180/W/18/3203724

As the local Member of Parliament, I write to place on record my support for the aforementioned appeal, submitted by Kier Construction with regards to the proposed erection of a 6FE secondary boys school on St Hugh's Playing Fields. It is worth noting that the scheme also enjoys the support of a large number of Bromley councillors, the London Assembly Member for Bexley and Bromley, Gareth Bacon AM, as well as a significant proportion of the local community. Indeed, during the course of this appeal you will no doubt come across representations made by the Bullers Wood School for Boys Local Residents' Support Group, of which there are in excess of 2,150 members.

There is certainly a shortfall in secondary school places across the Borough, especially for boys, with both the Council's Draft Local Plan and Secondary Schools Development Plan indicating that 34 forms of entry will be required by 2021/22. In the intervening period since the publication of these plans in 2016, a number of proposed entries have been permitted, but a 6FE school on this site remains an integral part of the Council's strategy to deliver this overall target. This is recognised by the allocation of the St Hugh's Playing Fields as suitable for education use in the Draft Local Plan.

All relevant national and local planning guidance makes clear that great importance should be attached to ensuring there is a sufficient choice of local school places. Figures published by the Council, including by its Education, Children and Families Select Committee, have highlighted that a considerable number of the students attending the boys' school would reside in the Bickley Ward, with many others coming from neighbouring Bromley Town and Chislehurst.

In fact, if the Council's modelling is correct and matches the preference trends of Bullers Wood School for Girls, its sister establishment - which has a comparatively low rate of out-of-borough pupils (9 per cent, compared to a Bromley average of 21 per cent) - then over



three quarters of Ward resident pupils will attend one of the two Bullers Wood schools. A school on this site would therefore help to deliver much needed school places for local children.

The Council's Draft Local Plan makes very clear that:

"opportunities to address the pressure for education provision [should not be] refused on grounds where there are potential solutions to mitigate adverse impacts of the development, through planning conditions or obligations (e.g. travel plans, highways measured, staggered school hours, landscaping)."

Furthermore, Draft Policy 28 of the Plan is explicit in its assertion that *"proposals will be permitted unless there are demonstrably negative local impacts which substantially outweigh the need for additional education provision."* Given that this application was refused solely on the grounds of potential traffic generation and road safety concerns, which I believe are surmountable through cooperation, I would contend that the Council's notice of refusal on 31 January runs contrary to its own planning guidance.

Numerous mitigating measures have already been incorporated into the proposed scheme, and I remain confident that the revised access and travel arrangements put forward by the School as part of its comprehensive travel plan, which includes staggered school hours and sustainable modes of transport, could address the concerns raised by neighbouring residents living in the immediate vicinity. This is something that was previously recognised by the Council's Development Control Committee prior to refusal, as well as by planning officials at both City Hall and Transport for London.

Having considered this evidence, I would urge you to come to the same conclusion, allowing the development to proceed. The urgent need for a new school has been acknowledged in successive Council committee reports, as well as by the Planning Inspectorate during an earlier appeal. These plans are widely supported, by parents, and indeed residents with no formal association with the School, and certainly have my full backing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bob Neill', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bob Neill MP