

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA041217-6520

4 January 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information which the GLA received on 4 December 2017. Your request has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

As you will note in paragraph 42 of the Stage 2 report, the Mayor has the power under Article 6 to direct the local planning authority to refuse permission for a planning application referred to him under Article 4 of the Order. The Mayor may also leave the decision to the local authority. In directing refusal, the Mayor must have regard to principal purposes of the Greater London Authority, the effect on health and sustainable development, national policies and international obligations, regional planning guidance, and the use of the River Thames. The Mayor may direct refusal if he considers that to grant permission would be contrary to good strategic planning in Greater London. In this instance, it was concluded that the scheme complies with the London Plan and that there were no sound reasons for the Mayor to intervene in this case.

Our response to your request is as follows;

- 1. The Applicant only carried out an alternative site search in November 2016 after this was requested by the Mayor at the Stage 1 Referral of the first planning application (which was rejected by Bromley Council). As such, it was a retrospective exercise and also did not involve a robust assessment or comparison of the alternative sites. When the Free School Application Form was submitted by the new Boys School to the Department for Education in August 2014, the proposed site was the only one put forward. Other more highly ranked sites, including Brownfield sites, are identified in Bromley's Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan which could have been taken forward if a proper exercise had been carried out back in 2014. Please can you explain how it was concluded in the Stage I Referral Report of 23 August 2017 that the applicant had carried out a proper search for alternative sites? Given that we pointed out the shortcomings of the applicant's alternative site search in the note attached to our e-mail of 24 October 2017, please can you explain why no mention of this was made in the Stage II Referral Report?*

The provision of a secondary school fully accords with the Council's emerging local policy designation. As set out in the Stage 1 report on the current application, the Council has gone through a process of evidence based assessment and an extensive site selection process to

identify sites that could be available for expansion of existing schools and new school sites to address the need for primary and secondary school places due to rising birth rates. As confirmed in the Officer's Committee Report on the previous application, 'this evidence, and the site selection process, have been agreed and accepted by the Council Education Select Committee and approved by the Education Portfolio Holder on behalf of the Council'. This has been supported by the alternative site assessment process carried out by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. With there being no outstanding issues in relation to this point at Stage 1 on the more recent application, in accordance with GLA reporting procedure, it was not necessary to mention it at Stage 2.

2. *It is stated in paragraph 26 of the Stage I Referral Report of 23 August 2017 that "the existing courts are currently disused and have been for some time". We pointed out in the note attached to our e-mail of 24 October 2017 that the area where the grass tennis courts used to be (about 3,866sqm) is actually being used by the pupils at the existing Bullers Wood School for Girls to play football and rugby and for private football coaching (with a photograph included showing a football goal and training squares in this area). We also pointed out that two car parks are being built on further existing open areas on the site (totally about 3,300sqm), which was not taken into account in the Stage I Referral Report. Please can you explain why this has all been ignored in the Stage II Referral Report?*

As noted under paragraph 24 of the stage 1 report there are 3 hard surfaced tennis courts (disused) and 6 grass tennis courts (disused) which are split in two by fencing which would be replaced two external games courts and a 4 court indoor sports hall. Therefore, it was concluded that no displacement of need would occur via this proposal. Instead, its usage will increase to the wider community.

3. *It is stated in paragraph 10 of the Stage II Referral Report of 20 November 2017 that "GLA and Bromley Council officers and the applicant have worked with Sport England to address concerns raised regarding the loss of playing fields...". Sport England clearly set out in an e-mail dated 23 September 2016 changes that would potentially allow the proposed development to fall within exception E5 to its policy on planning applications for development on playing fields. However, none of the changes suggested by Sport England have been included by the applicant under either the first or second planning application. Therefore, please can you explain exactly how the GLA officers, Bromley Council and the applicant "worked with" Sport England to address its concerns?*

As set out in the Council committee report and paragraph 36 of the Stage 2 report, Sport England has maintained its objection to the scheme. Despite on-going engagement and discussion between the parties – i.e. the Council, applicant, GLA and Sport England subsequent to the Stage 1 reporting, and despite revising the proposal to best address the comments from Sport England due to site constraints, the applicant could not make all of the revisions requested and on that basis Sport England maintained its objection.

4. *It is stated in paragraph 22 of the Stage II Referral Report that the GLA received 168 direct representations to the Mayor. Please can you confirm how many of those representations were in support of the planning application and how many were opposed to it?*

Unfortunately, I have been unable to collate this information for you as part of this response. This will take some additional time to collate by our Public Liaison Unit and will be reported back to you as soon as possible.

5. *Please can you provide us with copies of any representations received by the Mayor or the GLA officers in respect of this planning application from Local Councillors, London Assembly Constituency Members and Members of Parliament?*

None were received.

6. *It is stated in paragraph 31 of the Stage II Referral Report that “whilst the proposal would result in additional traffic delay on local roads, this additionality is not considered to have a significant impact on the highways network”. As pointed out in the note attached to our e-mail of 24 October 2017, the traffic impact assessment submitted by the applicant is based on questionable travel survey data and a series of contrived assumptions aimed at reducing the school trip attraction figures and there are errors in the base traffic flow inputs and modelling itself. In addition, the reports prepared by Bromley Council’s highways officer and two traffic consultants, Glanville and Odyssey, all conclude that the applicant has not demonstrated that the cumulative residual impacts of the proposed development are not severe. Given this, please can you explain exactly how the TfL officers reached their conclusion?*

As reported in the Stage 2 report TfL officers have reviewed the independent traffic report by Odyssey, the highways officer’s comments, the proposed conditions and S106 mechanisms and a rebuttal prepared by the applicant. Whilst the proposal would result in additional traffic delay on local roads, this additionality is not considered to have significant impact on the highways network. The impact would be further reduced through the secured travel plan, pedestrian improvements and cycle facilities. With regards to concerns regarding pedestrian safety on Chislehurst Road, TfL officers have worked with Bromley Council and the applicant to secure additional minor improvements to Chislehurst Road via a S106 mechanism and to be delivered via the section 278 agreement. TfL officers are satisfied that the improvements secured address pedestrian safety concerns raised. The TfL officers review included a thorough review of the base traffic flow inputs and modelling itself as well as the reports prepared by Bromley’s Highways Officer, Glanville and Odyssey.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference MGLA041217-6520.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Wells
Principal Strategic Planner

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA’s FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>