



Cheltenham Borough Council
Place and Economic Development
Promenade
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23rd January 2019

Dear Sirs,

Regarding; CBC LOCAL PLAN 2011-2031 EXAMINATION

I am writing to you in response to certain statements submitted to the Inspector responsible for examination of the Local Plan, in relation to use of the application land (HD4) by the School. In particular, that *'the land in question is used on a daily basis by the School and is part of school, district and county cross-country events'*.

I can confirm the following;

- The land is not in daily use by the School and is not part of the School's sporting facilities. Indeed, as set out in our letter and Statement of Support (attached) to the Senior Planning Officer on the 30th October 2018, it is non-essential to the educational and recreational requirements of the School.
- The cross-country events referred to can very easily be accommodated within the remaining 35 acres of the School's grounds. The School is very happy to continue to offer its full support to this valuable activity and it would be a simple matter to relocate the current course without any negative impact at all.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Susan Honeywill
Chair of Trustees

ST EDWARD'S SCHOOL STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

Introduction

- 1) St Edward's School supports the development of this portion of the 45 acre site, being non-essential to the educational and recreational requirements of the School for the following form of development:

'Proposed development on land off Oakhurst Rise, Cheltenham.'

- 2) The development would lead to significant enhancement to the facilities at the School which should attribute 'great weight' in the decision-taking on this planning application. The Framework 2018 states at paragraph 94:

'It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and*
- b) work with schools promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.'*

- 3) These development proposals, by gifting a major capital asset in the form of the freehold of the school and its grounds to St Edward's will enable the School to be altered and expanded in the public interest.

St Edward's School Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020

- 4) The School has published a Strategic Plan (which is attached as APPENDIX 1). The Strategic Plan identifies Strategic Objectives for St Edward's, which include improvements to the physical facilities at the School, namely:
 - I. Invest in new capital projects to enhance the facilities for sport on both sites (by improving the swimming pool, changing rooms, gym and hall on the Senior School site and the Red Gra and sports hall on the Preparatory School site) to complement the educational provision.
 - II. Maintain existing buildings and facilities to a high standard and adopt, where practicable, sustainable solutions to improve energy efficiency.
 - III. Develop outside spaces to extend opportunities for outdoor learning and pupil wellbeing.

Public Benefits

- 5) Lest it be suggested that these enhancements benefit only a minority sector of the local community, St Edward's responds as follows:
 - i. National planning policy as set out in the Framework does not seek to confine the application of 'great weight' to public sector schools.
 - ii. In any event St Edward's School remains committed to the aim of providing public benefit in accordance with its founding principles. The Trustees have given careful

consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and confirm that they have complied with their duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011. The Trust fulfils its obligations under this Act through the availability of bursaries, the affordability of school fees and the availability of its facilities to community groups and State funded schools.

- iii. The School makes its facilities available to local community groups including sport (cricket, swimming, rugby, football, tennis and hockey), drama and music groups. The Trust values its links with the local community and plans to continue to build on these strong relationships.
- iv. Below is an outline of some of the links the School has with local community groups and state-funded schools:
 - Free or subsidised use of the School's swimming pool to local state funded schools.
 - Rounders, football, athletics and quadkids tournaments are held at the Preparatory School with the involvement of state schools for no charge.
 - Local sports groups including East Gloucestershire Hockey and GoCrea8 Hockey use the Senior School's AstroTurf pitches.
 - Pupils from many local state primary schools take part in the many free experience days that the Senior School holds which offers them the opportunity to expand their knowledge and experiences of particular subject areas. Successful music, sports, STEM and drama days are held regularly.
 - Use of the School's cricket pitches and equipment by Charlton King's Cricket Club.
 - Use of the School's rugby pitches and equipment by Old Patesians RFC
 - Both school sites are made available through the holiday periods for holiday camps which benefits the many local working families.
 - Year 12 students take part in a community service programme.
 - The School's CCF resources are shared with All Saints Academy and Pate's School, both State funded schools.
 - The Highbury Club, a local community group for partially sighted and disabled, use the School facilities once a term free of charge and are entertained by the School's pupils.
 - Annual fireworks event at the Preparatory School open to the entire community and attended by several thousand people each year.

Conclusions

St Edward's school is not the freeholder of the land for development. It has a diminishing lease (less than 30 years remaining) at a significant annual cost. However, the freeholders have agreed to transfer the ownership of the school and grounds to the School Trust at nil premium in the event that planning permission is granted for the proposed development. A conditional contract has been agreed to reflect this arrangement.

The ability to acquire the freehold not only secures the School's long term future, it also has a significant impact upon the ability of the School Trust to raise finance so as to enable the capital improvements described in the Strategic Plan to be undertaken. The School Trustees believe that the acquisition of this asset will have a seminal effect upon the fulfilment of its Strategic Objectives.