

Hearing Statement/Update

Section 3.3 – Draft Policies 28 & 29

Issue 8 – Questions 33 & 34(f)

St. Hugh's Playing Fields

Update

1. In my representation dated December 28th 2016, I referred to a planning application submitted in July 2016 for a secondary school on this site. That application (LBB ref. DC/16/03315/FULL1) was refused. The reason for refusal was as follows:

'the potential traffic generation and capacity of the existing highway network along with the proposed access arrangements raise both road and pedestrian safety concerns that have not been fully addressed in the proposal and are likely to cause severe cumulative impacts contrary to Policy T18 of the Unitary Development Plan 2006 and paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.'

2. The applicants have submitted an appeal which is being dealt with by way of written representations. The Inspector's decision has not yet been issued.
3. A second almost identical application for a secondary school on this site was submitted in May 2017 (LBB Ref. DC/17/02468/FULL1). This was recommended for refusal by officers for the same reason as stated above. However, their recommendation was over-ridden by LBB's Development Control Committee on 4th October last, when they resolved to approve the application. The draft minutes on the LBB website include the following:

'Following a vote in favour of the application, Members resolved (9 votes to 7) that the application be granted subject to conditions, obligations and informatives and also subject to any referral to and/or direction made by the Mayor of London and/or referral to the Secretary of State.

It was further resolved that authority be delegated to the Chief Planner in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee to prepare and finalise the conditions and informatives and the necessary Section 106 obligations.'

At least two of the councillors supported the application on the proviso that the conditions and obligations should include highway and road safety mitigation measures, which were not included in the then submitted scheme (see Committee Minutes on LBB website).

4. At the time of writing the application has been referred to the Mayor of London and to the Secretary of State and their formal responses are awaited. No permission has therefore been issued.
5. At this time there is therefore no certainty that a permission will ultimately be granted, and further that any conditional permission if granted, together with any obligations, will be viewed as satisfactory by the applicants.

Disputed Need

6. In my earlier representation I referred to disputed need for the proposed secondary school. I am concerned about the reliability of the forecasts of places required to meet the Council's statutory responsibility, on which Draft Local Plan allocations and policy are based. At the 4th October Development Control Committee meeting the Education Portfolio holder revealed that 23% of secondary school pupils in Bromley's schools were out-of-borough residents. The Leader of the Council revealed that there were currently 200 existing voids in the borough's secondary schools (see Committee Minutes on LBB website). Additionally, a number of Bromley children are educated in private secondary schools, such as Bromley High School and Eltham College.
7. I cannot find in the Council's plan background papers that these factors have been taken into account, and accordingly I suspect that the overall Borough need has been significantly overestimated. As a possible consequence, there is the prospect of green-space sites (valued environments) in LBB being proposed for development whilst existing brown-field school sites in surrounding and particularly inner boroughs are likely to become surplus to requirements (see Secondary Primary Development Plans Report paragraph 3.7 & Education Background Paper 2016 paragraphs 3.2 & 3.3).
8. For the reasons in my earlier representation and those above, I remain of the view that this secondary school allocation on St. Hugh's Playing Fields should be removed from the Local Plan.