
From: planningcomments@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories:

Application Reference No. : SMD/2021/0694 Site Address: Land at Ash Bank Road Werrington Staffordshire
Comments by: S. ClarkeMoorside High School
From:

Cellarhead Road
Werrington
Staffordshire Moorlands
Staffordshire
st9 0hp

Phone:

Email:

Submission: Objection

Comments: 7 December 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Re Planning Application Ref: SMD/2021/0694

The governors of Moorside High School have a number of significant concerns regarding the proposed development of 75 new dwellings, new access, provision of green infrastructure and all associated works on land at Ash Bank Road, Werrington, and Staffordshire. Our concerns are based on Policy SS1 Development Principles which sets out that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands. There is no doubt that the current planning proposal will negatively impact on the social development of Staffordshire Moorlands due to the lack of provision for education.

We believe that the planning of this proposed development does not address the deficiency of social facilities that will present as a result, specifically the lack of available places within local schools.

Moorside High School is a popular over subscribed school. Our PAN for every year group is 145. Currently we are above PAN in four of our five year groups (years 7, 8, 10 and 11). We currently have 781 on roll compared to a whole PAN of 725. This puts additional pressure on our communal areas such as the dining room, main hall and narrow corridors. The reason Year 9 are not above PAN is because we do not have the classrooms or the staff to accommodate an extra group.

It is important to note that Moorside is situated near to the border with Stoke on Trent Authority. Therefore, it does attract applications not only for Staffordshire looked after children and those with an EHCP, but also from Stoke on Trent Authority. As both these categories of children must be admitted, irrespective of the number already on roll, class sizes can increase.

We currently have 20 Looked after Children on roll and have a further two from different Local Authorities trying to get in to Moorside High School.

As of November 2021 there are 139 pupils with special educational needs who do not have a statutory statement and 25 that do. The percentage of SEN students with an EHCP plan exceeds the national average and falls into the top 20% of schools nationally. The percentage of students who require SEN support exceeds the national average. There are 10.10 FTE teaching assistants to address the special educational needs of pupils across the school. All of the foundation groups across all year groups will have TA support and therefore the equivalent of 5.10 FTE TA's have to support the other pupils with additional needs in the other groups in the lower bands. With 4 groups in the lower band in Years 7, 8, 10 and 11 from September 2021, these TA's will be thinly spread.

Moorside High School was built in two phases: an initial block which was built using a primary school design in 1939 and a newer block in 1957. Neither block was therefore designed with the needs of pupils and the curriculum of the 21st century in mind. The rooms in the older block are generally used for specialist teaching: science, art, design technology, music and ICT.

The newer block which houses most of the non-specialist teaching is a two storey block. Classrooms are arranged in pairs with one classroom larger than the other. In the Local Authority's condition survey of the school, the cramped classrooms which result from this arrangement were identified as the first key issue requiring urgent improvement. This was said some years ago before we have grown like we have. Of the 22 general teaching rooms 6 are unable to accommodate groups of 30. It is not feasible, therefore to use all of these classrooms in the main teaching block for groups of 30 or above (although we have to) and we have always had an arrangement with up to 3 larger groups in upper band in every year group.

Any additional pupils admitted to the school as a result of successful 'In Year' appeals will lead to:

- an increase in class sizes, which is detrimental to both the teachers and pupils due to reduced teacher 'pupil contact time,
- classrooms possibly accommodating more pupils and furniture than they were designed for, therefore contributing to overcrowding which is detrimental to pupils' learning experiences, and can have a negative impact upon the process of raising standards.
- further pressure on communal areas.

As a school we are committed to delivering the highest quality of educational provision to pupils currently on roll. The planning proposal makes no reference to pupils currently on roll who must not be negatively impacted by potential Admissions appeals for families applying for a place outside of normal Admissions procedures. If children of the families moving into the new housing development were to win an Admissions appeal, this could prejudice the education of existing pupils at our school.

Yours faithfully

S. Clarke

Simon Clarke

Headteacher

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