

Planning Application SMD/2021/0694

Submission: Objection

Organisation: Potteries Educational Trust

Submitted by: H McLachlan, DCEO

The trustees of the Potteries Educational Trust have a number of significant concerns about the planning application: SMD/2021/0694 where it is proposed to build 75 new houses on land at, Ash Bank Road, Werrington, Staffordshire, our objections 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, without important amendments, will **negatively impact** on the social development of Staffordshire Moorlands due to the lack of provision for education.

Objection 1: Both academies are already over their published pupil numbers on roll and at maximum net capacity

Werrington Primary School and Moorside High School are both part of the Potteries Educational Trust, a local multi-academy trust. Currently both academies would not have any capacity to provide in-year school places for the families moving into proposed housing development as both are heavily oversubscribed, exceeding their pupil number on roll (PAN) for most year groups and at 99-100% net capacity.

Current school places at Werrington Primary School

Published Pupil Number on Roll : 60 per year group

Current Pupil Number on Roll: 5 out of 7 year groups are at or over PAN

Net capacity is currently at 99%

Current school places at Moorside High School

Published Pupil Number on Roll: 725

Current Pupil Number on Roll: 781

Net capacity is currently at 100%

In the proposal, it states that *“A financial contribution towards education may be sought”* in relation to primary provision (Werrington Primary School) and secondary provision (Moorside High School) in order to ensure there would be sufficient places for children in families moving into the proposed housing development. The School Organisation response to the consultation states that an additional 24 school places would be required from this proposal, 14 primary school places and 10 secondary school places. In spite of this, the proposal states that a request towards education financial contributions for additional school places would not be made. The consultation response from the School Organisation team does not appear to have a named respondent to ask about this recommendation which would be helpful in understanding this recommendation. If additional financial contribution were made in the proposal, both academies would be willing to discuss a possible expansion with support from the School Organisation Team.

It is important to note that both schools are 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 and further exceed the PAN.

Objection 2: First preferences are well above PAN which means families moving into the new housing development may not be able to obtain a school place locally through the normal admissions process into Reception and Year 7.

In the planning proposal, it states that *'it is likely that children living in the development would be able to obtain a school place locally through the normal admissions process into Reception and Year 7'*. Based on current first preferences and the high number of applicants for places in Werrington Primary School's Reception intake and Moorside High School's Year 7 intake, this statement ignores the current local demand for places, which is well above the PAN for each year group.

Werrington Primary School

Pupil projections which include committed developments based on first preference trends: applications are currently running at 135% first preferences for Nursery and Reception age children. In total, there were 81 applications for the 60 places in Reception at Werrington Primary School for the academic year 2021-22. In addition, childcare sufficiency requirements have been overlooked in the proposal and require due care and consideration as well as a financial contribution for additional childcare place planning.

Moorside High School

Pupil projections which include committed developments based on first preference trends: applications are currently running at 116% first preferences for Year 7 pupils. First preferences have been consistently above PAN for the past 5 years. Without an additional financial contribution from developers for additional school places, there will be limited capacity to admit children of the families who may wish to move into the new housing development. There were 201 applications for the 145 places in Year 7 at Moorside High School for the academic year 2021-22.

Current oversubscription criteria for Admissions Arrangements for September 2023-24 are due for consultation to be completed by 31 January 2022. Currently, no decision has been finalised about the priority of different criteria within Admission Arrangements at the academies and it would be inaccurate and inappropriate to refer to this within the planning proposal.

Objection 3: Commitment to pupils currently on roll at local schools

The PET are committed to delivering the highest quality of educational provision to pupils currently on roll at Werrington Primary School and Moorside High School. The planning proposal makes no reference to pupils currently on roll at both academies 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 gain a school place through an Admissions Appeal, this could prejudice the education of existing pupils at the academies. This would be morally wrong.

The PET believes in the fundamental right of all pupils to access education, reflective of our inclusive approach. As a result of any Admissions Appeal, no pupils with additional needs

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including those who are vulnerable, in care or those with SEND must be impacted by the planning proposal and/or children moving into the area.

The Potteries Educational Trust would welcome the opportunity to discuss these objections further and can be contacted at the telephone number and email address above.