
From: Curley, Jane
Sent: 02 February 2022 15:04
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: SMD/2021/0694

For file please and web

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Senior Planning Officer (Majors & Commercial)
Mobile

From: School Organisation
Sent: 02 February 2022 11:18
To: Curley, Jane <
Subject: RE: Planning Application Ref: SMD/2021/0694 Objection

Hi Jane,

Please find below the response which can be made public. We have taken out the first preference data information as the allocation process is ongoing.

Response

Please find outlined below the response from the School Organisation Team to the objection raised by the Potteries Education Trust (PET) in relation to the proposed residential development at Ash Bank Road, Werrington. Please note that this response relates to mainstream primary and secondary school places only, and does not include early years provision or SEND places which are both outside the remit of our team.

The County Council's School Organisation Team are responsible for assessing the impact of housing development on mainstream school places. For this development, taking into consideration the wider context of school place planning for the local area, we have concluded that a contribution would not be sought from the developer towards the capital costs of increasing places at either school.

Every school has a published admission number (PAN) and they legally have to admit up to that number of pupils before they can refuse a child a school place; this is set out in the admissions policy for the school which also includes over-subscription criteria. If a school receives more applications than places available, school places are allocated to pupils in line with the over-subscription criteria for each school/academy, irrespective of whether this is during the normal admissions round, (applying for a school place during the application window for the co-ordinated admissions process) or in-year (outside the application window or into another year group other than the normal intake).

Some schools choose to exceed PAN and in these cases the authority seeks confirmation from the school/academy that there is sufficient accommodation and

resources to do so as no capital allocation towards additional school places will be provided. In some exceptional circumstances, a pupil(s) may be allocated a place(s) at a school in excess of PAN through the appeals process by an independent panel, who consider the balance of the argument as to why a child should be admitted against why admitting the child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

Moorside High School have had a PAN of 145 for a number of years and the PAN has been exceeded for the past few years. To provide an example Year 7 intakes for 2020 and 2021 the school has chosen to exceed PAN and 165 pupils have been allocated a place exceeding the PAN by 20 pupils. This has allowed children who want to attend the school to be able to attend from further afield as the school is popular. There was no basic need requirement (school age population increase) that necessitated the need to exceed PAN for those admission years. The School Organisation Team response to the school has always clarified that there isn't a basic need requirement and therefore any accommodation changes or additional resources required would need to be funded by the school and not the School Organisation Team.

Werrington has had a PAN of 60 for many years and normally fill to PAN or close to PAN

Currently both schools over-subscription criteria is as follows:

1. Children in care and children who ceased to be in care because they were adopted
2. The child is distinguished from the great majority of other applicants either on their own medical grounds or by other exceptional circumstances and the child would suffer hardship if they were unable to attend the preferred school.
3. Children who have an elder sibling in attendance at the preferred school.
4. Children living within the catchment area of the preferred school.
5. **For Moorside only** – Children on roll at a major contributory school (Werrington and St. John's, Wetley Rocks)
6. Other children arranged in order of priority according to how near their home addresses are to the main gate of the school, determined by a straight-line measurement as calculated by the local authority's geographical information system.

Whilst the provision of SEND places is outside the remit of the team it is important to note that based on the current admissions policy, children with an ECHP will be able to access reception and year 7 places at both schools during the normal admissions round as allocating children under criterion 2 is given a very high priority. Pupils wishing to access a place in other year groups with an ECHP would be assessed on an individual basis by the relevant officers at SCC and may be deemed as exceptional cases and allocated a place.

As you can see above, priority is given to admissions of children with siblings on roll over catchment pupils which is in line with the standard admission arrangements across Staffordshire for Maintained schools. Both schools have admitted children under over subscription criterion 6, demonstrating that the schools do not fill with siblings and catchment pupils and are popular schools. Allocating pupils in excess of

PAN paired with allocating pupils from further afield indicates that any increase in the school population is not in excess of the current capacities.

Staffordshire County Council is not the admission authority for all schools; for example academies and diocesan schools are their own admissions authorities but may choose to apply the same or similar over-subscription criteria. Both Werrington Primary and Moorside High School converted to academies as at April 2021 and are now their own admissions authority although are still part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme, ie parents applying for a school place through the Local Authority and receiving the outcome on offer day to ensure each child only gets one offer.

PET are currently consulting on updating the over subscription criteria for September 2023 at both schools to give priority to catchment pupils over children with siblings on roll and adding children of staff to the oversubscription criteria.

Whilst both schools are popular and will fill to capacity there is no basic need requirement to suggest that additional places are required. If additional places were required any expansion to either school would cost significantly more than the education contribution that would be sought from a development of this size. The absence of other local housing development in the area suggests that the demand for school places should not increase further. As stated in our original response currently the majority of year groups are over-subscribed at both schools and therefore it may be necessary for children in other year groups requiring a place outside of the normal round of admissions to obtain a school place in the wider local area depending on the timing and phasing of the development and which school they currently attend.

Rural popular schools may experience pressure for places where the cohort has already reached the PAN of the school. This then means that schools do not have places available for children moving into the area in-year. It is not possible to restrict or safeguard places for children moving into the area such as those moving into new housing developments. This often means that where there is significant housing development in an area, families moving into the area are unable to obtain a school place at the catchment school if they are applying for a place in-year outside of the normal co-ordinated admissions window. This is common and is not unique to Werrington or Staffordshire. As stated above any child allocated a place through the appeal process is determined by an independent panel who considers why a child should be admitted against why admitting the child would prejudice the existing provision or resources.

The deadline for both reception and year 7 applications has now passed and National Offer Day for Secondary is 1st March 2022 and for Primary is 19th April 2022. As an Academy, Moorside High school has informed our admissions team that they would like to exceed PAN again by another 20 children and allocate up to 165 pupils.

I hope that this clarifies why there was no education contribution requested for either school.

Regards

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