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Our Ref: 402.2959.00001/NDB/Emmaus School, Staverton
Your Ref:

Dear Dale

RE: EMMAUS SCHOOL, STAVERTON – TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

I am pleased to provide below our summary of traffic and transport issues relevant to the operation of the Emmaus School in terms of the current and proposed numbers of staff and pupils. Our observations are made in respect of a visit to School Lane undertaken on Tuesday 19th January, a normal school day unaffected by the recent bad weather, and the details you have provided in respect of the school building and access layout and the number of staff and pupils present.

The purpose of this letter report is for it to be submitted in support of proposals for an increase in pupil numbers from the currently approved 60 to proposed 90 and explaining the traffic and transport implications thereof.

Background Information

The Emmaus School (the school) is a small independent school teaching pupils between the ages of 5 and 16 years. It occupies the site of the former County primary school on School Lane, which in turn relocated to a new site further along the lane. The school received full planning consent in May 2006 for the extension of classrooms. This consent was only partly implemented, with the construction of only 1 new classroom, due to limited funds. A condition of the May 2006 consent was for the school to produce a School Travel Plan.

Proposal

It is proposed to increase the number of pupils enrolled at the school from the currently consented 60 to a proposed 90. The proposed development work will enable increased pupil numbers within each class and thereby will not result in any additional classes or teaching staff. The proposal will also see the provision of improved facilities for staff and pupils in the shape of an extension to the North East side of the existing school to provide a classroom, improved toilet accommodation, head teacher's office and new entrance to the ground floor with two classrooms on the first floor. This replaces an existing aged mobile classroom and improves the overall facilities of the school in line with current modern day expectations and regulations.

School Layout and Access

The school has current on-site parking provision for 8 staff and visitor cars. The configuration of this parking is such that the front row of three vehicles block in the five vehicles parked behind. In the context of the small school and staff numbers, this arrangement is understood to operate successfully and is well tried and tested. The staff car parking area is accessed off School Lane by means of a vehicular crossover of the footway located 20 metres from the B3105 junction. Visibility for drivers of vehicles emerging from the car park was observed to be adequate.

As staff numbers are not proposed to increase as a consequence of the proposal, it is not anticipated that there will be any additional demand for staff parking and therefore no change to the parking provision is proposed.

School Lane

School Lane is a minor road serving the Staverton CE Primary School, the Emmaus School, a pre-school nursery and approximately 40 residential properties. The lane is a cul-de-sac and serves no purpose other than providing access to the above stated development although it is believed that emergency access can be gained to adjoining areas.

In terms of its highway provision, in the vicinity of the school the carriageway width is 5.5 metres wide between kerbs and has footways of approximately 0.8 metres and 1.5 metres width on the north and south sides respectively. The footway on the northern side is not continuous along the length of School Lane. It was observed that School Lane forms part of a signed pedestrian route to Trowbridge.

With only a very few exceptions, it was noted that residential properties had driveway parking contained within the property and that this provision was generally sufficient to accommodate 2 cars.

School Lane is subject to a 30mph speed limit for its full length and is illuminated with street lighting. There are no parking restrictions in place along School Lane although the width self-regulates parking to only one side of the road.

It has been observed that the Staverton CE Primary School has formal parking provision for 24 staff and visitor cars and a drop-off/pick-up lay-by type configuration of 80 metres length and which should ordinarily accommodate in the order of 12 vehicles parked in parallel. Vehicular access to the car park is by means of a dedicated ingress to the south and egress to the north, both taken off School Lane by means of simple priority junctions.

Our site inspection was undertaken between 15:00 and 15:35 and coincided with the pick-up of children from the pre-school, Staverton CE School and Emmaus School. It was evident that parents were well 'rehearsed' on where they were to park and were generally considerate in keeping access clear.

In summary it can be said that the long standing primary purpose of School Lane has been to provide access to the school. Over time this has increased to three separate education provisions and housing has been added. Whilst not evident during our site inspection, it is now a common factor with pre and primary schools that at certain times of the day on-street parking, if undertaken irresponsibly by individuals, can potentially lead to small scale and localised congestion and road safety issues. However, no evidence of this was seen from our site visit during the school pick-up period and that any congestion that did occur was localised, did not extend beyond School Lane, and was resolved in a very short time. As a consequence we are of the opinion that School Lane provides an appropriately safe

environment for pedestrian and vehicular access to the schools without the obvious need for improvement.

B3105 New Terrace

Access to School Lane is gained by means of a simple priority junction taken off the B3105 New Terrace. The B3105 is the 'main' road that links Staverton with Bradford on Avon to the west and Trowbridge, via Hilperton and the B3106, to the south. For its length through Staverton the B3105 is subject to a 30mph speed limit and is illuminated by street lighting. Sight lines at the junction were observed to be restricted to the left (west) by the bridge parapet and hump in the vertical road alignment whilst to the right (east) the sight line is considered to be good. In view of the 30mph speed limit and urban nature of the B3105 at this location, the visibility to the left, whilst not being desirable, is not considered to be dangerously sub-standard.

In the vicinity of the School Lane junction the B3105 carriageway width is approximately 7.5 metres between kerbs. To the east of the junction footways are provided on both sides of the road whilst to the west it is only provided on the northern side due to the restrictive width of the bridge over the railway.

To the east of the School Lane junction, a Zebra pedestrian crossing has recently been installed as part of the nearby Persimmon development at Centurion Park.

The historic centre of Staverton is located approximately 250 metres to the north of the School Lane junction, however, significant and recent residential development has occurred on the southern edge of Staverton bordering Hilperton. The new housing development runs up to the back of School Lane and has direct pedestrian access providing a very good level of accessibility to the schools for residents of these new housing areas.

School Travel Plan

The Emmaus School implemented a School Travel Plan in November 2006. Other than its primary purpose of promoting sustainable travel and mode shift away from private car travel, it acts as a useful source of travel choice information.

The Travel Plan survey, achieving a 100% sample, identified that the school catchment area was over an area wider than ordinarily the case. This is often so where specialist, independent or faith based schools are concerned and is the consequence of parents not having a similar alternative school located closer to home. This dispersion of pupils has a significant influence on mode choice. The following table provides a summary of travel choice of pupils as measured before the implementation of the Travel Plan in 2006 and most recently in 2010.

Mode of Travel to/from School	% pre Travel Plan	% in 2010
Walk	3%	20%
Cycle	3%	0
Public Bus	0%	0
School Bus	0%	0
Train	3%	0
Car (single family group)	29%	21%
Car share with other pupils	61%	59%

The above summary of mode choice shows an encouraging shift away from car use has been achieved as a consequence of the Travel Plan implemented by the school. Now, out of the 34 families attending the school, only 7 do not walk or car share.

The Institute of Highways and Transportation in their document 'Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot' suggest that the preferred maximum walking distance for commuting journeys is 2km. PPG13 states that walking 'offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly under 2km'. Since the Travel Plan was implemented significant new residential development has occurred within Staverton and that therefore the opportunity for pupils to be drawn from within 2km is far greater. Presently, 12 pupils walk to school, 8 from within the 2km radii, but 4 in excess of 5km.

Guidance contained within PPG13 (paragraph 78) suggests that cycling is a viable alternative to travel by private car for distances up to 5km (a 20 minute cycle time). The Travel Plan identified that 32% of pupils lived within 5km of the school and therefore within a reasonable cycling distance. The survey sought to identify attitudes to cycling, particularly those of parents, and it is evident that road safety issues, in the absence of off-road or segregated cycle facilities locally, were a particular concern and a reason for the reluctance to cycle to school.

The absence of any pupils travelling by bus is unusual. The current provision of bus services is identified elsewhere within this report and has been found to be of a reasonable level of provision in terms of services in the vicinity of the school. However, it may be the case that the services that operate along the B3105 do not have the spread or coverage to match the catchment of the school. The Headteacher has also identified that parents consider the cost of public transport for a family to be prohibitive and not comparable to car sharing.

The proportion of pupils that are driven to school in a car sharing arrangement with other pupils is encouraging and is significantly greater than that observed at other schools. Maybe it is a reasonable supposition to suggest that the relatively small number of parents results in them knowing each other better, being part of a small school community, and being able and inclined to organise travel arrangements between themselves.

In summary, the continued promotion of sustainable modes of travel through the Travel Plan, combined with increased opportunities for pupils to be drawn from within the new neighbouring residential developments, is seeing a continued shift of mode choice away from private car to sustainable modes.

Public Transport

Bus services do not operate on School Lane but the nearest bus stops are located only a short walking distance away, approximately 150 metres either side of the junction. These bus stops are served by service 237 operated by Faresaver between Trowbridge and Melksham.

In terms of inbound trips towards the school, buses arrive in Staverton at 08:05 and 08:43 from the Melksham and Trowbridge directions respectively. Outbound in the afternoon, buses depart at 15:30 and 17:00 towards Trowbridge and 16:16 and 17:51 towards Melksham.

In summary it is evident that bus services operate at times convenient to staff and pupils. The available route links with the two nearest major towns and at which the interconnection of services to a wider area can be achieved.

Impact

As described above, the proposal would see an increase of 30 pupils, from 60 to 90. This increase in pupil numbers would not result in any further staff.

Utilising the 2010 mode split figures stated above, the additional 30 pupils are likely to result in 6 pupils walking (20%), 6 pupils being driven as part of a family group (21%) and the remaining 18 being driven as part of a car sharing arrangement (59%). In terms of vehicle trips the 18 car sharing pupils would equate to 5 vehicular trips (3.4 pupils per car) and the remaining driven pupils to 4 vehicular trips (1.7 pupils per car).

In total an additional 9 car trips would be generated to the school as a consequence of the increase in pupils by 30. It has been observed that whilst parking on School Lane is at a premium during the usual drop-off and pick-up times, an increase in traffic of 9 vehicles is unlikely to exasperate the situation to an unacceptable level.

The school has indicated that as part of the development proposal it would like to contribute towards reducing the number of parents using and parking on School Lane. The school has entered in to discussion with the Staverton Club for the use of their car park as a designated drop-off and pick-up area for their pupils. With the recent implementation of the Zebra crossing on New Terrace, a safe route exists between the car park and the school. In the context of the existing 60 pupils at the school, 17 car trips would be removed from School Lane as a consequence of this proposal being successful. Therefore, rather than resulting in an increase traffic, this proposal would result in a reduction in traffic on School Lane at times of the day when it is most under pressure as a consequence of the three schools located along it and thereby making a significant contribution towards improving amenity for others.

Overall Summary & Conclusions

It has been determined that School Lane is of a suitable level of provision to meet the requirements of land-use located along it. It would appear that the primary and historic purpose of School Lane has been to provide access to the schools located along it and that the residential development has occurred subsequent to that. It has footways providing for pedestrians and is of sufficient width to accommodate on-street parking without hindering other traffic.

School Lane is signed as the pedestrian route toward Trowbridge and has good pedestrian connectivity to adjoining neighbouring areas which lie within easy walking distance.

From our site inspection, undertaken at school pick-up time, there is no evidence of any road safety issues.

The Emmaus School has already implemented a School Travel plan and continue to promote sustainable travel to pupils and staff. As a consequence car sharing is predominant and achieving car occupancy levels of 3 pupils per car on average.

Whilst being limited in terms of configuration, on-site parking for staff and visitors operates well and would not be impacted by the development proposals as staff numbers would not increase.

The on-going major residential development of adjoining land has already resulted in a number of pupils coming from these areas and therefore being able to walk to school. In comparison to the May 2006 base situation, a significant increase in walking trips has occurred.

The use of the Staverton Club as a pick-up and drop-off facility will remove the majority of traffic associated with the Emmaus School from School Lane with a resulting improvement in amenity to others.

In conclusion the professional opinion has been formed that, with or without the use of the Staverton Club car park, the type and scale of proposed development is unlikely to have a material or detrimental impact on the safety and free flow of traffic. The view has also been formed that the school is relatively well provided for in terms of travel by bus and walking and that there is every opportunity for these two modes to increase over time by promotion through the existing Travel Plan.

Closure

This report has been prepared by SLR Consulting Limited with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the manpower and resources devoted to it by agreement with the client. Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is for the exclusive use of the Emmaus School; no warranties or guarantees are expressed or should be inferred by any third parties. This report may not be relied upon by other parties without written consent from SLR.

SLR disclaims any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the agreed scope of the work.

Yours sincerely
SLR Consulting Limited

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