

From County Councillor Stuart Bray

Atief Ishaq
Planning Officer
Leicestershire County Council

Re: Hastings High School 2023/Reg3Ma/0131/LCC

Dear Atief,

I write as County Councillor for St Marys Division which includes the school site and all surrounding streets.

I want to state from the outset that Hastings is an excellent school with a good reputation locally. Most people across my division support, in principle, their need to expand to cope with increasing pupil numbers and a desire to provide excellent facilities for local children.

However, there are a number of concerns with the application from the people living nearest the site in particular those living in The Fairway and St Catherine's Close.

Firstly there is a concern about the lack of initial consultation. The application was submitted to the planning department for determination some weeks before residents were invited to view the plans at the school. This caused a great deal of frustration and anger locally. If residents had been engaged at the outset, many of the issues and concerns that now exist could have been avoided.

It was also therefore disappointing that the revised plans were submitted again before the residents were asked their views at the most recent public consultation meeting held at the Parish Council's offices.

A number of options were considered for the site. 'Option two' that placed the new building near the existing maths block is the preferred choice of myself, the Parish Council and the residents living around the school. It is my belief that with some mitigation of the remaining grounds then it would have been possible to proceed with this option and maintain the five existing sports pitches which would have satisfied Sport England. **It remains my strong preference that the County Council should continue to explore 'option two' and not proceed with the plans as being presented to the board.**

However, if the County Council are minded to proceed with the revised plans I would have the following the comments to make on that scheme:

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1. The height, massing and industrial look of the proposed building will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the people living on The Fairway. Whilst it is of a similar height to the existing school it will be much closer to the boundary with The Fairway and therefore have a greater impact.

If the County Council does decide to approve the scheme I would ask that further thought is given to softening the industrial appearance of the sports hall. Some residents have suggested that they would like to see some wood effect cladding or other features to break up the facade to make it more attractive.

2. The loss of existing mature trees is a real concern too. It is vital that any trees lost are replaced and that any planting along the boundary is of a sufficient nature to help screen the development using semi-mature trees that will provide cover from the outset. There should be a condition that ensures that the trees are maintained in perpetuity and should they become diseased or die off then they will be replaced. There is a deep concern that due to a lack of sunlight and poor drainage in the area where planting will occur that any trees planted will not flourish.

3. The proposal includes wider community and extra-curricular use for the school in evenings and weekends. Facilities for the wider community will be welcome by many Burbage residents, but careful consideration should also be given to nearby residents amenity too. If the County Council are minded to approve the scheme I would ask that conditions are imposed limiting the hours of use to reasonable hours and not late evenings and all weekends. I would also request that a condition is imposed that the fire escape doors on the wall nearest to The Fairway are kept closed during use unless being used in an emergency.

4. There is also a concern about external lighting used on the site. It was mentioned at the latest consultation meeting that only low-level bollard lighting is being proposed and no flood light type security lights will be used. Again if the Council is minded to approve the scheme, I would ask that a suitable condition is imposed to ensure this is the case.

5. As previously mentioned there are existing issues of water run-off from the Hastings site that causes flooding on neighbouring properties. Conditions should be imposed to ensure this is mitigated.

I would welcome the opportunity to address the Development Control Board when the application comes forward in April and I thank officers and members for agreeing to visit the site prior to the committee meeting.

Yours sincerely



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Stuart Bray

County Councillor for St Marys Electoral Division

CC Jane Moore - Director of Children & Families

Burbage Parish Councillor & neighbouring residents

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