

Pell Frischmann

Cheswick Green Primary School

PJA Transport Measures – Delivery Strategy
Version C – Pell Frischmann Audit

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Executive Summary

This Technical Note has been prepared by Pell Frischmann on behalf of Cheswick Green Parish Council, in order to review the proposals for an expansion to Cheswick Green Primary School in Cheswick Green, Solihull. In particular this review considers the highways and transport issues of the development proposals based on version C of the Transport Delivery Strategy prepared by PJA, on behalf of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC).

The main issues that are considered within this document can be summarised as follows:

- **School Travel Plan** - Whilst implementation of a School Travel Plan (STP) for existing pupils, staff and visitors is considered appropriate, the proposed extension will result in a step change in pupil demand from locations beyond Cheswick Green and in particular Blythe Valley Park (75% of new demand). The documents submitted to accompany the planning application confirm that it will not be possible for children to walk or cycle to school from locations beyond the extents of Cheswick Green and Cheswick Place, which includes Blythe Valley Park. These documents also acknowledge that it is not feasible for pupils to travel to or from school via the existing A7/A8 public bus service, because the timetable does not align with the school start and finish times. Therefore, the only viable options for expanding future Travel Plan measures associated with demand from the school extension, is through car sharing and the dedicated school bus service.
- **Implementation of Staggered Start and Finish Times** - The proposal to stagger start and finish times by only 20 minutes is likely to have a limited impact on traffic conditions when compared to the overall increase in demand from new pupils at the school. For families with siblings in different stagger groups there will be no traffic impact benefit as both children will arrive and depart at the same time. As a result, the proposed strategy is unlikely to address the concerns raised by SMBC in their comments.
- **Cheswick Green Walking Bus** - the route between Kingfisher Way in Cheswick Place and Saxon Wood Road is currently inadequate and would require suitable investment in order to provide an acceptable route for children. It is also not clear how the proposed walking bus will help to address concerns regarding the increase in traffic generated by the proposed extension given that the majority of 'new' trip generation will be from beyond Cheswick Green and Cheswick Place, with 75% from Blythe Valley Park.
- **Review of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)** - The proposed Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) along Cheswick Way and Creynolds Lane will not address the existing on street parking issues created by Cheswick Green Primary School or provide suitable mitigation for the proposed school extension. Indeed, the introduction of these TROs will lead to displacement of existing parking and create far more substantial impacts on the operation of the local highway network in Cheswick Green than at present. The need for on-street parking will only increase as a result of the proposed school extension and so the proposed introduction of TROs will only serve to exacerbate the existing parking issues rather than provide an effective solution.
- **Car Park Management Strategy** - In order to justify the use of tandem spaces information has been provided on operations at other schools within Solihull. However, a review of these sites confirms that there are more extensive restrictions that prevent on street parking in these locations and alternative travel options by public bus are available to provide staff with travel choices. In the case of Greswold School, there is evidence to suggest that staff do not fully utilise all of the available spaces in order to avoid being blocked in and as such this reduces the overall parking supply.

- **A7/A8 Bus Service** - The feedback from TfWM confirms that the A7/A8 bus service timetable will not be modified in order to align with the start and finish times of Cheswick Green Primary School. As a result it will not be feasible for pupils attending Cheswick Green Primary School to travel via public bus services. Whilst there are aspirations to increase the A7/A8 frequency to a 30 minute service, the details of this are currently unknown. The response from TfWM also confirms that aligning their services with primary school hours represents a lower priority when compared to secondary school pupils. This is because primary school pupils normally live closer to school, which is not the case with the proposed extension of Cheswick Green Primary School. In summary, the A7/A8 bus service does not provide a viable transport option to cater for the school extension and so should not be considered as part of the proposed transport strategy.
- **Expansion of Before and After School Clubs** - The expansion of before and after school clubs is likely to have a limited impact on the overall transport strategy and so there are no further comments from Pell Frischmann.
- **Temporary Construction Access** - Whilst the Technical Note demonstrates that sufficient visibility splays can be achieved on Creynolds Lane, the vehicle tracking drawings indicate that two-way vehicle movements will not be possible within the vehicular access or on the public highway in the vicinity of the site when large vehicles are accessing/egressing the site. In terms of the access road design, it is recommended that the proposed give way markings are amended in order to give priority to vehicles entering the site rather than those exiting. This is in order to remove the potential for blocking back onto the highway.
- **Promotion of Walking and Cycling from Blythe Valley** – The delivery strategy presented by PJA does not include any proposals to promote walking and cycling from Blythe Valley Park. This is despite the comments provided by SMBC which suggest that these measures should be provided in order to align with both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Solihull Local Plan (2013).

In summary, whilst the delivery strategy provides some opportunities to enhance sustainable travel based on the existing school catchment within Cheswick Green and Cheswick Place, it does not address the fundamental issues relating to the proposed extension or fully address the errors and discrepancies with the assessment presented in the TA. In terms of the proposed introduction of TROs, these are likely to exacerbate the existing parking issues and cause a significant impact on the local highway network rather than provide an effective solution that contributes towards the overall strategy.

1 Overview

In June 2021, Pell Frischmann were commissioned by Cheswick Green Parish Council to review the proposals for an expansion to Cheswick Green Primary School in Cheswick Green. This review considered the highways and transportation issues of the development proposals based on the May 2021 Transport Assessment (TA) prepared by PJA, on behalf of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC).

In December 2021, PJA submitted two Technical Note documents to accompany the planning application. The first Technical Note directly responded to the comments and issues identified in the Audit undertaken by Pell Frischmann, whereas the second Technical Note set out various transport measures to be implemented as part of the school expansion within a Transport Measures Delivery Statement (version B). The purpose of the second supporting Technical Note was to address comments raised by SMBC following discussions and their review of the May 2021 TA in July 2021.

A review of the PJA response to Pell Frischmann's comments was undertaken in January 2022, in order to provide additional comments on the proposals and assessment submitted to accompany the planning application. However, since providing these comments a revised version of the PJA Transport Delivery Statement (version C) has been issued to SMBC. The purpose of this document is to review the latest PJA Transport Delivery Statement in order to see if this addresses the comments made by SMBC Highways in their response dated July 2021 as well as the issues that have identified by Pell Frischmann.

This technical review follows the same basic format as the Technical Note provided by PJA and so is generally structured on the following basis:

- **SMBC Highways Comments** – these sections summarise the comments provided by SMBC Highways in their response dated July 2021;
- **PJA Proposals** – these sections present the transport proposals described by PJA in version C of their Transport Delivery Statement; and
- **Pell Frischmann Comments** – these sections provide comments made by Pell Frischmann on the proposed delivery measures presented by PJA, including consideration of whether they address the comments made by SMBC in their July 2021 response.

2 School Travel Plan

2.1 PJA Proposal

The School Travel Plan (STP) submitted with the application has started to be implemented by the school.

A Working Group at the school has been formed to ensure that the measures outlined within the STP are implemented, as follows:

- Carol Mason – Headteacher / STP Champion;
- Rachel Mitchell – Assistant Head Teacher;
- Simone Seickell – Assistant Head Teacher;
- Annabel Matharu – Local Authority Officer.

As set out within the STP, the Working Group will be: “introducing measures to encourage families to travel actively and by studying any modal shift in family travel habits”.

The measures and targets contained within the STP will be expanded to reflect the development proposals and areas from which additional pupils are drawn from, prior to occupation of new classrooms.

2.2 Pell Frischmann Comments

Whilst implementation of a School Travel Plan (STP) for existing pupils, staff and visitors is considered appropriate, the proposed extension will result in a step change in pupil demand from locations beyond Cheswick Green and in particular Blythe Valley Park (75% of new demand).

The documents submitted to accompany the planning application confirm that it will not be possible for children to walk or cycle to school from locations beyond the extents of Cheswick Green and Cheswick Place, which includes Blythe Valley. These documents also acknowledge that it is not feasible for pupils to travel to or from school via the existing A7/A8 public bus service, because the timetable does not align with the school start and finish times.

Given the above, the only viable options for expanding the future Travel Plan measures associated with demand from the school extension, are through car sharing and the dedicated school bus service.

3 Implementation of Staggered Start / End Times

3.1 SMBC Highways Comments

The mitigation measures include the implementation of staggered start/end times to essentially spread the number of vehicles travelling to/from the school out over a longer period, rather than all of the vehicles arrive over a shorter period of time. Whilst this can be effective, the Highway Authority has concerns that the staggered start/end times will only prolong the impact on the operation of the local highway network, and it is also unclear how the staggered start/end times will operate in conjunction with the other mitigation measures proposed, including the walking bus, dedicated school bus, and the increase in frequency of the A7/A8 bus service.

3.2 PJA Proposal

Operational Requirements

Timings

It is proposed to implement staggered start/end times at the school, based on the following appropriate criteria:

- Number of stagger periods – 2;
- Maximum number of year groups in each stagger – 4; and
- Minimum duration between stagger periods – 20 minutes e.g. Stagger ending at 15:10 and Stagger 2 ending at 15:30.

Wrap Around Care

In order to ensure parents/carers do not have to wait on-site/ on surrounding highway network for pupils in different stagger groups, wrap around care will be provided by the school. Wrap around care will be provided for 20 minutes at the start and end of the school day for the following groups of pupils:

- Families with siblings in different stagger groups which span different start/end times;
- Pupils utilising the Walking Bus (unless there is sufficient demand to run a service for each stagger group);
- Pupils travelling via dedicated school bus to Blythe Valley Park.

Staffing

The wrap around care will be staffed by the school. The number of staff required to provide this wrap around care will depend on number of siblings, and uptake of the Walking Bus and dedicated school bus, but will be provided in line with the required staff: pupil ratios for each age group.

Management

The school will be responsible for setting the staggered start/end times depending on operational requirements, and in line with the agreed criteria. The arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they reflect the needs of the school and the community.

The staggered start/end times will be implemented as outlined in this section, prior to occupation of any of the additional classrooms delivered as part of the expansion.

Funding

Wrap around care for the groups stated above will be provided free of charge to parents/carers, and be separate to any existing before, or after school activities.

The Council undertake to provide funding for 2 years from the Dedicated Schools Grant (Growth Fund) and beyond this from a corporate budget until such time as the provision becomes embedded and self-sustaining, in agreement with the school.

3.3 Pell Frischmann Comments

The proposal to stagger start and finish times by only 20 minutes is likely to have a limited impact on traffic conditions when compared to the overall increase in demand from new pupils at the school. The majority of new pupils are expected to be from locations outside Cheswick Green and they are unable to walk or cycle to school or travel on public bus services. Whilst a dedicated bus service is to be provided from Blythe Valley, it is clear that a number of additional journeys will be undertaken by car.

For families with siblings in different stagger groups there will be no traffic impact benefit as both children will arrive and depart at the same time. Given the above, it is clear that the proposed strategy will have only a limited impact and is unlikely to address the concerns raised by SMBC in their comments.

4 Cheswick Green Walking Bus

4.1 SMBC Highways Comments

The Highway Authority requires further details of the operation of the walking bus service, including whether a drop-off service will be offered, and whether the school would be committed to providing staff to operate the service. If volunteers were to be expected to operate the service, what mitigation measures would be put in place if one or more volunteers stopped operating the service. Details of the duration the walking bus service will be operated or funded for should also be provided.

4.2 PJA Proposal

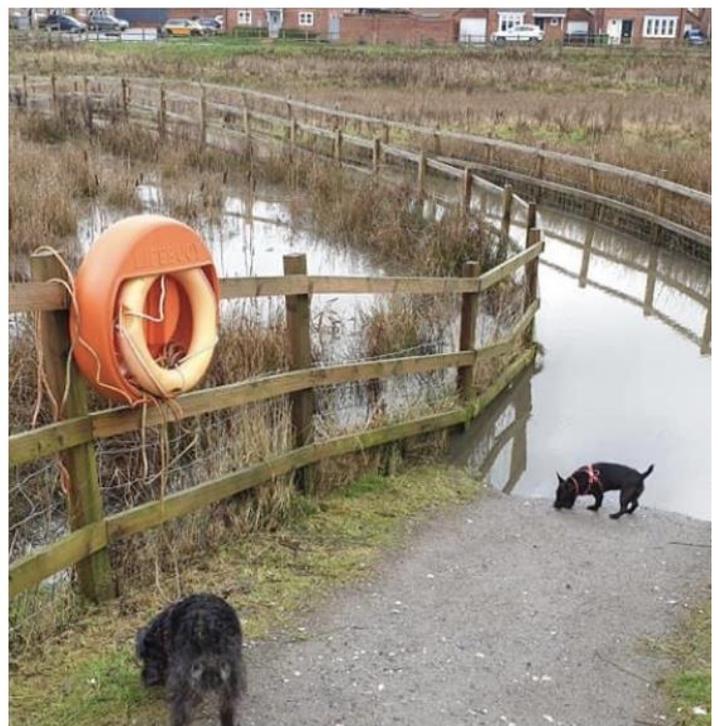
PJA state that the walking bus will be supervised by staff employed by the school and will be provided in line with the minimum ratio of adults to children as stated within the SMBC guide to implementing a walking bus. Management of the walking bus will be in accordance with the same SMBC document.

The Deliverability Note states that timings of the walking bus will be determined by ascertaining the take up by year group to ensure there is suitable provision to tie in with the staggered start and end times with a walking bus provided for each stagger group if take up is sufficient.

PJA state that funding for the walking bus was approved by the Cabinet Member for Education and Children in March 2021 and that the Council will provide funding for 2 years from the DSG (Growth Fund) and beyond this from a corporate budget until such time as the provision becomes embedded and self-sustaining, in agreement with the school.

4.3 Pell Frischmann Comments

Whilst the Deliverability Strategy does provide further details on the proposed walking bus routes, there are concerns over the suitability of some of these in their current state. In particular, the route between Kingfisher Way in Cheswick Place and Saxon Wood Road is currently inadequate and would require suitable investment in order to provide an acceptable route for children. The photos below demonstrate the existing flooding issues that have been known to occur in this location.



In addition to the above, it is not clear how the proposed 'walking bus' will help to address concerns regarding the increase in traffic generated by the proposed extension. As already noted, the majority of 'new' trip generation will be from beyond Cheswick Green and Cheswick Place, with 75% from Blythe Valley.

The suggestion from PJA that children will be driven 3km from Blythe Valley to Cheswick Green and then dropped off to join the local walking bus for the final 660m of their journey is considered highly unlikely and would not address the overriding sustainability aims as the majority of their journey would be undertaken by car.

The response from PJA also places great emphasis on trips within Cheswick Green and Cheswick Place, however these journeys relate to existing demand from properties that have already been developed and occupied for some time.

5 Review of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)

5.1 SMBC Highways Comments

The Highway Authority would require a review of existing TRO's to be carried out as part of the planning submission, to assess whether new TRO's could be implemented or existing TRO's could be extended/amended to offer a benefit to public highway safety or the operation of the local highway network.

5.2 PJA Proposal

In order address the comments provided by SMBC, PJA are proposing the following changes, which are also provided on an accompanying drawing:

- Implementation of single yellow lines along one side of Cheswick Way between Creynolds Lane and Saxon Wood Road to limit parking during school peak periods and create natural chicanes to control vehicle speeds. This would allow residents to continue to park on-street outside of school peak periods;
- Provision of double yellow lines at junctions between Cheswick Way and Saxon Wood Road, Badger Close, Foxland Close and Creynolds Lane to ensure pedestrian visibility at crossing points is unobstructed and parking doesn't restrict turning movements in/out of these junctions;
- Reducing the kerb radii at Cheswick Way / Foxland Close to restrict the ability for vehicles to undertake u-turn manoeuvres within vicinity of pedestrian access to the school, increase highway safety for vehicles and pedestrians;
- Implementation of a zebra crossing with high friction surfacing to the east of Foxland Close to formalise existing crossing provision and improve highway safety;
- Provision of tactile paving across Cheswick Way / Foxland Close to improve crossing facilities for pedestrians;
- Provision of dedicated bay for school bus on northern side of Cheswick Way, adjacent to pedestrian access to the school, with suitable TRO to prohibit parking by other vehicles during school peak periods;
- Provision of H-Bar Markings across private drives to the west of the main school entrance to ensure vehicles do not block access for residents, mirroring existing provision on southern side of carriageway; 11
- Removal of existing bus stop on southern side of Cheswick Way which is currently not served by any public bus services; and
- Implementation of yellow hatching across school access to ensure vehicles do not block vehicle access to the school

5.3 Pell Frischmann Comments

The proposed Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) along Cheswick Way and Creynolds Lane will not address the existing on street parking issues created by Cheswick Green Primary School or provide suitable mitigation for the proposed school extension. Indeed, the introduction of these TROs will lead to displacement of existing parking and create far more substantial impacts on the operation of the local highway network in Cheswick Green than at present.

The May 2021 Transport Assessment (TA) provides a summary of the existing parking issues observed along Cheswick Way and surrounding streets, including Foxland Close, Saxon Wood Road and Boscobel Road. If sections of Cheswick Way and Creynolds Lane are subject to parking restrictions, then this will simply increase parking pressure on Foxland Close, Badger Close, Saxon Wood Road and Boscobel Road as well as those locations on Cheswick Way beyond the extent of the proposed restrictions.

The termination of parking restrictions on roads surrounding Cheswick Green Primary School will increase the number of drivers that park indiscriminately in these locations, as many will attempt to park as close to the school as possible. These trends have already been observed with the existing school operations, but will be exacerbated with the proposed TROs.

In addition to the above, it is clear from existing on-site trends that some parents and staff are reliant on driving to school and therefore need to park on street, due to the lack of available alternatives. Whilst the majority of children living within Cheswick Green currently walk or cycle to school, this will not be the case following the addition of new demand associated with Blythe Valley Park. Whilst a dedicated bus service is to be provided, it is inevitable that many children

from Blythe Valley will be driven to school. Consequently, the need for on-street parking will only increase as a result of the proposed school extension and so the proposed introduction of TROs will only serve to exacerbate the existing parking issues rather than provide an effective solution.



6 Car Park Management Strategy

6.1 SMBC Highways Comments

The Highway Authority has concerns that the development proposals will significantly increase the number of vehicles travelling to/from the school that will increase the demand for on-street parking within the vicinity of the school access, which could have a severe impact on public highway safety, or on the operation of the local highway network. The Highway Authority also has concerns that the increase in vehicles travelling to/from the school could increase the number of vehicles performing U-turn manoeuvres within the Cheswick Way / Foxland Close junction, which is located in very close proximity to the school access and could have a detrimental impact on public highway safety.

6.2 PJA Proposal

The Deliverability Note states that a car park management strategy will be implemented to ensure that staff utilise tandem parking spaces appropriately which will include surveying staff to pair those with similar working days/hours and to allocated specific spaces for staff regularly based at the site.

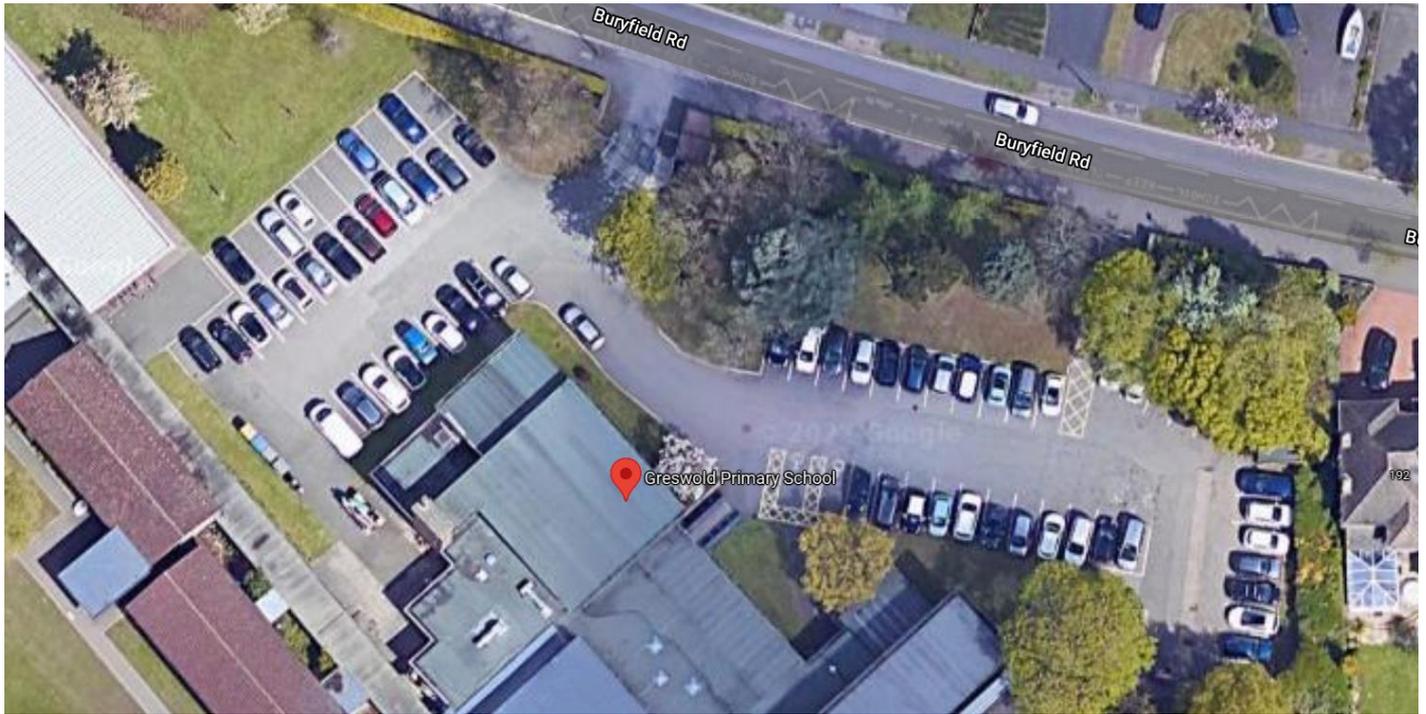
PJA also state that additional classrooms provided by the expansion will not be occupied until the additional staff car parking is provided.

The Delivery Note also states that to reduce the impact of parents parking in the vicinity of the school, measures will be outlined for all those who are able to walk, cycle or utilise public transport to access the site will be encouraged to do so and where utilising a car is the only viable option, information will be provided on appropriate locations to park and car sharing will be encouraged.

6.3 Pell Frischmann Comments

Having reviewed the feedback on existing Tandem spaces from other schools within Solihull and Birmingham, the following observations can be made:

- A review of streets surrounding each of the schools listed, confirms that there are more extensive on street parking restrictions that prevent parking in these locations. Even with the proposed introduction of TROs on Cheswick Way there would still be easily accessible locations on side roads for staff to park.
- A review of the schools listed also confirms that these sites have much better public bus services available than at Cheswick Green in order to provide staff with travel choices.
- The sites at Sharmans Cross and Blossomfield have far fewer tandem spaces to manage than those proposed at Cheswick Green Primary School and Coleshill Heath School was only implemented on a temporary basis.
- Feedback from Greswold Primary School doesn't indicate how satisfied staff are with tandem parking and if this causes any issues. This feedback does imply that staff try to avoid blocking each other in, which has the potential to reduce the overall parking capacity. These trends are evident from the google screenshot below which shows that 5 of the 10 tandem spaces are blocked off and not available, despite the remainder of standard parking spaces being fully occupied.



7 A7/A8 Bus Service

7.1 SMBC Highways Comments

It has been suggested that the frequency of the A7/A8 bus service could be increased to coincide with the school's start and end times however, it is unclear whether the increase in frequency has been discussed with Transport for West Midlands (TfWM). Details of the likely number of pupils that would utilise a public bus service are also required.

7.2 PJA Proposals

The Deliverability Note states that initial discussions with TfWM have been undertaken where it was identified that school start/end times would need to be adjusted to fit the existing timetable and there is limited scope to amend the bus timings due to impact elsewhere on the network.

The following feedback from Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) was also provided within the PJA Technical Note:

“Changing the time of this bus would be problematic as we have fine tuned all of the services to fit in with the start time of a number of schools that are served by the route (specifically Solihull School, Alderbrook School, Tudor Grange and Arden Academy (just to name the secondary schools), and we only have one service travelling in each direction at the time in question.”

Historically we would try to focus school trips based more around the trips that pupils make to secondary school, as primary school pupils generally live closer to the school that they go to. However I do appreciate that this is the nearest school for Blythe Valley, and wouldn't really be in walking range, especially for younger pupils.

But that said, I'm reluctant to end up making a change to fit around these hours that would have significant detrimental impacts elsewhere on the network, and the cost of introducing a new bus specifically to cover the requests made for the morning and the afternoon would most likely, based on experiences from elsewhere on the network, be quite high.

7.3 Pell Frischmann Comments

The feedback from TfWM confirms that the A7/A8 bus service timetable will not be modified in order to align with the start and finish times of Cheswick Green Primary School. As a result it will not be feasible for pupils attending Cheswick Green Primary School to travel via public bus services.

Whilst there are aspirations to increase the A7/A8 frequency to a 30 minute service, the details of this are currently unknown. The response from TfWM also confirms that aligning their services with primary school hours represents a lower priority when compared to secondary school pupils. This is because primary school pupils normally live closer to school, which is not the case with the proposed extension of Cheswick Green Primary School.

In summary, the A7/A8 bus service does not provide a viable transport option to cater for the school extension and so should not be considered as part of the proposed transport strategy.

8 Expand Provision of Before / After School Clubs

8.1 PJA Proposals

As set out within the Transport Assessment, the school currently operate a series of before and after school activities. These will be expanded in line with the expansion of the school.

This provision is separate from the free 20 minutes of wrap around care provided by the school to families to account for the implementation of staggered start/end times.

8.2 Pell Frischmann Comments

The expansion of before and after school clubs is likely to have a limited impact on the overall transport strategy and so there are no further comments from Pell Frischmann.

9 Temporary Construction Access

9.1 SMBC Highways Comments

SMBC have requested an access drawing be submitted for the proposed temporary construction access, which should include details of the geometry of the vehicular access and demonstrate that visibility splays commensurate with a 40mph speed limit (2.4 x 120m) can be achieved in both directions to the near side edge of the carriageway. Vehicle tracking drawings should also be provided to demonstrate that two-way vehicle movements can occur within the vehicular access onto the public highway, and also along the access road.

9.2 PJA Response

The PJA Technical Note and supporting drawings provide visibility splays and vehicle tracking. It is stated that the site is not expected to generate significant construction traffic and as such construction access will only provide sufficient width for two-way traffic at the access point from Creynolds Lane with a passing place layby also provided to the north of the access road. A give-way line or signage will be installed where the access road narrows to single track width.

9.3 Additional Pell Frischmann Comments

Whilst the Technical Note demonstrates that sufficient visibility splays can be achieved on Creynolds Lane, the vehicle tracking drawings indicate that two-way vehicle movements will not be possible within the vehicular access or on the public highway in the vicinity of the site when large vehicles are accessing/egressing the site.

In terms of the access road design, it is recommended that the proposed give way markings are amended in order to give priority to vehicles entering the site rather than those exiting. This is in order to remove the potential for blocking back onto the highway.

10 Promotion of Walking and Cycling from Blythe Valley Park

10.1 SMBC Highways Comments

Policy P7a)iii. of the Solihull Local Plan 2013 states that “Proposed education, health and other public service facilities should be located where they are easily accessible on foot, by bicycle and bus by the local community they serve”. The proposed expansion will primarily serve pupils from the Blythe Valley Park residential development and the TA sets out that the existing school is not easily accessible by foot or bicycle therefore, pupils would have to rely on private vehicle or the proposed school bus service.

SMBC have requested that PJA demonstrate how the development proposals promote walking and cycling from Blythe Valley Park to accord with Policy P7 a) iii of the Solihull Local Plan 2013, and Paragraph 110 a) of the NPPF.

10.2 PJA Proposal

The PJA Transport Delivery Strategy does not include any specific walking and cycle mitigation measures from the Blythe Valley Park development. However, the following information is provided within their Technical Note responding to comments raised by Pell Frischmann on behalf of Cheswick Green Parish Council.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

Paragraph 110 a) of the NPPF states that development should ensure “*appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location*”.

This policy makes it clear that any opportunity to promote sustainable transport modes must be appropriate for the type of the development and its location. It does not specifically require developments to promote walking and cycling, rather, sustainable transport modes that are appropriate in the context of the site. Given the age of the pupils and distance between Blythe Valley Park and Cheswick Green Primary School, the Transport Assessment has acknowledged that it would not be suitable for pupils to walk/cycle to school using existing infrastructure, and land within the applicants control/publicly maintained highway boundary. On this basis, the mitigation measures set out within the Deliverability Note for pupils drawn from Blythe Valley primarily focus on those modes which would be appropriate, for example, public bus services, dedicated school buses and car sharing, all of which are sustainable transport modes.

In addition, whilst it would not be appropriate to encourage pupils drawn from Blythe Valley to walk and cycle for their whole journey, the proposed Walking Bus, and complementary softer measures e.g., School Travel Plan and Car Parking Strategy, will encourage parents/children to walk for the final part of their journey, whilst also reducing parking demand within the direct vicinity of the school access. It is considered highly appropriate for existing pupils from Cheswick Green and additional pupils drawn from Cheswick Place to walk/cycle to and from school. Mode share surveys undertaken as part of the Transport Assessment illustrate that some families living within suitable walking/cycling distance of the school currently travel by private car. Mitigation measures such as the Walking Bus, Travel Plan and Car Parking Strategy aim to encourage those who are able to walk/cycle to do so.

It is therefore considered that the proposed mitigation measures will provide appropriate opportunities for parents/pupils to access the school via sustainable modes. This includes both new pupils drawn from Blythe Valley Park and Cheswick Place, and existing pupils.

Policy P7 a) iii – Solihull Local Plan (2013) Policy P7 a) iii) states that:

“iii) Proposed education, health and other public service facilities should be located where they are easily accessible on foot, by bicycle and bus by the local community they serve;”

To mitigate the impact of the development, it is proposed to implement the following measures to improve accessibility by bus for the local community served by the school:

- Increased frequency of A7/A8 bus service between Cheswick Green Primary and Blythe Valley Park; and
- Provision of dedicated school bus service between Cheswick Green Primary School and Blythe Valley Park.

The local community served by the school does not only increase pupils drawn from Blythe Valley. Mitigation measures have been included within the development proposals to improve access on foot/by bike from Cheswick Green and surrounding areas, including implementation of a Walking Bus, provision of dedicated cycle parking on-site for staff and pupils, and implementation of a School Travel Plan to promote sustainable modes.

10.3 Pell Frischmann Comments

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

The PJA response provides an interpretation of the NPPF which suggests that the sustainable travel opportunities are appropriate for the type of the development and its location. However, Pell Frischmann's interpretation of the NPPF differs from the response provided by PJA.

In the context of sustainable travel opportunities from Blythe Valley, it is considered that these are extremely limited. As acknowledged by PJA, it would not be possible for children to either walk or cycle to Cheswick Green Primary School from this location. This is despite the comments provided by SMBC, which request that pedestrian and cycle opportunities from Blythe Valley Park are promoted. The alternative sustainable travel options suggested by PJA are public bus services, dedicated school buses and car sharing.

In terms of public bus services, these do not currently provide a viable means for parents to take their children to school from Blythe Valley Park and details of future expansion aspirations for these services are currently unknown. This is recognised in the PJA response, which confirms that these trips would be limited.

The existing dedicated mini bus which operates between Blythe Valley and Cheswick Green Primary School for up to 10 children will require a step change in service provision and funding support to accommodate the estimated demand from Blythe Valley (68 children). As such it is considered that this does not represent a long term sustainable travel solution.

The suggestion from PJA that children will be driven 3km from Blythe Valley to Cheswick Green and then dropped off to join the local walking bus for the final 660m of their journey is considered highly unlikely and would not address the overriding sustainability aims as the majority of their journey would be undertaken by car.

The response from PJA also places great emphasis on trips within Cheswick Green and Cheswick Place, however these journeys relate to existing demand from properties that have already been developed and occupied from some time.

In summary, the options presented for sustainable travel are not considered to provide appropriate opportunities for journeys associated with the expanded Cheswick Green Primary School and are therefore not in accordance with the NPPF.

Policy P7 a iii) – Solihull Local Plan (2013)

The PJA response makes reference to policy P7 within the Solihull Local Plan (2013), which states that “*Proposed education, health and other public service facilities should be located where they are **easily accessible on foot, by bicycle and bus** by the local community they serve*”.

The above policy is explicit in its requirements that ‘proposed’ education facilities should be located where they are ‘easily accessible by each of sustainable travel options listed, including walking, cycling and bus. The TA assumes that 75% of new pupil demand will be from Blythe Valley but acknowledges that it will not be feasible for these children to walk or cycle to school and so clearly does not comply with SMBC's own planning policy.

The increased frequency of the A7/A8 bus service has yet to be agreed and the current provision is acknowledged as not being practical to serve the school start and end times. As with walking and cycling, the absence of an easily accessible public bus service provision confirms that the proposed school extension does not comply with SMBC's own planning policy.

In an attempt to overcome the absence of walking, cycling and public transport options, it is proposed that the existing mini bus service provision between Blythe Valley and Cheswick Green Primary School is increased. This service provides travel for up to 10 children currently, however the estimated demand by PJA suggests that a step change would be required in funding and service provision in order to accommodate demand for 68 pupils.

The PJA response suggests that other measures are in place to promote walking and cycling for the remaining 25% of new pupil demand, which will be from Cheswick Place. However, the assumptions around trip generation and distribution are challenged in this Technical Note because the properties at Cheswick Place have been completed and occupied for over 1 year and a significant number of pupils are already attending the existing school from this location. Whilst this is

acknowledged by PJA, the methodology used to determine the expected pupil demand has not been updated. Given that no further properties are due to be constructed within Cheswick Green or Cheswick Place it is likely that a greater proportion of 'new' trips will be from locations beyond Cheswick Green and therefore also not within a feasible walking and cycle distance.

Based on the above points it is clear that the proposed development does not comply with Policy P7 a iii of the Solihull Local Plan (2013).

In addition to the above, policy P7 states that "*Development will be expected to meet the following accessibility criteria, unless justified by local circumstances*".

Given that the development does not comply with the expected accessibility criteria listed in the Local Plan, further justification of the local circumstances has been provided by PJA. This justification is based on the fact that the Blythe Valley Park development was granted planning permission with no education provision on site and that Cheswick Green Primary School is the nearest existing school to this development.

In order to accommodate the education needs of the Blythe Valley development, there will inevitably be alternative options that could have considered and progressed by SMBC. The aim of this Technical Note is not to comment on these alternative options, but what is clear is that the current proposal to extend Cheswick Green School does not meet the necessary sustainable access criteria set out by Solihull Council in their Local Plan (2013).