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## PLANNING OBJECTION



**RTPI**

Chartered Town Planner

OUR REF

PPL.CHEB904HG

DATE

13/07/2021

### Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Cheswick Green B90 4HG

Expansion of the existing 1FE primary school to form a new 2FE school for 420 pupils ranging from Reception to Year 6. In addition to the 420 pupil intake, there will be 30 pre-school and 60 nursery children attending the school as a result of the proposal. The existing school site area will increase to 19,828m<sup>2</sup> from 16,305m<sup>2</sup>. The proposal will consist of an additional 5 new class bases for year 1 to year 6. An additional reception class base and extended nursery provision together with internal alterations, additional on staff site parking provision an external enclosed MUGA and minor reconfiguration of the external play space for the KS1 play areas and access paths. The proposal will also seek permission for a temporary access route to be established via Creynolds Lane from the east of the site via the existing adjacent field next to the school sports field.



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1. INTRODUCTION

We have been instructed by Cheswick Green Parish Council to submit an objection to the proposed expansion of Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way B90 4HG.

The Parish Council has been in contact with the Council throughout the preparation of the application that has now been submitted.

The Parish Council has been clear throughout the process that it is opposed to the expansion of the school.

The Parish Council submitted a detailed objection to the Council as part of the consultation process. The objection is copied with and will be referred to throughout this planning objection. The points that have been raised by the Parish Council have not been addressed in the submitted planning application.

The expansion of the school will increase its capacity. It is intended to cater for children outside of Cheswick Green as well as local children.

The fundamental objection that is raised by the Parish Council is that the parking and traffic issues that currently exist around the school will be significantly exacerbated by the influx of additional pupils, many of which will travel in from outside of the Cheswick Green area.

The planning application includes a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan.

The Parish Council does not accept the findings of these documents and remains firmly of the view that the proposed development will significantly worsen existing parking and traffic congestion issues around the school.

The Parish Council has appointed Pell Frischmann Consultants to examine and comment on the Council's Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.

The report by Pell Frischmann is submitted with this objection. It endorses the Parish Council's opposition to the development on parking and highways grounds.

Cheswick Green is within the Green Belt. There is no development boundary around the built-up part of the village.

Policy P17 of the Local Plan allows for limited infilling in Cheswick Green. The proposed development is not limited infilling.

The school has been extended a number of times over the years. The cumulative volume of extensions over the size of the original building is large.

The current proposal is likely to take the total volume of extensions over 40% of the size of the original building.

This could mean that the development is inappropriate in the Green Belt. Inappropriate development can only be approved in Very Special Circumstances (VSC) where harm to the Green Belt and any other harm is clearly outweighed by the benefits that are brought forward by a development proposal.

In this case, the harm to the Green Belt may be limited. However, other harm that is brought forward by increased car parking demand, traffic congestion and encroachment into open land is significant.

The development does not therefore benefit from VSC.

This objection will expand on the above points.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is a modern school building with associated development around it.



The school lies within Cheswick Green. The existing site boundaries are clearly defined by existing development and trees that demark the boundary of the site from adjacent open fields.

Cheswick Green is within the Green Belt. There is no development boundary drawn around the village.

The site is within walking distance of properties and other facilities within Cheswick Green.

Cheswick Green is detached from other settlements.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application proposes extend an existing school building.

The extension is required to increase the capacity of the school.

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Cheswick Green Solihull B90 4HG

Expansion of the existing 1FE primary school to form a new 2FE school for 420 pupils ranging from Reception to Year 6. In addition to the 420 pupil intake, there will be 30 pre-school and 60 nursery children attending the school as a result of the proposal. The existing school site area will increase to 19,828m<sup>2</sup> from 16,305m<sup>2</sup>. The proposal will consist of an additional 5 new class bases for year 1 to year 6. An additional reception class base and extended nursery provision together with internal alterations, additional on staff site parking provision an external enclosed MUGA and minor reconfiguration of the external play space for the KS1 play areas and access paths. The proposal will also seek permission for a temporary access route to be established via Creynolds Lane from the east of the site via the existing adjacent field next to the school sports field.

This will enable the school to become a 2FE school for 420 pupils with a further 30 pre-school and 60 nursery children attending the school.

The proposed building works will take the floor area of the building from 16305m<sup>2</sup> to 19828m<sup>2</sup>.

The existing floor area includes previous extensions to the building.

Previous development at the school has included extensions to the building and the replacement of temporary classroom accommodation with permanent buildings

The additional school capacity is sought to accommodate children from the Blythe Valley development. Blythe Valley is detached from Cheswick Green

4. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

It is necessary to consider the policies of the Adopted Solihull Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Local Plan Review.

Solihull Local Plan (2013)

The Policy P17 of the Local Plan states,

**POLICY P17 Countryside and Green Belt**

The Council will safeguard the “best and most versatile” agricultural land in the Borough and encourage the use of the remaining land for farming. Development affecting the “best and most versatile” land will be permitted only if there is an overriding need for the development or new use, and there is insufficient lower grade land available, or available lower grade land has an environmental significance that outweighs the agricultural considerations, or the use of lower grade land would be inconsistent with other sustainability considerations. Development involving farm-based diversification will normally be permitted in order to support farm enterprises and the management of land, providing it is in an appropriate location, of a scale appropriate to its location, and does not harm the Green Belt, conservation or enhancement policies.

The Council will not permit inappropriate development in the Green Belt, except in very special circumstances. In addition to the national policy, the following provisions shall apply to development in the Borough’s Green Belt:

- Development involving the replacement, extension or alteration of buildings in the Green Belt will not be permitted if it will harm the need to retain smaller more affordable housing or the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.
- Limited infilling will not be considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt settlements, providing this would not have an adverse effect on the character of the settlements. Limited infilling shall be interpreted as the filling of a small gap within an otherwise built-up frontage with not more than two dwellings.
- The reasonable expansion of established businesses into the Green Belt will be allowed where the proposal would make a significant contribution to the local economy or employment, providing that appropriate mitigation can be secured.
- Where the re-use of buildings or land is proposed, the new use, and any associated use of land surrounding the building, should not conflict with, nor have a materially greater impact on, the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and the form, bulk and general design of the buildings shall be in keeping with their surroundings.
- Where waste management operations involving inappropriate development are proposed in the Green Belt, the contribution of new capacity towards the treatment gap identified in the Borough may amount to very special circumstances, providing the development accords with the waste management policy of this Plan.

The small settlements of Hampton-in-Arden, Hockley Heath, Meriden and Catherine de Barnes are inset in the Green Belt and are not therefore subject to Green Belt policy. Nevertheless, the Council, in considering applications for development in these settlements, will take into account the importance of their rural setting and of their attributes, such as historic buildings, open space, density of development, landscape and townscape that contribute towards their special character. Immediately beyond the inset boundary, strict Green Belt policies will apply.

The justification to policy P17 allows for infill development in Cheswick Green

- 11.6.8 Limited infilling in villages, identified as appropriate development in the Green Belt in the NPPF, will be permitted in Chadwick End, Cheswick Green and Tidbury Green. In the other Green Belt villages and hamlets in the Borough, new building, other than that required for agriculture and forestry, outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries, or for extensions and alterations will be considered to be inappropriate development, in order to protect the Green Belt and the character and quality of the settlements. The policy provides some additional guidance to assist interpretation of limited infilling.

It is also necessary to consider Policy P7 of the Local Plan. The policy deals with the location of development and availability of services. The guidance for housing development is set out below,

**POLICY P7 Accessibility and Ease of Access**

- a)** All new development should be focused in the most accessible locations and seek to enhance existing accessibility levels and promote ease of access.

Development will be expected to meet the following accessibility criteria, unless justified by local circumstances.

**i.** Proposed housing development should be:

- Within an 800m walk distance of a primary school, doctor's surgery and food shop offering a range of fresh food; and
- Within a 400m walk distance of a bus stop served by a commercial high frequency bus service (daytime frequency of 15 minutes or better) providing access to local and regional employment and retail centres; and/or
- Within an 800m walk distance of a rail station providing high frequency services (3 or more per hour during peak periods) to local and regional employment and retail centres.

- ii.** Proposed offices, retail and leisure development should be located in town centres, or other established locations including Birmingham Business Park, Blythe Valley Business Park, Birmingham Airport and NEC, as defined in Policies P1, P2 and P19. Here and elsewhere they should be within a 400m walk distance of a bus stop served by a commercially run high frequency bus service;

- 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;

- iv.** Proposals for change of use are likely to be resisted if they reduce accessibility to levels below those listed in this policy.

Investment in improvements to local public transport provision, cycling and/or walking measures will be sought in association with development proposals which do not meet the accessibility criteria set out by this policy.

Residential development proposals for fewer than 3 dwellings in urban areas west of M42 and within rural settlements will be exempt from the criteria set out above. Investment in improvements to local public transport provision, cycling and/or walking measures will continue to be sought in association with such proposals where considered necessary.



- b) Access to development from the core walking, cycling, public transport and road networks will be expected to be:**
  - i. Safe, attractive, overlooked and direct on foot, by bicycle and from public transport;**
  - ii. Safe for those vehicles which need to access the development;**
  - iii. And assessed in accordance with Policy P15 'Securing Design Quality' in the Local Plan.**

Policy P8 Managing Demand for Travel and Reducing Congestion.

**POLICY P8 Managing Demand for Travel and Reducing Congestion**

- a) All development proposals should have regard to transport efficiency and highway safety:**
  - i. Development will not be permitted which results in a significant increase in delay to vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists or a reduction in safety for any users of the highway or other transport network;**
  - ii. Travel demands associated with development should be managed to minimise detrimental impact to the efficiency of the highway network;**
  - iii. Ensure new development reduces the need to travel e.g. by promoting linked trips and encouraging mixed use development where appropriate;**
  - iv. Provision for parking and servicing will be required in accordance with a Supplementary Planning Document on managing travel demands associated with development;**
  - v. The Council will support proposals for strategic public transport schemes such as rapid transit, local rail schemes as identified in LTP3 and local Park and Ride at appropriate railway stations subject to other policies in the Local Plan;**
  - vi. Off-site parking provision proposed in association with economically important sites will be supported, subject to other policies in the Local Plan, where sustainable transport links between those sites and the parking provision are of a good quality, direct and attractive to use.**
- b) The use of sustainable modes of transport, i.e. walking, cycling and public transport, shall be promoted and encouraged in all developments by:**
  - i. Ensuring the design and management of the development enables and encourages the use of sustainable modes of transport;**
  - ii. Ensuring transport planning measures are implemented to help and encourage people accessing the development to use sustainable transport modes;**
  - iii. Ensuring the routes to the site from nearby services and local public transport stops are good quality, direct and attractive to use for all users.**

**National Planning Policy Framework February 2019**

Paragraph 11 confirms the principle of sustainable development

## The presumption in favour of sustainable development

11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For **plan-making** this means that:

- a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas<sup>5</sup>, unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area<sup>6</sup>; or
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For **decision-taking** this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date<sup>7</sup>, granting permission unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed<sup>6</sup>; or
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

<sup>5</sup> As established through statements of common ground (see paragraph 27).

<sup>6</sup> The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 176) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 63); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

<sup>7</sup> This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer, as set out in paragraph 73); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years. Transitional arrangements for the Housing Delivery Test are set out in Annex 1.

Paragraph 94 deals with the choice of school places

94. It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:
- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and
  - b) work with schools promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

Paragraph 124 deals with design.

124. The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

The site is in the Green Belt.

Paragraphs 133 and 134 of the NPPF set out the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

133. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
134. Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Paragraph 143 confirms that inappropriate development should not be approved unless Very Special Circumstances (VSC) exist.

143. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 144 goes to state that VSC will not exist unless the harm caused by inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

144. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

### Local Plan Review

The Council has recently carried out a Local Plan Review.

The Local Plan Review was triggered by a High Court Challenge concerning the housing requirement for the area.

The Examination in Public (EIP) is expected to start in the Autumn of 2021.

Policy P17 Green Belt of the emerging plan is set out below

Policy P17 Countryside and Green Belt	
1.	The Council will safeguard the "best and most versatile" agricultural land in the Borough, unless there is an overriding need for development that outweighs the loss, and will seek to protect the character of the countryside.
2.	Land designated as Green Belt in the Borough is identified on the Policies Map and will be kept permanently open, in accordance with national Green Belt policy.
3.	Inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Solihull Green Belt, unless very special circumstances have been demonstrated in accordance with the NPPF. Paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF set out forms of development that are not regarded as inappropriate. In interpreting these paragraphs, the following provisions will apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Limited in-filling or redevelopment may take place in the following settlements without constituting an inappropriate development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chadwick End</li> <li>Cheswick Green</li> <li>Millison's Wood</li> <li>Tidbury Green.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- ii. Limited infilling in villages shall be interpreted as the filling of a small gap within an otherwise built-up frontage with not more than two dwellings.
  - iii. Disproportionate additions shall be interpreted as additions that are more than 40% of the original floor space of the building.
  - iv. Where the re-use of buildings or land is proposed, the new use, and any associated use of land surrounding the building, should not conflict with, nor have a materially greater impact on, the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and the form, bulk and general design of the buildings shall be in-keeping with their surroundings.
4. In considering proposals for inappropriate development in the Green Belt, the following factors may be taken into account as very special circumstances:
- i. The reasonable expansion of established businesses into the Green Belt will be allowed where the proposal would make a significant contribution to the local economy or employment, providing that appropriate mitigation can be secured.
  - ii. Waste management operations, provided the development accords with the waste management policy of the Pplan.
  - iii. The delivery of rural exception sites for housing are to be brought forward in accordance with pPolicy P4B of this pPlan.
  - iv. The construction of renewable energy provision is to be brought forward, in accordance with Policy P9 of this Pplan and pPara 147 of the NPPF.
5. Development within, or conspicuous from, the Green Belt must not harm the visual amenity of the Green Belt by reason of siting, materials, or design.
6. The small settlements of Hampton-in-Arden, Hockley Heath, Meriden and Catherine de Barnes are inset in the Green Belt and are not therefore subject to Green Belt policy. Nevertheless, the Council, in considering applications for development in these settlements, will take into account the importance of their rural setting and of their attributes, such as historic buildings, open space, density of development, landscape and townscape that contribute towards their special character. Immediately beyond the inset boundary, strict Green Belt policies will apply.

## 5. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The site has a long planning history.

We are only able to access the information that is available on the Council's web site at present. The following applications are relevant.

Provide a new classroom extension to cheswick green primary school to enable the existing temporary classroom building to be demolished. A further extension is proposed to extend the existing administration, staff and head teachers room at the front of the school and infill the existing external courtyard in the centre of the school building (resubmission of 2010/1405).

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Shirley Solihull B90 4HG  
Ref. No: PL/2010/01897/FULL | Received: Tue 09 Nov 2010 | Validated: Tue 09 Nov 2010 | Status: Decided

**Refurbishment of existing school building and construction of new extensions to provide teaching space, improved storage, central courtyard and external works area**

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Shirley Solihull B90 4HG  
 Ref. No: PL/2010/01428/FULL | Received: Thu 09 Sep 2010 | Validated: Thu 09 Sep 2010 | Status: Unknown

**Proposed extension to provide nursery class room to infant school including new canopy for external play provision.**

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Shirley Solihull B90 4HG  
 Ref. No: PL/2006/00745/INV | Received: Mon 06 Nov 2006 | Validated: Mon 06 Nov 2006 | Status: Unknown

**Extensions for new classroom and entrance lobby**

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Shirley Solihull B90 4HG  
 Ref. No: PL/2002/01184/FULL | Received: Mon 25 Feb 2002 | Validated: Mon 25 Feb 2002 | Status: Decided

**Renewal of temporary permission for temporary classroom no.111**

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Cheswick Green Solihull B90 4HG  
 Ref. No: PL/1991/01767/REG3 | Received: Tue 17 Sep 1991 | Validated: Mon 23 Sep 1991 | Status: Decided

**Deemed application for extension to library**

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Cheswick Green Solihull B90 4HG  
 Ref. No: PL/1989/01468/REG3 | Received: Wed 27 Sep 1989 | Validated: Fri 06 Oct 1989 | Status: Decided

**Renewal of consent for temporary classroom (no.111)**

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Cheswick Green Solihull B90 4HG  
 Ref. No: PL/1988/02223/REG3 | Received: Mon 01 Aug 1988 | Validated: Mon 08 Aug 1988 | Status: Decided

**Renewal of temporary permission F/C/81/1189 for temporary classroom**

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Cheswick Green Solihull B90 4HG  
 Ref. No: PL/1986/00641/REG3 | Received: Tue 20 May 1986 | Validated: Wed 21 May 1986 | Status: Decided

**Renewal of temporary permission for temporary classroom no. 111.**

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Cheswick Green Solihull  
 B90 4HG

Ref. No: PL/1985/01668/REG3 | Received: Fri 02 Aug 1985 | Validated: Mon 05 Aug  
 1985 | Status: Decided

**Renewal of temporary permission for temporary classroom number 111**

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Cheswick Green Solihull  
 B90 4HG

Ref. No: PL/1983/01059/REG3 | Received: Mon 04 Jul 1983 | Validated: Mon 04 Jul  
 1983 | Status: Decided

**Renewal of temporary classroom permission for hut no.143**

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way Shirley B90 4HG

Ref. No: PL/1982/00874/REG3 | Received: Mon 05 Jul 1982 | Validated: Mon 05 Jul  
 1982 | Status: Decided

**Erection of temp classroom no 150 transf from lowbrook primary school  
 for initial period of five years**

Cheswick Green Primary School Cheswick Way

Ref. No: PL/1979/12096/HIS | Received: Mon 01 Jan 1900 | Validated: Mon 01 Jan  
 1900 | Status: Decided

**6. PRINCIPAL ISSUES**

The following issues are relevant to the application,

- ***Whether the proposed development is appropriate in the Green Belt***
- ***The impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.***
- ***Whether Very Special Circumstances exist to support the development***
- ***Parking and highways matters***

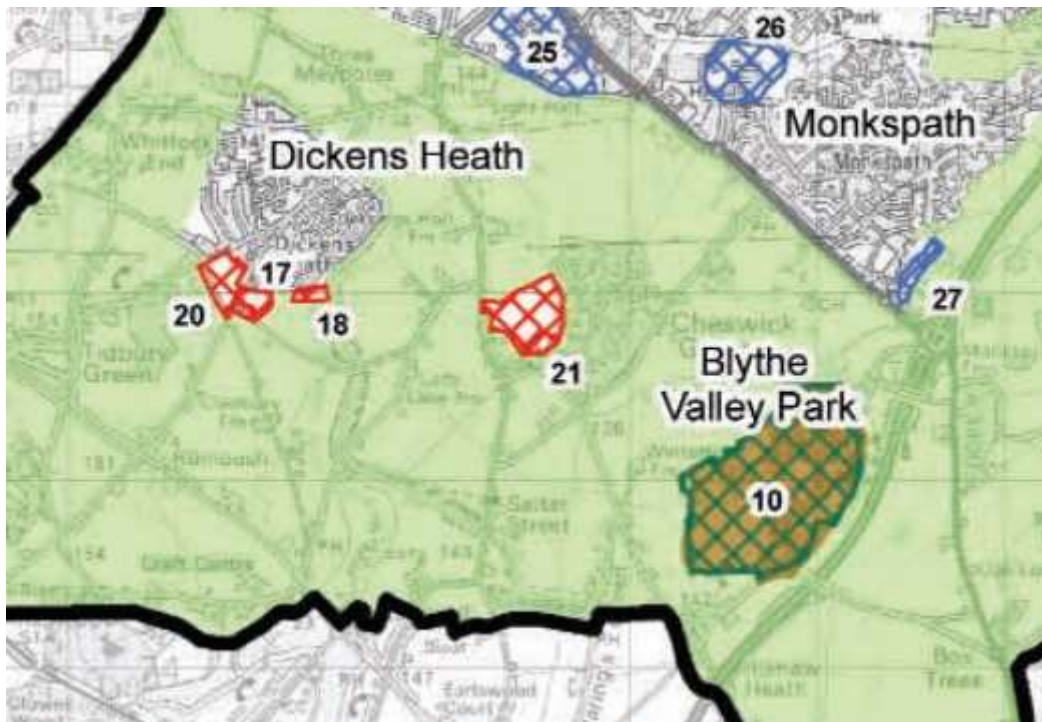
**7. AMPLIFICATION OF PRINCIPAL ISSUES**

**Whether the proposed development is appropriate in the Green Belt**

Local Plan Policy P17 and the NPPF set out appropriate forms of new building works within the Green Belt.

The extension of existing buildings is appropriate if the extension is not disproportionate to the original building. That is the building as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1948 or as built if constructed later.

The whole of Cheswick Green is within the Green Belt. There is no development boundary around the built-up area.



The only concession to the NPPF Green Belt policies in Policy P17 of the adopted and emerging Local Plan Review is that limited infilling will be allowed within Cheswick Green.



The expansion of a school building does not fall within the definition of infill development and must therefore be assessed against the Green Belt policies of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

There are two elements to the application. These are the extension of the school building and the extension of the school boundary.

We will deal with each matter in turn

The description of the proposed development refers to the existing and proposed amount of floor space within the school building (16305m<sup>2</sup> existing and 19828m<sup>2</sup> proposed).

This gives an approximate increase of 21% over the size of the existing school building.

Green Belt policy is clear that extensions to a building in the Green Belt must be assessed over the size of the original building.

The figures quoted in the development description do not take the cumulative size of previous extensions to the building into account.

It is not possible to visit the Council Offices to check the full planning history of the school due to Covid 19 restrictions.

The Planning History that is available on the Council's Web Site goes back as far as 1979. However, many of the applications on the web site either have no or very little information available to view.

The Planning History that is available includes a number of developments such as the location of temporary classrooms, extensions to the school building and an application (PL/2010/01897/FULL) that extended the school building. This included permanent replacements for the temporary classrooms.

It is impossible to establish the full size of the previous extensions to the building without access to the original plans and any applications that pre-date the online records.

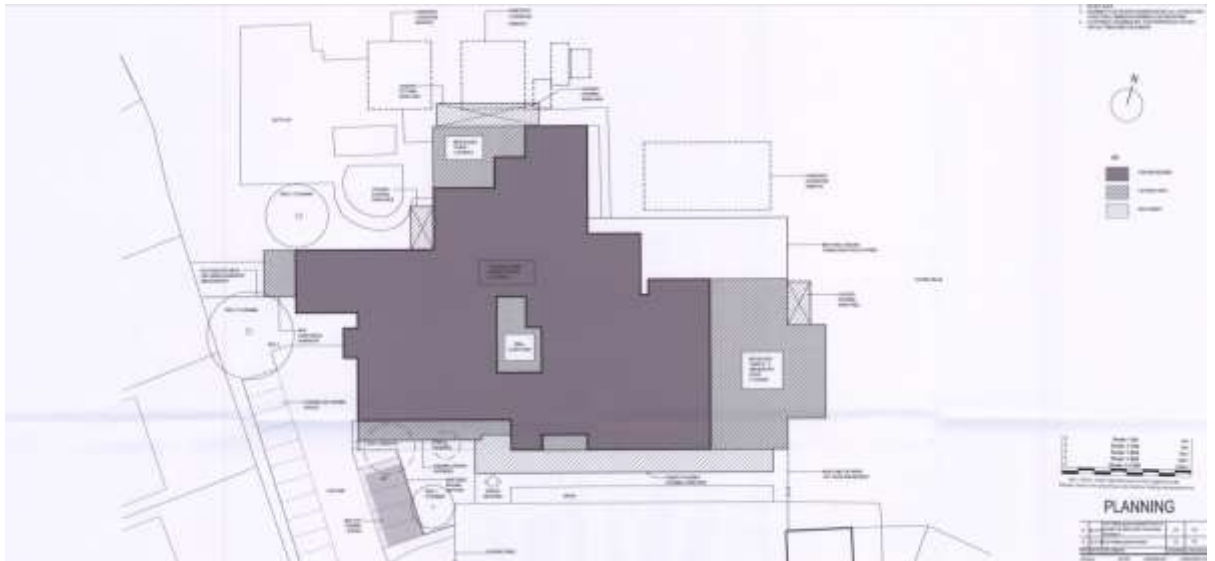
The incremental increase in the coverage of buildings across the site can be reviewed via other means.

The earliest Google Earth view of the site we can find is dated December 1999. The image is set out below. It shows the school buildings including temporary classroom accommodation.



The planning history of the building shows a further extension being added in 2002.

The proposed site layout that was approved under application PL/2010/01897/FULL is set out on the next page.



The image shows substantial areas of extension. This includes buildings and covered areas. The covered areas are relevant as they are a form of enclosure.

The school layout approved under the 2010 application is consistent with the existing layout submitted with the current application.



The additional building works that are proposed under the current application will significantly increase the coverage of buildings within the site.



The current proposal should not be looked at in isolation.

The cumulative increase in the coverage of buildings across the site compared to the original school building is significant.

We therefore consider that the current proposals tip the balance away from appropriate Green Belt development.

The total increase of buildings across the site including previous extensions to the building means that the proposed extensions and alterations to the building are inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The second part of the development is the extension of the school boundary.

The plans and aerial images of the site show that the school has a clearly defined site boundary that is marked by trees.

The boundary also runs in line with the rear gardens of properties in the adjacent road.

The proposed extension to the site curtilage steps outside of the clear and defensible site boundaries that currently exist at the site.

The plans show no use for the land i.e., sports pitches. There is therefore no justification to extend the school boundary out into open land.

These comments are echoed by the Council's Policy Team who made the following comments in response to the consultation process.

However, the proposals appear to extend the school curtilage into the more open green belt land beyond the built up part of Cheswick Green. This would enable a site works compound but it isn't clear from the application whether it would be a temporary arrangement for the duration of the building work only. If it is not temporary the final purpose of the land should be explained, bearing in mind that the encroachment of the school curtilage may be 'inappropriate development' requiring a very special circumstances case (VSCs).

The lack of information concerning the use of the extended curtilage means that it cannot be considered as an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt.

The encroachment of the extended curtilage into open land will harm the openness and character of the area. The land will be enclosed by some form of boundary treatment. This will inevitably have a harmful impact on the openness that Green Belt policy seeks to protect.

We are also concerned that the boundary could be extended further if this application is permitted. There seems little to stop further encroachment into the Green Belt if the current unjustified incursion into open land is allowed.

We therefore consider that the extension of the building and the enlargement of the school curtilage is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

**Whether Very Special Circumstances (VSC) exist to support the development**

The NPPF confirms a clear presumption against granting planning permission for inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Inappropriate development should only be supported if harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by the benefits that are brought forward by the development.

We are of the view that the proposed development does not benefit from VSC that outweigh the harm caused by inappropriateness and any other harm.

The Council's arguments appear to be that extension of the building does not harm openness due to the built-up location of the site. This may carry some weight insofar as the extension of the building is concerned but it does not support the extension of the school curtilage beyond the existing built-up area.

The case to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt centres around the requirement to provide school places for children from new developments such as Blythe Valley.

Cheswick Green Primary School has been selected by the Council as it is closest to Blythe Valley. That is not a sufficient VSC to justify inappropriate development.

The Parish Council has been in contact with the Council throughout the preparation of the current application.

The Parish Council continues to oppose the expansion of Cheswick Green Primary School as the preferred option to provide additional school places to serve Blythe Valley.

The Parish Council has submitted a reasoned and justified objection to the expansion of the school as part of a previous consultation exercise.

The comments remain valid. The comments are attached as an appendix to the objection.

The following extracts from the Parish Council's objection to the expansion of the school are brought forward into this objection as they remain relevant.

The information that has been submitted with the planning application fails to respond to the following points.

The comments relate to the selection of Cheswick Primary School for expansion.

8. Your feasibility study may have demonstrated that Hockley Heath Primary School and St Patrick's Academy were unsuitable to accommodate an expansion of this size. However, as a key suggestion was to accommodate children across all three primary schools, we see no evidence that the proposal was taken seriously and investigated. Paragraph 4.4 of the Cabinet Member report on 11<sup>th</sup> January did specifically address the feedback in the consultation regarding the option to accommodate the children across all three primary schools and identified that this was not a credible option, for the reasons identified in the report.

*To meet demand from Blythe Valley Park and Cheswick Place developments the Council needs to add additional school places, to ensure it meets its sufficiency duty. Cheswick Green Primary School is the closest school to both developments.*

As you will see later in our response (SC) has given no meaningful consideration to credible alternative options.

The comments go on to state.

Alternative Proposal

Under a 'presumption route' the Council is able to make a business case for a new school. We understand that under this arrangement the Council is responsible for the capital cost and revenue set up costs. We agree that creating over-provision of school places has the potential to destabilise the viability of neighbouring schools, but the Councils preferred model is a 2FE (420) place school.

The Parish Council recommends a new one (210) or two form entry (420) place school.

The Council has said 'That no site has been identified for a school at Blythe Valley'. We request that Officers are asked to re-examine Blythe Valley and examine Hockley Heath for a site suited to a one form entry school. Officers will conclude there is sufficient demand for places for a new school to be feasible at both sites. Indeed, should the construction of 90 plus dwellings earmarked for Hockley Heath in the current draft LDP be approved, that development could be commenced in the first stage (5 years) of the plan and further school places for children would be available.

An alternative is to build a new two form entry school at Hockley Heath to replace the existing school which was built following the closure of the original school in 1913.

Either of these two proposals could be financed from Section 106 Agreements arising from the developments at Cheswick Place and Blythe Valley to pay for a new school. Further finance would be available from the sale of land if a new school is built in Hockley Heath.

A new school constructed within Blythe Valley or Hockley Heath would make journeys to and from Cheswick Green school easier and safer for children with

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the benefit of easing congestion locally. Blythe Valley has a mix of uses including housing and has been effectively removed from the green belt. Hockley Heath has a settlement boundary around it and we would reiterate that there are proposals to remove more land from the green belt. Both areas are also sustainable with good connectivity and transport links. We understand that the Council owns/has an interest in parcels of land within the area.

Solihull Council should be looking to the future education of our children by constructing a new school incorporating up to date environmental, bio-diverse, energy saving and technological advancements.

The comments conclude

Summary

This consultation lacks proper detail and expanding Cheswick Green Primary School is an easy option without any recourse to the implications for the local area. It seems that no other options have been given any detailed consideration.

The primary concern of the Parish Council is the expansion of the school with exception to other criteria. Will the school be 'fit for purpose' appears to be a secondary consideration and the impact on residents not a consideration at all.

Residents do not need a commissioned traffic and highways appraisal to know that whatever mitigation is recommended congestion will be far worse than at present.

The Parish Council continues to urge the Borough Councillors to reject the expansion of Cheswick Green Primary School when so many questions posed require answers and seek an alternative location to accommodate the children within Blythe Valley or Hockley Heath.

There is no further justification as to why Cheswick Green is the only option for the additional places.

The information that is set out in the Pell Frishmann Report goes into the technical details of the case. However, it is reasonable to state that being the school closest to Blythe Valley does not necessarily make it the most accessible or sustainable option.

Inappropriate development should only be allowed if harm caused by inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by the benefits that are brought forward.



The existing school causes significant parking issues and congestion in the area. This will worsen if the school is allowed to expand.

Children who will be brought into the area from adjoining areas such as Blythe Valley are most likely to travel by car. Local children may also be brought to school by car as part of onward journeys by parents.

Measures such as staggered start and finish times are not guaranteed to resolve matters. The school cannot control parents who arrive at school early to wait for children or parents who stay after their children have been dropped off to talk to friends.

The Parish Council can provide many photographs of parking problems and congestion around the school. Photographs are also provided in the Pell Frischmann Report.

It is quite reasonable to assume that these matters will worsen once Covid 19 restrictions are lifted.

We are of the view that further consideration should be given to providing a dedicated school in Blythe Valley or Hockley Heath. The two settlements are far more accessible to each other than Blythe Valley is to Cheswick Green.

The encroachment of the development into open land brings forward harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The increased traffic and parking problems that will be associated with an extended school will worsen an already horrendous situation to the significant detriment of the amenities of existing residents in the area around the school.

The extension of the existing school is not sustainable. The report by Pell Frischmann provides a detailed commentary and critique of the Travel Assessment and Travel Plan that has been provided with the application.

It is also worth reiterating in this document that policies P7 and P8 of the adopted Local Plan promote Accessibility and Access and, Managing Demand for travel and reducing congestion.

Paragraph 5.3.11 of the Travel Assessment submitted with the application acknowledges that the age of pupils and travel distances involved make walking or cycling to the application site from Blythe Valley unviable.

Indent III of Policy P7 (a) is clear that schools should be accessible on foot, bicycle and bus by the community they serve.

This is clearly not the case concerning the proposed intake of pupils from Blythe Valley. There is no realistic prospect of walking or cycling from Blythe Valley to the application site.

Mitigation measures are proposed but, parents would have to be willing for their children to use a school bus if one was provided.

The school cannot control parents who would prefer to take their children to school by car whether it be part of an ongoing journey or a dedicated journey to drop off/pick up children from school.

This conflicts with the adopted Local Plan policy. It is not sustainable and adds further weight to the Parish Council's objection.

The report by Pell Frischmann should be referred to for a full assessment of the traffic and access issues associated with the proposed development.

The fact that the site is closest to the Blythe Valley development does not mean that it is the most suited for the proposed development. It certainly does not warrant inappropriate development that will undermine the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

The development will also have a detrimental impact on the amenities of existing residents who already experience loss of amenity from the traffic issues associated with the existing school.

The proposal does not therefore benefit from VSC that tip the balance in favour of granting planning permission for inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

**Parking and Highways Matters**

The previous consultations concerning the expansion of the school have acknowledged traffic issues that are associated with the site.

Parking and vehicle congestion are an existing problem that will get worse if the development is allowed to proceed.

The planning application has been submitted with a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan.

The traffic issues that will be caused by the expansion of the school is the fundamental objection that the Parish Council has to the development.

The Parish Council has appointed Pell Frischmann to review and comment on the travel information that has submitted with the application.

The report finds significant failings in the information that has been submitted concerning highways matters.

We request that the findings of the report are taken into consideration and fully reviewed by the Council's Highways advisors before the application moves forward.

**Other Matters**

The commentary to paragraph 11 of the NPPF refers to issues such as flooding restricting the capacity for areas to be developed even if the development is considered to be sustainable.

There is a recognised issue with flooding within the Cheswick Green area.

We are extremely concerned that the increased coverage of buildings within the school site will worsen the flood risk within the local area.

## 8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Cheswick Green Parish Council objects to the proposed expansion of Cheswick Green Primary School.

The site is within the Green Belt. The expansion of the school buildings and the expansion of the school curtilage is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

There is an immediate presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It will only be allowed in Very Special Circumstances (VSC). VSC will only exist if harm caused by inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The justification for selecting Cheswick Green Primary School as the location to take additional pupils appears to be based entirely on the proximity of the site to Blythe Valley and other new developments.

The proximity of the site to Blythe Valley does not make it the most accessible or sustainable location for the proposed development.

The report by Pell Frischmann identifies many issues concerning the transport aspects of the application that will need to be addressed and resolved.

The application site is not easily accessible from Blythe Valley. The increase in the number of children attending the school along with increased travel by car will exacerbate existing parking and congestion issues in the area.

Photographs of the current problems that residents experience are included in the Pell Frischmann report.

The Council has not given proper consideration to other more accessible locations such as Blythe Valley or Hockley Heath as a location for the additional school places.

The Parish Council has opposed the expansion of Cheswick Green Primary School throughout the consultation process leading up to the submission of the planning application.

The legitimate and valid material objections that the Parish Council submitted to the Council in correspondence dated February 2021 have not been taken into consideration by the Council when the planning application was submitted.

The proposed development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The cumulative expansion of buildings on site is disproportionate to the original building. The proposed extension to the site curtilage gives no details on how the land will be used. It encroaches outside of the existing boundary into open land beyond. It will therefore encroach into the countryside and will harm openness.

The presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt is not overcome. The case for locating the expanded school at Cheswick Green has not been properly assessed and other potentially suitable locations have not been fully explored.

The parking problems and congestion that is caused by the existing school already causes amenity problems to residents. Those issues will be made worse by the expansion of the school.

There are flaws with the transport issues that the Council has used to support the application. The Parish Council has commissioned a report from Pell Frischmann that assesses and critiques the travel and highways information that has been presented by the Council.

The development does not therefore benefit from VSC and should be refused as inappropriate in the Green Belt.

We trust that the Parish Council's objections will be brought to the attention of the Planning Committee.