
KING EDMUND SCHOOL – ACCESS FROM BRAYS LANE (Min 345/2000)

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides background information in relation to the motion on the provision of a new access for King Edmund School from Brays Lane referred from Full Council on 24 October 2000. Council referred the matter to Community Services on the grounds that a representative from the Education Authority would be present at the meeting.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The existing access to King Edmund School is via Spencer Gardens and into Vaughan Close. For some time, it has been argued that the existing access arrangements are unacceptable and expose the pupils to unacceptable levels of danger. An Ordnance Survey extract of the site is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Consideration of the issues here must not be seen as replacing or prejudicing the consideration of any planning application or a further submission as part of the Local Plan Review.

3 HISTORY

- 3.1 In 1986, a formal objection was submitted to the Rochford District Local Plan, seeking the allocation of land to the north of the school for residential development as the key to providing an improved access. The argument put to the Inspector was that the land made no contribution to the Green Belt and that it was of low agricultural quality.
- 3.2 The Inspector concluded that 'I find no grounds for seeking to relax the Green Belt along this admittedly rather raw edge to the built up areas.' An extract from the Inspector's report is attached as Appendix 2 to this report. Following the Inspector's recommendation, no alteration was made to the Rochford District local plan, which was subsequently adopted in 1988.
- 3.3 In 1992, a further objection was submitted to the Rochford District Local Plan First Review which again sought the allocation of the same area of land to the north of the school for residential purposes in order to enable the provision of a new access to the school.
- 3.4 This representation was reported to the District Plan Working Party on 25th February 1993. A copy of the report is appended for Members information (Appendix 3). This report was presented as the Council's case at the Local Plan Inquiry that commenced on 30 November 1993.

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- 3.5 The Inspector reported in June 1994, and concluded that the land north of the school made an important contribution to the Green Belt and that it would be inappropriate to release the land for development. An extract from the Inspector's report is appended for Members information (Appendix 4). As with the earlier objection, the Inspector's recommendation was accepted and Local Plan First Review adopted with out a change to the Green Belt status of the land.
- 3.6 In 1999 a planning application was submitted to the local planning authority for consent to provide a coach turning area within the grounds of the school. The application was approved, subject to conditions, on 27 July 1999. A copy of the committee report is attached as Appendix 5.

4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The arguments rehearsed in the two objections to the original Local Plan and the subsequent Review are, in the main, still valid today. Planning Policy Guidance remains that it is only in exceptional circumstances that consent should be granted for new development in the Green Belt. The provision of a new access to the school does not provide the required 'exceptional' circumstances.
- 4.2 The issue of the release of this Green Belt land can only justifiably be considered again as part of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan or if a planning application should be submitted. Consideration of the principle of the release of land for development is beyond the remit of this committee. In any event, at this stage in the review of the Local Plan, it is not clear that significant additional releases of housing land will be required. The assessment of the need for release of green field, Green Belt sites, will be considered further once the outcomes of the Green Belt Boundary Study and the Urban Capacity Study are reported. In the meantime, should a planning application be submitted, it would be assessed against the background of the current Local Plan and Green Belt policy.
- 4.3 For the purposes of this report, the key issue to address is the principle of a new access for the school. This is a matter that has never been considered by the Council in isolation from the release of land for development. The detailed analysis undertaken in 1993 (Appendix 3) advised Members that the evidence presented left a considerable element of doubt about the justification of the need for a new access. There has been a number of new developments on the school site since then and clearly the views of the Highway Authority and the Education Authority would be relevant in this context.
- 4.4 The key period of difficulty seems to be with the morning delivery of pupils by coach, conflict with other pupils arriving on foot, and the

impact on the residential streets. In the afternoon, all coaches are able to enter the school grounds, collect the pupils and depart in an orderly fashion. There is no doubt that the morning arrival does cause some inconvenience in the narrow residential streets adjacent to the school, but this is completed in a relatively short period of time.

- 4.5 Notwithstanding any doubts about the need for an access, it is considered that in planning terms, taking account of the Green Belt status of the land, in principle, a new access on its own might be acceptable. It is therefore suggested that Transportation and Environmental Services consider this particular matter in more detail.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, this matter be referred to the Transportation and Environmental Services Committee for further consideration. (HPS)

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Background Papers:

Rochford District Local Plan Inspector's Report – 1987
Rochford District Local Plan Inspector's Report – 1994
Report to District Plan Working Party – 25th February 1993
Letter from the Chief Executive to King Edmund Board of Governors – 13th September 2000

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