

Proposed development: Full Planning Application for Conversion and extension of existing buildings to form a new teaching block together with improvements at existing parking areas.

**Site address:
Westholme School,
Wilmar Lodge,
Meins Road,
Blackburn,
BB2 6QU.**

Applicant: Westholme School.

Ward: Billinge & Beardwood / Livesey with Pleasington

Councillor: Derek Hardman

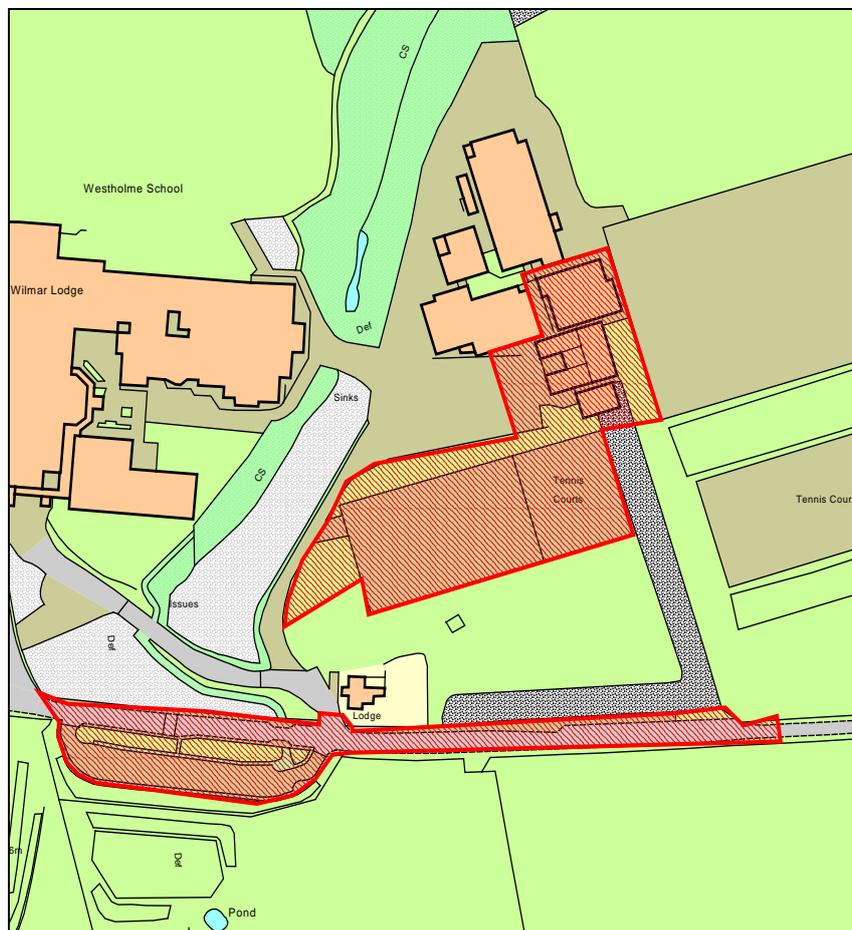
Councillor: John Pearson

Councillor: Julie Daley

Councillor: Tasleem Fazal

Councillor: Paul Marrow

Councillor: Jackie Floyd



1.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

1.1 APPROVE – Subject to conditions; as set out in paragraph 4.1.

2.0 KEY ISSUES/SUMMARY OF PLANNING BALANCE

2.1 The application is in the form of a full planning application. It is presented to the Committee on account of the application receiving 14 letters of objection in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation (Chair Referral Scheme).

2.2 Approval of the application will allow positive progress to be made towards re-configuring Westhome School into one site. It will address the challenges of the dispersed sites and underused buildings. As such, it is, therefore, necessary to advance a high quality development on the footprint of the previously developed land which makes up the application site to ensure that the impact on the Green Belt is reduced to an acceptable level.

3.0 RATIONALE

3.1 Site and Surroundings

3.1.1 The application site is the Westholme School located at the western end of Meins Road. The school is sited within the defined Green Belt and comprises a number of buildings to the north and west of the application site.

3.1.2 The proposed development will occupy a parcel of land that was previously a hockey pitch but is no longer utilised as such, but rather as an overspill car park as in 2005 planning permission was granted for an extension to the school curtilage to provide for new tennis courts and astro-turf hockey pitch (10/05/1048).

3.1.3 Located east of the site runs a Public Right of Way (PROW); Footpath 83 which is sited approximately 120m from the proposed development application site. The site contains Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) located north and north west of the site circa 20m away.

3.1.4 The application site houses the senior pupils. Located circa 1km east of the application site lies Westholme Junior School and Westholme Nursery School split over two separate sites. The infant and junior school population at Westholme School has dropped from two form entry to single form entry. As a consequence, the infant and junior school buildings are being underused.

3.1.5 Access to the site is via Meins Road which is adopted up to a certain point, the remainder of the road is un-adopted and this is the part which runs outside the school entrance. The site shares the access road with a number of residential properties. Access to the site is via the junction the road shares with Preston New Road, A677.

3.2.6 Teaching Block

The proposed teaching block will be formed by converting and extending the existing arts and music blocks present at the site. The existing gross external floorspace of the building is 720m². The proposed development would result in the creation of a new external floorspace of 1,374m² which is a net gain of 654m².

3.2.7 The proposed teaching block will be sited south of the sports hall and swimming pool and will form a cluster of development at the heart of the school site.

3.2.8 Located south of the proposed new building lies a redundant tennis courts. This part of the site lies on land which is set higher than the proposed new building which will house the primary school. As part of this application it is proposed to use the space as an external play area / learning space. A bridge will link this space to the first floor of the new teaching block.

3.2.9 Internal car parking alterations

As part of the proposed development the parking layout is to be rationalised with a separate access and egress and a zone for 'drop off' at the nearest point to the school. A ramp and steps are proposed which will link the car park to the new school entrance.

3.2.10 The improvements to the car parking arrangement within the site will provide 94 car parking spaces (including disabled persons parking). 2 of the car parking spaces will be marked out for use by electric vehicles. There are a further 52 spaces set out within the application site, resulting in a total of 154 spaces. A barrier access will allow for the managed use of the car park

3.2.11 The majority of the parking proposed will be made available for the 'drop off/pick up' parking of parents collecting their children from the infant and junior school. A small proportion of these spaces will be used also by staff members.

3.2.12 Improvements to parking and turning area on Meins Road

The proposed development offers along with it the opportunity to improve the capacity and efficiency of the existing parking and turning area on Meins Road, adjacent to the school campus and entrance.

3.2.13 The amendments will improve the circulation of vehicles which currently use the zone for 'drop off / pick up' of the senior pupils. It involves the expansion of the parking and turning zone at the margin and the re-engineering of the space to facilitate additional parallel parking.

3.3 Development Plan

3.3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.3.2 Core Strategy – January 2011:

- CS1 – A Targeted Growth Strategy
- CS14 – Green Belt
- CS16 – Form and Design of New Development
- CS18 – The Borough’s Landscapes

3.3.3 Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) – December 2015:

- Policy 3 – Green Belt
- Policy 7 – Sustainable and Viable Development
- Policy 8 – Development and People
- Policy 9 – Development and the Environment
- Policy 10 – Accessibility and Transport
- Policy 11 – Design
- Policy 41 – Landscape

3.4 Other Material Planning Considerations

3.4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) (2019)

The Framework sets out the government’s aims and objectives against which planning policy and decision making should be considered. The following sections of the Framework are considered relevant to assessment of the proposal:

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

3.5 Assessment

3.5.1 In assessing this application there are a number of important material considerations that need to be taken into account, as follows:

- Principle of development;
- Trees;
- Ecology;
- Highways;
- Amenity;
- Design;

- Drainage;

3.5.2 Principle of development:

Paragraph 144 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) NPPF specifies that *'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.'*

3.5.3 Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

This is reiterated in Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy and Policy 3 of the LPP2 and

- 3.5.4 Paragraphs 5.2 to 5.4 of the submitted Planning Statement make the applicant's case for the impact of the proposed development on the Green Belt. It argues that Westholme School is previously developed land in the green belt. Infill or certain forms of new development will be appropriate provided that there is no greater impact on openness and replacement buildings are permitted if the existing and proposed area is of broadly similar scale.
- 3.5.5 Paragraph 5.4 states that *"In this instance the new teaching block is created through the re-use of existing building and extensions to those buildings. The extensions represent a form of infill development. The re-use, conversion and extension of the existing buildings and limited infilling at previously developed site are appropriate forms of development in the green belt."*
- 3.5.6 Officers advised the applicant as part of pre-application discussions that as submitted the proposal failed to comply with the Council's Local Plan Part 2 Policy 3, which reiterates the stance of the NPPF in that redevelopment of previously developed land within the Green Belt should not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.
- 3.5.7 It was considered during these discussions that the conversion and extensions to the existing buildings would amount to a level of development that far exceeds a form of infill development. The proposal results in the creation of a two storey element which replaces a single storey structure. It would therefore have an impact on the green belt by virtue of its scale, massing and size.
- 3.5.8 The application site is currently occupied by existing buildings. Annex 2 of the NPPF defined previously developed land as, *"Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure."* It is, therefore, considered that the application site is previously developed land.
- 3.5.9 Paragraph 118 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable previously developed land. Therefore, significant weight should be given to the fact that the site is previously developed land.
- 3.5.10 As previously advised as part of the pre-application enquiry the applicant was informed that in support of an application justification would be required demonstrating special circumstances to overcome the impact of the proposal on the green belt. Paragraph 5.5 onwards of the submitted Planning Statement offers such justification. These are:
- The need for the development
 - Realistic alternatives to meeting the need
 - The role and purpose of the school
 - The benefits for existing and future pupils
 - The benefits to the community

- The role of the school as an employer
- The benefits from learning in a rural location
- Meeting overall education needs in Blackburn with Darwen.

3.5.11 It is therefore considered that the applicant has provided sufficient justification to overcome the impact of the proposed development on the Green Belt and, as such, complies with the NPPF, Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy and Policy 3 of the LPP2.

3.5.12 Further to this, the Core Strategy includes a test for development sites in the green belt which requires the purposes of including land in the green belt to be examined. Members should note that this test has been removed from the 2018 NPPF, so carries a reduced weight. However, it is a vital tool to use when assessing the impact a proposal will have on the green belt. The test includes 5 purposes, therefore, it is appropriate to consider the degree to which the proposed development impacts upon these.

3.5.13 **To check the unrescted sprawl of lawge built up areas** – the application site is sited in a somewhat rural context outside of the defined boundary edge of Blackburn. Further to this, the proposed development will be sited on previously developed land utilising existing buildings. The existing built infrastructure present on the site is clustered together and the proposed development will be read in association with it, thus, ensuring that unrestricted sprawl does not occur.

To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another – The application site does not contribute to the abovementioned point.

To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment – The new development will be sited on land that is previously development and occupied by buildings already. There will be no encroachment into the countryside.

To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns – The development is not adjacent to a historic town. Further to this, there are no key vistas or viewpoints which need to be preserved.

To assist in urban regeneration – There is a less than significant impact on initiatives to secure urban regeneration.

3.5.14 Taking into account the above, it is considered that the proposal would have an impact on the green belt. However, the public benefits of the scheme provide special circumstances outweighing the harmful impact to an acceptable level.

3.5.15 Accordingly, Members are advised that the development is considered to be acceptable in principle, on account of the reuse of the previously developed land and the public benefits of the site outweighing its impact on the green belt; in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Local Development Plan and the NPPF; subject to assessment of additional matters set out in paragraph 3.5.1.

3.5.16 Trees

Policy 9 requires that development will not have an unacceptable impact on environmental assets or interests, including but limited to trees. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been prepared by Yew Tree Gardens on behalf of the applicant and submitted in support of the application

3.5.17 The submitted details confirm that only a small number of tree and groups of trees are located within close proximity to the proposed development site. Tree reference T1 as shown on the 'Tree Constraints Plan' will be removed. The report concludes that Tree T1 is of low retention value and is in conflict with the existing building / structures. Tree references T2 and T3 are considered unsuitable for retention due to their current conditions / form. T2 and T3 are both semi-mature in age and, therefore, are considered to not make a significant contribution to the site, the wider landscape or the green belt.

3.5.18 Group G1 as shown on the constraints plan will be removed to accommodate the construction of the retaining wall. The trees present in Group G1 are all small saplings of little significance. Group G2 is located a sufficient distance away from the proposed development. Therefore, the use of standard protective fencing would ensure that during the construction period no activity occurs within the Root Protection Area (RPA) or harms the RPA of these trees.

3.5.19 The juxtaposition of the proposed development along with the retained tree stock present within the site will not create any significant conflict in terms of shading or overshadowing. The development is located out of all the identified RPAs of the trees which are to be remained.

3.5.20 Therefore, to ensure that the development is carried in accordance with the appropriate working methods, protective fencing and site management a condition will be added ensuring that the development is carried out in accordance with the recommendation of the AIA. The proposal therefore accords with Policy 9 of the LPP2.

3.5.21 Ecology

Policy 9 with regard to ecology assessment emphasises that development likely to damage or destroy habitats or harm species of international or national importance will not be permitted.

3.5.22 A Bat Survey Report dated October 2019, has been submitted to supplement the application. It has been peer reviewed by an officer at Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU), who has confirmed that the development is acceptable in principle subject to the implementation of conditions.

3.5.23 The officer confirms that the report recorded no evidence of present or historic usage, but concluded that B2 & B3 (Art & Music Block) had moderate

potential to support roosting and B1 (Changing Room) had low potential. The activity survey appears to have used reasonable effort and personnel, whilst undertaking the survey in the appropriate weather conditions.

3.5.24 The activity surveys recorded the emergence/re-entry on all three occasions (2x emergence & 1x re-entry). Common pipistrelle bats were recorded utilising roosting points in 5 locations around both B2 & B3. No emergence or re-entry was observed from B1. Other bat species were recorded foraging and commuting in the immediate vicinity. The officer, therefore, confirmed that due to the above that the Art and Music Blocks (B2 and B3) are bat roosts under the definition of the Habitats Regulations (2017).

3.5.25 Works to B1 the boys changing rooms can be commenced at any time, subject to the need to the updated survey condition.

3.5.26 The bat roosts are in a part of the Site which will be subject to rebuilding, reroofing and modifying as part of the proposal. Therefore, as identified in the activity survey report some form of European Protected Species licence (EPS) will be required from Natural England, to derogate from the provision of the legislation in order to implement the proposals should an application receive permission. In order to provide for a derogation under the legislation three tests should be met: -

- That the action is for the purposes of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature;
- that there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range

3.5.27 It is equally important to consider that in this case, which involves roosts for small numbers of common pipistrelle bat, that the favourable conservation status (the third test) of the species can be maintained via the implementation of mitigation measures.

3.5.28 The Report (sections 5.4 – 5.6) includes the detailed outline of the proposed mitigation. In my opinion this description is adequate for planning purposes and demonstrates the approach that will be used in the Natural England Licence application.

3.5.29 The officer has recommended the use of a British Standard (BS 42020: 2013 D.6.2) condition ensuring that before any works including the reroofing, extension and modifications to the Art & Music Blocks (B2 & B3) which support roosting common pipistrelle bats shall not in any circumstances commence unless the Local Planning Authority has been provided with either:

- a) A licence issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 53 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, authorising the specified development to go ahead; Or

- b) A statement in writing from the relevant licensing body to the effect that it does not consider that the development will require a licence. In these circumstances a Method Statement based on the provisions of 5.4 – 5.6 of the submitted Bat Survey report (Bowland Ecology, October 2019) should be submitted in writing to prevent injury to bats (Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981).”

3.5.30 Further to this, should the applicant wish to erect or install any external lighting than a condition will be attached ensuring that details are submitted to the LPA prior to its installation. This will ensure that any external lighting does not conflict with the bat mitigation proposals for the bat roosts and for other species of bats foraging/commuting around the site.

3.5.31 Best practice guidance indicates that the results of bat surveys are only valid for a limited period (1 – 2 years) as the suitability of structures for bats can alter over time. In this case if works have not commenced by March 2021 then an updated bat survey should be required including internal & external visual inspection along with 3 activity surveys during the maternity season. The update survey should include the details of any additional mitigation over and above what has already been provided. The additional details should subsequently be implemented. A suitably worded condition will be attached.

3.5.32 The assessment is considered to demonstrate support for the proposal from an ecological perspective subject to the attachment of the aforementioned conditions; in accordance with the requirements of Policy 9 and the NPPF.

3.5.33 Highways

Policy 10 requires that road safety and the safe, efficient and convenient movement of all highway users is not prejudiced, and that appropriate provision is made for off street servicing and parking in accordance with the Council's adopted standards.

3.5.34 The application has been supported by a Transport Assessment as well as other supporting documents. The application has been assessed by the Council's Highways Officer and the Transport Assessment has been external assessed by a Highways officer at Capita on behalf of the council.

3.5.35 The Council's Highways Officer has confirmed that the parking spaces as submitted are considered acceptable. The spaces meet the required space standards as does the ratio of parking spaces to pupils. The proposal, therefore, would accord with the council's parking standards documents.

3.5.36 The site in question is accessed off Meins Road, this is the only connective highway route to the site. The Highways Officer along with the applicant's highways consultant have explored connections through to Billinge End Road, via Woodgate's, however this has been considered and dismissed as the highway is designated as bridleway, and there would be reliance on third party land, which we cannot place on the applicants to resolve.

- 3.5.37 There are changes proposed to the highway by way of introducing additional parking bays. Some of these are within the highway and require reconfiguration of the adopted highway to accommodate them.
- 3.5.38 Off-site highways works will be sought by means of a S278 application. These will include specifically a MOVA upgrade at the signalised junction of Revidge Road/Billinge End Road/Preston New Road, together with improved pedestrian facilities. It is considered that the improvements to the junction will reduce the impact of the proposed development on Meins Road, Preston New Road and the junctions.
- 3.5.39 Further mitigation methods have also been proposed by the applicant to minimise the impact of the development on Preston New Road and Meins Road. The school will set up a car share scheme, pupils / parents will be encouraged to car share and the new parking for the primary / junior school will be dedicated and passes issued to parents, senior school parents cannot use unless they have younger siblings.
- 3.5.40 In 2019, the main campus had 510 pupils. The proposed development will result in an increase of the number of pupils present on site to 659 when the additional 153 pupils relocate over from the other schools. Taking into account, current trends and projections over the next 4 years the total number of pupils will reduce to 563 in total ie 69 fall or 66% of the relocated trips would not be on site. By 2029, the trend continues and the total predicted is 523 against the 2019 total of 510, at this level the nett change would not be noticed on site.
- 3.5.41 Trip generation, traffic flows and assessment have been provided in support of the application. The vehicle trips generated by the proposed development are not new as it is a relocation of two existing schools onto one site. In addition, the school will have reduced staff numbers over time as the school will have some duplication of roles.
- 3.5.42 Table 4 found in the submitted Transport Assessment on pages 58 and 59 details how the traffic flow diagrams have been calculated. It is understood that the assessment traffic flows are robust and potentially include double counting, as the existing trips associated with the junior and infant schools have been left within the surveyed traffic flows, whilst the proposed number of trips associated with the fallback (750 pupils and 130 staff), current 2018/29 proposal (687 pupils and 130 staff) and current 2019/20 proposal (659 pupils and 130 staff) have been added on top.
- 3.5.43 The impact of school traffic has been formally submitted within the Transport Assessment for the two junctions: 1) Preston New Road / Meins Road ghost island T-junctions; and 2) Preston New Road / Revidge Road / Billing End Road signalized 4-arm junction.
- 3.5.44 The assessment has demonstrated that the Preston New Road / Meins Road priority junction would operate over capacity in the AM peak hour. This is due to the school start time of 9pm being for all students present at site. The school end time has been staggered for infants to finish at 3.40pm, juniors to

finish at 3.45pm and seniors to finish at 4pm. It is considered that the Preston New Road / Revidge Road / Billinge End Road signalised junction would operate within capacity in both AM and PM peak hours.

3.5.45 The submitted Transport Assessment has been thoroughly assessed by Capita's Highways Consultant on behalf of the Council; the officer has confirmed that the information provided was adequate. The officer confirmed that in principle the proposed development was acceptable subject to the confirmation of a number of conditions.

3.5.46 The assessment is considered to demonstrate support for the proposal from a highway efficiency perspective; in accordance with the requirements of Policy 10 and the NPPF.

3.5.47 Amenity

Policy 8, supported by the SPD, requires a satisfactory level of amenity and safety is secured for surrounding uses and for occupants or users of the development itself; with reference to noise, vibration, odour, light, dust, other pollution or nuisance, privacy / overlooking, and the relationship between buildings.

3.5.48 The nearest residential dwelling to the proposed development site is located circa 250m away. It is, therefore, considered that there is sufficient distance between the proposed development and the neighbouring dwellings to ensure that the development has a negligible impact upon the amenity of occupiers.

3.5.49 The implications of the increase in vehicular movement will have an impact upon the dwellings present on Meins Road. However, this has been assessed in greater details as part of the highways assessment.

3.5.50 Acceptable levels of mutual amenity are, therefore, achieved. The proposal accords with Policy 8 of the LPP2.

3.5.51 Design

Policy 11 requires a good standard of design and will be expected to enhance and reinforce the established character of the locality and demonstrate an understanding of the wider context towards making a positive contribution to the local area.

3.5.52 The proposed development will be sited adjacent existing buildings present within the site. The proposal would be read in association with the application site.

3.5.53 On account of the topography of the site the proposal will appropriately sit within the site, the development will appear well-integrated and proportionate to its surroundings. Moreover, the roof form and fenestration proposed suitably responds to the character of the area. The materials proposed would reflect those of the existing building as well as utilise materials of a more modern nature such as render and timber cladding.

3.5.54 Given where the proposed development will be sited it will not be readily prominent from the highway Meins Road, or, the PROW which runs alongside the eastern edge of the site by virtue of the topography of the site and the trees and shrubbery which abounds the site.

3.5.55 Accordingly the development is considered to accord with the high standard of design principles set out in Policy 11 and the Residential Design Guide SPD of the Development Plan, and the NPPF.

3.5.56 Drainage

The Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) has confirmed they have no objections to the proposed development subject to the attachment of a condition requiring the submission of a foul and surface water drainage scheme prior to commencement of the development.

3.5.57 The proposal therefore accords with Policy 9 of the LPP2.

3.5.58 Summary

This report assesses the full planning application for the conversion and extension of existing buildings to form a new teaching block together with improvements at existing parking areas at Westholme School, Meins Road.

3.5.59 In considering the proposal, a wide range of material considerations have been taken into account to inform a balanced recommendation that is considered to demonstrate compliance with the aims and objectives of the Local Development Plan and the NPPF.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Approve subject to Conditions which relate to the following matters:

- Commence within 3 years
- Materials to be implemented as agreed subject to the approved drawings/details
- Highways – Grampian - S278 off-site highways works: a MOVA upgrade at the signalised junction of Revidge Road/Billinge End Road/Preston New Road, together with improved pedestrian facilities.
- Highways - visibility splays
- Development in accordance with CEMP
- Standard contaminated land
- Prior to commencement of use 2 parking bays shall be fitted with ECV points
- Submission of a drainage scheme
- Traffic management scheme to be agreed
- Limited hours of construction:
 - 08:00 to 18:00 Mondays to Fridays
 - 09:00 to 13:00 Saturdays
 - Not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays

- Submission of a lighting scheme
- Ecology – licence
- Ecology – submission of a re-survey if works have not commenced by March 2021
- Implementation of car parking scheme prior to commencement of use
- Development in accordance with Bat Survey
- Development in accordance with AIA
- Development in accordance with submitted details / drawing nos.

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

N/A

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Neighbours

276 neighbouring properties were consulted during the consultation process relating to the initial scheme and the amended details, in addition 3 site notices were posted. A press notice was advertised in the local newspaper on the 27th November 2019. As a result of this, 14 letters of objection have been received (see summary of representations).

6.2 GMEU

No objection subject to attachment of conditions

- Submission of a Natural England Licence or a statement from a relevant body based on report and findings
- Submission of external light scheme before installation
- If works have not commenced by March 2021 then a re-survey is required

6.3 Drainage Section

No objection subject to a pre-commencement submission of a foul and surface drainage schemes condition.

6.4 Public Protection

No objection subject to the imposition of two conditions, one requiring the implementation of 4 bays containing Electrical Vehicle Charging Points, and the other a standard contaminated land condition.

6.5 Highways

No objection subject to the imposition of a number of conditions, a pre-commencement condition requiring the submission of a construction method statement and a S278 Grampian condition securing off-site highways works.

6.6 Environmental Services

No objection.

6.7 Lancashire Constabulary

No objections, but recommended that the scheme should be developed to achieve 'Secured by Design' accreditation.

6.8 United Utilities

No objections, subject to condition requiring separate foul and surface water systems

6 CONTACT OFFICER: Rebecca Halliwell – Planner, Development Management.

7 DATE PREPARED: 3rd February 2019

7.0 SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Comment – Sue Challinor, Lancashire Constabulary HQ Saunders Lane Hutton. Rec 02.12.2019

Hi,

I have had opportunity to look over the above planning application and am grateful for the opportunity to be able to provide you with comments as below.

Educational establishments fall under the definition of Crowded Places, and as such, there is a risk from the terrorist threat at this site, however small or significant. Whilst there is no direct intelligence to suggest a threat to any particular sector or the North West as a region, the risk should be taken into consideration at this stage whilst it is most cost effective. Counter Terrorism Security Advisors can advise on physical protective security, along with best practice guidance in terms of planning for lockdown or emergency evacuation and invacuation in dynamic incidents. Therefore, we would be grateful if you could pass our details, to the applicants at this stage, to ensure they have the opportunity to seek our advice on these matters. Additionally, we could then also provide a confidential report around risk and threat, and site-specific consultation on threat mitigation measures which we cannot include in public planning application responses.

If the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Growth and Development Department would also like further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

I look forward to hearing from somebody around the advice contained above,

Kind regards

Sue Challinor

Objection – Canon Andrea Titterington, 9 Meins Croft. Rec 24.01.2020

Dear Ms. Halliwell,

Re: Application Number 10/19/1081

Thank you for the notification of additional information submitted in relation to the application by Westholme School to incorporate the Infants and Junior Schools currently housed on Preston New Road into the campus towards the end of Meins Road. I have read all of the documents.

The new information prepared by the Transport Consultant, DTPC, is still inadequate. Their submission of “new material,” some of which dates from January 2019, does not seriously address the congestion at the Meins Road/Preston New Road junction at peak times nor the inadequate footpaths and lighting on Meins Road.

Statements such as:

- “The distances fit the guidance however, there are limited pedestrian routes in the vicinity of the site as such pedestrian mode will be limited in nature” (Umbrella Travel Plan);
- “The distances allow a limited area of Blackburn to be accessed by walking and would most likely be by parents or staff thus more experienced walkers. It is not anticipated unaccompanied children will use the route. The review takes on the location of the school in coming to a view.” (Technical Note J1022-TN1);
- “Planning permission is only sought to improve condition of teaching facilities which means that it is considered that it should not be the responsibility of the school to provide any improvements to the highway network.” (Technical Note J1022-TN3);
- “Many of the key factors in successfully supporting walking already exist in the wider residential area linked to the school bus pick up locations for those on foot.” (J1022-TN2).

The mitigations and “voluntary actions” (Benefits and Disbenefits) are not sufficient to improve the traffic problems which already exist on Meins Road at peak times or pedestrian travel from Preston New Road to the school. For example, the “staggered leaving times” offered are only 5 minute intervals which still means that all cars/buses will converge at the junction with Preston New Road with longer waiting times.

The entire application is based upon the financial situation of Westholme School and the investment beyond the buildings within the campus are solely related to traffic issues directly adjacent to the campus. They are planning for decline and also for a loss of population in Blackburn (which, given the number of new homes being built within the borough, seems disingenuous and irrelevant to the planning application).

There are other issues that need addressing and they are Westhome’s responsibility.

I walk along Meins Road from my garden to past Westholme School’s boundary almost every day for exercise. I also collect litter from Preston New Road for the same distance (to the farms including Carr Lane) as part of “Keep Blackburn Tidy” every Sunday. I have to do this on a Sunday as the traffic is a danger to pedestrians throughout the day on the other six days. There needs to be a full footpath along Meins Road – properly sized and surfaced so that people don’t have to walk in the road. Surely local children who attend Westholme School should be encouraged to walk! Our neighbours’ children cannot walk to school at present as it is too dangerous, especially in the winter.

In addition, the parking spaces on the north side of the road outside Westholme School are sites of anti-social behaviour (drugs, etc.) and fly tipping. The police are monitoring the situation. As well as improved lighting in this area, there should be CCTV provided by the school.

No account has been taken of the residents of the Meins Road area or the many people who walk along Meins Road on a regular basis. The alternative route along the Bridal Path is not the only opportunity. If you look at the Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 2087, there is a potential route that joins Preston New Road from the school grounds, past Middle Shorrock Hey Farm, Lower Bencock Farm and Arley Farm, emerging between Beardwood and Yew Tree Drive. Westholme School should

have to purchase the rights of way and improve this route as an alternative to Meins Road. None of the offers for mitigation to the traffic problems will ease the pollution or congestion that currently exists and therefore the planning application should still be refused until better solutions can be agreed.

Yours sincerely,

Canon Andrea Titterington

Objection – Mr Anthony Cope, 2 Heathfield Park. Rec 22.01.2020

reference 10/19/1081

regarding conversion and extension of existing buildings at westholme school

my main concern would be the extra traffic trying to enter and exit meins road due to the increase in the number of pupils going to the school

im sure all residents from the area will feel the same because it is a nightmare already with all the schools in the area

Mr anthony cope

2 heathfield park

Objection – Dr Shanker & Dr Sarala Waghray, Unknown Address. Rec 09.01.2020

Dear Mr Prescott

We write this letter with considerable anguish as a reply to your letter of 14/11/19. We were away on vacation and now understand that the last date for comments about the application has been extended to 09/01/2020

I could not believe that a merger of all three west Holme schools is being considered without planning for a proper thorough fare to ease the traffic

We live on Heathfield Park and already suffer the long delays whilst going to work and returning home every day . The proposed merger will add another 200 plus students at Westholme school thus increasing that much traffic on Meins road –a narrow road which was not designed for this traffic load.

Cars are usually parked on either side of Meins road with total disregard for the double yellow lines on the road. Parents in the eagerness to drop their children to school disregard the oncoming traffic and park the cars on the pavement or reverse onto the main road.

Preston New road, the main road leading into Blackburn is a busy road and there is usually a tail back of cars trying to turn onto Meins road from Preston side right up to the Yew tree drive junction. After dropping their children at Tauheedul school parents turn their cars to join the main traffic towards Blackburn with no consideration for on coming traffic thus blocking traffic which can lead to accidents

On our way to work in the mornings we have seen a few near misses especially due to people trying to join the main road .

We the residents had expressed our concerns about this situation when it was proposed to establish Olive school on this lane but those concerns were not heeded and the addition of more traffic now can lead to serious consequences. One wonders if our concerns carry any weight at all

Another area of extreme concern is that the Emergency services, will not be able to come on Meins road during those hours

I urge you to reconsider this decision in the interests of public safety. There used to be a road called woodford road from Meins road to Pleasington road (now defunct -----Our Sat Nav still directs us to it though) Reopening that road might be a solution .

Yours sincerely

Dr Shanker waghay

Dr Sarala waghay

Objection – Lukman Patel, 13 Heathfield Park. Rec 06.12.2019

Dear Officers

I spoke to Adam Sheikh on Tuesday regarding this matter following a discussion with the council's Democratic Services team.

Put simply, nobody returned my calls in the planning team and I had to resort to the only team that responded!

Adam advised that he would ask the chief planning officer to call me in the absence of the case Officer. I explained some of my initial observations and concerns to him but as he was not the case Officer he could not (understandably) answer the questions. These questions included (without limitation):

1. The misrepresentation in the highways report commissioned by the applicant
2. Building in the green belt without justification
3. The existing school site on Preston new road still retaining planning permission for a school
4. Existing highway issues
5. Road safety issues on Meins road

The consultation ended yesterday.

What is the point of consultation if nobody is available to discuss the application? It appears that it is a "token gesture." What is the point of a phone number if nobody will return calls?

I would like a meeting with the chief planning officer to discuss my concerns and understand the application better and put forward my representations (if any) in an orderly manner. Some fellow residents would also like the opportunity.

I sincerely hope that this is not a "fait accompli" as the current level of engagement can be described as either "poor" or a "tick box exercise". Consultations should be meaningful and proper.

I have cc'd my ward councillors who may also want to be involved in the meeting.

Best regards

Lukman Patel

13 Heathfield Park

Objection – Ms Lynn Taylor, Heathfield Park. Rec 05.12.2019

Dear Mr Kelly,

I write to you to express my dismay and disbelief that a merger of all three Westholme schools to the site along Meins Road is being considered. As a local resident, I have first-hand experience of the current chaotic traffic situation at certain times of the day, and I strongly believe that this is a potential threat to life as it is currently. To add to the number of vehicles requiring access to the Westholme site would make this almost a certainty. There are currently 529 Westholme pupils requiring direct access to the Upper School and Sixth Form school along Meins road. Should the schools merge, this would increase by a further 234 pupils, which I believe cannot be supported by a single access route – particularly a relatively narrow one. The local residents already endure lengthy waits in accessing their homes, and this merger would simply result in more disruption.

Preston New Road, one of the main routes into central Blackburn and towards the M6 motorway, is already extremely congested at peak times. With a high volume of traffic turning into Meins road as well as rush hour traffic each morning, the tailback of stationary vehicles can reach as far back as the junction with Yew Tree Drive. Similarly, traffic heading for the motorway is slowed by the number of vehicles crossing its path – parents wishing to turn into Meins road do not always follow Highway Code rules and I have personally witnessed several near accidents as cars along Preston New Road cut dangerously in front of vehicles who are travelling from the town centre towards the motorway. At any time between 2.30 and 3.30, there are cars parked along Meins Road, sometimes on either side, near to the junction with Preston New Road. These are parked unsafely, often against the direction of traffic flow, and all failing to observe the double yellow lines that are there to prevent parking and keep traffic safely flowing. As children are walking from the two schools, cars can be seen reversing over pavements, driving along pavements and positioning themselves across the road in order to force a way into the queue, thereby holding up the traffic which is attempting to enter Meins road which then leads to long queues on Preston New Road. The coaches attempting to drive down Meins Road can be prevented from doing so by this. Should the emergency services need to enter or exit Meins Road at particular times of the day, their progress along the road would also be considerably impeded, which could have tragic consequences. It is incredible that nobody has yet

been injured, and I fear that this is only a matter of time, as drivers become increasingly impatient and ignore many of the rules of the road that are in place for their protection.

It know that traffic surveys on this subject have already been undertaken, and have already concluded that the Preston New Road and Meins road junction is unable to support more traffic in safety. However, the number of children and adults accessing the direct area since these studies has already increased with Olive Primary now at its full capacity . I attended a number of meetings prior to the Olive School being developed and believed at the time that the traffic studies that had been undertaken were insufficient to get a clear picture of the situation. The number of coaches used by was under estimated (and contradicted at the time by a member of Westholme staff) and the data given did not reflect the reality. Before any consideration of this merger - which effectively has 6 schools using a road that was clearly not designed for such a purpose, I urge you to undertake multiple traffic surveys. These should be completed at different times of day and in different weather conditions over a period of weeks, not days, in order to get a true understanding of the problems encountered at the junction, even with the current level of traffic.

I strongly believe that to add further traffic into an already difficult and dangerous situation would be extremely foolhardy. Meins Road is not a suitable access road for the number of schools it currently serves, let alone more – the merged Westholme would be a single school on name only – it would have the numbers of three schools. I hope that you take account of my concerns when considering any planning applications.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Lynn Taylor, Heathfield Park

Objection – Rizwan Patel, 4 Heathfield Park. Rec 05.12.2019

Dear Ms Halliwell,

I write to you to express my very strong concerns on the planning application near to my property. The amount of traffic we currently endure on Meins Road at peak times just with Tauheedal Islamic Girls High School, Olive Primary School, School House Nursery, Westholme School and the to and from traffic from Preston New Road (commuting in and out of Blackburn) as well as the leaving Meins Road onto Preston New Road is a nightmare.

To merge all 3 school on the Meins Road is absolutely ridiculous, in terms of volume of traffic this is going to generate and add to what we have to currently endure on a daily basis.

A while back (I can't remember the exact dates but this was before Olive Primary School built), the residents around the Meins Road, had a number of studies completed, one by Atkins (Atkins who regularly carries out Traffic Impact Assessments on behalf of developers and Local Authorities). The study PICADY (Priority Intersection Capacity and Delay) identified a number of issues. The conclusion from that test that any increase in traffic into the Meins Road/Preston New Road junction is unacceptable. Since that report was written, the number of children and adults accessing the direct area/schools has grown and is estimated to grow more due to the increase in year groups that were

added year on year by Olive Primary (as at the time I think there were only 3-year groups). This is now at its full capacity for all 5 year groups.

My understanding is that no allowance has been made for the combined impact in traffic in terms of this development and local area. A thorough traffic assessment needs to be undertaken to take into account the increase in numbers at Tauheedal Girls' High School, Westholme School, School House Nursery and residences.

The Traffic Impact Assessment contained within the Transport Assessment was clearly insufficient and weak as at the time it did not take into account the opening and closing times of Westholme, Tauheedal Girls' High School and School House Nursery. It did not detail the actual scale of traffic passing by Meins Road.

Please note that Preston New Road (PNR) is the main route for commuting traffic that leaves and enters Blackburn that also allows access to the motorways. During peak times, commuting traffic is literally at standstill on PNR, as we have Westholme School parents dropping off children onto Meins Road, School House Nursery also on Meins Road, TIGHS parents dropping off school children via Meins Road, Beardwood Hospital, which is next to TIGHS school on PNR. Therefore, allowing all the traffic onto Meins Road would not be sustained with couple of hundred cars onto PNR and Meins Road leading to major potential hazards and accidents. Olive school parents park their cars on Meins Road and there is inadequate room to manoeuvre at the best of times for cars to flow in and out of Meins Road.

I hope you take my letter into consideration when making the planning application decision.

Yours sincerely,

Rizwan Patel

4 Heathfield Park,

Objection – Hassan Ali, 10 Heathfield Park. Rec 05.12.2019

Dear Mr Kelly

I write to you to express my very strong concerns on this matter. The amount of traffic we currently endure on Meins Road at peak times just with Tauheedal Islamic Girls High School, Olive Primary School, School House Nursery, Westholme School and the to and from traffic from Preston New Road (commuting in and out of Blackburn) as well as the leaving Meins Road onto Preston New Road is a nightmare.

To merge all 3 school on the Meins Road is absolutely ridiculous, in terms of volume of traffic this is going to generate and add to what we have to currently endure on a daily basis.

A while back (I can't remember the exact dates but this was before Olive Primary School built), the residents around the Meins Road, had a number of studies completed, one by Atkins (Atkins who regularly carries out Traffic Impact Assessments on behalf of developers and Local Authorities). The

study PICADY (Priority Intersection Capacity and Delay) identified a number of issues. The conclusion from that test that any increase in traffic into the Meins Road/Preston New Road junction is unacceptable. Since that report was written, the number of children and adults accessing the direct area/schools has grown and is estimated to grow more due to the increase in year groups that were added year on year by Olive Primary (as at the time I think there were only 3-year groups). This is now at its full capacity for all 5 year groups.

My understanding is that no allowance has been made for the combined impact in traffic in terms of this development and local area. A thorough traffic assessment needs to be undertaken to take into account the increase in numbers at Tauheedal Girls' High School, Westholme School, School House Nursery and residences.

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I hope you take my letter into consideration when making the planning application decision.

Yours sincerely

Hassan Ali

Objection – Canon Andrea Titterington, 9 Meins Croft. Rec 04.12.2019

**RE: Full Planning Application – Number 10/19/1081
Westholme School, Wilmar Lodge, Meins Road, Blackburn BB2 6QU**

This is a letter of objection to the above application on grounds of increased traffic and subsequent increase in pollution levels in the Meins Road area.

I am amazed at the inadequacies of the **Traffic Assessment** report prepared by DTPC on behalf of Westholme School which gives a very partial description of the make-up of the area and current traffic issues. This Report, No. J1022/TS, dated November 2019 states:

"The area has no accident record, no speed issue from observation and low flows. The afternoon pick up does cause congestion around the school access but does not affect through traffic as the road is cul de sac. It is considered that the route is a safe route for development to take place along." The surveys in the report are from November 2018.

The Traffic Assessment states:

"The scheme accords with local and national policy to site development adjacent to reasonable transport linkages and other attractions to minimise trips and share trip movements for a rural location." *Comment: Westholme School pupils and parents do not walk to public transport on Preston New Road. There are few children who walk to school. There is neither a continuous footpath along Meins Road nor any street lights beyond Woodgates Road for dark winter afternoons and mornings. No evidence is produced of any car sharing measures for parents. The school may be in a "rural location," but the only egress from Meins Road is onto the A677, a major artery into Blackburn town centre already congested by business and school traffic. The queue on Preston New Road going into the town centre (2 miles distant) at peak times is often backed up beyond the lights at Yew Tree Drive.*

The Traffic Assessment states:

"Traffic flows have been assessed for up to date levels and has no additional capacity issues based on a robust view of the flows and no capacity issues are expected to arise with the junctions. As such the scheme would have little impact

on the local network over and above the fallback and will overtime reduce the impacts as pupil numbers reduce." *Comment: The traffic flows assessments are over a year old. They take no account of other users of Meins Road including the parents of Olive School and Tauheedal Islam Girls High School who park on the double yellow lines and make U-turns in Meins Road morning and afternoon or taxis and cars of parents of nursery children at The School House Nursery. It is not credible that the traffic congestion caused by parents of children at the Westholme sites on Preston New Road are not going to add significantly to the number of cars using Meins Road as well as the additional coaches. The numbers at both sites have already reduced and the existing congestion will be displaced onto Meins Road. No account has been taken of the additional traffic caused by the new nursery on Preston New Road almost adjacent to the junction of Meins Road and Preston New Road as that wasn't operational in November 2018 when the surveys were taken. No mention is made of the extra curricular activities, such as concerts, plays, etc. that bring significant traffic flows from Westholme School after school times. No mention is made of all of the other traffic using Meins Road with only one possible entrance and exit from the road.*

The Traffic Assessment is flawed and paints an incomplete and therefore inaccurate picture.

The following is the accurate description of the area which, "because it is a cul de sac," is deemed to be "able to take a significant increase in traffic."

- There are 120 dwellings on Meins Road and its tributaries with 1, 2, 3 or more residents' cars per household. Many have to travel to work, school/college, appointments at peak times.
- There are 5 farms – with 2 milk-collection truck journeys each day and significant tractor traffic, especially at harvest times when the vehicles are travelling along Meins Road from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. There are frequent movements of large lorries making deliveries to the farms.
- The School House Nursery is open Monday to Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. with a constant flow of car/taxi traffic and deliveries. Peak times coincide with Westholme School's traffic pattern. The staff park outside the Nursery causing an obstruction and pinch point for all Meins Road traffic, particularly noticeable around 4 p.m. when there is usually a 25-minute queue at the bottom of my garden along Meins Road opposite the Nursery.
- As mentioned above parents/guardians of children at Olive School and Tauheedal Islam Girls High School park along Meins Road morning and afternoon. Due to the pinch point created outside the entrance to both schools and priority signs for traffic coming from Preston New Road, it can take between 10 and 15 minutes to try to exit Meins Road when that traffic flow comes up to the pinch point and turns right into the school grounds (to exit onto Preston New Road into the already stationary traffic going towards the town centre). Leaving home at any time from 7:15 a.m. and 9 a.m. is a time-consuming and difficult process for residents trying to get to work, school/college, or other appointments. For example, in order to get

to an 8:30 hospital appointment at Royal Blackburn Hospital, I have to leave by at least 7:15 a.m. to make a journey of 4 miles.

- Other commercial traffic regularly using Meins Road are bin trucks (commercial as well as domestic), delivery trucks (especially supermarket deliveries and couriers), taxis.
- At peak times a fire truck could not progress along Meins Road past the pinch point outside The School House Nursery and an ambulance would have difficulty to go further along Meins Road in an emergency at those times.
- Pollution caused by standing traffic – already up to 25 minutes – will increase further with more cars using Meins Road to access the expanded Westholme School.

No account has been taken in Westholme's application to the increased disruption to residents and farms caused by additional traffic.

No account was taken of the increased disruption to residents and farms in the changes made to traffic flows in Meins Road when Olive School was relocated.

Only with significant changes to the Preston New Road/Meins Road junction should these proposals even be considered. There is no box junction restriction (although even if it was painted on the road there is no assurance that it would be respected, as the double yellow lines along Meins Road alongside Olive School and Tauheedal Islam Girls High School parents/guardians show no concern for this traffic restriction).

Traffic management by the police paid for by the schools might ease the situation, but it would have to be consistent throughout term times for the entire duration of the disruption.

This application must be rejected until the traffic problems in the area are solved for residents and the farms.

Objection – Peter S Simpson, 4 Copper Beeches Meins Road. Rec 04.12.2019

Thank you for your letter dated 14th November 2019, relating to the above numbered planning application.

I understand the desire of Westholme to house the three schools on one site and have some sympathy with their application.

My concern about the proposal is the additional traffic that this will generate on Meins Road. Additionally, the ability of traffic to exit Meins Road onto Preston New Road.

A goodly proportion of Meins Road is without the security of a pavement access and currently pupils walking from Westholme Senior School are in grave danger, by having to walk on the road itself.

Much of what pavement there is, is dangerously narrow, uneven and in poor condition. Maintenance and street cleaning to these parts of the pavement has never been done in the three years that I have been resident here. Because of the state and narrowness of the pavement, it is often necessary to step off the pavement onto the actual road, thereby taking the grave risk of traffic injury.

These conditions will become so much more dangerous, if the three schools are merged into the one site. There will then be very young junior and infant children walking to and from school on an extremely busy motorised road without any pavement.

Currently, at school times, there is a long tailback of coaches and cars waiting to access Preston New Road. It is not difficult to imagine the length of time that will be needed if all three schools are on the one site. After these extraordinary queues develop, then there will even more children walking the length of Meins Road to exit onto Preston New Road; thereby greatly increasing the risk of fatal pedestrian accidents.

Should The Council decide to grant the Westholme application, then I can only see two solutions to this traffic versus pedestrian problem: The use of Compulsory Purchase Order to acquire land in order to widen Meins Road and install adequate footpaths, and/or making Meins Road a "one way road" and continuing a loop around the Westholme School grounds and back to Preston New Road, to the north of the Heatfield housing estate.

I do hope that The Council can find an adequate solution to the traffic/pedestrian problem, otherwise I suggest that this proposal to merge the three schools should not be allowed to proceed.

Objection – Mrs Alison M Kerry, 6 Meins Croft. Rec 03.12.2019

FAO: Rebecca Halliwell

RE: Full Planning Application – Number 10/19/1081

Westholme School, Wilmar Lodge, Meins Road, Blackburn BB2 6QU

This is my letter of objection to the above application on grounds of increased traffic and subsequent increase in pollution levels in the Meins Road area.

I am amazed at the inadequacies of the Traffic Assessment report prepared by DTPC on behalf of Westholme School which gives a very partial description of the make-up of the area and current traffic issues.

Report No. J1022/TS dated November 2019 states:

“The area has no accident record, no speed issue from observation and low flows. The afternoon pick up does cause congestion around the school access but does not affect through traffic as the road is cul de sac. It is considered that the route is a safe route for development to take place along.”

The surveys in the report are from November 2018.

“The scheme accords with local and national policy to site development adjacent to reasonable transport linkages and other attractions to minimise trips and share trip movements for a rural location.”

As a former parent of two pupils at Westholme School, both of whom walked to school on a daily basis, I wish to make the following comments :

1. Westholme School pupils and parents do not walk to public transport on Preston New Road.

There are actually few children who do walk to school. There is not a continuous footpath along Meins Road nor any street lights beyond Woodgates Road for dark winter mornings and afternoons. The school may be in a “rural location,” but the only egress from Meins Road is onto the A677, a major artery into Preston and Blackburn town centres already congested by commuter and school traffic. The queue on Preston New Road going into the town centre, less than 2 miles away, at peak times is backed up to well beyond the traffic lights at Yew Tree Drive.

“Traffic flows have been assessed for up to date levels and has no additional capacity issues based on a robust view of the flows and no capacity issues are expected to arise with the junctions. As such the scheme would have little impact on the local network over and above the fallback and will overtime reduce the impacts as pupil numbers reduce.”

2. The traffic flows assessments are over a year old. They take no account of other users of Meins Road including the parents of Olive School and Tauheedal Islam Girls High School who park on the double yellow lines and make U-turns in Meins Road morning and afternoon or taxis and cars of parents of nursery children at The SchoolHouse Nursery. It is not credible that the traffic congestion caused by parents of children at the Westholme sites on Preston New Road are not going to add significantly to the number of cars using Meins Road as well as the additional coaches.

3. Whilst pupil numbers at both sites have recently reduced the existing congestion caused by parents at Billinge House and Beardwood Bank will be displaced onto Meins Road.

4. No account has been taken of the additional traffic caused by the new nursery on Preston New Road almost adjacent to the junction of Meins Road and Preston New Road as that wasn't operational in November 2018 when the surveys were taken.

5. No mention is made of the extra- curricular activities such as sports fixtures, Parents' Evenings, concerts, plays, etc. that bring significant traffic to and from Westholme School after normal school finishing time.

6. Nor is mention made of all of the other traffic using Meins Road with only one possible entrance and exit.

The Traffic Assessment is flawed and incomplete and therefore gives a totally inaccurate picture.

The following is the accurate description of the area which, “because it is a cul de sac,” is deemed to be “able to take a significant increase in traffic.”

- There are in excess of 110 dwellings on Meins Road and its tributaries with 1, 2 or more residents' cars per household. Many residents have to travel to work, school, college, appointments etc. at peak times.
- There are 5 farms – with 2 milk-collection journeys each day and significant tractor traffic, especially at harvest times when the vehicles travel along Meins Road .
- There are also frequent movements of large lorries making deliveries to the farms as well as to the schools and properties undergoing renovation works.
- The School House Nursery is open Monday to Friday 7am to 6pm with a constant flow of cars, taxis and delivery vehicles as well as their own mini buses. Peak times coincide with Westholme School's traffic. The nursery staff park on the road outside the Nursery causing another pinch point for all Meins Road traffic, particularly noticeable around 4 p.m. when there is usually a 25-minute queue along Meins Road outside said Nursery.
- Parents of children at Olive School and Tauheedal Islam Girls High School park along Meins Road in the morning and afternoon. Due to the pinch point created outside the entrance to both schools and priority signs for traffic coming from Preston New Road, it can take up to 15 minutes to try to exit Meins Road when that traffic flow comes up to the pinch point and turns right into the school grounds , to exit onto Preston New Road into the already stationary traffic heading towards Preston and Blackburn centre. Leaving home at any time from 7.00 am and 9.15 am is a time-consuming and difficult process for residents trying to get to work, school, college or other appointments.
- Other vehicles regularly using Meins Road are bin waggons, delivery vehicles, especially supermarket ones, couriers and taxis.
- At peak times a fire engine could not progress along Meins Road past the pinch point outside The School House Nursery and an ambulance would also have difficulty to go further along Meins Road in an emergency at those times.
- Pollution caused by standing traffic – already up to 25 minutes – will increase further with more cars using Meins Road to access the expanded Westholme School.

No account has been taken in Westholme's application to the increased disruption to residents and farms caused by additional traffic.

No account was taken of the increased disruption to residents and farms in the changes made to traffic flows in Meins Road when Olive School was relocated.

There is no longer a box junction restriction at the junction of Meins Rd and Preston New Rd, although even if one was re- painted on the road there is no assurance that it would be respected. The double yellow lines along Meins Road alongside Olive School and Tauheedal Islam Girls High School are certainly not. Parents/guardians show no concern for this parking restriction what so

ever. In fact the right of way sign, for traffic continuing along Meins Road past the pinch point in question, is abused on a daily basis. The congestion caused has been reported to the school, council and police on numerous occasions with no action taken.

Only with significant changes to the Preston New Road with Meins Road junction should these proposals even be considered.

I believe that this application must be rejected until the traffic problems in the area are solved for residents and the farms.

Objection – J Marshall, 6 Copper Beeches Meins Road. Rec 29.11.2019

DEAR SIR/MADAM.

I STRONGLY OBJECT TO THE
WILMAR LODGE EXTENSION. DUE TO.

1) TRAFFIC ON MEINS RD SERVING
THE TWO SCHOOLS IS ALREADY
EXCESSIVE. MEINS RD IS NOT
SUITABLE TO THE BUS TRAFFIC
THAT ALREADY EXISTS AND MORE
TRAFFIC (WHEN WESTHOLME SCHOOLS
CLOSES ITS JUNIOR SCHOOLS ON
PRESTON NEW RD) WOULD MAKE
IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR EMERGENCY
SERVICES (AMBULANCE & FIRE SERVICE)
TO ENTER & EXIT MEINS RD PROMPTLY
PUTTING RESIDENTS LIVES AT RISK.

Objection – Alison Davies, Higher Meadows Meins Road. Rec 27.11.2019

Regarding the above planning application;

I have great concerns about the additional traffic congestion and gridlock on Meins Road which is already oversaturated with cars going to and from school.

I live next to Middle Sharrock Hey Farm, the right turn beyond school; the volume of traffic and total gridlock at peak times prevents me from getting to my home or out onto Meins Rd in the opposite direction. Westholme School have created a self imposed turning circle using the small car park outside school on Meins Rd, for cars to turn left into, then exit right facing outwards back onto the highway. When this initiative was introduced, changes were made to the road; a narrowing section with bollards further compounded the issue and double yellow lines which are completely ignored. As a result of poor planning, the ridiculous intense circle of traffic, blind to any other vehicles who may not be school related, causes a huge obstruction preventing access to properties and farms beyond the school. Parents clearly seem to think that this stretch of road is 'one way' which it isn't. Consequently, on numerous occasions, myself and all my neighbours have been physically blocked from driving straight through the congestion to our homes. Indeed we regularly get verbally abused by parents who seem to think that we are driving the wrong way on a one way street.

Twelve months ago I needed to call an ambulance to my home at school home time. The ambulance was also unable to get through to my property and was delayed access for 10 minutes which is absolutely outrageous and totally unacceptable. I have on several occasions brought this to the attention of the school headmistress but nothing has been done to address the problem.

It also needs to be made clear that the lane which runs alongside school down to the farms and properties, is in fact a private road for residents and service vehicles only. It must not be used by parents and sixth formers who at present use this route as a short cut to the car park at the rear of school alongside the six form block. The regular flow of unauthorised traffic on this one track lane greatly inconveniences farm vehicles, trackers, milk wagons, and residents who are forced to reverse or change their path in order to allow two vehicles to get past each other. Westholme School has a responsibility to make clear by signage, contact with parents and daily stewards to supervise the flow of traffic, that through traffic must not be obstructed.

I invite you to come down to my house, specifically travelling in the direction of school on Meins Road, attempting to drive straight ahead when you reach the congestion outside school at 3.50 (it is important that you travel at that precise time to observe the peak). You will see for yourself what we have to face everyday and in relation to this planning application, unless this huge block of traffic is properly addressed, the additional cars dropping and collecting children from the transferred sites, will only make the problem considerably worse.

Alison Davies

Higher Meadows

Objection – Sarah Nightingale, The Barn Higher Shorrock Hey Farm Meins Road.
Rec 26.11.2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

I'm a contacting re the planning application 10/19/1081 and the further traffic congestion it will create.

Currently the traffic situation on Meins Road caused by Westholme School is truly a complete nightmare. The road is far too narrow for heavy traffic and furthermore, creates a complete blockage of us gaining access/exits from our own home. By adding two times the amount of traffic that there currently is will only drastically elevate the current problem and naturally this is causing great distress for myself and neighbours.

There is no possible chance of emergency vehicles granting access to our homes, if heaven forbid we ever needed them, during the peak times of approximately 3:30pm - 4:00pm. Again, by adding a further two times the amount of traffic will make it completely impossible for not only ourselves to leave or try to get to our own homes but it also makes me wonder how the school busses and parents will all fit in the small area. Not to mention, the abuse parents seem to think it is acceptable to hurl at us when we ask them to move when they are blocking our lane by parking in front of it waiting for their children.

Furthermore, our private road down the side of Westholme School has become more frequently used for sixth formers and parents trying to take shortcuts onto the main road. Many years ago there was a clear sign stating 'our' road was for residents and service vehicles only, however the sign is no longer clear (if it is still there you can't see it) and so has become used by the school also. Not only do we need a clear sign reiterating that it is a private road but Westholme School also need to inform their staff, students and parents that it is not to be used by them.

While I am on the subject of 'our' private lane; Westholme School recently informed their school canteen staff that they are not allowed to smoke on school grounds. The staff have now taken to forming their own 'staff room' in the middle of the private road where they can smoke and eat their dinner. When we drive down our lane we are given dirty looks as if it is our fault we have to make them move out of the way. Not only is this uncomfortable for us residents but it is also very unsightly having to witness their cigarette ends, on occasions lunch wrappers and stacked up chairs down our countryside lane.

Unless there is a clear understanding of how the excess traffic will be addressed with the new planning proposal for the school, the already nightmare problem will grow to be considerably worse for not only residents but the school also.

I would very much recommend you visit our residency yourselves during the suggested time above and see how congested the small area really is.

Kindest regards,

Sarah Nightingale

Objection – Firoz Patel, Meins Road. Rec 22.11.2019

For the attention of:

Planning Manager,

Ref: Full Planning application: Conversion & Extension of existing buildings to form a new teaching block together with improvements at existing parking areas At Westholme School, Meins Road, Blackburn BB2 6QU

Dear sir,

Thank you for informing me regarding above mentioned recently received planning application.

As a resident living on Meins road I have concern regarding increased Traffic at school times as no doubt this proposed Conversion & Extension will bring more nursery and other children coming to Westholme School by Cars & Buses in the morning and leaving in the afternoon.

As a resident on a Meins road, it takes sometimes good 15 to 20 minutes just to join Preston New Road in either directions as School Traffic of Westholme & Tohidul is turning into Meins Road from both directions specially in the morning when the general commuting traffic on Preston New Road is very heavy.

Cars wanted to join Preston New Rd in both directions from Meins Road have to wait at the top of the Meins Road until someone shows kindness to let you go in either direction. This specially becomes near impossible when turning right from Meins Road to go towards Town center as hard to find two kind people in opposite directions who would let you turn right from Meins Road.

Cars who wants to turn right on to Preston New Rd from Meins Road becomes aggressive, sometimes abusive as they block Preston New Road. It can be a major battle sometimes just to turn right in the morning !

As a resident I know that my objection for not to grant planning for this development on additional traffic basis will not be considered but I hope your traffic experts looks at the forthcoming additional traffic impact to join Preston Road New Road in both directions from Meins Road by considering some form of temporary traffic lights at school times for safe turning in to and out of Meins Road.

Regards,

Firoz Patel

West Borough