

(please mark response FAO)

Project Manager
Katherine Warrington School
c/o Roundwood Park School
Roundwood Park
Harpenden AL5 3AE

Date: 24 October 2017

Ref: Section 10 Consultation

Dear ,

Please find below response to Section 10 Consultation prepared for RSRP – a residents group representing people affected by the proposals for the school. On a personal basis I fully endorse the comments below and therefore question 1 (of your proforma) counts as F Local organisation and B individually. The majority of RSRP members would classify as category C.

On the remainder of the proforma the answers are 2 b No – in current state of proposal it is not possible to agree to opening and 5 b No – same reason as above. Question 3 is difficult to assess and question 4 is considered to be inappropriate as phrased. No answers are therefore made to these.

The balance of the response falls under section 6. These are highlighted below:

- Insufficient information to assess impact on local community, compounded by an unwillingness to discuss any matter considered as Planning – which subsequently has been shown to have been prepared prior to 18 September and submitted to Herts County Council on or about 11 September and therefore was known and represented an apparently deliberate effort to withhold information.
- Source of pupils not identified (see also reference below), resulting in lack of traffic plan and impact

In April 2015, following school's initial stage approval by DfE, RSRP wrote to DfE with concerns over a number of aspects. The DfE formally responded directing RSRP to the section 10 process to raise it questions, which the DfE indicated should be taken up with the Trust. This included a variety of points relating to the case for establishing a school and its location, which the Trust has knowingly lent its name to. When approached by RSRP the Trust / KW School has stated it considers it has met all that it needs to and the questions put by RSRP remain unanswered. The scale and impact of answers to the questions posed leave too many unanswered points for the ESFA (for The Secretary of State for Education) to enter into a funding agreement. The outstanding points are repeated as asked and left unanswered by the Trust:

Section 10 Academies Act Consultation: Questions Submitted by RSRP

RSRP has asked the following questions of HSET – the Trust behind Katherine Warington School – to enable it to complete its response to the consultation (closes 25 October). If no response received, RSRP will reference the lack of response and submitted comments on what it considers the issues to be. This follows direction by DfE in April 2015 to direct all questions to Trust at Section 10.

1. During the course of the consultation relevant material on the Trust's proposed operation was made available through the publication of supporting material for the Planning Application for the school. This material began appearing after the consultation evening at Rothamsted (18th September) with full publication at end of September/ early October.

Q

In gathering responses to the Section 10 Consultation are the Trust differentiating between responses received prior to publication and those received after publication of Planning Application support documents? (For purposes of this RSRP considers most of the supporting information to have become publicly available around 28-30 September). If so are the Trust giving additional weight to the more informed responses?

2. The current published school forecasts on the Schools planning pages of Hertfordshire County Council show a reduction in numbers in the area to the extent that demand is shown in the last year of the forecast at just over the current capacity for the current 3 schools (576 in 2026/27). On the boards at the meeting the Trust stated it was confident of 100% fill rates from the outset. In the proposal to establish the school, submitted in late 2014, the final year of forecast was declared at 700 Hertfordshire pupils + 120 Out of County pupils (page 37 of bid document), with Central Bedfordshire and Luton identified as main sources.

Q

2A. With Hertfordshire demand having evaporated are the Trust relying on the 120 out of county applicants for the majority of their intake?

2B. Where do the sister schools expect their intake to come from?

2C. How do the family of School Trusts for Harpenden see out of county applicants travelling to the schools in the area?

3. In providing information to the Trust in support of its application did Herts CC provide an indication of where the 120 out of county pupils per year currently receive their secondary education?
4. Has the Trust been directly involved in the preparation of the transport Assessment included in the planning Application?
5. When the project was publicly launched in 2013 the Harpenden Parents Group, who had been campaigning for the school, published approximate boundaries for the schools which would apply to oversubscription criteria by giving each household a 'nearest school' within the priority area to which the household would enjoy greater access irrespective of distance. These boundaries effectively define sequence of allocation for eldest/only children and the Parents Group were keen to point out that pupils to the east of a line mid-way between Sir John Lawes and what has become the Katherine Warington School would be allocated to Katherine Warington, freeing up places at Sir John Lawes for their core members in South / Central Harpenden. The reluctance of a significant number of parents to send children to

North and East Harpenden has been apparent in a number of years recently when County has sought to allocate pupils to Sauncey Wood (2010, 2014) and the Lea (2011) where temporary expansion of primary capacity was possible, only to have most such allocations rejected, to the extent that when County sought to extend High Beeches in 2014 (with a consultation in early 2013) their Education department specifically identified Batford as an area of no demand. Over and above this, the company the Trust engaged to help promote the establishment of the school – Hertfordshire Community Free School Company Ltd – who assisted with early presentations and clearly identified that parents could choose to support the school by stating they would consider at a first preference, without any obligation to accept a place if they were offered. In essence this presented parents with a clear option to nominate a school for others to go to, in turn freeing up places in the established schools (the Trust’s partner schools) for which they would receive a higher preference in the allocation system.

Q

5A. What proportion of the supporting applicants (in the Trust’s bid, section E) came from areas which fell within HCC’s definition of ‘nearest school within priority area’ for the Katherine Warington School (the location of which was first assigned by HCC in early 2011)?

5B. What proportion of the supporting applicants came from areas that are within the nearest school within priority area definition for each of Sir John Lawes and Roundwood Park? (Note: Different definitions apply to St George’s which exclude the school from this definition – although it is noted that St Georges admission rules have been changed since the application by the Trust).

5C. What numbers of supporting applicants came from ‘Out of County’ areas, and how many of these relate to the area defined on pages 36, 37 of the trust’s application?

5D. What measures did the Trust take to ascertain that the applications from prospective parents in the areas referred to in 5B above were from parents who intended making the Katherine Warington school their first choice at time of application and intend to send their children to the School?

6. In the Trust’s 2014 application to the DfE to establish a school the Trust stated it approached prospective parents with the following opening statement: *“In 2016 and beyond there will not be enough secondary school places in Harpenden. To meet the demand for extra places the Harpenden Secondary School Trust is proposing to open a new secondary school in the town.”* (page 31). The statement makes no indication that a significant proportion of demand is located outside the town of Harpenden. In fact application information published by Herts County Council annually suggests that applicants from Harpenden are consistently much lower than the current Secondary School places provided within the town. The most recent publications, relating to 2017 entry, show the total number of secondary applicants in Harpenden Town was 443, while for primary applicants – the base for entry to secondary in seven years, the number was 421. With the Katherine Warington proposal there will be more than 750 places available in the town each year. Herts County Council aggregates demand over a wider area which includes villages to the east and west of Harpenden Town – however these areas, which include some significant concentrations of pupil demand, account for approx. 40% of demand in the aggregated area and have significantly lower success rates in achieving ranked allocations than those living in Harpenden Town.

Q

6A What proportion of the pupils at the Katherine Warington School and each of the other 3 schools in related trusts (Sir John Lawes, St George's and Roundwood Park) are expected to be residents of Harpenden Town?

6B What proportion of pupils at each of the four schools (Katherine Warington and its partner schools) are expected to come from Villages to the East of Harpenden (Wheathampstead, Kimpton, Whitwell etc.) and what proportion from the Villages to the West (Redbourn, Markyate, Flamstead, etc.)?

6C. When declaring that the Trust wished to establish a school in Harpenden town, did the Trust consider establishing the school in any other location in the area, and what criteria did they use to establish a location in Harpenden?

It is RSRP's view that the answers to these questions would illustrate an underlying issue that the school is being founded in area where there is no immediate local demand (as it is low and satisfied in existing schools) and that the demand should effectively be met by a location that would offer greater security to those pupils in areas currently suffering greater lack of success in obtaining places or within source areas where mass movement of pupils over distance is implicit.

Yours Faithfully

(Right School Right Place /)