



## **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS - KWS (Oct 2020)**

As you may be aware Hertfordshire County Council (Highways) recently wrote to a number of premises in the vicinity of Katharine Warington School outlining their intentions to introduce double yellow lines over a substantial area in Batford, Harpenden East and Lea Valley, Wheathampstead.

HCC has asked for views on their proposals, prior to formalising their process of introduction, but has provided sketchy plans and a very limited time to respond. Their letter recognised that their plans were difficult to read and invited recipients to contact them for more details to enable feedback. With two days remaining and a number of people requesting the clearer plans from HCC, RSRP is not aware of anyone having received a response and a request to local County Councillor for the area – David Williams – to request an extension of the deadline has so far gone unanswered.

A copy of the letter received by residents is included in the downloads' section and anyone affected is asked to forward comments to [informalconsultationdm@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:informalconsultationdm@hertfordshire.gov.uk) quoting reference DM/2009/20 or to write to HCC at the address (repeated at foot).

RSRP had hoped to provide constructive comments on the detail of the proposal, but as details have not been provided we can only provide general analysis. A number of concerns have been voiced on social media and most of these are valid. The principal concerns identified to date include:

- The scale of the measures proposed include substantially more double yellow lines than most other similar proposals, and may be in excess of 2km of lines. This seems unduly excessive.
- The measures are proposed for both sides of Lower Luton Road and along the undeveloped sides of many surrounding roads (e.g. Common Lane, Marquis Lane) and appear to fulfil the Council's stated objective which is to free passage for school traffic. The measures stop short of offering any protection to residents and other property owners in the roads around the school and given where proposals stop are likely to encourage school users to use the residential and other roads in the area (Crabtree Lane, Lea Valley Estate, Batford Road, Milford Hill etc). This will have the opposite effect than that sought as it will further congest roads for local occupiers.
- The measures are proposed as 'No waiting at any time' which, in the absence of further information from HCC, implies all day restriction when the measures are to address a school use which peaks for very limited periods in the day (morning drop off and afternoon pick up). Therefore local users will be penalised throughout the day for much longer than the source of the problem.
- The measures are of absolutely no use to address the true problems which are a totally unrealistic and unenforceable plan for school travel which called for no drop-offs / pick-ups within 800metres of the school entrance. The school has not yet completed a full year of regular operation with limited numbers, but has already stated it is powerless to enforce the conditions that were part of the grant of school planning permission.
- The same planning permission was granted on a Council promise of more than half pupils travelling by public transport – around 650 per day when the school is fully operational. At an average of 40 pupils per bus (after covid) that equates to 16 buses, the majority of which will serve only school pupils. The parking provision on site for buses, with safe unloading, is around 4 vehicles – there is already queuing in

ordinary bus stops (two bays in Lower Luton Road) as the school moves into a limited operation with only two of seven years attending.

- The Council are proposing these measures at a time when they have not yet completed the traffic mitigations required for the school plan – for example the new pedestrian light crossing outside the Amble Inn on Station Road – and therefore cannot have the evidence to judge the adequacy of the proposals they (HCC) put forward at Planning. Similarly the roundabout at the junction of Common Lane and Lower Luton Road has had to be partially rebuilt because it proved impractical. This work has just been completed and it is impractical to have assessed the effectiveness of the latest attempt.

All of the above are reasons to question the wisdom of the Council's proposal – in practice the proposals are likely to mean pushing more drop-offs and parental vehicles further into residential and working areas and, as the school Head has already commented he is not immune from the abuse of parents when asking for consideration. The other fault is that the proposals fail to address the cause of the problems and simply seek to push them out of sight – the root cause remains what was pointed out by RSRP throughout and magnified by the Council's planning approach. In the year after opening HCC's forecasts (of pupil numbers) dropped by over 100 per year and the number of applications received from Harpenden residents (at primary level) has been consistently around 420 per year for all the years expected to move through to secondary over the next 7 years. As a result Harpenden, and more specifically Harpenden North and East, Cllr Williams' constituency, has 750 places per year of capacity and 300 + per year pupils will have to travel in for secondary schooling. Katharine Warington School will attract a disproportionately higher number of these pupils which in turn will bring vastly higher travel distances than any of the more established schools which exacerbates the issue. For good measure HCC failed to plan for adequate parking on site, which would allow for both bus and car drop away from residential areas, and this has been reinforced by a bar on site entry – HCC has since put up a proposal for an identically sized school in Bishops Stortford with more than twice the provision for vehicles on site. The fault in this situation lies squarely at HCC's door as they controlled the site choice, the formulation of the plans and the hearing of the planning application, including submissions from their Highways Department as a statutory consultee that failed to pick up the scale of the traffic problem. You may therefore also wish to recommend that before resorting to draconian traffic measures which will put a burden on local people, HCC first take the whole question of traffic impact back to their Town Planning process to see if any solutions exist that would address the source of the problem and not the symptoms.

Address for postal submissions:

Hertfordshire County Council Traffic Order Services (Development)  
Network Strategy and Compliance Group (Highways), First Floor, East Link Corridor, Postal Point  
CH0242, County Hall, Pegs Lane Hertford. SG13 8DN

Local County Councillors:

Cllr David Williams (Harpenden North and East); Cllr Theresa Heritage (Harpenden South and West) and Cllr Annie Brewster (Harpenden Rural – including Wheathampstead and Redbourn) – email addresses on [Hertfordshire.gov.uk](http://Hertfordshire.gov.uk)

14 October 2020