

Planning Application 25/01830/FP

Transport Assessment & Travel Plan Objections

The Highway Authority, recognising the concerns raised by local residents regarding the severe cumulative impacts on Highfield and the local road network of the proposed commercial use of the school playing field, and the increased risk of highway safety and blocked ambulance access, required a 'robust plan'. These documents offer no understanding of the problems, no mitigation of risk and no meaningful management. There is no 'robust plan'.

1. Parking Sufficiency and On-Street Parking

The Transport Assessment (TA) concludes that the existing 124 car parking spaces (including 9 accessible bays) are sufficient, with 29 spaces available during the proposed peak demand of 95 cars (at 19:00–19:15).

Challenging the "Worst-Case" Car Occupancy: The calculation assumes a multi-occupancy rate of 2 players per car to determine the total vehicle trips (7 two-way vehicle trips per pitch or 28 arrivals/departures per hour for 4 pitches). For junior sports, most parents bring one child and wait, resulting in a much higher number of single-occupancy trips, which would significantly increase the demand for parking beyond the 95 vehicles calculated for the 19:00–19:15 peak. When the parking demand exceeds the 124 spaces, it will directly lead to vehicles parking on Highfield's narrow road.

Extending Existing Restrictions would be ineffective as they are widely ignored: The TA notes that existing parking restrictions on Highfield: 'SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR' (08:00–17:00, Mon-Fri) and single yellow lines (08:00–17:00, Mon-Fri). These are only monitored if residents specific request it so the risk of fines to illegal parkers is very low. Waiting in attended vehicles is no risk. Since the AGP will operate from 16:00 onwards on weekdays, and is in heavy use after 17:00, extending the current parking restrictions on Highfield would be completely ineffective during the busiest times for the AGP and community use unless the council is able to fund much greater monitoring. This lack of enforceable restrictions will inevitably result in increased on-street parking, congestion, and highway safety issues on Highfield as well as numerous resident requests for traffic warden intervention.

2. Highway Safety and Accident Data

The TA reviews accident data (2019–2023) and finds only one slight accident in the vicinity, concluding the development will not exacerbate an existing highway safety issue.

- **Accident Data:** Quoting 1 road accident of one in 5 years as an indication of low risk is misleading. That accident is only meaningful as a predictor of future risks if you factor that number to allow for the increased heavy traffic periods, the different travel type and the time of day. That accident occurred during one of 2 heavy traffic periods of 20minutes per day in term time. At that time traffic is almost entirely cars driven by members of pupils' families. Travel is in daylight. Factoring that one accident to allow for the number of increased heavy traffic periods (up to 56 two-way vehicle trips potentially once an hour almost every waking hour throughout the year outside school hours and terms) already

produces numbers which should be of real concern. Factoring further to allow for numbers of younger drivers, motorbikes and for travel during darkness in a poorly lit road implies serious risks for drivers, riders, children and particularly pedestrians.

3. Travel Plan Measures and Monitoring

The Travel Plan aims for a **10% reduction in trips to the site by car** to be achieved within three years of opening the AGP without any robust way to achieve that target, it's fanciful.

- **Baseline and Targets:** Travel Plan **lacks any pre-determined baseline** or hard, quantifiable targets *at the time of the application*, making it difficult to assess its credibility and enforceability upfront. Setting a target **after** the application is approved, based on a baseline survey to be completed within 3 months of opening, is not robust. Lack of a baseline suggests lack of understanding. Proposing a target cut of 10% in 3years is nugatory, a token.

Trip Generation and Peak Hour Conflict

The proposal's success heavily relies on the assumption that traffic from the AGP will not coincide with the school's peak drop-off/pick-up period.

- **Mitigation and Peak Hour Conflict:** The TA states the AGP use is "anticipated to take place from 16:00 onwards, to mitigate the risk of causing conflict with the school pick-up period". However, the proposed weekday AGP operation starts at **16:00**, with arrivals potentially starting at **15:45**. At this time, the school car park is still occupied by staff cars and by parents picking children up from after school clubs etc. There would be limited car park spaces available for AGP users, so they will park in the narrow road, exacerbating traffic problems and road safety risks.
 - The combined parking accumulation peaks at **118** vehicles between **15:45–16:00**, showing a **direct overlap** where AGP traffic (28 arrivals) is added to the tail end of the school's peak departure period. This overlap, even with existing departures, is likely to cause congestion and queuing on Highfield Road, which is already a concern for local residents, as acknowledged in the Highways Consultation Response.
 - The TA claims the peak hours are **17:00–19:00** on a weekday, but the parking survey shows the school's existing peak *accumulation* is **14:45–15:00** (158 vehicles). The crucial time is the **crossover period** (15:45–16:00), when school and AGP traffic mix, leading to an immediate local highway impact on Highfield Road that could be considered 'severe' in this immediate vicinity.
 - The traffic and car parking requirements for people attending classes, clubs, parties in the sports hall, which is regularly hired out (despite the fact that residents were promised, in 2014 when the new school building was approved, that the sports hall was for school use only and would not be hired out outside school times), are ignored. Similarly, no account is taken of requirements for people attending Highfield School's extra-curricular.

The original Highway Authority recommendation was for the application to be **refused** due to *insufficient evidence* and requested a Transport Statement **and** a robust Travel Plan. The plan is not robust.