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Your Ref: 2021/62/93674/W
Our Ref: 40025/NMA

FAO Nick Hirst
Senior Planning Officer
Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
Civic Centre
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HD1 1WG

20 December 2024

Dear Nick

2021/62/93674 – Greenhead College – Application for Non-Material Amendment

We write with background information in support of the Application for a Non-Material Amendment to planning condition 37 of planning application 2021/62/93674. This application is not seeking to amend any aspects of the use, size or location of the development and would ensure that the condition meets the six tests for conditions.

Planning Condition 37 is currently worded thus:

37. The total number of students shall at no time exceed 2,800 and staff shall not exceed 185 (full time equivalent).

We request an amendment to the wording of the condition such that it reads thus (or similar):

37. The total number of students shall at no time exceed 3,275 and staff shall not exceed 210 (full time equivalent).

The final phase of a construction project that was subject to this consent to replace dilapidated teaching and support spaces at Greenhead College is underway. The first phase to construct a four-storey replacement teaching block for science and psychology, replacement car park and artificial pitch was completed in October 2023.

Background

Greenhead College is one of the highest performing sixth form colleges in the country and rated Outstanding by Ofsted in their most recent inspection in 2022. The college is the largest provider of A-Levels in the area and does not offer applied or vocational courses.

Kirklees is experiencing significant growth in demand for sixth form education due to demographic increases in the number of 16- to 17-year-olds, the change in the law requiring young people in England to continue in education and training until their 18th birthday and the improving performance of local secondary schools. Data provided by Kirklees Council forecasts an increase of 947 learners aged 16 to 17 in the borough by 2027-28. The college previously secured grant funding for a potential project on the Trinity West site in the former Huddersfield Infirmary Building, but this could not proceed, primarily as the landowner had allowed the building to deteriorate to a state where a refurbishment project would be uneconomical.

Kirklees Council has a statutory duty under Section 18A of the Education Act 1996 to secure suitable education and training provision to meet the reasonable needs of all young people between 4 and 19. The local authority proactively engages with post-16 providers to advise of forecast changes in demand and assist in commissioning additional places across a range of providers. Facilitating additional places at Greenhead College is a key part of the local authority's strategy for ensuring that all young people in the area have access to a suitable place.

The need to facilitate additional students at Greenhead College is urgent to meet exceptional demand and to ensure statutory duties can be met.

Supporting Information

Planning condition 37 effectively caps the number of students and staff that the college can have on site at any one time in perpetuity and irrespective of any mitigations the college puts in place. In our extensive experience in working with education providers across the UK, including many large universities and colleges in urban areas, we have not seen such a restrictive operational constraint applied which would remain in perpetuity.

Akin to many colleges and universities that are near to town/city centres, but in residential areas, Greenhead College has received anecdotal feedback in the past that parking on nearby residential streets is being generated by their students. Given that Huddersfield Town Centre, the Railway Station and Bus Station are a very short walk from the college site, there is a high probability that most parking demand Monday to Friday is being primarily generated by commuters and not college staff or students.

We understand that the background to this planning condition may have been implemented due to concerns raised by Local Councillors regarding highways matters and parking on surrounding streets. At the time that the planning application was submitted and considered, there was limited information on actual parking behaviour on surrounding streets and the travel habits of staff and students. Extensive survey work and parking beat surveys have now been completed, in the first year of the new replacement teaching building, and since improved on-site car parking and cycle parking been operational. This work has been submitted as supporting information from this NMA application and clearly demonstrates that parking demand on the surrounding highway network is not being generated by Greenhead College.

To assist you in your decision with respect to this non-material amendment application, we have set out some of the relevant points below:

1. **The college is not seeking any increase in floor space** and confirms that any future plans would be subject to a full application.
2. The college is not seeking any amendments to the development location, use, size or appearance.
3. The current cap on student and staff numbers is not based on evidence of parking beat/demand surveys and has no mechanism for being adjusted or removed.
4. The condition capping student and staff numbers does not appear to be in line with planning conditions applied to developments by other similar providers.
5. A parking demand/beat survey has been completed in the summer holiday and in term time on all surrounding roads and shows no changes in the level of parking – this shows **the college is not a significant generator of parking demand on local highways**.
6. Greenhead College operates a proactive Travel Plan and travel surveys show **over 81% of students travel to college by sustainable means** (this is included in the supporting information to the NMA application).
7. The most recent annual travel survey shows that no staff park outside of the designated on-site car parks.
8. Greenhead College is exceptionally well located to transport hubs and if student demand cannot be met at Greenhead, young people will have to travel further and are more likely to travel by non-sustainable modes. This is contrary to Policy LP20 in the Local Plan and would be to the detriment of Policy LP21 at other education sites.
9. If the NMA is not approved, Greenhead will not be able to meet the request of Kirklees Council to assist them in their statutory duty to provide suitable places for 16 to 18 year-olds.
10. Given the nature of the existing highways network, the existing levels of vehicles and pedestrians and the high levels of travel by sustainable modes, there will be no detrimental impact on the highway network.

We trust that the above information, and the supporting information submitted with the application, will assist you in coming to your decision. We understand that the Local Authority is under significant pressure with capacity and planning activity, however, the college must make offers to new Year 12 students by early-Feb 2025. A decision on this application is critical to the college being able to make offers, so it would be greatly appreciated if it could be expedited, as far as possible.

If any further information is required to enable a decision to be made, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours Faithfully,

Kerrie Norman

Director

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