

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

For the benefit of Mitcham Cricket Green
Conservation Area and its environs

CRANMER SCHOOL –community use and travel plan

**Application number 14/P2791
September 2014**

1. Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage takes an active interest in the future of the Cricket Green Conservation Area and its environs. We are the civic society for this part of Merton and part of the wider civic movement through membership of the national charity Civic Voice. We have been closely involved in the development of the new Character Study, the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and numerous development proposals in the area as well as the recent bids for Heritage Lottery Fund support. The Cricket Green Charter (<http://bit.ly/1l4jbDi>) establishes our approach to development and change in the area and was developed in partnership with the London Borough of Merton, the local community and our local councillors.

2. We supported the expansion plans for Cranmer School back in May 2013 subject to some important caveats, including around the impact of the "school run" and the need for an inclusive approach to the community use of the new facilities.

3. We have considered the current application to discharge the planning conditions for providing community access and a travel plan and do not consider them to have been adequately fulfilled.

Community access

4. We welcome the opportunity for the local community provided by the new facilities at Cranmer School, including the new MUGA. The scheme for community access is welcome for the commitment to "*....provide opportunities for local people and sports organisations to participate in sport and physical activity.*" This is especially pertinent given the lack of community access to the two new floodlit MUGAs adjacent to the Canons Leisure Centre despite local representations. However, the school uses a definition of community that is narrow and limiting in not going beyond parents/guardians and school users and that is inconsistent with Cranmer School's mission statement which commits it to "*working in partnership with parents, governors and the community to enrich the learning experiences for all*". It remains unclear from the scheme for community access how local people will access the facilities unless they are connected to Merton Sports Partnership, Harris Academy or Mitcham Rugby Club. As it currently stands, the scheme excludes local people who have no link to local schools or play rugby for a club.

5. We ask that the scheme for community access is amended to explain the manner in which local people will have use of the facilities. This should include providing

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minimum standards of access and providing timings and costs for when the facilities will be available. We would also ask that community access is provided to the open space and also meeting rooms within the school.

6. We would also encourage out-of-hours use of the MUGA facilities to focus on the pitch furthest away from Caesar's Walk to minimise the impact on local residents.

Travel plan

7. We have previously highlighted the impact of the school run on the surrounding area. This is already a concern and will be significantly worsened by a 50% increase in the number of pupils. The information accompanying the planning application barely made any reference to the illegal parking and obstruction that is a daily experience in Bramcote Avenue and The Close as well as along Cranmer Green Road. We were pleased, therefore, that this issue was pressed by councillors during discussion at Planning Committee and conditions were placed on the planning permission.

8. It is very disappointing to have been presented with an inadequate travel plan. This does not address the problem of the "school run" and, despite the evident engagement of pupils, it has not been developed in consultation with the local community. The objective should be to reduce impacts to below current levels even after the expansion. This can be achieved through more effective measures, their implementation and enforcement. Instead we have been presented with a travel plan that conforms to the lowest standard of accreditation under the STAR Sustainable Travel and Accreditation Scheme. We welcome the increased proportion of pupils and staff travelling to Cranmer School other than by car but more needs to be done, especially given the local catchment, and stronger provisions are needed to monitor and enforce the travel plan's requirements.

9. Given the sensitivity of this location and the evident problems with existing levels of use we believe that a much higher accreditation level should be required to manage the expansion. This approach should be developed in collaboration with the local community and we should be happy to play our role in supporting this. A Silver level accreditation was secured in 2009 and this is the minimum standard which should be allowed before the planning conditions can be discharged. The plan should also be regularly reviewed with input from the local community and not just at the Governors' AGM.

10. We ask that the current application to discharge these planning conditions is rejected until the issues identified in these representations have been addressed.