

Dear Kate Cornwall-Jones,

I'm writing on behalf of the Fortune Green & West Hampstead Neighbourhood Development Forum (NDF) to give comments on the consultation about the expansion of Kingsgate School onto the Liddell Road site. Thank you for agreeing to accept comments after the deadline earlier this week.

Following on from discussions at last night's NDF meeting, and previous discussions about the Liddell Road site, we would like to make the following points:

1. The NDF strongly supports the need for additional primary school places in the area. This is reflected in the current draft of our Plan (Policy 9i).
2. The NDF feels that a wider discussion/consultation should have taken place previously about the nature of the need for additional school places and the best site for a school. A number of NDF members are concerned that the Council appears to have chosen the Liddell Road site without any consultation in the community. For some people, the fact that Liddell Road has already been chosen as the site for a school means the result of the consultation is a foregone conclusion. We would also have liked to have been able to consider the option of a new primary school and whether it should be an academy.
3. While we appreciate the good record of Kingsgate school, we are aware of a number of problems in developing a co-sited school with sites so far apart. We are particularly worried about the walking route between the two sites. There are also questions about whether it is wise to create such a large primary school and a concern that such an expansion could have a negative impact on Kingsgate school's good record.
4. Without clearer information about the catchment area of the co-sited school, many people feel unable to express an opinion about whether a co-sited school is a good or bad idea.
5. In light of the above, and the differing views among members of the Forum, the NDF is not able to give a consensus view on the proposed extension of Kingsgate School. While some NDF members support the idea, there is not a majority in favour of what is currently being proposed.
6. It is worth noting that on nearly every issue discussed by the NDF to date (and included in the current draft) we have been able to find a consensus or clear majority support. The fact that, on this issue, there is no clear view does reinforce the opinion that there has been a lack of consultation and engagement in the community about these plans.
- 7. The NDF has therefore agreed to back a position calling for more information and more clarity about the proposals before any final decision is made. This is a hugely important decision for our community, which we will have to live with for decades to come - it is vitally important that a decision is made that clearly benefits the community and has wide support. NDF members would also like to be consulted on a variety of options for addressing the shortage of primary school places in the area - rather than just one proposal.**
8. As it is likely that a final draft of our Plan will be in place before any further consultations are brought forward, the NDF would also like to outline its views in the case

that a decision is made to go ahead with the Liddell Road redevelopment. These points are listed below.

9. There will need to be a discussion about the amount of land any school building takes up and the height of the school building. Is it, for example, reasonable to limit the school to two storeys, while having other development at, say, six or seven storeys? In light of the controversial design of the Emmanuel School extension, the design of any new school building will be an important issue.

10. The NDF welcomes the protection of the 'green corridor' between the site and Maygrove Road.

11. The NDF would like to see the plans include an expansion of Maygrove Peace Park onto the site. The Park is currently small and will need to be expanded to accommodate the growing population around it.

12. The NDF considers any loss of jobs and businesses from the Liddell Road site to be highly significant. A number of the businesses have told us they would like to stay in the area, but cannot find suitable premises. We would like the Council to work harder to find suitable sites within the area. The empty - and currently unused - council offices at 156 West End Lane should be reopened and offered to these businesses.

13. As Liddell Road is such an important and rare light industrial site for the borough (see LDF 8.10 & 8.13) we think that any redevelopment should seek to replace as much of this type of use as possible. Any redevelopment of Liddell Road should have the same amount - or more - of the commercial floor space which currently exists on the site.

14. In light of point 13, we consider the need for housing to be far less on this site. The main priority should be affordable housing. If this affects the financial viability of the scheme, it should be subsidised by part of the money raised by the Council through the sale of the 156 West End Lane site.

15. We also think that the Council has failed to consider the impact of the area of the various approved/planned developments around the site. The developments at 59 Maygrove Road, 65-67 Maygrove Road, the Iverson Tyres site and the Iverson garden centre site will, in all, bring around 180 new homes to the area immediately surrounding Liddell Road. We are concerned that there are no plans to cope with such large scale development in such a small area.

16. We are also concerned about access to the Liddell Road site. This would be vastly improved by the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the railway lines from the Maygrove Peace Park to the bottom of Broomsleigh Street. If this can't be funded by the development of the site, it should be paid for from the money raised through the sale of 156 West End Lane.

We hope you find these comments helpful. The NDF remains committed to engaging with the Council on this issue and any future development of the Liddell Road site. We urge the Council to be as open as possible with local residents and businesses about its proposals.

James Earl (Chair, Fortune Green & West Hampstead NDF).