

COMMENTS

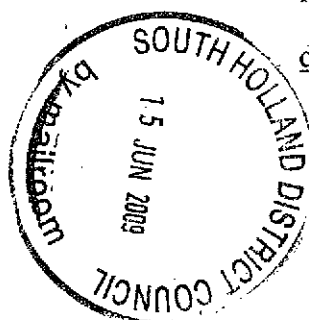
PEDALS 2009 - Spalding's Cycle Action Group

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11 June 2009

Mr Steve Williams
Head of Planning and Development
South Holland District Council
Priory Road
SPALDING PE11 2XE



Dear Mr Williams

COMMENTS BY PEDALS ON ST NORBERT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL'S TRAVEL PLAN AND PROVISION OF CYCLE PARKING

Thanks for your letter to our Chairman David Jones on 5 June regarding H16/0343/09, St Norbert's School. PEDALS response is as follows:

Requirements

The planning application for the school's expansion, H16/1118/08, requires the submission and approval of a Travel Plan, Condition 5, prior to development starting; and approval of the provision of cycle racks, Condition 6, prior to the first use of the development.

Travel Plan

This is dated March 2008, so first needs to be updated as it is 15 months old, and, therefore, prepared before the planning application. It includes various target dates that have long since past so what has happened needs to be included in an updated Plan.

The Plan contains good objectives, targets and actions. However, it also contains several "we will investigate". The outcomes and results now need to be reported. An annual progress report is referred to but does not appear in the Plan.

The travel survey was done in January 2008 and a 'Hands Up' survey was due to be done in October 2008. Again, the latter needs to be reported, along with any changes in targets and actions as a result of it. The response rates of surveys, i.e. what proportions of parents and pupils responded, should be mentioned in the Plan. This is vital information for assessing the robustness of the results.

Travel Plans last many years and targets should ideally be set as short, medium and long term – 2, 4 and 6 years ahead. The current targets, therefore, should be revised.

The actions proposed are entirely sensible and logical – school crossing patrol, lower speeds, cycle training, cycle routes, walking bus, and car sharing. But there is no information on how these are progressing. Many of these are the responsibility of Lincolnshire County Council, which is an essential Plan partner. So their responses to the school's proposals should feature in the Plan. In updating the Plan can these be included?

The school is quite right in identifying the lack of cycle routes in this area of the town. PEDALS strongly supports greater provision, especially to/from schools, as well as lower speed limits. A Government good practice guide, in 2003¹, stated "We would like all local transport authorities to consider the case for 20mph zones around schools". And in 2006, guidance² advocated 20mph zones in the vicinity of schools. Currently there is only a 20mph advisory limit at school times in the *immediate* vicinity. The county council needs to consider a much wider area if cycling and walking are to be *positively* encouraged – SHDC's requirement, see below.

The council's decision notice requires the Travel Plan to:

- Contain proposals that "positively encourage" sustainable travel
- "Set out a timetable for its implementation"
- Have a "programme and methodology for monitoring and review"

On the first, the proposals arguably are there but are over a year old. On the second, the timetable, with a few exceptions, only covers 2008, as it was set 15 months ago. And on the third, although the Action Plan includes a 'monitoring and evaluation' column no results are given.

Cycle racks

The letter from CP Associates on 15 May 2009 merely confirms that racks will be provided – "We confirm that racks will be provided prior to occupation of the building. Although the Governors have not formally agreed the exact position of the cycle shed, it is likely to be sited adjacent to the pedestrian access gate to the south of the site".

Surely to discharge the condition information is needed about: the amount and type of

¹ Department for Education and Skills, and Department for Transport, 2003, Travelling to School: a good practice guide.

² Department for Transport, 2006, Setting Local Speed Limits, Circular 01/2006.

cycle parking, whether secure, its position, and whether the amount, along with current provision, accords with the demand envisaged in the Travel Plan.

There have been so many examples of the wrong amount and type of racks being installed in the wrong places at developments in Spalding that PEDALS regards it as essential that the council knows well in advance that provision will accord with County Council standards. The Department for Transport³ also has valuable guidance - "Cycle parking should be in a high-profile location alongside building entrances, well-lit, safe, secure". Currently the council would seem to have no firm information regarding these sort of vital details. Yet its decision notice specifically expresses interest in knowing about the location and design.

Conclusions

The Travel Plan should not be approved until it is updated and includes progress since March 2008, latest survey results, implications of the school's expansion, and revised actions/targets. It is essential to monitor Travel Plans and measure progress and success, and there is no evidence yet of any results emerging from its implementation that began early last year.

Information needs to be forthcoming on the location, amount, and type of cycle parking, together with associated facilities such as security and lighting.

Yours sincerely



David Hurdle
On behalf of PEDALS

Copy: Jon Sharpe, Lincolnshire County Council

³ Department for Transport, 2008, Essential Guide to Travel Planning.