



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

24 May 2018

Cllr Chris Maskell
Planning Applications Committee
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading RG1 2LU

Dear Chris

I am writing to raise concerns about the planning application for a fence to be erected in Westfield Park, I want to oppose this application on a number of grounds after speaking to local residents about this issue.

I would like to ask you and the Planning Committee to turn down this application and to ask the relevant officers in the Council's Education Department to re-think their approach and to find an alternative solution which is acceptable to both residents and The Heights School. I believe the application for the fence is completely out of keeping in the park and that it would cause significant problems for the local community.

The issues I'm concerned about are:

1. The effect of the proposed fence on the amenity value of the park

The application would, I believe, significantly harm residents' ability to enjoy the park, which is a much needed green space in a very densely populated area. It is enjoyed by a wide range of local people including families with young children, older people and a range of other members of the community. The proposal to fence off part of the park is causing a great deal of upset among these local people and I do hope the Committee will consider this when assessing the application.

2. The appearance of the fence

At present there are sweeping views across the park which is an open and attractive green space with trees and flowers around the edge and a large, grassy open space for children to play in and for other activities in the middle of the space. The fence-line would break this up and fundamentally change the appearance of the park.

(Continued)

3. **This would be a semi-permanent structure and could set a precedent in planning terms**

The Heights School may be based off Gosbrook Road for some time and as a result residents and other park users are likely to have to suffer the effects of the fence for a long period of time.

4. **Christchurch Meadows (Sandy Park) should not be seen as an alternative**

The nearby green space at Christchurch Meadows between Gosbrook Road and the River Thames should not be seen as an alternative for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is across a busy road containing three lanes of traffic which often travels at high speeds and is frequently congested. This makes it difficult to access for older people and young families, particularly if they just want to spend a few minutes enjoying the park. Secondly, Christchurch Meadows are used for football at the weekend and as a result are not suitable for many activities which are undertaken by families with young children, and elderly people (quiet play, picnics and enjoying the view of the park from park benches). Thirdly, Christchurch Meadows are also used for other activities such as the Reading Beer and Jazz Festival.

I do hope you take the above points into consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Matt Rodda MP, Reading East