



WALKING BUS TECHNICAL NOTE

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Project:	Abacus Belsize Primary School – Planning Application Reference 2019/2375/P
Subject:	Walking Bus Technical Note & Report of Practical Demonstration

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Paul Mew Associates (PMA) is instructed by the Department for Education (DfE) on behalf of the CfBT Schools Trust in relation to the proposed development at the Former Hampstead Police Station, 26 Rosslyn Hill, London, NW3 1PD.

1.2 A planning application has been submitted to Camden Council for the proposed change of use of the Former Hampstead Police Station (which is Grade II listed) to permanently relocate an existing established one form entry (FE) primary school, Abacus Belsize Primary School, from its current (temporary) site under D1 of the land use class order. A description of the development is set out as follows, the planning application reference number is 2019/2375/P:

“Change of use of the site from a police station (sui generis) to a one-form entry school (Use Class D1) for 210 pupils and business/enterprise space (Class B1) including alterations to the rear and associated works.”

1.3 Abacus Belsize Primary School currently operates from premises at the Jubilee Waterside Centre, 105 Camley Street, London, N1C 4PF on a temporary basis.

1.4 At present the school operates a coach and mini-bus service which transports its pupils and some staff from the catchment area to the current temporary accommodation. The catchment area for the school is the area immediately south of the preferred

permanent site at the Former Hampstead Police Station on Rosslyn Hill. An illustration of the school's catchment area is presented on a map below.



Source: Google Maps/PMA

- 1.5 Should the planning application for the proposed change of use be permitted by Camden Council, current coach/mini-bus trips will no longer be necessary as the majority of the pupils and staff will live within walking and cycling distance of the new school site. Those school-related walking, scooting, and cycling trip to the pick-up points will simply transfer to the new premises.
- 1.6 The proposed walking bus route is 1km in total from the centre of the catchment and will take under 20 minutes to walk. The walking route is planned to be run by the parents of the school.

School Travel Plan

- 1.7 Abacus Belsize Primary School currently implements a School Travel Plan at its existing temporary premises at the Jubilee Waterside Centre. As of September 2019 the Travel Plan has attained a Silver Accreditation following Transport for London's (TfL) STARS

(Sustainable Travel: Active, Responsible, Safe) scheme. The School's Travel Plan together with a School Travel Plan Statement prepared by Paul Mew Associates have been submitted with the aforementioned planning application.

- I.8 The School Travel Plan Coordinator is the Headteacher, Vicki Briody. The role is shared with Stephanie Savvides-Howell who is a senior member of the school's management staff. Since February 2018 the school has been working closely with Camden Council's School Travel Plan Officer, Michelle Jamieson, on its new STARS compliant School Travel Plan document.
- I.9 The school will continue to implement and adapt its Travel Plan at the new premises as part of any future planning permission, in close working partnership with Camden Council's Travel Plan Department. Through the School's commitment to its Travel Plan there will be a clear obligation for continued engagement in this process if planning permission is granted. The School Travel Plan will be clear in demonstrating how the school's impacts will be mitigated. It is also the School's intention to set up a working group to review the annual travel plan and will include local resident and community representatives.
- I.10 The implementation of the School Travel Plan will be secured by Camden Council as a condition of any future planning permission as well as in the S106 Agreement at the new site and will therefore become a legally binding and enforceable document.

Walking Bus

- I.11 Owing to the current temporary location of Abacus Belsize Primary School some 4/5 kilometres to the south east of the proposed new site and the school's catchment area, walking to school as an outright trip is presently not an option for the vast majority of its pupils. Accordingly, a walking bus is not a travel activity that is currently practical for the school to organise.
- I.12 However this situation will be entirely different if planning permission is granted for the school to move to its planned new premises at the former Hampstead Police Station.

- I.13 The school has mapped the evolution of its catchment area since 2013. Now that a new Reception class has started as of September 2019 Abacus Belsize Primary School is able to clarify that for the past 3 years of Reception admissions no place has been offered to any child outside of catchment for the start of September who does not live in catchment. The only exceptions have been for those with an older sibling in the school, 'Looked After Child' (which, in common with every state school, the school accepts regardless of catchment) or the child of a member of staff.
- I.14 The school has been taking admissions for 7 years now, so there are still siblings of early pupil intakes that were accepted from outside of the catchment area. By the time the school moves to its permanent site, it is likely that many of these children will have left the school. The percentage of children from catchment is therefore likely to move even closer to 100%.
- I.15 The catchment area is within an easy walking distance from the site and therefore a walking bus is something that the school is extremely keen to implement as part of its School Travel Plan at its new site.
- I.16 By definition a walking bus is a form of 'active' transport for schoolchildren who, marshalled by at least two adults (a "Driver" leads the bus from the front and a "Conductor" follows), walk to school along a set route, in much the same way a school bus would drive them to school. A walking bus is a fully recognised 'travel activity' in TfL's STARS scheme and contributes towards School Travel Plan accreditation.
- I.17 The school is committed to implementing a walking bus as part of its School Travel Plan at the new site, and on Saturday 11th May 2019 around 30 children and around 12 parents actively took part in a trial run. The purpose of this Technical Note is to set out details of the walking bus trial and illustrate how this will become an established part of the School's Travel Plan.

2.0 ABACUS BELSIZE PRIMARY SCHOOL; WALKING BUS

Start Point

- 2.1 The main start point for the walking bus is within an open public square at the Belsize Terrace junction with Belsize Lane which is within the centre of the school's catchment area.
- 2.2 This location provides a safe and practical space for children and parents/carers to congregate at the beginning of the walking bus. An illustration of the start of the walking bus demonstration is presented below:



Source: Abacus Belsize Primary School

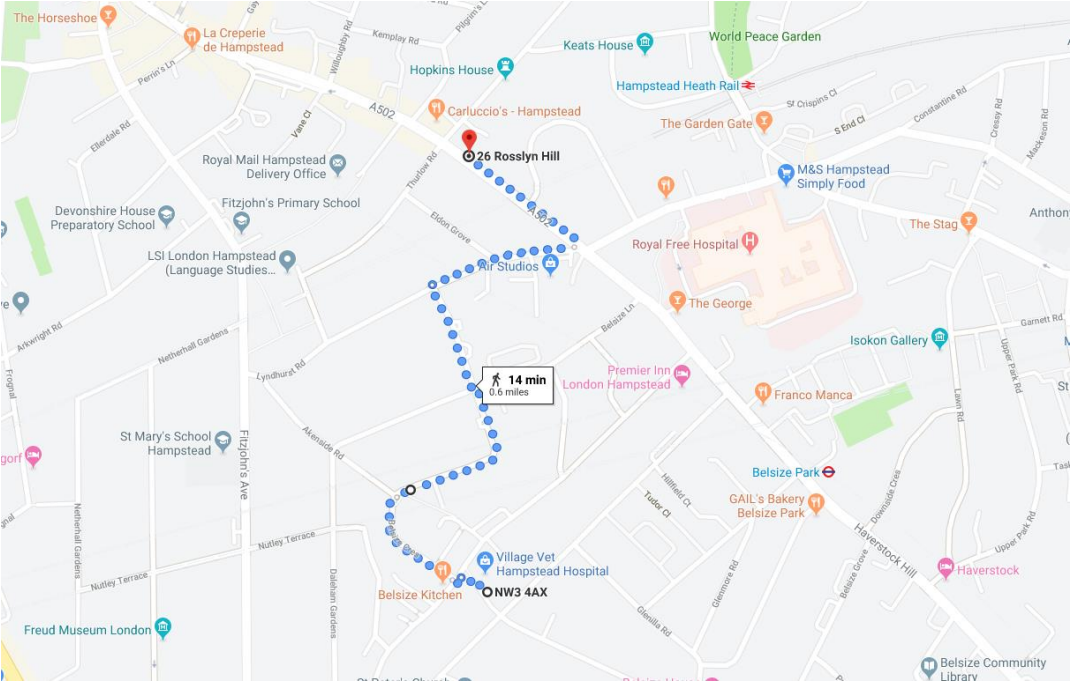
- 2.3 The majority of the children who will be taking part in the walking bus on a daily basis would meet at the main start point at the Belsize Terrace junction with Belsize Lane, as was the case during the recent demonstration.

2.4 Two secondary walking bus start points have also been identified based partly on the post code plot of the most recent school intake. One is at the Buckland Crescent junction with Fitzjohn's Avenue in the south west extent of the school catchment area, and one is at the Eton Avenue junction with Belsize Park Gardens towards the south east extent of the school catchment area. Both of these secondary walking bus start points link directly to the main point in the open public square at the Belsize Terrace junction with Belsize Lane.

2.5 The Buckland Crescent junction with Fitzjohn's Avenue is around just a 500 metre walk from the main start point, and the Eton Avenue junction with Belsize Park Gardens is around 700 metres from the main start point.

Walking Bus Main Route

2.6 The planned route of the walking bus from the main start point at the Belsize Terrace junction with Belsize Lane to the proposed site will: lead along Belsize Crescent to Lyndhurst Gardens, turn right at the Lyndhurst Gardens junction with Lyndhurst Road, cross the A502 Rosslyn Hill at the signal controls, and finally head up the hill for the last 200 metres or so to the site. This is the route that was taken on the demonstration. The plan below demonstrates the walk route on a map base:



Source: Google Maps

- 2.7 The walking bus route only requires crossing at six road junctions, two of which are at controlled crossing points and the remaining four are at lightly trafficked junctions where uncontrolled crossing can be performed safely and with the assistance of the walking bus 'driver' and 'conductor'.
- 2.8 The first crossing point is across Belsize Lane from the open public square to Belsize Crescent. A 'zebra' crossing is located at this point which allows a safe and controlled crossing for the walking bus (refer to the image below):



Source: Google Streetview

- 2.9 The walking bus then heads along Belsize Lane to Lyndhurst Gardens, there is one required crossing at the junction with Wedderburn Road which is lightly trafficked and will be safely managed by the 'driver' and 'conductor'.
- 2.10 Then there is one further required crossing at the junction of Lyndhurst Gardens and Lyndhurst Road where there is a kerb build-out to facilitate safe pedestrian crossing (photo as follows):



Source: Google Streetview

- 2.11 The walking bus then heads along Lyndhurst Gardens on the north side of the road towards the A502 Rosslyn Hill.
- 2.12 There is a further required crossing at the junction with Eldon Grove which again is lightly trafficked and will be safely managed by the 'driver' and 'conductor'.
- 2.13 The penultimate crossing point to get to the school is across the A502 Rosslyn Hill at the junction with Lyndhurst Road.
- 2.14 There is a 'green man' pedestrian phase within the signal controls at this junction which again allows a safe and controlled crossing for the walking bus (refer to the image as follows):



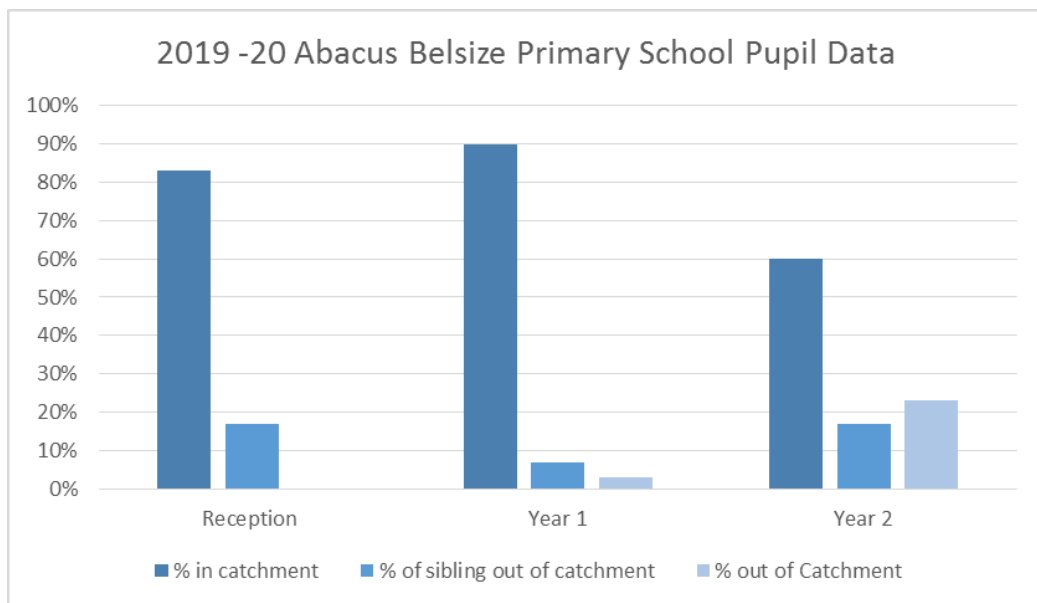
Source: Google Streetview

- 2.15 Once safely across the A502 Rosslyn Hill the walking bus leads up the hill for the final circa. 200 metre part of the journey on the east side of the road. The footpath on Rosslyn Hill at this point is generously wide ranging from around 5.5-6 metres in width up to the junction with Hampstead Hill Gardens.
- 2.16 Getting across the Hampstead Hill Gardens junction is the final crossing point for the walking bus, again safely managed by the 'driver' and 'conductor', before getting to the school. The footpath on the final stretch of Rosslyn Hill up to the site remains generously wide ranging from around 3.5-6 metres in width before increasing further to around 6.4 metres immediately outside the former Hampstead Police Station building.
- 2.17 The total distance from the main walking bus start point at the Belsize Terrace junction with Belsize Lane to the proposed site is around 1 kilometre, the majority of this journey is completed along relatively quiet and lightly trafficked side streets with only the final 200 metres or so along the busier A502 Rosslyn Hill.
- 2.18 The walking bus demonstration from the open square to the 'playground' at the proposed new school site was timed at just under 20 minutes on the day. It is anticipated that the walking bus time will be reduced by at least a few minutes once it is established.

Walking Bus Implementation

- 2.19 As is set out in TfL's STARS School Travel Plan scheme, walking buses are suitable for primary school pupils and their parents/carers and are a sociable and active way to travel to school. Pupils and volunteers meet at an agreed time and location and walk a set route to school in a group, picking up 'passengers' along the way. The same is done in reverse for the walk home.
- 2.20 While the walking bus can be initiated and supported by the school, it works best when run informally by parents, carers, and volunteers. In the case of Abacus Belsize Primary, the school has already initiated a walking bus and therefore this activity will run with the help of parents, carers, and volunteers when the school is established at its planned new premises.
- 2.21 The walking bus demonstration was very well attended by parents, carers, and volunteers as well as the children themselves and therefore it is anticipated that the school's walking bus will be a successful main mode of travel for a significant portion of the school's pupils.
- 2.22 As discussed now that a new Reception class has started as of September 2019 Abacus Belsize Primary School is able to further clarify that for the past 3 years of Reception admissions no place has been offered to any child outside of catchment for the start of September who does not live in catchment. The only exceptions have been for those with an older sibling in the school, 'Looked After Child' (which, in common with every state school, the school accepts regardless of catchment) or the child of a member of staff.
- 2.23 The school has been taking admissions for 7 years now, so there are still siblings of early pupil intakes that were accepted from outside of the catchment area. By the time the school moves to its permanent site, it is likely that many of these children will have left the school. The percentage of children from catchment is therefore likely to move even closer to 100%.
- 2.24 The chart below illustrates the percentage of pupils inside and outside the catchment area, as well as the percentage of siblings, at Abacus Belsize Primary School Pupil using

the 2019-20 data. As is shown, in the current Reception Class 0% of pupils are from outside of catchment other than siblings of older children. Once established at the new site it is reasonable to expect that 100% of school intakes will be from within the defined catchment area and therefore within an easy walk, scoot, or cycle distance from the school.



Source: Abacus Belsize Primary School

- 2.25 The catchment area is within an easy walking, scooting, and cycling distance from the site and therefore the walking bus is anticipated to be extremely successful.
- 2.26 The walking bus will be implemented as part of the existing established School Travel Plan at the new site. As discussed, the implementation of the School Travel Plan at the new site will be secured by Camden Council as a condition of any future planning permission as well as in the S106 Agreement and will therefore become a legally binding and enforceable document.
- 2.27 Walking buses are a great way to encourage walking to school as a main mode of travel and are also very easy to set-up and maintain. Now that the route and the start point(s) have been established, all that will be needed to run the bus is a group of organised parents/carers/volunteers to coordinate the walking bus(es) of which there are many, hi-vis jackets or badges for the children as well as volunteers to make everyone easily recognisable and stand out during the darker months, and promotion of walking buses on school notice board(s) and in newsletters. The use of hi-vis jackets has

been well established in the demonstration as is shown in the following image from the day:



Source: Abacus Belsize Primary School

2.28 The walking bus will be evidenced in the Abacus Belsize Primary School Travel Plan in the following ways:

- Involvement of Camden Council's School Travel Plan Officer;
- Record the feedback from pupils as well as to note how many of them are using the walking buses to check if targets are being reached; and
- Add the story to the STARS website. The activity will be explained, photos added, and pupils' feedback set out. The information will also include maps, route planning and risk assessment documents, as well as evidence of promotional materials produced.