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Councillor Daniel Fitzhenry
Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport
Cabinet Members Office
Southampton City Council
Civic Centre
Southampton
SO14 7LY

5th October 2011

Dear Councillor Daniel Fitzhenry

Re: Parking for teaching staff at Highfield C.E. Primary School

I am writing on behalf of Highfield Residents Association to express our concern at the ongoing problems faced by Highfield Primary School in trying to resolve the long standing difficulties their teachers face when trying to park. In recent years, teaching staff have left their jobs or applicants for vacant posts have turned down job offers because of the difficulties in getting to and from the school. This situation is likely to worsen due to recent changes being introduced by different council departments. As you will appreciate, if the situation worsens and staff recruitment becomes more difficult then it is likely to undermine the long term academic results of the school.

As you will be aware, this school's position is unique in the city. It does not have onsite parking, is split across two separate sites and is surrounded by

roads with parking restrictions. Furthermore, the roads immediately around the school site and in the wider vicinity have recently consulted on introducing further restrictions, which will remove the limited unrestricted parking in the area currently used by staff.

The school's two sites are not on a significant public transport route, with the number 14 bus the only bus stopping in close proximity to the school. Unfortunately the hours of operation are severely restricted and would not enable staff to get to school at the beginning of the school day. St Deny's train station and the bus stops at the university campus, Portswood Broadway and the Avenue are a significant distance from the school and would mean teachers having to carry heavy loads and school equipment over long distances. This also makes cycling to the school on a daily basis very difficult. The reality is nearly all the teachers who do not live very close to the school have to drive. This is also the only practical means of transporting equipment between the two sites.

In an attempt to resolve the problem, the school has negotiated with local residents and businesses to use their driveways or visitor parking permits. Unfortunately, new visitor parking permit charges and impending changes in business ownership look set to make this untenable. As a result, teachers are already beginning to disrupt their working days in order to move their cars to comply with local parking restrictions. The situation is likely to worsen as new teachers are recruited in order to expand the school's teaching capacity, which is being increased in response to requests from the council.

Whilst there may be merit in the wider policies being pursued, they are clearly unintended consequences for the school, which the council has the power to rectify. I understand the Headteacher has already made officers aware of local authority owned highway in the area, which could be given over to staff parking with minimal effect on local residents and at little cost. Alternatively, the council could give an undertaking to issue the school with 30 day long parking permits to accommodate teaching staff parking. I understand that the school has been asked to fund these from within their budget and the cost of this would be over £2,700. This appears to be lacking in logic as this additional cost would be at the expense of providing educational resources such as IT equipment, books or staff time, which were identified as a necessary requirement of the school's functioning by another council department.

Finally, if issuing parking permits is the preferred method to resolve this problem then it would be greatly appreciated if a written explanation of why this is the case could be provided. Whilst a decision by your good offices would not tie the hands of any future administration, or cabinet member, it would give the school some comfort to have written confirmation of why this is a sensible policy to pursue, which would be of help in the future should the policy be subject to a challenge or review.

As you will appreciate, this is of considerable concern to staff and parents alike and therefore an early reply would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Reed". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Keith Reed

Committee Member of Highfield Residents Association

cc. Councillor Jeremy Moulton
Councillor Adrian Vinson
Councillor Vincenzo Capozzoli
Councillor Matthew Claisse
Alan Whitehead MP