

Marlwood school – issues of capacity and location as a secondary school to serve the Barwood development proposal

Response to verbal comment by Mr Matthews

Statement from TRAPP'D

1: Capacity

The Govt. website is currently quoting Marlwood school as having a school capacity of 1,365 compared to 497 pupils. However, this is unfortunately misleading as the capacity figure shown is prior to a reorganisation. The school has confirmed (Mrs Anne Hanratty – Assistant Headteacher) that **the capacity is now 750 versus current pupil numbers of 513.**

Furthermore, the secondary schools operate on the principle of catchment areas, referred to as “Areas of Prime Responsibility” which, for Marlwood, relates to an area south of the school excluding Thornbury, and therefore the proposed site (see appendix 1).

Whilst it is not unheard of for a school to take pupils from a neighbouring catchment area – for example if the nearer secondary school is full – the entry rules will give priority to those pupils falling within its Area of Prime Responsibility. It would be highly irregular for a large new development proposal to rely on school place availability outside of its relevant Area of Prime Responsibility.

2: Distance / transport implications

The Govt. guidelines state that children will qualify for free school transport if they go to the nearest suitable secondary school which is more than 3 miles away (see appendix 2).

For the purpose of calculating this entitlement the Council will use its own computerised mapping system. However, as a guide we have shown in appendix 3 the distances for driving and walking using Google Maps, taking Oak Leaf Nurseries as the point of origin, which is on Butt Lane close to the planned exit point for the proposed development.

This shows a shortest driving distance of 3.8 miles (which will be longer from the centre of the site) and a walking distance of 3.5 miles.

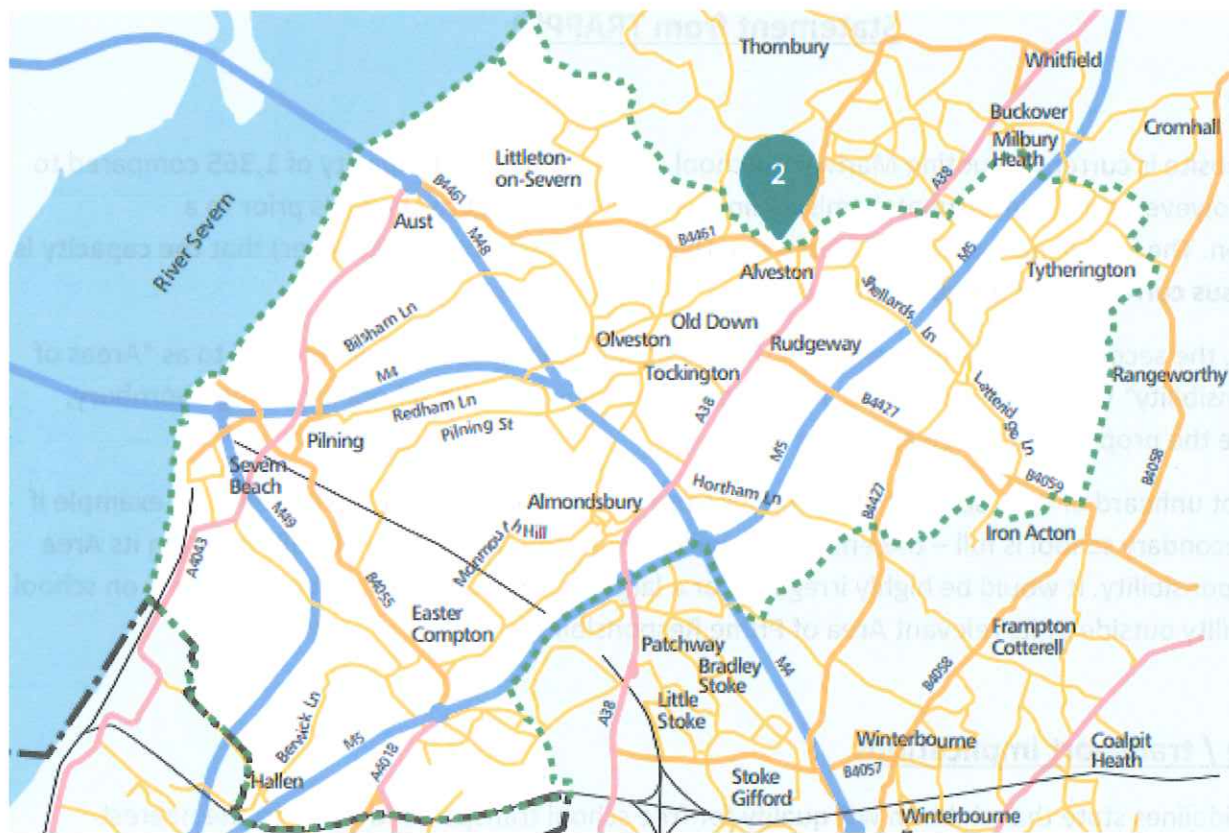
It is clear from these figures that pupils attending Marlwood from the proposed development a) will not be generally walking to school and, b) are likely to qualify for free school transport.

3: Conclusion

The real capacity available at Marlwood is substantially less than declared on the Govt. website and there will also be a call on this limited resource from the circa 500 permitted dwellings that have not yet been built out, as well as ‘pinch points’ in particular years. This, combined with a catchment area mismatch with the proposed site, suggests that there is no ready-made solution for secondary school capacity as has been suggested by the appellant.

In addition, the distances involved are likely to result in the need for a free school bus service for which the appellant should be providing financial support if the appeal is allowed. Alternatively, if for some reason bus transport is unavailable, this will result in a substantial harm from the additional extended school run private car mileage.

Appendix 1: Marlwood School Area of Prime Responsibility



The area is defined in the north the by the boundary line between Aust Ward and Oldbury-upon-Severn Ward, running from the River Severn eastwards. At the Thornbury Ward boundary it continues eastwards along the southern side of Thornbury Ward boundary enclosing the Olveston, Alveston and Tytherington Civil Parish boundaries. At Baden Hill it then runs eastwards along the Tytherington Civil Parish boundary east and then southwards until the Mineral Railway line. Then southwards along the Mineral Railway line to the B4059, then at the layby it tracks south and westwards across the fields in semi-circular line to include Latteridge village and to re join the Alveston Civil Parish boundary. It then runs along the Alveston Civil Parish boundary westwards, then at the Almondsbury Civil Parish boundary runs southwards to Trench Lane. At Trench Lane it runs west to the M4, then north along the M4, then west along the M5 with Almondsbury Civil Parish boundary, then south along the Almondsbury Civil Parish boundary to the South Gloucestershire Council administrative boundary, then westwards along boundary to the River Severn. (Note the defined area diverts from the Thornbury Ward boundary in three places; at Mumbleys Lane the defined area runs around the outer boundary of Brook Farm, Chelwood and Marlwood School grounds and along the track to the entrance of Alveston Cemetery in Costers Close, at the point where Jubilee Way meets Abbey Lane the defined area runs in a direct line eastwards to the dismantled railway line at The Slad, Grovesend at Milbury Heath the defined area deviates to the field line to exclude the Garden Centre complex).

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Free school transport

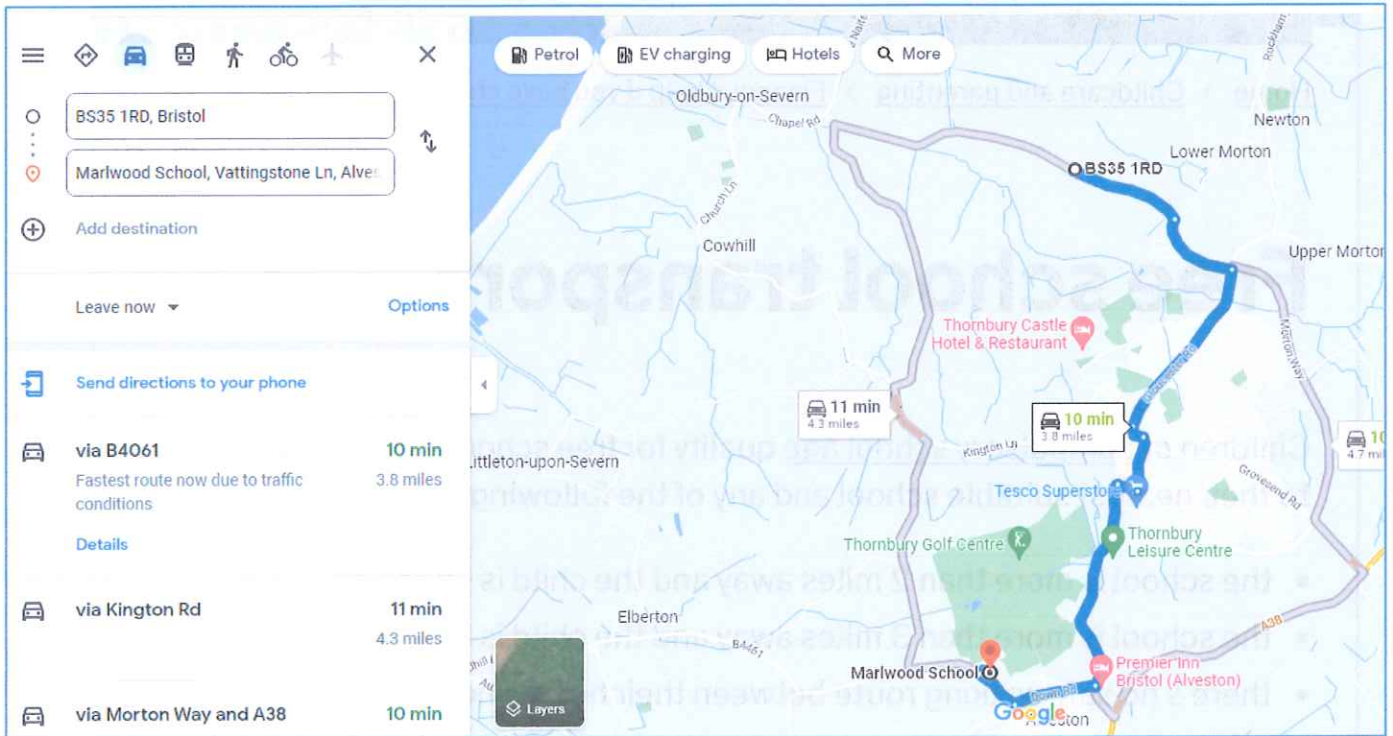
Children of [compulsory school age](#) qualify for free school transport if they go to their nearest suitable school and any of the following apply:

- the school is more than 2 miles away and the child is under 8
- the school is more than 3 miles away and the child is 8 or over
- there's no safe walking route between their home and school
- they cannot walk there because of their [special educational needs or disabilities or a mobility problem](#)

If your child does not qualify for free school transport for these reasons, they may still qualify if you have a low family income.

Appendix 3: Approximate distance from proposed development to Marlwood School

a) Driving 3.8 miles



b) Walking 3.5 miles

