

Bromley Liberal Democrats
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Dear Neighbour,

Update on Plans for 1 Westmoreland Road

We're writing to update you on the Lib Dem's views on the future of this site following the decision to open Bullers Wood School for Boys there on a temporary basis from September.

We campaigned against the siting of the SHaW school at 1 Westmoreland Road last year and we remain opposed to it. We're in favour of the SHaW school – Bromley desperately needs more secondary school places (2017 figures showed a shortfall of over 2000 places by 2022), and this school seems like an excellent concept – just in the wrong place. The Council can and must do more to make other more appropriate sites for the school available, such as the Civic Centre.

We fully supported the campaign to get Bullers Wood for Boys school opened on its intended permanent home of St Hugh's playing fields on Bickley Road. The school has faced astonishing planning mismanagement by the Council – planning permission granted, then revoked just a few weeks before national offer day, causing huge stress and upset to the boys and their parents. For this reason we support Bullers opening on 1 Westmoreland Road as a temporary site only. It remains a thoroughly unsuitable site for a secondary school, much work needs to be done to make sure the site is brought up to standard for the boys in September, and to ensure that work is done on safe routes to school. Meanwhile, we will continue to do all we can to support the campaign to get Bullers open on the St Hugh's site as soon as possible, reducing the time it needs to spend at 1 Westmoreland Road.

Long term, we will continue to actively oppose placing a school at this location but it will not be an easy battle and we need to remain resolute. The current Council has recommended the 1 Westmoreland site both for educational use and for a tall building in its draft local plan. We have repeatedly alerted Cllr Harmer and his wife, Cllr Dykes, to the need to challenge the designation of this site for educational use in the draft Local Plan but they have stated they are supportive of the site for some form of education. With the Local Plan set to become primary planning policy for the Borough later this year, it will be this designation of the Westmoreland site, more than its prior use as a temporary site for schools, that will risk the SHaW proposal for a high-rise school for 1200 pupils winning planning approval on appeal to the National Planning Inspectorate.

A more proactive, creative and holistic approach to town planning in Bromley is desperately needed to avoid ill-conceived and unpopular schemes such as a high-rise school on 1 Westmoreland ever being put forward. Bromley Liberal Democrats have that vision. We do hope you will use your vote for change on 3rd May and vote for us.

Yours faithfully,

Julie Ireland, Rhian Kanat and Sam Webber
Liberal Democrat Candidates for Bromley Town