

Highgate CAAC further objection and update to Highgate School's traffic plans for applications including HGY/2023/0313, HGY/2023/0315, HGY/2023/0317, HGY/2023/0328 and HGY/2023/0338

Summary

This update to Highgate CAAC's earlier objection to Highgate School's traffic strategy is in three parts:

1. Some comments on the document "*Estate Wide - TPA - Active Travel Zone, Healthy Streets Assessment - 1903-079 TN01*" posted on Haringey's website on 18/2/2026.
2. An update on transport developments of relevance to these applications since HCAAC Chair Gail Waldman wrote to Robbie McNaugher and John McRory of Haringey's Planning Department on 22.3.2024.
3. Consideration of how Highgate School's transport problems may evolve over coming years.

Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee continues to object to all the above applications for the transport reasons outlined below and many others, as described in the various objections we have submitted over the last three years.

Detail

1. The latest transport document: Active Travel, Healthy Streets.

Numerous additional documents concerning Highgate School's many planning applications have been posted on Haringey's website since New Year 2026. One of them, posted on 28th February 2026, is entitled "*Estate Wide - TPA - Active Travel*

Zone, Healthy Streets Assessment - 1903-079 TN01 - Active Travel Zone (Healthy Streets) Assessment”.

It turns out that this is not a new document, but is dated October 2023. Why was this not made available to the public before now?

This Transport Planning Associates document on Active Travel refers back to their earlier Travel Strategy documents, which set out the background, baseline positions, relevant policies and proposals when Highgate School first made these numerous planning applications more than three years ago:

- Dyne House HGY/2023/0328 TS01: “Dyne - Transport Statement”, 01/2/2023
- Richards Music Centre HGY/2023/0315 TS03: “RMC - Transport Statement.pdf”, 31/1/2023
- Science Block HGY/2023/0317 TS04: “Science - Transport Statement.pdf”, 31/1/2023
- Mallison Sport Centre HGY/2023/0338 TS05: “MSC - Transport Statement” 02/2/2023
- Decant HGY/2023/0313 TS06: “Decant - Transport Statement.pdf”, 31/1/2023
- Far Field HGY/2023/0316) TS08: “Far Field - Transport Statement.pdf”, 31/1/2023

(The document titles and dates shown above are as recorded on Haringey’s web pages for each application.)

The main obvious point about this list of earlier Transport Statements is that they are now significantly out of date, e.g. referring to the 271 bus rather than the 263. Perhaps they should be revisited.

It should also be noted that the Active Travel, Healthy Streets document is an academic exercise. While in principle it is possible for children, accompanied by an adult if needed, to walk or cycle to and from Highgate School, many parents want to take their children to and from the school by car. Highgate School provided data on that in their Travel Plans document. A link to our earlier comments on that is provided below. It showed very clearly that a significant number of parents and staff

travel to and from Highgate School by car every day and little progress had been achieved in reducing this number over recent years¹.

The October 2023 Active Transport document posted on 28th February 2026 merely records some potential walking and cycling routes to the school from nearby transport hubs and notes various possible issues and solutions, such as placing benches half way up Highgate Hill in case people walking up the hill from Upper Holloway railway station get tired and need a sit down. This is more than slightly redundant, as almost everyone, fit or not, would take the 263 bus from right outside the railway station to the stop immediately opposite the main school entrance in North Road.

The same applies to walking up North Hill from East Finchley underground station (263, 143), up Highgate West Hill from Kentish Town underground station (214) or from Hampstead and beyond (210, 310, 603).

Suggestions such as additional benches on surrounding hills are of no significant public benefit as all routes are also covered by public transport.

Since the “*Estate Wide - TPA - Active Travel Zone, Healthy Streets Assessment - 1903-079 TN01*” document should have been publicly available before early 2024, and adds nothing of significant practical use, Highgate CAAC stands by the comments made by HCAAC Chair Gail Waldman in her letter to Robbie McNaugher and John McRory of Haringey’s Planning Dept, dated 22.3.2024, listed under the various Highgate School planning applications, e.g., for HGY/2023/0328, Dyne House, Southwood Lane, Hornsey, London, N6 5EE:

22/3/20	Objection from the Highgate Conservation Area	Download
24	Advisory Committee to the Highgate School Transport Strategy document	(PDF, 1.76MB)

¹ Unfortunately, applying planning conditions such as requiring Highgate School to pay Haringey for traffic wardens would be problematic because the drop-off and pick-up times vary a great deal according to activities taking place.

2. An update on transport problems for neighbours, visitors and through traffic.

Traffic chaos was one of the most mentioned topics at the Highgate Society's public meeting in the Summer of 2023 and continues to be so. The transport document Highgate School has submitted is insensitive to Highgate residents' concerns.

The school's near neighbours in various locations have raised numerous traffic concerns recently in their objections, for instance describing the traffic situation around Broadlands Road as "bedlam" at picking up and dropping off times, or concerned that the roads of Highgate Village are not robust enough to support the addition of numerous construction vehicles. These concerns echo the comments Highgate CAAC made back in 2024.

Since then, various HCAAC members have attended numerous meetings with the school under the auspices of the Kings Foundation process² and outside it.

Gail Waldman summarised the contents of the above letter to Haringey at a King's Foundation meeting on 26th June 2024. The school told attendees that a new scheme had started that Monday, whereby the pick up and drop off from coaches and minibuses in North Road shown in the photos in HCAAC's letter would now take place in Hampstead Lane.

This seemed to us to be a potentially unsatisfactory solution, as Hampstead Lane is, if anything, an even more important through route than North Road, and traffic congestion along the northern side of the Heath was already very severe at the beginning and end of the school day.

While the coaches and minivans pictured in Gail Waldman's letter (see above link) did indeed disappear from North Road for quite a while, now they have reappeared. Most of the new photos in the attached Annex 1 were taken at about 10 past 4 on

² The school has made statements based on the Kings Foundation meetings. The Highgate Society, Kings Foundation and the School apparently agreed minutes of all workshop sessions. We were not aware of this and our records of these meetings tell a rather different story. However, since the notes for record kept by various HCAAC members were not intended for public use and attendees were obliged by the King's Foundation rules not to publicise the contents of those discussions, we do not think adding our notes to the public record would be appropriate.

16th March 2026. The buses and coaches are again impeding the 214, 263, 603 and 143 bus routes, to the detriment of other travellers.

In addition, parents have continued to stop in the road or double and triple park outside the residents' parking spaces near the main school entrance throughout, impeding passing traffic, including buses - see various photos in Annex 1.

The introduction of "school streets" in Broadlands Road (and Storey Road, for Highgate Primary School) has led to cars idling for periods of time in numerous nearby streets, e.g. on the raised section of North Hill, adding to pollution, noise and congestion in a wider area than before.

It is evident that the school cannot make promises about the behaviour of parents because it has very little control over what some parents do. If they cannot pick up from right outside the school buildings they will simply wait somewhere else nearby, and it appears that no amount of "encouragement" will stop some parents from causing traffic chaos outside the main school entrance in North Road.

Also, some nearby residents have been disturbed early in the morning by dedicated school taxis idling in secluded parking spaces near their homes while waiting to transport children, although presumably these school transport car services are taking other children from Highgate to schools elsewhere. It may be that the taxis used by Highgate School are causing similar annoyance elsewhere around London while waiting to bring children to school here. Neither is welcome.

Collapsing road surfaces and road works.

Concerns are increasing about the state of the roads around Highgate Village and whether it would be manageable for significant numbers of construction and delivery vehicles to use them for these projects over a 10 year period.

In addition to the apparently endless road works undertaken by utility companies, most recently Thames Water blocking various parts of Southwood Lane for months and causing major disruption in Highgate West Hill, North Hill, Broadlands Road,

Highgate Hill and other roads, traffic is now being disrupted by collapsing road surfaces, resulting in diverted or suspended bus services while the damage is repaired.

Annex 2 illustrates both these issues with photos taken over recent months.

HCAAC presumes an effective Construction Management Plan for each application will be required by condition and updated if required. These would need to take into account not only frequent roadworks, deteriorating and narrow roads, bus routes, the needs of nearby residents and businesses and so-on, but also other major developments which are likely to be built during the school's proposed 10 year programme of construction works. These include: large dementia homes in North Hill, Hampstead Lane and near Parliament Hill, a new housing development on the Newsteads site, new council homes at the junction of North Hill and Archway Road, and in prospect in several other places along Archway Road and Muswell Hill Road, considerable development at Archway and in Kentish Town, plus any additional large schemes coming forward in the Local Plans in Haringey, Camden and Islington.

Disruption to local and public transport and inconvenience to residents and local businesses should be monitored and followed up appropriately and promptly.

The pressure on roads in and around Highgate is already immense and these applications, if permitted, will add enormously to these problems.

3. Future prospects for Highgate School's transport strategy

As HCAAC Chair Gail Waldman has noted in her comments on the school's "Needs" document, public and private schools may face difficulties attracting sufficient student numbers over coming years, and may have to cast the net more widely to find sufficient families capable of affording their fees.

- The government have added VAT to private school fees.

- School rolls are falling in most London boroughs as housing costs force many families out of inner London. Primary schools have already been closed or merged in numerous London boroughs: Camden, Islington, Hackney, Southwark etc. Only in outer boroughs such as Barking and Dagenham are state school places under pressure.
- State schools are evolving e.g. St Aloysius' College, Hornsey Lane becoming co-educational in September 2025.
- There are numerous well regarded state funded secondary schools not far away: St Aloysius' College (Islington), Parliament Hill School, La Sainte Union, William Ellis and Acland Burghley Schools in Camden, together forming the LaSwap 6th Form Consortium, Highgate Wood Secondary School in Haringey and numerous top rated state funded schools in Barnet.
- Public and private schools, some with considerable more leeway for expansion than Highgate School, are engaged in an "arms race" regarding facilities for non-academic subjects such as music, drama and sports.

Against this backdrop Highgate School's prospects might seem rather uncertain.

It seems extremely likely that the school will need to attract children from across an ever widening area of London to maintain³ current school numbers and with this will come the need for more coaches, mini-buses and taxis to get them here, causing ever more congestion on London's roads and traffic chaos outside the school.

We would like to see data on the areas where families live, where the children are picked up and dropped off from around London (and beyond?), the routes, numbers of children transported in each coach, minibus or taxi, and how this network might have to increase in future.

Highgate CAAC does not feel that these most recent trends have been fully taken into account in the school's transport proposals.

³ The School has said on various occasions that they don't intend to expand student numbers, but others have noted that future management may not be bound by these statements. Many neighbours expect school numbers to increase, no matter what has been said recently. Further, any conditions set on permissions can be changed. One objector has suggested a binding covenant not to increase numbers, in perpetuity.

Conclusion

We do not think the school have presented an up to date, convincing case regarding their transport strategy. It is very clear that school coaches, minibuses and parents' cars are still causing chaos around Highgate and it seems likely that this will continue or worsen over coming years.

Similarly, we question whether Highgate's roads are robust enough to cope with ever more construction traffic. This, combined with almost constant roadworks and other traffic pressures, seems likely to lead to even greater gridlock on Highgate's streets than the considerable amount seen at present.

For all of the above reasons we believe Highgate School should review the transport implications of their applications. Without a realistic plan the applications should be refused.

Annex 1 - Photos of transport issues around Highgate School

1. Minibuses and coaches blocking the 214, 263, 143 and 603 bus stops and 214 terminus area in North Road at about 4.10pm on 16th March 2026:



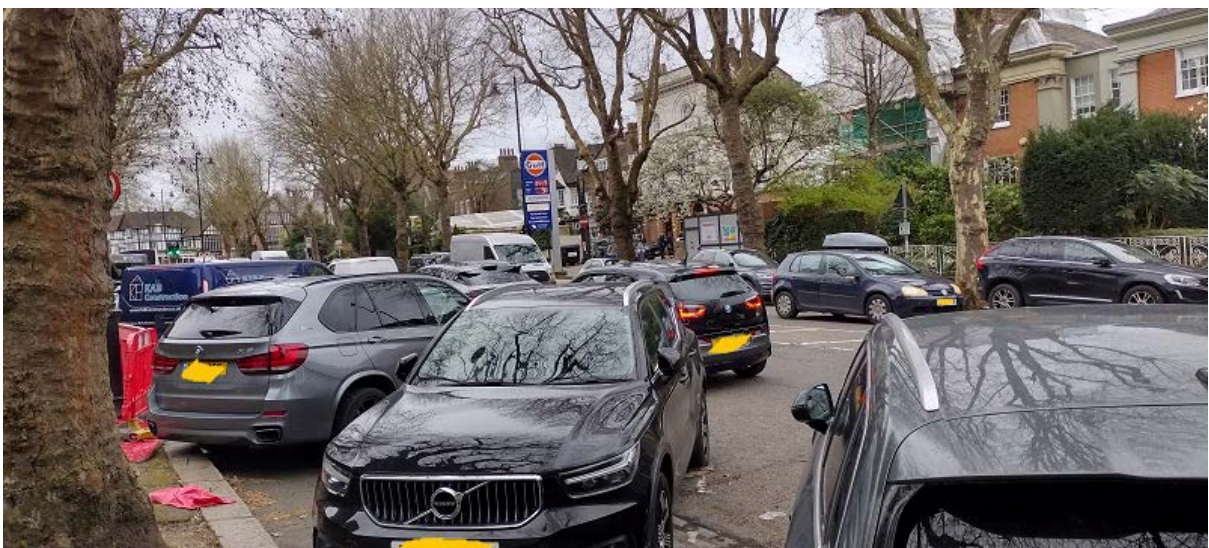




2. Prior to this, despite the move to Hampstead Lane, coaches were seen loading and unloading children in the 263, 143 and 214 bus stops since 26th June 2024 - e.g. in these photos taken at about 6.20 on 27th August 2024. The children were apparently returning from a school arranged day out during the summer holidays.



3. Parents have continued to add to the chaos throughout by waiting to pick up children with their engines running while “double parked” outside the residents’ parking areas, impeding passing traffic. About 4.10pm on 16th March 2026:



Seeing cars double and triple parked like this outside Highgate School at pick up times is not unusual, e.g.:



Cars idling, "double parked" in North Road, waiting to pick up children from Highgate School at about 4.15pm on 8th December 2025, impeding other traffic including the 263 bus.

Annex 2 - Roadworks and collapsing road surfaces - photos

Thames Water roadworks in Southwood Lane. Varying parts of the road will be closed for months. These photos were taken on 26th February 2026:



A month later, on 29th March 2026, Thames Water have moved the road closure slightly further down Southwood Lane:



Collapsing road surfaces outside Highgate School

Perhaps even more disturbingly, road surfaces around Highgate Village appear to be giving way. As other neighbours have questioned in their objections, are the roads around Highgate Village robust enough to withstand 10 years of heavy construction traffic?

The following photos were taken at about 7.15pm on 17th February 2026, when bus services along North Road had been suspended due to TfL fears about an “unsafe road surface”.





The hole in the middle of the road was mended and bus services returned to normal over the following week, but the curbside outside the school remains in a poor state.





Photos taken by a member of Highgate CAAC on 23rd February 2023.