01 November 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

Riverside Primary School wishes to represent our concerns regarding the proposal to use the Chambers (Loftie Road) site by Thames Water for the Thames Tunnel.

The applicant has not considered the significant impact this project will have on the lives of over 300 children aged between 3 and 11 years who attend Riverside Primary School. We are the nearest non-residential receptor to the Chambers (Loftie Street) Site with no screening from the site and no protection from the hazards this project brings to the local area.

Due to the position of the site we feel it will significantly impact on the school environment and adjacent walkways that are used daily by our pupils for the following reasons:

♦ The noise impact on the school site as a whole and especially the infant block situated a few metres from Bevington Street will be constant and prolonged – learning and well-being will be seriously affected by the level of noise and pollution that will be caused by construction traffic that has been estimated on average to be at least once every five minutes for a period no less than 7 years. Riverside School has no barrier to the noise levels from the actual work site, the adjacent routes to be used by construction traffic or the environmental effects of a project of this scale. This means that a child entering our Nursery class will never experience primary school without a high level of sustained disruption and pollution – the damage to their cognition and learning is unacceptable and should not be underestimated.

♦ We have been working closely with the LA specialist for our pupils with hearing impairments to reduce the level of noise in school for these pupils in order for them to have access to the curriculum in line with their peers. The impact on these pupils will be significant and irreparable.

♦ The small gardens used by pupils to plant, grow, experiment and study will not be able to be used due to the close proximity of the site and construction traffic. This is the only area of grass in the school that also incorporates a “peace garden” for those pupils who have experienced bereavement. The outside area for the Reception Class (4-5 year olds) will not be able to be used which is considered to be a vital part of their early learning, as identified by government and educational research and OFSTED.

♦ The windows of the infant block are located within metres of Bevington Street. This means that there will be no ventilation available during warm weather and a level of air quality in and around this building detrimental to young children’s health and welfare.
The main older building is a listed building and therefore has no additional protection to prevent air or noise pollution other than the original Victorian windows that were not designed to withstand the environmental pressures this project will force upon us.

The majority of our pupils live in close proximity to the site. This means they will be exposed to the noise, environmental pollution and health and safety risks this project brings not only in school but on the way to school, after school when they use open spaces to play with friends and in their own homes. Pupils at Riverside School will be affected by noise, air quality, visual and highway safety constantly throughout their formative years and the impact this will have on their education, health and well-being has been largely ignored and significantly underestimated. The work the school has done in recent years to promote healthy living (e.g. cycling/walking to school, our responsibility to make our local area a safe and environmentally friendly place to live) will be in vain – this project contradicts all that we have set out to achieve.

We therefore feel that the applicant has erroneously considered Riverside Primary School as a secondary receptor with no legitimate reason for this decision and that our concerns and issues should be addressed and given the serious consideration they warrant. The future of the children in the area should be a priority for all and their health, safety and well-being a responsibility that must not be overlooked. We have expressed our concerns since the project was first conceived with no solutions even suggested to us. We therefore propose the Chambers site to be the wrong choice for a project such as this to go ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Mortimer-Lee
Jose Lewis

Headteachers