I live locally, cycle regularly down Myreside and use the sports facilities at George Watsons College.

I don't object to the school extending their facilities and offering them for community use out of hours at all.

I do, however, wish to raise concerns that cycling as a means of accessing the area, or delivery of the Council allocated "safeguards local connections" has not been considered at all within the application.

The connecting phase for this route has already been built and is a shared active travel route through the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. A future phase is proposed which crosses Myreside Road (a cycle crossing is already in place), and would lead around the western edge of the proposed application area and onwards to Colinton Road. From there, there would be access to the canal which is an important part of the strategic network across the city. A path exists at the moment; it is extremely narrow and contained by the stone wall of the school estate on one side and the safety Network Rail fence for the railway line on the other.

The Council isn't clear within the Local Development Plan about the proposals required to deliver the future route connection but it is clear that Watsons Ground will have to come into it somehow and delivery is likely to be done in partnership with the school, Sustrans, CEC and possibly Network Rail. The applicants' proposals will stymy options as their proposals come right up to the boundary edge.

Whilst cost will inevitably slow the strategic link timescale it would seem prudent to have considered its location, delivery and likely cost now, whilst masterplanning is being carried out within the wider area.

The Transport Statement for the application is very high level and does not consider this at all, nor does it look at the impacts on Myreside Road during peak times or when there are sports activities on. This seems a big oversight. Myreside Road becomes severly congested, not just at peak times during school pick up and drop off but often at the weekends when there is sport across the campus. My observation is that users often prefer to park on Myreside Road rather than using the car parks within the school estate.

Cycling within these conditions is extremely unpleasant and only for the experienced cyclist; I wouldn't send my children to the school grounds by bike due to safety concerns. The road is narrow due to the extent of turning, and roadside parking. Driver behaviour is often erratic and highly aggressive. The condition of the road surface is very poor and as a result is unsafe. The school offer reasonable cycle parking provision within the school so clearly support this, and it is my view that before this application goes ahead, a deliverable strategy for getting users out of their cars and onto public transport and bikes needs proper consideration. The situation is complex around there and the solution will have to consider several physical and management options. My own view is the safeguard route should take cyclists off Myreside Road and behind the wall and trees which line the road, and if GWC could provide ground on a long term peppercorn lease then delivery of the cycle route should come from public money.

In conclusion I don't think the application should be determined until a plan has been drawn up showing how the Council proposals for a strategic active travel route can be delivered. Having timescales attached to secure early funding would also embed principles of sustainable access to these new playing fields at the outset. This would closely align with Council policies around climate change, inclusive places and health and wellbeing.