

**The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames**  
**Proposed Site for a New Secondary School in the North of the Borough**  
**Summary of Consultation Responses**

## **1) Introduction**

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, like many other London boroughs, is currently experiencing exceptionally high demand for places in its primary schools, which will in future years translate into demand for secondary school places. To meet the increase in demand, the Local Authority, as part of its Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Strategy for Change, is planning to build a new secondary school in the north of the borough and add additional forms of entry to a number of other Kingston secondary schools by 2015. From mid July to mid September 2009, the Local Authority consulted key stakeholders on proposals to build a new eight-form entry, co-educational 11-18 school in the North Kingston area – the main 11-16 school on the site of the current North Kingston Centre and the sixth form on part of the Hawker Centre site.

## **2) Consultation Method**

The consultation was purely concerning the site for the new school. A six-page consultation document was prepared explaining the selection of the proposed sites and asking people their views. Views could be submitted by sending in a freepost form or completing the form online. The consultation document was distributed to parents of primary school age children, parents of pre-school age children, every resident in the Kingston Town neighbourhood, Children's Trust Partners and all Council staff and Councillors. In addition, posters and consultation documents were available at all doctors' surgeries, Children's Centres, Guildhall receptions, the Hawker Centre, the North Kingston Centre and on the front page of the RBK website. To publicise the consultation, a whole page advert was placed in all the local papers and on the RBK website.

In addition to the paper consultation, a public meeting was held by the Director of Learning and Children's Services at the Hawker Centre on 22 July 2009 as part of the consultation process. Points raised at that meeting are included in this summary of consultation responses.

A number of comments were received about the original closing date in mid-August, so the consultation was extended and closed a month later on 14 September 2009. An advert was placed in local press to advertise the new deadline and the RBK website, schools, doctors' surgeries, Children's Centres, the Hawker Centre and the North Kingston Centre were all given new posters and extra copies of the consultation document as required.

## **3) Responses to the Consultation Document**

### **3.1) Data Summary**

- 38,000 paper copies of the consultation were distributed
- 1,882 responses were received
- 80% of respondents made comments
- 59% of responses were received on paper and 41% online via the internet

<p><b>For the North Kingston Centre Site</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 51.6% (972) people strongly agree or agree with the site proposal</li> <li>• 35.8% (674) people disagree or strongly disagree with the site proposal</li> </ul> <p><b>For the Hawker Centre Site</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 44.1% (830) people strongly agree or agree with the site proposal</li> <li>• 43.0% (809) people disagree or strongly disagree with the site proposal</li> </ul>
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- Full equalities monitoring was conducted as part of the consultation. An equalities summary has been included in the report appendices (available in the Members' Room or on the Kingston website).
- Views varied across different groups of respondents as detailed in the table below:

	North Kingston Centre			Hawker Centre		
	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Parents/ Carers	58.2%	9.0%	32.1%	50.4%	10.6%	38.2%
KT2 Residents	53.1%	8.9%	36.9%	45.4%	9.0%	44.9%
Non-KT2 Residents	48.7%	16.1%	33.6%	41.6%	17.5%	39.2%
Centre Users	38.3%	14.2%	46.0%	27.9%	9.7%	61.9%

\* KT2 residents have been selected as they live in the immediate vicinity of the proposed site for the new school.

- Views on the Hawker Centre Site seem to be very equally split from the perspective of parents/carers and residents. With a small majority in favour of the site choice.
- The majority of existing users of the both the Hawker and North Kingston disagree with the site choice.

### 3.2) Comments

The main themes to emerge are listed below in descending order (i.e. the theme that elicited the greatest number of comments first) with the number in brackets indicating how many people commented on that particular issue. There was a general feeling among those who made comments that the Council had not provided sufficient information about its proposals at an early stage, which has led people to seek reassurance about how the Council would address people's concerns should the proposals go ahead rather than be outright opposed to the proposals.

- 1 Concern about the impact of increased pupil numbers on the local area (mainly traffic/parking/public transport but also antisocial behaviour and road safety) particularly as there are already a number of other schools close by (911)
- 2 Concern about how the proposal would affect future use of the Hawker Centre, in particular concern about the loss of green space and recreational facilities (647)
- 3 Concern about how the North Kingston Centre site would be affected, in particular where adult education classes would relocate to (498)
- 4 Agreement that there is a need for a new Kingston secondary school in the north of the borough mainly because there is currently not enough non-selective secondary provision and people want their child to be able to walk to school (491)
- 5 Issues to do with site selection – mainly the need to reconsider other sites (344)
- 6 Sixth form provision – a mixture of views but mainly that it should be on the same site as the main school and not the Hawker Centre site (283)
- 7 General reasons given in favour of the proposal as a whole mainly that what is being suggested is the only real option (273)
- 8 A preference for a school which is smaller than eight forms of entry (due to lack of space and impact of such large numbers on local area) (240)
- 9 Dissatisfaction with selective education (mainly Tiffin Girls), in particular the unfairness of them having taken over the site/buildings of a non-selective school and being able to select on ability thus accepting a large number of pupils from outside the borough and a feeling that they should become non selective (227)
- 10 Criticism of the Council, in particular that a lack of foresight and planning has been displayed (e.g. by closing schools and allowing development of flats etc whilst not retaining sites for educational use) and dissatisfaction with the method of consulting (219)
- 11 Against the new 11-18 school being on a split site mainly because of the negative effect on the ethos of the school and the danger to pupils crossing a busy main road between the two sites (173)
- 12 Concern about the impact on the local area of the five storey building proposed for the main school because it would be out of keeping with other buildings in that locality and would overlook some people's property and be an invasion of privacy (143)
- 13 Concern about the impact that using the North Kingston Centre site would have on Fern Hill Primary School including the proposed expansion (138)
- 14 Grey Court School – concern about the impact of the new school on it and the view that the Council should work with Richmond Council to expand/improve it (e.g. put the sixth form there) instead of building a new school so close (133)
- 15 Timescale – mainly that the school is needed earlier than planned (as well as that the Council should wait and do it properly and concern it won't be ready on time) (123)
- 16 In favour of using the Hawker Centre site mainly for the sixth form as proposed but also a view that the whole school should be put there (111)
- 17 In favour of using the North Kingston Centre (98)
- 18 A number of miscellaneous issues mainly that there is a need for (secondary) schools in other parts of the borough and that green spaces and recreational areas in the borough should be protected

The main points raised on each of the themes with numbers of comments are listed below. It should be noted that most people included comments on more than one issue.

<p><b>1. Concern about the impact of increased pupil numbers on the local area (mainly traffic/parking/public transport but also antisocial behaviour and road safety) particularly as there are already a number of other schools close by</b></p>	<p><b>911</b></p>
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- how the proposals would affect the area where the new school would be sited particularly as there are already a number of educational establishments in that part of the borough - most obviously The Tiffin Girls' School and Fern Hill Primary School
- the proposal to add another 1,200 students to an area where it is perceived that there are already large numbers of students competing for space
- traffic congestion - Richmond Road is already a very busy main road
- parking problems caused by parents dropping off and collecting their children in cars making it harder for local residents to park- this is a particular issue when local schools hold events such as Open Days when the police manage traffic flow and parking
- the difficulty of getting on a bus when pupils are arriving for and leaving school because of the large numbers involved and how this would become even more of a challenge if there were more pupils competing for the same amount of space
- the safety of pedestrians (in particular schoolchildren) and motorists who would be affected by the increase in traffic that would accompany the building of a new school with the potential for more road traffic accidents as a result
- the pavements in the area would be unable to cope with an increase in pupil numbers and that there would be large volumes trying to cross the road at the same time, which could be dangerous and slow traffic down - a particular issue in connection with the proposal to have the sixth form and sports facilities on a separate site across a busy main road
- antisocial behaviour by pupils such as dropping of litter, graffiti, noise and general poor behaviour in surrounding streets, at bus stops and on public transport

<p><b>2. Concern about how the proposal would affect future use of the Hawker Centre, in particular concern about the loss of green space and recreational facilities</b></p>	<p><b>647</b></p>
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- recognition of how valuable the Hawker Centre is to a wide range of people
- seeking reassurance that the same level of access to the wide range of facilities offered would be maintained or even improved under the proposals
- wanting the continuation of access to facilities/services at affordable prices
- losing the Hawker Centre's role in providing facilities to maintain/improve health and fitness and as a social amenity
- keeping alive the Hawker Centre's historical importance within the borough (in relation to British Aerospace)
- loss of green open space

<b>3. Concern about how the North Kingston Centre site would be affected, in particular where adult education classes would relocate to</b>	<b>498</b>
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- recognition of the importance of the centre for the wide range of services it provides
- mainly for those who attend the adult education classes a reassurance that they would still be able to access the services elsewhere, preferably in the same area
- the site is not big enough for the size of school being proposed
- adding a third school on that site in that area would give rise to a host of problems

<b>4. Agreement that there is a need for a new Kingston secondary school in the north of the borough mainly because there is currently not enough secondary provision there but also because there is a perception that the Tiffin schools are not available to local children and people want their child to be able to walk to school</b>	<b>491</b>
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- a lack of choice in the North Kingston area (but other parts the borough are in just as much need of new secondary school places)
- The Tiffin Girls' School is selective/single sex and takes a high percentage of its pupils from outside the borough
- North Kingston is currently over-reliant on Grey Court School
- pupils are currently required to travel too far to get to school - hope that the new school would mean their child(ren) could walk to school
- the new school needs to be for Kingston pupils and accessible to all (i.e. not selective, single sex or a faith school)

<b>5. Issues to do with site selection – mainly the need to reconsider other sites</b>	<b>344</b>
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- a need to look at other sites, mainly by reconsidering sites that had already been ruled out:
  - Kingston Road Recreation Ground, New Malden
  - Dinton Field
  - Latchmere Road Recreation Ground
- other sites suggested included:
  - The Keep on Kings Road
  - Ravens Ait
  - the old BT site next to Wickes
  - the halfway prison
  - the old post office site near the college roundabout
  - the old BBC sports ground at Motspur Park
  - the Thames water site
  - the Canbury hotel development
  - the old Richmond Road boys' school and gas site
  - the King Charles Centre
  - the power station
  - the proposed Tesco site in Tolworth

- Dickerage Lane Recreation Ground
- Surrey County Hall
- Homebase/Matalan and the units behind the Kingstonian football ground
- some dissatisfaction with the way that the Council had gone about selecting sites and the view that:
  - the proposed sites represented the cheapest/easiest option
  - the argument presented for having ruled out sites was weak
  - the consultation document was worded in such a way as to be biased towards the Council's preferred options
  - compulsory purchase should be considered if it meant finding a more suitable site

<b>6. Sixth form provision – a mixture of views but mainly that it should be on the same site as the main school and not the Hawker Centre site</b>	<b>283</b>
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- the sixth form element of the school should not be on the Hawker Centre site
- the sixth form should be on the same site as the 11-16 part of the school
- a new sixth form is needed because:
  - this would ease the pressure on Esher College
  - concern that Esher College may restrict the number of places available to out of borough students
  - Grey Court School does not have a sixth form
- a new sixth form is not needed because:
  - all Kingston secondary schools have a sixth form
  - there is also Kingston College
  - parents want to send their children to sixth form college rather than have them stay on at school (the top choices for Kingston parents being Esher College closely followed by Richmond College)
- suggestions of alternative sites for the sixth form including Grey Court School

<b>7. General reasons given in favour of the proposal as a whole mainly that what is being suggested is the only real option</b>	<b>273</b>
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- acknowledgement that the Council was faced with a difficult problem because additional school places were needed but sites were limited and the proposals represented the most viable option for achieving what was required within the prescribed timescale
  - the sites chosen would keep loss of open space to a minimum
  - facilities would still be available to the community and would be improved
  - it would be possible to build on the two sites without much disruption
  - the two sites being so close is convenient
  - there are good transport links
  - it would be quick, easy and cost effective to adapt the two sites because they are already used in a similar way (the North Kingston Centre was originally a school)
  - they are where there is a need for a new secondary school as there are a number of primary schools nearby

- the sites are easily accessible
- having three schools next to each other would mean they could work together to provide safe education village for the benefit of both children and adults alike

<b>8. A preference for a school which is smaller than eight forms of entry (due to lack of space and impact of such large numbers on local area)</b>	<b>240</b>
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- the proposed eight-form entry school is too large for the North Kingston area particularly on a small site between two existing schools
- concern that the Council is trying to solve the whole borough's shortage of secondary school places in one area
- concern about how such a large school would affect the ethos of the school and that this could manifest itself in underachievement and poor behaviour
- a reference to research which demonstrates the link between size of school and effectiveness (i.e. that larger schools are less effective)
- the proposed Richmond Road area is not big enough for a school of that size particularly as it would mean three schools in a row
- an eight form entry school in a restricted space next to a four form entry school with ample space (The Tiffin Girls' School) could create resentment and conflict between the pupils of the two schools
- a number of suggestions as to how big the school should be – the most popular being four, five and six form entry
- a preference for two smaller schools each four form entry with their own sixth form, one in the North Kingston area and the other somewhere else in the borough

<b>9. Dissatisfaction with the Tiffin schools (mainly Tiffin Girls), in particular the unfairness of them having taken over the site/buildings of a non-selective school and being able to select on ability thus accepting a large number of pupils from outside the borough and a feeling that it should become non selective</b>	<b>227</b>
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- more commented on The Tiffin Girls' School than the boys' counterpart (Tiffin School) but many of the issues raised were common to both
- dissatisfaction that the Tiffin schools are able to select on ability and as a result take a large number of pupils from outside the borough
- a desire to challenge the Greenwich Judgement (which allows out of borough pupils to take places in borough schools) to open up the Tiffin Schools to Kingston pupils
- a preference for non-selective, co-educational, non-religious secondary schools so that they are accessible to all
- The Tiffin Girls' School contributes to (if not causes) the shortage of secondary school places in the North Kingston area because it is selective and single sex
- the Council should not have allowed The Tiffin Girls' School to take over what was Tudor School so that they now benefit from spacious grounds when the school is only four forms of entry

- building a new eight form entry school next door in a smaller space could cause resentment and lead to conflict between the pupils of the two schools
- move The Tiffin Girls' School to a different part of the borough to free up the site for Kingston pupils, take some of the land off them or share some or all of their sports grounds/facilities

<b>10. Criticism of the Council, in particular that a lack of foresight and planning has been displayed by the Council (e.g. by closing schools and allowing development of flats etc whilst not retaining sites for educational use) and dissatisfaction with the method of consulting</b>	<b>219</b>
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- the Council has
  - given one option
  - the Council was not consulting at all because from the language being used in the consultation document/at the public meeting it was clear that it was a done deal
  - people were not being offered enough information about the proposals
- concern about demonstrated a lack of foresight/planning in the way it has gone about planning secondary school provision in the borough by:
  - giving planning permission for houses/flats/supermarkets/hotels etc and using up spaces suitable for a school
  - allowing The Tiffin Girls' School to take over Tudor School
  - closing former schools (e.g. Fitzgeorge School, Bonner Hill School)
- residents have been able to see the shortage of secondary school places coming for some time and have tried to make the Council aware but the Council has not listened
- criticism of the consultation:
  - not enough time to respond
  - unreasonable of the Council to consult during school summer holidays
  - the leaflet advising them of the public meeting did not arrive far enough in advance
  - the timing of the public meeting was poor
  - people were only being the relevance of asking people their age, sexual orientation etc in relation to a proposal to build a new secondary school
- general criticism:
  - the proposal is ill considered and should be completely rethought
  - the Council will not listen to residents
  - the Council is giving in to pressure from a vocal minority in the North Kingston area
  - do not have confidence in the Council to retain the special and unique character of the borough especially the riverside
  - the Council will ignore public opinion and use sites for the new school that are valuable community resources rather than sites that are derelict/unused
  - the Council is not looking at the bigger picture by putting education above the environment and health of the community
  - the Council is failing in its duty to make the Tiffin schools accessible to Kingston residents
  - lack of trust in the Council to keep its word on ensuring continuing community access to facilities at both the North Kingston Centre and the Hawker Centre

<b>11. Against the new 11-18 school being on a split site mainly because of the negative effect on the ethos of the school and the danger to pupils crossing a busy main road between the two sites</b>	<b>173</b>
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- it is unhelpful/unsafe having 11-16 pupils crossing a busy main road to get to their sports facilities or for the sixth formers to access facilities sited in the main part of the school
- concern that it would not seem like one school if the sixth form and sports facilities were separate
- concern about groups of students in the streets and the potential for accidents and antisocial behaviour
- important for the sixth form to be in the same part of the school as the younger pupils so that they could learn a sense of responsibility and give something back to an institution they had benefitted from for several years by working with the younger ones and being their role models
- concern that it would be difficult in terms of timetabling, recruitment and retention because staff would not want to spend time getting between sites and the time it would take pupils to do so would also be difficult to manage

<b>12. Concern about the impact on the local area of the five storey building proposed for the main school because it would be out of keeping with other buildings in that locality and would overlook some people's property and be an invasion of privacy</b>	<b>143</b>
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- a five-storey building could be out of keeping with the area as there were no other buildings that tall nearby
- it could impinge on the privacy of local residents as they could be overlooked
- having such a tall building close by could affect quality of life (less light/more noise) and reduce the value of local properties
- such a tall building next door to Fern Hill Primary School could be intimidating for younger children
- concern about the practicalities of moving large numbers of pupils around such a tall building particularly between lessons or evacuating them in an emergency

<b>13. Concern about the impact that using the North Kingston Centre site would have on Fern Hill Primary School including the proposed expansion</b>	<b>138</b>
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- mainly in relation to Fern Hill Primary School.
- concern that the proposal would impinge on if not prevent the planned expansion of Fern Hill Primary school which was thought necessary
- Fern Hill Primary School should be relocated on the Hawker Centre site as this would free up space to build the whole 11-18 new secondary school using the North Kingston Centre and the Fern Hill Primary School sites
- concern about how the proposed new school would impact on pupils at Fern Hill primary School once it was operational

- concern about the impact building work would have on Fern Hill Primary School Pupils and how this would be managed

<b>14. Grey Court School – concern about the impact of the new school on it and the view that the Council should work with Richmond Council to expand/improve it (e.g. put the sixth form there) instead of building a new school so close</b>	<b>133</b>
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- the Council should work with Richmond Council to improve/expand Grey Court School instead of building a new school as Grey Court School is seen by many North Kingston residents as the secondary school for that area even though it is in a neighbouring borough
- the sixth form could be added to Grey Court School as it has lots of space and would avoid spoiling the Hawker Centre

<b>15. Timescale – mainly that the school is needed earlier than planned (as well as that we should wait and do it properly and concern it won't be ready on time)</b>	<b>123</b>
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- the school is long overdue and is needed to open before 2015 - some people want it open by 2012, some by 2013 and others by 2014
- parents of children who will reach secondary school age between now and 2015 are concerned about whether they will get a school place and where
- some disbelief that it takes so long to build a new school
- concern that the new school would still not be ready on time (i.e. by 2015)
- the Council is rushing things and should take the time to do things properly including finding a more suitable site

<b>16. In favour of using the Hawker Centre site mainly for the sixth form as proposed but also a view that the whole school should be put there</b>	<b>111</b>
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- mostly in favour of the Hawker Centre for the sixth form
- some support for the whole school being sited there
- a lovely green open setting for pupils by the river which could be used by the school for water sports
- the local community could benefit from putting the sixth form or whole school there because facilities could be shared between the school and the local community and all would benefit from new and improved facilities
- use of the site would not result in the loss of open space and amenities
- the site is centrally located with good transport links and set back away from a main road making it accessible yet safe with good parking and big enough for either a sixth form or an 11-18 school

- some support for moving Fern Hill Primary School to the Hawker Centre site to make space for the whole 11-18 school on one site using the current North Kingston Centre and Fern Hill Primary School sites

<b>17. In favour of using the North Kingston Centre</b>	<b>98</b>
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- the site is ideal for a school because it was built for that purpose and would therefore be quick, easy and cost effective to convert
- that the building is currently underused
- it is accessible being on a main road close to the town centre with good transport links,
- the new and improved facilities could still be used by the local community or current users could easily be located elsewhere
- it is an ideal size
- being close to the river could benefit pupils
- two secondary schools operated effectively side by side before so there is no reason why this could not happen again
- having three schools in a row could be a benefit by ensuring close cooperation between them to provide educational benefits for children and adults in that area and that having the Hawker Centre opposite would mean the two sites could be used together to maximum benefit

**A number of miscellaneous issues mainly that there is a need for (secondary) schools in other parts of the borough and that green spaces and recreational areas in the borough should be protected**

- the borough's green/recreational spaces should be left alone because they are at a premium due to the amount of development the Council had allowed over recent years (e.g. the building of houses and flats)
- any sites chosen for the building of a new school should ensure that green/recreational spaces were retained for the benefit of the community
- other parts of the borough need secondary schools too
- the North Kingston area is being given special treatment and this is increasing the socio-economic divide that exists between that area and other less affluent parts of Kingston
- the need to ensure the new school is for Kingston pupils particularly as it would be so close to the boundary with Richmond
- money should be used to expand existing schools rather than build new ones
- some people felt it was not their place to comment (they were too old, did not have children, lived too far away)