

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES RAISED BY CONSULTEES

1. Comments made for and against the proposals, are summarised below to capture the points raised by respondents;

Summary of Comments:

- 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.

Council's response:

2. It is clear from the comments that many people, both for and against the proposals, felt that the Council had not provided enough information about its proposals at this early stage. This has led people to seek reassurance about how the Council would address people's concerns should the proposals go ahead. In other cases respondents expressed a clear view that they did not support the proposals.
3. Whilst the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals at both sites there tended to be fewer comments made by people who supported the proposals. 491 comments supported the need for a new Kingston secondary school in the north of the borough, and a further 273 comments supported the proposals as they felt it was the only realistic option available. Of the 111 comments in favour of the Hawker Centre many indicated that the whole school should be located here; even though the consultation document stated that this was not possible due to restrictive covenants and planning constraints. A further 98 comments were in favour of the proposed use of the North Kingston centres site.
4. Many of the comments regarding the lack of information reflect the tension of needing to consult on the proposed location of the new school at such an early stage in the process before more detail regarding the school is available. Some of the comments indicate that information in the consultation document provided insufficient assurance regarding the proposals.
5. The concern raised most (in 911 comments) was about the impact of increased pupil numbers on the local area (mainly traffic/parking/public transport with less concern about antisocial behaviour and road safety), particularly as there are already a number of other schools close by.
6. It is recognised that any new development of a school will need to be carefully considered and appropriate action identified to minimise the impact of these issues. It is acknowledged that the proposed location of the new school on the North Kingston Centre site presents a particular challenge due to the adjacent Tiffin Girls' and Fern Hill Primary Schools. Careful consideration of the design and management arrangements for the new school will need to address these issues appropriately.

7. The pupil data projections support the need for an eight form entry secondary school in the area, to provide a local offer for as many children in the north of the borough as possible. The incidence of similar growth in pupil numbers in the neighbouring London Borough of Richmond indicates that the development of the new school will not have an adverse impact on Grey Court School, even if that school expands due to the overall need for more places across the area.
8. The Council's pupil data projections identify that there is an increased sustained need for more secondary school places across the borough. The development of the new school in the north of the borough will enable pupils living in the immediate area to attend a local secondary school, rather than travelling some distance to a school in Kingston or to a Richmond school. It is anticipated that the majority of the pupils at the new school are likely to attend local primary schools and live locally. The number of pupils from North Kingston primary schools who transferred to Grey Court was 71 in 2008 increasing to 107 in 2009. In addition a further 37 pupils transferred to Teddington School in September 2009. This represents almost 5 forms of entry of children who could potentially otherwise attend a school in the north of the borough.
9. There are currently sixteen forms of entry in Kingston Town primary schools; ten of these forms are in the five local primary schools to the proposed site. In total it is planned to increase primary provision in the neighbourhood area to twenty forms from 2011 onwards.
10. Another concern raised in 647 comments related to the scale of the potential development at the Hawker Centre, and the potential loss of green space and recreational facilities. The Council has sought to reassure residents that there are no proposals to develop any part of the green open space at the Hawker Centre. The consultation paper clearly set out the planning restrictions on this site and that any redevelopment would be limited. The proposal would allow for community use at both sites and facilities at the Hawker Centre would be retained including the playing fields, bowling green, tennis courts, amenity area and children's play area.
11. Approximately 450 comments were about the plans for post-16 provision. These ranged from views that post-16 provision was unnecessary to concerns that the post-16 provision should not be on the Hawker Centre site and should be co-located with the 11-16 provision. Comments included concerns about the negative effect that a split site would have on the ethos of the school and safety concerns for pupils needing to cross the main road to travel between the two sites.
12. The majority of the post-16 curriculum accommodation would need to be located on the North Kingston site as an integral part of the school and to avoid duplication of specialist facilities and teaching spaces. There would be limited post-16 activities undertaken at the Hawker Centre site, comprising minimal teaching spaces with some tutorial spaces and post-16 social space. The external sports facilities would be used by the whole school, and as in many other schools the safety of pupils moving to and from the main school

site to access sports facilities would be a management issue. Many schools, both in Kingston and elsewhere, have school sports facilities located off-site.

13. Over 300 respondents indicated that they wanted other sites to be considered for the new school; either one of the sites named in the consultation document that had been considered but not proposed, or alternative named sites.
14. A working group of officers established criteria to assess possible sites against and undertook a review of 25 possible sites. The sites that met most of the criteria were the six listed in the consultation document, although none of them apart from the North Kingston Centre were suitable for a school building of the size required. At the public meeting a number of questions were asked about the reasons for not proposing the other named sites and additional information regarding this was added to the consultation documents on the Kingston website after the meeting. This information is attached in a separate Annex to this report.
15. Over 1,000 comments raised concerns about the future plans for existing services at either the Hawker Centre or North Kingston Centre. The consultation document identified one of the disadvantages of the proposed sites would be the impact on the current users of the North Kingston Centre and the requirement for the Council to identify alternative accommodation / locations for the services. It was also acknowledged that whilst the development works took place at the Hawker Centre there would be an impact on the current users / hirers of Hawker Centre.
16. If the proposal to locate the new school at the North Kingston Centre and the Hawker Centre is approved there will be the need to immediately identify suitable alternative locations for existing services and start the planning to relocate services before 2012. The new school buildings will include community access to ensure that the wider community benefits from the investment, but an alternative location will be required whilst the building works are undertaken. This work will be a priority for the project team that would progress plans for a new school.