

EXECUTIVE

9 MARCH 2010

APPENDIX C REFERS

**NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL IN NORTH KINGSTON – STATUTORY CONSULTATION
COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED BY CONSULTEES**

1. Some respondents to the consultation provided additional comments regarding the proposals. These covered all circumstances i.e. whether respondents agreed, disagreed or were undecided about aspects of the proposals. The following summarises the Council's response to the main issues raised by consultees.
2. Choice of location and size of school – impact on area
Many responses raised concerns about the impact of the proposals on the infrastructure in the area in terms of the increased pupil numbers in a small geographical area and the impact on traffic, parking and public transport. A large proportion of respondents (20.6%) indicated that they are still undecided regarding the proposed size of the school based on the information available at this early stage.
3. 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 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.
4. Architects appointed in early February have started the feasibility and design work for the new school following national Building Schools for the Future guidance and government space per pupil guidelines. This initial work will also test if the existing North Kingston Centre building can be incorporated into the new school building. The aim of this initial design work is to understand the range of possible costs, to identify solutions to some of the concerns raised and to obtain the necessary level of planning security.
5. As part of this initial phase of design work we are about to commence a traffic impact assessment. This will inform discussions with the Highways Department and will also provide evidence to help with negotiation with Transport for London re bus provision to support the new school e.g. increased frequency and/or changed routes and dedicated school routes if the Traffic Impact Assessment evidences the need.
6. The number of pupils in the area attending the three adjacent schools will require management across the 3 schools including the continuation of the current arrangements for staggered start and finish times. A school travel plan will be developed to encourage sustainable travel and it is anticipated that many pupils will live within walking & cycling distance. The traffic impact assessment will test out the

changes that a local school will make to current travel patterns of pupils living in the north of the borough.

Size of school – appropriateness for proposed site

7. Proposals regarding the accommodation needed for an 8 form entry (fe) school will be assessed against local and national planning policy. A Planning Brief for the North Kingston Centre will be developed and consulted on during June and July 2010. This will enable an early view to be reached regarding the suitability of the site accommodating an 8fe school and will provide a framework to guide detailed design proposals for the development of the site for a new secondary school.
8. The Council has been asked what alternative options there are in the event that it is not possible to locate an 8fe school on the North Kingston Centre site. The new school is only part of the strategy to ensure that there are an additional 16 forms of entry to meet the projected need by 2018-19. In view of the lack of other suitable sites for a new school in the whole borough the only alternative option would therefore be to plan for a smaller new school on the North Kingston Centre site, and expand the other 8 non-selective schools to provide the additional places i.e. if the new school were 6fe then the other 8 schools would have to be expanded to provide 10 forms of entry. It is currently unclear how this could be achieved, particularly as two of the schools are already 7fe and other schools are on constrained sites. Initial feasibility work being undertaken at all Kingston secondary and special schools as part of the preparations for the Building Schools for the Future programme is testing out the ability for existing school sites to accommodate increased pupil numbers.
9. This option will not however necessarily deliver sufficient new places for the September 2015 Year 7 intake, nor provide the additional places in the north of the borough as proposed, nor necessarily provide an increased number of co-educational places that provides flexibility regarding school admissions and has received strong support in the consultation (70.4% agree).

Size of school in educational terms

10. Some responses indicated that there were concerns about the proposed size of the school being impersonal, more likely to experience poor standards of behaviour amongst pupils and to lack a sense of community.
11. The relationship between school size and performance is an aspect of the proposal that Local Authority officers have researched carefully and provided information on the RBK website. National and inter-national Research findings do not support the view that school size is a barrier to excellence (EPPI review 2004). It is clear that the effectiveness of a school depends on the leadership and quality of teaching within the school. There are examples of very successful large schools evidenced in recent Ofsted report on outstanding schools. It is worth noting that Kingston's two outstanding non-selective 7fe secondary schools are both likely to expand to 8fe as part of the provision of additional secondary school places. In addition the two Richmond schools that are currently selected by many parents in the north of the borough are of a comparable size i.e. Teddington School admits 225 pupils each year (7.5fe), and Grey Court 200 (6.7fe).

12. The educational vision for the new school aims to ensure the following goals are supported by a school building fit for 21st century learning:
- Personalisation will be at the heart of the school – we aim to meet all children and young people’s needs, including their social, emotional and physical development needs while meeting learning needs
 - Learners will play a prominent role in shaping the school – consultation has already begun and will continue
 - The school will be at the heart of the community – responsible to it and providing for it
 - The school will share its excellence widely – and benefit from the excellence of other schools and services
 - Our school will maximise the use of space and time -through technology, design and timetabling

Potential and Impact of locating adjacent to Tiffin Girls School

13. The consultation document indicated that local negotiations are taking place to identify the potential to increase the size of the proposed site for the new school. Whilst the LA had not felt it appropriate to provide more details at this stage during the consultation period Tiffin Girls’ School (TGS) shared details of the early stage discussions with pupils, parents and the general public via the school website.
14. The LA approached the school in the autumn to explore the potential for developing new accommodation on the TGS site that could provide for the needs of both schools. The initial view from TGS was that this would not be practical.
15. The LA also identified that there is a possibility that the LA can make the outside space for the new school larger by applying for a transfer back of some of the land transferred to TGS when they became foundation status last April. There are criteria that must be met to evidence that the land can be considered ‘surplus’, and the LA feels that these criteria are met.
16. The TGS Governors have stated that whilst there are no parts of their current site which are not required for the purposes of TGS they are prepared to continue discussions and to look at possibilities that may benefit both the new school, and TGS with earlier investment in new facilities than would otherwise have been the case under the BSF programme.
17. The proposal does not however rely on an increase in the existing North Kingston Centre site and the proposed school will be assessed against a planning brief for the existing site. The intention behind any transfer of land or sharing of resources on TGS site will be to result in a more equitable share of land between the two schools.
18. Tiffin Girls School responded to the proposals indicating that they were undecided whether a new school should open in 2015 or regarding the proposed specialisms; agreed that it should be co-educational and non-selective; strongly disagreed that it should be 8fe and be based on the North Kingston Centre site. Additional comments regarding the proposals indicated disagreement on the basis of:

- Principle of the development – location and size, impact of increased pupil numbers on area
- Timetable regarding decisions required considered unrealistic
- Objection to implied threat to its facilities
- Sports facilities and impact upon existing Hawker Centre users , and Community Use Agreement regarding the TGS multi-use all weather pitch
- Green Travel Plan will be affected by existence of free bus travel and desire of older pupils to drive to school
- Insufficient exploration of alternative options to make up shortfall in school places.

Potential of an alternative site to the use of the North Kingston Centre site

19. Some responses indicated that alternative sites should be considered as a location for a new school, or that the proposed school should be smaller and a second new school developed elsewhere in the borough. This issue has been considered in detail in the consultation undertaken in 2009 to determine the location for a new secondary school, and subsequently in the work undertaken to identify potential sites for new primary schools across the whole of the borough.
20. An independent review of potential new school sites undertaken by Land agents on behalf of the LA to identify sites that were large enough for a new primary school (which is significantly smaller than that needed for a secondary school) confirmed: “The search highlights that there are no readily available site opportunities on the property market which address all of the Council’s primary school site search requirements. Of the sites identified within this report all suffer from some constraints. “ The most significant constraints identified are:
 - required site size – “finding sites of a suitable size for a primary school is very difficult in a fairly densely developed London borough such as Kingston. Even taking into consideration opportunities to combine plots, opportunities for sites are limited”
 - planning designations – “protection of development of land which lies on the fringe of Green Belt/Metropolitan Open Land”, and
 - land ownership – the site search identified that there are no suitable sites currently on the market.
21. During the consultation last year the possibility of using the old power station located between Skerne Road / Canbury Gardens in Kingston was suggested by local residents and the Canbury Area Residents Association (CARA). At the time it was explained that this was not a practical option. A recent survey undertaken by CARA in February 2010 summarised in Annex 3 to this report indicates support from 62% respondents (29 residents) for reconsideration of this site for a new school.
22. The LA confirms that this is not considered a viable location to provide a new school by 2015 for the following reasons:
 - It is not within RBK ownership
 - It already has a consented scheme that the developer is working towards implementation

- The planning policy position is covered by Policy P12 of the Kingston Town Centre Area Action Plan (K+20) which seeks a mixed residential hotel and residential scheme. There is no provision for educational use.
- It would not be possible to provide planning certainty to Partnerships for Schools by November 2010 in accordance with the requirements to secure the £30m funding for the new school.

Projections of future pupil numbers and potential impact of new school on Grey Court School, Richmond

23. The pupil data projections undertaken by Kingston support the need for an 8fe 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. The projections undertaken by Kingston have been independently assessed as part of the BSF programme and confirmation received that the data, methodology, and assumptions made are appropriate.
24. Some responses indicated that Kingston should be working with Richmond Council to find a solution to the shortfall of secondary school places. Kingston's position is that we will continue to work with all of our neighbouring boroughs regarding school place planning in a way that recognises that significant numbers of children travel across borough boundaries to attend secondary school. There is a history of Kingston pupils attending some Richmond secondary schools due to linked admission arrangements between some primary schools in North Kingston and Grey Court and Teddington Schools. Whilst these linked arrangements may continue, Richmond secondary schools cannot provide enough places for the increased number of secondary aged children in the north of Kingston. Richmond has experienced a birth rate rise of 12% during this same period and will require more places within their schools for resident pupils.
25. Ultimately, it is the statutory responsibility of the home authority to provide a school place for all of its resident pupils who require one. RBK cannot rely on Richmond to provide school places for a large increase of school aged children within the borough.
26. The London Borough of Richmond did not send a response to the specific questions in the consultation paper but submitted their response to the proposal. Their comments are limited to the accuracy of the Kingston projections and the potential impact that the new school would have on applications to Grey Court School, and the three primary schools in Ham and Petersham. The full response of LBRuT is available in the members room and has been included on the secondary school expansion pages on the RBK website.
27. The response from Richmond is particularly surprising as Kingston officers met with Richmond officers to discuss the potential impact of cross-border pupil movement and the future need for school places and the assumptions to be used in forecasting future need, as a requirement for the BSF programme. This included an agreement that it would be a reasonable assumption to assume that the numbers of Kingston

pupils attending Grey Court and Teddington Schools from 2015/16 onwards would reduce by 50%, taking into account the new option for Kingston parents of the new secondary school and the increased need for secondary places for Richmond residents in Richmond secondary schools. The interpretation made of the information contained in the consultation proposal is flawed, with assumptions about Kingston pupil patterns that do not reflect the incidence in Kingston. An explanation to this effect has been sent to Richmond.

28. Grey Court School also did not send a response to the specific questions in the consultation paper but submitted their response to the proposal in general as outlined in Annex 3.
29. Kingston officers remain confident that based on available data the current increased need will be sustained and the projections of future need of secondary places in Kingston require an additional 16 forms of entry across the borough, with the need to provide 8 forms of entry in the north of the borough. This will provide not only sufficient places but increase the diversity of offer for parents in this part of the borough.
30. Grey Court School and other responses suggested that Grey Court School should be expanded and either a smaller, or in some cases, no new school created in north Kingston. This is impractical for the following reasons:
 - Richmond will similarly have an increased need for additional secondary school places in the future; the school already has an intake of just under 7fe and any limited expansion that may be possible without the school becoming too large will be marginal compared to the 16fe needed by Kingston and will be required for the additional Richmond pupils in the future.
 - In addition we are advised that much of the very large Grey Court School site is designated as Metropolitan Open Land and this limits the scale of development that may be possible.
 - The funding for the new Kingston school is via the Kingston and Croydon Building Schools for the Future Programme; Kingston is not able to use it's allocation to fund a building project in Richmond, and Richmond have yet to enter the Programme.
 - Kingston need planning and funding certainty by the end of 2010 to secure the new school places in time for September 2015.
31. Kingston will continue to respond to requests for support from Kingston services and schools to work with Grey Court school as part of their school improvement plan, and as is usual practice will discuss plans regarding the new school at Local Authority level with Richmond.

Re-location of existing services from North Kingston Centre

32. The consultation document identified the requirement for the Council to identify alternative accommodation / locations for the services currently based at the North Kingston centre site. Whilst a commitment is made to re-locate existing services from September 2012 some responses highlighted the need for more details of the

plans for relocation. It is clear that until new locations are identified the uncertainty is a cause of concern amongst service staff and users.

33. The extent to which existing services are valued by residents and service users is understood. The Council aims to provide certainty of future locations as a priority within the overall project to develop the new school. The Council has established a project team to identify alternative locations and will continue to provide regular information to staff and service users through a newsletter as the project progresses.

Proposed Specialism's of Music and Humanities

34. This is the question that received the most 'undecided' responses (39.4%) and may reflect a general level of misunderstanding about this aspect of the proposal which was also evident at the public meeting. In hindsight a clearer explanation should have been included in the consultation document regarding the requirement for, and the approach taken to specialisms in Kingston.
35. Most secondary schools are specialist schools and nationally all new schools are required to have specialism(s). This does not remove the requirement for all schools to teach a broad and relevant national curriculum, with no lesser focus on any subject area.
36. Kingston's secondary schools currently include the following range of specialisms: maths/computing x 2 schools, technology x 3 schools, sports x 1 school, science x 1 school, performing arts x 1 school, and languages x 2 schools.
37. It is proposed that the new school should have a specialism in Humanities with a special focus on English; including reading and writing and literature. It is further proposed that the new school will have a second specialism in Music. This would provide a great opportunity for creativity, a strong link to the Music Service and encourage the large numbers of primary children who stop taking music lessons to continue into secondary school and beyond.
38. A specialism requires the school to offer other schools the opportunity to share its expertise. Secondary schools are required to work with primary and other secondary schools in their areas of specialism and in Kingston many primary aged children benefit from secondary school specialisms. The proposed specialisms in Humanities with English and Music would balance the current specialism offer in Kingston. 36.5% of responses agreed with this aspect of the proposal. In Kingston, specialisms do not have any impact on school admissions criteria and there is no desire or intention for specialisms to impact on the admissions criteria for the new school.
39. It is worth noting that this aspect of the proposal will remain under consideration and will ultimately be determined by the provider of the new school who will propose which specialism(s) they prefer as part of their bid in the competition stage.