

Notes of comments and questions made during the public consultation meeting

**A New Secondary School in North Kingston
held at Fern Hill Primary School**

Tuesday 9 February 2010, 19:00 – 21.10

Officers Present:

Duncan Clark – Director of Learning and Children’s Services (Interim)
Scott Herbertson – Head of Culture and Lifelong Learning
Tina Herring - Head of Learning & School Effectiveness
Anne Redparth - Head of Resources & Commissioning
Jo Twine – Director, Kingston and Croydon Building Schools for the Future Programme
Graham Willett – Strategic Manager for Secondary Education

There were approximately 120 people present at the meeting.

Presentation

The Executive Member for Children and Young People’s Services welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Director of Learning and Children’s Services (Interim) gave a presentation on the need for the new school, key aspects of the outline specification proposed by the Local Authority, an overview of the Building Schools for the Future Programme and the timetable for the competition process. The presentation is available on the Kingston website:

http://www.kingston.gov.uk/secondary_expansion

Comments and Questions

The table below outlines the main comments made and questions asked together with the response given by officers.

Comment/Question	Response
If 150 Kingston resident pupils per year are currently attending Richmond Secondary Schools why can the school not be built sooner?	There is a certain period of time needed to deliver a new school. In addition the additional places are needed from September 2015 and not before this.
The presentation highlighted changes to the planning process for a new school. What does “planning certainty by November 2010” mean?	The LA had originally thought that full planning permission would need to be obtained by the end of 2010. It has been clarified with Partnership for Schools that a Planning Development Brief would provide sufficient certainty that the site could accommodate the school. A full planning application would then be developed with the new school provider once they had been appointed.
When will results of the Traffic Impact	This is expected to be completed in

Assessment referred to be available?	approximately three months time.
What is the space allocation for large schools referred to in the presentation compared to this proposed school?	It is a relatively small site but we believe we can provide a great 8FE school on the North Kingston Centre site. The purpose of comparisons was to highlight that other schools were as large or close to being as large as the proposed school and that their size does not have a bearing on their overall performance.
The proposal will increase the number of pupils that would come into the area to school each day especially with the proposed expansion of Fern Hill added to it. Grey Court School has a large site.	All research suggests that there is no correlation between school size and its effectiveness. A recent Ofsted study highlighted a number of large secondary schools as being examples of excellence. The size of the site is not referred to as a factor. There is no desire for pupils to attend a school where they would not feel safe or receive a good education.
What happens if studies show that a new school of this size is not possible on this site?	We have a duty to provide school places and there is no alternative site in the Borough. The proposal to provide a new school and expand existing schools is the only way we can ensure that a sufficient number of school places are provided for the future.
A new school will provide a difficult choice for parents. Is an alliance with Richmond Council not possible looking at the area as a whole? A school could be provided on the Stag Brewery site, Mortlake.	<p>The LA is required to promote as much choice as possible and there will be much less choice for parents/carers if there is no new school.</p> <p>We continue to work closely with Richmond but we cannot rely on additional capacity at Grey Court to provide for the increased projected numbers of pupils from 2015 onwards.</p> <p>Prior to the increased pupil numbers proving to be sustained, the LA had discussed the possibility of additional capacity at Grey Court being provided to offer more places to Kingston pupils. Richmond will not enter the BSF programme for some time and we must work within the parameters which are that BSF monies for Kingston must be invested in schools within the Borough.</p>
What kind of school may we end up with?	The School Competition Process is separate from BSF and it is a statutory requirement for the LA to set out its case for a new school and invite bids. The LA's outline specification for the school informs the type of school that providers can put forward. The selection of

	the provider will be the subject of further consultation later in the year.
<p>If the majority of people are opposed to Eight Forms of entry what will you do?</p> <p>From where are you considering land that will expand the size of the site?</p>	<p>RBK's Executive will make the decision on what will be contained in the competition notice and will take account of the results of this consultation.</p> <p>The LA is currently engaged in local negotiations regarding the school site and cannot say more on this matter at the current time.</p> <p>We are clear that 8FE is required but if it is not possible then it will not be pursued.</p>
Who are the Architects appointed to design the new school?	'A Studio' has been appointed following a full procurement process.
If the Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) shows that 8FE is too big, will you scale down the proposal? Is there a Plan B?	<p>The TIA will examine the whole area and the impact that a new school will have. TFL will also be engaged about additional bus services. We will need to evidence that the size of the school will be possible in planning policy terms. There is already some staggering of school hours in the area and this will be part of the strategy to manage the arrival and departure of pupils to the new school.</p> <p>The number of children resident in the area justifies a 8FE new school.</p>
<p>Will there be an updated timetable for the planning process on the RBK website?</p> <p>Concern that a planning development brief does not provide planning certainty, this only arrives when planning permission has been secured.</p> <p>The presentation referred to it being strongly anticipated that the Hawker Centre will not be required. No details were given on the timescale for this and the public need more certainty.</p>	<p>The website will be updated to outline the new timetable for the planning process with an explanation about a Planning Development Brief. Partnership for Schools has confirmed that a Planning Development Brief is sufficient to release the funding for the new school.</p> <p>The Planning Development Brief will provide certainty about the Hawker Centre site as it will show whether the new school can be accommodated on the North Kingston Centre site. By end of July 2010 the extent to which the Hawker Centre will need to be included in the proposal will be known.</p>
I have spoken to many people and no-one supports the use of this site. It is important to get this right and there are other site opportunities in the Borough. Not enough importance is being given to users of the North Kingston Centre with assurances but	We recognise that we have many competing demands. There will be a full detailed consultation with all users of the North Kingston Centre regarding the relocation of services.

<p>no details given about relocation of services and whether these will be kept together. It is a lovely building.</p>	<p>Following extensive analysis of possible sites, we have concluded that this is the only viable site in the Borough and the right location. We are not unaware of the implications this proposal has for Adult Education and will work with all users on relocation.</p>
<p>If this proposal goes ahead there will be 15FE of pupils in a small area. It seems impossible in terms of travel arrangements, access to the site etc.</p>	<p>Traffic implications will be fully investigated as part of the Planning Development Brief. It is not in anybody's interest for this not to work.</p>
<p>An 8FE school should have a site of 24,000m², whereas the North Kingston Centre is only 14,000m². It is clear that you intend to take sports field area from Tiffin Girls School which would be contrary to planning policy guidance.</p> <p>Page 9 of the document says you will seek to expand size of site available – how will this be done?</p>	<p>The figures referred to relate to the paper produced for the informal consultation regarding sites last year. These set out in detail reasons why other sites could not be delivered for a new school on the timescales required. RBK's Executive took the decision to move forward with an 8FE proposal for the North Kingston Centre site. The planning process will ultimately test if this is possible.</p> <p>We are aware of the information that Tiffin Girls has shared with its school community. The LA is not in a position to discuss the detail of options for the site at this stage. There is due process to follow on this matter and we will share information publically when it is appropriate.</p>
<p>Pupil place planning is not an exact science. What will you do if the birth rate starts to fall again? Kingston has had a recent history of school closures.</p>	<p>We keep our forecasts under constant review. Recently we have been very accurate in forecasting primary school numbers and we can be confident that our forecasts are as accurate as they can be. If numbers change we will respond accordingly but in the medium term we know these additional places are required. Additional capacity will be added in a way that if demand for school places reduces in future years, spare capacity could be utilised in ways other than for teaching and learning such as community use.</p>
<p>How will a new school starting with only a Year 7 intake teach a broad curriculum and a high standard of teaching? Will there be 8 or 40 teachers in the first year? With no track record of opening new secondary schools, people need confidence in how the school will operate.</p>	<p>The school would work closely with current schools both within Kingston and those that it is close to in other Local Authorities in order to ensure that pupils have a peer group that is wider than within the new school. The school being 8FE makes this an easier challenge than if it was a smaller size. Whilst challenging, the school will have as much specialist teaching as it needs.</p> <p>Staffing ratios will be higher than schools with</p>

	<p>all year groups, funding protection will enable this to happen. There is the example of one other new London secondary school that has recently opened with only a new year 7 cohort which we will learn from. Kingston has a track record in opening new primary schools, such as Fern Hill.</p> <p>Primary Schools in this area are outstanding and the LA is confident that we will be able to provide a new school which will be outstanding too.</p>
<p>As a Development Control Committee member I would like to assure those present that the committee is not a rubber stamp and that design proposals will be examined closely by the committee.</p>	
<p>Whilst appreciating the need for additional school places, local residents do not feel that they have been adequately consulted on the appropriateness of the proposed site.</p>	<p>Other options were shared during the informal consultation and the challenges and difficulties with other sites were outlined. From the LA perspective this is the right site for the school and as required prior to a competition notice we are consulting on our proposal for the new school.</p>
<p>There are conflicts between a school being non-selective and a neighbourhood school and the policies promoted by a number of school providers.</p> <p>If the Hawker Centre is used for Sports Provision for the school this would be incompatible with its current community use.</p> <p>The Hawker Centre currently has a footfall of 25,000 people per month. This needs to be taken account of if re-considering use of the centre other than for sports facilities.</p>	<p>The impact on the Hawker Centre if just used for sports facilities would be minimal. There are plenty of examples of sports fields being used by school pupils and adults. All pupils would be supervised by school staff with CRB checks and there would be no conflict if used by the school and the community.</p>
<p>Is there an assumption that the Church of England will wish to be involved in provision of the new school? How does this impact on admission criteria?</p>	<p>The LA is the commissioner and sets the framework for the need for a new school, its proposed main characteristics and who the school is designed to serve. Admission criteria will be proposed by the provider.</p> <p>The education vision is set out by the LA, it will need to be inclusive and have a specialism.</p>
<p>Where will teachers of the new school park? The implications of 3000 children emptying out onto Richmond Road will be huge.</p>	<p>We will wait to see the results of the Traffic Impact Assessment but we believe there may be a reduction in some travel as children will</p>

	be attending a school closer to their home.
Hasn't the proposal already been determined? Whilst no-one doubts that the school will be excellent with dedicated staff, the size of the school seems a pre-determined position with no likelihood of a smaller school being built.	This part of the statutory process requires the Local Authority to set out its proposal for the new school. We believe that this proposal is the right one given the lack of alternative options.
Concern regarding the impact of a major building project for Fern Hill pupils adjacent to the site.	Building works will be carefully managed to ensure that their impact is managed and does not adversely affect the education of pupils at Fern Hill. Building projects will be integrated into the curriculum which have been a really positive experience for pupils at other schools.
As a School Improvement Partner at another LA I am concerned about lack of social space at the new school. The restricted size of the site means that the building will impact upon the amount of social space that can be provided and this has implications for behaviour and achievement. In general there seems to be a lack of educational input into the plans.	The LA has already begun discussions on the Education Design Brief by working with existing schools through a series of road shows and consultations with primary and secondary aged pupils. It is a constrained site but all space will be used intelligently to aid learning and pupil achievement.
What is the minimum size of school under the BSF programme? Does it need to be 8FE due to these imposed requirements?	<p>8FE is proposed because 8FE is required by the Local Authority to meet the need of a growing secondary school aged population in this part of the Borough. We are convinced that the level of demand for this size school makes 8FE necessary.</p> <p>The BSF programme is designed to rebuild or refurbish all secondary schools in the Borough. A new school is being provided under the programme because existing schools cannot all accommodate the rising demand. Existing schools will benefit from the BSF programme and extra places will be delivered on a programme from 2015/16 to 2018/19. All non-selective Kingston schools will become larger, many also on constrained sites.</p>

The Director of Learning and Children's Services (Interim) thanked everyone for attending and advised that there will be an opportunity to ask further questions via the website from 10 February 2010.