

Notes of Public Consultation Meeting

Primary School Expansion 2011 – Public Consultation Meeting Ellingham Primary School

Thursday, 29 April 2010, 19:00 – 20.45

Officers Present:

Anne Redparth - Head of Resources and Commissioning
Charis Penfold - Strategic Manager/ Inspector for Early Years
Justine Rego - Policy Officer, Learning and Children's Services
Headteacher - Ellingham Primary School

There were approximately 40-50 people present at the meeting.

Presentation

Anne Redparth welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a presentation on the expansion of Primary Schools 2011. The presentation outlined our statutory responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient school places for all children who need one and Kingston's proposal to meet this demand through school expansion in the South of the Borough area. The presentation is attached as Annex A.

Comments and Questions

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

Comment/Question	Response
Why did you get rid of a school when you knew the numbers were increasing?	RBK uses the GLA (Greater London Authority) population projections. The population projections showing the increases came through after the decision was made to close Moor Lane. The pupil roll projections from the GLA had been very accurate (within 1%) for the previous 10 years. Across London significant factors have led to the lack of preparation for the population increases. There are also issues around delays in receiving data. Kingston Hospital is a key source of information but we receive the data only two to three years after births have taken place. Due to the increased use of Kingston Hospital by a wider geographical area, only 50% of the births at Kingston Hospital are to borough residents.
Why didn't you reverse your decision? Re-open the school	The Moor Lane site has been used for the Integrated Disabled Children's Service with funding from the different agencies such as health. It would not be possible to reverse the decision.
The site at Moor Lane has loads of space.	Most of that is protected green space on which we cannot build.
Doesn't stop you building anywhere else.	Can I ask that we save the questions until after the

	presentation, we'll go around the room and everybody will get a chance to ask their questions.
Won't be enough time, the presentation lasts ages.	This is the last presentation of 14 and everyone has had the chance to ask all their questions at the others. I'll finish in 10 minutes so we have one and a half hours to answer your questions. I will stay until every question is answered.
Could I just ask whose rule is it to have four FE? That's very large.	It's Kingston's. I'll ask Charis to give more information on this in a couple of slides.
Could you explain why you can't share the designs yet?	The will be released on 17 May, and there will be a display here on 18 May 2010 so that you can see the plans. There are 14 schools and a new school whose plans all need to fit into a budget of £70m. We are very nearly there but are just making sure everything balances.
Do we have to still return this by 1 June if the plans aren't available until 18 May 2010?	Yes. This consultation is about the principle of expansion of the school and the other consultation is about the plans; they are two separate processes.
So there's an Options Appraisal. Can we see it?	The Options Appraisal went through planning policy, there were 5 different options but none of them provided a better solution. On 18 May & 27 May we can share the DCSF guidelines about size and facilities we need to provide for pupils in schools.
Do you know whether this school will have a phased development or not?	The development at Ellingham will not just be for the new intake, it will be quite a radical overhaul and it may take longer. We'll have a better idea when we share the plans with you on 18 May. The pre-planning consultation will give you the chance to comment on the plans. St Mary's has recently had a significant re-build and it has been a really positive learning experience for them all. It has been very carefully managed.
Whilst building work was being done why didn't you expand St Mary's, they've got space?	They are a church school and did not want to participate. We've had discussions with all schools throughout this process. St Mary's is a voluntarily aided school and as such we cannot simply direct them to expand. The Southwark Diocese does not have any three form entry schools and so did not want to expand St Mary's.
How do you decide which schools to expand?	We work closely with the schools. There is an expectation from the government that the existing balance of community and faith schools is maintained. The Primary Expansion Strategy maintains that balance.
What makes you think that the increasing number of births is going to stop?	Our projections go up to 2020 and show a stabilising of recent increases.
Why did you close Moor Lane? Why can't you back track? That site is huge and has been a school.	
My view it that the school is huge. It could be knocked down and re-built.	Moor Lane is now a community hub providing services for disabled children. The large playing field continues to be used by Castle Hill School. We have a commitment to provide the services at Moor

	Lane. The whole building is being used and the workplace nursery is also accommodated there. Now I recognise that if we hadn't already actioned the changes at Moor Lane things may have been different.
Why was that mistake made in the first place?	The data about the increases in population was not received until after all the decisions about Moor Lane and Castle Hill were made.
How many children go there?	We've brought all the services for disabled children together so that families do not have to keep repeating their story over and over to different professionals. There's over 600 children receiving services.
So when the birth figures continue to go up where is your capacity for the future?	Our estimates show the numbers stabilising but we don't definitely know what will happen. The numbers are being regularly reviewed – every three months. So much also depends on the independent sector who have not expanded to accommodate the rise in demand for school places, probably due to the current economic climate. It may be in the future this situation changes and people may choose the independent sector again.
If the numbers dropped it will benefit the children as the pupil numbers per class will drop and they will hopefully keep their funding.	Unfortunately the funding would not be kept as it is based on pupil numbers. The worst case is over supply of places. We are trying to ensure the designs for the schools are future proofed if numbers decrease then the buildings can be flexible and accommodate that.
It doesn't take a crystal ball to see the houses being built around here, and they keep on building.	We have a target to increase the housing in the borough. Housing development here has not been of the same density as elsewhere.
There's 30 houses being built at the moment with 4 / 5 bedrooms, you're going to need more school places.	Unfortunately accurately predicting school places is not a science, there is not one simple answer for this.
The work will start and then you'll change your mind and leave us with a half built school. The funding last year was £80m, is it still?	In March the budget was set at £70m.
Is the £70m actually available?	We have £42m at the moment. RBK has been lobbying the DCSF for extra funding. We have secured £8m from the DCSF and the Primary Capital Programme provides another £15m. We'll also apply for funding from government for basic need which is given to us over 7 years. The Local Authority has underwritten the work to progress. After the election there will be the Comprehensive Spending Review which will set the Local Authority funding for the next 3 years, but we can't wait for this decision we have to act now.
What will happen if you start and then run out of money? Will you stop?	No, the funding will be secure before the building starts.
What about the national policy to reduce class size?	The government would have to fund the investment needed to do this. We can't wait until then, we need to deal with what we know now.

What if the government slashes funding?	I think all parties have promised funding. The DCSF work on a formula and we made a case according to that formula, it is not dependent on political parties.
How much money do we have?	£42m. The Council has committed to underwrite the other £28m.
We have great teachers here and a great school, so the increase in size from one to two forms of entry is not an issue from my perspective. My issue is space. We have the smallest site. The outside facilities are awful as are the playgrounds. When the school is re-built I can't see how it would be big enough. In addition, people may need to drive to the school.	
I was part of a re-build group looking at plans. I can't see how that can change to accommodate a two form entry school.	All these concerns are being addressed when looking at the plans. There are guiding principles for developing schools, the Ellingham site does fit within the government principles. Ellingham currently takes up a lot of ground space and fragments what there is of the outside space.
What about site access?	This is a key issue for Ellingham which we are aware of. We are looking at the whole area of St Phillip's and Chessington Community College and the use of the space.
Lovelace has a huge school site.	Unfortunately the land is protected and we are very constrained by the foot print of the school. In planning policy terms we wouldn't get planning permission.
What about extra places needed in the future?	We would need to go elsewhere. I can give you the assurance – we can't use this site for a three form entry school.
Head Teacher – you're letter said that you had concerns over 2 form entry, what's changed your mind?	I went to other schools and had a look, talked to them and came to the conclusion it was in the best interest of the school to expand to two forms of entry.
These houses they're building have no space, they're crammed in.	
What will the building be like?	It would be a two storey building with the youngsters at the bottom and others at the top.
But are you listening to us? The parking down the road is a huge problem.	It is a key part of the project to be addressed.
The site for the new school, will the entrance be Ellingham Road?	Probably Ellingham Road for vehicular access and pedestrian access. We are looking at other options as well.
All well and good but those that drive, have to drive.	<p>These are the real issues we need to work through – wherever we expand this is a problem. So many of the schools are either on main roads or in cul-de-sacs.</p> <p>We can propose a joint working group made up of school representatives, local residents, highways department and the education authority. It is an option that we can put in place.</p>

Why can't we know the plans now?	We don't yet have the final designs.
But you're dealing with people that it doesn't impact.	Because we have government guidance and planning guidance we work within those parameters first.
Will the designs have different options?	No
So what impact can we have?	No point for the education authority to put in a plan that many people object to. We want to adapt the plans in response to your feedback. Tonight is to explain the reason for the expansion not to discuss the plans.
There are two waste management sites that have been earmarked for this area, have they been considered for a school?	When I go back to the office I'll check the waste transfer sites have been ruled out.
I still can't see why you can't reinstate the old school.	It has been converted to house the integrated disabled children's service.
Why can't you enlarge Castle Hill?	We will gather all your responses together and they will taken into consideration.
It's hard to visualise without plans and the children have already had the development of Chessington Community College – couldn't open windows for months. Are they really going to look after the health and safety – there were problems with CCC?	We can give a commitment to ensure the health and safety of all the children. We need to look at the long term benefits of this development.
It would be better to be built all in one go.	It's not in our interest to create a bad experience for children at school – it's at the forefront of our thoughts.
I don't know if a drop in is the best format for the 18 May because people can't hear everything that is going on.	We've chosen this format to enable more people to come along and ask what ever questions they wish, when they want to – directly to the architects and local authority staff.
What happens if the school is not expanded to 2FE? Will the school still be re-developed?	No it wouldn't.

Anne Redparth thanked everyone for coming along and giving their views.