

New Secondary School Competition, Kingston upon Thames

Report from the seminar for potential proposers held on 18th May 2010

A seminar for potential promoters of a proposed new secondary school in the north of the Borough of Kingston upon Thames was held in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Kingston. The seminar was chaired by Robin Clarke from the Office for Public Management (OPM). The purpose of a seminar, within the new school competition process, is to provide potential proposers information.

There are four key aims for each seminar:

- To provide information to organisations and individuals who are interested in becoming proposers of the new school
- To set out what needs to be done to be a successful proposer of a new secondary school
- To explain how organisations and local community based groups can get government funded support to help them put in a bid
- To clarify what needs to be done if successful in bidding to establish a new school

Presentations were made by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (RBK) and by OPM. OPM is an independent consultancy, working on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). All materials were provided by the DfE, OPM and RBK as appropriate. The seminar was run by OPM.

A number of activities were carried out prior to the seminar. To advertise the new school competition, OPM placed adverts in the Times Educational Supplement (TES) on the 24th April 2010, further local adverts were placed in the Surrey Comet on the 16th April and the Surrey and Sussex Telegraph on the 26th and 28th April. The adverts asked if people were interested in getting involved in setting up a new secondary school, and explained that the Local Authority were inviting proposals to set up a new school in Kingston, to open in September 2015. The notice invited any local people and organisations, and national organisations who might wish to become involved in being a proposer of the new school to attend the seminar.

Invitations were sent to primary and secondary schools as well as further education colleges in the area, In addition, invitations were issued to voluntary and community based organisations, specifically those located in Kingston with a focus on provision for children, young people and education.. Leaflets along with A3 posters were created and distributed by our community engagement team who spent time in Kingston.

Attendance

31 representatives from local and national organisations, schools, higher education, churches and residents were in attendance, as well as officers from RBK and OPM.

Summary of the event

OPM began with an explanation of the event as follows:

- To engage and provide networking opportunities for organisations and individuals interested in becoming a promoter of the new school;
- To explain the process of school competitions and what is entailed in preparing and submitting a bid to open a school;
- To develop maximum interest and participation in the process; and
- To signpost for information and detail.

Introduction

Robin Clarke from OPM chaired the seminar and started proceedings by introducing Anne Redparth, Head of Resources and Commissioning, and Tina Herring, Service Director, Learning & School Effectiveness. Robin also introduced OPM colleagues Tarley Smith and Kimberley Green.

Robin clarified that the council had a lead role in the new schools competition and that they would be outlining the criteria that they wanted proposers to meet in the competition.

He emphasised that the thinking behind new schools competitions was to raise standards in schools through the involvement of a greater range of partners and providers in establishing and running schools.

New school competitions are aimed at inviting new providers, such as local community and voluntary groups, as well as those with a good track record, to enter the competition to establish and run schools.

OPM presentation

Robin Clarke gave a presentation outlining the purpose of the school competition as raising standards, inviting new providers, encouraging innovation, meeting local needs and ensuring greater choice in the area.

He outlined who can put forward a proposal and what the scope of proposer's role is. Robin also described the respective roles of a governing body, the Local Authority and the Department for Education. He also outlined the similarities and differences between different types of school, including voluntary aided, foundation, voluntary controlled and academy.

In addition Robin set-out the timeframe for putting forward a proposal. He also discussed the decision-making process, the support available to providers and gave some information about what happens after the competition.

Council presentation

Anne Redparth, Head of Resources and Commissioning, and Tina Herring, Service Director – School Effectiveness gave a presentation on the proposed new secondary school in the north of RBK

They outlined the local context in which increasing demand on secondary school places is forecast to rise. There will be insufficient places to meet demand from 2015 and as a result a new school, as well as expansion of existing schools is required to ensure that a place is available to every Kingston secondary aged pupil who requires one.

RBK has a strong Children's Trust and an outstanding Ofsted rating for its Children's Services. Despite this there is a significant gap in the attainment of the highest and lowest achieving

pupils in the borough. The new school must be part of the strategy to bridge this gap and raise the performance of the lowest achieving pupils.

The new school.

RBK plan to increase the number of secondary school places by 28% (16 Forms of Entry) by 2018/19, half of which will be provided in the new school (8 Forms of Entry). This will provide a new option for pupils in the north of the Borough as well as providing greater choice for all residents.

Anne and Tina outlined the '5 Big ideas for Education in Kingston' and how these shape the new school specification:

1. 'personalisation will be at the heart of the school'
2. 'learners will play a prominent role in shaping the school'
3. 'the school will be at the heart of the community'
4. 'the school will share its excellence widely'
5. 'our schools will maximise the use of space, time and resources'.

The school is being designed as part of the Local Authority Building Schools for the Future programme. It must be a non-selective co-educational school as there are currently none in the north of the borough and provide places predominately, though not exclusively, for pupils in the north of RBK. As 100% of schools in Kingston are required to deliver extended services the school will also be required to meet the needs of the whole community through providing a range of extended services.

In addition, they council are keen for the school design to allow pupils to learn in a more diverse range of environments.

The school is also required to have post-16 provision. Anne and Tina emphasised that all Kingston schools have 6th forms and that parents will want and expect this. The school will also need to collaborate with other primary/secondary schools in the area.

They outlined the resources available for the new school. The building will go forward as part of £220m of BSF funding in the Kingston area. It is required to have a specialism with humanities, music and the arts being preferred options (to balance existing specialisms). It will be a PFI scheme with managed services for facilities and ICT.

The timeline for the competition was set out as:

- The bid period: 23rd April to 23rd August 2010
- A second notice issued outlining bids with further public consultation: 3rd September 2010
- Deadline for comments by 12th October 2010
- Decision: November 2010

Those attending the meeting were directed to: www.kingston.gov.uk/secondary_expansion for further information.

Questions and discussion

Robin apologised for the errors in the presentation pack where previous areas where Competitions had taken place were mentioned and stated that the production of these materials was OPM's responsibility and not a reflection on the Local Authority.

After the presentations, questions and points for discussion were answered by Robin Clarke from OPM and Anne Redparth/ Tina Herring from Kingston Council.

The following questions were put by those attending the meeting:

1. *As a point of clarification, you plan to raise school places by 28%, when you came to this figure did you take into account planned housing developments?*

(Anne Redparth) We use forecasting models that include development sites that have approved planning permissions and those that are designated as potential development sites.

2. *You said there's going to be 15 places in a SEN unit, will this be 15 per year or 15 in the whole school?*

(Tina Herring) There will be provision for up to 15 pupils in a Special Resourced Provision for the whole school, 2 or 3 per year. It will provide support for pupils with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Needs (BESN)

3. *Firstly I'd just like to comment that I think the consultations have been well run (e.g. with doorstep drops to residents). I'd like to know where the playing fields for the school would be located*

(Anne Redparth) This is currently part of the planning and development brief and the LA is currently exploring options.. Planning consultants and architects have been asked to provide the school on a single site, but with external sports facilities on a separate site (to be determined) and are likely to seek planning permission on this basis. One option that the LA has publicly consulted on is the use of the Hawker Centre external sports facilities.

4. *How are the 4 assessment criteria weighted?*

(Anne Redparth) Not currently weighted but an initial thought is that each of the 4 may need to be considered as some of them can be unpacked in more depth than others.

(Tina Herring) I think they are probably actually weighted fairly equally. We've not worked out exact criteria because we weren't asked to as we aren't at the point of assessing them. We will have a discussion once we get to that point.

(Anne Redparth) We do recognise the importance of confirming this to assist potential proposers writing their bids and will advise all interested parties accordingly, in good time to inform the bids.

5. *Is the Local Authority planning to submit a proposal?*

(Anne Redparth) We cannot provide a clear answer on this yet. The Council's Executive hasn't been reformed since the election; hence no policy decision has been made. There should however be some continuity in views on this matter as the Council continues to have a Liberal Democrat administration

6. *Will the decision of whether/not the LA will put forward a proposal be made before the end of the school year?*

(Anne Redparth) We're not sure but we'd hope so.

Robin Clarke closed the meeting with thanks to all those who had given this new school competition their serious attention. Robin reminded those present that they could apply for consultancy support and/or register an interest in the competition at any time before the competition deadline. Robin thanked Anne, Tina and other colleagues for their support at the meeting.

Further Information

If you are interested in getting involved in bidding to set up this new school and/ or would like to be put in contact with others who might work with you in order to achieve this please contact Kimberley Green at OPM 020 7239 7828 or email kgreen@opm.co.uk

Queries about the new secondary school in Kingston including the specification should be sent to Anne Redparth, Head of Resources and Commissioning
anne.redparth@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

Further information about the requirements for new school competitions, including a copy of the guidance and the application form for consultancy support to help you prepare your bid, is available at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/tools/schoolhandbooks/>. Any queries regarding the process should be directed to Amanda Graham on 01325 391282 or by email to School.Competitions@dcf.gov.uk .