

Public Consultation Meeting held at Hamara Centre on Monday 19th September 2011 from 2.00pm

Present

Representatives from Education Leeds:

Charlotte Foley (CF) – Learning Environments

Lesley Savage (LS) – School Organisation

Viv Buckland (VB) – School Access

Anne Kearsley (AK) – Early Years.

Approximately 12 members of the public.

These notes are not intended to be a verbatim account of the meeting, but do capture the key issues raised, so they can be addressed when considering the outcome of the consultation. Attendees were advised that if they wish to be sure their views are fully heard they should also respond in writing. A brief outline of the proposal, and the competition was provided, before questions were invited from the floor.

Q1 Will the Local Authority bid to run the school?

A1 This decision will be made at a later date, however, if they do place a bid then the Local Authority will not be the decision maker – the schools adjudicator becomes the decision maker. At this stage we're consulting on the basic specification (size, location etc) and this will be decided later.

Q2 The Head of a local Catholic school expressed concern that there are already two Catholic schools in the area would like to know if this extra competition to these schools would be recognised in this process? Also, is population change considered?

A2 All views will be taken in to account, and the number of Catholic places offered is a matter for the diocese to consider, however, overall we believe these places are needed in addition to the places currently offered by the existing schools. We have arranged to attend the local school cluster meeting during the consultation to ensure the schools have opportunity to discuss the issues and raise their concerns.

Q3 Would the new school incorporate a swimming pool in to its plans?

A3 There is no swimming pool planned as the budget for school does not allow. The proposal is for a school, and that does not assume anything about a swimming pool.

Q4 As the Sports Centre is on the proposed site, does this mean that the buildings will have to be demolished. View that the need for a new school is accepted, but the issue is whether it means the swimming pool and sports centre must go.

A4 Not necessarily, but there is no detailed building plan at this stage. This stage of consultation is aimed making sure the proposal to put a school on the site is sound. In theory there is sufficient overall site area to have a school and a sports centre, but we haven't worked out the details of if/how that could be delivered. If the outcome of the consultation is to progress with the competition for a school on the site then there are three possibilities: independent proposals for a school and a separate sports centre; a school provider who wishes to include sports facilities as part of their plan; or a school and no sports centre. The community needs to tell us now about their views on those

options. If we invite people to bid to run a school we need to be very clear what the authority are funding, and that will just be a school.

Q5 The local community feel that there is a need for the swimming pool and that the cost of demolition would be expensive, has any other sites been considered?

A5 No other sites within the area have been identified which are genuinely available, suitable in size, and in the right location relative to where the children live.

Q6 Teachers Union representative, informed the meeting that the consultation documents states that the school will be of a modular make-up, if no decisions have been made at this stage then why has this been published?

A6 A procurement framework is in place to use this type of building, as they can be constructed off site and erected quickly with minimum disruption, and are cost effective. These modular buildings have a 60 year life cycle and are high quality.

Q7 Will the bid have to be built on the present footprint of the buildings on site at present.

A7 At this stage it is the size of the site that is the only consideration, where the school is placed on that site is undecided.

Q8 With the Sports Centre on site at the moment plus the proposed school will there be enough room and is the playing field to be included in the bid as this with the sports centre is a major community facility that is needed in the area. Schools were being closed several years ago, now educational and sports facilities in the area are needed.

A8 This consultation is from the educational need perspective at this stage. The council will need to make a decision about the competing priorities for the site based on the outcome of the consultation, and will consider then if any sound proposals exist for a sports centre. This consultation is to find the best site for a school and if this site is not utilised then another solution will have to be found, hard decisions will have to be made in the future. We are simply asking if this is the best site for a new school.

Q9 Why are we having to choose between sport centre and school when schools were been closed in the recent past.

A9 This consultation is simply to decide if the site is the correct site for a school at this time and in the future based on the number of existing pre school children. All schools are full or almost to capacity at the present.

Q10 Can buildings be placed on the footprint as this would provide options for the other space if this is the case.

A10 We are looking at the suitability of the site as a whole and further decisions will be made at the formal planning meetings, this will include access, green space and many other issues.

Q11 The preference would be for a Local Authority school, however, the member of the public does not think they will be able to keep the sports centre too. Is there a provider who could support both?

A11 The next stage, after the consultation will be the time when the Local Authority decides whether or not to enter a bid.

Q12 Are these places really needed in the area as there are spaces in some of the schools in the area, especially as Hugh Gaitskell is just outside the area? The data does not recognise the places offered by Hugh Gaitskell and Beeston Primary.

A12 There is a recognition that there may be a small number of places free at the present time but we are looking at the future trends which point to an increased intake by the time the school will be open in 2014. Within 1 mile of the site there are 586 children in the 2014 reception cohort, and 400 places. If we expand that circle to include Beeston Primary and Hugh Gaitskell we will also include more children – so those places do not solve the issue.

Q13 Has the demolition of local housing stocks in the area being taken in to account?

A13. The data published looks just at the existing children, the known demand. We've shown how many were born in each year, but also a snapshot of the 0-5's in September last year, so that shows how the population is changing, including through changes in housing stock. We regularly review this data, and when the next annual update is available it will be published.

Q14 Would the Local Authority bid and what happens if no bids are received?

Q14 The process was given again, including the proposed changes under the education bill currently before parliament. The main point as the law currently stands is that if the Local Authority does enter the process then it cannot be the decision maker. It can choose during the competition stage whether or not to bid, for example if no bids are received then that might influence the Local Authority's decision on whether to bid themselves.

Q15 Is the Local Authority aware of any bids at the present time?

A15 At this stage we are not allowed to do anything to imply a preferred bidder, and we focus just on whether the specification is correct. We can speculate that existing providers such as the CE and Catholic diocese, existing academy sponsors etc may bid, and we have distributed information to those bodies for awareness, but we are not at the stage of inviting bids. If we get to that stage we have to advertise in a prescribed manner.

Q16 How much money is involved in the build? £4m+ is quoted in the area committee report.

A16 The final costs depends on many factors, and the provisional high level estimate provided so far does not include a nursery provision or any other extras, which is what the consultation is testing. It will be refined during the process. A discussion about local Early Years provision followed, and it was explained that while any local providers would be encouraged the area has a shortage of Early Years providers of all types, a 26 place nursery is therefore included in the specification we are consulting on.

Q17 What would the catchment area of the school be (especially as Church schools can set their own)?

A17 Any proposer would be their own admissions authority, and responsible for setting their own policy. However it is intended to serve the local population, and so they would be assessed for how well they met that criteria. We can also ask (but not insist) that they include a nearest criteria in their policy.

Q18 There is a 6 weeks deadline for questions, will they be answered within this time period?

A18 Individual answers will not be possible but the results of the consultation and the exec board report containing the recommendations will be published on the web. We will also keep schools and other consultees informed of the development of the proposal.

Q19 The web page is not user friendly could this be addressed?

A18 We will review this to see if it can be improved. Unfortunately the old Education Leeds website has not yet been reintegrated into the council's web site, but we have given information on how to get the documents, and it should be fairly easy to get to.