

## **Public Consultation Meeting held at Compton Centre on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2011 from 5.00pm**

### **Present**

Representatives from Education Leeds:

Lesley Savage (LS) – School Organisation

Darren Dobson (DD) – Project Coordinator

Julia Manning (JM) – Early Years Extended Services Manager.

Approximately 5 members of the public, plus ward members for Burmantofts and Richmond Hill.

### **Q1 The lack of local people at the meeting was commented on and what sources had been contact to communicate these meetings to the local community?**

A1 All schools and early years providers were made aware, they were advertised on the Family Hub and main council website, doctors surgeries, libraries, post offices, through area management officers and local ward councillors. Any further suggestions would be welcomed.

### **Q2 Who suggested this site as it is not a popular choice.**

A 2 There are not many options in the local area, we looked at all of the council owned land and buildings in the area, as well as the expansion of existing schools. This is the only viable site at this stage.

### **Q3 Why wasn't the Local Residents Committee aware of this consultation process?**

A3 The area management committee and area management officers were used as the link to the local community, we will review if this can be improved for the future.

### **Q4 Florence Street is very narrow and residents find traffic and access difficult at the moment , a new school will only increase the problem.**

A4 The details of access and highways will be decided through the independent planning permission stage, but initial high level discussions suggest we could manage the issues. This consultation is only to find if the specification is correct for a new school. The site is close to where many children live so they would be able to walk to school; this is the best way to mitigate that issue.

### **Q5 What is the perceived life span of the houses in the area?**

A5 The suitability of the site is all that we are consulting with, other agencies may have to be consulted for a reply to these issues.

### **Q6 A number of Heads in the area have expressed concern if a new school is a viable option and should existing schools be expanded instead.**

A6 This consultation will be taken to the cluster meeting later this month for consultation with the schools, however, Brownhill and Shakespeare have been consulted individually. There were valid reasons why these sites would not be suitable for expansion, mainly lack of space, and proximity to the highest demographic pressure, see section 7 of the consultation document.

**Q7 A number of Heads in the area are also concerned about the sustainability given the population mobility.**

A7 Whilst there is high mobility, and this does absolutely affect our thinking in developing proposals, there are also fundamentally many more children than places.

**Q8 Why was the proposed Free School on the Copperfield site turned down by the DFE?**

A8 Free Schools are independent of the authority and as such we are not the decision maker, so are not fully aware of all the reasons. It was for a 4-18 school, and is not where we would have prioritised spending for basic need purposes. We do consider Free Schools in planning, and had it gone ahead then this development would possibly not be required, however, it was rejected.

**Q9 Who would build the school?**

Q9 We are only looking at the educational need for a school at the moment, these decisions will be made at a later date. We have a number of possible suppliers.

**Q10 Does the take up of Nursery Education Grant Places at the nurseries in the area necessitate a new school nursery, as there doesn't seem to be a great take up in some of the nurseries already in the area?**

A10 The NEG take up in the whole of the Harehills area is a major cause for concern, Early Years have set up a Harehills NEG Consultation Group so that the places that are not taken up can be accessed. However, the overriding problem is the early start that children not accessing early education suffer from the rest of their education because research shows this early education is never caught up on. Harehills has a shortage of Nursery Education Grant places over the whole catchment area.

**Q11 There was concern over parents not wanting to travel to school, and has the children's centre site being considered for the nursery provision instead?**

A11 The reason the site is proposed is because it is close to where the families live. There is some spare land at the Children's Centre, but we need to be mindful of the need for outdoor play area which is a necessary part of the whole ethos of a Children's Centre. This will be considered in the consultation response, as the nursery element could potentially be split off, at the moment the focus of this consultation is on the school requirement, and whether or not a nursery should be included in that.

**Q12 Would the site next to the recycling/waste tip be suitable?**

A12 We believe we can work around this with suitable screening. It might not be our first choice, but we believe we can make a suitable school environment.

**Q13 There is not a great deal of green land, this would mean losing a valuable patch of green space.**

A13 We understand there has been interest in developing the land for recreational use, but no viable proposals have emerged. We believe the proposal offers a way to enhance the area, and any school could be available for use out of school hours. We can ask bidders to describe how they would make the building and outdoor facilities available for use by the community.

**Q14 The area suffers from various antisocial problems and concern was expressed about the safety of the children going to the school alone.**

Q14 This is a primary school, children are normally accompanied to/from school.

**Q15 The lack of outdoor space for the school, size of other available sites and possible expansion on other school sites were also discussed and questioned.**

A15 We believe we have expanded most other schools to their limit, and could not create this amount of extra places. The alternative sites are less well placed, or not genuinely available now. The site would be constrained, but many inner city schools are, and we make suitable arrangements for sports use etc. The timeline is important – to get through the legal processes and deliver any buildings in time for 2013 the land needs to be available now.

**Q16 What would the cost of the project be? It says £4m+ in the area committee report**

A16 We have not got detailed costings yet, because we haven't done the detailed design, but yes that is our high level estimate. Although each site is different, we have experience of recent new developments at Carr Manor and Roundhay, so can be reasonably confident of the high level estimate.

**Q17 It was suggested that a two story building could be put on site to minimise footprint, but this is not the best solution for a primary school.**

A17 This may be a solution for parts of the building. Many primary schools manage this, and obviously we would need to put some thought into which parts would be appropriate for an upper storey – eg staff room, or KS2 classrooms. Many existing schools find this a positive feature.

**Q18 Would the land next to the Harehills Children's Centre be a possible site for a nursery?**

A18 This land would have to be bought adding to the cost of the project, but it could be considered.

**Q19 It was suggested that there are many problems acknowledged with the site.**

A19 This is a consultation and the more input the better at this stage so that it can move on to the next.

**Q20 The width of the roads where the school is proposed is narrow and this may result in further problems, as with Victoria / Richmond Hill Primary.**

A20 Access issues would need to be resolved with input from the Highways Department, we do have experience of managing these issues and it is likely traffic management measures would be a part of the plan.

**Q21 Do the council own Primrose site or the old Roseville school site land and would this be a solution?**

A21 Yes they do own the former Primrose site, however, this is not where the places are needed. We will look into the Roseville site, but do not believe it is ours.

**Q22 What was the feedback from the other consultation meetings?**

A21 The parent who was there was pleased that there was to be a new school in the area, and felt it was an acceptable location.

**Q23 As the car usage is a problem would a school bus service be the answer?**

A23 We would look at all transport issues at the planning stage and look at these options. The school would also need to have a travel plan which looked at these issues.

**Q24 Will the school site be open to community use?**

A24 Yes, but it won't have dedicated community spaces within it because we don't have the funding for that. We have to be very clear in any specification what we will fund as an authority, but bidders are free to offer additional funding to meet additional aims they may have. It is recognised as an important issue, and bidders will be asked to describe how they would make this happen.

**Q25 This will be a big disruption to all so we will need to get it right, especially the community use issue.**

A25 This part of the consultation is to create guidance for the competition stage, and that's what we'll use this feedback for. This school is needed in the near future and we have to start the process now so that the school is ready in time.

**Q26 If a religious school was to win the bid would they have to follow different procedures?**

A26 Any bidder is likely to be their own admissions authority, that is they decide their own admissions policy. They have to follow the admissions code though. The specification is for a school to serve this immediate area, and they would need to describe how they would do that in their bid.

**Q27 Has there been any bids suggested at this stage, a local authority run school would be preferable to a private school with sports recreation facilities for the whole community?**

A27 There have been no bids at this stage – at the moment we are just consulting on the specification and are not implying any bidder may be considered more favourably than any other. If it is agreed we need a school on that site of this specification we proceed to an invitation to bid. You then get a public consultation on the bids received, before Exec Board make a final decision on who best meets the need described in the bid.

An overview of the rest of the process was then given, and the meeting was closed.