

Appendix 3

Consultation on Draft Proposal to Amalgamate
Ashford Carbonell School and Caynham School

Introduction

This Appendix selects and responds to the main points raised during the consultation, including at the meetings with staff, governors and the community. The minutes of the meetings at each school are also attached to the report as Appendices 2a and 2b. The actual responses received are available for inspection in the Members Library and will be available to Members at the Cabinet Meeting on 19 May 2008.

Points Raised and Response by Officers

Ref.	Point Raised	Response
1	If the schools are amalgamated, would there be a new school?	<p>The answer to this is in two parts. The first is about the administration of a new school and the second is about its buildings.</p> <p>Administration</p> <p>The proposal is to close both schools and ask the Diocese of Hereford to open a new Foundation school to serve the whole area. This means that a temporary Governing Body will be set up, drawn from members of the existing Governing Bodies.</p> <p>The temporary Governing Body will be in charge of preparing policies and setting a budget (including the staffing structure) for the new school. One of their important early duties will be to select the new headteacher, who will then work with both schools to allocate staff to posts in the new structure. As at present, the Church of England will nominate a proportion of the Governors of the new school. However, as the proposal is for a Foundation School, the staff would be employed by Shropshire County Council, who would also be responsible for admissions. This is the case currently at Ashford Carbonell, but not at Caynham which is Voluntary Aided, so the staff are employed by the Governors who also control admissions.</p>

Ref.	Point Raised	Response
		<p>Buildings</p> <p>Neither of the current schools' buildings are suitable for 21st century education. If a new school were to go ahead, it would need to be in wholly new building</p>
2	Where might a new school be built?	<p>Although responses to the consultation from each village tend to prefer that a new school is built close to their village, the majority of respondents believe that a new school in one of the two villages is more important than its location. Officers have looked at a number of sites identified by local people. Out of these sites, the most favoured one is to use the field next to the current Ashford Carbonell School (see appendix 4), whilst the next most favoured site is on the edge of Caynham village. Both of these sites would require successful negotiation with the landowner and planning permission.</p>
3	What about early years' provision?	<p>Shropshire County Council would like to continue to work with the existing early years' provider, which takes children from both schools. Accommodation for the early years' provider would be included in a new school.</p>
4	Why build a school in a village (either Ashford Carbonell or Caynham) where there aren't many children?	<p>Most children in each school come from outside the villages. However, the communities of both schools have said that they would like the children, once they reach school, to be able to walk easily to a Church. In addition, siting the school in one of the villages means that the facilities of the school can be used by the village outside school hours.</p>
5	What will happen to standards in a new school?	<p>The new school will be able to draw on the strengths of both of the existing schools, and the outcomes for children in the new school would be planned to be higher than in the individual schools. In addition, the new school would be better placed to retain staff if there was a change in pupil numbers in one area or the other, or a slight temporary dip in total pupil numbers.</p>
6	Will the children be safe?	<p>There are three parts to the answer to this question.</p> <p>Home to School Transport</p> <p>Shropshire County Council and its contractors safely transport many thousands of children each day, from very young children to eighteen year olds. Children help each other on these journeys, for</p>

Ref.	Point Raised	Response
		<p>example in helping young children fasten seat belts, and the driver has an overall role in safety management. Travelling to school by bus is statistically safer than travelling by any other means of available transport.</p> <p>Travelling By Car and on Foot</p> <p>Each of the current sites causes congestion at the start and end of the school day. A new school would have design features to significantly reduce congestion, and to ensure that children can be delivered safely to school by their parents either as a car passenger or a pedestrian. Although there is a Public Rights of Way between the two villages, at 4.5km it is a significant walk. The route does not at first sight appear to be suitable for conversion to a cycle route, even assuming permission could be negotiated with land owners.</p> <p>In and Around the School</p> <p>Building a new school (as opposed to extending one of the current schools) will make the task of ensuring safety during construction easier. Neither of the top two preferred sites has any significant hazards. Both have walking routes to their respective Churches which would be safe with adequate training and supervision. Although it should be noted that Caynham children currently walk safely to Church along the main road. (Ofsted commented favourably on the safety arrangements) the second preferred site has footpath access to the Church.</p>