

## PRIMARY SCHOOL ORGANISATION CONSULTATION

### NOTES OF A MEETING HELD AT ASHFORD CARBONELL CE PRIMARY SCHOOL HELD ON 10 MARCH 2008

#### COMMUNITY/PARENTS' MEETING HELD AT 6.30pm

##### **Present:**

Mrs M Cooper	Headteacher
Mrs G Hall	Chair of Governors
Heather Lewis	Parent
Wayne Clent	Parent
Rob Genner	Parent
Louise Genner	Parent
Bronwen Coldwell	Governor
Sally Froggatt	Governor and Parent
Christine Stinton	Governor
Tracey Toogood	Governor and Parent
Colin Toogood	Parent
Sally Yapp	Governor and Parent
Ros Booth	Pre-school Parent
Helen Cooper	Parent
Ruby Adshead	Parent
Michelle Copeland	Parent
Ruth Bufton	Parent
Julie Leighton	Parent
D N Bowden	Parish Councillor
D T Gittins	Interested Party
N A Tudge	Interested Party
Bernadette Bailey	Parent and Teacher
Andrew Evans	Parent
Julia Hall	Interested Party
Jeremy Hall	Interested Party
Marilyn Heath	Parish Councillor
Morfa Dalton	Interested Party
Stephen Dalton	Interested Party and ex-headteacher
Viv Parry	District and County Councillor
Louise Tilt	Parish Clerk
Lisa Ayres	Parent and Treasurer
Michelle Hodnett	Parent
Ann Hartley	County Councillor
Ian Budd (IB)	Assistant Director
John Baxter (JB)	Education Places Manager
Val Hawley (Note taker)	Admissions Manager

Ian Budd opened the meeting and introduced those present. He explained:

- the reasons for the review;
- the review process; and
- possible next steps

IB	The proposal is to bring both communities together as equals and involve everyone. The choices are to close both schools and open a new school, or to close one and expand the other. Staff would be looked after to ensure good outcomes. Both schools have a church foundation, therefore the new school would have church links.
S Froggatt	Important to have strong links with the church
R Adshead	Agreed
L Ayres	Also agreed in order that the children receive good guidance
S Froggatt	Also important that the children can walk from the school to the church
IB	Both schools also serve rural communities although some children come from out of area. Important not to create a large school, a 3 class school is preferred.
S Froggatt	Would it not be more appropriate to have 4 classes?
IB	Looking at future forecasts of pupil numbers the Local Authority believes that 3 classes would be sufficient, but with the potential to add a fourth class on the site. There may have been some misunderstandings about the School Organisation Policy which stated the need to have 4 class schools, but it is recognised that in some rural areas smaller 3 class schools might be more appropriate.
C Toogood	I support a 4 class school from a capital cost point of view and also for providing resources for SEN children.
IB	The need for proper facilities is recognised. The DCSF have a Building Bulletin setting out the expectations for the curriculum and this would take account of SEN provision, etc.

#### Site Issues:

IB	Neither school site is perfect, therefore there would be a need for compromises. Neither the County Council nor the Diocese has available land in the area. If there are other sites which parents know of the Local Authority would be interested to investigate.
R Bufton	Some Glebe land at Richards Castle
IB	The Local Authority will check out any suggested sites then report back to both governing bodies on possible sites.
JB	Richards Castle falls mainly in Herefordshire and is also at the very extremities of the area.
V Parry	Some land which was previously a chicken farm. There may be some land near to the church. Would prefer a site between the two schools.
R Bufton	The site suggested is some way from the church and the access could be difficult and dangerous.
D Bowden	There's a good sports field near to Ashford Carbonell.
JB	The Local Authority will need the names of the landowners.
R Bufton	What will happen if a suitable site is not found?
IB	The County Council will need to have all the facts in order to make a decision. It is also important to get views from both school communities on what are the most important issues, e.g. is it sports facilities or IT facilities?
G Hall	If a new site cannot be found, will the Local Authority look at one of the two sites?
W Clent	Will the County Council not use a Compulsory Purchase Order?

IB	The County Council prefers not to because of the cost and time implications.
JB	Consensus is better than confrontation.
R Buffton	Parking is important
IB	There has to be safe access and there would be a safe travel plan drawn up.
JB	Access and egress can be worked out.
H Cooper	About 50% of children come from Ludlow.
JB	It is sometimes possible to get parents to look at sharing and organising a minibus. It is also possible to pay for vacant seats on any buses already travelling to the school. The main priority however are the in area children. Also important to look at a seamless transition for current pupils and the carbon footprint.
R Genner	Has the Local Authority ruled out the existing sites because of the required expansion?
IB	There would be challenges on both sites, but solutions can be found.
JB	Either of the two sites would involve demolition of the current buildings.
IB	The Shropshire weblink sets out the vision for Primary Education. One aspect is high quality education for all children. Good outcomes result from good staff and the vision sets out how to achieve that. Also sets out the opportunities both in and out of school, but there is no set model for each school. There are different ways in which high outcomes can be achieved.

#### Shropshire Primary School Organisation Plan:

IB	Already talked about the need for rural schools with the potential for 4 classes.
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#### Community and Environment:

IB	Sustainability is an area of high priority. One issue is how a school can be designed to show that care is taken about the environment. Thus there's a need for a travel plan, what is incorporated into the building design and using opportunities to work on sustainability, e.g., heat sources and insulation. By replacing two old buildings with a modern efficient building it is possible to make a reduction of about 38% on the carbon footprint.
H Cooper	Will pupils' performance be as good?
JB	No one would be happy if we were not to produce as good if not better school and the head of Ludlow School would not be happy if standards were to be lowered.
IB	Governors would not allow the Local Authority to lose good staff. When children and parents and staff are involved in planning their own schools there is much pride in the school, how it operates and in developing a new environment.
V Parry	Would solar heating be used?
IB	This would be part of the discussion and evaluation work with pupils and the community.
V Parry	One or other community may feel they have missed out. It would be good if in the changes there might be some provision for village halls.
S Froggatt	Is it possible to demolish a school whilst providing for the children?

IB	This would be easier on a new site, but if the school is on an existing site then there would be serious discussions on how this could be managed.
R Bufton	Is it possible to demolish a school without asking the landowner.
IB	Yes. The Local Authority will work with the planners. Many schools in Shropshire are owned by the Church Authorities but most have a reverter clause and providing the site is still used for educational purposes there is no problem. Where there is any dispute between owners there is an Education Asset Board which can stipulate how land is to be used.
JB	The school is not a listed building.
L Till	Getting rid of this school building is not appropriate; seconded by other parents.
IB	It is suggested that a group from the school of staff/parents/governors visit other new school sites, or arrange for visitors from other schools to come to Ashford Carbonell. There may be ways of using existing buildings. There will be discussions with Pre-School Providers about delivering services more locally. Extended School services could also be looked at.
R Booth	As representative of Butterflies Pre-School, she felt excited at the prospect of having new facilities within a new school building.
IB	Usage patterns of Village Halls and Church Halls could be looked at as well as the County Council wants to be able to sustain these facilities in villages.
V Parry	Must there be a full-time teacher in Pre-School Provision?
IB	There must be a substantial presence. So this would also be part of the discussions.

#### Staffing:

IB	The Local Authority expects to be able to provide continued work for all staff wanting it. It is in the schools' and the Local Authority's interests if highly skilled staff continue to work in Shropshire. It is also very important for the children to have the staff they know remaining with them through the transition. It is also in the Local Authority's interests not to have to pay for redundancies. The Trade Unions agree with this but they also insist that their members should also be allowed to opt for voluntary exits if they wish. In amalgamations budgets might be slightly lower, but running costs are lower in one building than in two. There may be opportunities for smaller classes with better amounts of staffing. In Shropshire the turnover of Heads is about 15% higher than other teaching staff. One Head may be displaced but the Local Authority will work with them to find an alternative post. There should be a workable slotting in process for most other staff and it will be done as simply and as easily as possible, so that the staff feel secure and this will benefit the children.
R Bufton	With the plan for 3 classes there would be a mixing of Key Stages.
IB	Not as simple as that, because there is small group work and this is for the governing body to work out. There is great variety in the way schools of a similar size are organised.
R Bufton	There's a lot of affordable housing being built in and around Ludlow.

JB	The Local Authority liaises with the Planning Officers to get information on planned housing. Some social housing does not always produce the number of children one might expect. Those out of area would be displaced in favour of in area children at the allocation stage. The Local Authority has to try not to create surplus places which could happen if a 4 class school were to be built.
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#### School Buildings:

IB	This has already been discussed, but the last sentence of this section was stressed, i.e., that the decision on the location is also independent of any decision on which of the three routes to amalgamation is used.
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#### Other Comments:

IB	Everyone is encouraged to make their views known by 2 May, by phone, email or letter. The telephone contact number is the Customer Service Centre, but calls can be put through to Officers. Cabinet meets on 19 May. It is a staged process and Councillors will have to make decisions at each stage. There are plenty of opportunities to work with the communities. If a new school is developed it will be one which has involved parents and their children
S Dalton	Speaking as a previous head of the school and as a parent, the best solution is to find a new site. He encouraged people to go through the pain because the current building is no longer relevant to the educational needs of the children.
R Bufton	There is rivalry between the two schools.
IB	Everyone needs to work together on this. Site suggestions will be looked at to find an agreed outcome.
H Cooper	What will happen to the children particularly if there is a demolition of a school?
IB	That will have to be worked out and would be discussed with the governors.
T Toogood	How long will the new build take?
IB	It will depend on a number of factors. Major works will be carried out during school holidays as far as possible. But in general about 12 – 18 months. The key is to get it right even if it takes longer.
R Adshead	Although some of the current children will have left by the time a new school opens, what will happen about naming the school?
IB	That will be for Governors to decide.
S Froggatt	Can all children be moved onto one site while the building work is taking place?
IB	This again will be worked with the governors. There may be a need to use temporary accommodation. There will be various ways in which children may be involved, e.g. in laying a brick, in designing tiles, or graphics, etc.
IB	Thanks to the school for their hospitality and thanks to the parents and public for their attendance.
G Hall	Thanks also to the Local Authority officers for their time in making the presentations

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm

