

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES FOR PERMISSION TO PUBLISH A PUBLIC NOTICE FOR A CHANGE TO THE ORGANISATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN HETHERSETT:

- To change the age range of Hethersett Woodside Infant & Nursery School, and Hethersett CE VC Junior School to the full primary age range
- To relocate the current infant and nursery school to a new site, north of Hethersett
- To expand the junior school to accommodate the increase in pupils

ANAYLSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Background:

Norfolk County Council undertook a consultation between 12 June and 21 July 2017 on a proposal to change the age range of both schools to primary phase and relocate the current infant and nursery school to a new site within the strategic housing development, north of Hethersett (see attached map).

If approved, the schools would reorganise from 1 September 2019.

Purpose of report:

This report is in four parts:

Part 1 : the consultation process

Part 2 : analysis of consultation responses

Part 3 : project costs

Part 4 : approval to proceed to statutory Public Notice

PART 1: The consultation process:

Over 700 consultation documents were distributed in accordance with the Department for Education guidance on statutory school organisation changes. Consultees included pupils; parents and carers; staff; other schools in the local area; the local MP; the local District and County Councillors; Diocesan Bodies and early years providers. The full distribution list is provided in Table 1 below. The consultation document explained the proposal and provided a range of means to respond. These included; post boxes in the two schools; freepost reply; online questionnaire/survey; or by email to schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk

The consultation document was also made available on the County Council's website at <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/hethersett/>

Four stakeholder meetings were held:

- 20 June from 9 – 10 am at Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School
- 21 June from 6 – 7pm at Hethersett CE VC Junior School
- 26 June from 6 – 7pm at Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School
- 4 July from 3.15 – 4.15pm at Hethersett CE VC Junior School

13 attended the first meeting, 10 attended the second, 32 attended the third and 14 (members of staff) attended the fourth meeting.

Table 1: Consultation distribution list

Organisation	No. of copies
Hethersett Woodside Infant & Nursery School – pupils and parents/carers	270
Hethersett CE VC Junior School – pupils and parents/carers	250
Hethersett Woodside Infant & Nursery School – staff and governors	50
Hethersett CE VC Junior School - staff and governors	65
Local primary schools – Headteacher and Chair of Governors (5 x 2)	10
Local secondary school –Principal and Chair of Governors	2
Early years providers (22 x 2 copies)	44
NCC County Councillor	1
South Norfolk District Council and Councillors	3
Richard Bacon MP	1
Diocese of Norwich	1
Roman Catholic Diocese	1
Professional Associations	10
Hethersett Parish Council	2
Others (Dr Surgery, Post Office, Library)	12
Total	722

1.2 The consultation period ran from Monday 12 June to Friday 21 July 2017.

2. PART 2 : analysis of consultation responses:

2.1 Question 1 on the response form asked people to indicate whether they agreed with the proposal to change the age range of both schools to primary phase, and relocate the current infant and nursery school to a new site within the strategic housing development, north of Hethersett. From the responses:

- 22 (59.46%) support the proposal
- 11 (29.73%) do not support the proposal
- 4 (10.81%) gave no answer

In addition there was correspondence from Norwich Diocese and Little Melton Primary School.

2.2 Question 2 asked people for their comments or suggestions to help us with the decision. **Those who support the proposal made the following observations/assertions:**

- The Early Years provision at Ducklings and Woodside Nursery are outstanding and should be safeguarded for the future.
- Best course of action is to relocate and expand Hethersett Woodside, the current site is insufficient for growth.
- The Firs Close residents must not be disadvantaged by any new buildings on the junior school site.
- Concern about increased volume of traffic at the start and end of the school day. Safe arrangements needed for walking/cycling/parking.
- Concern about future plans for use of the Woodside site and access/egress to it. Suggestions included; a children's centre, community centre or café for park users, residents of the care home and sheltered housing complex.
- Concern about the conversion of the existing Victorian junior school.
- Concern about rivalry and competition between the two schools, and demand on places.

- Another school is needed but it will mean that more members of staff will need to drive to school.
- More information e.g. school prospectuses will be needed to inform parental decisions.
- Both are great schools and it makes sense to expand on the good practice that already exists.
- Would give parents more choice (a community primary school and a Church primary school).
- The new school will help bring the older and newer parts of the village together for the benefit of everyone.
- Concern about implementation and use of extensions or mobiles at the junior site.

Those that did not support the proposal made the following observations/assertions:

- The new housing development should make provision for their own needs (school, surgery, and other main facilities).
- Extra provision should be made for secondary age children.
- Concern on potential re-use of the current infant school site.
- The infant and junior schools should remain separate. Make each a specialist of their current age group.
- The current junior school will be the poor relation in terms of accommodation.
- Hethersett is not big enough for two schools having to compete against each other. Why split the village in this way?
- Move the junior to the new site and expand the infant site and release the junior site for expansion at the academy (or sixth form).
- Concerns about road safety; access is already dangerous; consideration must be given to car park provision.
- Loss of friendship base if children have to transfer to the other school.
- Concern that not all Hethersett residents were notified of the consultation meetings.
- Disagree with the new school location – too far to walk and will mean people will use their cars.
- Why close the existing outstanding Hethersett Woodside Infant & Nursery School?

Those that gave no answer made the following observations/assertions:

- Whilst agreeing with the change of age range for both schools, the new school should not be located on the new housing development, but somewhere more central in Hethersett.
- The school should not be a free school.
- Two primary schools could have a negative impact on the community spirit.
- Concerns about large volume of children walking to the new school site.

2.3 Question 3 asked respondents to classify themselves (nb some will have recorded joint roles);

- 23 (62.16%) were parents/carers of children at the 2 Hethersett schools
- 2 (5.41%) were members of PTA at the 2 Hethersett schools
- 1 (2.70%) is a member of staff
- 5 (13.51%) were school governors
- 16 (43.24%) were local residents
- 1 (2.70%) is a local business
- 1 (2.70%) is a local community group

- 4 (10.81%) chose not to answer
- 2.4 Of the 23 parents and carers who responded, 12 support the proposal, 9 disagree and 2 did not answer.
- 2.5 The member of staff agreed with the proposal.
- 2.6 16 local residents replied to the consultation. 8 support, while 6 do not and 2 did not answer.
- 2.7 The local County Councillor was fully briefed on the proposal.
- 2.8 Letters were received from the following key stakeholders (attached at Appendix A):
- The Diocese of Norwich fully supports the proposal with regard to the Church of England Junior School at Hethersett, in extending its age range to one of 2 -11 years of age.
 - Little Melton Primary school are fully supportive of the proposal but are concerned as to whether serious consideration had been given as to the potential future role of Little Melton Primary School in catering for the significant local demographic changes.
- 2.9 A copy of the consultation document is provided at Appendix B.

3.0 PART 3 : PROJECT COSTS

- 3.1 The proposal will vacate the infant school site. Whilst the site will be available to the Secretary of State for a Free School for an eight year period, we have made it clear to the RSC that this proposal provides a long-term of places and expansion of a good school and that no further mainstream places are required. NCC will explore possible additional needs requirements in the area as the first priority for reuse.
- 3.2 Sums are available in the approved capital budget as follows:
- Hethersett new primary - the scheme is at development stage and the current budget allocation of £500k will take the preparation to full planning stage. This and all future construction funding is available from Section 106 agreements.
 - Hethersett Junior school, refurbishments and expansion – the scheme is at initial development stage and is funded at present for £50k development costs. Further funding as the scheme develops will be drawn, first, from available section 106 funding and, secondly, from Basic Need unallocated. Approvals will be sought through the 2018/19 Corporate capital development process starting in September 2017.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Taking into account that all statutory requirements in relation to the initial consultation were complied with, and the views of those who have expressed an interest in this proposal have been taken fully into account, it is recommended that it proceeds to the next stage of formal Public Notice.

In pursuant of the delegated powers granted to me by the Children's Services Committee (10th July 2014) and in accordance within the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, I hereby give permission for a public notice to be issued on the proposal to change the age range of both schools to primary phase and relocate the current infant and nursery school to a new site within the strategic housing development, north of Hethersett.

This will appear in the Eastern Daily Press on 8 September 2017.

Signed: 
(Executive Director of Children's Services)

Date: 14/8/17