

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**21 October 2014**

**Report of the Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults**

**REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION REGARDING THE  
PROPOSAL FOR A SECOND PRIMARY SCHOOL IN HILTON – (Children  
and Young People)**

**1. Purpose of Report** A report was put to Cabinet (and subsequently approved) on 21 January 2014 outlining the housing development proposals within the South Derbyshire District in general and Hilton in particular. The issues outlined in that paper led to a recommendation to hold a consultation on the developer's proposal that they provide a new primary school in Hilton to address pressures on the existing provision and serve the increased housing in the village. This report brings back to Cabinet the outcome of the consultation approved by Elected Members at that meeting and recommends the next steps to be taken.

**2. Information and Analysis**

2.1 The consultation was held from 24 February to 11 April 2014. A consultation paper was circulated to parents, staff and governors of Hilton Primary School, and to the Head Teacher and the Chair of Governors at schools within a three mile radius of Hilton. Also, copies of the paper were published on the school and on the Derbyshire web sites, and sent to other interested parties and statutory consultees.

2.2 Ten responses to the consultation were received and the Local Authority considered these carefully. The comments have been collated into broad themes identified in the report below.

**2.3 Pressure on Places**

A number of respondents to the consultation accepted the need for additional primary school places in the light of press discussion of growth in population, but argued that the proposal for a new school was based on a possible over estimate of the demand for new places in Hilton. Other responses expressed a general concern about the size of the existing school and accepted that the projected growth would mean great pressure on education at the school. However, it was stated that the Local Authority would need to address the issue of class sizes now, and not wait for a proposal that will take some time to deliver. Some respondents stated that any new school would fill from the new housing estate being proposed and would not take pressure from the existing school. One respondent stated that far more analysis needs to be done on the primary numbers and when/how they will peak to demonstrate whether this second school is necessary. Another respondent felt that the Local Authority should support existing primary school to expand by 30 or so places and reduce the proposed housing development. The same respondent had contacted the maternity hospital to establish more information, and suggested that the birth rate is in decline and additional housing will not push numbers beyond the former peak at the school. Some respondents believe that there is physical space to expand the existing school on its site and that building a second school is not necessary.

### **Authority Commentary**

The Local Authority undertakes pupil projection analysis on an annual basis, looking at Health Authority and GP registration data to establish future demand for primary and secondary school places. Development in Hilton has produced a significant demand for primary school places which has not diminished over the last ten years as might have been anticipated. The proposed housing development of 485 dwellings is expected to produce a primary pupil yield of 97 and require a growth of the existing school from its current projected number of 793 to a potential size of 890. This would require classrooms but also toilet provision and other support spaces as well as staff space and other facilities. In addition, some Hilton resident children choose currently to attend other schools in the area. As primary numbers rise in neighbouring villages, this may become less of an option in future and therefore could result in the number of pupils at Hilton Primary rising above 900 and potentially more than twice the size of the next largest

primary in the county. A second primary school within Hilton provides more flexibility to cope with future changes in birth rate.

## **2.4 Staff Issues**

Three of the responses stated specific concerns relating to staff redundancies at Hilton Primary, whilst some others alluded to this issue. Concern was voiced that this consultation follows rapidly after the uncertainty and stress in the school just overcoming pressures of OfSTED inspections and the appointment of a new Head Teacher. Parents were concerned in particular that too much has been read into the recent OfSTED Report.

### **Authority Commentary**

The Local Authority would not wish to see redundancies at schools, but in the situation of growth of numbers in the area would anticipate that there would be increased demand for staff and not a reduction.

## **2.5 Community cohesion**

A significant proportion of the responses (approximately three quarters) expressed their sense that a new school would destroy the community cohesion of the village. Because children go to the same primary school, it gives support and stability to both children and parents. To establish two separate schools would split the village with nothing but negative consequences for families and friends. The current scenario of one primary school provides for a close-knit community with a feeling of being safe and secure and this is because parents meet at the single school for the village. There is a sense amongst some members of the community that the existing 'them and us' within the village would be worsened if a new primary school is built; a new school would create 'them and us' all over again. Hilton Primary School is a good school and very much a part of the community.

### **Authority Commentary**

Across Derbyshire, there are a number of areas where more than one primary school, or a combination of infant and junior school, serves a single community. This leads to some movement of pupils between normal areas (formerly catchment areas) but offers parental choice, and opportunities for schools to work together and share expertise.

## **2.6 Competition between the Schools**

80% of the respondents expressed concern there would be competition between two schools, and feared that the facilities and funding would be different for the two schools. Competition between the schools would not be good for the village, for the parents or for the pupils attending the schools. Two responses stated that they were unconvinced that 400 dwellings justifies the provision of a new school, and one response felt that if a new school is built in Hilton and is too big, it will attract pupils from outside of the village and bring increased traffic.

### **Authority Commentary**

Schools serving the same community currently find that there are opportunities for joint working and sharing of staff expertise to enhance education, rather than competing with each other. The timing of the building and opening of a new school would need to be handled very carefully to ensure that the places provided serve the Hilton community and are not taken by out of area applications, leaving no places for those moving into the new houses. The Local Authority is aware of this issue, and would plan the growth of the new school carefully.

## **2.7 Proposal for Split Site Primary or Creation of Infant & Junior School**

Two respondents to the consultation suggested that the Local Authority should consider splitting sites so that one is an infant and one is a junior school. It was felt that it would be a better option to have infant and junior school between the two sites (existing and new) than create a division within the village.

### **Authority Commentary**

Infant and junior schools across the County often work together very well and provide a good standard of education. However, there is evidence that generally primary schools achieve better outcomes than separate Infant and Junior Schools. Split-site provision is generally not regarded as the preferred choice because of the co-ordination problems it creates.

## **2.8 Funding and Resource Concerns**

One respondent identified that a decrease in numbers at the existing primary school would have a negative impact on the resources and funding from the Local Authority for that school. It was feared that this would lead to staff redundancies, reduced resources available for pupils

at the school, and a reduction in opportunities for those children attending the existing school as a result of this. One response agreed that the amount of space at the current site is very pressured, but felt that this is not a reason for making and pursuing this proposal; this respondent felt there should be other options. One respondent asked 'where will the catchment areas be defined for new school and existing school?', expressing the concern that the proposal for two schools would lead to a dilution of resources available for Hilton Primary School, both from Local Authority and from other charitable organisations. Two responses stated that one school might be better resourced than the other. One respondent commented that the Local Authority should be looking at resources for an ageing population, and not sharing out existing resources between two schools in the village.

### **Authority Commentary**

The funding of schools is prescribed within the Local Management of Schools formula. The most significant element of the formula is pupil numbers and this drives the allocation to any school, with further specific factors added to the total allocation. Thus, the allocation of funding for the existing and the proposed school would be made on the same formulaic basis and would differ by virtue of the number of pupils on roll and not as a result of competition for resources. Access to funding from external sources is often assessed on a bidding system, but may give opportunities for sharing of facilities and expertise as opposed to competition for resources.

## **2.9 Concerns about Secondary School Provision**

Twenty-five per cent of the responses felt that the proposal fails to consider the effect of increased housing in Hilton on the secondary school at Etwall, John Port School. Several people expressed their concern about the existing size of secondary schools as being too big, and this would lead to more pupils with increased pressure. This will create a strain on the existing secondary school.

### **Authority Commentary**

The Local Authority is well aware of the pressure for places at John Port School in Etwall and, in the light of wider housing development proposals that will impact on John Port School, has initiated discussion with the Head Teacher and Governors to plan for this increased demand and develop a plan that ensures quality buildings for the future.

The Authority will be seeking a contribution from the developer of the new housing in Hilton towards provision of new secondary school places.

## **2.10 Scale of Existing School**

One respondent argued that, just because this is the largest primary school in the County, does not mean that a new school is needed; the response went on to argue that larger schools benefit from higher levels of resourcing, funding, and of greater flexibility in the deployment of staffing. It was argued that the prospects for the village are a decline in numbers as families remain in their housing and do not move while children will move through to attend the secondary school at Etwall. Another response stated that the numbers of primary aged pupils will level off and fall over the longer time period. Two respondents asked what other solutions had been considered to cater for increase in primary school places required. Four responses felt that the increased level of development on the site at The Mease is being used as an excuse to fund the new school but is really about St Modwen's profit and should be opposed. One response stated that bigger schools are in a better position in modern society with more resources and more security and felt that providing a second primary school is short sighted; a new school would cause more problems than it solves.

### **Authority Commentary**

Hilton Primary School is the largest primary school in the County (in January 2014, the second largest had 460 pupils) and there have been some concerns expressed as to whether the traditional primary school management structure can support the scale of the school. The Authority will not be able to expand Hilton Primary School continually. If primary numbers continue to rise due to housing and increasing birth rate, the Authority would face a problem as further expansion of Hilton Primary School would be undesirable. Even if primary numbers eventually fall, there will be sufficient numbers of children to support two successful primary schools.

## **2.11 Decision Making on a New School**

One respondent posed the question 'Who decides who attends and who works there?'

### **Authority Commentary**

The proposed school would be an Academy under the terms of the 2011 Education Act and as such would be directed according to the plans and proposals of its sponsor. The Authority will take the lead in organising the selection process, although the final decision rests with the Secretary of State for Education.

## **2.12 Next Steps**

Discussions have been held between the Local Authority and the developer to identify the next steps that would be required to deliver a new primary school. It is proposed to deliver a one form entry primary school that could be expanded to a two form entry primary school at a later stage. This would reduce the potential impact on the existing Hilton Primary School, but retain flexibility for the Authority for future growth and demand for future pupil places. In addition, this enables the developer to make a financial contribution towards additional secondary school places via a S106 Education Contribution, addressing concerns expressed through this consultation.

It is proposed that a paper be brought to Cabinet for approval, with details of the process of securing an academy sponsor, including selection criteria. A timescale will be identified so that the development of the new school at Hilton can run in parallel with that at Chellaston Fields.

3. **Financial Considerations** The developer is proposing to establish a one form entry primary school (with sufficient site and core facilities for a two form entry school) as part of the cost of developing the site. Revenue funding over and above the formula budget for the Academy will be provided from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) until such time as it can operate within the limit of its formula budget allocation from the DSG.
4. **Legal and Human Rights Considerations** The Education Act 2011 requires Local Authorities to seek proposals to establish an academy or a free school where it thinks there is a need for a new school in its area. The Authority has no alternative but to follow this route in its area.
5. **Human Resources Considerations** The establishment of a new school in Hilton will require the appointment of an increased number of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, but this will be a matter for the Academy sponsor to address. The Local Authority will work with Hilton Primary School Head Teacher and Governors to address any specific

concerns about staffing of the existing primary school, and would seek to work with the Academy sponsor to avoid any redundancy of staff as a result of this proposal.

**6. Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered – prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity, health, environmental, property and transport considerations.

**7. Background Papers**

A file is held in the Children and Younger Adults Development Team office which holds copies of all responses received during the consultation.

**8. Key Decision?**

Yes.

**9. Call-in**

Is it required that the Call-in period be waived in respect of the decisions being proposed within this report? No.

**10. Strategic Director's Recommendation**

10.1 That the Authority proceed to develop a new school in Hilton that will be one form of entry in size initially but be capable of expansion to two forms of entry as set out in the report;

10.2 That Cabinet receives a further report on a proposed selection process to secure a sponsor.

**Ian Thomas**

**Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults**