

## MELTON MOWBRAY AND VALE OF BELVOIR SCHOOL'S REVIEW

### MEETINGS HELD AT LONG FIELD HIGH SCHOOL, MELTON

5<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2006

#### OFFICERS PRESENT – AT ALL THREE MEETINGS

Gareth I Williams – Director of Children and Young People's Service  
Bob Dutton – Head of the Learning Environment Team  
David Atterbury – Project Officer for the Melton and Vale of Belvoir Review  
Ann Morgan – Curriculum Adviser, Children and Young People's Service

#### ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Ivan Ould C.C. - Lead Member for Children and Young People's Service  
Mr G Hart, Cabinet Support Member for Children & Young People's Service (present at the public and parents meeting only.)

#### TEACHERS' MEETING 4.00P.M.

#### **NUMBERS PRESENT – 41 PLUS HEADTEACHER**

Q	In relation to curriculum delivery across the whole of Melton. What do the kids get out of this proposal? How do they get at the curriculum?
A	Castle Rock School cost £9.8 million. Nearly £30 million will pay for three new schools. We will be looking to re-model some buildings and demolish others.
Q	Can you provide details of training for teachers to be able to teach at Key Stage 4 level?
A	This will be done through the Workforce Reform Programme. We will also be asking the three schools through their Headteacher, Management Team and staff to work through what is needed and then tell us how that can be delivered.
Q	Will there be additional funding for this?
A	Some would come from the Local Authority and some would be from the schools. This would have to be jointly funded. Castle Rock was a model of good practice, mainly because the pupils and the teachers helped to design it and overall it was a complete partnership from all those involved.
Q	Under the new curriculum arrangements, how many diplomas would be offered?

A	Fourteen would ultimately be offered, although they would be phased in. The first five are due to be operative in 2008. The schools clearly have to show their capacity to deliver these diplomas before undertaking them.
Comments from Headteacher	A Gateway application has already been made for this school in conjunction with King Edward Melton.
Headteacher	The diplomas are delivered as a consequence of the options chosen and how these schools will take forward the delivery. There were 3 groups of staff from the schools in the area who were already working to put these into place. The groups were covering the 14-19 diplomas, the issue of consistent, advice and guidance to pupils, and the need for consistent staff development.
A	The diplomas operate at different levels and there would need to be discussion at what level they should operate here.
A	Our job is to ensure co-ordination and we will be asking senior managers in these schools to tell us how they will do it. This will not be something imposed by the Local Authority.
A	We have to look at a range of options. Options relate to age related delivery and whether youngsters can study at an appropriate level at their age.
Q	In relation to subject and specialisms, how will this affect my children? If pupils don't feel comfortable then they won't thrive and the subject won't be delivered. Under the proposals, pupils could get lost and lose individual support. The place could be too big and huge age groups are an issue. Here at Long Field, the school is not over huge and my view therefore is that Option B is better than Option A. Pupils need to be comfortable in their learning.
A	There is a need to take a balance between happy children and the curriculum options. There has to be a balance struck on these issues. The schools need to be small enough to know the children well, but flexible enough to allow everyone access to the curriculum requirements.
Q	In relation to Option A, you stated that this was a throw back to the sixties. If we want the transformation to take place, is this simply a choice between Options B and C?
A	The money available will fund Option A, Option B or Option C. Option A is very much viable and most schools in England would recognise this and would operate in this way as they didn't have any other option. Here there were now some options and the question needed to be asked as to whether B and C would provide better delivery. Option A would provide a

	transformation and all schools working together could deliver what was required. I repeat all the options are workable. Most schools in Britain would have Option A as the only option available to them.
Q	In Leicestershire, we have experience of small high schools which provide a caring ethos, pupils feel comfortable and we perform extremely well at Key Stage 3. Should we not be building on this? The relatively small schools can build on the ethos that is already there.
A	The underlying principle of anything we do is that we should not destroy anything that is good.
Q	Re post 16. Would there be any problem with the Belvoir School being included in any of the partnership arrangements shown in all the options.
A	There will be no problem at all if this was their wish and they wanted to be involved. Bottesford would also need to consider the options available in Grantham and Bingham in order to possibly widen the options available to their students.
Q	Re post 16, the choice at post 16 appears poor. Does the funding go into the college to improve the provision and therefore not go to Grantham or Bingham?
A	The range of courses provided should be more appropriate and schools should be given a wide choice and would be working with the LSC as their partner in this area.
Q	Options B and C appear to be quite similar. What difference would the pupils notice?
A	<p>You are asking me to give a very personal view and to try to read a child's mind. From that personal point of view, Option B would give the benefits of small schools and might provide better pastoral care and it might be more likeable for the child. From an organisational point of view, the option is more complex and the partnership arrangements would need to be far clearer and businesslike.</p> <p>Option C from the pupils' viewpoint provides an opportunity for education to be provided across one site but there were likely to be more tensions. From a management point of view, this organisation would be much easier with one overall management organisation, one staff group and provides options on a bigger scale.</p>
Q	Under Option C, it would appear that the current sports leagues would fly out of the window. It would appear that the Melton transport budgets would need to increase.

A	We note that but surely it would be possible for leagues to be organised internally within the new arrangements.
Q	Looking at Option C, there might be some anxiety in the community and I would question whether this would be disruptive to pupils and to staff. Would Option B be less disruptive?
A	The option of status quo is not acceptable but there remains no blank cheque.  All three options are sustainable. What we are asking now is for you to tell us what the best options are for the pupils.
Q	You talked about limited anxiety but there will be anxiety for staff. Could you provide some more detail on the Statutory Notice process?
A	Statutory Notices are required when there are proposals to open schools, close schools or to change the nature of schools.  In relation to Melton, we are looking at the nature of schools and the Statutory Notice process is one that we have to do. We can consult and put forward proposals, but we can only start to actually build after this Statutory Notice process has been properly completed.
Q	Does this process mean that at risk notices will be issued for all staff?
A	This would be a subject to be discussed by the Headteachers and the relevant governing bodies. In the majority of cases, teachers would transfer into the new schools.
Q	Does that mean that there will not be any compulsory redundancies?
A	In my view, if teachers are trained into their new responsibilities and want to be so, then there is no reason why this should be the case. However some teachers may not want to be re-trained to teach different age groups. It would be wrong to expect that there would never be any compulsory redundancies. If the numbers on roll in these schools went down, then there would be no option but to issue them.
Q	I have to say that there is that anxiety out there at the present time.
A	There may be some need to change delivery style and methods to pupils at post 14, however the number of Key Stage 3 pupils in these schools is expected to stay the same

	and they will need the same number of teachers to teach them. So if the numbers stay the same, then there should not be any dramatic changes.
A	Headteacher - This period of change could offer good opportunities for career development for staff.
A	If schools continued to deliver good results then there should be no issues.
Q	In relation to Option B, I can see that the partnership working would be needed. Can we guarantee sustainability in the current allocations system? Parents would still have a choice and some of the options may not be sustainable.
A	An alignment of budgets would have to take place in order that all pupils get exactly what they need. I, as Director, together with Headteachers and Governors would have to meet and discuss these issues and that is why I repeat the partnership agreements would have to be very clear and businesslike.
A	Headteacher – In effect this would offer more security.
A	Yes, and would provide greater flexibility for us to work together.
Q	You state that one management structure is easier, but is this the case when operating over three sites? Does the ease of management work against identity/understanding/choice? There is a feeling of caring when pupils come through the front door at Long Field and we have our own ethos. Would the one management structure impose one issue over all and thereby lose the individuality.
Q	In relation to having three 11-16 schools, each of them could adopt a specialism and could offer choice. There could be an issue with regard to the choice of locality provision or specialist subject.
A	You raise the question over choice. The reality of choice is much narrower and it boils down to which school do I want. In relation to post 14 pupils, that choice will be more in the hands of the individual child who will make judgements – “ I need X courses to do what I want to do in the long term.”  In relation to location from 2008, that will be subject to the child’s choice of courses. The question is how do we move to that culture, without necessarily affecting provision. If the partnerships that I have talked about do not work, then some specialisms or courses could be lost. There will be a movement of choice from the parent to the child, who will be making the decisions as to what was best for them.

Q	There would be some changes between sites. Would changes in choice/curriculum be available as choices would inevitably change as pupils grow up and change their minds.
A	There would be a need to look at timetables extremely closely. The timetable in the schools would be in blocks, in different ways to those currently operated, in order to avoid pupils having to move across or between sites.
Q	Would there be a case for schools opening for longer hours?
A	Schools can always change their hours and this would be possible under the arrangements.
Q	You have raised the issues of federation and partnership. Under the terms of the new Education Act, could federation be imposed?
A	<p>No, federation is a technical term. Federation involves the abolition of one governing body and being replaced by one governing body running 2 schools. This has been used in small schools in Leicestershire, usually when one of the two partner schools is in trouble and where hopefully there would be benefits from economies of scale.</p> <p>Federation in this case would not work, we would not get the benefits of economies of scale. I would refer to my earlier remarks about partnership and the way in which this could operate but that the terms would have to be more defined and legally binding. Option C could be seen as an amalgamation and again I would stress that, legally, each of these is different. The current Education Bill is notable for putting much more decision making/listening at the local level. This can be illustrated by the situation at Bottesford where the parents' views with regard to the 11-16 option to solve their particular issues had come forward. The issues here can be solved by the schools in Melton. No-one can force them to do it. If we don't work in partnership however, the revenue costs resulting could be very high.</p> <p>In Melton what we want to see is schools working together on a shared resource basis.</p>

Gareth Williams thanked everyone for their input to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 5.32pm.

## **GOVERNORS MEETING AT 6PM**

### **NUMBERS PRESENT – 11 + HEADTEACHER (FOR THE DISCUSSION ONLY)**

C	This is a live project – money is available – we are likely to get the further £10 million needed to finalise the project.
Q	Option B, as you have described it, is different to that shown in the printed documentation. You have been talking about 3 schools of 1000 whereas the document talks about 3 schools of 800. Gareth Williams clarified that the Learning Centre for 16 + students was made up of three groups of 200 from each of the 11-19 schools. This meant three schools of 1000 pupils, 200 of whom were accommodated at the 16 + Learning Centre. The governing body of each of the schools would have responsibility for 6 <sup>th</sup> form management with governors also accepting responsibility for quality. This would hopefully avoid some of the issues you've raised.
Q	In relation to Melton, our view is that small is beautiful and that the 800 figure is much better.
Q	In relation to the post 16 Centre, you have spoken about the three Melton schools jointly managing it. Does this allow the school from the Vale of Belvoir to integrate?
A	There is no reason why the Vale of Belvoir School cannot take part in this arrangement. The Bottesford School would also be looking to Grantham and Bingham as well as Melton in order to provide provision for its older students. They would probably need to see the configuration of the curriculum on offer before deciding, but that option is available.
Q	The 11-16 provision in the Vale of Belvoir remains at Bottesford – is that the best place for it?
A	This is the only land we have and the parental views in the area were very strongly for retention in Bottesford as it appeared to work for them. Working across County boundaries was not an issue in these discussions.
Q	Looking at Option B, one of the disadvantages that was pointed out was that the year groups would only be 160 which provided a limited curriculum.  At Bottesford, with 600 places this would have smaller year groups and yet your belief is that they can still deliver the curriculum?
A	Yes. Your question does put a negative emphasis on this issue but we have to acknowledge that Bottesford still has that problem to face.

Q	It is my understanding that some of the parents at the Vale of Belvoir and certainly the Head of Bottesford High School, were hoping to get an 11-19 year school out of the Review.
A	We were at the Bottesford High School last night for a similar meeting. I emphasised that such a suggestion was completely out of the question. The LSC, who would fund part of the costs, would not back that process. In saying that, it is inevitable that rumours will occur and that there may be some damaging discussions, but I emphasise again this was out of the question.
Q	Looking at Option B, this shows a Learning Centre at one site, would this be at King Edward VII or elsewhere or would it be in the blue sky?
A	We won't decide where it is. The "united schools" of Melton and Brooksby will be the ones who would make the decision about its location.
Q	A centrally placed location would logistically be the best.
Q	Are we looking at the creation of a perceived super-school in the town?
Q	Where does Melton/Brooksby College fit into the process?
A	They already have access at the LSC. The LSC would not fund dual provision. This was a big issue for elaboration in order to let parents know whether they were getting the service they want. In the end, it would be for all the Headteachers and the Principal of Melton Brooksby College to collaborate and decide who was offering what, in order to ensure there was no duplication.
A	There was a need for all parties to behave cooperatively. It will be for the Headteachers to make this cooperation happen. This had to be the situation.
Q	In relation to Option B you have stated that there could be three specialisms. Why isn't it the case that some of the 6 <sup>th</sup> form provision could be made on each of the sites, although this would mean that kids would have to travel between the sites.
A	It is inevitable that such travel arrangements are likely to occur, either inter school or inter college and this would occur to ensure that the provision was working correctly.  There are some issues with regard to constraints on the site at this particular school. There is a great deal of land but there are issues with regard to flooding, the obtaining of planning permission and the issue of DfES agreement to construction on this site.
Q	There are 9 acres of land that could be utilised and we have a different view as to their potential.

Q	The video in relation to Castle Rock showed a two storey building. Would we be looking at two storey construction in future?
A	This was likely to be the case.
Q	I am a parent of a pupil who is currently in the primary school. My understanding is that many parents at primary schools in the area do not know anything about this Review process.
A	We have visited all the primary schools and provided them with copies of the consultation document and asked them to circulate those documents to their parents.
Q	I repeat again that parents and staff in primary schools do not know of this process.
A	Please leave this with me but I repeat that primary schools have had the documentation. There may be issues about the documents being sent out by pupil post, but these were sent out to all schools on Monday of last week. David Atterbury has been working very hard to get the message across.
Q	Could we point out that the consultation document now being considered looks very similar to the first one and is not easily recognisable as the second stage in the process.
A	I acknowledge the points that you are making and we will rectify that with the documentation we send out in relation to stage 3.
A	We would also point out that pupils in the area are being asked for their views at 3 consultation meetings and this includes primary age pupils.
Q	Could I raise the issue of the selection of children to go into which schools and how that will be decided.
A	In the past, it has been the parents who have decided on which school to send their pupils to, based on word of mouth, local knowledge, etc. In the future as pupils grow up then the link between parents and the pupil's choice will change. As pupils' get older, they will be making more of the choices themselves. This will be based on their view as to which courses they need to undertake to get them to where they want to be in the future. The choice process would be very differently driven with far greater pupil involvement in that choice. I would point out that Melton is almost unique in only having one school making provision for pupils aged 16+ and those pupils can be very easily identified in the town.
Q	It is notable that some of the pupils aged 17 are currently in limbo.
A	Yes that is the case but hopefully these changes will provide us with an opportunity to change that. I would emphasis that the Chamber of Trade in the area will also be consulted as part of this process.

The meeting then closed at 7.18pm.

## MEETING WITH PARENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC - 7.30PM

### 64 PARENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT, ALSO PRESENT MR BYRON RHODES COUNTY COUNCILLOR

A	There was a need to address the curriculum in 2008. If we miss the best opportunity for the pupils now, it will be the whole community that suffers as skills are lost and economic opportunities for the generation would be lost. This would be a missed opportunity for our pupils and our community.
Q	The children who will primarily be affected by these changes are now in primary schools. The information may be on the website but can primary schools access it and how do we know how the primary schools feel?
A	All the primary schools and their parents have had all the documentation which was sent out at the beginning of the previous week. By next week, further information will be available on the website. We understand that in the first week of consultation, 95% of the responses received were from primary school parents. We do not and cannot ignore them. This is a 15 year project and the pupils currently in primary schools will be the ones affected. One thing that we do understand is that some of the schools may not have given out the documentation sent to them but we will take measures to check this.
Q	Re numbers and balance. You stated that 58% of pupils currently get A* to C grades at GCSE. The figures appeared to show 600 out of 3000 at the 6 <sup>th</sup> form centre, is this an increase in number?
A	You have to remember that the family also included the Melton Brooksby College. There will be ongoing discussions with the LSC. It is believed that as the numbers grow, then so should the funding.
Q	I have some concerns about the balance across the three schools.
A	Currently, parents make choices based on some form of evidence available to them, either word of mouth or examination of tables. In the future it will be pupils who will be making more of the choices and deciding which courses they need to get them to their ultimate goals.
Q	Are there issues around catchment areas?
A	The issue of catchment areas and their interpretation needs to be more flexible in this area. The Government legislation needs to follow through.
Q	I have an issue with regard to funding. Is the funding conditional on new build only or can it be used for re-building/re-modelling?

A	<p>The funding is conditional only on the delivery of a better and broader curriculum and also on meeting the DfES timescales.</p> <p>Some schools will have re-build, some will be re-furbished and some re-modelled. Buildings will only be bulldozed where there was a clear need for this action. In designing any new aspects of the programme, new build, refurbishing or re-modelling, then architects involved in their design will be informed by those in schools.</p>
Q	<p>I have a question about specialisms, Options A and B appear to give opportunities for extra specialisms. If we have a school of 1200 and that one particular school has a specialism, how will that be decided?</p>
A	<p>The current rules are relatively strict. In relation to the specialism examples, this has to be a best guess of how many pupils would want that specialism and what the likely demand would be. One point to emphasise was that we cannot afford duplication. It could be the case that the specialism is full and this happens now. Working through these current arrangements, it would not be possible to say that the specialism would never be full.</p>
Q	<p>In relation to the year 8 and 9 pupils, they would be affected by events over the next five years.</p>
A	<p>All schools as the options appear and are developed, will need to plan to sustain the current provision as the process is undertaken. My role as Director is to assure quality. No moves or actions will be taken unless it can be guaranteed that changes won't affect the learning of the current pupil generation. The teachers, Headteachers and governors will have to prove to us that they are ready to make the move.</p> <p>One offer that I can make is that I will continue to talk to parents during the transition period, on an independent basis from the schools, in order to try to ease that transition process as far as possible.</p>
Q	<p>How long will this whole process take?</p>
A	<p>We have the £17.9 million guaranteed and the £5.9 million pounds guaranteed for Bottesford and this money has to be utilised by 2009. We would hope to be using our funding at the same time. Part of the process would be dependent on the sale of assets and so there might be a delay if this were not easily forthcoming.</p>
Q	<p>If children want to have an increased choice and varied curriculum, would this mean that there would be travel between these sites?</p>
A	<p>Yes, this may be the case it had to be emphasised that under these arrangements, the current curriculum arrangements simply would not work. It would be essential in future for the schools to "block" the curriculum, i.e. to teach blocks at the same time and avoid movement as much as possible. I acknowledge that where pupils have to move more frequently than this, this can be a disaster. In relation to potential travel costs, we have been told by DfES that these could be covered, as part</p>

	of the financial allocations.
Q	In relation to all three options. My youngest child is currently in year 5 would she have to decide on her specialism at age 11?
A	The ranges of options would need to be discussed from age 13 upwards. The consequences and opportunities of those choices would need to be clearly explained. There would obviously still need to be discussions with parents and the child with regard to the paths to be chosen at 14+ and at 16+. That debate and that choice should focus on what schools are offering and how pupils view that choice.
Q	In relation to the financing of the project, are there any private finance companies involved in the proposals?
A	Not at this stage as yet. In the future, some vocational courses will be enriched by working with business and industry and there would also be the use of work experience in non-educational areas. I would hope that all schools would be open to working with business. There is a clear need to get the plans clarified and firmed out at a school base level before going onto potentially involve industry.
Q	My children are currently started in the schools in year 7. Will they stay at Long Field or will they be moved?
A	Quite clearly they would stay at Long Field, subject to the normal constraints. The building work should be concluded by 2009 which will be after they have left the school.
Q	In relation to the funding, you stated that some money may need to be realised through the sale of assets, does that mean land?
A	There are sites available but we are not selling schools from under you.
Q	In relation to Option A how would you decide which school to close?
A	I am not going to speculate on that question, we haven't given any thought to it at all. That option is of no consequence at the present time. At present the important aspect is which of these options best delivers the curriculum to your child.
Q	Could you give some more detail about the third round of consultation?
A	In that round, after listening to the results of the second consultation, there will be one recommendation put forward. The process would then be the same as now, in that we will be seeking views on that preferred option. This round at present is to stimulate the discussion which will lead towards a decision about the preferred option.
Q	My daughter is due to come to Long Field School next year will she still be coming here?

A	We are still talking about the three existing sites.
Q	In relation to Option A, you stated that you have no view as to which of the schools would be closed. I would like to say that the feeling in Melton is that one school has already been identified. People in Melton are already saying that one site has been chosen.
A	We can only reiterate on that, that we have no view on this subject and no discussions have taken place about any such option.
Q	In relation to the Vale of Belvoir, the parents there appear to have got the option that they wanted. What influence will they have on the Melton solution?
A	The Vale of Belvoir still has no foundations laid as yet but only one option was coming from there, although this still had to be discussed. In relation to Melton, the biggest issue for the Vale of Belvoir is the post 14 and post 16 provision. They will need to look outside of their immediate area for some of their options. This will involve them looking in three directions to Melton, to Grantham or to Bingham. If the Vale pupils were to come into Melton, then the Vale of Belvoir could reasonably expect to have an input into the management of the 6 <sup>th</sup> form provision.
Q	If the Vale of Belvoir school has 600 pupils then how does it meet the 14-19 curriculum requirements? Is there a disproportionate amount of funding going to the Vale of Belvoir given their low numbers?
A	If the Vale of Belvoir were working together in partnership with their colleagues in Melton, then this should optimise the best value for money. It is inevitable that we will have to live with different revenue costs across the area, otherwise we would need the judgement of Solomon in order to allocate funding.
Q	In relation to the consultation and the finalisation of proposals, how does this fit in with allocation forms that are being required to be completed and submitted in November, i.e. in two weeks time?
A	All parents should submit their allocation choice forms as normal and as if there were no changes. It is certainly the case that we would not be changing anything till after February 2007. The admissions team would then be working with parents in order to achieve their expressed preferences.
Q	I have my loyalties at Long Field School, even though I work in another school. I would like to say that schools do feel very strongly about this whole issue and would inform you that some schools are being urged by larger schools to vote in a certain way. If this is the case, then those schools, because of their size, will have a majority on the outcome of the consultation.
A	Consultation is not voting. Consultation is the right to express your views and the opportunity for you to present evidence to elected

	members. The 1000 votes that you talk about won't win. There will be a need to balance the arguments rather than counting the votes. I would emphasise again that we don't know the answers, it will be for the teachers and parents to tell us what those answers should be.
Q	I have a child who is currently just started in year 7. When the final option is chosen and when building starts, how disruptive will that be to her education?
A	I would refer you to the video relating to Castle Rock which was a school that had to be re-built. The School, the Authority and the contractor worked together and as part of that development managed to enhance the curriculum opportunities by working closely together. We managed to ensure the life of the school continued, despite the builders being on site. One part of the new process will be to invite governors to visit the sites in order to see the processes of keeping pupils and builders apart physically, but working together on curriculum issues. We will very clearly have to address the practicalities.
A	I would like to thank everyone for their participation and to remind them that there will be a third round of consultation. Tonight's views are useful but please, in addition, use the response forms or website to put over your views. We can't do it without you, nor can we get it right without your views being expressed.
A	Headteacher – could I just emphasise that this is a very broad issue which is most important. It is truly an opportunity open to all of you as parents to be able to steer the way that education goes in this town. I would encourage everyone to express their views to the Local Authority, whatever those views might be.

The meeting closed at 9.18pm.