

## Appendix 2

**A synopsis of the interviews held with the Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of The Long Field High School, John Ferneley High School, King Edward VII School and the Headteacher and a governor of Belvoir High School. All of the interviews took place in early to mid January 2006.**

The Headteachers and their Chairs of Governors were issued with an agenda in advance of the meeting, which included the following items: -

- Scene setting –review of actions to date.
- Recommendations in Barbara Hughes Report.
- Why should the Vale of Belvoir/Melton Mowbray be first in any reorganisation of school places?
- The advantages and disadvantages of the current organisation of school places.
- Options for change.
- Timescale and Building implications.
- Items to include in the consultation document.
- Arrangements for parental consultation.
- Next steps.

The key issues emerging from the discussions are summarised below.

- The Vale of Belvoir/Melton Mowbray was justified as first choice for any reorganisation proposals on the basis of response to parental request in the Vale of Belvoir. Additional reasons put forward included the statement that the area is virtually self-contained in terms of the organisation of school places and therefore it would be easier to manage change here.
- In terms of the advantages of the current pattern of organisation the following statements were made:
  - Key Stage 3 results are excellent within the High Schools.
  - Collaboration between the existing schools, and with other partners such as Brooksby –Melton College and local employers, is developing well.
  - Some schools already have plans in place to improve the learning environment at their school.
  - The large sixth form at KEVII is able to offer a wide degree of subject choice in terms of curriculum.
- In terms of disadvantages of the current pattern of organisation the following statements were made: -

- In terms of results at KS4, pupils do not make the progress that might be expected on the basis of results at KS3.
  - There is no choice at Key Stage 4 or competition between schools.
  - Achieving cross-school collaboration between staff is problematic.
  - For children in the Vale of Belvoir it is easier to travel to schools and colleges in other local authorities rather than to Melton.
  - Locating all 16+ provision to the south of Melton ignores the natural geography of Melton in terms of traffic flow and congestion.
  - Parents are not happy with the disruption consequent upon transfer between the high and upper schools.
  - Year 6 provision should be located within the primary schools in the Vale rather than the High School.
- Change was envisaged as building on the advantages of the current organisation of school places whilst mitigating the disadvantages. In particular providing choice for parents and their children in terms of secondary school places.
- With reference to options for change the following views were put forward:
    - An 11 to 16 secondary school was identified at appropriate for Bottesford, but post 16 provision was considered not to be viable, especially given the proximity to other providers in other local authorities in the context of independent advice to pupils.
    - The preferences in Melton varied from:-
      - A 10fe 11 to 18 school at KEVII plus another 11 to 16 school.
      - Two 11 to 16 schools with a sixth form centre elsewhere.
      - Two 11 to 18 schools of equal size.

(A 10fe school 11 to 18 school would be a school with 10 forms of entry (10x30 pupils=300 pupils) in each of years 7 to 11 (to give 1200 pupils plus a sixth form of c600 ) to give a school of 2100 pupils).
    - The contention in Barbara Hughes' report that two 11 to 14 schools should be amalgamated to create an 11 to 16 school plus King Edward VII, with intakes of similar size, was not supported.
    - For some, choice and parity of esteem were key criteria whereas an alternative view was that a collaborative approach to provision based on choice was the key driver.
    - There was no consensus on the benefits of Formal Federations between schools. Some wanted to see good practice elsewhere before commitment, whereas others wanted only sufficient collaboration to enable wider pupil/student choice.

- Headteachers and their Chairs of Governors emphasised the need to avoid undue haste and appreciated that identifying and implementing change in a considered manner would take up to 2009 to achieve.
- With reference to items to include in the consultation document for the first round of consultation, the following list of items was approved.
  - Principles identified by heads, governors, students and pupils.
  - The processes involved.
  - A description of the current arrangements.
  - A description of a conventional 11 to 18 system.
  - Standards related issues.
  - Advantages and disadvantages of change.
  - Organisational options for change.
  - Questions and Answers.
  - Next steps to include a second round on consultation on the County Council's preferred option(s) for change.
- The Headteachers and Chairs of Governors pointed out the need to ensure that;-
  - Parents of primary school children were included in the consultation process.
  - The establishment of a local advisory group of Headteachers who would advise the Authority on the implementation of any change.
  - Full cognisance was taken of the need to plan implementation carefully in terms of relocating/upskilling staff and minimising disruption to the education of pupils and students already in secondary schools.

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