

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

8 July 2019

Report of the Executive Director for Children’s Services

**CONSULTATION ON THE ORGANISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN
TIBSHELF**

1. Purpose of Report

To report the outcome of the consultation on the organisation of primary education in Tibshelf.

2. Information and Analysis

Derbyshire County Council made a significant investment in building a new secondary school for Tibshelf, providing modern facilities that enhance high-quality education. Tibshelf School moved to its new location on the edge of the village in November 2013. The former Tibshelf School site (to the rear of the Infant & Nursery School) occupies an area of 58,839 square metres in the centre of the village of Tibshelf. At the time of leaving, there were extensive school buildings on site, playing fields, tennis courts, an all-weather pitch and a changing block. The all-weather pitch and changing block had been funded with a partial grant from the Football Foundation. All the sports facilities were replicated on the new school site and are available for community use. Since the school’s departure, the buildings (with the exception of the changing block) have been demolished on safety grounds. The changing block and playing fields have continued to be used by a local football club and the athletics club. There is access across the site to the allotments.

In April/May 2016, there was a pre-publication consultation to consider the future of primary education in Tibshelf and the disposal of surplus land on the former Tibshelf School site. Derbyshire County Council’s Cabinet considered the outcome of that consultation in July 2016 and the decision was made to apply for permission to dispose of the surplus land. The decision on the future of primary education in Tibshelf would be the subject of further consultation. The Education and Skills Funding Agency approved the disposal of surplus land in 2018. The remaining site, together with the

capital receipt from the surplus land, provides an opportunity to invest in new school premises. It is, however, necessary to determine the organisation of primary education in the village before a design can proceed. The decision will also determine the correct statutory or non-statutory procedure for re-organisation.

When the initial consultation took place, it was thought that access to the former Tibshelf School site could be achieved without impacting on the existing Infant School. Further discussion with the Highways Department has determined that that is not the case and a section of the Infant School building will have to be demolished to provide acceptable access for any development on the available site. As a consequence, if the decision is made to utilise the site for a school, the new building will be required to house both the junior and infant pupils regardless of the organisation of the school.

Town End Junior School is located on the edge of the village. It has a net capacity of 196 with 174 on roll. The site is very restricted and does not provide sufficient playing fields to meet current DfE standards. There is a maintenance backlog of £636,555. There is no scope for enlargement of the school on its present site.

Tibshelf Infant School is centrally located. It has a net capacity of 130 and 130 on roll. It is on a constrained site and the condition backlog is £389,261.

The projections show a small decrease in numbers at the Junior School but an increase to 153 by 2023 for the Infant School (23 above capacity). In addition, planning approval has been granted for 227 houses in the village which could generate 45 primary-aged pupils. The Infant School is also eager to extend its age range to provide pre-school education to 2 year-olds.

On 28 February 2019, Cabinet agreed to a further consultation on the organisation of primary education in Tibshelf, and it took place from 14 March 2019 to 10 May 2019. A copy of the consultation paper is at Appendix 1.

There were 17 responses to the consultation. There was general support for moving to the new site but a mix of views as to whether the new school should remain as two schools but be federated or become a primary school. The following details the issues raised by those who responded to the consultation.

Do you prefer the Junior and Infant Schools to remain on separate sites?

Of the 17 who responded, 15 were in favour of co-locating the school on the former Tibshelf School site with one opposed and another not offering an opinion. Of those in favour, they saw the advantages as:

- Improving the logistics of taking pupils to and from school
- Assisting with the transition at the end of the infant stage
- Offering a 'one team' approach to education
- Improving on the existing old buildings and providing facilities that are fit for purpose in the 21st Century
- Improve the appearance of the High Street

There was support for the nursery to remain as part of the school and for the existing clubs to be able to continue using the sports fields.

The one consultee who was opposed felt that the existing schools did a very good job and to break the teams up could impact on the learning and care of the children. They expressed a desire for the existing schools to be expanded but it had been explained in the consultation document that the sites in question did not lend themselves to expansion.

Do you think Town End Junior School and Tibshelf Infant and Nursery School should be co-located and operate as a federation?

Three of the consultees expressed support for a federation, however 5 were specifically opposed. There were 8 responses that were neutral, expressing the view that they would support whichever was best for the school. One was opposed to the co-location so did not comment on the reorganisation.

Do you think the Junior and Infant Schools should close and be re-established as a new primary school?

Seven of the consultees expressed support for the creation of a primary school with 3 opposed having opted for a federation. Six were neutral and one was opposed to the co-location as above.

General Points

There was some opposition to the partial demolition of the Infant School given the aesthetics of the building and concern about how the school would continue to operate if a section of the building was demolished.

DCC response - the demolition would not take place until the new school was built.

There was concern about the location of the access road and a suggestion that a holistic approach should be taken to consider accessing the site at other points on the High Street through discussion with the Parish and

District Councils. **DCC response** – this could be considered during the design phase.

Traffic on the High Street was a concern particularly with the pending start of works relating to HS2. **DCC response** – the access road and parking for the new school would be off the High Street and would therefore improve the current position of cars parking at both the Infant and Junior sites.

There was a view that the new school should be built on the footprint of the old secondary school and leave the playing fields untouched so they could continue to be used for recreation. **DCC response** – the footprint of the old buildings was considered however there were significant level changes which would prevent the new school from being fully accessible and access to the playing fields would be across the vehicle track that accesses the allotments. By constructing on the lower site, the buildings will be fully accessible with safe access to the playing fields and the adjacent multi-games court and changing rooms would be brought back into full use. The school playing fields would still be available for community use and benefit from the improved facilities. They would be in addition to the facilities that had been created at the new secondary school.

There was concern that the playing fields on the former Tibshelf School site were identified in the Bolsover District Council Long Term Development Plan. **DCC response** – Over the past 2 years, the District and Parish Councils have been informed of the plans for the site and therefore further dialogue would be required in respect of the development.

There was concern that the extra housing in the village demanded additional health facilities as well as schools. **DCC response** – this falls outside the remit of DCC and is a matter for the Health Authority in discussion with Bolsover District Council.

3. Financial Considerations

The estimated cost of a new school is £7M. The value of the surplus land at the former Tibshelf School is £1.75M and the value of the Town End Junior site is £600,000 providing a total capital receipt of £2.35M. Initially, the capital receipt was estimated at £3.9M, however that was reduced in subsequent valuations. On 26 January 2016, Cabinet approved £3.1M from borrowings and on 26 July 2018, Cabinet approved £1.55M from basic need funding to replace the loss of capital receipt.

4. Human Resources Considerations

The considerations relating to human resources will depend on the decision made about the organisation of the school. Derbyshire County Council will provide support with any reorganisation.

5. Legal Considerations

The procedure to be taken by the Authority will depend on the final decision made in respect of primary education in Tibshelf and will be the subject of further consultation. The following processes for school reorganisation may apply:-

- (a) for the transfer to a new site, the process of is set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended), The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013, and in the DfE guidance 'Making Significant Changes 'prescribed alterations' to Maintained Schools – statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers' (October 2018);
- (b) for the closure of the infant and junior school and the re-opening of a new primary school, the process is set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended), The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 and the DfE guidance 'Opening and closing maintained schools – statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers' (November 2018);
- (c) for two schools becoming federated, the procedure is set out in the School Governance (Federation) (England) Regulations 2012.

6. Social Value Considerations

The Authority has a duty to ensure that there are adequate school places for children in the County and the aim is for those places to be of high quality and meet current standards. A new school would be built to Department for Education Building Bulletin 103 standards.

7. Other Considerations

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

8. Background papers

A file is available within the Children's Services' Development Section.

9. Officer's Recommendation

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Young People:

- Approves the progression of the design of a new school on the former Tibshelf School site with consideration of an alternative entrance to the site.
- Approves the proposal to enter into discussion with the governing bodies of the infant and junior school to consider the options of either

federation, the formation of a primary school or joint occupation as separate school in the new school building and report the outcome of those discussion to the Cabinet Member for a decision.

Jane Parfremment, Executive Director for Children's Services

Appendix 1

The Organisation of Primary Education in Tibshelf

Informal Public Consultation

Introduction

Derbyshire County Council wishes to consult all interested parties on the organisation of the schools in Tibshelf for the education of primary-aged children.

Background

The former Tibshelf School site occupies an area of 58,839 square metres in the centre of the village of Tibshelf. Tibshelf School moved to its new location on the edge of the village in November 2013. At the time of leaving, there were extensive school buildings on site, playing fields, tennis courts, an all-weather pitch and a changing block. The all-weather pitch and changing block had been funded with a partial grant from the Football Foundation. All the sports facilities were replicated on the new school site and are available for community use. Since the school's departure, the buildings (with the exception of the changing block) have been demolished on safety grounds. The changing block and playing fields have continued to be used by a local football club and the athletics club. There is access across the site to the allotments.

In April/May 2016, there was a public consultation to consider the future of primary education in Tibshelf and the disposal of surplus land on the former Tibshelf School site. Derbyshire County Council's Cabinet considered the outcome of that consultation in July 2016 and the decision was made to apply for permission to dispose of the surplus land. The decision on the future of primary education in Tibshelf would be the subject of further consultation. The Education and Skills Funding Agency approved the disposal of surplus land in 2018 and therefore the Authority is wishing to formulate its plans for the site.

Issues for Consultation

The availability of a site on the former Tibshelf School site creates an opportunity to review the organisation of primary school provision in the village. There is scope to effectively merge the two schools and create a primary school. Primary schools are seen to have a number of advantages over separate infant and junior schools, and in recent years, a number of infant and junior schools have merged. The advantages are set out below:

- A primary school is able to organise and coordinate the teaching across the primary years, and there is no need for a transition between infant and junior schools; the transition from infant to junior can be unsettling for some children and impact on educational progress.
- The Infant and Junior schools in Tibshelf are not located on the same sites and, as a consequence, parents may have children in two schools at separate locations within the town, presenting travel and time issues in getting children to school.

The 'merger' of the two schools could be achieved in one of two ways. The first is for the two governing bodies to decide to form a 'federation'. Under a federation, the two schools can have a single governing body and head teacher and effectively operate as a single school, although they remain distinct in some respects such as separate Ofsted inspections, budgets and admissions. The alternative would be for the Authority to undertake a formal legal process to close the two existing schools and open a new primary school. Under current legislation, the new primary school can remain a maintained school under Derbyshire County Council. In financial terms however it would operate with a single budget and this may adversely affect the viability of the school. The federation option has many of the benefits of a single school but can be put in place with less disruption.

Derbyshire County Council is proposing that the all-weather pitch and changing block should remain and an area of 28,700 square metres be retained to build a new school which would offer modern facilities and enhance the quality of education.

The Junior School is on a very small site and there is no scope for expansion.

In order to access the former Tibshelf School site, since the last consultation, it has become clear that the Infant & Nursery School would at least have to be partially demolished to provide acceptable access for any development and therefore if the decision is made to utilise the site for a school, the new building would accommodate both the junior and infant pupils regardless of the organisation of the school. The surplus land including the site of the current Town End Junior School would then be available for disposal.

Funding

The proposed project will be developed in more detail if this consultation establishes support for the proposal. The cost of building a new school to

accommodate all of the primary-aged children in Tibshelf is estimated to be in the region of £7m. The value of the land for disposal is estimated to be around £2.35m. The balance of funding would be provided by Derbyshire County Council from its Capital Programme. The details of the project, including the access to the site, would be subject to further consultation as part of the planning process.

Consultation Questions

1. Do you prefer the Junior and Infant Schools to remain on separate sites?
2. Do you think Town End Junior School and Tibshelf Infant & Nursery School should be co-located and operate as a federation?
3. Do you think the Junior and the Infant & Nursery School should close and be re-established as a new primary school?

Consultation

Cabinet will consider all views expressed during this consultation before deciding on the future of primary education in Tibshelf. The consultation will commence on Thursday 14 March 2019. If you require the consultation document in any alternative format such as large print or braille please contact Sue Pegg. If you would like to respond to this consultation, please e-mail or write to Sue Pegg (sue.pegg@derbyshire.gov.uk) Development Section, Chatsworth Hall, Chesterfield Road, Matlock. DE4 3FW by **Friday 10 May 2019**.