

### Community Consultation Meeting

**Worthen**                      **13 October 2016**                      **17.30**

Present:

N Halliday, Parent

Rachel Evans, Pre School Leader

Rachel Bissell, Governor/Parent

Jo Hilliard, Parent

Dan Roach, Parent

Scott Gerrard, Governor/Parent

Sally Johnson, Chair of Governors

Jane Gill, Executive Headteacher

Chris Mathews, Commissioner for Education Improvement and Efficiency

Phil Wilson, Head of Service Delivery

Helen Woodbridge, Notes

Phil Wilson gave a presentation on the proposals which have been driven by governors. He confirmed that the Phillip Sell from the diocese had been invited to this meeting. The consultation had been launched on 22 September and will run for 6 weeks. Documentation is available from the Shropshire Council website or hard copy from the school. The plan is for the process to be complete by September 2017 or January 2018. There will be a final decision by Cabinet in March 2017. It was confirmed that the Cabinet meeting will be a public meeting. It was also confirmed that there are around 12 Cabinet members and the decision would need to be made by a majority. Views are being gathered from all stakeholders.

Sally Johnson pointed out that the recruitment and retention of headteachers had been the issue. Governors have agreed that the best solution is to provide education on one site. One school was down to 19 pupils and in total the NOR for the three schools had reduced to 85 from 114. Future sustainability had been a major consideration. Also, the opportunity for children to have a wider friendship group.

Jane Gill spoke of this exciting opportunity which the children are enjoying. Staff are positive and are working together which lessens their workload. There is a real 'buzz' around the school.

Parent/community comments/questions:

It is nice to see more children and parents.

Will there be staffing reductions and if so, how will they be handled? The headteacher advised that there will be a staffing plan. The number of teachers needed is the same but there may be some reduction in support staff. However, there will be more wraparound care which could create more job roles.

Who owns Worthen? Phil Wilson confirmed that it is the diocese and added that any new building would transfer to the diocese. There is an intention to extend the school if the proposal is approved. However, Early Years work may start earlier as it is not part of the consultation process.

A parent commented that the pre-school is important as it feeds into the school.

## Appendix 3b

What would happen if the proposal is not approved? Chris Mathews advised that theoretically it could revert to three schools but this would make no sense. It is a big decision to close one school let alone two – and closing two rural schools is harder. The case needs to be rock solid and a statutory procedure is required. The process has to be carried out correctly to prevent challenge. It is encouraging that governors are doing what is best for the children – they should get credit for taking this difficult decision.

Phil Wilson added that a challenge may come from outside the area.

What will be the average class size?

Jane Gill advised that class sizes could go up to 30. This is a positive as there are good teachers with good support. In small schools pupils can be with the same teacher for 4 years. Other positives are that the headteacher has more time as she will not have to be travelling between three sites. Social and sports opportunities for the children will also improve.

My son is enjoying being able to attend more clubs.

Rachel Evans, Pre School Leader expressed a concern that the nursery provision could be staffed by current school employees rather than those from the pre-school. They would like something reassuring in writing.

Sally Johnson confirmed that there is no intention to set up a rival early years setting.

Jane Gill advised that the new setting would be full time with more job roles so hopefully there will be positions for all.

How is the transport working?

Jane Gill confirmed that this is currently working well – coach/minibus/two taxis.

Scott Gerrard advised that it is calm compared to other sites.

Concerned about the children who can't access after school clubs because of having to use transport.

Jane Gill agreed and added the other problem for early years children who could not access provision if there was no parental transport.

Governors confirmed that they are planning to organise social events for parents in areas.

Concerned that is only one parent governor from each site and so not all age range views are represented.

Jane Gill advised that parent governors are elected by parents so there is little control over this.

Sally Johnson advised that more associate governors could be appointed if necessary. She also felt that parent governors have a role to represent the whole school regardless of their child/children's age/s. The PTA could also feed in views to the governing body.