

**Summary Report on Consultation with Young People About The
Best Site For a New School**

Thursday 14th of December 2006

1.0 Summary

Brent Children and Young People's Participation Steering group organised a participation event for children and young people on Thursday 14th of December 2006 to consult children on proposed sites for a new school building in the borough. Following site visits and discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of each site, young people voted on which site they thought would be most suitable for a new school. They also voted on whether or not an all age school should be built. Ten out of 12 young people thought that the Wembley Park Sports Ground would be the best location for a new school. Four out of twelve young people thought that an all age school should be built. The majority of young people did not think that any of the sites are big enough for an all age school.

2.0 Consultation Event

Purpose

2.1 To seek the views of children and young people from schools across the borough on the following:

- The three proposed sites to build a new school
- The development of an all age school in the borough

Objectives

2.2 The objectives were to ensure that;

- Children and young people are informed of the site options for building a new school to deliver additional school places in the borough
- Children and young people have the opportunity to participate and be involved in the development of the new school at the very beginning of the process. This is in line with the department's commitment to children and young people's participation.
- Children and young people's views expressed are used to inform Members and council officers about where to develop a new school in Brent.

Pupils consulted

- 2.3 Twelve young people aged between 10 -16 year olds from the following schools attended the event. Students from Capital City Academy, Copland Community School, Kingsbury High School, Park Lane Primary School, John Keble Primary School and Kingsbury Green Primary.

The days programme

- 2.4 The programme for the day included a tour of three proposed sites:
- Wembley Park (Bridge Road)
 - Chalk Hill temporary Health Care Centre
 - Gwynneth Rickus Building and Swaminaryan School land
- 2.5 Pupils were given information about each site as well as the advantages and disadvantages of undertaking any development on them. During each site visit pupils were asked to consider the following key factors of each site to be able to select the best option for a new school.
- Size of the site – 7 hectares is recommended for a new school
 - Location – where there is a need for a new school
 - Loss of priority use - what the site is currently used for.
 - Accessibility –is the site easy to get to by walking, cycling or, public transport
 - Impact on neighbours – noise, traffic congestion, compatibility with neighbouring uses.
 - Availability and cost – who owns the site, will the council need to purchase the land.
- 2.6 Site visits were followed by a facilitated discussion group where the pupils debated the advantages and disadvantages of each site. Young people were also given the opportunity to share their views about developing an all age school. At the final session of the day pupils were asked to vote for their preferred site option for a new school.

Key Findings

Wembley Park (Bridge Road) Site

- 2.7 Ten out of 12 young people thought that the Wembley Park (Bridge Road) would be the best location for a new school. The main reason was that the Wembley site is the largest site so there should be room for a bigger building with more facilities. Young People thought that the school would benefit from the range of amenities nearby including the health centre, train station, transport police and College of North West London.
- 2.8 Young people did express concern about the loss of the football pitch. However they suggested that if a new school is built on this site the council should guarantee that

the school's pitch facilities should be available free for community use at weekends. The close proximity of the site to Preston Manor School was raised as a concern; young people thought that this could cause competition and rivalry resulting in fights and increased "bunking" from school. Shops could also be a temptation for "bunking off". Young people expressed concern about the railway line being at the back of the site and potentially being a health and safety risk.

Chalkhill temporary Health Care Centre Site

- 2.9 One young person thought that the Chalkhill healthcare centre site was the best place to build a new school. Young people thought that the advantages of this site were that the transport links were good and that a new school would be close for those who live in Chalkhill. There is medical centre nearby the Chalkhill site. In this case the disadvantages outweighed the advantages. Young people thought that the Chalkhill site was very small so a new school would have to be very tall, the trains would be very noisy, the proximity to Asda could cause numerous problems, residents would be unhappy as they would lose the park area and there would be more noise caused by crowds of children.

Gwynneth Rickus Site

- 2.10 One young person thought that Gwynneth Rickus site would be the best place for a new school. Young people thought that the Gwynneth Ricketts site would be quiet, environmentally friendly, it would be an alternative to the private school and there are no shops nearby. The disadvantages raised were that the Gwynneth Ricketts site is too small and has poor transport links. It was also mentioned that there is a canal nearby which could be a feeder for rats. Young people did not think that a new school was needed at the Gwynneth Ricketts site as there are already three schools in the area. It was noted that there would be high demolition costs of the Gwynneth Ricketts building resulting in no facilities for teachers.

The Development Of An All Age School In The Borough

- 2.11 Four out of 12 young people voted for an all age school. Young people thought that an all age school would be good because friendships could continue and transition would be easier because no time would be wasted adjusting to a new school. However they thought that young children may be intimidated in an all age school. Young people who voted for two separate primary and secondary schools felt that pupils feel the transition to a different secondary school can be a fresh start and that change is positive and can prepare them for the future. They also thought that younger children would feel safer in a separate primary school.
- 2.12 Eight out of 12 young people did not think any of the sites were big enough for an all age school.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 Twelve young people visited three proposed sites for a new school and gave great consideration to the advantages and disadvantages of each site. They also gave their views about the development of a new school. The majority of young people thought that the best site for a new school is Wembley Park (Bridge Road), that none of the sites are big enough for an all age school and that they prefer to have separate primary and secondary schools.