

SPECIAL SCHOOLS PROPOSALS (19 November 2019)

APPENDIX 3(b):

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS AT LARKRISE SCHOOL – 19 September 2019

Meetings led by: Helen Jones, Director of Commissioning
 Judith Westcott, Interim Head of Children’s Commissioning and Joint Planning
 David Paice, Interim Head of Special Schools Transformation

Sessions were digitally recorded and then transcribed. Please note that some dialogue did not always come across clearly, where this has been the case this has been identified or a sense of the dialogue included. The original audio recordings can be drawn upon for clarity if needed.

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Larkrise School – Parent session

Judith Westcott

OK. I'm going to do the formal bit to start with, which is we are recording this session. And the reason we're recording this session is because everything we say goes all the way up to the schools' adjudicator. So, the schools' adjudicator is the folk that make the decision about all the things that we've been talking about. And so, we will transcribe everything that is said today and he or she will get the full transcript. As a result of everything we said. There is a roving microphone which we will send round.

And by taking hold of it and speaking into it, we are assuming you are giving consent to be recorded in that sense. So, if you do not want what you are saying to be recorded and be sent to schools' adjudicator then don't use the mic. But we are assuming that you will do on the basis that you've turned up and you're here and you're part of the consultation. Yeah. Is that all Okay? Yeah. OK so let's go back to that. Welcome, thank you very much for coming. We're all getting to know each other.

We've seen each other several times now. As you'll be aware there were quite a few changes made to the proposals. Having spoken to everybody and you will see that we've got new proposals on the table now. And David will talk those through with you and we've got about an hour.

David Paice

I think we're 15 minutes late, but, yes as long as you've got.....

Judith Westcott

About an hour to talk these things through. But remember this is one way of giving your views and talking through about what you feel about it. There is also the online approach which you can do at any time as well.

We complete it all at the end of September.

So, we need all your views in by then but I'm going to hand it to David now.

David Paice

Yes, thanks very much indeed.

Judith Westcott

You do know who I am, Judith Westcott and this is David Paice. David Paice is working with the council, moving the project forward. What I want to do is talk you through this timeline. I think most of you will have seen it, if you haven't, very good do you want one now? (hands out printed versions). And so, this hopefully, this has been shared with you previously, it's the poster on the back there, it's the timeline. So, it takes us from where we are at now to the actual proposed building in 2023. So, there's, there's a kind of, I'm going to talk you through, the kind of legislation and guidance around why we are in this process having further conversation, more consultation and some legislation around that.

And also, how you govern the process and there's legislation around the governance. So, I will talk you through that. This is a representation. So, we want to hear your voice which we're capturing because that is the evidence base, whether you are positive or negative, we just need to get your honest view of the proposal. It goes to an independent organization or body or person called a schools' adjudicator.

How's that sound?

OK. Right. ["And if you kind of go to the next one" – request to Emily to move the slides forward]. So, the legislation is in terms of opening and closing new schools and then part of the proposal is to come back at some stage, in the future, to consider how many sites you actually want. There's different legislation for that. So that's on that side. [So just click one down, Emily, that's it. That document, you'll get all these slides, and all of the legislation you can just pull off Web sites as well. So, if you want to read it.]

That's where to go. And on the other side it's around governance. And I'll talk you through that too. There might be one of two you who may be a parent governor and I'll talk you through the process because it involves a shadow governing body, as well as a standard governing body too.

Parent

Right. So, you're saying that there's going to be a governing body for each site still? A site has its own governing body?

David Paice
(Inaudible)

So, in the.....

Judith Westcott

It's not individual ones with a shadow governing body but we'll talk about that in a moment. We'll go through all of that with you so you can see what happens.

David Paice

Yes. So, if we just go through to the next slide.

(New parent arrives)

David Paice

These are not mics to give more of a sound, they're so we can capture your voices, your comments and then we will have them transcribed. So instead of just typing away, we just put it into a computer program and it changes the voice into words and that's evidence that will then go as part of the proposal. So, we're capturing exactly what you think about it. It will go word by word to an independent assessor, the Schools' Adjudicator. So, we need your consent to capture your comments, so, if you're comfortable with that there's a mic going around to capture comments.

If you speak into it, we'll assume that you give us consent on that basis if that's okay?

Well yes that's absolutely, good.

Thank you. Next slide. So, the proposal is that all three sites stay open. But they are joined as one school. One school, three sites, so Larkrise here stays open.

There is a change. This school is closing as a school by number. There'll be a new school number for the Amalgamated school but this stays open as a site as part of the New School as does St Nicholas as does Rowdeford. That's what is termed as an amalgamation. We are proposing that as a local authority. Because it was the feedback from the consultation was that that was preferable to going down an academy route. So, it's a local authority maintained community Special School across three sites.

That's the proposal. And the legislation around is what we're following in terms of amalgamation. So, as we're the proposer, you can't mark your own homework. We can't say, it's a really good idea and we are marking and go "Yes, it is a good idea". Well done. It has to go to an independent body. The independent body's called a schools' adjudicator. So, we capture all of your views. We pull those together as a report. The report goes back, as it did last time, to a

cabinet meeting, a full cabinet meeting where you're perfectly able and welcome to come and listen to that.

The Cabinet make a decision as to whether they want to move forward on the basis of the evidence that they've got. If they go 'yes', then that'll be in November. This year. If the cabinet go 'yes', then it has to go to the schools' adjudicator. The schools' adjudicator probably will take, there's no definitive timeline, but let's say six weeks, indicatively. So that gives us to about Christmas. So, we're talking....

Parent

Is that out of county or in county independent body?

David Paice

It's independent, central government.

Judith Westcott

Yes, it's part of the DfE. So, part of the Department for Education and the schools' adjudicator is somebody they appoint, there are about six or seven schools' adjudicators and they will choose who is the best person to look at this particular case.

David Paice

Yep.

So, we are in a situation of not being able to move ahead with the amalgamation at all until we get the green light. The earliest we're looking at that is January to be able to start. So, if we start in January we've got a period of time to make this this happen. it is quite quick.

So why we're here now is, we have a four-week consultation in September. All of September is asking for your views or of the proposal again capturing.

Parent

How can you access the consultation online if you want to make comments? You just email comments?

David Paice

Yes, there's a survey

Judith Westcott

So, if you if you go onto the Wiltshire Council site, if you Google in Wiltshire Council consultation it takes you to the consultation page and then when you've gone to the consultation page you will see, one of them will say special schools. Be wary. The ones that we had in previous months are there but they say closed. So, they're not the ones you're looking at. So, the one which says open, you click onto there and then there's some supporting documents. So, there's the document which has the proposal and then it takes you through to a series of questions that you go through and then you have the opportunity if you want to go into sort of freestyle comment as well.

David Paice

I think there's a link at the bottom of the last slide of the presentation. So, we're at this stage the September piece and we have until the end of September to be able to make your comments known.

So, the change here as Judith was saying is, Larkrise stays open as a site. That's the significant shift from the previous proposal where it was just one site all on Rowdeford.

Same is true for the other three sites. St Nicholas stays open, Larkrise stays open, Rowdeford stays open. The capital commitment from the local authority is thirty-two million pounds, that capital is all about building new spaces on the Rowdeford site.

Parent

If Larkrise is staying open, is there going to be any actual investment in this site? Bearing in mind that we're going to have children in education here?

David Paice

Yes, in terms of the ongoing operational spending.

Yes. So, it is, operationally, there's money that is going in to support the ongoing development of the school, that would stay the same as it always has done. The Capital money is to build new stuff, new places and so from a building perspective, there will be no building here. So that, the 32 million pounds is around buildings and the proposal says we're trying to reduce overcrowding. Rather than increase building here.

And then coming back at a later stage to think how many sites are we actually going to need. To look at the actual numbers of pupils across North Wiltshire going forward with the various sites.

The original proposal was to go for one. Now it is worth keeping in mind that there's a lot of work happening in terms of inclusion and thinking again about the different areas around special bases. So, we want more students to be educated in their locality, wherever that may be which means primary school and secondary schools, primary bases, secondary enhanced learning provision. So we hope that this parallel inclusion work will help reduce demand on the amalgamated special school. Judith will go into detail about those plans and how this is part of that holistic thinking regarding special education needs and disabilities.

We're also very aware that particularly in Chippenham as well as in Trowbridge, but particularly in Chippenham, there's a potential for 7000 more houses. So that might significantly increase demand for special places. So that actually might be four sites.

Parent

I'm not exactly going to say 'I told you so' but we've been telling you that for at least two years.

Parent

You'll see lots of houses in Melksham as well.

David Paice

Yeah. I appreciate that and that is why we are

Parent

Not you in particular David, or Judith but we've been telling the council this for two years, on deaf ears. The surveys that we've done online, twice. Majority was against one school option. But you still went against the majority. You're no better than those idiots in bloody Westminster.

Parent

(Inaudible) bigger school in Rowdeford. Not going to be the same school anymore. It's not going to have all that space. That's (Inaudible)

David Paice

No, I appreciate that. You're right, so you've got three sites though I hope

Parent

Because we fought to keep them. Otherwise you'd steamrolled over the rest of us like you've done in the past or the council has, not you in particular.

David Paice

I think it's because you've made a very strong case. That is why the proposal takes on board those points that you made.

Parent

I don't understand your statement. Yeah. Your statement is the schools. Yeah, the schools to stay open.

David Paice

Yes.

Parent

But you're forgetting the 'but' part. There's a but. They're staying open, for a few years, until the new school is built. So, you're saying exactly the same but in a different way.

David Paice

No. Well, let me explain. I'll explain why that maybe. So, there are two things that give some flexibility to how many places and where you want them. So, it's up to 400 places on the Rowdeford site. The reason to say that is, we're conscious of demand going up. We might need more places than that in the Chippenham area or across North Wiltshire. We're conscious that some things haven't been decided yet. So, the 7000 houses have not been agreed yet.

Parent

Look, you said of this 400, but is that the 32-million-pound school, is that what you're saying basing on 400 people, 400 kids, to up to 400? Right. So, then you're planning something and then you're saying there's gonna be more houses built in Chippenham. So, like you said there might be more people going in there. So surely your budget is going to go up for more than 32 million, you're going to have to build a bigger school.

David Paice

It would do, absolutely.

Parent

Sorry, but that's not down here.

David Paice

No, but you wouldn't...

Parent

Well, you must know if there's going to be more houses. I know there's going to be more houses built in Trowbridge,

Judith Westcott

So, let me give you answer to that one. So, we already know there are lots of houses being built.

Parent

We know that

Judith Westcott

There are 24000 houses being built and that's why we're building the 400. So, we worked out the projections and that's why those are being produced in addition to those 24000, at the moment there is an application in something called the housing infrastructure bid which would increase the number of houses in Chippenham by a further 7000. Now we have no idea at this point whether that will be successful or not.

Judith Westcott

These are bids that go in against Birmingham, Westminster, Norwich. So, all those places. So, we know it's possible and we won't know that until quite a while yet. So, which is why as we said, we had to leave the door open to say we think 400 will be enough based on the projections so far. But if that bid is successful we need to leave the door open to say we might need to do something else. Now, at the moment (parent inaudible in background) there it would be more school places.

And the question is, obviously if it's in Chippenham, then we would need to

Parent

(inaudible) I'm saying

David Paice

There's not a budget for an even bigger school. We've got 32 for up to 400 places, if it's 500 places, we'll go back and say we need another school. So, in the same way that in the south, I'm kind of stealing some of Judith's thunder, but we've been quite successful because there's a great demand in South. So, we put in a bid to central government which was successful for 150 places

Parent

OK this is my first one, I'm a bit embarrassed that I haven't been to the others. So, I'm just going to, I'm just going to ask a couple of questions . We're gonna go back and forth, over things. We know how this all works, it's you against us. And we can all be nicey, nicey but it doesn't work like that. So, have you got children?

David Paice

Yes.

Parent

How old are your children? If you don't mind me asking.

David Paice

A 15-year-old and a 13 year old.

Parent

All right. So, when they were younger, when they were six or seven or something like that and you had to send them out on a bus somewhere else, to a different school, 15 miles away. Would you've been happy with that? Being told that your school down the road and you are had to send and they didn't like travelling or they find it difficult. Would you have liked that?

David Paice

Er...

Parent

There's nothing you, you shouldn't even be thinking about that, you should say 'no' straight away, when you've done that you got.. Hang on, you finish your crisp.

So, you, you shouldn't even have thought about that, you should have said 'no' straight away but you had your council jacket on then, you had to think that, you would say no, straightaway, correct? You would, stop thinking about it. If it was upsetting your kids....

Judith Westcott

But.....

Helen Jones

There's no need to be aggressive

Parent

I'm not being aggressive. There's no need to be eating when we're talking.

Helen Jones

I'm sorry you are.

Parent

I'm talking to the gentleman David

David Paice

Yeah.

Parent

David's fine. I'm not, I'm being aggressive because it's my children. This is my child, right. So, keep, if I'm talking to you, take a front seat there but at the moment I'm talking to David. I'm talking to David not you. I'm talking to David not you. I'll talk to you in a minute. Talking to David.

Right back to that. So, I do apologize if I come across aggressive. I'm very passionate about this. So, I'm going to be upset. Like all these people are. And the people who are not yet. There's certain things we don't have confidence in the council, Governments and all that. And you can understand it, right? It breeds from a lot of stuff. So, I'm just asking you. This is the main reason why us people are fighting for it. You know there's a perfectly good school over there.

Parent

You won't invest in it. You're saying you could spend 32 million on a new school for 400, 400. And then if it's not big enough you're going to go back and ask for some more, why won't you ask for some more over there. There's a school over there perfectly big enough. Why can't we do that?

David Paice

I think I understand where you're coming from. So, we can't have any more space here. This this is

Parent

Fine....

David Paice

So, I can't invest any more money here.

Parent

Oh, we get that.

David Paice

So, we're looking for where else could we have more space. Not closing this down, so we initially, the proposal was, I think where your anxiety is, you're going to close this down. We're not.

Parent

Right.

David Paice

This is not closing. So, I can explain that.

Judith Westcott

Let's talk about that particular anxiety then in terms of what that means. So, when we looked at this we had to say how do you get to that next stage. If we need more at that stage or indeed if we need less, we think that's unlikely but if we need more at that stage, we have to go through a legal process in order that we could put a bid in for additional money. So, you know money, you know, we can't just ask for it and we automatically get it because we're competing against Birmingham, Norwich and all the rest, as I said earlier. So, when we do that we have to have a solid case at that time when we can evidence that we have that need here in Wiltshire. But we can't go ahead of the game, so we can't say to them we think this might happen because they'll say, well, we're not going to give you X million pounds on the basis of 'we think' we'll only give you that at the point.

Parent

That's neither here or there... what I'm saying is, this place is too small, that's what's your saying, yeah?

David Paice

Wait, it's not too small, we can't expand it.

Parent

We can expand it, too small we can expand it. So, what's happening with the place across the road then?

David Paice

That's that that, because you haven't been through the previous ones.

Parent

Yeah, that's fine.

David Paice

I'll explain. There is, there's again, legislation that determines what size of school you can have. So, the legislation, that would say that's too small a site to build anything on, in terms of a special school. So that was one of the options . I appreciate, there was a real desire to look at a number of sites so we looked at least 14 sites objectively. We went through a review of those sites including the site you refer to on Ashton Street.

And the site that came out as possible was the Rowdeford site. To get there on the basis of that, objectively looking through line by line, which one's the best. So, that's why we moved to the Rowdeford site, that has space on it. So, we can build more capacity on that. Where I think your real anxiety is, you still think this is going to get closed. I think that's what that's the bottom line.

Parent

Yes, that is the bottom line.

David Paice

Yes, I get that, in black and white you have this. It is open. So, there is a separate stage which we are committed to coming back to because the local authority has to legally have enough places for the children in the local authority. We have to come back to that. It seems very likely that there will be more places required. So, what's likely to happen here if, you want to reduce overcrowding, which is what everybody said we would like to see, a little less kids will come here. So, it was built I think for 48. There are 101 children here today.

Right. So that's too many kids for the size of space that we've got. It is a great school. The teachers are fantastic. You love the experience but I think everybody accepts that there are.....

Parent

My point on that is we mentioned this in May. The reason it's overcrowded is because the council were short sighted and not planned ahead.

Parent

You kept sticking mobiles on the place.

You put more mobile classrooms on, hence, you've got more kids here than it's designed to take. Now on the OFSTED report, it's now we're saying there's not enough green areas for kids to play in. But you lot built. (inaudible) you put the extra (inaudible) extra kids. You were told 10 years ago by the staff here, headmasters, that you needed a new school. It's took you 10 years to realize that. And we're at the stage where we are now.

Judith Westcott

Which is good news. We are going to build.

Parent

So, it took you 10 years so

Judith Westcott

I know it's taken a time. That's why we need to act and we need to keep moving things forward.

Parent

(inaudible) the children are here now. And that's not good news.

Judith Westcott

Which is why we have to get on with it.

Parent

It's good news for our children who are starting in a few years' time, that is great news and nobody would deny that. But it's not for the children now.

David Paice

But I think the good news from my perception is, colleagues have listened to a very strong argument to save, Larkrise, keep schools local. It was a really strong argument. That argument has been won. You have this. Your anxiety is "I don't believe you."

Parent

You say this school has 101 students.

David Paice

Yes. This year.

Parent

We should maybe have 50.

David Paice

Well it was built for 45 .

Parent

Which 50 children you're going to send then? If you keep this school open.

David Paice

Then I can explain the process. The decision, for that, it is around the governance. And I'll explain to you how you collectively and the heads will manage any transition and you if you're looking to reduce the numbers, your governing body.

Parent

At which point do we have transition?

David Paice

I think that transition, which parent carers will be very rightly anxious about, will need to be extremely sensitively considered. There is no plan for that right now.

Parent

So, you're telling me that there is no plan? So, I'm supposed to make plans, he's in year 10. I'm supposed to make plans early as I have a child with special needs. Right? How can I make those plans, if part of the provision is not there?

Judith Westcott

I think

Parent

(inaudible). Wiltshire College is there, but they provide a foundation course. My child can't do that, Fairfield Farm is there (inaudible)

Judith Westcott

Can I just suggest that you let David work through his slides because there's lots of information that David's got for you here which will give you some reassurance. But he kind of needs to tell you in a logical order so you can see how it all fits together. So, there's lots of opportunities. Each time David gets a couple of slides. So, after every couple of slides David will give you a

chance to ask questions but it's helpful if you hear in order and then you can see how it all fits together.

(New parent arrives to meeting)

Judith Westcott

Welcome to our meeting here this afternoon. If I can just let you know we are recording today. And we've got the microphone going round. So, when you take the microphone that's giving consent to be recorded at the same time because this all has to go to the schools adjudicator if you're happy with that.

Judith Westcott

David do you want to.....

David Paice

I do. And I think you will both feel more comfortable, I hope, when I explain this process is a process you're in control of and I explain the mechanism for that. OK? I do appreciate that you have some serious anxiety about the proposal at the moment, that I think we've captured in this meeting. The next bit of my presentation would have been around the issues. I was hoping to get which one of these is the most important driver for you. But I'm taking from the floor that actually the things that are most important to you, you are not comfortable with are that actually you feel it's a kind of done deal, that it's going to be closed. So, I want to reassure you that that is not the case but that's the most important thing I think I'm hearing from you.

It will be interesting to come back, if you've got any time, just for me to capture for the record which of the drivers are important,. The proposal is all three sites stay open. That absolutely is in black and white.

Parent

If you've got a child going into Year 10, he can potentially stay here until he is 19, right?

David Paice

Absolutely. That decision will be for you collectively to make. And I'll explain how that works.

Parent

Are you going to keep a sixth form here?

David Paice

You have a sixth form here.

Parent

Are you going to keep Wiltshire College open, as well?

David Paice

Yes

Parent

Are you going to provide post-16 provision at Rowdeford?

David Paice

The plan is for the new school on the Rowdeford site to also have a sixth form. So, it's additionality.

Parent

They don't at the moment.

David Paice

They don't at the moment, but they're going to.

Well, the proposal is that they do.

Parent

So, three schools staying open.

David Paice

Yes.

Parent

Got too many in..

David Paice

Three sites.

Parent

Three sites will stay open, is there too many children in the other sites as well?

David Paice

No. There is space available on the Rowdeford site.

Parent

Right.

David Paice

There's no additional space, in terms of, there's not a physical building.

Parent

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

David Paice

But that's where we could put physical buildings.

Parent

So, we're just going to take some students from here.

David Paice

No.

Judith Westcott

Let him keep talking, because he'll talk you through that bit.

David Paice

I'll talk you through that video. Oh, come on. No.

(inaudible)

There's a difference between taking students out and getting, I think this is what xxx's view is. How do you phase to give us a bit of space back? So, if there are 101 now, how do we get to 90? How do we get to 80?

Parent

Yeah, I get that. That's what I understand, so I'm just saying, this school is staying open.

David Paice

It's staying open.

Parent

It's just being less students?

David Paice

Hopefully. Yes. Yes. Over a period of time

Parent

Is that the same with the other schools?

David Paice

St Nicholas, the same, they too have more students, significantly more students than they were originally built for.

Parent

That's what I was asking a minute ago, are the other schools overcrowded?

David Paice

But not Rowdeford.

Rowdeford's the one that's got space.

Parent

Right.

David Paice

The two others, of the three, and all three are staying open only one has got space to be able to build on it.

Parent

Right. Got ya.

David Paice

That's it.

Parent

It makes sense to me now. Fine. That's what I was asking.

David Paice

Yeah I know.

Parent

Can I just ask a quick question? Well we say the three schools, when you say 'no, three sites'. What does the difference mean?

David Paice

I will explain the difference. That that is purely a legislation thing. So, we're amalgamating because what's come through is there's lots of good things about all three schools, but a single leadership team would bring that together. So instead of having three schools collaborating, and they do collaborate now, I'm delighted to say I'm working very closely with Phil and Ros. Ros is the head at St Nicholas and Mike is the head at Rowdeford. I'm working with them now because we're having to think about solutions to next year and the year after regardless of the amalgamation.

So, I speak to the heads to think about what we can do so we're not kind of resting on our laurels but we are thinking about that. This proposal though is actually you formalize the leadership team, the integration. So instead of having three separate heads collaborating, you have one head working across, bringing together those three sites, so they can make those decisions as one school three sites.

Parent

You're saying that, you've brought the three, I think, you've kind of, the original proposal, you've brought the three schools' parents closer together as well as obviously we knew about the other schools. They've come closer together. That's why you've had such a battle, so it works both ways.

David Paice

No, I think it's been brilliant, I genuinely think that what you've done is shown me you're stronger together. And I think that's demonstrable. Absolutely. So, it's building on that and making that a strength of a school that has three sites. But together, stronger together, bring them together.

Yes.?

Parent

So, one question so don't get confused. We've got one name, one school, three sites. What about the staff? Are they required to travel across the sites or can they stay on their current site?

Judith Westcott

It's one of the reasons we went for a maintained school. So, if we'd gone for an Academy they would have all had to go through something called TUPE. You might have heard of that, transfer of undertakings so some of the staff have to transfer. So, at the moment they were all employed by the local authority even though they worked in the three schools. By being a maintained school, it means that's exactly the way they stay. Now the only bits that we would change, is the senior leadership team because obviously they're going to want to find ways of talking together and they're going to potentially appoint a principal.

Who will then help run the whole thing and then the senior leadership team across the three schools, as they are now, or the three sites will be able to talk to each other, think about what training looks like together, when they want to work together, how they are going to realise their plans. And David will talk a bit more about that. So, when they want to start thinking about how do we slowly reduce numbers here and increase numbers there so that there isn't the overcrowding? They need to do that talking.

So, we want to bring them together so that they can have those conversations with the governors and with parents, so there is a conversation going on about how we get from here to where we want to be with more places. And as far as the staff are concerned, what you'll find is that it will be kind of business as usual thing going on. So as far as the mainstream staff, the TAs, and the teachers here, they probably won't see an awful lot of difference in the first instance. You know they will say you know maybe I'm talking to different people but broadly speaking I'm in the same classroom, I'm doing the same thing, I'm meeting the same children.

So, that's the way it stays. Over time there might be people who say you know I can see a career opportunity for me. You know I've been a teacher here, I now want to be an assistant as part of that group. But that's a good thing in terms of our teaching staff because it gives them career development, it keeps them here. It keeps them well-trained and talking to each other. And so, one of the conversations was that Rowdeford hasn't got a sixth form at the moment but they could talk to you guys here and say 'well, how do you do it? How do you make it work?' And there can be conversations then about how they can gain that skill, experience and knowledge.

Parent

Sorry, I don't want to go over this again. Right, you're saying the schools are staying open, it says this at the top there, build a new school, fine with that....

...and it says "at a later date consult on options regarding bringing all pupils from three sites onto the Rowdeford site"

Judith Westcott

Yes, it says that, yes.

David Paice

Yes.

Parent

But you're saying, you're contradicting what you first said.

David Paice

No, it's not contradictory.

Let me explain to you. There's a wider aspiration to have even more inclusion. So, it's not just if I've got special education needs and disabilities I go to Larkrise or a special school...

Parent

Yes.

David Paice

We're actually looking at trying to enhance the provision for inclusion in mainstream schools, all mainstream schools. And enhancing the capacity of bases, what are called primary bases, where there's support for children young people with requirements and they are located to primary schools. And looking again at the provision for what's called enhanced learning provision.

Now if that works you'll get more kids going to that locality, which is a big strength of what you were saying and therefore they might not need to come to Larkrise, if there are bases.

Parent

Right. Right. I totally get what you're talking about, I totally, totally get it. So, maybe we should go back because this is the way I'm reading it, I don't know if anybody else is reading it the same, "a later date consult on options of regarding bringing ALL pupils from three sites".

David Paice

Yeah.

Parent

That says to me, you're going to take the children from this school, Larkrise, you're going to take the children from the other two, the other one, St Nicholas and put them on the Rowdeford site. That's what it says to me.

Judith Westcott

The key word there is ...

Parent

..is all...

Judith Westcott

...is consult.

David Paice

Absolutely.

Parent

Consult. Yeah, but we know how that goes don't we. Let's not. Let's just not go down ...

Judith Westcott

Consult. This last time got you to the change of plans.

Parent

Right.

Judith Westcott

So, the consult at that point could mean.....

Parent

But your idea, consult, your idea is bringing all of them to the main school.

Judith Westcott

It's one option that might...

Parent

So, it is an option then! But you're saying you're keeping the school open.

David Paice

We are. I think, we're trying to think where your anxiety...

Parent

No, it's the wording. I'm not calling you a liar or anything.

David Paice

No, I know you're not.

Parent

I'm saying, what it says here in black and white.

David Paice

Absolutely.

Parent

It says in your most recent proposal and I quote, it says, it states, that Larkrise and St Nick's stay in use until the new provision is ready and it is appropriate for transition to the new site at Rowdeford.

David Paice

Yes

Parent

So that implies to us that children are going.

Judith Westcott

So, we deliberately used the word appropriate there because it might not be appropriate. So, if it's not appropriate, we won't do it.

Parent

But then on, and I hate to say this because we're all in this together, on the Rowdeford newsletter, their latest newsletter which was dated the 6th of September, it actually states that at later date, there will be a further consultation regarding bringing all pupils from the three schools onto the site at Rowdeford by 2023.

Judith Westcott

And that's right. We will consult

David Paice
Consult on it.

Judith Westcott
There will be a conversation about, do we need it?

Parent
But can you see why?

David Paice
Yeah, I do, I do, I do.

Parent
Why we're confused.

Parent
May I ask, may I ask, why do you need to consult on it about putting all pupils there, if this one's staying up? Because that's not true then, you're not going to take all, you're not take all the pupils, you're not taking over all the pupils, listen to the words, ALL the pupils.

David Paice
I get that.

Parent
If it says that, I don't see confusion, does anyone else?

Parent
Why was it not worded all or some? Why, why wasn't it worded that all?

David Paice
There's a degree of

Parent
There's a difference, that's quite black and white, there's no 'or'

David Paice

No, I do, I do understand where you're at.

Parent

(inaudible) proposal.. when the majority of the build is complete...(inaudible) close Larkrise, St. Nicholas schools, not the sites, please explain. It will still be a building site when these kids go.

David Paice

I don't....

Parent

That's in your proposal.

Judith Westcott

What we want to do is to be able to consult at a point when we know more than we do now and we can see more than we can see now.

So, in terms of buildings getting built and knowing a bit more about where the housing is going to be, getting to know a little bit more about how it works out with maybe creating more Resource Bases in local schools and when we've got a bit more knowledge we will get

Parent

You've got a bit more knowledge and then what?

Judith Westcott

We will consult.

Parent

Think about closing this down.

Judith Westcott

But if it's not right, we won't do it.

Parent

Two seconds ago, two minutes ago, you said I can't see this place being closed down.

David Paice

I genuinely can't. So...

Parent

...potentially closing this... is it just me, but I can't, I'm getting confused here.

David Paice

Let me try, cos I don't want you to be confused.

Parent

But it is confusing, you're saying 'I can't see this place being closed down, but potentially it could be'?

David Paice

Yes.

Parent

But this bit here, says "all pupils". I don't know if it's just on my piece of paper, it says "All pupils".

David Paice

Yes.

Parent

No, but you're saying this one is staying open. Why would it stay open if there are no kids here? All the pupils would have gone?

David Paice

No let me try and explain it. Let me try and explain.

Parent

Ridiculous

David Paice

Well, it's not, it isn't.

Okay.

Parent

If you said 'some', then I would accept that. No problem. Because you said the school's too big (inaudible) .

David Paice

So whatever you're comfortable with that.

Parent

I'll be fine.

David Paice

Yeah. OK. OK.

Parent

You put (inaudible)

David Paice

Yes.

Parent

But that's me, that's telling me, that this place is closing down, in the future. And that's what it's telling me.

Parent

It's saying 'possibly closing' but you're also saying 'no, it's not closing'

Parent

You're contradicting yourself.

Judith Westcott

The word "possible" and that's the thing, so, we at this stage.....

Parent

But you said 'no, it's not closing'.

David Paice

I think, I think, I get you. This is where I try and explain and I absolutely do see the contradiction. But let me try and explain to you why you can hold both things. The reality is, there's more demand for places. So hence we'd need more places. That's what the building is all about. We need more places. Committed to doing it, you can't build on either of the two sites, can only build on one site. Is demand going to come down? Probably not. It's probably going to go up.

So, the most likely scenarios you'll need more rather than less. That's most likely. So most likely to reduce overcrowding, you're going to reduce in, an appropriate way, in discussion with yourselves, the teaching staff, the governors to get here down to a more comfortable number of pupils, to reduce overcrowding here.

Parent

Totally agree.

David Paice

So that will be the 'some' bit.

Parent

Right, that's fine

David Paice

That's the most practical, likely scenario, but just in case there are other scenarios, what happens if, because there are other things that are happening or might be happening.

Parent

Like what?

David Paice

The building in Chippenham, that is not definitely going to happen, in terms of the 7000, if it does happen before we get to having up to 400 places, we might go 'hang on, we need another school, over in Chippenham'. So, a possible scenario is to open a new school in the Chippenham area.

So you've got 50 in St. Nick's but we still need more. Another hundred. So, you go, I'll build a school.

Parent

So, you might need more than one school.

David Paice

Yes, that's what I'm saying. So, if that happens, which is not definite but it might happen, we might need another school. Or you go, I might want a brand-new school for all 150 kids.

Parent

Right.

David Paice

So, you go well I'll build a new school with 150 places and then I'll close St. Nicholas down and we'll all move across similarly, that could be the case here, depending on.....

Parent

You're close this one here and build a new one.

David Paice

If there was massive demand in Trowbridge.

Parent

There are no sites, you've looked at 14 places, there's nowhere David, you've looked. That's not even in the ball park, I don't know where you've brought this up.

David Paice

All I'm saying is, it depends.

Parent

It depends, suppose, suppose, let's not do just hypothetical stuff because if we all do that, we're not going to get anywhere.

David Paice

Well, then the non-hypothetical bit is these are going to shrink down a bit and you're going to have more in the centre. Will we need to come back and go, is this new configuration now fit for purpose in light of demand for places at that time? If it is, great! If things have shifted and demand has dropped off in Trowbridge and Chippenham then we can move to a one site solution in Rowde. So, we've got one centre.

Judith Westcott

I think the thing is what we're trying to do is actually not pull the wool over anyone's eyes. So, what we're not going to say to you. Hear me out. What I'm trying not to say is everything's going to be the same forever and a day because that's not the case.

Things will change. And the reason we've put that clearly there is to say in 2023 we will need to talk again. We will talk about what the right options are then. Things will change again but we

don't know what that is yet. We don't have that crystal ball to be able to say we can guarantee it's gonna be like this or like the other.

So, we want to be open with you and say yeah there will be further conversations we need to have. But this is how far we've got-what we know right now is that we're going to build more places and the way we're going to build more places is by bringing the leadership of the three schools together so that they can talk about it together and they can develop that.

Parent

Can I just say something? What I find really hard to believe actually is that you can't find a site anywhere around here that would be appropriate for us, yet, I'm sure you'd managed to find somewhere for a mainstream primary school or mainstream school once say, one's needed. Why are we not given the same priority and importance?

Parent

Because I was reading and I read through a lot of your literature believe me, I was reading through the 2015 to 2020 school places plan and it actually states in there that by 2026 you are going to need more secondary school places. So, you are going to be building a secondary school on the West Ashton.

Judith Westcott

Okay. let me answer this question.

That's true. So... (inaudible) in legislation the DfE put forward and they tell you how much space every child needs depending on whether they have a special educational need or if they don't. So, in a mainstream school which is designed around all the children, the space amount is much smaller than if you have a special school. Per pupil the amount of space per child or young person is a lot less.

Parent

But we're coping with 100 pupils in this school...

Judith Westcott

Let me keep going. So, so then when you have a special school. If a child has autism or social emotional or mental health problems they say it's this much space which is bigger than the space that they give to a mainstream pupil and then they say if a child is non-ambulant. So if a child has complex needs they have wheelchairs, you need this much space. So when we go

looking we have to find a space that's big enough for the spaces that the guidance that is telling us is the right size. And what we haven't got is that space.

Parent

It's more cost effective to have 300 students in this area rather than 50 or 100. That's the difference. You could still have that same area but for less students. Do you understand what I'm saying?

So what, so what she's saying is basically this school here, how many students are there? 101. Right. How many mainstream students could you get on here? You could get 25-30 in each class. Correct? Am I correct or not?

Judith Westcott

I don't know off hand.

Parent

Roughly, just give us some figures, you said it's all about space. So, mainstream students, you get more in, correct? Yeah, yeah, yeah exactly. So yeah, so running the place, still costs the same?

David Paice

No.

Parent

Maybe more with the special needs. Yeah. Yeah. Right. But the space. So, there you go then, there's the problem, it's the cost, not the space. It's not the space.

David Paice

No.

Parent

So, your argument is flawed.

Judith Westcott

No. The conversation we're having was what land could we find to put a special school on.

Parent

No, what the lady said to you, what the lady said to you, you can find land for a mainstream school, but you can't find land for us and then your argument was, it's the space, they take up so much space. That was your argument. But it's not an argument, you can get more people into this school than you can with special needs, you get more mainstream in here, than special needs. Your argument is flawed. You can look to the skies all you want.

(inaudible).

Parent

There're 101 kids in this school. Yeah. In the same space you can have 350 kids in this school. Normal kids, not ours. The point is, the space you're about, the new primary school or another school for 350 kids on. The same space you can put 50 of our kids. For the same price. Exactly.

Judith Westcott

I can see where you're going now .

Helen Jones

Reverse roles? I don't know that there's identified land...

Parent

If you're going to build a new school at West Ashton and it states in your plans for 2026.

David Paice

I don't know about that at all.

Parent

Is this all being recorded?

Judith Westcott

Yeah, so long as you're using a microphone, have you got the microphone over there?

Parent

You're about to build a new school on West Ashton, which is going to be about 5/600 kids. It's in your proposal, it'll be for more than that, it's a secondary school. So, you're talking of 1000+. On the same space of land. Right. You could build the same school for our special needs kids. You could only put 200 in there.

Judith Westcott

What we know is

Parent

It's reversing roles. What we're saying here, you've got what 9 or 10 classrooms here. You could have 300 kids in here not 101. So, if you reverse the role, you can afford to build a new school for normal kids. But you won't build a school for our kids.

Judith Westcott

But part of the issue is the money comes from a different place. So, when we get the.....

Parent

Your developers and you know this, as you're on the same consultation as us. You ask the developers, they give you 10 percent or 15 percent of what they put in towards the kitty and that's supposed to go towards rebuilding the roads or going to build a new school. Why don't you get the money from the developers to put x amount from that 15 percent put towards a special school? Cos, you don't ask, and you haven't got, you need to change your rulings.

Judith Westcott

It costs an awful lot more, so if you work out what it is ...

Parent

Section 106. You need to redevelop and look at that.

Judith Westcott

They do contribute and what we're talking about in terms of inclusion is ensuring that children with SEND do get opportunities and our mainstream schools to be part of those schools and that development has to happen too, so it can't be an either or. So, we can't say you know well mainstream kids don't get a place and the SEND children do.

So, we have to look at all of the needs when we look at the land and having found the land at Rowdeford, it felt like it was worth using that because that was available to us now. When we get to 2023 we'll be continuing to have conversations about what will be available at that point in time and whether we need to build further at that point in time.

Parent

Can I just ask about, David you said you're talking to the three principals together? Which mainstream principals are you talking to about putting Resource Hubs in local mainstream schools? Because that's going to have a huge impact. Essentially you have a huge impact on

the numbers that are needed here. So really until you know how you're going to organize resource hubs locally, how do you know how many children you're going to need on this site?

Judith Westcott

Yes, the heads have been very excited about that, the three heads.

Parent

No, but which mainstream heads have you been speaking to? Which mainstream schools are potentially going to have Resource Hubs?

Judith Westcott

There are a couple of schools on the edge of Trowbridge, outskirts of Bradford on Avon, who are thinking about it. So, there are a number of schools who we're in consultation with at the moment and I don't think it'd be appropriate for me to name them at this point in time because they're still thinking about it. But we've had expressions of interest from at least 15 schools who are all saying that they would like to think about having resource bases and those resources ... No new schools, so schools with new resource bases. So, it's not the existing ones. And we're also talking to schools that already have resource bases about increasing their numbers and those would mean that we have more opportunities for children to be going into those across the county.

Parent

Yeah, I know what it means. What does it mean in terms of numbers? You're making predictions about the numbers you need on each site. How can you do that until you've got resource hubs in place?

Judith Westcott

That's why we're waiting to have a consultation later on because.....

Parent

But you're making projections on numbers now, you're not.

Judith Westcott

No, we've used some predictions, so we've got our, you know, statistics and information as we've got so far to here. And we've tried to have a look as far as we could and say what do we think that will look like? But in reality, we're not always right. So, there are more children move in, more out, remember we've just had the army re basing, you know, birth rates change. So, there are some things that we have to wait until actually these things emerge to know the full

numbers. But we are creating new places all the time. So, I can show you a slide in a moment where we've created new resource bases and we've created about 100 new places this last year in special schools, so we're always increasing and expanding.

Parent

Where have you created these places?

Judith Westcott

I'll show you the slide in a moment. Do you want to do that slide now or shall we come back to it in a moment?

Parent

I personally know of a child, who currently doesn't have a school place because there's no secondary special school place for him.

Judith Westcott

Yeah. So, we can come to that slide in a moment. What would be really helpful, I think, it would really help, if David can talk to you about some of the governance and how the changes are made. Because I think the question you're asking about how do we make that change, is quite important in terms of the role that the head teachers have, and the shadow governing body, so you can hear that bit.

David Paice

Yeah, but you're right there are some things that might mean there'll be less demand for places, if the resource bases are positive.

Parent

And the designation of the schools will change, I mean are you going to have 11-19 on each site? Are you going to have a sixth form site?

David Paice

Then, the next slide will be exactly where we need to go. And so, if I could explain the governance and those decisions which are for the heads now, the governing bodies now, and you as parent carers to influence what you want for this amalgamated school with three sites.

Helen Jones

Can I say that is the difference between us having the Academy's sponsor and having it as a maintained school. So, if you remember that the original proposal was to shut the three

schools, open it on one site and have an academy in. And an academy sponsor which would have just gone and done it. The consultation and the subsequent campaign meant that, you are now in the driving seat. Members modified their proposal. and they said a) they want it to be maintained, so that maintains the partnership with the parents, the governors and the staff. So, it's not determined by a private sponsor. And secondly the only thing that they did determine was that there was going to be a single school, maintained on three sites. Now during the previous May Cabinet meeting, they went out and changed the proposal. When they did that and they changed the proposal, they put in the line about a consultation at a later date when the new site was open. And that is the only determinant on this. So as far as members are concerned they got one school, they got three sites, and at a later date, determined on demand they will look at the data, which is what you are saying. Now what we're actually saying is that the data may say you need a new school or you need a full site or we don't know because we don't yet know what the determination is and what the demand is going to be.

David Paice

I can just give you, I'm sorry to cut across, I think this will help, I think

Parent

I hope so.

David Paice

I've only got a few minutes. If I don't do the governance thing.....

Helen Jones

Yeah, it's worth seeing that.

David Paice

It will be for the shadow governing body to oversee this whole amalgamation across 3 sites concept. So, it's important that you start planning for this shadow governing body phase now. So, I'll be talking to you and your colleagues to think this through so that if it's a green light you confidently go into a shadow governing body to ensure a smooth transition to a fully operational amalgamated school across 3 sites. We need to plan now in order to hit the ground running in January.

The first thing you need to do is get a principal. So this is when you'll be thinking through what is the vision for the New School? What are we doing? Are some of the sites going to be predominantly for primary pupils? Are we going to have secondary provision largely on one site only? You'll have thought that through. As to what you want collectively. So, in a shadow

governing body your governors are going to be starting thinking about this. What provision do you want to see at the current Rowdeford site, what at St Nic's. The Shadow Governing body allows you to come together with an equal representation.

So, the plan is to have a Shadow Governing body from January onwards, through all the way up to at least September of next year, possibly more. In the proposal it says by 2021. And the reason it says by 2021 is that you might not recruit a Principal in time for them to hand in their notice and to start by September 2020.

But if a Principal is recruited in April they could start in September 2020. In which case the New School could start officially in September 2020. Three sites, one school. Might not be though, so if you missed April and you weren't successful, you weren't happy with the candidates and she or he wasn't the person that you were looking for, then that would mean that you couldn't start even if you were appointed and went back out and got somebody in May they still couldn't start till January. So, then that is why you're then going by 2021. But it could be as early as September 2020. So, the shadow governing body makes that appointment.

And that's the key. So, you are in control of what vision you have across the sites and the representation of that is significantly loaded with governors and staff and parents as compared to the local authority. We, as a local authority, are proposing this is your school across three sites. So, in terms of the power to influence that, your voting rights are significantly more in terms of, you know, I want this, I want that. It's predominantly parents and staff here. As well as in Rowdeford, as well as St Nic's, that make that decision.

So not the local authority.

Helen Jones

Or an Academy Sponsor.

David Paice

No. So, you are empowered to do this. That is the key. So that's the bit, I hope it's saying- it's three sites, you're in control of what they do on those three sites, how you move this forward, the curriculum will be worked through, you're empowered to do it. That's your choice then.

Parent

Let me tell you what I think is happening. Right. So, you want to close the three schools, met the campaign, so it got stopped. So, you thought 'right', let's try and backdoor this'. So, what you're doing, is buttering people up, giving them, a little bit and you will bring that in. You will

bring that in later. We know how it works, we know how it works with governments and everything. I'll be surprised if this school's here in three, four years, it'll have houses on it and everything. (muffled) If I'm wrong I'll come and apologize to your face and knock on your door whatever. If I'm right I'm going to knock on your door as well.

David Paice

Fair do's, fair do's! I think I appreciate that too, in terms of it's been a journey and it's not been pleasant at times. So, I absolutely appreciate that. But in terms of how you can manage this and the voting rights of it, I can't see anything other than you knocking on my door and going. "Actually David, you were right".

Parent

Can I just ask then? The 32 million then, the three sites are going to be staying open, is that going to be split across the three sites, the 32million or?

David Paice

That's Capital, the revenue is, it's two budgets. There's money to build stuff.

Parent

Right.

David Paice

You can't build anything here. You can't build anything at St Nic's but you can build....

Parent

But will we still have money to maintain and improve and that still stays open does it?

David Paice

It stays the same, it stays the same.

Parent

Indefinitely? There's no time lapse on that, no time period?

Parent

Until it closes

(muffled)

Parent

Out of that 32 million, where does the Resource Bases come from?

Judith Westcott

Again, that's a separate pot of money.

(Laughter and jokes about having lots of pots of money)

Lots of different pots and they're all ruled by different rules and regulations and they're all allowed to be used for certain things. So, there are some things that we were allowed to spend more on which they won't let us spend on the other one. And so, there is a revenue pot as we say that would keep things going here. But that's not the same pot as the 32 million. It's not the same pot as the one which funds the resource bases.

Can the money be used on a smaller build at Rowdeford, another site in Chippenham and then they could have Ashton Street site for Secondary and use Larkrise for Primary.

Parent

Well, what you've said, in Chippenham, possibly, not definitely, possibly 7000 more houses....

Parent

Say, you know Trowbridge, Trowbridge is getting bigger and bigger and there's going to be more things. So why can't we have the same thing, like you've just said for Chippenham?

David Paice

You would. The only problem with the Ashton Street site doesn't meet the DFE regulations, you cannot build on that site.

Parent

That's what I'm saying here. So, you have to build a separate school separately, on a separate site.

David Paice

Yes.

Parent

But in a different place. That's what I'm saying here. Build a separate school just down the road there. Exactly the same.

Keep primary here and secondary there.

David Paice

But that does not meet the guidelines. That site was looked at. We reviewed 14 sites as part of the previous consultation period.

Parent

Well the guidelines needed to be looked,

Parent

..then, we possibly could build another small school.

David Paice

Yes, you could do. Absolutely.

Parent

But we haven't got the...

Judith Westcott

So, we've got two problems at the moment: one is, land, we would need to find good land to do it on. And the second thing is we'd need to find some extra money. Now we did do that in the south.

Parent

Because you went and asked for that

Judith Westcott

Absolutely and that's what we did in Salisbury. We went (muffled) and we said we can prove there is demand for a new special school and they've given us twelve million to support that school there. When we get to the point about how much demand is going forward, that goes back to that 2023 thing; we might be able to go back and ask for a bit more. We can't do it yet because it won't be based on known demand. But in 2023 we could go back to them and say 'Could we have a bit more?'

Helen Jones

That'll be for the governing body.

Judith Westcott

Absolutely.

Parent

You know how many military are being posted back to the UK. Why don't you ask the MOD for a consensus of how many of those children will have SEND?

Judith Westcott

We have. And they've given us some money. So, the school that was built by Larkhill has a resource base that's going to be considered for it at the moment of which they're going to fund that.

It's for the locality.

Parent

So how many can go to that school?

Judith Westcott

It's a locality. So, you'll be aware the Army's built loads of new houses down there and those houses are primarily for the guys coming back from Germany. But you'll be aware we're also taking some folk from Shropshire as well. And of course, the local community so the school isn't an army school. It's for the whole community, of which significant numbers are of army children.

Parent

(Muffled response).

Judith Westcott

We are.

David Paice

Unfortunately, we're running out of time so could I make the offer to come back and meet with you again at a time that's convenient to you?

Parent

So, just carrying on then really on what you're saying about the schools in their communities and everything that is what it's all about for us we want all children in their communities not just on one site. So, surely what we just talked around makes perfect sense to build extra schools on the three sites because it's just, it's not fair that our children aren't allowed to be amongst their own community and where they're accepted. We've fought tooth and nail over years now

for inclusion, and for people to be accepted and we've come so far and to be just... I know Rowdeford is a beautiful place and it's a lovely site but they're just tucked away, they're away from everybody, they're out of, you know...(muffled talk from parent saying that the local authority wouldn't close and move students from the three mainstream secondary schools in Trowbridge to a remote spot)

Parent

It's all about community. What you just said.

You're not listening, why won't you do it? (more muffled talk)

Judith Westcott

I have to say, we have to call time.

Larkrise School – Staff session

Judith Westcott

Okay. So, thank you all for coming. It really is great that you manage to find the time to join us here so thank you very much. We are at the next stage of the consultation and this is an opportunity to talk about the proposals which have been changed from when you last saw them. But I'm going to leave it to David to explain to you how they've been changed. The bit that I need to say to you is about the recording, so you'll see I'm sitting here with a mic on my lap and we've got a mic here.

These don't amplify the sound it's just so that we can record everything that you say because the decision that is made from this is made by somebody called the schools' adjudicator and he or she gets to hear everything that we've said in order that they can make the right decision going forward. In terms of consent you're all aware of GDPR, by taking the microphone, we're assuming that that is your consent, that you're happy to be recorded. But of course, if we can't record you we can't send the information to the schools' adjudicator, so I hope you are happy with that.

So, is that OK? Could you also signed the sheet going around? That's just so that we can tell the schools' adjudicator who came along so they know that there was good representation. All happy with that bit? If you are happy I am going to hand over to David.

David Paice

Great.

Thanks very much indeed. So, I am going to take you through the legislative kind of stuff we have to do, which guidance. Two bits of that. So, the proposal involves closing three schools, amalgamating those three schools, so opening up the new school which is then amalgamated; three sites, one school, three sites. So, there's some legislation around that and guidance documentation. So, if we can just run through those. That's it. So, on this side, where there is the highlight, that's the main bit that we're focusing on. It relates to opening a new school. We're following the guidance for that. You will see there's a process for it and hopefully you'll see there's a little poster here.

You may already have seen that timeline and I'm going to talk you through how this legislation actually plays out over the next year and then through to the building where it is on 2023. Hopefully we will go through a little bit more detail on that timeline. I'll flick through one more thing. The amalgamation is something that the local authority is proposing. And that's because particularly from a staff perspective we got the message that "we don't want it to be an

academy". We would prefer to keep this maintained. Which from your perspective means that even though there is a change, it doesn't change your terms and conditions at all. TUPE does not apply.

You're doing the same job, with the same employer until told otherwise. So, it is the same. So that should be quite reassuring from a staff perspective. But because we are the proposer in this amalgamation, the next slide please Emily, says that we can't just go "Oh it's a good idea. Staff think it's fine from their terms and conditions, we'll do it". It has to go to somebody else. So, it's completely independent. And as Judith was alluding to I have mentioned the schools' adjudicator. There are about a dozen, six to a dozen people that are schools' adjudicators and they will make that independent call.

They sit outside of the department as well. So, they are completely independent. And what they want is to review the evidence that is before them. So, it is really important that we capture what you have said. Hence, we're doing this and capturing the voice.

We will transcribe it. So, I'm going to ask some questions to get your view on some elements of this timeline. So, we'll be asking questions.

But feel free to ask questions throughout. If that's the way you feel, you want to make your voice known, that is the most important thing here that we really capture that. Just go through to the next one. The reason being is where there is this process to go through to get the proposal through to the schools' adjudicator. We're at a four-week period, it's called representation. And that is your chance as well as other parents, governors, people who live locally, everybody can say what they think about the proposal. And we're in that stage, so about four weeks, in which you can formally say what you feel. And that's really important we have that evidence base. So there's an online survey at the end of this slide that there is the URL for that online survey. But you can go through the Council's website to get to it. But we'll show you that. We'd be really grateful if you could fill that in.

Please take time to make comment. That would be great, if possible. And are you comfortable with that? OK. So, let's relook at the timeline. What we've said is that this is bringing three schools together. Under a single leadership team. So, it will be one principal that will sit across the three school sites-one school three sites. To build on best practice on the three schools.

That's all we're trying to do here. And the key driver is getting more places. So, there is a commitment for 32 million pounds to build new infrastructure with new capital. Buildings. But

only on the Rowdeford site. This site together with St. Nicholas in Chippenham, you have overcrowding here.

And there's no space left to build anything. So, the only place we can build and the capital money is building money, it's not ongoing on staff or operation or painting, this is building money-so that's the 32 million pounds. It is significant, it is coming from the local authority. The capital usually comes from the Department for Education. Based on conditions. So those schools that are in the worst condition get money first but this is, going ahead of all of that and the local authority are funding the thirty-two million pounds.

Part of the reason the local authority is funding the proposal is because they have a responsibility to provide places. And there is clearly a need for more special school places. So, this is part of their ability to put that commitment into practice. That's what they're doing. The part of the proposal is to actually consider how many sites do we actually need going forward.

The plan is to have the site up and ready by 2023, September 2023.

The feasibility study that was part of the proposal, looked at a modularised approach to construction. So, it can be done sensitively in small modules, as it goes year by year. This proposal says we will go out to consultation when everyone can see the spaces that have been created. Once you've got three sites and you've got an additional expansion of the Rowdeford site, we will look consult again on how many sites we want at that time We will consider again whether there is demand for just one site or whatever is the right number at that time.

So, we will consult. It doesn't mean it's going to happen. But it means we will consult on whether having just one site is the right thing to do. If it is, great, if it's not, and I suspect that the demand is likely to remain high with significant additional housing growth in Chippenham from our housing development bid for an additional 7000 houses; that would likely mean more demand rather than less. So, if demand goes up rather than decreases we will go back and consult on what is the right number of sites to meet the demand for places. And it is worth noting that there are other reasons why demand for special school places might reduce. For instance, there is a strong push from the local authority to have greater inclusion into all schools and settings and therefore that would reduce demand.

So, some things could increase demand for places but there's some work to try and reduce the demand for places by enhancing bases, getting greater inclusion into mainstream primaries and secondaries and looking again at the enhanced learning provision in secondaries. If these things work that would take demand down for the schools. That has not started yet. So, Judith

will talk to you about the new strategy going forward but there is a desire to be more inclusive. So, we don't know for sure what the demand will be and will review that very carefully. The proposal is up to 400 places but might not need those 400 places if the wider system becomes more inclusive.

So, we will very carefully look at year by year growth projections to determine exactly what's right. So that's the proposal I'd really like to get is your thoughts on.

On that. Can we try and capture your thoughts on what has been said so far?

Staff

So, can I ask, so you're building new places at Rowdeford, keeping these three sites?

David Paice

Yes.

Staff

Will we continue running under new leadership at this number of pupils, this number on roll. You were saying about us being overcrowded. So how we will manage on the money?

David Paice

By sensitively managing a transition to a smaller more manageable size. We appreciate that this site is currently overcrowded. There is a desire to keep the site but not have as many children here. Which children move, at what transition point, will be the decision for you the staff, the head teachers, so Phil together with Ros, together with Mike.

Together we will be thinking about what is appropriate, which families? Who? Where might children move to when there's space?

There is a desire to give you more space to reduce the overcrowding. But there's absolutely no decision on potential transition arrangements at this stage. But the direction of travel is to reduce overcrowding here. And same on St. Nicholas site to.

Staff

If you've made, you know built this school and the decision is made that some children would stay here and at St Nics, what amount of money are you putting aside for that eventuality?

David Paice

Well you've already got

Staff

As both schools would need to be of an equal quality, wouldn't they?

David Paice

Yes absolutely. So, there are two pots of money. There's a capital money and that's the thirty-two million pounds to build new bricks and mortar type money. And then there's keeping it up. That's an operational pot of money, that's different. So, you will continue to get funding on an operational basis which is separate to the 32 million pounds. So, ensuring that you get the right environment is a decision and there is funding associated with that, but is separate to 32 million pounds. Is that OK?

Staff

No, I'm not quite sure about it. I'm asking, there must be, part of the 32 million pounds to, you know...

David Paice

I understand why you want equity in terms of everybody's got to be treated, you know, you wouldn't want to have children in, who are here to be treated differently to children who go somewhere else. Absolutely. But you have bricks and mortar here. So sensitively looking at the site as you reduce down to reduce overcrowding, there is always operational money in terms of, you know, the painting, the decorations. There's enough money to keep making sure this is a great school.

But you don't have any building. That there's no bricks and mortar required here because you haven't got any space. Quite the opposite really. We're trying to reduce overcrowding. The only place you get bricks and mortar, new physical bricks and mortar is Rowdeford. So, it's a separate pot.

Staff

So, all the new children that need education now, will go to Rowdeford.

David Paice

No. No.

Judith Westcott

It's quite a careful question. I think it would be helpful for David to run through the slides for you about how that decision making happens going forward. So, there's lots of decisions about which children go where and when. Conversations about when the new starters start, where do they start, where should they go? David can explain to you a bit about the governance then you'll see how the decision making will go forward because it changes as you move through the process.

David Paice

Yes. In which case I'll jump a couple of slides. OK. So, September we're in this consultation process. October, we'll have to pull a paper together that captures everything that you've said. We will take this to the Cabinet. They will want it ahead of that time. It'll be November therefore before it is presented, and they will make a decision as to whether it moves forward.

Assuming Yes. And they were comfortable enough to put 32 million pounds in previously, so one might assume that they're still comfortable with that unless they're hearing lots of negative things and this time, so the proposal now is all three sites stay open. But the expectation is that we can now come to a proposal that is acceptable to everybody. One school. three sites. Thirty-two million pounds for new capital investment, same ongoing revenue costs that come in with it with the children. One would assume; therefore, the cabinet goes 'yes', 'we are happy with this'. They don't have to, but let's assume they do. The proposal then has to go to an independent schools' adjudicator. So, the very next day after the Cabinet meeting the proposal will be sent off to the schools' adjudicator. We hope to hear back in six weeks, shortly after Christmas.

We hope to get the green light from the Schools' Adjudicator from January. Between now and then there is a process to this proposed amalgamation in terms of governance.

All this year, it's business as usual. Your governing body will continue to manage the school.

What you will be asked to do though is to engage with the governance of the New School in terms of the shadow governing body, getting ready, for the one school. This will involve considering the vision for the new school, what journey do you want to go on in order to get there and what resources, particularly human resources will be needed to realise this vision for the New School.

So, we've gone for a single unified leadership team with a single principal or CEO that we hope to appoint in time for them to start in September 2020. This means the Shadow Governing Body will need to have created and agreed a job description for the person they want to lead the New

School on the journey to the vision you all aspire to. There is not much time to do this. Indeed, we need to advertise the position by February 2020.

It will be important to reflect on who you want to represent you on the Shadow Governing Body. You can have an election, or you can nominate governors. But that's a decision for you as a school to take. There will be the same number of people on the staff governing body from each school. So, the head of each school and another staff member. A parent representative. That's three governors from each school. Then there's one Local Authority. That brings the total to 10 governors. And then there are people that you can call upon that might have a particular skill you feel would help establish and run the New School. You probably have lots of learning experience. One or two of your governors might be lawyers so you might draw on them for legal advice and guidance. For other experience that you don't have you can co-opt governors on to the Shadow Governing Body. So, you look at the skill set of the people from the various schools that are going onto the governing body and see what gaps, what might we need.

And in addition to that, think through which governors have capacity to turn up to the meetings all the time. That's the normal governing body meetings and now the shadow governing body meetings. For those with less time availability there may be specific things committees that you want to influence the full governing body for their consideration. And that is where you can have associate members too. So, there's a bit of a way to go for you to think about what you want from the shadow governing body. What I'm putting here is purely a suggestion, so you can see the nature of it, but you don't have to stick to those numbers.

That is just coming as best practice from the governing team from the local authority. So, you can change it. And that's a decision for you, with colleagues in the other schools. But it gives you the power to say right we're going to recruit the principal that we want. And it's the terms of reference of what this new school is about. That's what the shadow governing body will pull together. So, a lot of power and control moving this amalgamation forward relies in the shadow governing body.

Once we have got to September, then we're into a new start. The principal is in place or might be. Once the principal is in place then you're actually in the new school. So, we could have a new school in place still on the three sites but doing exactly what you want it to do. You will want to consider how you can reduce overcrowding here, what arrangements might be appropriate if children are to transition to different sites. What the curriculum is going to be. Much of the wriggle room for managing this change in a physical sense is on the Rowdeford site. That is your site, now. So, working with colleagues you will think well what are the best learning experiences for the children? Rowdeford at the moment does not have a sixth form. You do.

Rowdeford does not have primary, it's a secondary school. So, they will be looking to your skills and expertise to say what is the appropriate way forward. And you want to gradually think that through with, you know, your children and your families, what's appropriate? Do any of them want to think that might work for me?

Some of the families here might be coming from the east and might live more over towards Devizes. That might be something that your families would be interested in in the short term.

Staff

So, to clarify the school's decision is to decide which children transition to the new site. My worry is that's a bit of a lottery project . To say hypothetically you have lots and lots of parents, well say all of them...

David Paice

Hypothetically....

Staff

No, I don't want my child to go. What happens then? As a lot of accountability for schools.

David Paice

The initial decision is we need more places. So we have the capacity to build more on Rowdeford. But by 2023. So regardless of this amalgamation, I'm working with Ros and Phil and Mike, to say, well we know that demand is going up. We have this proposal to get capital money to do more. But even if this amalgamation does not come through we still have to accommodate those children. So, we'd still need more places. What can we do by 2020 which is not long. We need to be able to increase places. Do we put mobiles? We can't put mobiles here. We can't put mobiles on St Nic's. We could put mobiles on the Rowdeford site. It's not very easy to do because there are badgers there and we have to go through more planning. What we potentially could do is look at regardless of the amalgamation we might be able to refurbish some of their space and that we could free up.

So, we have to do something regardless of this to accommodate all of the children. Next year as I understand it, is that all of the children if they were to stay here would mean that you have no space at all for the reception class. So, year zero could not come here, unless there is a movement. And either you collectively across the three say no, no one can come here, they're going to have to go somewhere else. Well that might then mean, if that were the case, that the only reception places that we have available would be on a Rowdeford site. As that's the only space.

Staff at Rowdeford haven't taught reception so they'll say, 'help us do reception', if that's the right scenario. We know what kids are going to come through. We've got two bits of wriggle room on Rowdeford. What can we do. How do we maximize that? And that is your decision collectively, you know the kids. You know all the kids that might transition. Is it appropriate to do so? Is it appropriate from the perspective of their parents because the parent carers would need to consider that too?

So, this is a collective professional decision with and for parents and carers but with the constraints that we have. And that's nothing to do with the amalgamation. That's just what we would be doing now and we're actively thinking about what we do in preparation for September 2020, what do we do for 2021 and at the same time we have the potential for this amalgamation and a significant capital build that enables us to dream. And that's absolutely what we're looking at. So, this is the formal bit of getting to that vision. Informally we know we've got to do something anyway. And that's going on regardless, they sort of zigzag into each other, because that's part of it. Does that help?

Staff

So, in theory we could still end up with 3 sites then?

David Paice

You definitely will, no theory about it. You have three sites, that is the proposal. All three sites stay open. This site stays open, St Nicholas stays open and Rowdeford is expanded on. The proposal is to reduce overcrowding so instead of having 101 kids here, you would be looking sensitively to reduce that to what is an appropriate amount. It's going to be 75 or whatever it is, you'll know what an appropriate environment for your kids is and it's just that it was built for half of the current numbers. We know you do a tremendous job in an environment that's actually quite constrained.

Staff

Yeah. We know it's been overcrowded for years and years. But what everybody was feeling so passionately about, when the proposal first came out was, it seemed like you wanted to go to Rowdeford and you would close the other two schools.

David Paice

That was the proposal and you very articulately and very passionately said that was the wrong solution. People have listened and that is no longer the proposal.

Staff

But part of the proposal is that, at a later date, consult about going to one site.

David Paice

Yes.

Staff

So, it isn't a 'forever' plan, is it to keep the three schools?

David Paice

No, there's a probability and an aspiration to keep this site. We hope that we would keep it. Because you made a very articulate point about localities. There are other things afoot which is also happening about localities.

So, there's the enhancement being more bases in primary. Looking at the potential to do the same sort of thing in secondary. Now if that happens that's when the demand would go down. If, and it hasn't happened yet, but that is what they are looking at now. Meetings with the heads were around how we might move that forward. It's very early days. So, we don't know, but if that works then actually we will be in a different situation including provision for special education in localities. Seemingly though demand is going much higher, so that might mean that you might need more.

So, the proposal here which stems kind of from where things were. It was one, well now it's three. But we would still like to revisit, if other things happen, we might only need one. Might. Might not. Might need more. So, we know that there are significant drivers, particularly in Chippenham because that's where 7000 additional houses are potentially going to be built. So that will skew the figures significantly and therefore we might need more schools.

Judith Westcott

I think the bit that we wanted to be very clear about and that is we're saying the three sites will stay open. But what we can't tell you is, we haven't got the crystal ball which will tell us in four years' time whether that's still the right thing to do. And I think that's where our cabinet wanted to step back and say we need a few things to pan out. We need things to work through, but we're very committed to reviewing again at that point in time so they're clearly saying they're not wanting to say to you it's completely off the table we're never thinking about that again. But what they're saying is that they want more information, more understanding. They want to know more about what happens to demand and then they will look at it at that point in time; but they're making no decisions at this point in time and they're very clearly saying at this point in

time we think it's right to keep all three sites but there's only one place we can build in order to get the extra places and that's at Rowdeford

Staff

I continue to be desperately concerned that all this meeting has talked about so far is numbers and location. What you're not addressing is the fact that we are two sites with severe and complex needs and one with moderate learning difficulties. And you can build on Rowdeford but what you haven't explained is how are they going to meet the needs of the young people that should be coming to these two sites.

David Paice

Yes, and that is not for me to, oh sorry does someone else have a question? Okay. So yeah, I am not suggesting that I have the blueprints. It's not for me to do so. Working with Phil, the Head, Mike, Ros, the governing bodies, yourselves, you'll have a view as to what's the right way of supporting children across three sites. So, you got the same children you've now got three sites. Now in terms of inclusion, you would hope that some of those children that have not got as complex care requirements might be included in some of the enhanced provision that's going to go forward. Therefore, they might not need to go to Rowdeford. So, the idea is to have additional capacity to support, in particular, those with complex care requirements the MLD students that come here. That absolutely is key.

But how we transition to that is decision for you collectively to make...

Judith Westcott

And I think it goes back to the training, the CPD, the experience and ...

Staff

Skills that...

Judith Westcott

Absolutely.

David Paice

I agree.

Judith Westcott

And so, you were just sort of saying that, so for the mic, that there are skills to be developed and I absolutely agree with you. Which is why we're not doing this overnight. And that's why the

heads are starting to talk about things now to start talking about how do you create that experience? How do you create that knowledge? How do you build up those skills so that when we get to the point when children are needing all those places that everybody has the skill set going forward? And we're very clear that we as the local authority can't shape that or design that it will be down to the senior leadership team and the governing body behind them to be able to create that process going forward.

Staff

I want to say two things. There are children in mainstream primary schools, in resource bases at the moment, and I actually think their needs are not being met because they're not in the right place. They should be in a special school. So that's one point. But also going back to what you said about the large amount of houses being built in Chippenham. When I asked Wiltshire Council why Larkrise was not receiving section 106 agreement money from the massive amount of houses being built, I was told that you do not ever presume that a special child was being housed in a housing estate. So, I'd like to know what changed legislation when now you do think that way and where is that change. And what happened?

David Paice

I'm not sure where that's come from.

Staff

I did ask and a counsellor told me that.

Judith Westcott

So, the rules in terms of developing that 106 money as you rightly say when housing developers now build housing estates, they have to put a proportion of money to the infrastructure that goes round it. So, the things like the libraries the shops the roads

Staff

Though it's never been given to a special school but now it is.

Judith Westcott

So, what we're saying is collectively that money is made available for all the things that go forward and that includes schools but because a special school doesn't just meet a town's need or any estate needs a special school is meeting an area's need. We have to collectively put together 106 money if we're going to take it forward and the other problem is it's not enough at any one time in order to be able to build that.

So, this 32 million - we would never have derived 32 million in order to create the number of places out of Section 106 money. So that's not possible in that sense but it will be contributing along the way to, for example resource base places, that come as part of mainstream schools. So, for example some of the new schools that are being built at the moment are considering having resource bases and that money would be included within that scope but special schools come from a separate fund that the DfE give. So, we've just recently bid for a special school down south and we've got 12 million from the DfE to build a school. So, it's very much about the rules and the way the money can be applied and the practicalities of how much money you can get together at any one time. Sorry Helen.

Helen Jones

This is not section 106 money. So, it's not.

Staff

We are talking about the amount of houses being built in Chippenham which I presumed was what you were thinking of the in future weren't you?

Helen Jones

Yes. But we would necessarily think of using the Section 106. Because I think what David's trying to articulate is that if we looked at projected demand and the argument as to whether there should be one site two site three sites or four sites, we know that there is going to be increased demand. So, members made the decision not to shut any sites because they didn't know what the demand was going to be. If these seven and a half thousand new homes were being built so that's it. I think it's fair to make assumptions that there will be children with special needs in those homes.

Judith Westcott

The main thing is it's a different budget though. So, in terms of Section 106 our estates department have to put a bid forward for this additional infrastructure money which enables houses to be built by developers.

If they were successful we would then be able to go back to the DfE and put in an application and say because of this, we might need to build an additional special school to support that bigger demand. But that pot is a separate pot and it's a bided for pot. So when we put in our bid for the school in Salisbury because we could see demand growing in Salisbury we bid against, I think it was 80 other local authorities, who also said that they would like some money and only 48 of those projects were successful going forward.

So, it's a different process but clearly we looked to our housing department to say can you tell us what is going to potentially happen in the future in terms of knowing where we should be thinking about building?

Helen Jones

It's also important to remember that the operational bill for funding for new school has to be paid in those circumstances by the local authority not out of a free school budget . So what members have said is that they can't anticipate what demand is going to be. But also, I think primarily they listened to the argument that parent carers, families were giving that they did not want these two the two sites to shut in Trowbridge and Chippenham. So as David said at the beginning is what they've said is that we're not going to shut those sites which had been what their original proposal was. They're going to keep them open.

And then when the new places are built it will be for the principal, the head and the leadership team and yourselves and the governing body to look at what your demand is and how many sites you need. And indeed, for us it's the local authority to identify whether we need more provision.

David Paice

Is that okay?

So, your schools will continue to run separately, in addition you will have the shadow governing body. It's going to be made up equitably from the three schools. It then gets into one school. So that makes one shadow governing body, three schools, actual governing body, one school. So, the suggestion here for the actual governing body is to have five people on it, and in this proportion. So only one principal or CEO or whatever the role will be but only one of those. Only two parent governors. One staff governor. And one local authority. You have to have those five and that proportion and then two others to be Quorate, so that's seven as a minimum. So, many schools have more than that but that's the minimum. So, the suggestion here is that you consider 4 co-opted governors. You could have more. But that's a starting point for you for your consideration. So, it will go from the slightly larger number of staff, because of the three Heads to one, so slightly smaller. But this is the governing body that actually moves the whole school forward because it is unified. You've now got these three sites you need to be thinking about the curriculum that runs across those three sites and begin to make that more cohesive in an appropriate way to release a bit of space here. As we said sensitively coming from 101 down to a more manageable size here and ditto over in St Nic's but in a negotiated way that the parent carers feel is good. And also, that we can accommodate on the Rowdeford site so working very sensitively with which buildings, where, at what time.

So, we need a master plan for the whole site of the up to 400. Architects will work with you here and at St Nic's to shrink well. They will also draw up plans for up to 400 there on the Rowedford site. How you manage that is why the unified and integrated team is key because you're now unifying three sites to be able to manage the increase in demand but also the reduction of overcrowding here. That's your decision. That is what the governors will be asking the leadership team to deliver.

And for you to be able to then teach the kids in in this way in an appropriate way you will choose the curriculum. That's for you to consider. So that's the timescale for that. There's only one local authority governor up there. The rest are staff, parents. It's your school. So, you have the power to do what you wish with the thirty-two million pounds of capital money in a way that suits your children your families.

And that is the proposal to take forward now. Any thoughts?

Staff

Redundancies. If we are running one school obviously we don't need 3 lots of everything. Is there a time frame for that?

David Paice

No. In reality there are unlikely to be redundancies for the vast majority. You won't have three heads, but it doesn't mean that you won't necessarily need the three individuals. That again is going to be discussed as to who's going to be doing what. What jobs need to be required. So, in the first instance there needs to be an agreement around what is the vision that we have for three sites for children and young people with complex and severe learning difficulties. What is that vision? What are we holding to in terms of inclusion and it's very outward reaching as well. So, it's not just about coming in. It's about supporting the inclusion agenda too. That needs to be articulated, agreed upon. Because then you'll have, that's the vision, that's the mission that we have. What jobs therefore do we need? Who do we need to do those jobs hasn't all been fully specified. But clearly, you'll be doing very similar jobs to the jobs that you do now and there's no change in your terms and conditions.

But from a leadership perspective, that that is going to be different. So, I think, will there be some redundancies? Possibly, that's more likely to affect Phil, Mike or Ros because there'll only be one principal whereas there are three at the moment. Administration too, there's a potential for shared services there. How that will operate, which jobs, who could do them, also needs to be considered. But this is an expansion. So, there will be more children, more jobs need to be done. So, it's increasing numbers, increasing demand for your skill sets.

So, the redundancy issue here is we're not reducing demand. We're kind of going, we need more rather than less. But it might be that while the jobs that are required might mean I don't want to do that. Okay so that's a restructure. There's no TUPE here but the jobs that will be required might be different, particularly from Phil's perspective because there's only one principal. So, I think of all the people that's going to affect the most, Phil is one of the most exposed to change. But it doesn't mean there's not necessarily a role that Phil might wish to apply for. He might want to go for the Principal role. If so great. Great.

Judith Westcott

Before Phil goes on can I just say we've got a couple of people extra in the room and I just need to make sure that you're comfortable. This is recorded. So, if you choose to go on mic by holding the mic you are giving your consent to be recorded so I just need to ensure that everyone is aware of that.

Do go ahead Phil.

Phil Cook

Just thinking about the governance and sorry I had to go into another meeting. We have 2 parent governors, one staff governor-I know this is a point where it's one school.

David Paice

Yes

Phil Cook

But it's actually three sites, and the legacy is three schools.

David Paice

Yeah.

Phil Cook

The biggest school where you've got the most votes would be Rowdeford. I'm not suggesting any wrongdoing here, but it could be just because that's got the greatest numbers, parent governors end up coming from Rowdeford, the staff governor ends up coming from Rowdeford.

Judith Westcott

I think you're gonna have to think very carefully around how you want to dynamically become three in one. I think one of the temptations is going to be to keep wanting to do one from here,

one from there, one from there and one from there and some of that you're going to have to think about-how does that really work in terms of developing the skill set across the whole site? So, you're going to have to make choices as you get to that point in terms of understanding how you make it work. And I think you're kind of only going to know that as you experience it which is why again you have a shadow governing body. So, there's lots of opportunity to talk about how does this work.

Phil Cook

I'm not suggesting it's an unresolvable thing, it's more of a comment. And with the three sites something particularly around TA roles, when you become one school and you know somebody might have a very strong association in terms of locality to one site; could they be directed to another site because actually where you're going to need the biggest change is Rowdeford as you're suggesting round MLD moving more into the mainstream and the PMLD/ SLD moving there. But the expertise for that is on the other two sites.

David Paice

Yeah absolutely. And again, I think that does need to be handled very sensitively but that is a decision for yourselves. But in terms of 'can we be forced?' No, your terms and conditions are the same, that's the benefit of being local authority maintained. It might be that we need to look at a potential restructuring. If you think we need to do different jobs to realise the vision of a unified school, then it is possible to consider a potential restructure. But that doesn't affect your terms and conditions in the same way as TUPE.

Helen Jones

And I don't know what your terms and conditions are, but when I was a teacher although I wasn't with this local Authority, my terms and conditions were certainly that I taught in a particularly named school. My terms and conditions now as an Officer are, I'm supposed to be based at County Hall but there is a clause that they could move me wherever they want.

But my understanding is, is that teachers' terms and conditions are related to the physical aspect of the school.

Phil Cook

So, the site, not the school. So, it can be a three-site school, but you're tied to a site, right?

Helen Jones

We need to check that out.

Phil Cook

Particularly around TA roles.

Judith Westcott

So as far as HR are concerned you can move that forward, as you go forward. So, when you recruit new staff you might want to recruit on different terms and conditions, in terms of going forward but you can't, obviously, you need to work through bit by bit in terms of the restructure so we're identifying the principal bit needs to be sorted out with the governing body. Then you'll want to look at your SLT senior leadership team and then you might want to look at your staffing going forward but you can only do that within the terms and conditions that you have available at that point in time.

Staff

Going by all of this that is happening, I've worked at Rowdeford and I now work at Larkrise. Rowdeford it is a secondary school, as we all know. But there are secondary school teachers here. We all teach one class with one group of children. Whereas they are specifically English, French. They've got their subject areas. How is that going to work, again talking about my students and the different styles of children, the different types. You're saying it comes back down to us. But with Rowdeford again being the bigger site, with their staff going to want to do one thing for their children, obviously, but our children like Dance Classes Key Stage 3, 4. They wouldn't want to be in a mainstream or mainstream class. That's a lot, you keep putting it back to us to discuss as groups. But that's a heck of a lot for those children and for us.

Staff

You know you've got this brilliant idea about all these schools being three sections and different places.

Judith Westcott

We're not going to leave you alone, so we're not just going to say off you go, and we won't help you. One of the main reasons we went for having a maintained school was we could keep working together and if we'd gone for an Academy it would have been an Academy Trust who would have come in and said we're going to do it like this or do it like that. The advantage of the maintain school is we can work together, and we can have lots of conversations with the SEND leadership team, you know with the education department, so we can work through that bit by bit. It's the other reason again why David is wanting and is starting to engage with our head teachers now because it's really a lot to talk about. There really is a lot to talk about and how we move that forward gently in a way that works for all of us. So, we all know we can do change.

But the one thing we don't want is for it all to happen overnight. And I think that's the bit where we keep having to have the conversation.

And I think we'll work it through. But I'm not going to tell you that it's straightforward.

Staff

Can I ask, do you know of any other schools that have done something similar? And can I have access to the research that you have about this model?

David Paice

Yeah. I mean, I think, I think because as I understand it, you went to Three Ways in Bath. So, say quite close. Three schools have come together that they're all amalgamations that take forward. Very happy to organise trips to kind of learn from those that have gone through things that went really well, things didn't go quite so well. And I think having, you know, that I'll feed that through, it's a conversation with Phil, Mike, Ros. So, what's going to work for you, to think how do we make the very best of this? Absolutely, we can organise that.

Staff

So, is your research Three Ways school?

David Paice

No, I came into this and captured a lot of the research that was done to suggest this route forward but also part of the proposal is listening to you. So.....

Staff

So, is there research about your model that we're...?

David Paice

It's not my model.

Staff

Who devised it then?

David Paice

On the back of listening to the requirements, we know we need places.

So, there's some drivers are around, we need places. Some drivers are around actually we want to have a real

Staff

Are we winging it then?

Judith Westcott

No, no, no. Please, please don't feel that way. So, we have a scrutiny group as well at the Council and they went and did some of the visits as well.

Staff

To Three Ways?

Judith Westcott

They went to Three Ways, they went up to Shropshire as well.

Staff

Can you tell me the school they went to in Shropshire?

Judith Westcott

I can't remember the name.

Staff

I would really like to know.

Judith Westcott

It's all in it's in the cabinet report. OK. So, you can read the cabinet report.

They were closer. Yeah.

They did slightly something slightly different. And I mean if we, if you go around the country, of course there are Multi Academy Trusts all over the country now, who are bringing together the senior leadership teams, in order to take forward the education. So, there are lots of different working models, but I think equally so, we've got to find our own understanding of what is going to work for us here. As you say every circumstance is unique.

You know however much you look at what other people have done, at the end of the day you have to say how do we build it here? And you know David and I've been having long conversations about how do you make it work? But at the end of the day, we are the support, to enabling you to do it.

Staff

I think the main thing that we don't feel is right, is that it's away from the community. And so, you know.

Judith Westcott

The school's staying open, so what's away from the community?

David Paice

This one stays open.

Staff

It's staying open? For how long?

Judith Westcott

You missed the earlier part of the conversation. The earlier part of the conversation, is that we're not closing this place.

Staff

Okay, so how long do they stay open for?

David Paice

As long as is required.

Staff

So, we do have to move some children onto the Rowdeford site? So, we're going to have that as the main site and this school and St Nic's and Exeter house.

Staff

Say, if there are less children, will that mean less money then? (inaudible... remark about state of building) falling to bits in places, it's a bit more than just a lick of paint that's needed to be honest. So, less children, less money or?

David Paice

No, you get, you get an operational budget but then people will look at the condition of sites from an operational perspective and ensure that we do the very best job we can, within a funding envelope.

It's purely that the, in this proposal, there's bricks and mortar as well that are required but then absolutely, we want to ensure that all of those three sites are great. That's for sure. The idea is to give fantastic education for all children and young people with special education needs and disabilities in northern Wiltshire. So, the desire, you have got three sites, we want all of the three sites to operate brilliantly.

How they operate and how they will be maintained will be a decision for the integrated leadership team to take forward with a budget that they have across three sites. It is one school on three sites and the head and the leadership team will be held to account to ensure that they are brilliant.

Staff

(Inaudible comment about 'transport') You could have a situation, where there is a child that lives around the corner from St Nic's, but perhaps this is the school that accepts her, I don't know. They would have to get on a bus.

Judith Westcott

They do now. Right, right now, kids go all over the place. And that's exactly what will continue by keeping three sites open. But of course, if we've got more universal service across the three, if that's the decision that is made by the senior leadership team and the governing body.

Staff

(another inaudible comment about transport and the Passenger Transport team at County Hall).

Judith Westcott

They provide the transport and for every child who has an EHCP it is assessed whether they need support with their transport in getting to school. But how we work that out and choose the choices that parents make going forward. It may be that parents in the future who live very close to Devizes might say, actually I'm really chuffed, I can now go to the Rowdeford site rather than come into Larkrise. And there will be other parents who live close here say I'm really glad that means I can stay here and go to Larkrise, but they may make other choices.

So, they may, I mean, conversations we had with the parents over at St. Nic's yesterday. They were talking about how they really like the fact that, under the one leadership, there were new opportunities for them to think about what, what decisions they made for their children.

Staff

When will we know about the staff restructuring, infrastructure? Because actually, that worries a lot of people. We're still going on, we're still trying to move forward with things.

Judith Westcott

So, if you follow David's timeline, what we know is that the earliest we could have a principal in place would be this, this time next year. And it may be that, in terms of writing all these job descriptions, the vision and all the rest of it, it takes a bit longer and it might take a bit longer in terms of getting somebody appointed. So that's the very earliest. When they're in place it will be their job then to work with the governing body to say, what does our senior leadership team look like? And we haven't put a timeline for further than that.

So, they might take six months doing that. They might take a year doing that and they might choose to have considerations about asking the heads in the schools. Could you keep going for a little while longer until we sorted that bit out. So those are decisions that need to be made once we've got the decisions made around the principal, the shadow governing body and the actual governing body in place. I guess though in terms of your peace of mind we don't want to hang around forever. There comes a point where it would be nice for you guys to say yeah, we've done that bit, now we're all moving forward, and we know what we're doing.

Phil Cook

Will the new school be in existence from January?

David Paice

No, from this time next year. You can't have a new school...

Helen Jones

At the earliest.

David Paice

At the earliest, this time next year.

Staff

So, I've heard a lot of it's teacher led, it's SLT led, it's teacher led, we support you, we support you, we support you but who at the Council takes accountability for, who has the expertise to say, that it's acceptable for a child to spend a major chunk of their time at school travelling by bus whereas it might not be every child and is selective and it may be decided that this particular child goes to Rowdeford. Why is that okay for that child to spend so much longer than others?

And why is it okay for children to be limited in their community experience by being in the middle nowhere?

Staff

And why, why is that a decision for SLT and teachers to decide which children?

David Paice

You know the children and the families the best. So, you would you speak with them all day, every day, and that's fantastic. So, we would look to you as experts, as the professionals with the most knowledge and understanding.

Staff

But every child has access to their local community...

Judith Westcott

Every child has a SENCO in the school, who has some role in looking at that, every child has a SEND lead worker identified with them.

They get an annual review. So, it's not a simple matter of your senior leadership team saying you, you and you. It has to be done in consultation with parent carers. It has to be done looking at their goals that have been identified within their EHCP. It needs to be looked at in terms of the curriculum that you can take forward here and in the other schools. So, it's not an easy decision in terms of somebody just saying, "oh well, you know, that'll make, that'll fit". It will take time to work through and that will have to be worked through in terms of the build as well.

So where are the timescale in which we can make those moves as well. But you're certainly not going to be able to do that from a position of just sitting here now. We have to work that through, year by year, term by term. So, the right decisions, at the right times, with the families, with the children, with yourselves, with your governing body etcetera. It's that... not quite...

Staff

My concern also is, is that if you have a significant chunk of parents who say "no I don't want my child to leave" you're still taking the decision out of the parent's hands, whether it's the school itself or it's a SEND lead worker. It's still not a parent's decision and it's still out of the community.

David Paice

The legislation is, gives, the primacy to the requirement from the parent's perspective. So, there's lots of protection, legal protection around the child and the parent carer. If they don't feel that that's appropriate and doesn't make reasonable adjustments for their child, then they can challenge that. That's their protection. But clearly, we want to support the child, we're not trying to be belligerent or difficult. But everybody here wants the very best for children and young people. So, we would be discussing that.

And when you create that plan, the parent carer and the child's voices is primary. You're wrapping services around their requirements and they have to be empowered to feel that they own that decision. We support that. You will be very much part of that plan. So, I am hoping that that is the case.

Staff

So, we could end up with still 100 children here, as nobody will want to leave.

Judith Westcott

Somebody has said they think that we might end up with 100 children here.

David Paice

Yes, that, well, if that was deemed appropriate and we hadn't got a really attractive vibrant facilities for those parent carers particularly over in the east, who might think, we've talked about transport, could go I only really want to be here and I'm happier, then that might be the case but that's not what parents and carers have told us. And last night, I was with a parent last night, who actually said I am having to travel, so for me it's good. I'm actually interested in, can you support, you don't have sixth form at Rowdeford but I'm interested in that. How are you going to support them and to facilitate something which is more local for me? So, we're listening to you.

You want locality based provision and therefore, for some, the locality of Rowde is going to be beneficial and therefore if what you've been saying is that's going to be a driver then one would imagine that a proportion of children that come here at the moment might be better suited to an opportunity that's put in place appropriately for them but in Rowde as opposed to in Trowbridge.

Staff

I think what I'm trying to say is, a lot of our children have access to the community, they walk to soft play, they walk to the parks, they walk to the shops, there isn't that facility in Rowde. So, they'd have to be then put on transport again, to go out for part of their curriculum, their community curriculum. Yes, swimming, horse riding, we've got, we are lucky in our environment what we've got now, and I think a lot of our parents wouldn't want our children to go to Rowde

where they haven't got those facilities. Yes, they'll have a lovely new building which is great. Absolutely and it's that community and curriculum that we really pride ourselves on here.

David Paice

And that is a key strength. So that is why the site is here. But the issue is there may well be more children and people who want to come here. It's impossible to put any more children here because particularly next year, everybody will stay, and you might get another eleven children come to reception and you go we have no 11 spaces, we're reaching the corridor now, we haven't got it that way. But we are aware that there's overcrowding here-we want to do something about that. So, we need to sensitively say to the more people who want to come here we have no space, but we will work to ensure that the same great magic you do here will be done on Rowdeford site. So please be assured parent carer that we will do our best for you to replicate what we do here, there. That's what we're looking for.

Judith Westcott

There are some really hard choices about how we're going to meet need immediately. So, David and I are reasonably comfortable when we look at 2023 and we've got 400 places at Rowdeford, about how you could work together to develop that. But, we are worried about next year. We are worried about how we will get to 2020, 2021, 2022 to be able to move that forward. And that's again why we wanted to bring you together because that's not something the local authority should figure out on their own. That's something we should be working with you to understand how we develop that which is why we then sort of said this decision about amalgamating schools was so important to enable to you to have that shared voice. So, I am aware...

David Paice

We're just short of time. You've got governors coming in. Could I just take this question and then could we, I'm very happy to come back, if you can find something before the end of September.

Very happy to come back but we will have to cut it short pretty quickly.

Staff

I just have one question, it's a comment really about the single school governing body and that's what I'm most concerned about at the moment. Because if we are all inputting into it but by next September there's only gonna be one staff governor from the three schools and that doesn't seem enough, it's a suggestion.

David Paice

Yeah totally. That is purely a suggestion.

Staff

Who decides then, if it's a suggestion

David Paice

You collectively...Yes...

Helen Jones

The shadow governing body.

Staff

Right. With three, with six staff governors

David Paice

Yeah but that's my suggestion. If you feel that is not appropriate. Absolutely. That's exactly why we want this information. I just put a suggestion there for discussion.

Staff

It doesn't seem enough input from us.

David Paice

Great, that's really helpful. Thank you. Thank you.

Judith Westcott

So, I'm standing at the back, but I'm going to say a huge thank you. Thank you so much for coming again and spending the time with us. You really have made a difference and you need to remember how much you have changed to how much you've developed thinking by constantly having this conversation with us. Thank you for coming and this is the web address and I'm sure Phil has circulated this as well. So, if you would like to put something forward to us as David said we're happy to come back again. But in the meantime, you can go onto this Web site and you can go to the online survey and put your thoughts together there.

Staff

Sorry, this is not a question... I think xxx's there doing the same thing as I am, you're talking about children here. It's not about buildings. You could talk about bricks and mortar. Build a bricks and mortar school in Larkrise which was going back to right to the beginning, is what we all discussed in the first ever meeting, we never wanted to lose Larkrise as a school, we didn't

want to lose St. Nicholas as a school. I don't know what Rowdeford wanted. They're obviously getting the best deal out of us all. But it's the children.

Staff

And it comes back to them. We are not doing what we are doing. Everybody is talking about what the future is going to bring. What about these children? It does not seem to be about the children. The children need their communities, build a school in their community... (inaudible) as we all said in the very beginning (inaudible) I don't think that you are listening to us, really.

Judith Westcott

Thank you

Staff

Sorry, it's from the heart.

Larkrise School – Governor session:

Judith Westcott

By taking the mic and being recorded, you were giving your consent in terms of GDPR, that this is information that you are OK about being sent on to the Schools' Adjudicator. Yeah. You all happy with that?

All

Yeah

Governor

Given that we know how short an hour is and the fact that we have (muffled) feedback already (muffled dialogue - Governors have brought prepared questions). I've got four sheets of paper in front of me. I can see you blanching already but the good news is quite a lot of these have already been answered over the sessions. So, what might be useful is if I just read out our understanding, where we are so far.

Helen Jones

Yes.

Governor

As a brief summary and if, if that's okay and we've got that, then we can kind of go on from there. Would that be OK?

Helen Jones

Yeah. Okay. Okay.

Governor

Right, okay. So, our understanding then of the proposal is that the immediate future sees the three schools-Larkrise, St Nicholas and Rowdeford retained on their current sites and under their current names i.e. no immediate change this year, right? Okay. But between now and 2021 the three schools will be amalgamated into one new school. Across the three, the current three sites.

Helen Jones

Yes.

Governor

But under a new leadership team. Yes?

Helen Jones

Yes.

Governor

That by 2023 the new build at Rowde is projected to be ready to open. But that current sites in Trowbridge and Chippenham will not be closed until further assessment and consultation has taken place to determine need at this point.

Helen Jones

Yes.

Governor

Should such consultation show a need for places in these towns, special needs education may be retained on one or more appropriate sites albeit this may not be the current site or sites. If consultation at this point does not show a need for special education in these locations, then the existing three schools will close, and the new school will become a single site school at Rowde.

David Paice

That might be one, not both at the same time. So, for instance, if in Chippenham, there isn't a business need at that time, that would close but in Trowbridge if there is a need, that stays open. It's not both.

Governor

Yes.

Judith Westcott

Basically, you'd be looking at the numbers and the demand. Then there is the children, where they're coming from. And we'd say, looking at it now, knowing what we know now which we didn't know in 2019, what decision do we want to make. So, it is giving us the benefit of three or four years to do pieces of work.

Governor

Absolutely.

Governor 2

Make adjustments by the year, so that you can meet the needs of the children within that area.

Governor

Basically, what it's doing is the process remains the same. But is it slowed down and taken over a longer period of time.

Judith Westcott

What we really wanted to do, what we recognised was that, the way we presented

David Paice

We have 3 sites.

Helen Jones

Sorry, can I just clarify. I think members made a fundamental shift in decision. So, I think that the fundamental shift in decision was the proposal was, as you know, was close, one site. Boom. I think that the argument was so strong, that six hours in Cabinet, you know, they went out, they came back, and I think they did take note into what was being said. I think what they didn't want to do, at that stage, was to make assumptions about the longevity of sites or indeed maybe, that if this building, for example, is not fit for purpose in three or four years whatever. The teachers were telling us quite passionately today this needs more than a lick of paint, then other decisions might be made. But the only decision, that they have made and the only fundamental thing in the proposal is, is that there is going to be one school three sites. What they have said is, when it's open, when parents see it, with the benefit of knowing what builds are going to be in Trowbridge and Chippenham, are these 7500 homes actually going to be built, as you know, but members are saying how do we know that is actually going to work?

Are we going to have increasing population? Well actually all that might do, is stem an even bigger increase in special schools, it may do no more counterbalance that. So, I do think they genuinely shifted where their thinking was. That they didn't want to say 'yes, we're going to keep these three sites open ad infinitum as they are'. And, you know, they said, 'we need to reconsider it' and I think the benefit of having it as a maintained school was again their way of saying 'hey look, we're not going to leave it to an academy to determine what it wants to do, by whatever it wants to do, we genuinely want to do the best'. You know I understand this cynicism, some of the parents are saying 'we don't trust Westminster, why should we trust them here!' You know, I understand that. I think they genuinely, genuinely, shifted, it was the parental voice that shifted them.

Judith Westcott

And that consultation, which was hard work, you know that, but it did move things and it enabled us to think more creatively. And what that shift has also done, it's enabled us to come together. So, through various different routes and parents come together, governors come together. And it's almost like the last bit is putting the senior leadership team together. And that means then, as we start thinking about, what we should be building, where we should be building, how many, we are now doing that together. So rather than having three sites competing against each other and having to do this, you know, is my place better than your place? Actually, now we're talking about how can we do that together?

Governor 2

But you're dead right, for instance, but the other thing which we determined at the beginning, (muffled) first consultation, we took it on board is that strategically we shouldn't be looking at past pupils we should be looking at wider (muffled) and that has opened our eyes immensely. We had, really, Trowbridge, Warminster in our catchment area, it's across the county (muffled) provision for all those kids that they get the best

Judith Westcott

The reality is that's where you're drawing kids from. I mean in reality that we wanted to. Whether we'd like it to not be in big rural county. We're always going to be having to think about distance. But if we got three sites to work with actually, it gives us more choices about how we meet that need. And I think, I think, I mean David started to speak with some of the heads and I think to them it's a real opportunity and it's when we didn't bring them together they were trying to do, so much other business, that it didn't become a priority. But what this has enabled us is that we are going to do it.

Judith Westcott

So, we are going to have to do changes. Because you don't do changes for the sake of it, do you? You kind of need something to motivate and make it.

Governor 2

But it seems to me that the good thing at this point, that we know for certain or two good things that we know for certain, is that the three schools, their futures are, at the moment, secured and the idea of three sites seems to be accepted. We've also managed to do that and hang on to the money for building.

Judith Westcott

Yeah.

Governor

If the Cabinet had said 'No, no, no we're not accepting your proposal, we're going back to three schools on three sites', you might have lost that money and that would have been a tragedy. So, that's a good thing.

Judith Westcott

I think, I'll say it carefully, that Wiltshire Council putting 32 million on the table is really unusual, it's really special and it's such an amazing opportunity, kind of thing. But we've got to make the most of that. We really do need to make the most of that.

Governor

The other good thing is, because it's going to be a maintained school, it means you keep hold of control over that happens not only with the medical but with the education plan, that's a really important thing.

Judith Westcott

If it became an academy, they could have brought in a whole new governing body as well....

Governor 2

But the other thing is, if it was an academy, you couldn't guarantee speech therapy, hydrotherapy. I'm not having a go at academies but it, it's a business and they are there to make money, it's as simple as that, if they cut speech therapy they will cut it, I'm sorry.

Helen Jones

I'm really sorry I wasn't at Cabinet, unfortunately (muffled talk about family). Judith and David were there but I was watching it. I was watching the live stream. And as soon as I got my father went to the hospital and I sat with (muffled), I'm going to watch this for the next four hours. But I do think, I do really think, that that's what won the argument. What you were articulating on that day.

Governor

It did feel very much like a whole town coming together because it wasn't just parents. There were local councillors there, parish councillors, all sorts of people there.

Helen Jones

Yeah, yeah, yeah, and, you know, Cabinet did listen. So, I don't think that this is the same proposal. Just delayed or phased. I know, I know. I do understand the healthy cynicism of some parents, that is, why should we be trusted-'Can't trust Westminster, can't trust this lot here'. All I

can say is I genuinely think that they were swayed by the power of the argument. So, the proposal is different. But you know we have to be clear that within the proposal they do say they want to, sometime after 2023, to look at demand, look at need and, you know, and to consult again. Now we've got quite a number of sites, are they in the right places etc? And I think, you know, I think you did really well...

Governor

Oh, thank you. I'm pleased to hear that. There's just a couple more things on this and then perhaps we can go to, to questions. So, during the academic year 2019 to 2020, that's this year, a shadow governing body will be formed. I understand that that will take place after Christmas.

David Paice

You need to start thinking about it now, as there's actually a lot to do.

Governor

I've a lot of questions about that!

David Paice

It's only subject to us getting the green light because this is not a done deal by any way at all. So, it's capturing the evidence base.

Helen Jones

It'll go through Cabinet first. So, whatever comes out the consultation, recommendations go to Cabinet. Cabinet will then send that proposal to the schools' adjudicator. And we hope to get it done, that day, the next day. However, if Cabinet change their recommendations, like they did before as this is not predetermined, it may take us a few days longer. I am David's pessimist to his optimism. David is hopeful that we could get a decision back from the schools' adjudicator after Christmas, January. And in which case the message we are getting is don't keep delaying it. Don't delay it, let's start doing the working together. So, David's suggestion, it's not part of the proposals, it is a suggestion, if we get the green light, then why don't we get the shadow governing body formed as soon as possible after that. A couple of things obviously, other than looking at the vision and the curriculum, which is really important, what you'll want to do is you'll want to appoint a single Principal as soon as possible. And so that would be a very important job of that governing body.

Governor 2

Because I see it wouldn't be able to work on the vision until you've got a principal or executive head and a Governing body.

David Paice

I would suggest, there are two ways of playing it. My suggestion is you don't wait because from a building perspective, you want a master plan that's actually going to realize the vision in a timely way. Because you said you want to reduce overcrowding in both schools here, in Larkrise and St Nicholas. So, that does mean so instead of 101 kids we would want something less than that next year or the year after. To get to a more appropriate number of students. A comfortable number, whatever that number may be. And that's for you to collectively decide about it. So, the numbers will come down, so the numbers need to go in as well as going out as well. So, you're kind of reducing numbers here, they'll move, we have space in Rowde. And we may get more space in Rowde if the inclusion work really is powerful, then some of the students are currently going that will not, they'll go into bases, they'll go into Enhanced Learning Provision, they'll be in mainstream education, if that works. We know that we have up to 400 places there. But to be negotiated, in a way that makes sense for the schools, the curriculum and the parent carers particularly.

Governor 3

(Muffled question about how numbers will be split across the 3 sites, Governor 1 interjects with a comment that they have more structured questions)

David Paice

There are 166 pupils there at the moment (at Rowdeford). We said 150 (to be refurbished) plus 250 new places. You've got up to 400 on one site and another hundred elsewhere (presuming 50 on each of the Larkrise and St Nicholas' sites) gives us capacity of 500.

Helen Jones

This is what we thought we might need, as a conservative estimate

David Paice

So, you think, well, that might work on three sites. Which is why I've been (saying) up to 400 and in a phased way so that you can go, we might only want 300 on that site, if the demand is significantly in Chippenham. Then it might be that you think we need either another school, which would be in addition to the existing site there, or you might go actually rather than redeveloping that site make sure that's great asking for a brand-new school and phase that and think of the phasing, it might even be a bigger school.

A thought is around the Abbeyfield site because that was identified as a key site is a bit too north to be appropriate at this time, but it might be, if that's where the demand is. So, we're just

giving us a bit of wriggle room. To phase it appropriately. Given parental demand 'what do I want', you just said 'where's my son going to go, not sure yet'. And that's important, parents absolutely want to know where and when is it appropriate and 'I need to be convinced of that'.

Governor

And particularly with parents of younger children who, you know, who are actually going to be the ones to be affected by these changes and of course, potential new parents. Because we don't want parents being put off from applying for places because they can't work out where they might end up.

David Paice

So, it's sort of having those conversations informally outside of the amalgamation which we're having to go through. But if this is not successful and we don't get the money, we have got to do something. So, we are having conversations. We've not got the money yet because it has to go back to cabinet

Helen Jones

It has to go back to cabinet....

Governor

Right. Okay. So, we were talking briefly about vision I can see, if you're going to appoint an executive head, it is difficult to know what you're looking for if you don't have a vision for the kind of school you're creating

Governor 2

It's where you're getting that vision from.

Judith Westcott

That's where your shadow governing body and your heads working together, hopefully that collective will start shaping your vision, in terms of where you want to go. And it may also then start telling you about. What skills do you need? What kind of skills, what kind of person you're looking for, what background you want? And it's done informally I think.

Helen Jones

But there's lots of things that one could do outside a formal governing body structure. So, it may be a discussion with the three heads. The three heads asked David to organise a joint governor's workshop across three schools. They may ask David to organise the parents across

the three schools. So not everything will be done in a formal governing body meeting. There are things that you, in discussion with the heads and with David, might want to plan outside.

Governor

So, a new executive head to be appointed by 2021 at the latest. But you're hoping to do that sooner.

Judith Westcott

You have to take into account things like, the earliest that they could possibly start is next September, this time next year. You'd have to work really fast, assuming you have a shadowing governing body starting in January, write up JDs, do interviews in April, and then they can't start until the term later. The first bit may take a bit longer and all that kind of stuff. That's why we said by 2021, so it gives you a bit of leeway. But I think, I think what we hear from most people is getting on with it is kind of the preference.

Governor

Yes. I'm getting a sense of the timetable. On the last thing is that children will move to the new site at Rowde, at the moment it says, when it is appropriate for them to do so. Now, is that a when it's appropriate, or if and when it's appropriate? Because there is a difference.

Helen Jones

If and when it's appropriate.

Governor

Because that's one of the things that parents are a little scared about, confused about.

Helen Jones

Yes, I think you're right, we heard that in the earlier session today.

Governor

Yes, we've already heard. Not through the doors!

Governor 3

It's gone on social media.

Judith Westcott

Even now, I think everybody's thinking is moving. So, we've got this far. I mean we wrote this (points to timeline document) within days after the cabinet, kind of thing and I think everyone's

thinking continues to move as we've developed. And we get the opportunity with the November cabinet to hone these proposals again, so that what we actually agree is, such a wording that we all feel comfortable. But equally so I don't think we can run away from the fact that, there will be another point where we have to do some decision making and we will have to look again, and we'll have to reflect.

Governor

The most difficult thing, especially for you guys, in all of this, having everybody keep up. Because at the end of the day you will have full time jobs doing this. Most other people, whether they're local councillors or parents or whatever are kind of dipping in and out, when they can. And so, there is, there is a kind of a pace on the front that's on a gallop and there's a tail desperately trying to catch up.

Helen Jones

And the parent who was particularly cross today, did say that he hadn't been to anything before. What we have offered, or David has offered, if that parent wanted to come here to meet separately, with his partner, and to talk through it. I don't know whether that made it on to social media. But that was an offer that we made. It wasn't appropriate to have some of the argument that was taking place, but David was more than happy to come back again.

Governor

Right. So, that's kind of our understanding of the nuts and bolts of the thing. We're okay with that. Right. Okay. So, what I've written down loads of questions here under a number of headings but, actually, quite a lot of them have already been answered. The first heading was to do with the closures or potential closures of the three schools. Okay. The first question was the public, what do we tell them?! Parents and the local media are very confused. Local media are miles behind to be honest.

Governor 3

Taxi driver was saying, will your child be coming to Rowdeford each day?

Governor

The grapevine may be faster than anything else but it's massively more inaccurate too...

Helen Jones

Our comms has suggested that we do some more, what we didn't want to do, is that we're always very cautious about during a consultation being seen as being proactively campaigning. And we have deliberately, in all stages of this, stood back. And probably that's meant we've had

less information out. Our comms have suggested we get something out there which again communicates to parents. I don't know the context here I think that's something that we can definitely look at.

Governor

Can I make just a suggestion on that as well? And I don't know, I don't know whether this is possible for you to do but I'll just throw it out there. This is quite a long project and it's going to go on for another, what four years, what about a regular newsletter that comes out? It could be produced, say, one term by one of the schools, the next term by a different school. It could be produced by different groups who are and who have an interest in this. One could be produced by all. One could be produced by education officers, one by local councillors. I don't know. But if think, if there was once a term, you know, a newsletter that came up, that schools could distribute, could go into local libraries, all the places that we have access to.

Helen Jones

Good idea.

Governor

I know that you have difficulties using social media. So, it's the next best thing really isn't it. You know I know the parents read stuff that comes home in their book bags, newsletters from school.

Helen Jones

We will take that suggestion.

Governor

Right. So, the three sites will stay in use until or if it is appropriate for children. I just wondered (audio loss) and who will be deciding what is appropriate?

David Paice

You as the governing body.

Governor

So, would it would be the shadow governing body?

Governor 3

It would depend on the individual child though.

Judith Westcott

Yes. Yes. Remember every child has an annual review. And there are lots of conversations now about how do you go from having ...inaudible...and how do you do that. And I don't think that's going to be an easy one size fits kind of programme. That would meet with lots of discussions and parents especially since a meeting with the parents today and the parents over in St. Nicholas. And they already thinking . Maybe I would like that if there were points in time in children's lives where people say, 'Oh, I don't know if I think that needs to be done child by child' but also the benefit of strategic engagement is, how many does it look like, what would be useful, and if we're thinking about how do we use the sites. You've got so many choices now about, you know, you talked about the two big primary and one being secondary. All of that is up for debate as you go forward. It is how you use the sites as one school. And then that will help you make choices about which children when. But I think the main message is to potential parents and parents now is your child is staying where they are and it's business as usual. And we will do background stuff.

Governor 3

(muffled) St Nic's parents and they have lost four teachers this year. massive uncertainty. It might be business as usual here, but it isn't at St Nic's.

Judith Westcott

I would have to say that, that's not unusual.

Helen Jones

Sometimes, professionally, teachers sometimes to make decisions around the OFSTED rating of their school and a whole ream of things.

Judith Westcott

Holding all the decisions till 2023, meant that staff were left in limbo.

Governor 3

The point about this proposal is that it will enable us to be much more certain about the messages that we give to you. Yeah, it actually now looks an exciting proposition for a new teacher.

All

(inaudible)

Governor

I was looking at this business of if there are (inaudible) across three sites. Then, there is the potential for staff to work on more than one site. I just wanted to ask, would measures be put in place? But I think I've already answered this. Presumably the shadow governing body would ensure that measures were put in place to ensure that permanent classes in one site didn't get affected by a teacher opting to (inaudible).

Judith Westcott

Ensuring that every site is brilliant, so every class is brilliant. But also, things like what we know that Rowdeford doesn't have post 16 yet and they will want to learn from you guys here about how to do that. So, there is the opportunity to say how can we work forward. But we were discussing with staff earlier, their terms and conditions are site specific at this point in time. So, that can't be changed without consultation. And it's only the new staff that you will be able to talk to immediately about potentially working across three sites. So, it's incremental.

Governor

Yes. Yeah. Okay. That's interesting. Right. Well the next thing moves into the new amalgamated school across the three sites. The first two I've already had answered. And the third one. The next one would have been, will new parents i.e. after if they're new after the amalgamation be able to choose which site their child attends?

Helen Jones

That will be the school to set its admissions policy, wont it?

Governor

Right. Okay.

Helen Jones

That will be, the admissions policy will need to be developed by the shadow governing body, the principal going into the...inaudible.

Governor

Okay, that's fine...inaudible.

Helen Jones

No, it'll be your admissions policy.

Judith Westcott

It's for you to decide.

Governor

Okay. Designation of SEND at each of these sites. Would it be all designations at all three sites or again is that...?

David Paice

The idea, in many respects, that this is for more complex care. So, some of those that come with MLD, one would hope it'll be more inclusive. Absolutely.

Judith Westcott

We're creating more resource base spaces at the moment. And the other thing that you'll be aware of, as you'll see on Phil's door, the SEND strategy is also up for renewal now. That completes this Christmas. And Helean Hughes, the Director of Education is starting a whole consultation about all the wider issues. So, you know, talking about how we improve inclusion and we are saying at the moment, increasing the number of resource base places we've got as well as special school places. And reviewing ELP, there's been a lot of conversation. ELP means enhanced learning provisions, which is meant to be the same as resource bases in secondary. But isn't quite. So, there's a review going on to encourage everyone to get involved in that bigger debate, so if you like, this is one jigsaw piece in that bigger picture. Which obviously will be a significantly big one. You're going to be a beacon within that. Actually, there's all the rest of the stuff going on around you.

Governor

The weight of things coming down, because the trajectory has been you've failed in mainstream, you go into resource base, you don't do so well there, so you end up in a special school. I mean I'd like to see it go the other way. You've done really well in a special school. So, you're promoted to resource base where there is appropriate staffing and learning for you, which means you might even get promoted up into the mainstream.

Judith Westcott

We really want to get back some of those kids who we're sending out of county at the moment and give them the opportunity to be educated back here.

Governor 3

They're out of county because there isn't any provision, some provision offer provision up to the age of 25. It doesn't exist in Wiltshire. To be honest, that's probably what I'll choose when my child is 18.

Governor

So, going back to the near future. At the moment as you say, we've got projections of 101 here (Larkrise). We're all conscious of what the school was actually built for. So, over the next two years, the significance of that, we'll physically run out of space. Will there be place made for the rising numbers?

David Paice

Yes, interestingly, I was with architects today to see the art of the possible. Could there be space. I've not had the opportunity to speak with Helen yet but it is feasible, we think, if we can go through the appropriate channels which they, kind of, go straight quickly, get a paper to Judith and take a paper to Helen and I go through the channels, but if we got that as an agreement, it is feasible I got the architects to look at the three classes of 28 on the ground floor of Rowdeford.

Governor 3

A class of 28? That's an awfully large class for a special school.

Helen Jones

I must admit, I'm with you there,

David Paice

Three classrooms with 8 in each, that's 24. Yes. The reason for that is across all Larkrise and St Nicholas, there were 18 children reception, so if that increased a bit to, say, 20. Which we comfortably inside classrooms, which you need more than two, but you'll be comfortable in three. So, is it feasible, where can we have three? We've looked at mobiles. Where could we put them? Actually, even on the Rowdeford site there are big constraints, badger set there and it's not straightforward. So, it's more straightforward, from a planning perspective, so the planning expert said, to see if we can do a refurbishment of the space in that main area. Nothing has been agreed but we are thinking it through.

Judith Westcott

It's an idea that David knocked around this morning. So, it's trying to find a way of not messing with the big plan. Because if we were to make good changes to the Rowdeford main building it would contribute to the big build going forward. I have to say we really would like to avoid having to do mobiles because it's expensive, it goes nowhere.

Governor

It'll be difficult to sell that to parents, won't it?

Judith Westcott

Then it would contribute to the whole build going forward. But, we know, that every time we talk about what's being achieved in 2023, we've also got to talk about September 2020, September 21. Because what we know for your group is, you've got only 2 possible leavers this time next year. But normally you get to a group coming in of between 10 and twelve. So, the equation just isn't working. And again, it's not dissimilar over at St Nic's

David Paice

So, I'm having conversations with the three heads. So we've got a meeting next Thursday, Wednesday, Thursday. We've already met once, I've had informal meetings in the summer. And then I've asked all heads 'could I speak to chairs and governors?' And I just haven't got round to giving you a ring. But Phil said 'yes' and going through Phil, to have a conversation, you're holding them to account. And at some stage you'll be 'yes', you get kind of, this is, what could we do? And they'll come back with some thoughts about this. So, I now know that I could if I get the money ready quickly, to do this initial bit of work.

This is some breathing space. That isn't taking away from the master planning so whatever the vision is, if it went to kind of it's two primaries and a secondary, we need to accommodate that sensitively over a period of time. But the build needs to be ready and appropriate for a cohort of kids that we can see and identify, individually and then have the conversation with their parents and carers, would this work if we did this? It is quite sophisticated and lots of talking to go okay we do that. That space comes on board, we'll run this curriculum. All of that is heading in the right direction but the heads, my conversation next with Phil, is not only are they thinking about the vision, they're thinking of it and we're going to ask you to do exactly the same thing as three heads just as you were mentioned. They are absolutely wanting to bring you together informally regardless of this. Because we have some practical things which we need to resolve anyway for the next few years, but we have this great opportunity too.

So, we sort of need to consider all options informally as well as formally going through this process.

Governor

I attended a couple of governor meetings at St Nic's, so I've met one of two of their Governors, but I couldn't say I know them. And if there is going to be a shadow governing body it'll probably be a good idea if we met each other.

David Paice

I totally agree. I only did it last week because things are even busier than usual. But I've already spoken to the chair of Governors who said yes, I would be up for it at Rowdeford. Now you're here, I'm going to ask you the same. That's exactly what we want you to do. Once the heads have met, they will come back with some views for your consideration. But it is purely your consideration to get the ball rolling. They will also, because I spoke to Mike previously and said 'look, if I were to get three classrooms in that space, what would you do with it?' So, he knows that's what he's got to think about. I'm going to say the same to Phil and Ros. If three spaces were available. These are the children that are currently there, what would we do? If, because it's all 'if's', I haven't got an agreement. I haven't asked you, we haven't been gone formally. So, it's all, if we did this what may be. And Helen would need to speak to Helean. And then both of them would feel, is it appropriate to do this or not? Go to Terence and if that's appropriate, we need to go to Cabinet.

Governor

If we have an idea of where your thinking is going, it means we don't waste time. If we're not on the same trajectory, it's never going to work because we haven't got the information.

David Paice

Yeah, I totally agree. I would recommend that we all get weekly updates as a working group. So, you are completely informed, the heads completely know. And then we have really down into a comfortable move together. So, when you get to the shadow, if and when you get to the shadowing body, let's hope it's January, you've done lots of the preparatory work. So, then you can feel quite comfortable about what is the admissions policy. We're pretty much there. You know so you wouldn't need the same admissions policy if it's going to be, if it's not an amalgamation but because you're working quite collectively together you might go we'll have a soft federation or hard federation, we're working collectively. What's the right way for us managing the way in which we're collaborating now? You've done a lot of work because that's where the wriggle room is, in terms of physical site, Rowdeford's there, and the fact that you're working well together means I think you can be very creative with that. So regardless, let's hope, from a financial perspective at least, the money's there and the amalgamation goes through. But even if it doesn't, we've got to be pretty creative to manage the demand that's coming through in the short term.

Inaudible

Governor

I'm sorry. I'm trying to pick out the ones that have.. Optimum number of places at each site? I'm guessing is SGB (Shadow Governing Body).

Judith Westcott

Yeah. You know, at some point you're going to have to have an awful lot of fun with this name. But I suspect that it's going to be quite controversial.

Governor

We've already got Larky-St-Rowde-Face!

All

(laughter)

Governor

Not to put that in! It's not a serious suggestion.

David Paice

Inaudible.

Governor

Children from the three schools to be involved, from designing the uniform, the logo, the name.

David Paice

I'm coming here to see your kids next week, I think it's Thursday. And doing the same with all the others. I totally agree this needs to be really embraced by the children and young people here. And parent carers.

Governor

Enough on the amalgamation. Going back to the resources in mainstream. My understanding is that labels such as SLD and MLD and so on are national descriptors.

Judith Westcott

They are, indeed.

Governor

So, there must be criteria, for what determines.

Judith Westcott

Not so much so.

Governor

Oh really. Well I was going to say, you know, my experience, a long time ago now because my son is 24 now but he was re-designated when it was pretty clear because he was excluded from mainstream school at 5. He was clearly at the wrong place. And he was re-designated as SLD. It was done with a stroke of a pen by the Ed Psych. Which was fine for us, but it did make me wonder, are there criteria?

Judith Westcott

Not so much so, I mean in real terms, we work closely with Virgin Care, our current Community Health provider and with our educational psychologists and indeed with Oxford Health. And normally through that process of diagnosis and assessment, that's how they arrived on a Joint Agency approach what they think is the right designation for a child. In real terms, the designation doesn't always mean that much in terms of the help and support, the ECHP is how that help is defined. But clearly, we have to use it when we call the school something. And when we send in the census, we have to put a (muffled) on it. So, it's more I would say, I may be simplifying it, it's almost an administrative process rather than it is necessarily something that is a working issue around for our children.

Governor

The reason I'm asking this, is because if we are going to try and get this sort of movement, from a specialist to a resource base, from resource base into mainstream, I would hate that to be stymied by some fixed national descriptor that says 'no, this child can't go'.

Judith Westcott

You will find, at the moment, all schools have more than one designation. And in fact, it's quite interesting if you go and have a look at your school's designation. I know when I spoke to, I think it was Springfield, they were surprised what was on their designation. Can't remember off hand after conversation with the head. And that, in real terms, actually expanding it and keeping it wide is really helpful to you. And it's certainly something that stays at the local level and it goes back to your admissions policy in terms of how you want to manage that.

Governor

That's good. Oh yes. The next question was about oversight and management of resource bases . So, where would that come from?

Judith Westcott

So, at the moment, back this time last year we were having conversations with the headteachers about this. And they very warmly wanted to think about how they could bring their

expertise over resource bases. In addition to that, we have, Helean Hughes who's creating the Inclusion Strategy. So, we have had a SEND strategy in the past but in the future, it will be called SEND & Inclusion. So, there'll be lots of work going on this in the coming three or four months, trying to look at how we build that. So, I think in terms of new resource bases, which a number are coming online, we have explicitly said to all schools that have been putting forward expressions of interest, that you will be working closely with a Special School.

And one of the things that will be there to explore because we've always talked about the new provision in much more outreach focus, would be to ensure that actually we're creating a sort of hub and spoke models of connectivity. And when we would talk about the sort of locality base, in the sense there are three special schools around here but actually there are then 14 resource bases. And it's ensuring that every child can make choices and parents can make choices around I might want to be in a resource base for a while and then I might want to spend time in special school. I might then want to go back to a resource base having had a period in which I've had more intense support. So, we can get that more creative. But the management at the moment, I wouldn't say it was up for debate, I would say it's a continuing story. What we don't want to do is rush too much. So, taking into account all the good you guys are doing here, I don't want then to throw at you and say, 'Oh can you manage 40 resource bases as well' but equally so, you may want to do it bit by bit. As and when you feel ready.

Governor

It's really more of a question about that fluidity of movement. Because my experience as a parent and as a governor of a special school, of resource bases is very different to my experience of resource bases as a secondary school mainstream teacher.

Judith Westcott

Absolutely.

Governor

In terms of how they are the viewed and who is responsible for deciding who goes there, two very, very different pictures.

Judith Westcott

But the other thing that Helean has been doing, Helean has been creating these regional approaches to how she's doing school's support. So, I think that would really help her then to have conversations with Chippenham, about what support is available and she's very much talking about this idea of 'the community of children'. There's much more understanding about

how folk can work together, and again we're a kind of beacon of activity happening here, talking about being connected but it's a story that's going throughout the development.

Governor

Shadowing body. When will this be formed? One of the things that kind of, is scaring me a bit, is it will have a structure, our governing body here, we have parent governors, we have teacher representatives.

Judith Westcott

You might like the slide that David has prepared. It gives some suggestions. As you're probably aware, there's a governing group in County Hall, whose job is to support governing bodies, develop, train and become, and this is the advice, the conversations that David has had. I don't know if you can see that. This is our starter for ten.

David Paice

Okay. I'll show you where it is. It says Shadow Governing Body. Right. This is purely a suggestion. But so, it gives you an idea of a structure.

Governor

My worry about it was, that this is like an opportunity to produce something really important in Wiltshire and I was a bit worried that if it was all going to a handful of parent governors who could only do a bit of time when they could, that wouldn't be good enough. Now, I was going to ask, will there be local authority representation because we will need to have an ear into County Hall.

David Paice

Totally.

All

(Multiple voices discussing the role of co-opted governors and pulling support from various sources as needed)

David Paice

No what that means is for the full governing body, you are one of those, either co-opted in or you're a parent governor, a staff governor or you're the Head or local authority. Then you co-opt whoever you so wish. You have to turn up regularly for the governor meetings if it's a specific focus, that's important for you at a specific time.

Governor 2

I see where you're coming from.

David Paice

Exactly that.

(Muffled talk about length of term being only one year)

Judith Westcott

It's purely a starter for ten on the basis that when you end your first year, you might change your mind, you might say actually we need a different set of folk and you might have folk who say, you know, it's been really hard work this change and I'd like to step down at this point.

David Paice

Yes, there are elements of that. All I did in that regard is, if you've said I'm going to do it for four and then you change your mind, you feel you might let people down. If you've done it for one, one is actually the only thing you've done, I know it's meant to be four, it's easier to back off gracefully, no offence and equally if you've got someone who says, you said it was four but to be fair, I don't think you're quite right person. And then the new head's going to come in and they might have to inherit some of the people, you kind of go well, it's only a year we can live with it. It's a bit of flexibility in the first instance until you've got your feet. Here's what I suggest. But then in the shadow governing body, you only going to go for a year because we think it's going to be, you can extend, but even if we don't get somebody for April, it's going to be May, they would only be able to start in January. So, it might only be eight months, January to September. It might have to go for a full year. So, start for a year and you can make it a bit smaller or longer.

Governor

This is an unusual situation and there are inevitably over the next three or four years there are probably quite a lot of staff changes across all three of the schools, as the numbers change. As, you know, the future possibilities change and so on. And, you know, there may be new people recruited, more desperate to be part of this.

Governor 2

Can I take it, it might be one of your questions, I take it the shadow governing body (muffled)

David Paice

Yes, absolutely, you have to do school stuff. You need to hold the team to account, you are the governors of this, so that still happens.

Judith Westcott

You could decide to elect people onto a shadowing body or you could just say, could you do it? So, you've got choices how you get people onto that. But there is an expectation of some degree.

Helen Jones

And the individual school's governing bodies are in place until the point of amalgamation. Which is when you go into the full governing body.

Judith Westcott

And you're going to have to work out, in terms of referencing for the Shadow Governing Body, how much decision making, authority you want to give them during the time that they're there. So, that you may want to say something like, we're going to allow you to start doing this as well. Whereas, for other things you might want to say, for example, we'll keep that. So, you've got choices because you can negotiate that between the two bodies.

Governor 2

So, we've still got the scheme of delegation we can look at?

Helen Jones

Absolutely, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Governor

I did just wonder, the changes that are taking place in the north of the county at the moment, I'm aware that there have been and continue to be similar changes in the south.

Judith Westcott

Yeah.

Governor

Would there be an expectation, apart from the local authority, on the new head, of the new amalgamated school to work with the project that's going on in the south of the county too?

Judith Westcott

I think we would be very clear that it's all about working together. So, if I go back to Helean's strategy, it's everything about, we believe across the board, "together is stronger". But, in terms of practicalities, the new school in south is ASD/SEMH, so, we're not expecting automatically that there will be synergies but we do expect them to be having conversations and we're hoping to build that over time. But we also have to bear in mind, our new school in the south is an Academy. So, it's a slightly different relationship. It's a Free School Academy. So, it's slightly different and interestingly Exeter House is an academy. And the benefit we, kind of, get at the moment is, we get a bit of everything. And one of the things that we made quite a strong case to the secretary of state in choosing a maintained school, was to say we thought it was right to keep that mix because it gave a dynamic in terms of how to go to build our provision.

All

(Brief muffled talk)

Governor

So how many places, in total, will there be at the Rowde site, once the new school is fully open?

David Paice

Up to 400, up to.

Governor

How many additional places will be built at Rowde between now and 2023?

David Paice

They've already got 166 kids there, right now. The maximum you can get to is 400 and that's the maximum. Other configurations but up to 400 in total. Four hundred less the 166.

Governor

How many remodelled places?

David Paice

Roughly, a hundred and fifty. Those are the kids that are already there. That's got to be remodelled. And we're going to build additional capacity.

Governor

And I'll finish with this one. Has anyone given any thought to how each of the individual schools' history will be preserved and recorded? In a way that is this (muffled) for children with SEND as they transition from their old school into their new one?

Judith Westcott

That's really important

Helen Jones

Yeah, yeah, good point.

Governor

I just think, you know, as you go forward, with presentations and things like that, it might be something to get the schools to start thinking about. Because, I mean, we've got here, for example, a stained-glass window, which has in it the names of all the children who've passed away during their time here. Now for their parents, and their families and all who were at the school here with them, that's an important part of this school's history. I'm not suggesting we take stained glass window with us but...

Judith Westcott

The whole archiving, the story and the history.

Helen Jones

There's no need to take the stained-glass window, because it can stay here. No, but you have a point about history and legacy.

Governor

Because, it will be a new school.

Judith Westcott

And it's important that people, we've called the school 'X' but actually that bit used to be... And that's really important, that story, that history.

Governor

Okay. I think that's about it.

Helen Jones

If you've got any more, you can send them in via email.

Governor

It was just the one, about, well transport. The only thing about transport is that, presumably there'd be an equality impact assessment.

Helen Jones

Yeah. Yeah.

Governor

The last question was about equality across the three sites when it comes to external health services, like therapies, hearing and sight and so on. If Virgin Care are on site but they are on site at Rowde, how will that not disadvantage children who are at Trowbridge and Chippenham?

Helen Jones

That unfortunately, was one of the things that would have been an argument for one site. You have one base and clearly that is not going to happen under these plans. We're not going to have just one site in which Virgin Care or CAMHS staff are located.

(muffled talk)

Judith Westcott

They are across the county at the moment. We're really talking about finance. They are paying for offices, it's not one of our things that comes high on our list. So, actually to be able to provide spaces where they can be doing therapies and all the rest of it and they were very open to change, very open to talking about basing a paediatrician more locally to us. Because, I know, what a lot of parents have said when we were talking to them up in Chippenham, was it's a whole day out going to a paediatrician appointment. And if we can get that local to the school, at least for those parents it's a step forward. Stretching that budget and stretching their resources is a constant conversation.

Governor

It's just knowing what to say when parents say 'well, we want to know, we want to make a decision about where my child should go, they have epileptic seizures several times a day'.

Helen Jones

There may be some merits in the discussion we're having as to whether they have a base at Rowdeford, but they wouldn't be able to be only based in Rowdeford. They would have to come to the other sites.

Governor

It's just a question, do you bring the paediatrician to the school or you put a child in a taxi?

Helen Jones

We've not had that thinking under this new proposal, without having gone...

Governor 2

That's the detail isn't it?

Helen Jones

Yes, and the devil is in the detail!

Judith Westcott

One of the premises was that we wanted to improve and develop the health care. But as you say, that was always going to be the case. That will be part of our ongoing thinking about how do we keep the health care in the right place?

Governor

Judith, David, Helen, thank you so much for your time. We've probably got through more in this session than we've ever had before. And it's a good example really of how cooperation works better than shouting.

Governor 2

We'll pass it on to our parents.

Governor

They are tiger mothers and fathers, they really are, you know, they are in all schools aren't there?

Helen Jones

Yes. Absolutely, but I think there is some, for whom, they've only just started this conversation. As, I said, David has offered to come back and talk to those individuals, in small groups of people, who are just starting that. So, I just want you the Governors to know.

Governor

I think the thing I'm getting on the old social media is that everybody really welcomes that. That in a less formal arena than a presentation, they would really welcome having some time with you just to probably to ask many of the questions that we've asked here tonight.

David Paice

Yes, I'd be delighted. This is a really positive way forward from my perspective, but to sit down and, if there are misunderstandings, and there genuinely were, one guy in particular was really cross, understandably because his perception which is real was not reality though.

Governor

We've just gone through a very complicated learning experience.

Judith Westcott

But, you know, every time a new person comes in, that's a real benefit because the more people who are involved and get what's going on, the more we're actually moving forward. It's hard, but it's worth it.