

SPECIAL SCHOOLS PROPOSALS (19 November 2019)

APPENDIX 3(a):

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS AT ROWDEFORD SCHOOL – 12 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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Rowdeford School – Staff session

Mike (Rowdeford Headteacher)

Good afternoon. Well thank you for coming. I really appreciate you giving up your time to come to listen to this and to take the opportunity to give some feedback to local authority representatives. We've got Judith Westcott and Helen Jones and David Paice who are here. I think David is doing most of the talking.

Helen Jones

This is the first one we've done on this round of the consultation. As you'll know the new consultation started on the 2nd of September. You'll be clear, when I came in and I saw the proposal, pinned on your front door that the proposal has changed from the original consultation. The proposal is it's an L.A. maintained school and that it will be across three sites. But the new build will take place in Rowdeford and at a future date when the Rowdeford build is complete, then there would be a consultation which the leadership of the school would do, around whether it should maintain three sites, two sites, one site or however many sites. I just wanted that to be clear that this was the proposal.

Helen Jones

We are going to record. And so, if you speak in this meeting we're going to give you the roving mic to speak into and we're going to assume your consent. At the point in which you speak into the mic that we can transcribe what you have said, and it is really important for any challenge on the consultation process that we have been open and transparent and that we give members a fair representation of what people say. Hence, we're doing this recording. Okay? So, David is going to take over.

David Paice

It may be that I may be a little bit clumsy in terms of what I need to say something you might stop the flow a little bit but it would be this one I pass to you and we, as speakers, will also look a little bit clumsy because we need to come to you in order to capture what's going on so I can transcribe that. All this is following this presentation that you'll have seen a number of times-the time line, so there's no change to this.

David Paice

This is the representation, your opportunity to give us all the information back so that we can feed that back in, on this timeline. I'm assuming you've seen this a number of times before?

So, within that, there are two bits to the whole process. One of the bits, is around amalgamation, so there's guidance and two sets of documents that we have to follow in terms of actual guidance. And then there's a whole governance piece as well. And some of you may be governors or may think about becoming governors so there's bits of guidance that we're following there. So that is opening and closing, that's the legal documentation, let's move to the next one.

It's an amalgamation, so that's part of the guidance that we're following through. The next one. It's a local authority proposal because the feedback was we actually wanted a local authority maintained school. That means that we are the proposer. We've got the consent so we're onto this stage here. We had to go to the secretary of state to get his consent to move that forward for the proposal. So, we're here as a local authority as we're the proposer we can't mark our own homework. So, the whole proposal needs to go to our cabinet again.

Once the representation is back. We create the report on everybody's behalf. Push that back to Cabinet. They agreed to put 32 million pounds forward into this process. We need to kind of go yes. Still following this unless something comes back that changes our mind. So far I think

nothing of that nature has, so that goes to the cabinet, likely to be November. We then assume that they will say "yes", that will then move to the school's adjudicator. So, it's nothing to do with us.

It's completely impartial. They will then look at all of the documentation and hence Helen is absolutely right, we need to record everything that we do, so that an external expert will go, on the basis of the evidence you've presented; Yay or nay. And we know we cannot then go back on that. It's entirely their call. But now there's a lot of goodwill that we have. So, there's a lot of momentum behind it but it is their call. So that's the process for that.

Next one please.

And this is the phase that we are at. So, this four week is called a "representation period". And that is absolutely why we're here. During this presentation, not only will I go through this process and what each step means but also, work still goes on and I'll come and explain that too. So, just picking up Helen's point, this on your poster here is exactly what's on the projector behind me. So, it is to bring your school together with Larkrise and St Nicholas, together under a single leadership team.

All of those three sites, you will operate as one school. So, all three schools close but at the same time, new school opens and all three sites they'll carry on. So that's the part of the amalgamation. To facilitate the capital build, there's 32 million pounds. And then, at some stage when we've worked through how's this site going to work, how are the three sites going to work, what curriculum do you want to put into place, that's the decision for you collectively to come to and then we'll go okay, well let's see how that marries up with demand in the future.

So, there is a requirement to come back and have a think later on, when we know, but absolutely, all three sites stay open.

Right.

And so, these are really what we want your representation on. So, there's a bit of a question too to me here. And I'm, I might pause to try and capture some of your feedback because the proposal goes, this is the rationale; so, we need more places. So, there's a capacity issue. Does that hold and maybe which one of these are the most important to you? Is it improving standards? A unified leadership team should enable you to share best practice and expertise. Inclusive education, not just in the three schools but it's kind the outward facing work that you do in other schools is to be celebrated and built upon, more of that.

Professional development is going to be key, health care access to those is key, more resource bases as part of this proposal and post 16. So, you'll have post 16 both here as well as in the other two sites and that's for you to configure. So, it might be pertinent for me rather than to rattle on but just to ask that question, which bits of that really resonate?

If you know, do you want to feedback or not?

Staff member 1

The one thing that I was going to say was....

We know that there are going to be new students coming into school. We know that the model currently [unclear recording] isn't inclusion within mainstream. So, I guess there isn't a lot that we can actually do to change that regardless of how we feel about an increase in capacity within the school. From my point of view, knowing that that is the case, it is making sure that we still feel like a spacious place, we are, or are already having to deal with, an increase in numbers in our year sevens. And that's interesting even in the first two weeks, I think it's going reasonably well.

But there are definitely space considerations that I'm noticing even as I've taught my music today. So yeah, I think we know that we're going to have to do that, but we don't want to sacrifice space over numbers.

Staff member 2

I think throughout this whole process we've been seeing how it fits into our own mission statement to be at the forefront of education and actually, so for me, and I know for a lot of staff, the actual moral imperative of by getting the education across Wiltshire, the standard that we know that we can give at Rowdeford and we pride ourselves on, actually growing that and using all those amazing staff at Larkrise and St Nicks as well and getting the best quality of education for our SEND students across the whole county is really important for us.

Staff member 3

And I would agree with that and say for me it's enhancing the SEND staff professional development and knowledge because I think the nature of SEND across all settings has changed. So, you have children that no longer fit under nice neat little headings of kind of MLD. The complexity of needs are so varied that you have someone in this school, for example that cognitively he was very very able, but their physical abilities and things that they can access, are greatly impaired by that. So, it's looking at how other schools are doing things and getting that practice.

And I just I'm just glad that things are moving so I think actually the consultation has stopped [unclear recording]

Staff member 4

Say, one of the things that I think excites me the most on that list, is the opportunity for us to have an impact on resource bases and ELP provisions in secondary schools as well. I think having more influence and more the opportunity to provide expertise and up skill people and provide resources for those areas as well, I think, is absolutely essential for the long-term vision of SEND provision within the county. So, that really excites me and I think if you want a truly seamless provision across the continuum from right down PMLD all the way through to MLD borderline mainstream, that the unification of those provisions, in an amalgamation, is the only way to really provide that seamless transition between various different provisions.

Staff member 5

That's right. This sounds like all of us agree with all of those points to one degree or another.

For me investing in the Post 16 giving options to our young people where I think a lot of their choices have been removed in the past and actually giving them something that really does meet their need far more than currently and what is there is great. But let us offer even more, give them as many choices and let us always focus on what is our intent for our young people and getting them towards independence as far as is possible for them with dignity is absolutely critical.

I think that the investment in that element of it is going to be exciting and that's the bit that 'oh' I can't keep my excitement held in for much longer! Thank you.

David Paice

Yeah absolutely. Absolutely. Next slide is just absolutely making it completely crystal clear. All three sites remaining open and you get up to 400 places here.

Bearing in mind it has to work from a spatial perspective, so that's up to 400 places and that's the proposal. So, what we want is a timeline to really work to.

So, if it builds on this one that you've seen, there's some quite nitty gritty bits to the actual process, so you can see it on this slide; it's where it's at for the school and then on this slide there's a sort of legal process that we have to go through in terms of opening the new amalgamated school and the whole "what you have to do" in terms of governance, the appointments and so forth. So, from now through to Christmas, it's business as usual in many respects, I'm using Mike's vision here, there's a weaving of what's happening now anyway as part of how you develop practice both here and also in Larkrise and St. Nick's and all of the others, the relooking at bases and so forth. All of that still goes on and there's loads of really exciting things that are going on currently. Numbers are up in and we've got more money to support bases and got more investment in terms of free school.

So, there's a lot of investment across the county of which this is a key part. That is coming to fruition and I'm delighted to say that I'm here quite a lot now with Mike but also other heads. So, there is some work already going on but in terms of you from a staff perspective it is the same. When we get to Christmas, then we're into a shadow governing body, if we get the green light. So, we're kind of hoping that the procedure that I talked about earlier on getting to the school's adjudicator, that happens November, the school's adjudicator gets it.

The proposal goes to them. They come back by Christmas. Hopefully we get a green light. At that stage, if it's a green light it would be a shadow governing body after Christmas and it's the Shadow governing body that then we'll put together.

What are the three sites going to look like? How the three schools going to be able to share best practice? What's the sort of leadership team and staffing structures that will be able to do this? And what professional development do we want in order to move it forward so that they'll have a view of that because they have to have it fairly quickly. There'll be elections or you will put forward a staff governor having equal equitable representation across all three schools so the numbers are the same.

All of the heads are involved. During that process you all have a chance to steer what you want in a shadow format. That is a lot of work that needs to happen pretty quickly though because you'll have what one will have to go out. The shadow governing body will have to go out because they look pretty early, February time, for a principal because by March the principal or those people that will be interested in the role will be looking to put an application together and then have to be interviewed. We want to get the principal in place for a single leader to unify the team by April.

So yeah, we need the appointment-it will be in April. If we have the appointment in April, then the start date of the principal would be in September. So, in essence this year, this academic year will have no change in terms of what you're doing with your students but you will have the opportunity to get involved and shape what you want from the amalgamation. It's going to be quite a lot of work and that is beginning to happen and even if it's not an amalgamation, the work that you're doing collectively to think around three schools, to work together collectively, is great. And that that will continue to happen anyway because we have to hit the numbers for the following year.

So, we're planning that right now collectively. It happens to be that the amalgamation will also enable us to do that and we think that's the strongest proposal which is why we're putting it forward. So that's the energy behind it but it is that process that gives you the opportunity to then you know play a real part of it. From that time onwards, we've got a number of incremental years to get to 2023. So, the new building is 2023 in completion. We're going to be looking at it carefully to be a modular build.

Think about the sensitivity of space and how might that look and what are the numbers coming forward. But that's the place. So, we need to think about well what are we going to do year on year to accommodate, working collectively together, and Mike and Ros and Phil are working on that that right now and I'm sure you will be involved in the thinking as that progresses. So that is how I think it will come together over a period of time. Would you like me to stop and ask any questions that that bit?

Staff member 4

Absolutely. I just think it's worth reiterating that even though you've written business as usual only in the first section, actually, I think business as usual goes through all of those sections for the wide, you know, the large majority of staff and students.

David Paice

That's a really good point.

Staff Member

If one of the heads of the special schools were to go for the principal and got it, that would leave an interim period of time where one of the schools, although it's business as usual, wouldn't have a head. So would that be?

David Paice

No it wouldn't. In that, the heads are the heads for the three schools for the rest of the year. The earliest we could get a principal in for the new school, assuming that we had the go ahead for the amalgamation, would be September.

Helen Jones

Yes, the issue is it could be a year to the single leadership and that would need to be something that we would have a conversation with the principal and the head of the school as to how they would wish to see the backfill done etc. So why we're doing is if you think about if we were going for an Academy you'd have a MAT (Multi-Academy Trust). And it's really important that with the local authority, we are here to support but we're not leading, it's led by the principal and the shadow governing body-they direct the single leadership team. But we wouldn't want to leave any school in the lurch with under capacity, so we would need to have a conversation with the principal based on that.

Staff Member

I'm just trying to understand something about how the shadow governing body works. So, I can see that we've got the shadow governing body, who should be in place from January 20 and then a few months further on we've got the single school governing body.

David Paice

Yes.

Staff Member

Presumably that will be a more concrete formalized situation supporting the principal in implementation of their vision and what it's going to look like as a single school going forward. I think the bit I'm trying to understand is how the shadow governing body will influence that vision early on and what their relationship will be with the three school heads.

David Paice

So, then the next slide I have.

Absolutely, absolutely. Excellent question. Thank you very much.

So yeah, they do they. They are really important, and the structure is slightly different. This is a proposal. And any questions that you have, I'll try my best to answer. But I have said to the head of our school governance, she's on holiday, they're not here for two weeks and she apologises about that otherwise they would have been here. So, I will feed things back if, technically, I'm not 100% sure. But I can explain the proposal and it is only a proposal. So, on the shadow governing body.

So, in the first instance we're having six members of staff, so you've got in terms of staff, you have the heads, so all three heads sit on there as does another staff member.

You can choose, you know, you could have an election should you so wish for this or if you're already sitting, you might as governors and as the staff governors agree actually. 'We're very happy for you to go forward'.

But that that's the key number of those. The local authority is playing quite a big part in terms of giving you access to finance, to construction experts, to HR experts. So, we're surrounding the key team with support.

So, we've got six, sorry four, co-opted governors. Co-opted governors, we're proposing, would be folk of experts that might have the expertise. Grant, I think, works with Marie and the team to support from a financial perspective, if that would be appropriate. And there'll be one local authority governor, that is, kind of, part of it. So that will be a decision for Helen and the team to put forward from the local authority.

And there are, you can also consider, well actually I've got, I don't fit into that number of people. So, I've got a number of folk there. If there are other committees where you think, actually I could help here, and this is really important. That's where we can consider a larger number of associates. But in terms of the voting, that's the proposed structure for a maximum of a year. We probably wouldn't need it for a year though because you would have moved into the formal structure by September.

But if we go, the term is a maximum of a year, should we not have managed to recruit until May or we have to go out again, it might be January. But that would still give us a year or so- January to January might not need the whole bit, probably by September we're okay.

I think the importance here is you do not have to wait for the head to come in and you have all the answers. A lot of work needs to be done to build on the on the momentum behind the proposal. All of that rationale will be driving you forward. I think the shadow governing body is to build on the momentum and actually make that clear so that when they go out for the advert actually we know there's a sustainable structure to it in skeleton format.

But it's not going out blind it's going I'm really informed and your voice to channel what you collectively want out of the amalgamation is key. And then your shadow governing body can be a representative of you and the local authority to say this is what it's all about. This is what we want. We go out to market to ensure that we get the right single unified structure at that stage.

(Inaudible question) David Paice-Not as I know a particular number I would have to refer back to. No but you do want to feel confident and we as a local authority would want to be absolutely confident in terms of the sustainability going forward. We have a budget, will have a funding envelope of key members of staff. What is happening at the moment? Are you saying, this may be your stealing your thunder? The solution to being more creative is to work collaboratively, an amalgamation is a big proposal but it's not the only way forward. It's just that of all of those we strongly believe in this proposal. So, we are putting it forward. But regardless of that, informally outside of this process, Mike is working already with Phil and Ros to start thinking through well how do we get the vision and they're doing that right now. You know, how do we

then go back out to our staff to ensure we're right? They're thinking that through. So already then, you've got, well that's the that's the vision, that's the mission of what we can do collectively, align with the rationale that they, you or experts, are able to come up with, this is what we think we can do.

So, the shadow governing body then will take that work and be able to go out and we will have confidence that what we're going out for in terms of numbers of bodies in a structure more or less makes sense. And then it's up to us to listen carefully to the proposal that comes from candidates, to think, okay, does that work? But you've already got a direction that you're going into. So, the work that you're doing and have done over the years to get to this part, that's the driver that we're building on.

So, I think that's the movement in that regard. Does that help? Yeah? Then you get to there's a slightly different structure here because you've got three heads in place on the shadow governing body. You won't have that when it comes to the actual governing body. And there's a difference in terms of the staff governors too. So, you have the kind of core five and I think we've put two more in there. But you move down to a relatively standard single school governance structure, in terms of what moves forward.

What you might want to think about I'm proposing here is for your consideration for a single year. Usually governors are on for four. Now when it's a local authority governor, local authorities are here for a while. They probably give you that continuity you might decide from the head who's thereby, by virtue of their role, might want to go well will suck it and see. Maybe we'll put one person in but at that stage you are one school, you are kind of looking collectively amongst your staff, your parents, to go for our one school, who goes forward? And that's where your shadow governing body needs to think about the skill set, it's got that period of time to get used to what's the right governance structure.

And they will have to make a number of meetings unless you

Judith Westcott

This is how this fits in with the bigger picture. So, we've always been talking about the fact that this wasn't just meant to be an isolated change and that the changes that we were proposing were part of a bigger picture in terms of the resource bases and ELP provision and also the big push that we're trying to look at about what inclusion genuinely means. How do we ensure that children have an inclusive education? And by that I don't just mean where they physically are, I mean about being part of their community and being able to grow in their communities so that they, when they get to adulthood, feel comfortable and able to participate in the communities in the way that that feels best for them.

So, we briefly on this slide are just trying to look at the other things. So, we put the little pink jigsaw piece as a sort of reminder that this is one jigsaw piece in the bigger picture. Alongside this we're also creating additional places elsewhere around the county as well. So, there are new places and enhanced learning provision at the moment. There are new resource base places, some of which are coming online this September and some which will come online in the next two years because then going back to your point, one of the things we're very aware of is that we can't wait till 2023 in order to meet the demand. So, the demand is happening today. You know that is-you know that it's happening right now. So, one of the things that we're always having to remember is this sense of this big vision that we're talking about in terms of going forward. The amalgamation is, if you like, a tool for doing that. The vision doesn't change in terms of wanting to create more inclusion, wanting to create more places, wanting to be able to keep creating that development and that sense of what can be possible for young people with SEND.

So, as I say we've also got additional places in all of our other special schools at the moment. So Downlands this September are going up from 69 places to 90 places. Springfield South, if I

can remember all the numbers, they've now got 32 children there, having started with 16. We've then got Exeter House who've changed from, I don't have the numbers here, 142. I think they were at 134 last year. And of course, we then have the possibility as well, well not the possibility, the reality of the new free school which is an additional 150 places for children with social emotional and mental health problems and ASD.

So, when you see your bit of the jigsaw, it's part of that big picture ensuring that we've got enough provision across the whole of the county but equally so and this is the bit that's really important on the bottom here. And I'll come back to this bit as well. The new SEND strategy being put forward. I can now tell you that I've been with the local authority just about five years. The first job I was given when I came to the local authority was to create a SEND strategy. That's now completing this Christmas, that comes to an end. So, we are now starting the process of saying how do we want to build forward? And interestingly, we probably won't call it a SEND strategy, we will call it an Inclusion Strategy because that's the big overarching vision that's going through all of this. So, we were just talking a moment ago to your colleague in the back and she said you know you do a lot of consulting. Well we haven't stopped yet. We will be coming back, and we want to talk to you about the SEND strategy as well. So, you get an opportunity to think about how the changes we're making and presenting here, fit in that big picture as well. And that of course we'll be talking about all kinds of things to do with mainstream schools as well as the bigger picture. And I will just go back and talk about the independent special schools or the out of county special schools. So, Helen is also tasking me with looking at a review of what we're doing with the independent special schools at the moment. To understand how they fit in the picture as well and how they might need to develop and grow and move with us to ensure that the provision is available locally for the children as far as possible but where it can't necessarily local. We're also looking at the degree of specialism so we're going to be wanting to speak to our special schools about how you can be where we stop, you can be the next tier forward. And indeed, talking about ways in which our vision about working together can be shared with them as well. So how can we ensure that we create that good continuum for children and young people going forward? Are there any questions you'd like to ask or comments you'd like to make about that?

Staff Member

So, my understanding was we were looking to try to reduce the number of children who were travelling from the south of the county to the north of the county. That doesn't necessarily sound to me like that's going to provide that much of that. I can't see that having too much impact on those children who are having to travel from Salisbury to this site for example.

Judith Westcott

Yeah, I mean I think we've always got that sort of stretch across. Remember we've got Downlands as well. So, we've got Downlands, who are doing SEMH as their primary with ASD background. And if you like Springfield, do it the other way round. So, they do ASD with SEMH in the background, so hopefully having Downlands and you guys in the middle, we're then able to stretch up and stretch down but I think I'd also say, I think that the inclusion agenda is really important in this.

So, what we know is that there are huge numbers of new children getting EHCPs at the moment. Now we want every child to have a great plan and we want every child to have a great education. But what we know is that choosing a special school is not the only option if you want a great education. So, we want to ensure that children who are in the mainstream are also getting that great education and that there are all the bits in-between being in mainstream and into a special school. So, we need to look at how do we ensure that our mainstream schools are getting the support they need.

And that goes back to some of the vision that we were talking about for this school. So, we've been speaking to people particularly about when we've got the new free school in the south-it

will be an academy. So, I think that's the other thing that I think is quite positive. We'll have a mix of maintained schools and academies so we're getting the best of both worlds in that respect. When we went out to them and said you know talk about this school, we said we see the new SEMH/ASD school as an outreach school which happens to have a base.

And I think that's one of the ways that we're wanting to talk about this idea is that the build is secondary to the vision and the delivery of great education because great education can happen anywhere. And we know that we need to have places. Yes, so yes, we will be talking about building here and that's the other bit that I do want to draw your attention to is that regardless of whether or not the school's adjudicator says yay or nay, we know we will need new places so that background work has to continue. Whatever that outcome is we will need to be working with our council, our cabinet, with you guys to ensure that we meet that whatever the outcome, which is why we're having to start all of the work now and start doing that thinking. And it is really good to be here to be able to have that conversation with you and we're really pleased that the secretary of state allowed us to do that through the idea of a maintained school because I think that enables us to keep talking together.

Staff Member

I just want to know, I know it's not your decision, it's nothing you're in control of. You know you said "if" this is where they say yay or nay. This has been for me, such a kind of a convoluted, drawn out process, as is. What does happen if it's nay, just because in terms of you know talking to the children and kind of you know that they know that this is all kind of going on, is there a party-line?

Judith Westcott

I think one of the reasons why we separated out bringing the senior leadership team from the building bit because what we knew we had this vision and we were sharing this approach and wanting to build up things for young people and we didn't want that to be dependent on other decisions. So, by being able to build the vision that means we can keep going forward with all the good things that we want for our children and young people. In the meantime, we accept that government and particularly government right now has interesting wheels that it needs to turn.

And we need that can keep going forward without it damaging it. You were saying you know , you know that some cases this decision making is almost stopped as a sort of glue is into places. But I think part of the way forward now is enabling to unstick that and allows us to keep moving forward and ensuring that we can create the best provision. Undoubtedly you know if they say no we're going to have to go back and do a little bit of thinking and say, how does that all fit? But I don't think it stops the vision.

Staff Member

Thank you.

Staff Member

Question on the inclusion strategy and whether we were going to be consulting young people on what they felt about their inclusion?

Judith Westcott

I have to say that's been one of the really exciting conversations that David and I have been having over the summer, talking about how we get involved with children with SEND and you'll be aware that as part of this consultation, we're actually coming out to meet the children. So last time we did it, we kind of said to you, could you give us some feedback? But we're actually coming out to all of you this time and it's one of the things that Helen is very committed to is actually ensuring that we build that approach and ensure that it becomes a reality and when we

start talking about the practicalities and I think that's one of the really nice things about the guys that, you know, the kids who are here because you'll be able to see buildings happen here.

I think for the children here, it'll be really fun to start talking about, you know, what does this look like and how does that happen. And, you know, having conversations with them about how do you want to be in touch with kids over at Larkrise or kids at St. Nicholas? You know and use the technology that's available. You know I'm always struck by the fact that my son, two of his best friends don't live where I live. You know one of them lives in Milton Keynes, the other one lives in America. And I think that understanding of the world we live in now gives so many more possibilities to our young people for whom physical movement is not always the easiest thing. I'm going to go back to you David.

David Paice

I'm delighted to say I'm coming over.

The opportunity to meet children and young people is really, really great. Greatly received, because we want to make sure that we genuinely capture their aspirations for their futures through this programme. I'm still working on the exact kind of half hour slot and your thoughts on that would be really gratefully received because it's not been finalized yet what we're doing and I'm going to be led by yourselves but we're definitely here to listen and be with your kids. So, look I look forward to that. Thanks for letting us in.

David Paice

Let's move on a slide. Yes, this is it. So, the key thing here I think is just to say I'm quite excited about the proposal. In it we're building on this kind of continuity of opportunity that goes, we've got primary, we've got post-16, there's a lot of exciting things that you as experts can get involved with together with colleagues that are coming forward. So, we're quite excited by it. So, in terms of, do I think of going back to "what if"? I think the probability is, and certainly speaking to the heads, this is this seems a pretty good way forward.

You know we're talking 99 percent. I think colleagues were saying, we think this is positive but I can't be prejudging it in any way whatsoever, but this is your opportunity to say what you think, that is absolutely why we're here recording you. |You want it, say it, you know, we think it's really important we've got to move ahead. It's been frustrating but please let us move ahead.

Mr. Schools' or Mrs. Schools' adjudicator, so that's really absolutely key. And yes, I think it's very positive. All of those things there. So, the final slide with that.

What do you think? Please do let us know not just here but we've got the online survey. It genuinely is your chance to have your representation taken forward and we will catch all of that. We've captured all of the words you've said tonight. Please send things through. Emily checks them absolutely all of the time and we are trying to build up a really good case to support what we think is a strong proposal.

All ideas and suggestions very gratefully received.

Staff Member

Sorry, can I go back a bit, as for co-opted governors, where do you envisage them coming from and why have you chosen four and not three when everything else was very even amongst the schools?

David Paice

Yes, there are. It's purely a proposal, so kind of as a standard so went from the shadow governing body which is made up equitably. So in that regard I think we've got six staff governors, one staff governor, one head teacher able to get back to. Yeah.

This shadow governing body in that regard. Four co-opted governors-that was just to try and keep the numbers down-you could have more or less. It was a matter in some of that co-opted-ness, is well, of the six staff governors that we've got and the parent carers what skill set have we got? And which bits do we need? So, you might co-opt in a finance person or a legal type person to be able to do that. But again, it is purely a proposal based on best practice that had come through from our governance team, to try and ensure equity across the three schools so that you all felt in control of that process.

Judith Westcott

These top ones are kind of about representation whereas these are about what skills do you want extra. So, what it might be, somebody who is in fact nothing to do with any of the three schools right now. So, it might be somebody else that you brought in. So, it's really just saying there comes a point when there's too many, you know it's hard to have a discussion. We're sort of saying you probably could go up to four and saying you know you want that particular skill set. And because they're co-opted you can have them for a period of time and then you can say thank you.

But we'll say goodbye now you know and that can move on. So, it gives you choices. But we're suggesting you don't want it too huge because there comes a point where it gets too huge and you know the conversations take too long not everybody feels they've been listened to et cetera.

Staff Member

I know it's only a proposal but just as an observation, it doesn't look like a big enough governing body for 400 students. That's my initial thought.

David Paice

Thanks very much very helpful.

Any further thoughts or do you want to think about it and feed through? We'd be delighted to pick up conversations. We're always available too if you want me to pop over and have a conversation as well during this process. But thank you very much indeed for your time.

Really appreciate that. Thank you.

Rowdeford School – Parent Carer session

Mike Loveridge (Head)

Thank you for giving up your time to come and hear what needs to be said tonight and also to give you an opportunity, I hope, to feed into this consultation, to be able to make comments, ask questions and also hopefully to provide you with a stimulus to then go on and make some comments via the consultation portal as well which is online. I'd like to introduce Helen Jones firstly who's the head of commissioning at the local authority. She's going to speak to you first.

Helen Jones

And just as a brief introduction to us all, I do think you've seen us all before. I am Helen Jones Director of Commissioning and Judith Westcott who's the Head of Children's Commissioning and David Paice who is the Interim Head of Special School Transformation who's particularly working on this bit of the proposal. And so, at this we are now entering the representation

consultation. So, we did the consultation previously, it went to Cabinet and following the Cabinet's decision it went to the Secretary of State as to whether we could publish the proposal. And for those of you who were participating in the consultation previously, you know there are some slight and important changes to the proposal. So, the proposal is now that we have a local authority-maintained school rather than an academy and the secretary of state gave us permission to publish that but also that it will be a single school on three sites. That there will be a consultation at a later date as to how many sites there should be based on the demand at the time. But the proposal is that it would be a single school three sites.

But the new build and the capital investment will take place on this site. So, David is going to do most of the talking today to just give you a synopsis of exactly what the details of the proposal mean, some of the time frame and some of the things that we're suggesting we need to do to get to the proposal. We are recording this today and we are going to pass a mic to you if you want to speak. If you do speak, we are taking that as your consent that we are recording your voice and that it will be transcribed.

We don't name people. We will say parent 1, parent 2 parent 3 etc. But in order that we have transparency for Cabinet to enable Cabinet to make a decision, and then when it goes on to the schools' adjudicator ,we do need to have a true record of anything that you have said. OK?

David Paice

Absolutely. You may have seen or just double checked to see if you are familiar with the timetable. That is if you can move to the first slide. .

I'm going to go through exactly this in a little bit more detail and just get a sense and give you an opportunity to feed back in your thoughts as your input into the representation. And that's why we're trying to capture it. It might look a little bit stilted as we do it but when we transcribe it you will then have had your views captured on the proposal. So that's that, if they could move forward to this process. On either side here, they're all legal things that we need to be able to do.

So, on this side if you could just flip to the next bit. That is the main document that we're following to open a new school. So, the proposal is that it is a new school out of the three sites and all three of those schools are the sites-what's going on continues to go on but in what in essence will be a new name. An amalgamation of those three so they become one and one leadership but still all of the provision carrying on as is. This is referred to as an amalgamation and so that's the term that we are using, and it just means those three sites still stay open across one school.

One leader and leadership team and that the proposal is exactly as Helen was saying. What you've fed back collectively is that you wanted it to be a local authority maintained special

school. What that means is we as the local authority are putting this proposal forward and it has to be judged. You can't really mark your own homework. So we have to take on all of your thoughts.

The whole suggestion needs to go back to Cabinet and then to a schools' adjudicator. So up there it will say schools' adjudicator is the decision maker and they are impartial. They are an independent entity that makes the call and it is yes or no. So, we want to make sure that we have as much evidence to support the proposal that we're putting forward so that they can go. Okay. Yeah. This makes sense or not because it's you know that they'll weigh up the evidence that we've put forward and make an independent call.

So that's that piece, next slide please.

So, in this process now this representation period is four weeks. So, we started at the beginning of term on the second and will finish at the end of the month. So, throughout September people have been feeding comments through and your opportunity is, please do use that online survey. Emily who's capturing everything tonight is also regularly checking it and we really value anything that you would say and put forward. So please, please do that. And today is absolutely your opportunity to say what you feel. And again, also you can contact us at any time to make your views known as to this this proposal. Next slide please.

So, we do want your views now and I might stop to just try and capture a bit of your sense. So, there was this on the overall time scale. There is a plan. Love to get your sense of that and a rationale for it. So, I think we've heard about this in terms of it's three sites moving into one. Thirty-two million pounds is a very significant amount of money to develop for up to 400 places and then once we understand exactly how many places and what provision we really require we can think about whether we need three sites. Do we need two sites? We have more sites but until we get to 2023 all of the sites are definitely staying open because we need the capacity. So, when we get the real capacity to open in 2023 we might be able to look again. And we're committed to working with you to come back out to another consultation at that stage. Nothing to do with the amalgamation but to go where would you like provision. So that's the proposal-a separate consultation exercise. Could I just get a sense and particularly if you're a parent/carer have come in with younger kids just through.

Parent 1

With the leadership team, will it be situated in what school?

David Paice

All three in. One leadership team but with three sites. So, you're kind of running a three-site environment. Poplar college would stay open too and there's a bungalow within St. Nicholas.

So, it gives us the opportunity to think-How do we support across northern Wiltshire young people and children with SEND?

Parent 1

Would you have a headmaster in each school?

David Paice

How you're going to manage that is a decision which is being thought through carefully now and that is a decision for the shadow governing body to then go out and procure and secure the right staffing structure to make this process work. And the proposal is for an amalgamation so it's for your collective thoughts and the expertise of the existing heads.

We still have to ensure that we can cater for all of the young children still in Wiltshire. So, I'm working at the moment with Mike and with Phil and with Roz, the heads of the three existing schools. I will look at how do we best provide services for children young people with SEND across the board. That's where we have a bit of flexibility to do something quite exciting and interesting regardless of the amalgamation and that that is being considered already by the experts, the heads, and the governing bodies will also take that on board as well as the staff.

So, I think by Christmas we should have a pretty good view of actually who will be in those positions-that is being worked through at the moment.

Helen Jones

No because it'll be a single school.

So, the proposal is while three schools exist there will be three governing bodies and we will have a shadow governing body for the single school while we moved the amalgamation of the three schools into one. There'll be one governing body, there'll be one principal or executive or whatever you want to call them, and it will be for the governing body and the executive head to make those important decisions as to how they want the sites managed.

Mike Loveridge

So, just to give you some reassurance really.

So, I think on surface it probably sounds like quite a complicated setup but actually it is a setup that is very common across other schools and across other federations and across other trusts in other parts of the country. And actually, there are many, many successful examples of that happening in other in other parts of Wiltshire and beyond. So, like I said on the surface it might sound quite complicated but actually within education circles and practice it's actually a fairly common occurrence to have like a leadership team across more than one site. Okay.

David Paice

Thank you. And any other thoughts? Thank you very much for that.

Parent 2

Close the other two sites. I know it's a consultation and nothing's definite but ultimately it is the plan to have a single site.

Helen Jones

What cabinet said is they were quite clear that they wanted to keep the three sites open at least until 2023 and then with the principal and the new governing body then there would need to be decisions made as to how many sites you would need depending on demand. If it is felt that you can't maintain economically, or demand three sites then there would have to be a consultation about whether we reduce-in fact maybe the decision is made in a more than three sites.

So ,I just want to be clear that the proposal is. Members said there was no kind of end game but recognize that we may well need to consult on the number of sites at a later date when the new school places were in place. The new school was in place and we could see what the demand actually was

Parent 3

So, the plan is to increase capacity here?

Helen Jones

Yes

Parent 3

And not on the other 2 sites?

Helen Jones

No, the proposal is to increase capacity here. In a minute you will see that we want to increase capacity in mainstream provision of which the this the new school would provide outreach support to children and young people with special education needs included in mainstream education. In their best interest. The places are for the capital build here and the proposal is not to cut but we will not build on the other two sites.

Parent 3

And the proposal would still include provision as the site will be bigger.

Judith Westcott

And I think that nitty gritty and David is going to come to it in a minute. David is going to talk about what our suggestion is around having a shadow governing body. Get the principal in

place because you know the vision for that needs to be owned and formulated by the professionals.

Helen Jones

And the parents and carers and children and young people themselves rather than the local authority. So, we're not kind of prescribing that. That is something we're trying to get everything in motion, in a sense to enable those decisions to take place by the professionals supported by the local authority.

David Paice

So, that's a theory. And the issue of why we can't build on the other two sites is they are absolutely chock a block. So, we haven't got that ability to do that which is one of the key reasons why this site lends itself really well-there is space, it's a wonderful site. We are kind of taking all eventualities as well and considering what is the best curriculum structure and trying to alleviate some of the spatial issues particularly in Larkrise that has the most number of kids.

So, we are looking at trying to improve space where we possibly can on those sites and we're having early conversations Mike is speaking to the other heads to think about how do we move over the years to something that is really cohesive in the right stages? How are we going to do this? And that conversation is happening now to think that through.

Certainly, you're not going to get more children into those spaces. It's quite the opposite-we're trying to give them more space than it's currently the case.

And other thoughts or shall I just go through the next slide OK?

So, this this was the rationale. This is what people were all asking for and just get your sense of which bits of this you kind of go, yes, I think that's the key bit and which kind of you know are your top three.

On here it says we need 100 places definitely to reduce overcrowding. Absolutely want to get better space provision for their children/young people that's been really key. We want to improve the opportunity to learn from each other, get best practice across all three schools and therefore it says it's an improvement standards opportunity. We're actually looking about being outreach first. Lots of great practice already happening here in Rowdeford with working with other schools. We want more of that too. So, it's kind of outreach as opposed to just looking at it internally in schools.

Professional development is key. Taking the expertise that works here and disseminating that and also then the expertise that exists in Larkrise and St Nicks and going, actually if you get

these kinds of kids we can work with other schools and settings to ensure that other children that have similar conditions can be suitably supported and thrive elsewhere in mainstream.

And the health and care that was another key driving issue to actually improve access to health. Here is where there's an integrated position to be. That was a key driver as well.

More resource spaces to work with on the resource basis and Judith is going to say more about that and post 16 provision here.

That was a key rationale for why building here and what can we do. And I'd welcome your thoughts as to which of those resonate with you. Which do you think is kind of really that's the driver. That's the thing you need to hold onto here.

Any thoughts?

Parent 1

Quite an amazing job at Three Ways in Bath and because that was three separate schools. And it's quite an amazing place. I did visit purposely. And they certainly made a good job. So, yes. The only problem I can foresee is transport. Because obviously if those schools in Chippenham and Trowbridge were closed then they...

David Paice

But they're not.

Parent 1

But eventually. Rather chaotic wouldn't the amount of transport coming to Rowdeford be?

Helen Jones

And we did do as part of the first consultation which was a pre-statutory consultation, we did do a transport analysis which was shared as part of those papers which actually shows you could do it in an intelligent way so that you didn't create chaos. But for this proposal we're not looking at that now because you know all three sites will be kept open.

David Paice

This site would go to a maximum of 400 and it might not hit 400. You know we're looking at that in an incremental way to be sensitive to the three sites and the demand. So, we have the ability to go up to 400 here but there are already hundred sixty-six right now.

So that's giving us some additional capacity of 250 ish here up to and we want to take that sensitively. So, it is a modular build that we will work through carefully and work with Mike and others to go well actually build this. This would work best for us now. This, then this bit, then this bit but we have the ability to go up to 400 overall. So, another 250 ish places.

Parent 4

Well that includes-you've got post sixteen special education to include as well.

David Paice

Absolutely right. Yes. Yeah.

Parent 4

My son's only been here for a year, just going into year 8.

Helen Jones

Just for clarification though it does not include pre-school. So, there had been a proposal that would be pre-school and no post 16 but because we've got some really brilliant District Specialist Centres running, the demand and the gap was post 16. So yeah, so we decided there was no point in investing in capacity pre statutory school age and we would use that resource to invest in post 16.

David Paice

Brilliant and any other thoughts on that. Lovely. Oh, thank you.

Parent 5

My daughter comes to write it and those are all really important to all our children growing up and going through school. I am pleased to see all three sites are staying open. That's amazing. Because Rowdeford having extra, I would like Rowdeford to stay as much as Rowdeford could because I think that's what attracts a lot of parents and children to Rowdeford-the outdoor learning, the space in the woodlands and I think that is so, so important to children with special needs and disabilities and I think that's a major thing when we look at personally about the building and how it's Rowdeford.

David Paice

Thank you

Judith Westcott

Really lovely things about this site although we're using a certain amount of the space now-the council owns fields around as well. So, you know one of the staff was talking to us early about that doesn't mean we'll squish and squash it all in. We don't need to at all. We really have the benefit of being able to use all the space around here and ensuring that actually, you know, all the rurality and all the outdoor learning can come and grow bigger. Yeah.

Helen Jones

And one of the arguments that went in the last paper that went to cabinet as to why Rowdeford would be the primary site was because of the outdoor education so we wouldn't want to do anything that undermined that philosophy.

David Paice

I'll move on. So key messages- at one school but three sites and that gives us some quite interesting flexibility because Larkrise and St Nicholas have primary provision and they've got Post 16.

So, this this flexibility and the opportunity to learn from staff who are experts in different phases and there's a lot of opportunity to cross fertilize. So that's something where we're all quite excited about it.

So that's the key bits and it is by 2023. So, I will start talking about the practicalities of getting us to 2023. There is a process that we're following through the legislation both in opening a school but also then around governance and some of you may already be parent governors or be thinking about it. And that's going to be really important here. So, we have all of September is consultation. We can capture all of the information in October and we present that back to Cabinet-they've already ratified 32 million pounds worth of capital build for a local authority maintain school.

But we have to take that decision back in light of everything that you're saying. So, if positive and I'm hearing lots of lots of good messages, but you can say absolutely what you feel is appropriate. I'll take those comments on board and then consider it going to cabinet. It goes to a schools' adjudicator because they make the final decision. If we're lucky and I think we should be able to because to get this far we had to ask the secretary of state for his permission to keep it maintained.

You think they've already done quite a bit of diligence to go, this is the proposal. So, we're hoping that by Christmas or shortly thereafter you know that the Christmas period as well that we should get a decision. So, it should be a green light. So, that takes us to Christmas time, January over there. From a school's perspective therefore, it's completely business as usual.

But absolutely there'll be no change to Christmas, then we might get into a situation where if it's a green light to move it forward you have to have a shadow governing body. So, the three schools still exist as they do, all with individual governing bodies. From those governing bodies though there'll either be an election and that's for you to consider as a school do you want to hold an election for this? or are you kind of comfortable that you can just suggest names that are either doing a good job for you already and actually that's the person who's already in a governance position we're happy to put those forward. That will then take a decision.

We'll take the proposal out to market in terms of we'll have done the thinking around how are we going to run this? That the key decision that they need or that the action that they say is, get us a leader either a chief executive officer or principal. That the person that will lead the unified team. We hope that we would have a principal in place by April. So that means there is quite a lot of work to be done to get somebody in place-that means that you need to have a pretty good idea of the job description and the things that you want that leader to do, the vision for the combined school and what we want. So, what jobs need to be done so that the principal's job is key. That needs to be an agreed by that shadow governing body because they are the body that makes that appointment. So, collectively that needs to go out back end of February so that there's a kind of a four-week period for people in the application process. There is quite a lot of work that the shadow governing body needs to be able to do once that appointment is made.

That would mean that, if appointed in April, the principal would be able to take up the position, because they won't be able to take it up straight away, there's a notice to be to be given on their existing school, so, suggestion would be around about September. The suggestion now in the proposal we have is up to 2021 but the suggestion is we might have that in place though by September 2020, which means for your children that are here right now, this year is just as every other year. You know, there'll be no changes to the curriculum or staffing.

It's absolutely the same year, it will be the same thereafter in terms of projection through but at that stage if the principal is in place and you have a leadership team in place. Why. Oh, sorry I'll carry on. So, the key bit is it's your children and they have continuity of experience.

After discussion, there is the principal now working with other colleagues to think through well what curriculum should we have in place? What are we looking for? And then to get a principal on board and this unified school to deliver that for you. So, you will be feeding into what you want for your children and young people as part of this. This is what we want, how we can get there? And that could happen ahead of the proposal date which is by 2021.

My suggestion is we'd be hoping that in another academic year's time, this time next year it could already be happening now. So that's the suggestion, the proposal gives us a little bit more time.

Any questions you won't be able to see the dates?

You've got shadow governing body this year exactly the same shadow governing body and then the actual governing body. Any questions about that?

Because you were asking a question I think a little bit earlier on about this would we ask it last time.

Parent 6

Yes, how many current governors do you have?

David Paice

Ahh, I can come onto that now. Then I will. I will come back to that. I'll give you, these are suggestions, for you to consider because your school will have an equitable input to the shadow governing body. So, what I put up if it is yes I will be there. Yeah.

Okay. Well in which case I will tell you from here.

David Paice

So, in the shadow governing body I am proposing that from a staffing perspective three schools. Therefore, the three heads. And then from a staffing perspective another person. So that's kind of six school governors.

There's always one local authority. Governors, three parents. So, it is a proposal, you as parents would want somebody to represent your voice in this as will the other schools.

They would have a parent governor too. So, you've got Mike, staff and somebody that represents you as a parent governor in that. And then you look at the skill set and think okay, well we've got to make sure that this is going to be viable. You're giving us 32 million pounds. We will look though at the staffing costs, what can we do this? You might want to pull in some legal advice.

So, there are co-opted governors that you can go, actually, we need somebody and the local authority would be delighted to be able to give you that expertise. But you may have it already. So, there's an equitable bit. And then there's and I'm saying four co-opted governors because you don't want it too big. But because you've got these very important decisions to make in quite a short space of time. So, wouldn't go much more than that. There is also the opportunity to go actually for particular committees.

Something might be quite specific, and you can have associate members, so you can for that specific committee not the full governing body but something that's happening. Then you can bring people on board. But it goes from three schools, three lots of representation down to one school. So, then there is only one head. Then you will reduce the number of parent governors to two. This is a proposal but that this is kind of the standard and one staff governor. So, would be working as parents thinking okay well I am now part of three sites, there'll be other parents that you want to engage with to ensure that you've got the right parent governor or parent governors on that that board.

Helen Jones

This is just a suggestion from us as the local authority. Mike's already made the comment that he thinks the suggestion is actually too small for a governing body of a school of this size. So, you know this is just a suggestion, it's not part of the formal proposal but we will be working with the three head teachers and the shadow governing body to really shape, you know, how many parent governors etc because it's got to be owned by you.

Parent 7

Governors are very, very important.

David Paice

Absolutely, absolutely.

Parent 7

Definitely. One of the most important things.

David Paice

I think is crucial because they are, particularly the shadow governing body, that makes the key decision about who's the principal and what do we want them to do and how are we going to run all of this. So yeah, it's really, really important. I totally agree.

Any questions on that? You're okay with that? Yeah. Yeah. Then it might speak to the context.

Judith Westcott

If we had this up, you'd have a list of all the other schools.

So, you'll be aware that the three schools that we're talking about here are only three out of six special schools that we have across the county. So Exeter House down in the south and Downlands over in Devizes. Springfield's in both the south and north of the county. Exeter House has a similar kind of pupil group to Larkrise and St. Nicholas but Downlands is all about children with mental health concerns and the new school that Springfield has extended into the south and Springfield up in the north is children with ASD, with social emotional mental health problems as well. So, there's a sort of range of different sorts of schools as part of the whole county.

In addition to that, some of you may have had your children in resource bases before they came here. So, we have about 250 resource base places which are like sort of special schools within a mainstream school. So the idea is that you have specialist provision but that it's a sort of a halfway house for children and young people between the experience of a special school and a mainstream school.

So, what I want you to be aware of and if you had the picture we would have this this lovely slide with a picture of a jigsaw piece. So, the piece of work that we're doing here at the moment is only a small bit if you like of all the work that we're trying to do across Wiltshire. I was saying earlier I joined the local authority back in 2014 and the first thing I was asked to do to write a SEND strategy and that comes to an end this Christmas and so we're now starting to write a new one and one of the things you need to be aware of is that we'll ask you about that as well.

So, we'll be doing some consultation at the end of this month. Trying not to bump straight into this one which is talking about the whole big system. So, all the things that we do for children with special educational needs, to think about how we bring that together and that's really important. When we talk about what we're doing here because what we wanted to do is share expertise and that's what we want to do far more of is enabling every child to have the provision that is just right for them and wherever possible to be as local to them so that they can be close to brothers and sisters, part of their communities and enable that when they become Post 16 and go onwards that actually they feel good about being in the communities that they're part of.

So, when we talk about this we're talking about this bit of the puzzle, but we've also got a whole new school down in the south as well. So, we put a bid in to the Department of Education and we were really chuffed when we were successful and there'll be a new school in the south for children who have ASD and social emotional mental health problems down the Salisbury area. And that's really important to us to be able to offer more places. So, what we know is there are just lots and lots more children who need these places at the moment but also so that we can get the quality as best as it can be.

And that's what's really lovely about what we're doing at the moment. So, Mike, Phil and Roz who are the head teachers of the other two schools are working really closely together to say what can we do when we get together. What can we do. What knowledge and information and learning can we share so that not just the children in our school get the benefit of all the good things that we know but lots more children get the benefit of that as well. The other bit of course is also understanding how independent special schools fit into the picture as well.

You'll know there are fee paying schools which are outside of the system and sometimes we, the local authority, pay those fees and sometimes parents go independent into those schools and mostly they're schools for children with the most complex needs. But we want to ensure that they're part of our big system too. So, all their knowledge and understanding. So we'll be talking to them as well about how can we work together to ensure that say every child in Wiltshire gets exactly the right provision from whether it's just you know learning how to spell and struggling how to spell or all the way up to actually it's a real difficulty doing to understand how to talk to each other or how to move and all those.

So, everything from an in-between. So, is there anything you'd like to ask me about that and how this all fits together?

Parent 8

Education health care plan.

Judith Westcott

Aw yeah. In our special schools they'll always have an education health and care plan. But actually, there are lots of children in mainstream school so in total we have about 3200 children in Wiltshire who have an education health and care plan and in our special schools are about 500 of those. So, what you have to think about is actually there's more out there than there actually are in here and that's about ensuring that every child gets a great plan because that's what the EHCP is. I mean people talk about it a lot about you know how it changes things but actually it's just a great plan where we get all the people you know from health, from care, from education all talking to each other to say how can we ensure that every child gets the best help.

Helen Jones

So, I think you've all got sight of the slide deck. So, if we turn over the page.

David Paice

Which yes, it's pretty much nearly finished, this kind of penultimate slide was really quite exciting. So, that the proposal itself has come after a number of years that you have fed into what you want and actually it's quite exciting you know. The council's absolutely listened and it's three sites not one. All of the localities are open. It's sixth form here as well. So, it's all the way through. And that's quite exciting. So, it's trying to build on that and that's what this is about. It's trying to take the best of everything that's working in the three schools and build even more on that with this very significant capital investment.

So, it's just that we're excited about it. We need to if that's right and we have captured what you want- that's what the representation bit is. So, please feed in your aspirations and thank you for making it really clear to get to this point. I think we've done a reasonable job in the proposal of taking what you want but this is all about what you want and does this proposal represent that. Because if it does and you're happy with it, it goes through cabinet and it goes to the schools' adjudicator for their yea or nay.

And then the very last slide is just. Yeah. Any questions about that?

Thanks very much.

Parent 10

So, from the plan I see that it's the shadow. Well it was. Yeah. The shadow governing body that was going to appoint the principal. Yes. How is that going to work when the three current heads are actually on and make up that governing body.

David Paice

That is a very interesting point because there is a point at which we need the expertise of the principals in to help shape the vision and they need to be working with the staff and parent carers. How have we got it right? So, they're in a position and they're already working on that now. So, there's work that's happening now but I'm now going to speak to the chairs of governors, vice chairs of governors to keep this work going.

And at that stage it's wholly appropriate to have head teachers involved when it gets to the type of nitty gritty of exactly what job description they'll be a bit of a well at this part of the process, could you now leave the room existing heads because there'll be some sensitivity in terms of having a balance? This is a really exciting opportunity and we'll go nationally out.

And so there will be sensitivities about when in that case, when is appropriate and when it's not appropriate and who's actually going to be on the panel, who's going sign off the job descriptions. So, we're absolutely working with governance and H.R. to ensure that we have the right side of appropriate in that regard.

Parent 10

Thank You

David Paice

Thank you, any more? No well.

Oh thank you.

Parent 11

Can you reassure us we are not going to be let down because we feel we've been let down by Wiltshire council? We had to fight tooth and nail to get him here for now. And now he's here. He started to enjoy school again because we come from, he didn't want to go to school at the last four weeks because there's a lot of issues and problems. And now he's starting to settle down I feel and enjoy school and he's coming back smiling and happy for once for a long time.

David Paice

Brilliant

Parent 11

So, can you ensure that this school isn't going to change too much. You're not going to take people's TAs away and stuff like that.

Helen Jones

I think Mike as the head teacher should answer.

Mike

Just to reassure you. I mean David put up a slide earlier didn't he about business, business as usual and I made a comment in the last consultation meeting that we had before this for staff was that actually, even though it said business as usual, just between now and Christmas, as far as I'm concerned for the majority of staff and adults, you know the adults who work here, the parents and carers, for the children it is going to be business as usual throughout this academic year. Only for one or two people will they have to be working significantly behind the scenes to begin this collaboration towards you know securing a vision and securing a process towards this. This, this collaboration, amalgamation which is what was being proposed I think in terms of the practice that happens here. I think regardless of who that new principal might be going into the one school across the three sites, the majority of staff who work on this site will continue to work on this site. So, the provision will continue to be as it is now. Obviously, there will be some changes but actually I think any of those changes that occur will be beneficial changes not detrimental changes because actually it allows us, it allows us to share good practice, to share expertise across the sites to be much more refined and honed in terms of the practices that we have across all three sites.

Parent 12

Yeah. Like some people don't cope with change. Well I just wanted to know if the pupils will know what's going to be happening.

David Paice

Yeah. I mean. We are very well experienced as a school, I think, in working with children and young people who don't cope well with change. You know we have many different strategies that we use to help students with that you know. You know making sure we're preparing kids well in advance for any changes that might occur. And of course, we will be employing those strategies and our expertise to make sure that children are involved in the decision making and also prepared for any changes that might come.

Mike

Yeah absolutely. And those will be used to help the children.

You know I don't think xxx will notice any difference moving into Year 8. His provision will still be the same on this site with the with the adults who are working with him at the moment.

Parent 12

Okay.

Parent 1

I had grave reservations when I first heard but I must admit listening to quite a few consultations I'm quite happy.

David Paice

Delighted to hear that thank you

Parent 1

I think a lot of problems that I thought would arise have obviously been sorted out. So, let's hope it all goes as it should.

David Paice

Thanks very much.

Parent 1

We don't know who's going to be the secretary of state now.

Helen Jones

Luckily, we don't need to worry about an election for the schools' adjudicator.

Mike

So, I mean, our governing body we have, I can't speak for St Nic's governing body and Larkrise governing body but our governing body, we have a wealth of different experiences and specialisms and we actually have somebody who is very up on health and safety as well as finance expertise, legal expertise. Yes, safeguarding as well thank you. People who've had previous experience working within special education as well as procurement, all sorts of different things. What I missed I missed anything. Oh financially. I think I mentioned finance. But you're right.

So yeah lots of expertise across the governing body at Rowdeford.

David Paice

Thanks very much. Any other comments? Suggestions? No. If you do have anything else. There is this kind of ongoing questionnaire. Please, please do engage or encourage others to and feel free to contact us anytime if you want any further conversations.

Mike

Can I just say David so I will make sure in the next couple of days that I will send out this presentation to parents and carers for all of you and for those who weren't able to be here and also I would just remind you of the link and how to access the consultation online just so you know where that is.

Judith Westcott

And we just say thank you for coming because we know this has been a long process, but we really think we're getting there. So, thank you so much.

David Paice

Thank you.

Rowdeford School – Governor session

Mike Loveridge (Head)

And firstly, can I thank you all for coming and for giving up your time. I was saying to David, just a few moments ago, I think the reason why we haven't got many governors here is because actually I think you've been on the journey for so many years now and you're all happy with what the current proposals are. So, I think most people feel that they've had their say already. But thank you for those of you who are here. If I could, I think you've probably all met Helen before but if I could introduce Helen Jones Director of Commissioning and she wants to say a few words first.

Helen Jones

Yes, just to reiterate Mike, thanks for you coming here today. Just to say we are now part of the statutory part of the consultation process. We are consulting on what has been published as a proposal, which you have pinned to the front door which fundamentally is that we are going to bring three schools together as a single school, with a single leadership by 2021. That we're going to invest 32 million pounds for a capital build for new places on this site only. And that we will keep all three sites open under a single school. And when we have got all the new places open, then we will look with the principal and governing body then as to what demand trends are etc. as to how many sites there needs to be. And maybe that we need to continue three sites. It maybe that we have to have a fourth site for example or it may be that we need to reduce those sites. So, there's no decision being made about that. That would be subject to any consultation post 2023.

So, the proposal is a single school with three sites. We are going to record today for two purposes. First of all to ensure that we give an accurate record to our Cabinet and when they come to discuss this again probably in November and also we have to put in all copies of the

consultation and the results of the consultation to the schools' adjudicator as well. David will talk more about that in a minute.

But it's important that we get an accurate record. Therefore, we are going to ask that you speak into a microphone, it's not projecting your voice, it is helping the recording. And we would take it that if you speak, if you take the mic that you have given consent for us to publish what you say. We will not name you, we will not name children, we'll just say Person 1, person 2, person 3 etc.

David Paice

Thank you very much indeed. And I'm just going to run through the how and why we're here and then ask you some questions actually because this is the representation phase and we want to hear. I want to capture your thoughts. Now the process I think you may have seen this one once or twice before. All I'm going to do is just outline that and get into a little bit of exactly what that means from a governance perspective in particular. So, if I can just run through to the next slide. On either side here the following because this is governed by law.

This is the formal bit that we're following on the opening and closing of maintained schools. The potential change after that and another consultation is by the managing significant changes. But so that's the key documentation that we're following there. And then I will come into. We are governed by in terms of governance a number of documents which I alluded to there. So, just flick through to the next slide, what we have, what we talk about is an amalgamation. So, it absolutely is bringing all three schools together. From the documentation we have the wording is an amalgamation.

And what we are following is that the feedback was this amalgamation of the three schools will be a one local authority-maintained community special school. Now because it's local authority maintained in the next slide that tells the local authority proposing it which means we can't mark our own homework and go, well this is a great idea. It has to go to the schools' adjudicator an independent body so they can take the merits of the case or proposal forward. So, it's really important that we do capture accurately your thoughts and everything then goes to an independent body the schools' adjudicator.

Governor

Is the Schools adjudicator, he or she a national person or a regional adjudicator or a London one.

David Paice

Although there is an office in Darlington they do not sit in Darlington per say. There are about a dozen experts drawn from various parts of education and different backgrounds and

experience- the case comes in and they decide well who's the best person that we have to be able to review this.

So from their team they will nominate one of the team to do the review and then they'll

Governor

And that's the Department of Education?

David Paice

It's outside of the Department for Education now, it is independent of them. We had to go to the secretary of state because it was local authority. There is a presumption that it wouldn't be a local authority it would be an academy route. So that was that bit. We can do this but actually is there demand? Is it the appropriate thing to do? We feel so, we've listened as much as we can to come to this proposal.

So, this proposal is taking on board everybody's thoughts and comments which is why we have now gone through all three sites staying open. So, it is one school but absolutely the feedback was we want all three sites. So that is what we are proposing.

Governor

And is it a paper exercise or will he or she come to Wiltshire?

David Paice

It's largely a paper exercise.

Judith

Which is why we need you to talk. Because the transcripts from today do go up to this schools' adjudicator. So, all of that which you say does go to the schools' adjudicator but we don't get any interviews, there's no face to face contact

Governor

Fine. Lovely thank you.

David Paice

Thank you very much. That's super helpful. So, everybody yes. So, in this process we are on now at what's called representation. So, there is a four-week representation period. It started at the beginning of term on the 2nd and we'll carry on until the end of the month. So, you still have an opportunity not only to say things today but to actually go through an online survey. Emily is capturing everything you say today and is also capturing everything that comes through. And if you want to have another meeting then we can we can organise more.

But you know feel free to feed in because that is the evidence base on which we can substantiate or otherwise the proposal before it goes to the schools' adjudicator. It will have to go through the cabinet again. So, perhaps I could move on to the next slide. Yeah but by November that's probably

Governor

Will we be notified of the date of the cabinet meeting? And will we be given the opportunity to come along?

David Paice

Yes

Governor

As members of the public? And is there a possibility of speaking to Cabinet? I mean I don't know whether or not to.

David Paice

It's a full cabinet meeting

Governor

But can representations be made before cabinet?

David Paice

Absolutely.

Governor

Yeah thank you

David Paice

Yeah absolutely. It says that it's exactly as it was before.

Helen Jones

It's a full Cabinet meeting.

David Paice

So, it's just going to pause here to kind of get a sense of you know what do you think? So, the timeline here is kind of going, well this is the plan. Are you comfortable that we've actually captured it is three sites? They all stay open. What do you think to that?

Governor

Initially we were going to build a big school of 320.

David Paice

350

Governor

350

David Paice

Yes.

Governor

So now, if you're keeping the other two places open as well, is this still going to be as large or is it not necessarily as large if we still had another two sites open?

David Paice

The proposal is for up to 400 places. So, we have the capital that has been agreed for up to 400 places here.

Whether or not we use all the 400 is a different matter. And what we're working through very carefully already and I'm jumping a little bit ahead here because as well as this proposal there's the kind of we have an issue in terms of more places which was a kind of one of the key rationales for why we need new places. And regardless of whether it's an amalgamation, we need to be able to deal with that demand. Delighted to say that I've met with Mike and the other heads to start thinking that through very carefully as well as thinking about the amalgamation but there's the practicality of well actually you can be a bit more creative if you have three sites about how you can cater for children, the young people.

It's really quite exciting in terms of different ways of curriculum that might better meet need. They're already thinking that through. And therefore, that's also being planned because this is this is proposed to the capital being 2023 but we still need to manage 2020, 21, 22. That's what the heads are beginning to do now coming up with a kind of a plan of how do we do that.

Helen Jones

I think it's important to say though that the proposal for the capital is only to have new places on this site and not to have new places on the other two sites. I think it's really important that that is clear.

David Paice

Yeah

Governor

I mean I appreciate it would be up to the heads to decide but it could mean that some existing pupils here could move to a different site

Mike Loveridge (Head)

I think in the first instance I think that's unlikely.

But I think like you say ultimately that will be a decision for the new governing body and the new principal whoever that might be.

But I think certainly in the first instance I would think that would be very unlikely.

Helen Jones

if you think, there is currently overcrowding in Larkrise and St Nicholas. However many sites we have, be it one site, two sites, three sites, four sites wherever we need to reduce the overcrowding in their schools. So, there is not the likelihood of starting moving children into those schools. I think this will probably be done in a more phased approach in terms of dealing with new students first things like that.

So, based on the fact that Rowdeford is the best fit for those children, to move them to another site would be counter intuitive

David Paice

Brilliant can I capture that any thoughts about the 32 million pounds, three sites, one leadership team. Any other thoughts?

Is that a fair reflection of what you wanted?

Any other thoughts?

Governor

How would one leadership team work on three sites? Where would they be based? Or do they float?

David Paice

Well that's a very interesting question.

Helen Jones

That will be a decision for the principal when they're in place with a governing body.

David Paice

Yes.

Helen Jones

It is not for us as a local authority to prescribe. When we thought it would be an academy, we would have obviously got a sponsor in and the sponsor would be making those decisions. As it is we are proposing to maintain school, therefore, a lot of that decision making will rest with the new principal and the governing body.

Governor

On that point about an academy and we discuss this when we met before the summer break. Why should the new school be local authority maintained rather than an academy? Because potentially you could set up this new school and like a company you have a predatory academy come along and say, well we like this model, we will take over. So why therefore local authority maintained rather than an academy model?

David Paice

Yeah, I can give my thought on that initially. That's because people wanted that. We listened and the strong steer from the three schools was that we would we would prefer that this was local authority maintained. So, having listened, that's the reason the proposal reflects that. I think in terms of it absolutely. You're a great school. Lots of outstanding practice and coming together to cross-fertilization even better. So, it's an exciting opportunity. I'm sure people will be delighted to have you in their trust. But that's if you don't want that, you don't have it.

That's so you don't have to go down that route .

Helen Jones

And there's nothing to stop a principal and a governing at a later date making a decision whether it wants to become Academy. We're not stopping that, we're saying that for now as a local authority we're not going to propose it as an academy. And clearly when it's opened as a single school when all the build is completed by 2023 that'll be the decisions around future direction in terms of status will be as they are now as a matter of decision.

Judith

The other bit I would add is I think one of the main reasons that people wanted a maintain schools is because they wanted to work together so they wanted to have the local authority involved. They wanted to have the community involved. They wanted to have the schools involved. And one of the things I think a lot of people fear that if we had a sponsor academy that came from Norfolk, Northampton some of that local development might be lost. So, I think we very much see at this point in time it means we can all stay together.

We can all have a view, we can all talk about it and it may be that at some later stage we say we feel okay now we can turn this into an academy but that will be for the governing body at

that time to think about, to reflect upon and to think about how that makes a difference for the young people and students.

David Paice

Thanks very much. Could get on the slide on the timeline, the rationale behind the proposal.

I'd be really keen to get your voice around which should. Which of these are the key drivers?

But I'd be interested to kind of get your sense of yes that's absolutely it. So absolutely there is definitely a need for more places. So that was a driver in terms of needing 100 new places. And to reduce the overcrowding in the existing schools which is particularly acute. You're now 166 here and this anxiety is to ensure that you are able to deliver the same sort of outdoor experience that you always have done. It is very tight in both Larkrise and St. Nicholas. So that's the desire to create more places here by bringing the best, of taking the best of all three schools and all three teaching teams. We think we can cross fertilize so there's a kind of a school improvement opportunity here to make even better, building on all of the great practice. So that was a key piece also massively around outreach and being outwardly facing. You already do some great work to build on that and celebrate that across all schools and settings across Wiltshire. That was that was a big piece of professional development too because the proposal is around primary here as well as post 16. There are opportunities to think actually I might want to be able to pick up all through 14 through to 19.

So, there's a professional development key piece and you training other members of staff in mainstream schools in bases in LA provision to be able to best accommodate all children, young people how would they present themselves in wherever school they happen to go to. So that key driver is professional development. It would seem to be health was another driver of having on-site support for health care here, a dedicated team. So that was a key push around the proposal and to support the increased provision of resource spaces. That was another part of this, not just in the kind of individual schools but going outward.

So that was a driver and post 16 a lot of feedback about having post 16 provision here. Indeed, there was a therefore a change from having early years provision in an earlier iteration of the proposal to actually the specialist centres do very nicely thank you very much. The district centres do a good job so we're okay there. What we would quite like to do is ensure we have continuity of provision in terms of post 16 here. So that was part of the proposal.

I just want to check, have we captured that right? Does this proposal capture what you are talking about which are the most important issues?

Governor

Would there be enough funding to do residential?

Helen Jones

We are looking at sufficiency around residential as a separate work stream. It is not something we have done here but there is a discussion about the way we stop the flow of children being educated by special schools.

Mike Loveridge (Head)

Can I just say one of the things that I'm really delighted about is the fact that the proposal moved from 3 - 16 provision to 4 to 19 provision. I think that's a really, really positive step forward in terms of continuity of provision across those learners' needs. Thank you.

David Paice

Does it seem a fair reflection? And if so that's good. Well I appreciate that.

In which case recap, amalgamation means one school, but all three sites stay open.

So very much this is around business as usual, continuity of provision. Absolutely. And up to 400 places sensitively-the design is all around a modular design to increase at an appropriate rate to be able to work with the curriculum aspirations, pastoral aspirations. And that's something we are already working with the heads to work through and will continue to come back to you to talk about. What do you think of this? How do we build at a suitable space that works for you at all schools but particularly given this on this site your expertise in that's going to be going to be really, really important?

So, this is the key process, and this is the bit around governance which is which is key. So, on this side over here it's kind of a what's this actually mean on a kind of school year? But then there are key dates on this slide. So, we're in September. The representation is four weeks that will cover all of September. We will get the information back. Pull that together in October. So, we'll have got the paper together. Should we then take to Cabinet for November, on the back of the cabinet paper will have had to have got their input too and then we send that over still in November to the schools' adjudicator.

Hopefully then the schools' adjudicator is able to turn that around before Christmas. So, a decision yay or nay and seemingly the feedback is very positive. So, let's hope and or aspire to that being positive.

Governor

To say no. Oh no. Oh yes.

Helen Jones

The secretary of state, they only have to give us permission as to what proposal we publish. The secretary of state has already done their job and they have agreed to us publishing the proposal that was on the previous slide and now no longer goes near the secretary of state. It goes to the schools' adjudicator.

David Paice

So that that takes us to Christmas. At Christmas, if it's a green light then you need to be able to manage in the proposal becomes live. So, we have a period of time in which you've still got three schools. You are going to be all the governing body for Rowdeford all the way through until such time that Rowdeford is no longer Rowdeford. It is part of the new school. But in that interim period before you have a head and before therefore you've established the new school when the new head's in situ and the new governing body is in situ, there's a period of time when you have a shadow governing body.

And you what's happening already is we're starting to begin to think about some of the what. What do we need to be able to do? So, you think January there'll be some kind of election, or you will be nominating people from yourselves-who's the right person to come here and there's a degree of equity that we're suggesting so that there is a proposal that you get one school, one unified leadership team by 2021. The suggestion though is actually we might be able to do this slightly earlier you know ahead of that time if the principal is appointed in April. They then have enough time to be able to resign and start in September.

So, the suggestion is that we might be ahead of that proposal. If the principal is not appointed in April and we have to go out to market again or, say we can't an agreement on the structure therefore we don't know exactly what we're going out to and it slips a little bit. Well then you wouldn't have a start until January, which is 2021. So, you know we've given ourselves a bit of flex which is the proposal by 2021. But the suggestion is if we work diligently there's a lot of work to be done but it's feasible.

We think to be able to go out to market having got the agreed shadow governing body adverts placed February-March for 4 weeks or the period for the applicants to put forward a proposal for you to reflect on that, interview them you, then might get somebody by April. That does mean that although the shadow governing body starts in January you will want to start thinking about as a governing body, well what actually is this vision? We've talked about the drivers. You've been thinking about very carefully what you want to do collectively and individually in terms of vision going forward but we need to articulate that.

So, there's practical work to do. So, the idea of collaboration is quite exciting, and colleagues are already thinking about how we might be able to collaborate. The heads are working on that now regardless of the outcome of is it an amalgamation or not. We would still want to be able to build on all of that exciting collaboration opportunity and that's seen as quite an exciting way

forward. So, schools are already thinking about that and you may well want to as I mentioned earlier on about let's start thinking about that now and how we might want to move forward regardless because we've got to you know accommodate the children and young people in 2020-21, 22.

But the proposal gives us quite an exciting opportunity as it is looking quite probable that that is a key consideration. So, wanting to hit the ground running as governors one needs to start thinking and building on all the work that you are doing now ahead of that time.

Governor

So, the business at the shadow governing body would be about structure of the new school. It wouldn't be about grievances, complaints, exclusions.

What did you think the structure would be? I mean representation.

David Paice

Well funny you say that, yes. This is purely a proposal. And we've already had some very helpful feedback around numbers and is that appropriate. Might want more but you've got a very short space of time to do quite a lot. So, the more numbers you have the more challenging that can be to try and make sure that you've captured everybody's input. So, the suggestion here is for equity so all three heads would play a role. Whereas when it becomes a formal governing structure, it is at the moment there's just one head.

So here all three heads and so forth that from a staffing perspective and staffing governors on that one would then have a kind of equity from the governance perspective as well. So, I suggest you have three parent governors, one from each school as well. Therefore, you need to think who might have the right skill set from the Rowdeford governors that you might want. Do you do you nominate them and are you comfortable with that or do you want to have an election? That's entirely your choice.

The local authority would have a say in that. And then once you know the skill set and actually may suggest you actually got quite a lot of wide ranging skills sets so that you co-opt one to then do some of those jobs because you will be thinking about what sort of structure would work well for the new school or staffing structure what you want to have, the vision, the mission-all signed off that you're comfortable with. And then there's it's got to work both within the funding envelope of 32 million pounds but then the operational funding that you're going to get for the number of pupils are going to come through.

David Paice

So, there's a finance bit, there's a legal bit but again you're pretty well covered in that regard too. So, it's just that you then you can co-opt basically the skill set in should you require it and

the local authority have colleagues that you can pull on as well. But then if you think well okay so I've got, I'm now equitable, if there are specific things that you want specific committees you could have associates that come on for that. They don't vote, they're not part of the full governing body but if you feel there's something that needs additional support and focus then then there's always the opportunity to have associate members brought forward that is purely a suggestion.

And if you feel actually we'd like to do something else that isn't entirely your call but that's where the governing team said on national best practice, that's about right for where you're at as a starting point.

Governor

I understand about the three schools but actually in terms of numbers we are much bigger than the other two schools. So, you could look at it as being representative in terms of our children who attend Rowdeford, our parents and our staff actually, our numbers are much greater. And actually, you could look at it actually we should be more representative because of that.

David Paice

Okay. So that's a really interesting question.

Helen Jones

I mean that is things that you could feed into the consultation. I imagine that the other schools would argue otherwise. And so, we would need to ensure that you know we fairly represent those views. It's not for us to make a comment on that at this stage. But what we're trying to do is to get a solution that brings people equally together.

Judith

Here's the other comment that we would make if that's why we're starting the conversation now. Because you're going to want to start thinking about this and rumbling through those ideas and saying how would that impact on us? What difference does it make you know? So, I know that the other schools would say well if you look at the size of budgets you might say oh that school at times. So, there's lots of reason and everybody needs to have that conversation.

And I think the more you can start coming together now and having those conversations. It means when you get to that more formal stage of becoming the shadow governing body actually you say yeah. This is what the way we want to do it. We feel comfortable about this.

Helen Jones

And I think it's also important too. And I think what you're saying about such a shadow governing body, it can only operate for maximum one year.

David Paice

Right, that, it might be there. The suggestion here is that one recruits the principal or the chief executive officer in April in which case the actual school and therefore single governing body can be an operation from September. Therefore, you would go thanks very much. So, this next slide is around when you go from this kind of equity based thinking, that although at the moment two or three separate schools there is an aspiration to work as one.

So, once you get to the one bit then there is not equitable representation for each school because you've got one. So, it's only one head that that would be there, and you don't need as you know in terms of staffing. So, there's a kind of reduction. So, you just reflect. It's one school now but we've had some suggestions that came through previously. That looks a bit small for this size of school and that absolutely fine, that's why we'd love you tell us what you feel is appropriate.

This is your school. So, this is really important that we capture what you feel would be appropriate in terms of governance for that school.

Governor

Surely, you're not going to have a principal who is dashing from Trowbridge to Chippenham to here. So, you're going to have some sort of assistant head who's got responsibility for the two smaller sites. Wouldn't they be represented on the governing body?

David Paice

No not there. Well when I say no probably not because they couldn't be a staff member but again I would want to go back to that. But by standard it's the principal by their role. So, it's just the principal that would be reflecting that forward.

Helen Jones

I think I think it's really important too that it is a single school on three sites and that the principal is responsible, whatever we want to call them- principal, executive head or whatever. And then it will be determined by the governing body and the principal as to what the next level down would look like in terms of senior leadership team.

Governor

So I'm right in saying that the staffing structure is down to this school to decide about who's responsible for parts of the site.

Helen Jones

Yeah absolutely. Absolutely. Like any school is, nothing changes.

So instead of having a sponsor coming in and saying this is how it's going to be, it is very much the school itself. The principal, with the governing body, will make that decision supported by

the local authority. The local authority is going to have to be involved in terms of ensuring its 32 million is spent appropriately.

Governor

You know in the 32 million that you quoted, is that purely for the build and how are they going...Is there funding in addition for employing the new principal. And all those associated costs and also the cost of restructuring staffing.

And is that a separate pot?

Judith

So, we need to make the distinction between capital and revenue, so the capital, that 32 million covers all the things that we need to do with this site as it is. So, ensuring that all your environment here is good. And then building the additional places and ensuring that this site works well together as one site. None of that money is allocated to Larkrise or St. Nicholas on the basis that there will be no new additional provision there.

So, talking about funding the senior leadership team that changes, that has to come out of the revenue that's available through place funding. Now clearly, we will also be from the local authority bringing expertise which is why we've got the benefit of David with us here at the moment and others coming and the additional support that we can bring from our finance team, from our legal team. And that's one of the reasons why we particularly wanted to think about it as a maintain school so that we could use the expertise that was already readily available to you.

So, we will expect to work collectively to build that forward. But there isn't an expectation at the moment that we will be creating significant new pots to create revenue because the school's still got to operate within the place funding that already exists.

Governor

So, no new money for revenue.

Judith

Only in as much as there are additional pupils.

Governor

But clearly, it's going to be expensive to employ a principal and maybe some TUPE arrangement.

Judith

No TUPE.

So, the staff stay as being, they are on our books they stay on the books.

Helen Jones

And in terms of the fact that we may have to have a principal running at the same time as having three head teachers and then we have the local authority would need to look at how we supported that. So that no school's individual revenue budget is affected.

So, we acknowledge that there might be a something small like that in order to take it forward. But at the end of the day the running of the three schools has to run within the economies of scale. And of course, one of the issues that we know about is that it's very hard to run a school of say 50 children and offer a full senior leadership team and all the physio and all the rest of it. So, the expectation is that by creating the benefits of being together actually there are not necessarily potential savings but certainly efficiencies in terms of being able to run that all together.

Governor

Have you got a... We all know building works go over budget.

And you never know we might have rampant inflation with the changing political climate. I'm being as neutral as possible here. Do you have a contingency beyond the 32 million if costs run away with you?

David Paice

In modelling the finances for the feasibility study, we did look at various scenarios in order that we've taken a view on the risks inherent and costed those risks. Clearly, you're right. External things do happen, but we feel comfortable at this stage that that that funding envelope is sufficient and there is some flexibility in terms of the scenarios that we played in the figures that we eventually went with. So, there's some flexibility that we think we can accommodate but no more money than the 32.

Judith

Yes. So, in the first instance when we took to Cabinet, the idea of 20. We were telling them that's exactly the building costs. So that doesn't have fees in it and it doesn't have the contingencies and it doesn't have the site assessments and the feasibility studies. So, you can see the difference between the 20 and the 32. A lot of that was saying you can't assume this is always gonna go to plan. So, there's actually quite a lot of space within it to say we can work you know to this bigger figure but equally, so I think we need to be mindful of that.

Governor

Can I ask what the thinking is behind having one-year term for so many of these governors. I've been a governor for a year. I think I probably just got my head round it and I was a head teacher

in another school. I dread to think how a parent would feel after one year and then need to be re-elected.

David Paice

Yeah I totally agree. I purely put it there as a suggestion.

When you are confident that you know the roles in the governing body and that the team's got your confidence, it's a standard you go for a four-year term. I've just kind of suggested that where key, like the principal, would be a long-term person. The local authority would know for sure that who's the local authority person going to be, but the skill set in a period of time you might want to co-op people not for four years but for one because things are going to change.

You may want to, but you might not. Again, it's absolutely up to you. It was purely I put it low as a suggestion, just to kind of make you think how are you, how at what stage did you become confident but if again if you're absolutely confident from the off, particularly the work that you've done as a shadow governing body, that does need to be limited. But if you think no I think I think we're okay here. It's the movement from three schools where you've got through the equity-it is what's the right governance structure for this new school because it's a new easier to increase rather than saying, oh you're here for four and then it doesn't quite work out.

The new principal may have a view as who was elected to that governing body that maybe it's perhaps easier to say well you're only here for one.

Helen Jones

It is a suggestion, it's not part of the proposal-just getting the discussion going.

David Paice

Totally.

Governor

I would argue that you would probably need to stagger those terms otherwise you might have a bit of a cliff edge where suddenly everybody you know went. So, I think staggering the terms would be would be sensible.

Mike Loveridge (Head)

It's actually a really good point.

Helen Jones

Thank you everyone. Conscious of the time we have 10 minutes.

David Paice

Any other questions on that? Because that's largely it from a governor perspective. That's pretty much it.

Next slide is ready.

Judith

We slowed down on that one for you because obviously that's going to be particularly important to you. But this slide really is just to tell you a bit about where the work we're doing here fits in the bigger picture. So, you'll see on the graphic, we've done a little pink jigsaw piece to show that this is one piece of work which is part of a wider piece of work. So, across the county we're also increasing resource base places, we're increasing enhanced learning provision places where we're also increasing special school places in all the other schools as well.

In terms of Springfield south and north. You'll be aware there's a new provision down in the south at 32 extra places. And of course, we also were delighted when we were given the new school in the south as well so that's a new free school. That's going to be set up as an academy which again we're comfortable about the fact that we then get a mix of maintained schools and academies. That school will be for 150 new pupils who have ASD or social emotional and mental health concerns.

And that means that we're able to offer much wider provision. I think David it was something like 70 additional places this year. So even in this year we've already upped it. But of course, the benefit that we've had in some of the other schools is they still had land and classrooms to expand into and where we obviously got quite stuck here was that both Larkrise and St. Nicholas just had no option to expand at all, so we've had to think more broadly about how we take it forward. Of course, the other bit is the bottom here is about the SEND strategy and I was saying when I joined the local authority five years ago my first task was to write a SEND strategy which is now coming to its end it completes this Christmas.

And so there's also lots of work thinking about all of the children who have SEND and we were saying there is in fact about 3200 children who have an education health and care plan of which about 500 are in special schools. So putting that in context you can see the plan that we want to take forward will be for all those children and indeed all those children on something called SEN support which is those who have a plan but it's not necessarily got to the threshold of an education health and care plan.

And that's really about how we work across the whole of Wiltshire. So, we are working with our partners in health and in care in order that we think about every child and how they can be best met and that kind of fits back in with some of the conversations that we've been starting with the heads here about how do we share our knowledge. So how do we ensure that every child is

getting the support they need regardless of whether they're very early stages where they are incredibly complex and that there's something for each one of them.

And the other bit of course is talking about our independent special schools. You'll be aware that there are one or two in the county. Some of those are funded by the local authority and some of those are funded privately by parents. And then of course we have about I think it's about 120 children in total who are in independent schools and a lot of those are miles away. So, part of our work is also about saying how can we work with those independent schools and our own schools.

So potentially the children in the future don't have to go so far away because you know that's a real ask you know splitting up families, children travelling many miles to get to school. So, we really do want to think about ways in which we can keep them in county and that they can really benefit from what we're doing here. This year for the first year they call us a net exporter. It means we've got more children going out of our county to schools than coming into our county because we've just run out.

So, we're having to use schools in Bath, we're having to use schools in Swindon and we really want to get them so they can come to school here in Wiltshire. So, it's part of the bigger picture.

Is there anything you'd like to ask or comment on about how this fits into that bigger picture?

Governor

We have we've had about 20 percent increase in numbers this year. And we're pretty much full talking from a timetable perspective. Do you think we're going to get more numbers say next year?

Judith

I'm gonna say absolutely in terms of yes, numbers will go up. Where they're going to be placed, that's the piece of work we need to start doing now as well. So, I think it's one of the things that was quite complicated is while we talk about these big plans for 2023, actually in the meantime we've got to talk about 2020, 2021 and 2022. And we know that over that time we're going to have to think about where those children are going to go. So it may be that that potentially some children could come here but we will need to then think about how do we release the money so that we can start the planning and all the rest of it which is why the heads are talking now, even now, so that we can start thinking about that because we can't take our foot off the pedal and just think oh well you know 2023 it'll all be sorted and in the meantime you know.

So that decision making has to happen alongside it. But also, separately. So, we will make decisions about the amalgamation but in the meantime we'll also be talking about how do we ensure that come 2020 every child has the right place as well.

David Paice

And just to say that I think what we've been able to capture here is this kind of continuity of provision for the children, young people by bringing things together which we're celebrating-it's really exciting. So, we think the proposal has captured all of the good things that you wanted going forward, so that we're absolutely delighted. If you have again this is just the plea for anything that you'd like to say either in support of or in challenge to the proposal. Please, please do so but that the spirit of collaboration is really coming to the fore and I'm absolutely delighted for that.

Really appreciate your input. And the final slide is just saying any other questions at all about what we've just said or the process that we can capture in a few minutes.

Governor

Just one quick one. We know how we think about that. You say you Larkrise and St. Nic's because they were very anti the last time we spoke. Oh yeah, we had a meeting and I'm just wondering how they're feeling now.

David Paice

Yeah well, I'm delighted to say we've had lots of conversations with parent carer representatives and the mood music is very positive because as you say it's a compromise. So, we've really tried to listen to everybody's perspective and think well what's the right way forward. It seems that this proposal has captured that well. So, the parents that I spent time with and I speak almost daily to two parent carer representatives, it is positive. They think it's good and I'm delighted to say I'm working, I'm facilitating the hard work by the heads who are really coming together doing diligent work.

Let's get staff involved, let's get the governors involved. We'll be taking a clear lead from the heads who are working really collectively I think. Mike.

Mike Loveridge (Head)

I would agree with that David. I think that there is now an understanding from the other two head teachers-obviously I can't speak for their staff bodies- but an understanding from the other two head teachers that actually this is something that's worth taking forward and they know that they're on the same page

Governor

Sorry to put a spanner in the works but this appears to be a good compromise. However, you are still leaving open potential challenge. I hope not. I will see the bad side. I'm afraid that my work hat on me and the potential of a disagreement. And in 2023 when you built a new school here and it's all super-duper. And yet you've left open the door for potential problems about

deciding about the future of the St Nic's and Larkrise sites. How have you thought about managing that and have you thought about solutions to that or are you just going to put it in the cupboard?

Helen Jones

No. I mean obviously that was the decision that the cabinet made. And you know I think that will we'll be in a different setting in 2023. In fact, there will be a single head teacher, principal or executive whatever. There'll be a single governing body looking at it as a single school. So, I think I think yeah I think it's a different environment. Also, I can't help but think as well when people see the fabulous facilities and they, you know a lot of this has been quite rightly parents feeling very attached to a building you as well as the staff and everything else, and they have to gain confidence in the new and the vision they have to be part of shaping the vision and what is new.

And so it's really important as David say that we really get that momentum going and get them involved and get on with a new narrative. I think where we are now and where we'll be in 2023 is very different. I also want to say as well, we have to take into consideration by 2023, hopefully some of the wider work around education inclusion for children will be having an impact. We will see more children for whom it is more appropriate to be included in a mainstream school, maybe with some in-reach or outreach from this new school to facilitate that. That might help in terms of the increasing numbers but we also are acutely aware of the potential plans particularly around Chippenham around housing growth. So, you know again we won't really know for a couple of years what we can do and what the final local plan is going to be. So, I do think we're just going to be somewhere else. So, no we're not saying it's not going to be our problem we won't have to worry until 2023 but I just think this is all about getting the culture, the vision of a new school right first.

Judith

I think what we felt was that the conversation about buildings was getting in the way of all the good stuff that people wanted to talk about-about how they could work with children with SEND. So I think that's why the cabinet wanted to make the decision where they separated out the two decisions so that then we could create all the good work-the quality, the collaboration and all the inspiration going forward. And as Helen says you know when we first made the changes at Exeter House and so we created a whole new wing there, people immediately started saying Oh now I see. Oh yes, I want my child to be part of that. And it's quite fascinating you know as David says when we've been in conversation with the parent carers about the way they feel differently about things that they can see as opposed to just imagine. And so, I think we've got to use all that instead of trying to pretend that those things aren't important. We have to work with the fact that actually schooling is an emotional issue your children there rightly though an emotional issue and we have to work with that and enable people to make these changes bit by bit you know.

David Paice

Really appreciate your input and any other thoughts please, please feed them through.

Helen Jones

I believe you're going to send out the presentation.