

Consultation Feedback Form

Proposed Expansion of Wheelock Primary School, Crewe Road, Sandbach

You are invited to comment on Cheshire East Council's proposal to expand Wheelock Primary School from a 210 place, 1 form of entry primary school to a 315 place, 1.5 form of entry primary school for completion in 2013.

Before completing this form, please refer to the consultation document, which provides the rationale for this proposal.

Please tick the relevant boxes to indicate your views and any comments you may wish to make.

Do you support the proposal to expand Wheelock Primary School?	Please tick (✓)		
	Yes	No	No View
	☐	☒	☐

Comments (if any)

The consultation process for this proposal did not fully consult with key stakeholders before going to consultation therefore creating a proposal that is flawed in terms of the impact it will have in the short and the long term on all children's education in the Sandbach and Haslington school community. Local headteachers are identified in the Equality Impact Assessment as key stakeholders but have not been party to any consultation until invited to a meeting on 30th October by which time a confidentially conducted feasibility study had been fully completed, the project had gone out to tender, planning permission is soon to be submitted and parents and staff at Wheelock Primary are announcing to the local community that the expansion is happening from September 2013. At the consultation meeting with officers for local headteachers and Chairs of Governors on 30th October 2012 no minutes were taken by officers even though this had been questioned by those invited at the start of the meeting. I do not believe that views can be fully and accurately represented without minutes to record the discussions of all parties. Overall I believe the consultation process has not met the fair and high standards we expect of Cheshire East.

The proposal creates a school that will in the future will be 1.5 form entry. This proposal contradicts the council's own school organisation plan, recently consulted on, to create in the future whole form entry schools. This proposal will in fact reduce the number of whole form entry schools in Sandbach and Haslington in the future, leaving only one of the eight schools organised as a whole form entry school. If feasibility studies had extended initially to the other schools there are solutions to the current need to increase the number of places across the area which will also create a greater number of schools with whole form entry PANs. This in the long term would create schools which can deliver a coherent and progressive curriculum more effectively and therefore secure higher standards. Whilst the officers argue Wheelock is a popular school the impact of creating a 1.5 entry school with mixed age classes will possibly contribute to making the school less popular because of the new mixed age characteristic being created.

In the short term the building of four classrooms at Wheelock would give an immediate solution that matches the number of places required for reception applications in Sandbach and Haslington and particularly the Wheelock area. However the creation of classrooms for future year groups by September 2013 will immediately increase the number of surplus places for other year groups on completion of the project. No guarantee can be given by the

LA that admissions to the new build will be restricted to entry at reception only. The overall surplus created would for a number of years be above the level of surplus places at which the LA has indicated in its School Organisation Plan that it wishes to operate at. Whilst surplus places allow for parental choice within the locality and for families moving into the area it will be at a level which will impact directly on the numbers on roll in other schools locally because a critical number of pupils will be able to transfer from other schools from year groups other than reception which local headteachers have informed officers will impact hugely on their schools' organisation, curriculum delivery and staffing. The advantage for one school, Wheelock, should not create disadvantage for other schools.

I question why feasibility studies were not carried out on at least two other schools locally in order to ensure the predicted shortfall of places over the next five academic years is resolved with a long term Best Value solution to ensure education for all children in Sandbach and Haslington is planned effectively for the future. Elworth CE is a popular school and closer to some of the families who historically have been in the Wheelock catchment which has grown due to housing development in Ettiley Heath. I understand pupils from the growing Ettiley Heath, part of the historic catchment area, are transported by bus to Wheelock Primary and therefore continued inclusion in the Wheelock catchment would require increased transport which would have an environmental impact. Offley Primary is also a popular school who temporarily increased its PAN in 2012 at the LA's request. This school has a large site with spacious premises due to its reduction to a 45 PAN as an outcome of TLC a few years ago. It would be easier and more cost effective to increase this school to a 60 PAN again and as they are still rolling through the new pre TLC 60 PAN this would not have such an impact on the movement of pupils from other schools from other year groups as the overall number of surplus places across the local area would not be as significantly increased until the complete roll through of the new 45 PAN at Wheelock would be.

In discussions between officers and headteachers at the second consultation meeting arranged for headteachers and Chairs of Governors on 9th November a number of headteachers of the Sandbach and Haslington schools indicated higher current numbers of surplus places than the officers indicated they were aware of. I would urge the officers to look carefully at actual number of surplus and required places using actual figures available from schools rather than just relying on the desktop exercise they told us had informed the proposal. Only a few years ago my own school and another in the locality reduced our PANs as the outcome of TLC and we are now seeing that the solution agreed then was perhaps misinformed by data predictions.

I fully understand the current lack of school places across Sandbach and the predictions being made due to the actual and likely future housing developments in the area. However, I do not see the current proposal to increase Wheelock as the long term solution to getting education provision right to meet need and parental choice in the area. I would also add that the Equality Impact Assessment is not accurate as;

1. The current proposal is not benefitting all young people and their parents and carers in the Sandbach area.
2. Key identified stakeholders have not been sufficiently consulted early enough for their input to be fully taken into account.
3. The proposal will not positively impact on the number of school places for primary age children as the increase will have a negative impact on children in other schools if their numbers on roll drop significantly over the next few years due to this proposal.
4. No risk assessments have been carried out on the impact of the proposals on other individual local schools.
5. The proposal will not necessarily have a marginally positive impact on young people and parents with a disability because the provision of additional places will overall provide sufficient places closer to person's place of residence as some of the catchment for Wheelock is actually closer to another school.
6. Pupils from socio-economic disadvantaged groups in other schools in the area may be affected by the proposal because of the destabilisation the proposal will cause to the other schools.
7. The assessment considers the impact on community cohesion as neutral and evidence from the current concerns being raised by headteachers and governors over the way this proposal has been developed is already impacting negatively on the community cohesion

between the schools.

8. The proposal and its consultation process is not engendering a positive reaction from the wider local community and is not supporting good relationships between the wider school community and the Council.

9. Further local intelligence and data gathering is required before the end of the consultation period as illustrated in our discussions with officers at meeting on 30.10.12 and 9.11.12.

Thanking you in anticipation for your full consideration of my comments.

Please tick the following box(s) to indicate any of the following that apply to you:

	Please Tick (✓)
Parent/Carer of Present Pupil(s)	☐
Governor	☐
Member of School Staff	☒
Pupil	☐
Other (please specify)	

Name:Lynn Treadway	Date:19.11.12
Address:Sandbach Community Primary, Crewe Sandbach CW11 4NS	Signed:Lynn Treadway

Please return this form to:

Cheshire East Council, School Organisation and Capital Strategy, Delamere House, Delamere Street, Crewe CW1 2LL **by the closing date of 23 November 2012.**