

**School Organisation Meeting**

**Appendix 2.4**

**Date: 25 September 2013**

**Venue: Offley Primary School**

**Attendees:**

**Schools:-**

Pauline Bailey –Offley Primary  
Jenny Davies –Offley Primary  
Ben Cox –The Dingle Primary  
Margaret Blease-Bourne –Elworth Hall  
Di Morrison –Sandbach Community Primary  
Lynn Treadway –Sandbach Community Primary  
Karen Samples –Elworth CE Primary  
Eddie Lea – Elworth CE Primary  
Lesley Montgomery – Wheelock Primary  
Jenny Fitzhugh –Haslington Primary

**Officers;-**

Barbara Dale (BD) – School Admissions and Organisation Manager  
Janine Smart (JS) - Capital and Land Development Manager  
Simon Hodgkiss(SH) – Land and Sites Co-ordinator  
Sharon McKeown - Capital Development Officer  
Val Simons – Pupil Place Planning Officer

**Introductions**

Background by BD – purpose of the meeting today is to update on the forecasts following approval for the expansion of Wheelock, latest housing developments approved and those included in the draft Local Plan together with their potential impact on forecasts, further school expansions required. As the information was relayed comments and questions were invited and responded to by officers.

Question around the Haslington schools, where do they feature – although part of Crewe LAP and admit more pupils from the Crewe area than Sandbach, recognise contacts with Sandbach schools and for overall planning purposes they are included in the Sandbach Planning Area but much of the data provided today concentrates on the 6 town schools as indications are that this is the area where the additional places will be required.

Forecast data shared – relates to Reception through to year 6 and based on October 2012 school census. Indications are a shortfall of 258 places, across the planning area with 227 across the 6 Sandbach town schools, by 2018. This shortfall takes into account the approved expansion of Wheelock Primary. New forecasts will be produced following the October 2013 School census

However, based on these October 2012 forecasts LA now considering further school expansions. This scenario had been discussed at previous meetings and based on the options put forward by the group at those meetings LA now looking at the expansion of

Offley Primary from 1.5FE to 2FE and Elworth CE from 40 to 45 PAN (1.5FE) with the proposed expansion of Elworth CE being linked to known housing developments within its catchment area. 3 housing developments are now on site in the Sandbach area, 2 in Elworth CE catchment and 1 in Wheelock's with 1 further development imminent.(also in Elworth CE catchment area)

BD confirmed that the expected pupil yield from 2 of these developments (Canal Fields and Fodens) is already included in the October 2012 forecasts, additional ones will be included in the October 2013 forecasts. When deciding at what point to include additional pupils into the forecasts LA looks to Section 106 and has it been signed? (developers can't start on site until section 106 has been signed). Then phases the children in based on 40 houses being completed each year which equates to 7 primary aged pupils per year. Start the phasing from Reception intake and whilst appreciate that children won't all be reception age have no way of predicting how many of each age group so assumes one point of entry.

JS explained that pupil yield is calculated as an average for the whole of CE based on latest census data and takes into the account the number of pupils in the borough divided by the number of 2 bedroom plus dwellings. Current pupil yield equates to 18 primary aged and 13 secondary aged pupils per 100 houses. Need to be mindful that any Section 106 monies secured from developers has to be spent in accordance with the terms of the agreement , and this may include where it is to be spent and by when.

Question raised is any work undertaken to determine where the additional children from housing developments come from? are they new families to the area or just movement of existing families. BD confirmed no work along those lines has been undertaken as yet because no completed developments since the formation of school org team. Work of this nature would be undertaken in the future and although some movement of existing families is inevitable must consider that those vacated houses would be filled, expected increase in immigration, numbers of women of child age bearing age increasing etc.

Accuracy of 2013 forecasts were questioned – if the expected intake for Reception 2013 was wrong then brings into question all other figures. BD acknowledged that it is all about data and can only base the proposals on the current data provided. LA has to plan 2 years in advance (internal procedures, formal consultation, planning approval and potential building works) and although LA has made some changes to the forecasting methodology review is ongoing and LA is working towards achieving a much longer forecasting period.

LA are concerned about introducing too much surplus into the area and undermining existing local schools and that is why a phased approach to the expansion of Elworth CE to 1.5FE rather than straight to 2FE is being proposed. As the proposed expansion is connected to housing developments, and the uncertainty regarding housing, it's safer to expand on a phased approach even though this will incur additional costs for the LA and additional disruption for the school

Statistics circulated regarding potential impact of additional pupils from new housing on the current forecasts and how this would be managed by the proposed schools expansions. Indications are that there would still be a shortfall of places however, this would need to be reviewed when new forecasts are produced in October 2013. In addition should be noted that the housing developments (and hence additional pupils) considered only included the 4 sites previously mentioned. Additional sites such as Albion Chemicals, Abbeyfields,

Capricorn, Congleton Road are excluded and if these sites come on line further school expansion may be required.

Concern was expressed that no new schools were being proposed and expanding schools on this ad hoc basis could change the nature of the school and additional infrastructure required for a bigger school is not always in place.

**BD** explained that whilst gradual expansions may not be ideal, there are regulations to safeguard playing fields/ playground space etc and LA would work with schools to ensure suitable facilities are provided. However, priority for members and the Council is the protection of existing schools and reiterated that due to a number of uncertainties the current phased approach is the safest option. In addition Section 106 monies is not usually received as a lump sum at the start of a development but is phased in over its duration and therefore, the LA has to be confident that it has the finance in place to support the school expansion, pending receipt for developers, as it would be required to meet any shortfall.

**JS** confirmed that working practices are improving, LA now aware of planning applications and SH works closely with planning department colleagues. When the Local Plan is adopted will have a better overview and should protect the LA against ad hoc developments and although the Local Plan will not stop developers from submitting planning applications on alternative sites it will give the LA better grounds for refusal and a stronger case against potential appeals.

Currently any Section 160 contributions secured in respect of Education has to be spent on schools. However, when the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is introduced this will change and current restrictions will not apply. CIL contributions will be based on a set figure per square meter of housing but contributions will probably still be phased and will go into one LA "pot" and the different departments will have to submit bids based on need. Members will have to agree the bids and they are aware that education will be a priority and has a strategic duty to provide sufficient places.

The expansion of Elworth CE to 1.5 FE is supported by anticipated receipts of Section 106 monies, but as previously mentioned receipts are not guaranteed and LA would have to fund any shortfall. LA is currently exploring temporary funding of the expansion pending receipts of Section 106 monies. The LA currently don't have anticipated Section 106 monies to support expansion to 2FE.

Expansion of Offley to 2FE is funded from Targeted Basic Need, and follows a successful bid for capital to the Education Funding Agency. This programme is intended to provide new, school places in locations where need is demonstrated. Including Offley, the LA were successful in 3 of their bids with the requirement that the money is spent and the additional places are provided by September 2015. Any unspent money has to be refunded to the Funding Agency.

Statutory consultation is required for the proposed expansion of Offley as the changes, if approved, would increase the capacity of the school by more than 30 pupils and by more than 25%. Statutory consultation is not required in respect of Elworth CE's expansion to 1.5 FE because it is not above 25% growth (would be if expanded to 2FE) but still have to take proposal through some internal procedures to approve expansion and funding.

Officers will now progress the internal procedures in respect of both schools and if approved, the formal consultation for Offley expansion should commence late November.

As both proposals require building works they would both remain subject to the usual planning application and approval.

**Other issues discussed.**

Proposed housing development at Haslington – 260 houses with projection of 47 primary aged pupils. Development is in The Dingle catchment area and Ben already met with developers. No application in yet (developer enquiry stage). Current forecasts may not secure any Section 106 monies but could depend on when application is actually submitted and if CIL in place by then.

2<sup>nd</sup> development at Haslington, Vicarage Road, - 44 houses potential pupil yield 8 primary pupils.

Hind Heath Development - Hind Heath Road is classed as hazardous route, was a footpath included in the planning approval. If so was this to towards Ettiley Heath and Wheelock?

Question - Is there a strategic view towards having 1FE or 2FE schools or is it on a needs basis. BD. Whilst recognise the organisation preference and ease of 1FE or 2FE schools that is not the driving factor and not always possible. Have to look at expansions on an area need basis Some school sites will not allow for further expansion, even to 1FE, in some areas all existing schools may already be at 1FE or 2FE yet need additional spaces therefore, in exception circumstances may need to consider a 2.5FE or 3FE school.

BD confirmed would return to the group at a later date with updates on forecasts and Local Plan. In the meantime, and assuming formal consultation approved, schools will be kept updated during the formal consultation process regarding the proposed expansion of Offley.

**Actions.**

**VS – Send Pupil Distribution maps to The Dingle and Haslington**

**SH – Check planning approval for Hind Heath Road re footpath.**