



Services to People

Parent Meeting Response

MEETING FOR	Consultation of Merger of Park Primary School and Tower Nursery
DATE OF MEETING	1st March 2011
VENUE	Alloa Academy
CHAIR	Craig Machan
OFFICERS PRESENT	Lesley Robertson, Sharon Evenden, Kirsteen Carmichael, Eileen Turnbull
APPROX IN ATTENDANCE	2
ELECTED MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE	0
RELIGIOUS REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE	0
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE	0
MINUTES TAKEN BY	Alison Bryce

Craig Machan (CM) who was the Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Council officials in attendance.

CM confirmed the consultation was taking place in accordance with the Schools Consultation Act 2010.

CM then introduced Lesley Robertson (LR) who was giving the presentation.

LR informed the meeting that a consultation had commenced in the Summer of 2010, but due to some inconsistencies in procedures the consultation was stopped to ensure compliance with statute. There were further meetings with parents who came up with a second option, which is why there is now a further consultation.

LR said there were now opportunities to move the school and nursery operationally with one Head Teacher and that there are currently vacancies within both the school and the nursery for a Head Teacher. There was also the need to look at potentially reducing the number of Council buildings.

The two options proposed are:-

1. Move Tower Nursery School into the building of Park Primary School
2. Retain the nursery school in its current building and operate it as the nursery class of Park Primary School

The advantages for Option 1 are:-

- ✓ Education 3-12 would be offered in the one building
- ✓ Parents dropping children off at the same place
- ✓ No need to move to separate building for use of facilities e.g. lunch
- ✓ Staff able to work together informally
- ✓ Easier to share resources/expertise

The disadvantages are:-

- ✎ Primary School Support Services would need to be relocated
- ✎ Part of the school would need to be refurbished
- ✎ Refurbishment costs are estimated at £200,000

LR showed a map of the locality of the school and the nursery and said there is a very short distance between the school and the nursery.

The advantages of Option 2 are:-

- ✓ Established outdoor play and learning areas can continue to be used
- ✓ Enhanced transition arrangements for pupils who will attend Park Primary
- ✓ Continuity in children's learning at the early level of curriculum for excellence
- ✓ Continued use of purpose built accommodation

The disadvantages are:-

- ✎ Adaptations to current perimeter fence will cost approx £3,500
- ✎ Does not reduce the size of the school estate

LR outlined that there is currently purpose built accommodation and well developed playgrounds which are a huge advantage to the proposal to go for option 2. The disadvantage is a small cost with regard to opening up the fence between the school and nursery in order to give ease of access to the Head Teacher, whilst maintaining security and ensuring this is not compromised.

The educational benefits would potentially be:-

The pupils at Tower Nursery School and Park Primary School would benefit from realignment to a nursery class attached to Park Primary School. The implementation of this proposal would offer educational advantages from wider management support, early intervention, enhanced staff development opportunities, improved transition and enhanced learning experiences. A quality experience would be enhanced for more than the pupils of Tower Nursery.

Staff would benefit from working together more closely and learning with a wide range of teaching and non-teaching colleagues as well as sharing expertise so that all pupils can benefit from their extensive range of skills. Nursery children will be actively involved in the wider life of the school. They will be able to attend fun events, use the gym hall and attend school assemblies more easily than is the case at present.

One Head Teacher for the nursery and the school with a management team heavily involved in the running of classes.

Andrena Johnstone, (AJ) Parent, Park Primary School asked what happened to the nursery budget – was this kept separate? LR said the staffing ratio was 1:10 in nursery and this was the reason why the budget was kept separate.

Nursery parents will be able to join the parent council and other parents' activities which will enable them to become fully involved the establishment before formal schooling begins and to influence plans for the future.

Option 2 is now the most feasible one for the Council.

LR asked if there were any questions.

- 1. AJ - My worry is for Park School. I went to the school and my children attend also. Adrienne Aitken (AA), Acting Head Teacher always has time for parents and I would be concerned if one Head Teacher was taking over the running of both the school and the nursery that they would be hard to get a hold of. My priority is Park School and the running of the school and I need someone there.***

Lesley Roberston

AA has expertise of working in a large school with a nursery. The first few weeks of a new set up would mean the Head Teacher may have to find their feet and need a settling in period but I can see no reason why the Head Teacher would not be available for parents.

Nursery parents had the same concerns and I would expect the Head Teacher to be available to parents in both the school and the nursery.

2 AR- With the saving of one Head Teacher post, will this mean any savings would go back into the school?

Lesley Robertson

Every Head Teacher job in Scotland is job sized by using a specific toolkit to work out how much the salary should be. The job would need to be re-sized due to the additional responsibilities, the facts will be put into the toolkit and that is the salary that would be paid.

3 AJ – Will the savings be put back into the School?

Lesley Robertson

Some of the savings may be used but it will not be necessarily traceable into Park but would be used within the Education budget. During the budget consultation, 75% of the people said they would rather have fewer buildings and the money spent on education. This is part of the reason the strategy is set up as it is. In other parts of the budget consultation, 75% of the public thought that nurseries should be part of a Primary School.

4 AJ – If the option for separate buildings went ahead, could the Council turn round in a few years time and change this proposal?

Lesley Robertson

If any changes were proposed there would need to be further consultation under the current legislation.

AJ said she had no further questions and was quite happy. She said she was more worried about the school and how it would affect her own children. LR said she should see no difference.

The meeting concluded at 7.05 p.m.