

Report on Questions Taken to Meeting with Education Officers 20.07.16

Q.If you close one of the schools will the land released be sold off for house build?

A.No definitely not . The land will remain in the Dept of Education and will be used for the benefit of children and families?

(This begs the question. If the Dept cannot sustain the land for school provision ,how can it afford to sustain family friendly projects? How long will it be before the land is sold for further development?)

Q.Why not a more equitable distribution of the population of the three schools?

A. Does not solve the problem of cost .A class of seven or eight or even 20 is a privilege we cannot afford to offer across the Borough.. We must provide equality of opportunity for all our children.the savings we make will be distributed in other areas of the Borough.

Q.By closing one school you would save £150,000 plus VAT rebate.. Surely this is a very small saving in Education budget terms.?

A.The £150,000 is a very small amount... The main savings lie elsewhere, staffing and support staff , caretaking, maintenance , utilities and resources. We get excited about the wonderful opportunity this is to provide the children with the very best resources on just two sites!

Q.Are any of the three schools in deficit at present

A.No!

Q.Well then why not maintain a perfectly good operating system with three Good and Outstanding schools. At least why not give it more time to see how the demand grows as a result ***of the*** 800 houses being built on the edge of Shevington and the uncompleted build in Shevington itself. Surely a significant proportion of these children will choose to come to Shevington?

A.Parental choice dictates that the norm is to send children to schools in their own Community which are natural feeder schools to the local High School. It will take seven years for houses to be sold and families to settle and for increased numbers of children to emerge. Ours is a seven year plan. We cannot sustain the present situation for all that time.

Q.Seven years? *Is this a viable statistic . By what formula are these numbers calculated?*

A.These are the accepted planning statistical formulae

Q.Standish traffic infrastructure cannot sustain more families accessing Woodfold or St. Wilfred's?Standish schools are already at full capacity.Do you intend to build a new school in Standish?

A. We have no plans to build another school in Standish!!

(not yet perhaps but they will have to eventually) do they plan to expand Woodfold / St Wilfred's ?)

Q. The effects on children of not being able to walk to school and the environmental pollution of increased traffic is of serious importance to the health of our community .

A. We are aware and are in touch with relevant departments. When the decision is made we will consider all the options to minimise these problems

(Should not such considerations be a very important integral part of the plan.)

Q. One of the options was to conflate two schools and maintain the name of the school which moves.

A. No! We never said that. We do not know what any new school would be called. This would be a matter for the school and the community.

Q? To conflate two schools would create a Reception of 45 children . This is not a legal option

A. No we would then have two reception classes or a joint reception / year one!

(There is no saving of money here)

Q. Why expand the High School and close a primary school.

A. The expansion of the High School is a response to demand from Wigan West and Orrell... Nothing to do with increased house build in Standish! We do not anticipate any increased demand at Junior level for places in Shevington from those areas.

Q. Have you not contributed to the fall in numbers by having a three year dialogue with governors and the head. Rumour would cause numbers to fall dramatically.

A. No we don't believe there has been any rumour ahead of the Consultation . We would have known of it.

Q. Is this a done deal?

A. No it will go to Scrutiny . At that point District Councillors can call for further investigation.

The final decision will be made by me, James Winterbottom.

(Prepared by members who attended the meeting with the LA.)