

The Organisation of Primary Education in Tibshelf

Informal Public Consultation

Introduction

Derbyshire County Council wishes to consult all interested parties on the organisation of the schools in Tibshelf for the education of primary-aged children.

Background

The former Tibshelf School site occupies an area of 58,839 square metres in the centre of the village of Tibshelf. Tibshelf School moved to its new location on the edge of the village in November 2013. At the time of leaving, there were extensive school buildings on site, playing fields, tennis courts, an all-weather pitch and a changing block. The all-weather pitch and changing block had been funded with a partial grant from the Football Foundation. All the sports facilities were replicated on the new school site and are available for community use. Since the school's departure, the buildings (with the exception of the changing block) have been demolished on safety grounds. The changing block and playing fields have continued to be used by a local football club and the athletics club. There is access across the site to the allotments.

In April/May 2016, there was a public consultation to consider the future of primary education in Tibshelf and the disposal of surplus land on the former Tibshelf School site. Derbyshire County Council's Cabinet considered the outcome of that consultation in July 2016 and the decision was made to apply for permission to dispose of the surplus land. The decision on the future of primary education in Tibshelf would be the subject of further consultation. The Education and Skills Funding Agency approved the disposal of surplus land in 2018 and therefore the Authority is wishing to formulate its plans for the site.

Issues for Consultation

The availability of a site on the former Tibshelf School site creates an opportunity to review the organisation of primary school provision in the village. There is scope to effectively merge the two schools and create a primary school. Primary schools are seen to have a number of advantages over separate infant and junior schools, and in recent years, a number of infant and junior schools have merged. The advantages are set out below:

- A primary school is able to organise and coordinate the teaching across the primary years, and there is no need for a transition between infant and junior schools; the transition from infant to junior can be unsettling for some children and impact on educational progress.
- The Infant and Junior schools in Tibshelf are not located on the same sites and, as a consequence, parents may have children in two schools at separate locations within the town, presenting travel and time issues in getting children to school.

The 'merger' of the two schools could be achieved in one of two ways. The first is for the two governing bodies to decide to form a 'federation'. Under a federation, the two schools can have a single governing body and head teacher and effectively operate as a single school, although they remain distinct in some respects such as separate Ofsted inspections, budgets and admissions. The alternative would be for the Authority to undertake a formal legal process to close the two existing schools and open a new primary school. Under current legislation, the new primary school can remain a maintained school under Derbyshire County Council. In financial terms however it would operate with a single budget and this may adversely affect the viability of the school. The federation option has many of the benefits of a single school but can be put in place with less disruption.

Derbyshire County Council is proposing that the all-weather pitch and changing block should remain and an area of 28,700 square metres be retained to build a new school which would offer modern facilities and enhance the quality of education.

The Junior School is on a very small site and there is no scope for expansion.

In order to access the former Tibshelf School site, since the last consultation, it has become clear that the Infant & Nursery School would at least have to be partially demolished to provide acceptable access for any development and therefore if the decision is made to utilise the site for a school, the new building would accommodate both the junior and infant pupils regardless of the organisation of the school. The surplus land including the site of the current Town End Junior School would then be available for disposal.

Funding

The proposed project will be developed in more detail if this consultation establishes support for the proposal. The cost of building a new school to accommodate all of the primary-aged children in Tibshelf is estimated to be in the region of £7m. The value of the land for disposal is estimated to be around £2.35m. The balance of funding would be provided by Derbyshire County Council from its Capital Programme. The details of the project, including the access to the site, would be subject to further consultation as part of the planning process.

Consultation Questions

1. Do you prefer the Junior and Infant Schools to remain on separate sites?
2. Do you think Town End Junior School and Tibshelf Infant & Nursery School should be co-located and operate as a federation?
3. Do you think the Junior and the Infant & Nursery School should close and be re-established as a new primary school?

Consultation

Cabinet will consider all views expressed during this consultation before deciding on the future of primary education in Tibshelf. The consultation will commence on Thursday 14 March 2019. If you require the consultation document in any alternative format such as large print or braille please contact Sue Pegg. If you would like to respond to this consultation, please e-mail or write to Sue Pegg (sue.pegg@derbyshire.gov.uk) Development Section, Chatsworth Hall, Chesterfield Road, Matlock. DE4 3FW by **Friday 10 May 2019**.