

# **Report to the Governing Body of Princess Frederica CE VA Primary School regarding permanent expansion by 1FE**

**17 May 2013**

## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Governing Body of Princess Frederica CE VA Primary School to decide if it has sufficient information with which to commence a statutory consultation on permanent expansion by one form of entry (1FE) from September 2014.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The council continues to experience a shortfall of primary school places, the council's plans on how the demand will be met were set out in a report to the Council Executive in August 2012. A further update to that report will be considered by the Executive committee on 20 May 2013. All Executive reports can be found on the council's website. Both reports explain the number of Brent schools that have been or are currently included within the expansion programme.
- 2.2 Princess Frederica is a popular and oversubscribed good school serving an area of demand in Brent. In November 2012 the council asked the Governing Body to consider expanding by one form of entry. The school have been working with the council since November to progress decision making.
- 2.3 A feasibility study was commissioned by the Council to indicate it was possible to expand the school by 1FE. Various meetings have been held with officers who had also confirmed that the council would be unable to proceed with further design development without the Governing Body commitment to begin the statutory consultation process. The school have undertaken several consultation exercises with both the school and local community, and these remain open. Information from this consultation has informed this report.
- 2.4 The Governing Body decided in a meeting on 21 March 2013 that it had insufficient information to proceed with the statutory consultation process for expansion.
- 2.5 In a meeting held between the council's newly appointed Programme Manager for Schools Capital Programme, the Chair of Governors and the Deputy Headteacher on 22 April 2013 it was agreed that there were some pieces of work that could be undertaken to enable further information to be provided, although this would not include design development.
- 2.6 This report sets out a full response to concerns that have been raised by and through Governors by the community. It incorporates as much information as can reasonably be provided at this stage. The report aims to cover those areas of concern that have been raised to date but recognises that other issues may arise that will need to be addressed. The council will operate in good faith and work in an open and transparent way with the Headteacher and Governors of Princess Frederica to ensure that the setting up and running of any new provision enhances rather than detracts from the current performance and reputation of the school. Senior council officers will work with the school to

resolve any problems, attending management and governing body meetings as appropriate.

### **3 Details on the Building**

#### Building Project Personnel

- 3.1 The council has appointed Curl La Tourelle Architects from the Haringay framework to provide design services for up to 11 schools within the phase 2 and 3 schools capital programme. The practice has extensive education experience including work in Brent and widely with the London Diocesan Board for Schools. One of the founding partners Sarah Curl will personally be involved in the project as well as a dedicated project architect supported by a team of colleagues including those from other disciplines such as structural engineers, mechanical and electrical engineers and landscape architects.
- 3.2 The project will be managed overall by a council project manager. The project manager will be the schools main point of contact throughout the design and construction process. As well as managing the design team and ensuring the project stays on programme and on budget, they will hold regular meetings with the school to ensure everyone is kept up to date. The project manager will be responsible for making sure all relevant parties sign off designs at key milestones. In the case of Princess Frederica this will involve the Governing Body and London Diocesan Board for Schools. In addition to the regular liaison, the project manager will be the point of contact if the school has any concerns during the construction process.
- 3.3 Project progress will be overseen by the Programme Manager - Schools Capital Programme and will be reported through a council governance structure which includes representation from the most senior levels of management within the council.

#### Works Required for Expansion

- 3.4 The Council will complete all building work required to expand the school by 1FE. For internal areas, the Government's current building guidelines will be used, which are described as the EFA (Education Funding Agency) Baseline Designs. There has been no revision to the requirements for external area so Building Bulletin 99 is used.
- 3.5 A feasibility study was undertaken by HLM Architects for the Council and the school commissioned sketches of an expansion from Walters & Cohen. The school preferred the options proposed by Walters & Cohen. CLTA have undertaken a thorough review of the feasibility study (and additional sketches) in conjunction with a site visit to the school with members of all key design disciplines and a meeting with some Governors to re-confirm the schools priorities for the project.
- 3.6 The councils view at this stage of design is that the following works would be included within the scope of the project:
  - Additional point of access to the site to help ease congestion
  - Re-location of the main entrance and associated office function to have a better relationship with the existing playground
  - Extensions to the ground and first floor halls

- Re-location of staff facilities
  - Re-location of kitchen
  - Additional classrooms and re-designation of existing classrooms to enable year group clusters
  - Re-location of library to a central shared facility
  - Additional outdoor play space on the roof of the new building
- 3.7 The outline scope of works described above relates to three sketch options developed by CLTA. The scope of works is subject to review based on more detailed design development with the school, the planning service and the cost consultants; as well as other information such as structural surveys. This next stage in the design development will begin if and when Governors agreed to expand and full resources are committed to the project.
- 3.8 The construction of the new elements of the building will be of a high quality with a minimum 60 year lifespan. It is anticipated that off-site construction will be used as much as possible to minimise disruption on site.
- 3.9 All design proposals will have to be formally submitted to the Planning Service in a planning application. This will ensure that the height and scale of any new building is appropriate in the school and local environment.

#### External site area

- 3.10 One of the primary concerns raised through consultation is about the shortage of external play area and how this would be affected by an expansion.
- 3.11 A topographical survey was undertaken which recorded all the features on the land including levels. This together with the Ordnance Survey plans available enables the design team to accurately provide the external site areas. The table in appendix 1 shows the BB99 formula (for confined sites), the existing site areas, the areas required in BB99 for the existing 2FE school, the area required for a 3FE school and the areas that would be provided for the proposed 3FE school.
- 3.12 In summary this indicates that there is currently a 89m<sup>2</sup> excess in external play area without including the habitat area in Network Rail land. The difference between this assessment and that shown in the feasibility study which indicates a shortfall is due to the designation of areas to be included within the calculation. Expanding the school to 3FE and including the rooftop play area as proposed would increase the excess area to 374m<sup>2</sup>. These calculations include the habitat area as this is a valued part of the school landscape.
- 3.13 The school have entered negotiations with Network Rail to formalise the existing use of the habitat area on the embankment. The council will assist the school in negotiations where possible and appropriate. This land would not be built upon but would continue to be used as a habitat area for children.
- 3.14 The additional roof top play area will enable better designation and variety of the external play areas throughout the site. This will start to address some of the concerns raised by parents about the number of children on the site and the impact particularly on smaller children. The development of landscape proposals will form part of the next stage of design development.

## Traffic and access

- 3.15 The council commissioned an independent interim transport assessment for the school to assess the current traffic and access issues, which are reported as concerns by the school and parents. This is an interim report to inform design development and a full report would be developed for the planning application.
- 3.16 The transport consultant recommended the following for Princess Frederica:
- Transport statement is produced as part of the planning application for the school
  - Detailed parking beats are undertaken at specified areas
  - Meet with school and school travel co-ordinator at LBB to discuss potential school travel planning measures to mitigate against the impact of the development
  - Incorporate a pedestrian waiting area within the curtilage of the building as part of the new design
  - Open the gates to the school earlier, prior to drop off and pick up periods to enable parents to wait on site and not on the pavement or highway outside the school entrance
  - Increase school presence outside the school entrance during the peak drop off and pick up times to deter dropping off and picking up on School keep Clear Lines
  - Revise existing School Travel Plan to tie in with new Primary School
  - Incorporate minimum cycle parking standards for staff
  - Incorporate appropriate cycle and scooter parking for pupils to enable cycles and scooters to be parked on site and not on the pedestrian guard railing
  - Engage in further discussions with LBB Highways Officers and School Travel Plan Coordinator with regard to existing parking permits allocated to the school and for the two school mini-buses – there may have to be on-site mini bus parking accommodated within the design
- 3.17 In addition to this LBB Highways have confirmed the following:
- Princess Frederica are aware of the council's intention to withdraw on-street parking permits and are working with the School Travel Plan team to raise their Travel Plan up from Bronze to Silver standard by the end of the school year so that some permits can be retained from October 2013.
  - The streets around the school are fairly narrow, so do not offer a great deal of scope for footway widening however a localised widening of the footway directly outside the entrance on Purves Road might be possible. The extent of guardrailing and its location on the pavement could be reviewed.
  - There are no current proposals to alter traffic management arrangements on surrounding streets – Purves Road and College Road already have road humps and a zebra crossing has recently been installed on College Road outside the school.
  - The width of the bridge on College Road is narrow and the footways are particularly narrow at only about 1.5m. It may be possible to increase the width of the footway on at least one side to 2m subject to there being no structural issues relating to the bridge.
- 3.18 As part of the expansion project the council will continue discussions with LBB Highways and in conjunction with the findings of the transport assessment.

Where reasonable and practical improvements such as those suggested above will be made.

### School Priorities

3.19 Table 1 below shows the priorities listed by the school for the development and the councils response to each:

<b>School priority</b>	<b>Council response</b>
Does the construction improve the physical infrastructure of the school rectifying existing problems e.g. sinking kitchen with leaking roof, exposed pipework, lifting flooring, poor access points etc?	Where improvements to the physical infrastructure of the existing school are required to facilitate the expansion then these will always be included within an expansion project. This is the approach taken with all schools to ensure fairness and cost efficiency ensuring that the council can undertake enough similar projects across Brent to provide sufficient school places for all children. There are other sources of capital funding available to schools to address condition issues. In the case of the Princess Frederica kitchen for example, the structural engineer observed only minor cracking and has stated that subsidence is not a concern, however the proposals would indicate the kitchen should be re-located to facilitate expansion. In addition the council will support the school to make energy efficiency improvements which will save the school money in running costs.
Do the plans allow enough space for all classes to gather in the hall for collective worship. In an expanded school the whole community must be able to meet together for assembly	In general the expansion programme does not include provision for whole school assemblies as this is not a requirement within the governments guidelines, however the council recognises that this is particularly important for collective worship within faith schools and will seek to make provision for it within expanded schools wherever reasonably possible. The current sketch proposals for Princess Frederica show extended halls; detailed design will confirm the size of extension and the numbers that can be accommodated.
Need to ensure safe/orderly access to and from the school both during and post construction	Access to the school is important and the council will seek to address this as far as possible within this project. An additional entrance to the site is proposed in the current sketch options and further detail is provided in the traffic and access section of

	<p>this report.</p>
Fresh cooked meals must be provided on site to most children and staff	A production kitchen will be included within the expanded school sufficiently sized to cater for the expanded school population.
Physical activity must be maintained and further improved so children have access to a safe, orderly environment with improved provision for outdoor play	This is addressed in a separate section on external site area. During construction, there will be some disruption to outdoor play but the council and contractor team will work hard with the school to minimise this and always to maintain safety.
Our curriculum must not be limited. The school must continue to have a functioning library and ICT suite, music rooms to facilitate specialist subject teaching. One of the key strengths of the school at present is this specialist provision.	The council recognises that schools value their opportunities for specialist teaching. Where facilities are currently provided for these specialist areas then, if required and where reasonable, they will be re-provided elsewhere if the proposal indicates that those areas might be best served as general teaching. A good example at Princess Frederica would be the library, which is proposed to re-locate to a more central location enabling the current space to be used as a classroom.
The staff and office areas must maintain the positive staff ethos and provide a space for professional dialogue, relaxation and training	This is understood and where changes are required to existing facilities these will be reviewed with the school as part of the design development process. The current sketch proposals show a re-located staff and office area and there are options to be reviewed in design development about this.
Construction, where possible must not lead to a detrimental impact on the learning and progress of children at school. The schools preferred option is that some construction take place off site and we will need to communicate a detailed plan to the parents so that disruption is minimised as far as possible.	The Council expects a proportion of construction to take place off-site both to achieve cost efficiencies and to minimise disruption on site. There will be a detailed health and safety plan describing how the safety and welfare of children will be maintained at all times and how the construction site will operate considerately. The health and safety plan has to be approved by the relevant professional (Construction Design Management Co-ordinator) before work starts on site. This will be reviewed on a regular basis. It is highly unlikely that a contractor will be appointed who does not have experience working on occupied school sites. The council Project Manager will work with the school to ensure all plans for the construction period are clear and there is an effective communication link

	between the contractor and school both to advise of future works and in cases of emergency.
Accessible toilets close to each playground	Whilst this isn't directly related to the expansion of the school, if there is an opportunity to provide the additional WCs required in an accessible location then we will try to do this. This will be addressed in detailed design development.

Table 1 – School Priorities

### Programme of Works

3.20 There is a challenging programme for design and construction. Table 2 below shows the outline programme with key milestone dates and the typical engagement required from the school:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Engagement from School</b>
Joint Governing Body agree to expand	23 May 13	Governing Body meeting
Design Team work with LBB and Schools to confirm the brief	May	1 steering group meeting
Design Team work with LBB to progress design to RIBA Stage C	June	1 steering group meetings to update, prioritise design drivers and review design
Sign off Stage C		School Chair of Governors, Diocesan Board and Headteacher agree Stage C design with LBB
Stage C design progressed to Stage D design	July	2 steering group meetings to update and review design
Sign off Stage D		School Chair of Governors, Diocesan Board and Headteacher sign off Stage D design with LBB
Submit planning application	Mid-July 13	
Procurement of main construction contract	July/Aug/Sept	
Executive approval to award main construction contract	Nov	
Post-contract design co-ordination	Nov	Anticipated 1 steering group meeting
Construction	Dec - July	Anticipated at least 1 short weekly liaison meeting with school/contractor and 1 monthly review meeting with LBB

Fit out	August	Estimated duration for ICT and loose furniture fit out
Occupation	01-Sep-14	

Table 2 - Programme

- 3.21 The planning application can be made toward the end of the statutory consultation process and before Executive approval to expand the school is obtained. Procurement of the main contract will run concurrently with the planning application (and any statutory consultation processes). The council bears these risks. Executive approval to award the main construction contract cannot happen until planning approval for the scheme and Executive approval to expand the school have been obtained.
- 3.22 Alongside this programme for the main construction a package of enabling works (typically asbestos removal, demolition, temporary accommodation, services connections etc) will be developed. A small enabling works contract will take place during the 2013 summer holidays.

### School Engagement and Sign Off Process

- 3.23 The programme above includes key sign off stages. The school will be involved in developing the design to reach each of those stages through a series of meetings with the design team as shown in table 2 above. The council's project manager will manage this process with the design team and school to ensure key dates are met. Given the challenging nature of the programme it is important that this is an efficient process and that all parties understand what decisions are required of them in any given meeting.
- 3.24 If the school would like to engage with children and the wider school community on plans prior to signing off design stages this will need to take place within these programme dates so the school attends those meetings to represent the collective opinion. It may be appropriate to hold consultation events for local residents and the school community either immediately before the planning application is submitted or during that period. Plans will at least be available on the council's website and the school can provide links to those pages for the school community.

### Funding

- 3.25 The building project will be entirely funded by the council. The council will fund the provision of the accommodation required for a one form entry expansion and any associated works to facilitate that, as well as the ICT and furniture required for those classrooms to be used in the first year. This is in line with all other school projects.
- 3.26 There is no requirement for the LDBS to make a 10% contribution to the project in recognition of the support LDBS and the school are giving the council in meeting its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.
- 3.27 If the school would like to enhance the scope of works in the project (e.g. include additional works to address condition issues, fit out all classrooms in year one, have a higher quality finish etc) the school or LDBS would need to

provide the additional funds to cover the additional costs. Any VAT implications are currently being reviewed.

- 3.28 The capital funding allocated to the project is £4.8million. The council is responsible for managing this budget. In the event that the expanded school can be provided for less than the allocated budget, the council will re-allocate the underspend to the programme for re-use on new expansion schemes. Similarly the council bears the risk of any overspend on the project, although this will be managed very carefully through the project governance structure.

#### **4 Details of the Statutory Consultation Process**

- 4.1 The statutory consultation process is defined by Government and has five main stages. The process will be managed by the council in conjunction with the school and LDBS.
- 4.2 Table 3 below describes the best possible timetable for completion of statutory consultation:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Date</b>
Governing Body decides to start consultation	by Friday 24 May
LBB prepares consultation documentation and arranges consultation meeting	Mon 27 – Fri 31 May (1 week)
LBB launches consultation period and distributes documentation	by Friday 7 June
Consultation period	Mon 10 June - Fri 19 July (6 weeks)
LBB collate responses and meet school	Mon 22 July - Fri 2 August (2 weeks)
LBB prepare and issue statutory notice	Mon 5 August - Fri 30 August (2 weeks but school hols)
Representation period	Mon 2 Sept - Fri 11 Oct (6 weeks)
LBB collate responses and prepare Executive report	Mon 14 Oct - Fri 25 Oct (2 weeks)
Executive committee meeting – approval to expand	11 November 2013

Table 3 – Statutory Consultation Process

- 4.3 This timetable culminating in Executive approval ties with the programme in table 2 for design and construction which indicates Executive approval to award the construction contract in November 13 as well. Due to the constraints of avoiding school holidays during the consultation and representation periods and the need to have approval to expand before awarding the construction contract, it is clear that a decision to proceed with the statutory consultation is required before the May half term holiday in order to ultimately deliver the expansion by September 2014.

#### **5 Decisions Required**

- 5.1 The Governing Body of Princess Frederica CE VA Primary School is asked to decide:

- a) If it has sufficient information with which to immediately commence a statutory consultation to permanently expand
- b) If not, what further information would be required to enable that decision

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