



## **Minutes of the Governing Body Sub Committee** **Preliminary Findings - Meeting Fri 25 January 2013**

### **1. Contextual Information Document from Brent - Summary**

- Based upon Brent's analysis/projections, it was clear why there was a need to provide many more primary school places given the rise in population and other statistics. By 2020-21, Brent anticipates needing an additional 21 forms at Primary level, 19 forms at secondary and 192 Special Educational Needs places.

- A current total of £79.7m is available for capital expenditure at Brent. To provide the full number of places referred to above, an additional £82m is required. If Freds decides expansion is both prudent and feasible, it should do so sooner rather than later while the £79.7m funds are available ie. before they get used up by other schools in Brent.

- It was clear from the Contextual Information Document that all of the schools in our local area were being considered for expansion where possible. This was referenced on p. 78-82 of the Contextual Information Document (Phasing of Schemes). Brent has applied a preliminary budget of £4.8m to the expansion proposed at Freds (see table at p. 81). Freds is currently in phase 2 of the expansion plans with the first 3 form entry identified for September 2014 (see p. 80 at 5.25).

NB. the note for Freds at no. 16. of the table saying "school is keen to expand" indicates that the school's leadership team is keen to expand. The Governing Body has only indicated to Brent that it will consider the feasibility study and revert with requests for such further information as is required to make an informed decision on whether to proceed in principle. This must rightly follow a full consultation period which will commence ASAP.

### **2. Feasibility Study/Architects' Drawings (I will send round separately the alternative/preferred Michael Cohen Architect's drawings)**

- the feasibility study was commissioned by Brent without any input from the school/governing body. The drawings were therefore a pretty rough estimate of how 3FE might work and only really seemed to fix the immediate issue of additional school places without future-proofing the school for the mid-long term.

- there were also an alternative set of drawings obtained by the school independently at nil cost from Michael Cohen Architects.

- Matt, Adam and Glenn unanimously agreed that the alternative Michael Cohen drawings were a much better way to go. Not just a more natural use of the space at school but, with a third floor included, a bigger space without the need for significant additional spending (over and above the 2 floor solution Brent included in the feasibility study). This was seen as a mid-long term solution rather than just an immediate fix for Brent at the lowest possible cost.

### **3. Access/Entrances to School**

- given the increased number of pupils (210 after 7 years) and the current pressure on getting kids to and from school, Matt, Adam and Glenn thought that the school entrances should be re-sited in any expansion. One main entrance on the College Road side and the other main entrance where the main gates are currently. This would go some way to easing the pressure and the school office should be moved accordingly.

- the increased pressure at pick up/drop off was considered the main issue with any expansion although it was pointed out that with 30 pupils per year over 7 years, time was on our side.

### **4. Disruption/Phasing**

- Matt, Adam and Glenn agreed that the project should be a one phase project.

- They estimated that the work would take 12-18 months to complete and therefore felt that Sep 2014 was perhaps overly ambitious (even with only 30 children being added per year from Y1).

### **5. Other Thoughts**

- Matt, Adam and Glenn thought that with the Michael Cohen drawings, it was much more preferable to have the children/staff in the expanded section of the school with as much of the admin, facilities and storage moved to the far end of the Victorian building as possible.

- They also thought that we should consider knocking down the 2 existing assembly halls entirely rather than just knocking down the kitchen/staff blocks around them. It could be phased in a way to minimise disruption and wouldn't proportionately cost that much more - especially as there is a real danger that "hidden" costs would be revealed in taking down the supporting structures around the halls. They might have to be taken down in the end anyway so why not plan for it and include in the costs?

- We briefly discussed the loft space in the Victorian building but without looking at it further, nothing could really be added at this stage.

### **6. Conclusion**

- assuming we were given proper input and control on the drawings/design of the expanded school, the overwhelming conclusion was positive in terms of the re-designed/expanded school - both as to buildings and outside space.

- although the outside space is limited, this wasn't considered a major issue to expanding. In particular, as a result of the school's re-designed phased timetable and the fact that children spend approximately 80% of their time inside school learning.

- the major issue facing any project (beyond the disruption during construction) was the increased pressure on areas immediately outside school utilised for drop off/pick up. As above, re-siting the entrances/office and working on local traffic solutions was considered vital to the overall success of any expansion.

- one thought to ease the pressure on drop off/pick up was to expand the pedestrian walkway adjacent to the school on Purves Road - this might be possible if the Michael Cohen plans are used (third floor expansion allowing more space downstairs to be used for access).