

Notes taken from the Expansion Meeting with local residents on Thursday 17th November 2016

This document gives some of the themes of the questions that were posed and are intended to give the reader an insight into what was discussed for all interested parties and all those unable to attend the meeting. *Please note: these “minutes” are not verbatim*

Stuart Woods (Headteacher) welcomed the residents and thanked them for taking the time to come and hear about the proposed expansion.

Mr Woods explained that Upper Shirley High School is an oversubscribed school and the demand for places has led the Governors and the Jefferys Educational Trust (JET) Board of Directors to approve a slow growth plan over the next six years.

Mr Woods said he was keen to emphasise that this is currently a plan and the extent to which the growth will happen depends on a number of factors not least external funding. **The Proposed Student Numbers are as follows:**

{Table to be inserted}

Mr Woods explained that the focus of the meeting held on 17th November was Phase 1 of the plan, namely the construction of 8 additional classrooms for September 2017. As Phase 2 is yet to be finalised no information could be given at this point although Mr Woods said that the school believes Phase 2 centred around Sports Facilities only.

The document on the website is given to show the elevations of the proposed Phase 1 Build (8 Classrooms) which will occupy the space on the rear playground and will go over the existing footprint of the 2 temporary classrooms that are currently being used by the school.

The proposed building is to be a 2-storey structure housing two main Design and Technology classrooms (with attached preparation rooms) and six generic classrooms. The proposed building will also house two additional offices for staff.

Mr Woods explained that, should planning (which has now been submitted) be successful – and we will hear in early January 2017 if this is the case, site works are provisionally scheduled for the end of March 2017 and would, provisionally, extend for 22 weeks.

The architects are currently exploring options between a modular and a more traditional (steel and brick) build and whilst the school’s current preference is for a permanent structure, this is yet to be finalised.

To facilitate the site work, the school is exploring temporarily reinstating the second access point on Bellemoor Road. This would be in order to ensure that the school’s current entrance would not become restricted or blocked by construction related vehicles. If the second entrance was opened, the contractors (yet to be confirmed) would lay a temporary road surface down the length of the school field (nearest the current school buildings) and would contain site works and offices within an area surrounded by hoarding backing onto the Industrial Estate on the Winchester Road.

Concerns about the noise and disruption caused by construction

- The school will adhere to a considerate construction plan, to include making the best choice for the temporary road surface so as to reduce the invasive noise for local residents.
- The school will look into the possible access points (including the potential for one from the Winchester Road via the Industrial Estate) to deliver construction materials to further reduce the impact on local residents.
- With regards to the concerns raised about the possible additional congestion caused by an increase in numbers as more students require access to the school, the school confirmed that it is committed to review the on-site parking provision throughout and this includes promoting Cycle to Work Schemes and a car-sharing initiative. The school actively encourages and will continue to encourage students to walk and cycle into school where possible. The school recently invested in improved secure cycle storage facilities to encourage this.
- Residents would like the speed limit on Bellemoor Road reduced to 20mph and the school supports this and would willingly work with the residents to lobby the council on this matter.
- At this stage a turning circle or mini-roundabout or drop-off point is not possible due to restricted space at the front of the school. The school acknowledged that pinch points within the day, particularly at student drop-off and pick-up times create congestion in the vicinity of Upper Shirley High.

Questions specifically about the new buildings

- With regards to access arrangements, there are no plans at present to put a lift into the new building. The school has accessibility plans in place to ensure that the school accommodates staff and students with additional mobility needs. All ground floor doors and classrooms are wheelchair accessible.
- Residents were keen to know the exact location of the building and the plans detailing this are also available on the website.
- The school are not able to confirm the materials used in the build and whether the build will require a concrete footing prior to the tendering process.

Drivers behind expansion

- There is an impending national population bulge in Primary School aged children which is proven with the Local Authority's expansion of local Primary Schools in recent years. Appropriate Secondary Schools are all exploring the ability to expand to accommodate significant numbers of students needing secondary places by 2020/21. As USH is oversubscribed and is proven to offer a good quality education the Local Authority, the Governors and the Multi-Academy Trust have identified that, as a school of choice, we should take steps towards our contribution to managing this increase. The decision to grow lies fully and firmly with the leadership and governance of the school. The school believes our children deserve improved facilities and would be pleased to add new buildings for our existing students and future generations.

Noise and disruption

- Residents were keen to understand how this build would work whilst the school is open and given that the build cannot be exclusively completed in the summer holidays. The Leadership of the school is committed to reducing the negative impact on current students and will relocate the current classrooms and will only procure a contractor who will guarantee the highest level of safety and considerate construction.
- An approved code of conduct will be drafted as part of the implementation plan.
- Residents were keen to know about the noise disruption during the summer of 2017 and the subsequent impact it will have on their use of their gardens. The school will ensure that the working hours and construction noise will be planned and managed as part of the tender and implementation stage.
- As previously mentioned, the temporary road surface will also be monitored so as to minimise noise as much as possible.
- Exact start and finish times for construction are yet to be confirmed.

Other points raised

- The residents were keen to know which schools the new student intake would come from. Mr Woods said that we currently take from up to 12 feeder schools; these schools include the formal link feeder schools from the Jeffreys Educational Trust. At each year of growth, the leadership of the school will closely monitor the Y6 profile and manage it accordingly.
- Residents were also keen to know the extent to which the Local Authority are supporting the expansion particularly with regards to traffic management and Mr Woods confirmed that the school gratefully accepts the assistance of the local authority going forward.

Mr Woods closed the meeting by thanking the residents for attending.