

STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

CHANGE TO PRESTON LODGE HIGH SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN BLINDWELLS

**TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2016
PRESTONPANS COMMUNITY CENTRE**

PRESENT:

Fiona Robertson, Head of Education
Chris Webb, Independent Adviser, Chair of meeting
David Scott, Quality Improvement Officer
Liz Shaw, Corporate Finance Manager
Emma Taylor, Planning
Liz McLean, Property
Paul Zochowski, Planning
Rob Lewis, Senior Information Officer
Pauline Smith, Principal Officer (Information and Research)
Katy Johnstone, Graduate Intern
Councillor McKenzie
2 members of the public

Chris Webb welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Council Officers present.

Chris Webb introduced himself and outlined the purpose of the meeting.

Fiona Robertson reiterated that this evening's meeting was being held to discuss the following proposal:

1. The establishment of a new school, with primary and early learning and childcare provision, for the Blindwells primary school catchment area.
2. Establishing the new primary school initially within Cockenzie Primary School and relocating to its permanent site on the completion of the new building.
3. The alteration to the Preston Lodge High School catchment area to include the Blindwells primary school catchment area, as defined by Blindwells new settlement (LDP Proposal BW1), currently in the Blindwells secondary catchment area (established in 2010).
4. The alteration to the St Gabriel's RC Primary School catchment area to include the Blindwells new settlement (BW1) in alignment with the proposed revised Preston Lodge High School catchment area.

Fiona then went on to explain the background of the consultation:

- The Strategic Development Plan for South East Scotland (SDP) was approved by Scottish Ministers in June 2013.
- The SDP with its Supplementary Guidance on Housing Land requires the Local Development Plan (LDP) to ensure sufficient housing land is available to deliver 10,050 homes during the period 2009-2024 with 6,250 of those homes capable of being delivered across East Lothian in the period to 2019.
- To accommodate these strategic development requirements, East Lothian Council approved a Proposed LDP 2016 for representation on 6th September 2016.
- On 24th February 2015, approval was given by East Lothian Council to undertake consultations relating to the school estate (schools, catchment areas, locations) as necessary to support the emerging LDP.
- As part of the LDP 2016, the Blindwells new settlement (area “A”) is one of the main proposals retained from the LDP 2008.
- Blindwells settlement (area “A”) is currently allocated for mixed use development and circa 1,600 homes.
- Land to east of Blindwells safeguarded to expand (to circa 6,000 homes).
- However: no comprehensive solution for the larger settlement to the east, as yet.
- The 1,600 homes in area “A” require a new primary education facility with early learning & childcare provision.
- Secondary provision for this housing development can be permanently provided by Preston Lodge High school, if housing does not expand beyond current allocation of 1,600 homes.
- If unable to grow beyond 1,600 homes, not a feasible solution to have a permanent on site secondary school at the Blindwells site, for the projected secondary pupil numbers.

Fiona outlined the catchment maps. Section A on the map shows the proposed addition to the current Preston Lodge High School and St Gabriel’s RC Primary catchment areas.

Fiona then highlighted the proposal. To accommodate the projected pupil population from the current allocation (1,600 homes) the council proposes:

- Establish a permanent early learning & childcare and primary school capacity at the Blindwells site.
- Blindwells primary school established initially at Cockenzie Primary School, under a temporary “hosting” arrangement, for up to 36 months – until the permanent Blindwells primary school facility is delivered.

To accommodate the projected pupil population from the current allocation (1,600 homes) the council proposes:

- Secondary school capacity will be provided at Preston Lodge High School (via a permanent extension to the school). Preston Lodge would continue to serve the Cockenzie Primary School, Longniddry Primary School, Prestonpans Infant & Nursery/Primary Schools and St Gabriel's RC Primary School catchment areas.
- Capacity will be provided at St Gabriel's RC Primary School for projected denominational pupils arising from the Blindwells site (area "A").

Fiona then went on to explain the projected population data:

- **Blindwells Primary School:** Projected Pupil Population for proposed 1,600 houses in area "A", require peak school roll of 700 primary pupils (24 classes). Pre-school provision of 110 places.
- Projected pupils arising from area "A" in first 3 years (during "hosting" arrangement at Cockenzie Primary School:

August, Year 1 = 0 pupils (1 class)

August, Year 2 = 7 pupils (1 class)

August, Year 3 = 30 pupils (2 classes)

- **Preston Lodge High School:** Secondary pupils arising from housing with consent and LDP (including area "A"), in excess of 1500 (in 2036). Phased permanent extension required at school.
- **St Gabriels RC Primary School:** Projected peak roll of 238 pupils in 2036 (9 classes).

Fiona Robertson then outlined the Educational Benefits through:

- Providing a hub for learning, activities and facilities that will make a contribution to improving health and wellbeing and achievement;
- Shared flexible learning and teaching spaces in the new school will enable staff to work together in a collaborative manner and provide more opportunities for co-operative working between pupils;
- Enabling the full potential of the use of technologies to enhance learning and teaching.

Fiona went on to explain the "Hosting" and transition arrangements:

- Key priority for officers is development of "hosting" arrangement.

- Comprehensive transition programme to support transition into new school.
- Hosting arrangement will last up to 36 months – subject to acceptable start date and programming for development at Blindwells site.

Fiona summed up the project time line:

- Emerging Local Development Plan (LDP)
- Impact assessment of LDP on East Lothian School Estate
- Proposal of PLHS Catchment change & new primary at Blindwells
- Statutory Consultation
- Final Proposal Paper
- Council Approval (catchment established immediately)
- User Reference Group
- Transitional and Leadership Arrangements
- New primary school and nursery facility open

Chris Webb invited questions from the public.

Councillor McKenzie asked about the hosting at Cockenzie Primary School and sought clarification on when children come from Blindwells, will they share outside space but have a separate teacher and have their own identity.

Fiona Robertson confirmed that they will be separate and have separate teachers but will share outside space. They will have their own identity but in the interim there will be shared headship. Fiona Robertson stressed that there has to be flexibility around groupings and how best to provide the education. In terms of how the authority would look at forming classes and determining the best education provision, the authority will explore this when looking at the different stages of the children that materialise from the development as it moves on.

Andrew Crummy, Preston/Seton/Gosford Area Partnership asked when the proposed start date would be.

Paul Zochowski explained that there is no exact proposed start date as yet. Blindwells is a site that has been allocated for some time. There is a planning application in the system for Blindwells - which has not yet been approved - and from a Council's perspective, would like this to start as soon as possible. Liz McLean advised that some modelling has been done around the anticipated annual completion rates and this is what has informed the pupil role projections. The anticipated commencement date is 2021 for the housing completions to

commence. There are very detailed discussions taking place at the moment with the developer and some of the technical issues around the site.

Pauline O'Brien, Chair of Preston Lodge Parent Council raised concerns about the phased extension at Preston Lodge High School and the disruption to pupils.

Fiona Robertson mentioned the expansion that is currently happening at Dunbar Grammar School. The department has supported the senior management team to provide additional management time to be released to ensure that disruption to pupils is as limited as possible.

Fiona also highlighted the opportunities that it gives the school to think about that additional provision and what will be provided in the additional provision.

Liz McLean advised that the council does have experience in expansion projects and particularly in the procurement of contractors. As much as possible there would be minimum disruption to the internal alterations, with this taking place during summer holiday period. There will be full consultation with the Education Department, School, Parent Council and Head Teacher.

Pauline O'Brien also raised concerns about the people who are living near the school as they could be living with a building site for a number of years and the residents may not be aware of this.

Liz McLean advised that this would have to be managed and would come into consideration in terms of the scale of each of the phases. David Scott mentioned the extension at Pinkie St Peter's Primary School and highlighted that there was minimal disruption in terms of the teaching and learning. Chris Webb reiterated that every step will be taken to minimise the impact on both the community and the children and young people.

Pauline O'Brien made reference to the 9 classes at St Gabriel' RC and felt that parents would automatically think about composite classes and thought that this might be one for reassurance to parents.

Fiona Robertson explained that the authority does operate composite classes across the school estate, however engagement with the community and the school around what the arrangements would be, will be important.

Pauline O'Brien asked if children will be transported to Preston Lodge High School and St Gabriels RC from Blindwells.

Fiona Robertson advised that the distance will be taken into account and the Transport Policy would be applied, however the pupils who are being hosted at Cockenzie Primary School will be transported.

The Officers were unable to provide the distance from Blindwells to Preston Lodge High School and St Gabriel's RC Primary School however Fiona Robertson agreed to provide information on this.

There will be a transport plan put in place and part of that plan would be to look at safer routes to school. Further information on the transport plan and infrastructure will be provided.

Andrew Crummy asked about the expansion to Preston Lodge High School and what that means.

Fiona Robertson explained that the expansion is to extend the number of classrooms within the building and the facilities. Liz McLean advised that the expansion will take account of the provision of pupils from the likely increase in accommodation. This will include anything from general classrooms to specialist spaces like science labs and social spaces. There will be new buildings required. There will be opportunities to improve and enhance what is already there.

Andrew Crummy then asked if there was any area of Preston Lodge that was 'lagging behind' at the moment and through this be able to upgrade.

Liz McLean advised that at the moment the school has the accommodation that it needs for the number of pupils.

Andrew Crummy then asked where the new facilities will be on the Preston Lodge site.

Liz McLean explained that the most likely area for expansion is to the east of the school and there is also some space to the west of the school.

Andrew Crummy also asked what the Preston Lodge High School roll will be when it reaches its peak.

Pauline Smith confirmed that it will increase to just over 1500, it is currently just over 1000. Pauline advised that there are a number of different housing proposals that are feeding in along with this development.

Andrew Crummy then asked if Preston Lodge would get more funding due to the increase in school roll.

Fiona Robertson advised that the funding would be in line with the increasing roll and the staffing required.

Andrew Crummy also asked what the average size of a secondary school was.

Fiona Robertson explained that the size of secondary schools vary quite considerably, however 1500 pupils would be slightly above average but it is hard to tell because school

estates are changing all the time. The largest secondary school in Scotland has a school roll of 2000, which is in Glasgow.

Chris Webb highlighted that 1500 allows the school to offer a very rich curriculum for the pupils and can deliver a very good senior phase curriculum.

Andrew Crummy asked if there would be more consultation on this and how to engage more parents on this.

Fiona Robertson advised that the authority has engaged with Parent Councils, have invited Parent Council members to meetings and had drop in sessions. There has been a range of opportunities for the wider community to engage.

Councillor McKenzie suggested that it might help if this was on the agenda for each of the Parent Councils and Area Partnership meetings.

Pauline O'Brien suggested that perhaps because this has been spoken about for some time and perhaps once the community know that the building works have started, a more meaningful conversation could be had with the community.

Fiona Robertson advised that the authority does intend to engage as the development moves forward. The first stage is to move the proposal through for Council approval and there will be plans in place from that point forward in relation to the communication and engagement plan.

Chris Webb drew the meeting to a close and thanked everyone who attended the meeting.