

29/01/2018

High Littleton & Hallatrow Parish Council
C/o Leonard Sheen (Chairman)
High Littleton
Bath and North East Somerset

Dear

RE: Proposed new school and land at High Littleton

Further to our meeting on the 18th of January, I enclose some further information of our proposed development for use in the 30th January Parish Council Village consultation together with our assessment of the options open to the School Trust and Parish.

Background;

Planning:

The current B&NES (Bath and North East Somerset) Core Strategy provides for up to 50 dwellings outside the settlement boundaries of service villages in the Rural Areas. High Littleton is a service village allocated 50 dwellings which were included in BANES latest housing trajectory.

50 dwellings would create the need for an additional 15 primary school places which the school would not have the capacity for.

Furthermore, the Publication Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) makes provision for 3,400 houses on 'non-strategic sites' (developments under 500 houses) across the four West of England authorities to meet part of the residual need for housing between 2016-36 of 44,060 dwellings. A share of this is being directed to B&NES and there is the possibility this will result in a higher number of units being distributed to service villages.

Education:

High Littleton Primary school is currently slightly under capacity (169 places) but is expected to be at capacity (175 places) in the 2018/2019 years. There is no provision in this forecast for students arising from new development or coming in from other settlements with no schooling capacity.

The school presently has 6 classrooms and no ancillary teaching space.

Despite the accommodation and play area constraints, the school is currently rated 'Outstanding' by OFSTED and is highly ranked in the Country. It is important that this quality is maintained and that the school continues its exemplary work. To achieve this there is an identified need for teaching, communal and administration facilities to be brought up to current space and quality standards.

All the BANES Rural Area Schools are at or are close to capacity and face their own challenges in respect of meeting their own new housing school place demands. One solution for BANES is to close some schools and combine into a new 2 form entry school located in one of the larger rural settlements.

If the chosen location for this was not High Littleton / Hallatrow this would mean that primary school children who currently attend High Littleton Primary School would instead need to travel. As it presently stands all the children that attend High Littleton Primary School are resident in High Littleton / Hallatrow and therefore children from future housing development will need to travel out of the village.

Outside playing facilities at the school are limited. Children have to be escorted to the playing fields at Bungay's Hill to use the playing pitches and the Church serves as school hall.

The pre-school aged children attend the Pre-school housed in the Methodist Centre which is a term time only facility.

Highways and Traffic

Presently the footpath alongside the A39 connect Hallatrow to High Littleton is not continuous making this unsafe for walking with the result that pupils from Hallatrow are transported by vehicle to the school.

Safety has also been a cause for concern on the A39/High street to the front of the school particularly at School drop-off and pick up times and when escorting children to Bungay's Hill playing fields.

The Village is faced with four potential scenarios or propositions:

1. Current 'Do nothing' Scenario:

Location: School remains as is maximum capacity (175 places).

Number of new homes to be taken by village: 50+

- No additional capacity, new primary school age children in the village will need to be transported to other schools in the BANES authority area.
- Increased pressures on teaching staff to maintain present OFSTED rating on substandard site
- Highways safety issues continue.
- No ability to adapt to meet future standards and legislation.
- Increasing maintenance costs in respect of building fabric and services.

2. Extend into Church Farm:

Location: Church Farm is the listed building site adjacent and to the east of the school.

Number of new homes: Up to 70 dwellings on land South of Aumery Gardens, North of Langfords Ln, West of Jaylands

Background:

The owners of Church Farm are prepared to gift part of this land to allow the school to expand its existing play areas into, so freeing up the possibility of extending the current school buildings over the existing hard play area.

We understand that in return they are seeking planning approval for new dwellings alongside the existing listed building served off the high street and to increase the capacity of the school to allow up to 70 dwellings on land they own to the immediate south of Aumery Gardens, extending down to Langford's Lane.

- The extension of the school will provide an additional class spaces potentially increasing the capacity to 210 places but with no further long-term potential ('short term fix').
- Planning and listed building consent will be required.
- There will be additional external play areas though the topography of the land will present engineering challenges requiring fill to be imported.
- Pupils will continue to need to be escorted to Bungay's Hill playing fields.
- Very little improvement in ancillary space, challenges in maintaining OFSTED rating will continue.
- Slight improvement on ability to adapt to meet future standards and legislation.
- Increasing maintenance costs in respect of building fabric and services.
- Highways safety issues continue and could worsen with additional dwellings served directly off the High Street..
- Questions over Highway safety and capacity issues for new development off Amery Gardens and the junction of the High Street and Timsbury Road.

3. New school, Option 1 (High Street):

Location: South of the A39/High Street opposite Rosewell

Number of new homes: Up to 50

Background:

This land was previously subject of an outline planning application (15/01639/OUT) for up to 71 dwellings.

The landowners are prepared to gift sufficient land to allow the building of a new single form entry primary school (future proofed to allow extension to two form entry if required), with attached facilities for the Pre-school, onsite playing pitches, adequate car parking, pupil drop off provision (away from the A39/High Street) extended footpath and road crossing provision, extended 30 mph speed limit to the west and traffic calming measures at entrance to village.

In return, they seek planning permission for up to 50 dwellings which will be included in a detailed full planning application together with the school and will work with the Parish, School Trust and BANES in respect of; securing LocatED (a government body empowered to deliver new schools and increase capacity) funding for the school; design; materials; landscape mitigation and highway safety improvements.

There will be a Section 106 agreement which will require the gifting of the land for the school prior to occupation of the new dwellings.

- A new single form entry school will increase capacity to a standard 210 place 1 form entry school (Creating 35 places, of which around 15 will be needed by the scheme itself).
- 20 surplus places available for modest development (70 dwellings) elsewhere e.g. Paulton.
- Planning will be secured through a comprehensive detailed application and the gifting of the land secured, through a section 106 agreement, prior to commencement of dwellings.
- Housing and school buildings within the upper portion of the field.
- Onsite playing fields and pitch.
- Improvement in ancillary space, latest media services, improved environment for teaching and play reducing challenges in maintaining OFSTED rating.
- Building and external areas built to latest space, lighting and specification standards. Adequate space to meet future standards and legislation.
- Energy efficient building lowering operational costs and material specifications reducing future fabric maintenance.
- Highways safety issues significantly reduced potential to help BANES secure 'missing link' to High Littleton / Hallatrow footpath.
- A joined-up approach which could deliver the school in time to address immediate capacity issues and would deliver it before new dwellings are completed.

4. New school, Option 2 (Greyfield Road):

Location: Robin Candy Fields, Greyfield Wood Farm, South of Greyfield Rd,

Number of new homes: This land has the potential for up to 200 dwellings.

Background:

This land was subject to a Town and Village Green application dated 5th July 2013 (TVG13/2) which was declined on the 8th April 2015.

Although no application has been made, it is known that the owner has development aspirations for this land which triggered the TVG application in 2013.

If a proposal was brought forward **which** included a new school:

- A new single form entry school is achievable here which would increase capacity to 210 places.
- Planning could be secured through a comprehensive detailed application and the gifting of the land secured, through a section 106 agreement, prior to commencement of dwellings.
- Onsite playing fields and pitch could be provided as part of this.
- Building and external areas built to latest space, lighting and specification standards. Adequate space to meet future standards and legislation.
- Energy efficient building lowering operational costs and material specifications reducing future fabric maintenance.
- Improvement in ancillary space, latest media services, improved environment for teaching and play reducing challenges in maintaining OFSTED rating.
- Highways safety issues would be reduced near the existing school but may be increased at the junction of the High Street and Greyfield Road

- Increased 'rat-running' traffic on The Gug/Scumbrum lane to join the A39 and Maynard Terrace to join the A37 through Clutton.
- Introduction of traffic on to Greyfield Road itself in the morning and afternoon peak caused by school drop-offs and pick-up and, depending on how many dwellings were part of the proposal, residential access traffic on Greyfield Road as well.
- Potential emergency vehicle access problems due to the essential cul-de-sac nature of Greenfield Road for large vehicles.
- Forestry Commission Woodland Priority Habitat network area effects a substantial part of this land.
- Little if any potential to help BANES secure 'missing link' to High Littleton / Hallatrow footpath and the distance to the potential new school from Hallatrow would be significantly greater.
- No certainty on timing or intentions of the landowner.

Other considerations:

- The proposed new school could incorporate a 'community space'.
- Further thought will need to be given to the future of the existing school building, some possibilities are; A sensitive conversion to residential accommodation, Use by the nursery, or other community use/village hall (in three ownerships).
- The proposed new school would incorporate local and traditional materials and design to aim to maintain the 'village school' aesthetic and feel, this could include the bell.

I am enclosing a very indicative plan showing how we would envisage the various uses would be accommodated within the land. We have obviously drawn up plans in far greater detail to ensure that our proposals are technically feasible, and these can form the basis of more detailed discussion if the principle of our landowner's proposal is acceptable to principle stakeholders.

Yours sincerely

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