

Consultation on the Future of King Edward VII School, Melton Mowbray **Statement to Cabinet from the Governors of John Ferneley College**

The Governors of John Ferneley College recognise the difficult decision the Cabinet has to make regarding the future of King Edward VII. However, once the Cabinet has made its decision the Governors of John Ferneley College will do our utmost to ensure a smooth transition to the revised structure of secondary education in the Borough of Melton.

We look forward to working in partnership with the local authority, other schools and Brooksby Melton College on the implementation of the Cabinet's decision.

11-16 Students

Officers have recommended a phased approach to the transfer of pupils from King Edward VII to the other schools. We support this suggestion in the light of pressure on buildings and the integration of pupils. However, phased transfer might place host schools under considerable pressure given that parents may transfer their children ahead of the schedule. Host schools, if integration is to be successful, may need additional resources.

The new building at John Ferneley was designed for 800 pupils set by our admission limit of 160. If our admissions limit is now to be set at 200, our numbers will rise to 1,000 pupils. It is clear we will need additional buildings to accommodate the 200 extra pupils. We therefore note with approval the following statement:

“A provisional allocation of £5 million is incorporated in the CYPS Capital Programme. This will enable necessary adaptations to schools in the event of the closure of King Edward VII School.” (Cabinet report paragraph 48)

We believe that this money should be spent on fully funding a building programme to accommodate all the additional 200 pupils the admissions limit implies. We would remind Cabinet members that Melton Borough Council has taken the decision to locate the Sustainable Urban Extension of 1,000 houses within yards of John Ferneley College. This SUE alone is expected to generate at least 150 more pupils aged between 11-16, all within walking distance of John Ferneley College and putting extra pressure on our accommodation.

Post 16 Centre

We are delighted that the officers have recommended the retention of the original agreement regarding the Post 16 education; that it will be jointly managed by all the schools in the Melton Partnership together with Brooksby Melton College. The Programme Implementation Board (PIB) was designed to be the precursor of the Partnership Board (PB) to run the Post 16 Centre. Up to now it has not played that role, but once the Cabinet has made its decision, then we believe the PIB should be constituted into the Post 16 Centre Partnership Board and all decisions regarding the Post 16 Centre should be taken by the evolved PIB.

As with any transfer of responsibilities from an organisation, we believe the Local Authority should exercise due diligence with regard to the financial standing and any liabilities of the existing organisation before its potential transfer to the PB.

Post 16 Centre Staff

We are conscious of the expertise at the 6th Form Centre of King Edward and would wish to retain as much of that expertise as possible. Principals have been shown a potential staffing structure for the new Post 16 Centre. Although, ultimately it is for the Governing Body of each school to decide the staff that it will employ, we hope that speedy negotiation will resolve a staffing structure that will survive into September 2011 and beyond.

Responsibility for Post 16 Staff

Officers have pointed out that legally it would not be possible for the Partnership to be the employer of the staff at the Post 16 Centre. They have said that one school would have to take responsibility and be the legal employer of the staff. At the recent 1st March meeting of heads and chairs of governors, local authority officers stated that this could only be Belvoir High School (a Trust School) and John Ferneley College (a Local Authority School). A suggestion was made that the staff could decide who should be their employer. We believe that only those staff likely to remain at the Post 16 Centre after September 2011 should be consulted on their likely employer after September 2011. We also believe that whilst these staff should be consulted, they should not have the right to decide which school should employ the staff. This should be a matter for the PIB to decide. It would be helpful to establish a set of criteria to help decide which school should employ the staff, not least of which should be the ability and willingness to second staff to the Post 16 Centre as well as receive part time staff teaching their additional hours at the host school. The issue of a common timetable and ICT system between the school and the Post 16 Centre to facilitate such staff exchange will be important.

Leadership at the Post 16 Centre

Mention was made at the Cabinet meeting of the need for an outstanding and innovative head 'head' or 'principal' of the Post 16 Centre who would drive the Centre forward to ensure the highest standards of Post 16 education in Melton. It was also stated that this person should be given a substantial degree of independence in running the Centre. We agree with these statements.

Premises management at the Post 16 Centre

Our view is that the School that acts as the employer of the staff should also be responsible for the management of the premises at the Post 16 Centre. The two we believe go hand in hand. The management of the Sports Facilities on the King Edward VII Campus we believe should be separated out from that of running the Post 16 Centre.

Summary

The ultimate aim of the partnership is to ensure that every student has access to a high quality educational experience combined with the widest possible curriculum opportunity.

Melton can be and should be a beacon for excellence within and beyond Leicestershire. John Ferneley wants to play its full part in realising this vision.

Conroy Godber
Chair of Governors
John Ferneley College