

## **Feedback from Billingham Town Council Meeting**

**21<sup>st</sup> October 2008**

At our Town Council Meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> October members felt that there are a number of concerns, considerations that they would like to be taken into account as part of this consultation regarding the proposed merger of Campus and Northfield school.

1. It is fundamental that consideration be given to assisting staff find alternative posts at other schools if there are no opportunities of deployment within the merger, hence reducing the chance of redundancies.
2. Assurance that all vacancies that arise from the merger are taken by existing staff, and not to be opened to outside applicants.
3. If St Michaels School is to relocate to the existing Campus site, BTC (Billingham Town Council) would like to see the numbers of pupils increase so that the two schools ( Northfield and St Michaels) are almost equal in student numbers, hence giving more choice to parents. i.e. 1000/1000 instead of 1200/800.
4. Can you clarify if one of the options is to extend on St Michael's site?
5. What will happen if the Governing Body of St Michaels' will not agree to increase their numbers? What will be the plan? Or can they be forced to take in extra students?
6. What would be the plans if the numbers of students attending Billingham schools who live outside the area did not decrease when the new provision outside of Billingham is made available, i.e. if the 350 quoted wanted to stay in Billingham how will this affect the numbers attending Northfield and St Michaels?

17<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Building Schools for the Future – Response of the Billingham Partnership Board

Dear Lionel

Can I thank you and John Hegarty for your attendance at our special meeting yesterday and your input into our debate. We also appreciated the attendance of David Youldon and David Reach for their contribution as the Heads of two schools in question.

As a result of the debate the members of the Board agreed with the following response to the consultation. :

1. The board fully support the plan with regards to a New Build for St Michaels School on the Campus Site.
2. We are disappointed that the two schools in question did not feel they could create a Federation of Schools, which we feel would give an ideal solution to the issues in question.
3. We were also disappointed that It appears the Government are interfering with the consultation process by giving written directives to the Council's as to what proposals would or would not be accepted despite the agreement that this process would be consulted on with the communities themselves and the options from the communities considered.
4. We feel the funding criteria does not give any guarantee that the necessary funding will be in place in 2012 to take any of the proposals forward with confidence.
5. We consider making a policy decision to change the structure and fabric of education in Billingham based on statistics that are not verifiable and at the best indicate we would be creating a school of over 1200 and at worse one on over 1400 is not creditable.
6. There appears to be no contingency for numbers attending Northfield if St Michaels were to have a large Catholic uptake and not take a percentage of non-catholic children.
7. There is no indication of any environmental impact analysis on the Northfield area if a decision were made to create a larger school.
8. There is strong evidence that schools over 1000 in size affect socialisation issues within the school and there is no commitment with regards to class sizes should there be a move to one school.

The Board have taken into account the views of the Head Teachers and agree with the sentiments put forward by one of the Heads that the decision with regards to changes in Billingham should be deferred until 2012 when the issues regarding funding and demographic change can be addressed. If this deferment is not possible the Board ask the two schools to reconsider the Federation of Schools proposal.

The Board do not support the proposal to create two schools in Billingham having regards to the potential size of Northfield post 2018 and the issues raised above.

If you require a clarification regarding the above please do not hesitate to contact me or the partnership manager Kevin Pitt.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Harrison

Chair, The Billingham Partnership Board