



**Perth & Kinross Council
Education and Children's Services
Statutory Consultation Public Meeting**

Minute of meeting held on Monday 29 September 2014

at 7.00pm in Bridge of Earn Institute

Present

Councillor Bob Band
Audrey May
Karen Robertson
Carol Taylor

Convener, Lifelong Learning Committee
Strategic Lead – Change & Improvement
Service Manager - Business Services
Service Manager - Resources

In Attendance

Councillor Barbara Vaughan
Councillor Henry Anderson
Ken McAra
Gillian Holden – Minute

Perth and Kinross Council
Perth and Kinross Council
Education Scotland
Perth and Kinross Council

21 members of the public

1. Welcome and Introductions

Councillor Bob Band opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the public in attendance. Councillor Band introduced Audrey May and Karen Robertson.

2. Format of meeting

Councillor Band explained the format the meeting would follow.

3. The proposal

Councillor Band explained the consultation proposal to the attendees:

The Council proposes to:

- establish a new secondary school at Berth Park with effect from March 2018;
- vary the existing admission arrangements to alter the catchment areas for Perth Grammar school, Perth High School and Perth Academy to establish a catchment area for the proposed new secondary school, and establish temporary admission arrangements to accommodate the phased population of the new school; and
- vary the arrangements for the transfer of pupils from a primary school to a secondary school by altering the designated secondary school for the directly affected primary schools and establish temporary transfer arrangements to accommodate the phased population of the new secondary school.

4. **Presentations**

Audrey May and Karen Robertson gave presentations explaining the proposal in further detail.

Audrey May gave a presentation on the background to the proposal and the reasons a new secondary school is required. The presentation outlined the proposed site for the new secondary school and the proposed catchment area. Information was provided on the proposed first cohort of pupils expected to attend the new secondary school along with the transition arrangements, the educational benefits of the proposal and leadership and staffing arrangements for the new secondary school. Audrey also explained the project timeline to 2018.

Karen Robertson gave a presentation on the statutory consultation process including the legal framework, consideration by Lifelong Learning Committee, the content of the proposal including the Educational Benefits statement, statutory consultation period and representation from interested parties as the first part of the consultation process. Karen Robertson then went on to explain the next stages of the process which includes the involvement of Education Scotland, the preparation and publication of the consultation report and the decision made by the Lifelong Learning Committee.

Councillor Band then opened up the meeting to any questions or observations from the floor.

5. **Questions**

Q. Will there be a possibility of more senior school pupils moving over to Bertha Park when opened?

A. No. However it is proposed that some of the curriculum will be delivered through Perth City Campus, therefore, there will on occasion be some senior pupils in Bertha Park, but not a whole senior year group. This should give younger pupils some opportunity to interact with senior pupils acting as mentors.

Q. The current Perth City Campus model is based on a buddy system – what opportunity will there be for S1 pupils to mix with more senior pupils if the S1s will be in class when the senior pupils are there?

A. The Perth City Campus model is an evolving model and it will be developed further every year.

Q. I am concerned about the experience my child will have of secondary school when they will always be the oldest in that school with no senior peers to look up to.

A. The Perth City Campus model was the preferred option to allow children in the new school the opportunity to mix with more senior pupils. The alternative was to alter the catchment area for children who have already commenced their secondary education and this is not in line with Council policy.

Q. I am concerned that this will not be a 'normal' secondary school experience for my child and, although I can see the benefits of the proposal, I am concerned that my child will potentially be attending 3 different schools in a 12 month period. I am also concerned that they will be the only children within the new school initially.

A. This is a concern that the Council has considered and this is why we have made a commitment to introduce senior pupils from other schools using the Perth City Campus model. We welcome any suggested alternatives.

Q. During the 9 month period at Perth Grammar School, what identity will my child have?

- Will they be Bertha Park pupils within Perth Grammar School?
- Will they be housed in the main school building or will they be in a cabin?
- Will they have mixed classes with Perth Grammar School pupils?
- Will they wear a separate uniform?

A. Bertha Park pupils will be a separate year group from Perth Grammar School pupils. They will have their own uniform and classrooms, but it is not the intention for them to be segregated from the Perth Grammar pupils as there will continue to be community connections. The proposal will mean that there are 50 less S1 pupils who will be attending Perth Grammar School from 2018 so there should be no capacity issues requiring external cabins when the Bertha Park S1 joins the school.

Pupils will be consulted regarding uniforms and school name and there will be appropriate support in place to help pupils throughout the transition period.

Q. Why was Abernethy not included in the proposal?

A. During the planning process for the proposal the Project Team worked on a map, moving from the proposed site of the new school outwards. When the Abernethy area was reached the numbers in the new school were getting high. There needs to be capacity for new pupils from the new housing development at Bertha Park in the coming years to avoid a similar exercise in the near future. Splitting Abernethy from the same cluster as Dunbarney was recognised as a weakness in the options appraisal and this is reflected in the final report.

Q. Will Abernethy's cluster group change?

A. They will still be part of the Perth High School cluster (LMG) but yes there will be changes to some of the schools within this.

Q. Bridge of Earn is expanding due to developments such as Oudenarde, can you give me an estimate of how many secondary pupils are expected to live in Bridge of Earn in 2018 and to go to the new school at Bertha Park?

A. Exact figures not available on evening of meeting.

Q. Concerns raised that pupils in Oudenarde are currently split between primary schools and do not integrate with each other/Dunbarney pupils.

A. The proposal would mean that pupils from Oudenarde and Dunbarney would have the same catchment secondary school.

Q. I am concerned about the availability of public transport allowing my child to take part in extra-curricular activities.

A. It was pointed out that public/parental transport has to be relied on for children currently taking part in extra-curricular activities at their existing secondary school. It is however anticipated that the wider development of the new properties at the Bertha Park site will result in a review of public transport links from Perth City to the Bertha Park area.

Q. Will this be a PPI school or serviced by Mite?

A. Neither. It will be a new finance model, major repairs will be serviced by a contractor. The new school will not be built like a community campus but will have sports/meeting facilities available for hire outwith school times.

Q. Will there be further development of the existing secondary schools?

A. There will be space created in each of the existing secondary schools following the opening of the new school. This will allow for implementation of upgrade plans. Perth High School, for example, is about to get a £4m upgrade to their sports hall. It is not the intention for there to be a two tier estate created by the introduction of the new school.

Q. You mentioned that the funding from the Scottish Government will be withdrawn if the March 2018 completion date is not met. Is this non-negotiable?

A. Yes. Therefore the completion date could not be moved nearer to August 2018 in line with a new school session. The school cannot be completed any quicker than scheduled either (e.g. August 2017). There are external contributing factors which must be considered, such as the road not being finished until December 2017.

Q. I am concerned that delays in building work may mean that my child ends up spending more time than scheduled in Perth Grammar School. Will there be penalties for the building contractor if deadlines are not met?

A. No builder has been contracted to date, therefore no guarantees can be made in this respect. Consideration must also be given to external factors out with Education and Children's Services control, for example the Tay link bridge or new roads not being completed in time.

Q. Can your child still choose to attend Perth High School if they do not want to go to the new school at Bertha Park?

A. You may submit a placing request for your child to attend a school other than their catchment. As is existing policy, there will be no entitlement to free school transport and it is the parent's responsibility to get their child to and from school. It was also pointed out, as detailed in the proposal, that Perth High School may be nearing capacity in 2018 and there may not be room for your child to attend as a result of a placing request.

There will be separate transition arrangements for those with older siblings already at Perth High School. During P7-S1 transition these pupils will be given a choice between Perth High School and the new school at Bertha Park and, in these circumstances, free transport will be provided to either school. This is expected to be phased out after approximately 6 years.

Q. What will be the transition arrangements for children with additional support needs?

A. Key staff will be in post for the new school opening. The Inclusion Team will also be aware of the needs of pupils with ASN and their requirements for transition. Perth Grammar School has existing provisions for pupils with ASN.

Q. I am concerned that children in the Bertha Park cohort will feel like a minority with Perth Grammar School. Will senior staff from Bertha Park (e.g. Headteacher) be onsite at Perth Grammar School or spend much of their time elsewhere? Will the children feel like 'squatters' in someone else's school?

A. Key staff will be in post, however at this time it is not possible to say exactly who will be there and when. There will be a community of professionals working together to ensure the best for the children. We are committed to succeed and provide the best opportunities possible for children within Perth and Kinross.

Q. Will children at the other secondary schools in Perth & Kinross be canvassed to see if they would wish to transfer to the new school at Bertha Park in order to assist with populating other stages in the school (S2-S6)?

A. No. Perth & Kinross Council would never ask children to move from their current school. It is necessary to consider the impact particularly for children who have already commenced their secondary education and may be in the process of exams. This would also be extremely difficult logistically and transport would be an issue if the school was opened up to all pupils within Perth and Kinross.

Q. Decanting primary school children from one school to another has worked successfully in recent years. Would it be feasible to populate the whole of Bertha Park in this way from August 2018?

A. This could be considered as a short term fix until the S1 pupils are moved up the school.

Q. In my experience, buildings rarely complete on time. Is there the potential for Bertha Park pupils to still be at Perth Grammar School in S2 or further years?

A. In recent years Perth & Kinross Council has seen Breadalbane Academy, North Inch Community Campus, Inch View, Loch Leven, Blairgowrie and Strathearn Community Campus complete either on schedule or ahead of schedule.

Q. If external factors can lead to delays – when will timescales be available?

A. In 6 months to 1 year we should know if the school will be completed on time. We are currently planning and working based on the proposed schedule. There would be many implications following a delay in completion and parents would need to be consulted again if this were to happen.

Q. Was Bertha Park the only identified area for the new school?

A. Yes. This was the only site agreed within the Local Development Plan..

Q. Will there be more pupils from outlying areas than Perth city pupils attending the new school at Bertha Park?

A. Yes. The proposed catchment consists mainly of areas outwith Perth city centre, the exception being the new development at Bertha Park.

Q. What is the capacity for additional children at Bertha Park?

A. Approximately 450 pupil places. House building in the new development will take place over a number of years (20 -25 years); during this time pupil numbers will fluctuate, with people moving in and out of the catchment area.

Councillor Band thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.