

**NOTES OF THE BSF PUBLIC MEETING
HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2009
AT CHESTNUT HALL
WALTHAMSTOW TOWN HALL**

Present:

Chris Kiernan	Director of Children & Young People Services (CK)
Zoë Cozens	Head Teacher (Heathcote School)
Tracey Palmer	Leytonstone School & Parent of Willowfield School
Bill Palmer	Resident Site Service Officer (Willowfield School)
Carl Brown	Local Guardian Reporter
David Lyall	Parent of Cann Hall & Leytonstone Schools
Patricia Cooke	SNA (Dawlish Primary)
Claire King	NUT member & Teacher (Dawlish Primary)
W Harding	NUT Teacher
Len Weiss	Unison member & Technician (Frederick Bremer School)
Martin Spafford	Teacher (George Mitchell)
Marilyn Payson	Leyton resident
Gill Pearson	Leyton resident
Richard Bolt	Resident & NUT member
Darren O'Grady	WF Trades Council
Tania Collins	WF resident
Rinaldo Frezzato	WF NUT
Betty Brett	WF NUT President
Derrick Hibbert	NUT member (Sir George Monoux College)
Rezwan Akhtar	Leyton Parent
Mahnaz Akhtar-Jundua	Parent of Norlington and Cann Hall Schools
Farnaz Akhtar Nadeem	Leytonstone resident and parent
Tariq Mahmood	Leyton Resident
Neelo Mahmood	Leyton Resident
Halina Alawi	Leyton Resident
Mike Barton	Leytonstone Resident
Kathryn Prince	LSA (Norlington School), Union Rep & Parent
Akhtar Khokhar –	NUT member Norlington School
Steve White	Teacher (Leytonstone School) & WF NUT Deputy Secretary
Helen Lyons	Norlington School
Ian Lelman-Strutt	Norlington School

Note taker: Sue Gill

Chris Kiernan (CK) welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that the meeting was to discuss BSF transformation. He stressed that it was not to discuss the Trust arrangements for Beaumont, Norlington and George Mitchell Schools. He referred to the blue document ***Consultation on a proposal to create a Leyton Learning and Leisure Trust from September 2009***. That document was a matter for the separate governing bodies to discuss. Any issues from that document were not for CK to respond to, but for the governing bodies.

- 1. The matter of Trust is matter is for the governors to discuss with staff (Norlington teachers)?**

It was the governing body's duty to consult with parents and have representations from staff. The governing body can manage how it receives the views of staff.

2. Steve White - WF NUT Deputy Secretary

2.1 Re. the BSF document, worried that Trust was not mentioned once, but some schools in the BSF programme are to become Trust schools, this was a done deal.

2.2 There was an element of deception and the consultation should be carried out again. I am also disturbed that this document had been sent to schools north of the borough, what does that have to do with them? Most people wanted better schools for their children. The purpose of the consultation should be questioned.

2.3 Who was the document supposed to reach? Parents should have been consulted and a secret ballot be carried out. The consultation document was sent to everyone even it did not affect them.

2.4 The majority of people thought that the document was a bad idea and they did not want a PFI building for BSF. It was thought that CK wanted to take on the views of people at the meeting. It should not be assumed that those people who did not respond wanted it.

2.4.1 Chris Kiernan (CK) It was not a 'done deal'. The green document *Building Schools for the Future – Consultation on the BSF programme proposals for schools in Leyton, Leytonstone and Chingford including proposals for schools in Walthamstow* was not about trust status. That was a matter for the governing bodies of the schools concerned.

2.4.2 The validity of consultation was that it was open for anyone to respond. It was important to receive views of parents, but also from the community, especially those people who use community services. A demographic package was used in order to consult with people who they thought would be affected by this. Parents were not the only important people in regards to community services. With reference to a comment made about Steve Berwick, if everybody thought it was a bad idea then there would be compelling reasons to revisit the proposals.

3. To say that the consultation process was a fair and satisfactory process was laughable. It was bordering on corrupt. The Norlington consultation went out last week and there was no consultation or meeting with staff. This was a corrupt consultation process designed to get this through. How many parents at Norlington knew what was going on?

CK reminded everyone that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss the green BSF document.

4. What about the building plans at the Score Centre?

CK was not familiar with what happened at the Score Centre.

5. Another person said that the display of the plans at the school was not visible.

6. A remark was made that many parents had signed a petition against the Tom Hood all through school many. The proposal was likely to go ahead even though parents signed a petition against it. Parents at Cann Hall were also against this.

7. How many parents needed to object before this matter was scrapped? They were told that the petition counted as one objection.

CK reminded everyone that it was the governors of the schools concerned who would decide about the all through school, not the local authority.

8. Why governors and not parents? Parents had more say in schools becoming Grant Maintained Status in the 1990s.

That was the legal process at the time, there were now different regulations. The decision rests with the governors.

9. If governors turned down the decision of an all through school, would it be put to another governing body?

It is a matter for governors as to how this would be handled. CK's presence at the meeting was to answer school organisation and school places. Issues about expansion and forms of entry were a matter for the council and were not going to be discussed at this meeting.

10. Len Weiss – Unison Schools Convenor did not like the attitude of council regarding the consultation of parents. BSF was guaranteed. He worked at Frederick Bremer School which was part of BSF Wave 1. They had had to create 2 new classrooms in additional huts because the BSF programme did not estimate how many places would be needed at the school. Unison's point of view was not against new schools Waltham Forest needed new schools, but they should be run by the local authority, not firms who were not based in the area (i.e. Nottingham). Nothing can be done about the building unless it was reported to the company and clearance received. It made it extremely difficult as a place to work in. The caretaking staff were TUPEd across to Ecovert. IT was run by Rameses; the system had not worked since day one and still having problems. How could the authority move onto Waves 2 – 5 when they did not get it right with Wave 1? No one was considering what needs to be done to alleviate the problem. The local authority had abdicated the right to manage the building. The Walthamstow Academy was streets ahead of Kelmscott and Frederick Bremer.

There were three issues to respond to, (1) estimated number of pupils (2) PFI schools (3) value for money re. the issue of accommodation.

10.1 With 2 schools coming together, there was always going to be a bulge. It was greater than expected as the contributing schools recruited pupils whose parents wanted them to attend the new school. The use of mobiles was temporary and will eventually go.

10.2 With regard to the PFI: we are required to use this funding route for a new /70% plus refurbished school. Academy rules are different. CK believed that the FB school represented good value for money, both as a building and over the 25 years of revenue costs as a PFI. There have been issues with ICT, and there have been discussion about improving the performance of the contractor by the council. CK said he was very pleased with the contractor's response.

10.3 The Academy was also good value for money - formerly called McEntee, it had many vacancies and poor exam performance. Since opening, the Academy has become popular and successful.

11. **Concern has been expressed about moving Beaumont into an all through school on Brewster Road. Many families will be affected, I know of one single parent of 4 children, she would only have 2 routes to get to the school (along Vicarage Road - long route and Leyton High Road – quick route). Both these roads were very busy.**
- 11.1 **Norlington pupils will be expected to move through the High Road. There will be a concentration of approximately 1000 pupils on the Brewster and Crawley Road area. The flow of pupils will create problems. There will be constraints, with a playground on the roof, and no car parking space. The coming together of 3 schools will be dangerous and will create a difficult environment that was inferior to the current site.**
12. **A concern was raised that no elected representatives were present at the meeting.**
13. **The authority should have asked the community what sort of education they wanted in their local schools and their views taken on board. The opposite of this had happened. The council came up with a proposal that was difficult for parents to take on. Not totally against proposals, but felt that the authority could have done more to meet their needs.**
14. **In reference to pay and conditions, it would depend on which trust they were talking about. It was questioned what the all through would do for families in the area? (all questions from Martin Spafford)**

CK thanked martin for the information re parents at Beaumont. Clearly the authority and the school will need to look at the travel routes, and work with parents of both primary and secondary schools to reduce difficulties arising from any move. ham Forest last year. The children and young people directorate is working closely with the environment and regeneration directorate to ensure that the safety of pupils going to and from school is enhanced by new arrangements. With regards to pupils from different schools being drawn together and possibly creating conflict, both George Mitchell and Norlington will remain as separate schools.

With regards to Beaumont, there were not enough primary spaces in the area. It was impossible to expand school places on the current site. The new all through school would make better education for the one of the most deprived estates in the borough.

CK said he believed that the council's consultation was thorough and clear. The consultation documents produced by school governing bodies where all through schools and trusts were being put forward were of a similarly high standard.

- 15 **Frederick Bremer, where did the pupils come from?**

From Aveling park and Warwick, in respect of this year's year 8-11s, and from feeder and other schools in year 7..

16. **Why couldn't Beaumont be built on the former Leyton Manor Girls' School site (currently community playground)?**

We believe that pupils are best served by an all-though schools, with opportunities for learning from 3 to 18 on a single site.

17. **What evidence have you got of all through schools?**

There were not many all through schools in the country as there were many limited opportunities of rebuilding in the first wave. There were examples in this country, and CK said he would endeavour to provide information on the council's website about all-through schools currently open.

- 18. A teacher from Norlington stated that he had given the consultation document to boys in his class. There was no question as to what the parents think about moving onto the George Mitchell site. No questions related to the pupils. It was also unsure whether the terms and conditions of all staff would be protected.**

The school's consultation document was about the trust status, not the move. The new site and school organisation is the subject of the council's consultation, of which tonight's meeting is part.

- 19. Regarding non-teaching staff being TUPEd across to Ecovert, I know of a site office who lost his housing and was given unsuitable accommodation and another was placed in rented accommodation, although housing was shown on the original building plans.**

- 20. Willowfield pupils will be expected to go onto busy roads and the main entrance will be on Blackhorse Road. The governing body and staff were informed that there was no other option, if they wanted a new school they would have to go where they were told. Some of the plans could not be used as some of the land was on a flood plain.**

20.1 The council has always honoured obligations to caretakers re housing. It is true that options re another site for the school were limited – we required more pupil places, that required the school to increase capacity to 6 FE. The site adjacent to Blackhorse Lane is an excellent site, and we are confident that we will achieve safe pupil access.

20.2 Following on from a question, improvement notices had been served on Bouygues and the local authority had a number of sanctions on the LEP (losing exclusivity in the project, for example)).

- 21. A resident who teaches in a neighbouring borough stated that Tower Hamlets did not put any pressure on schools to go down the route of an all through school. Couldn't the police holding cent be placed somewhere else and that land used by Norlington? What were the benefits of having Beaumont and George Mitchell on the same site? They could be on separate sites but linked. There must have been some other options that could have been considered?**

The authority had considered other options. Tower Hamlets is a later scheme, and has different patterns of schooling and constraints, and will therefore have different proposals. One advantage Tower Hamlets has is the remit of its LEP is wider as it included housing. There had been long discussions with the police, who were unable to change their decision on the holding cells due to need for cells, which would be increased due to the forthcoming London Olympic Games in 2012.

- 22. The community use of Whittingham Youth Centre went when the new school was created. Jenny Hammond Primary was deprived of land. There were lots of primary schools that fed into secondary schools, what about them? What about the playground space?**

Pupils at the all through school will automatically have entry to the secondary school. The Beaumont pupils will not be disadvantaged. The Youth Centre trust legally owns the land for a particular amount of time. However, LBWF owned the freehold. Whittingham was not a PFI or trust school. There will be an agreement on the number of hours the land could be used. The land can be used after school hours and during school holidays. It was expected that there would be more enhanced community use.

- 23. Zoë Cozens, Head Teacher of Heathcote School & Science College**
23.1 She was present at the meeting to represent the Heathcote against the expansion of Chingford Foundation School. Many of the students were socially disadvantaged. It was accepted that expanding Chingford Foundation would mean better resources and opportunities. Chingford Foundation expanded 2 years ago, this skewed Heathcote's intake and the number of free school meals increased. Expanding by another 2FE would not be good for Heathcote. Zoë Cozens asked that a different proposal be considered so that there were 3 8FE schools in the Chingford area and a post 16 consortium.

CK agreed to consider that, but not to go into further discussions at the meeting.

- 24. Darren O'Grady – Parent from Walthamstow**
24.1 The issue of problems with the ICT systems was not peculiar to LBWF. PFI reminded parents that it will be 25 years before the school returned to local authority control. Councillors had shown contempt by preferring private companies rather than listening to the views of the community (they were informed that the petition was counted as one objection). Alternatives do exist why did the authority not think of them.

PFI does not reduce local authority control of the school – it affects the facilities management and repairs and maintenance of the school. There was no other way of refurbishing schools without PFI.

- 25. Why not publish/publicise fact that they do not have to go down BSF route if want to refurbish schools?**

There is no viable alternative source of capital to refurbish or renew all our secondary schools. CK said he was very proud to be director of children and young people Services at the time when there was a £300,000,000 investment in our secondary and special schools, in addition to primary capital, which we will use for the primary element of the all-through schools.

- 26. Rinaldo Frezzato – NUT**
26.1 Waltham Forest was a community. Zoë Cozens showed what happens when the community was broken down. Chingford Foundation was not part of the community, the governors have taken the decision to go into competition with Heathcote. Walthamstow Academy was in competition with other schools in the borough. Waltham Forest schools were slowly being dismantled. BSF was a good idea, but it was dismantling community schools, it will cause competition. Associating BSF with trust schools will cause a division.
26.2 The 1944 Education Act got rid of elementary education and created the primary and secondary system. Why change it?
The only all through school left in the authority (Lea Green) was forced to close as it was not appropriate for young children to be taught with older children.

Why was it appropriate now? Choice and diversity should be along all schools.

Waltham Forest had all through schools that were successful. Many of our special schools were all through schools. The Education Act, 1944 was now repealed: it has been replaced by the 1996 Act and the subsequent Education and Inspections Act, 2006 changed the framework that the authority now operated under. This defines 'diversity and choice' as a variety of governance models – without diversity of governance, BSF capital funding will not be released to the council. With regard to 'competition', schools had been in competition since the Education Act, 1988. Walthamstow Academy is funded through the council's formula and has no revenue advantage over state schools in the area.

27. Still going through consultation and planning process what was the borough's plan?

The process will be developed and amended if necessary. CK will be working closely with the planning officers where appropriate.

28. It was a done deal?

CK emphasised that nothing was a done deal. The consultation and objection process has not ended, and all views expressed will be closely consider by his officers, and him personally.

29. With regard to the custody holding centre, there was a need for modern facilities as people were placed all over London making it difficult for families and solicitors to visit and provide support.

30. What was the legal status of the planned building on the Youth Centre site? The land was given to the local authority on the condition that it was used for local recreation, but some of it will be used for other use. Who gave permission for the land to be given away and the use changed?

The covenant under Essex County Council was investigated. It was local authority land and we will act within the covenant.

31. Under BSF couldn't the schools be refurbished on the current sites?

They could, but there would be so many constraints. George Mitchell and Norlington did not allow expansion due to the age of the buildings, it would be difficult to refurbish. In terms of modern education, it would be inefficient to modernise, the only way was through a new build. Both George Mitchell and Norlington will remain as 2 KS3 4FE schools, preserving their identities especially important to Norlington. They will integrate once in KS4.

There will be no reduction in facilities on the Leyton Youth site.

32. Norlington will remain as a boys school from ages 11 – 14 years (KS3) , then mixed from 14 -17 years (KS4). This will remove the parental choice of single sex schools. Connaught had not been changed. Parents have been given a 'half cocked measure'. The mixture of pupils in KS4 will create a sexual imbalance.

Norlington will remain a boys' school under proposals. In KS4 there will be more movement and mixed-sex education.

33. Same conditions for the girls' school?

CK noted that Connaught was a part of wave 5 of the programme, and we have agreed proposals for the school's refurbishment in outline with the head and the governing body.

34. The governing body was keen, but the views of the parents and local community were not keen.

The governing body will consult with the local community. CK said that he would take into consideration what was said at this meeting.

35. Tim Spafford – George Mitchell

35.1 Some years ago the school had more girls than boys. Governors were keen with the proposals.

35.2 It was disgraceful that Cllr Robbins was not present although at George Mitchell, this meeting was about pupils' lives. He should have been here. We need the consultation timetable published for all trust schools and it should be made known to everyone.

CK noted these comments.

36. There should have been open meetings. Parents and local residents should have been able to have a secret ballot. The authority has deceived everyone and needs to be open and honest.

CK said that he respected and valued the community's views. CK wanted it recorded that he had honesty and integrity and had never hidden anything. He will take into consideration the views expressed. That did not make the consultation invalid.

37. George Mitchell had a total reluctance to hold a ballot, but in the interest for all concerned need to move forward with the support of the parents.

This was a matter for the governors of the schools. CK noted that he could not speak for George Mitchell and Norlington governing bodies.

38. Will the comments from this meeting be sent to us?

Yes. The minutes can upload onto the WF website.

39. At the Willowfield consultation meeting, there 5 parents present. There were more senior managers of the school who had a vested interest and were pushing this forward. The parents should have been included in any ballot put to the governing body. Re. the land of the new school site was aware that the local authority had been in contact with the Head Teacher and Chair.

The local authority had been in many discussions about availability of land.

40. It was discussed that the decision to become an all through school was a decision for the governing body to make, but it did not necessarily reflect what staff wanted. Beaumont has gone with that decision because they thought that

the local authority would not support them if they went against their view and 'wash their hands of them'. It was known that the Chair of Governors had resigned.

The local authority not 'washing their hands' of Beaumont. The issue was more complicated because Beaumont was in special measures. An Interim Education Board (IEB) will be taking over from the governing body. The resignation of the chair is a matter for her.

41. How much of the land would the Trust own?

They will not own the land; it will be on leasehold. This would be subject to a clear agreement that the terms of the lease could not be varied.

42. If the school was being built on a small space, why give the Trust the whole bit?

It would be easier to maintain and manage.

43. Staff would TUPE across to the Trust?

The staff maintaining the building will be managed by Ecovert.

44. Will anyone lose their jobs as a result of the changes to George Mitchell, Beaumont and Norlington?

Do not expect any one to lose their jobs unless school numbers decreased. The profile of pupil population was likely to be great and the schools should be popular and successful.

45. Len Weiss – Why am I losing my job?

I do not know. Maybe if the volume of work decreased, some staff will have to leave and not be replaced. There was no reason whether PFI or Trust Schools that staff should lose their jobs. .

46. If this 'experiment' fails, will you consider plans to revert back to local authority control?

This would be the same for all schools, resulting from poor OFSTED inspections (special measures). It did not prevent the local authority stepping in if there was a failure in the education being delivered. It was impossible to say what the pupils' attainment would be. CK said that he wanted the school to be well equipped and did not regard the all through school as an experiment, as the school would be existing working together to make it a success.

47. If there was a problem with the trust, what was the legal position to revert back to public ownership?

Any school that was failing could be closed and re-opened. The conditions of the school re-opening will be within the legal framework, which specifies the terms of competition and adjudication. It should not be assumed that no action can be taken.

48. What about democratic control? This was removed by the council.

Democratic control will not be removed. The critical thing will be the make up of the governing body. The Trust Board will include parents and members of the community.

49. What will happen about the company failing to manage the site?

There was recourse to address these issues.

CK stated that he was very excited about the George Mitchell/Norlington scheme. As one of the 2010 Olympic boroughs, Waltham Forest will be an attractive place to live and the scheme has the potential to be the focal point of regeneration.

50. What exactly was on the plans for the new school?

Plans are at a very early stage of formulation.

51. Re. the failure of the PFI companies. Would it be possible to issue the key performance indicators?

CK said that he will ask Moira Bishop to upload this onto the website.

Action: Moira Bishop.

52. You are making an effort to tell everyone that the Trust schools were the same as other schools and that there was nothing to worry about. What can the Trust bring that the local authority could not?

The IOE will be a valued partner with the schools. They will be able to give focused support to the schools on governance and curriculum.

53. The Norlington governors seemed to be working in a vacuum.

CK could not answer that. However, he stated that he had spoken to the Chair and Vice-Chair and they had a clear understanding about the future.

54. You are only talking to 2 members of the governing body. All governors should be informed of the changes.

CK agreed to talk to the Chair.

55. Couldn't part of the consultation include an IOE representative at a public meeting?

There had been representation at the governing body meetings of Beaumont, Norlington and George Mitchell schools and attendances at many events in Waltham Forest.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.