

The Samuel Cody Specialist Sports College possible relocation to the Oak Farm Community School site

Date **29th April 2010**
 Time **18:30**
 Location **The Samuel Cody Specialist Sports College**

Action

The meeting was attended by a total of 37 people who were mostly parents but this included three parent governors, 3 school governors, and one LA governor. Also in attendance were Anna Dawson, Headteacher and Glenn Parkinson, School Organisation Officer from the Children's Services Department of Hampshire County Council.

Anna Dawson began by giving a presentation on the background to the current position and why she and the governors were in support of the move subject to alterations and refurbishment works to the Oak Farm Community School buildings being undertaken to their satisfaction. Anna made it very clear that the school would not relocate unless the necessary building works were completed and that suitable revenue funding was available to be able to run the school at the alternative site.

The parents raised a number of questions;

- Concern was expressed that if the school relocated to a larger site and building then more children would be able to attend resulting in the school increasing in size which would affect the quality of education provided to children. A request for reassurance was made from the Local Authority that the school would not expand.

It was confirmed that the Local Authority had no plans to expand the school beyond its current numbers in the foreseeable future, although in time this would depend on any additional demand from the expected Aldershot Urban Extension of up to 4,500 new dwellings.

- It was asked why Oak Farm was closing.

The reason Oak Farm is closing is due to a reduction in pupil numbers in the area meaning there is no

requirement for three secondary schools serving that locality. Samuel Cody is an outstanding school, as judged by the recent OFSTED inspection, and there is no expectation that the excellent education the school provides would not continue if the school relocated.

- If Samuel Cody does move will they use all the site and buildings?

The site is owned by Hampshire County Council and if the school does relocate they will use a significant part of the site and buildings. Those buildings not being used by the school will be available for other uses including use by other organisations and general community use.

- Will transport be provided to pupils if the school relocates?

If a pupil lives over three miles from the school they would be entitled to transport in line with the current home-to-school transport policy.

- Will a pupil's statement of special education need to be changed if the school relocates?

Samuel Cody will continue to be the named school on the statement.

- Concern was expressed about the impact of the move on staff and whether this would affect the quality of education.

It is expected that all current staff would transfer to the new site if the school moved and therefore would be able to continue to deliver the excellent teaching that currently takes place in the school. The move gives the school an opportunity to secure larger and better facilities e.g. specialist teaching spaces and thus enable the development of an enhanced curriculum to support pupil's learning.

- It was asked what would happen to the old school and whether The Wavell Secondary School would take over the buildings?

No decision has been made about this yet.

- Why was it not possible to expand the school on its current site?

The site is restricted and sharing it with The Wavell Secondary School does limit opportunities for expansion. The impact on education provision as a result of the planned Aldershot Urban Extension indicates that additional facilities will be needed at The Wavell Secondary School which would exacerbate the current problems.

- If pupils are to move to a new site this could cause difficulties to those who are familiar with the current site and buildings. It is important that support is provided to those pupils to help them understand that the move is taking place and help them settle in their new surroundings as quickly as possible.

If the school does relocate then there will be support given to pupils and parents to minimise the impact on pupils learning. It has already been highlighted in school assemblies that a move is possible and if it is confirmed, then an action plan will be developed to ensure a smooth transfer for everyone.

- What will be the timing for the move?

There is a lot of detail to be confirmed to do with the building works necessary as well as the revenue funding for the school and community use of the site and buildings. Officers of the County Council are working with the school on these matters with a view to confirming the position as soon as possible. Assuming all matters can be resolved the intention is the school will move in the summer of 2011 ready to open in September. Anna explained it was very important to ensure all of the building works are completed prior to the school moving in.

- A general point was raised around post 16 education and whether in the longer term the school would need to cater for pupils beyond 16 years of age.

At this stage it is not possible to give an answer to this question albeit that the intention is that at 16 pupils will move to college, undertake training or gain employment. This is part of the strategic thinking around provision for 14-19 year olds and these plans will become clearer in due course.

- Parents were keen to hear how they would be kept informed on the situation and what would happen if they did not want to see the school relocate.

The school would continue to communicate to parents through newsletters and there would be opportunities for further meetings. It was hoped that parents would see the benefits of the school moving as pupils will be able to access a larger site with their own sports facilities, larger classrooms and specialist accommodation. Anna explained that this represented a good opportunity to gain better facilities.

At the conclusion of the meeting it was felt that there was a general feeling of support to the principle of relocating the school apart from the questions raised at the meeting.