Phase 2 Education in the West - CONSULTATION MEETING

Notes of Staff Meeting - West Woodburn FIrst School

6th March 2018 – 3:30 pm

Present: Sue Aviston – Head of School Organisation and Resources
Lorraine Fife - School Organisation Manager
Bridget Halpin – NCC HR Adviser
Jacqui Pearson – Note taker

Also Present: Andrew Gibson - GMB
Richard List - NASUWT
John Sanderson - NEU

5 Staff members of West Woodburn First School

Sue Aviston asked members of the LA to introduce themselves.

Sue went through the presentation, she explained that for Phase 1 there were 3 meetings which took place at Hexham Mart, 1 for Hexham, 1 for Haydon Bridge and a combined meeting for all Heads and Chairs of Governors. Following the meetings the feedback from Headteachers and Chairs of Governors was used to develop the proposed models. She explained that this is not a referendum and that there may be a Model D, which may consist of bits of Model A, B and C or something completely different.

Sue explained that Hadrian Learning Trust (HLT) consultation is running alongside the LA consultation but is separate and will end before the County Council consultation.

Lorraine explained the consultation process and explained what would happen next and the timeline.

Following the presentation there was a question/answer session:

Q: What does merging mean?
A: Merger is 2 schools coming together with 1 or 2 Headteachers and 1 Governing Body

Q: What would happen with staffing between merged schools?
A: The LA Officers would look to gain agreement from schools for a staffing protocol - Otterburn vacancies for example, candidates would be interviewed before a wider audience. If Otterburn FIrst School are to become a Primary School, they will need a new staffing structure and more staff. Later in the meeting the topic was returned to and confirmation was received that union colleagues sit in the interview room to guarantee the fairness of the interviews.

There was a lot of discussion about transport and concerns of younger pupils travelling. There was discussion about the printed distances in the consultation document and the actual mileage when it is driven.

There was discussion with the staff of how they had looked at becoming a Primary School and had a meeting with a structural engineer to see what the cost would be and the feasibility of extensions. Would this come from Capital Investment?
LA Officers discussed the rationale of the capital investment and the school was not to be concerned about that, if necessary it would happen.

There was a lot of discussion about the standard of teaching at Bellingham Middle School (and lack of) and what was the LA doing to support the school.

It was discussed that it is not healthy for one big school to serve a vast community and we are being railroaded by QEHS. If a school is not educationally viable then something should be done but all of the First schools are good or outstanding.
The meeting was concluded with it being a stressful process and Occupational Health is available for staff who may need Counselling.

There was discussion around HLT receiving funding. How? Why?
LA Officers responded that they teach Northumberland children and as a LA we still have a responsibility for children to be taught in the best environment possible. The buildings will remain owned by the LA and leased to the Trust.

There was discussion over the need of a business case and financial developments needed at the next stage.