

Morley Memorial Site Redevelopment Plan Document for Resources Committee meeting 21st October 2013

The background

To set the current position in context, going back to the Full GB minutes dated 9.7.12 (point 16), the following was discussed and agreed:

“Nicky Odgers talked about recent plans for the school building. The LA have commissioned plans to modify the school buildings, based on the premise that the EY building is not fit for purpose. One option is to move EY to the main site, with the building of new classrooms and facilities, and refurbishment of the outside spaces. This option is favoured by Michael Catchpool for a number of reasons (detailed in “what will we gain” below). The tennis court on the EY site would be remodelled as an all weather sports pitch, and the school would also retain some of the large EY garden, but the house and part of the garden would be put to another use by the LA, or sold. A decision could be made as soon as Jan 2013, but note that other schools in the county will also be going through this process and we cannot know yet where Morley sits in terms of priority. Staff have not yet been notified fully of the plans. A GB buildings working group would be set up when required. The LA requires GB approval of the option to move EY to the main site, by the end of term. **After a short discussion, the GB approved the plan in principal.**”

The working group has been in place for several months and meetings have continued with the project and design managers, architects and representatives from Cambridgeshire County Council (“CCC”). A lot of detailed work has been carried out with, in particular, Michael Catchpool, Tim Fox and Andrew Sweasey negotiating very hard to achieve the best result for the school from the limited budget available.

It is important to highlight that the Cabinet member for Learning at CCC has pointed out that Morley does not fit any of the urgent criteria for capital funding which would ordinarily qualify the school for some form of development work; we are therefore very fortunate to actually be in the latest 5 yr capital plan. This has all come about as a result of CCC suggestions as to how the whole site could be enhanced if Early Years were to move to the main site; the original complaint from Michael was purely in relation to the significant challenges faced in offering Early Years provision in the current building. As such, we are not able to demand that, for example, we have a whole new school out of this process as we are already receiving far more funding to carry out the work detailed in the latest plans than we could reasonably hope for.

What we will gain from the site redevelopment project

- Moving to a single site
 - Better integration between staff and students
 - Addresses safety concerns about EY children crossing the road at least twice a day
 - Removes some issues with transition from EY to Yr 1
 - Ability to provide an EY curriculum which is fully compliant with current practice such as ability to freely access outdoor learning
 - Removes the numerous difficulties which the current EY building presents
 - stairs,
 - difficulties teachers face in delivering learning given the layout of the rooms,
 - additional maintenance costs of running a split site
 - security issues re EY site access
 - old inefficient building which needs significant refurbishment for which we have no money e.g. upstairs toilets
 - less visibility of the Headteacher for Early Years parents (which is a point raised in the parent questionnaire)
 - Early Years parents don't immediately feel part of the wider school
- Refurbishing as much of the school as possible within the confines of the budget

- Improved flow of ‘traffic’ around the school, greatly reducing the frustration of congested corridors
- Improved resources with regard to the provision of dedicated space to host meetings and one to one sessions with pupils
- Increased opportunities to deliver an exciting curriculum as a result of flexible-use teaching and learning areas.
- Improving the main site play area and installing a multi use games area (“MUGA”) on current EY site
- Replacing the boiler
- Bespoke After School Club area
- New library space

What areas will the plan not fully address

- The entire school will not be refurbished so we will need to fund some of the work ourselves.
- We will need to fundraise for the work to the main site play area to make the grassed area usable all year round (quotes from several companies currently being obtained). We also need to raise money for the top playing surface for the MUGA (an allowance for groundworks, fencing and tarmacing is part of the CCC budget); to obtain best school and community use, some form of artificial grass/surface is preferable.

This is where we are in the process

Looking to move into an 8 week “design” phase where more detailed work will be carried out in relation to the current plans. As part of this process, a community meeting (and possible separate parents’ meeting) will be held at Morley to discuss the plans and allow for questions to be raised before moving on to the formal planning application process.

This is where we need your engagement

The Governing Body is being asked to give approval to the principles and location of the plans circulated on 30th September (the direction of travel) i.e. single storey building extension and the spaces within this, Early Years moving, new rear hall/after school club area, revised spaces within the existing building etc.

If we start to unpick these principles later, it will result in the designers having to go through the time consuming task of re-doing design which ultimately will prove expensive and will limit how much we get for the fixed budget the Council have allocated.

The Governing Body are not saying yes to give designers complete control of how the design progresses. As they carry out further surveys and involve specialist engineers etc, the design will progress. Things could change due to the restrictions of the existing building or things that come to light as the design stage develops. Things like lighting and power provision, classroom layouts, external and internal materials will all need to be designed, reviewed and agreed; there will be opportunity to do this.

It is important that the Governing Body as a whole are fully behind the plans so that they can engage positively with the wider parent body.

Michael Catchpool
Tim Fox
October 2013