

Meeting: Community Drop-in Session

Date/Time: Wednesday 14 July at 3.00pm – 6.30pm

Venue: Ryton Comprehensive School

Present: Sandra Punton – Learning and Children, Gateshead Council
Allan Ranson – Development and Enterprise, Gateshead Council
Nicky Wise – inspiredspaces
Jane Braybrook – inspiredspaces
Anita Dowson – Learning and Children, Gateshead Council
(notetaker)

Attendance: 41

- Assuming the funding was available what are the chances of building on this site?
- Green corridor gradually closing – totally built up area – meant to be preserving green field – meant to be refurbishing existing sites.
- Terrible shame - mortified if a supermarket or houses put here.
- Ryton is a very unique site.
- Very comforting for pupils to come through same gate for the whole of their education life.
- Current site has an open aspect, is safe and secure, backs on to open fields and golf course.
- Tesco – or big builder – will come onto this site!
- Publicity about the site – what is the real reason behind the choice of a new site? What is the plan for the current Ryton site?
- Need to do something on the junction first.
- How would pupils travel from Winlaton?
- New site is inaccessible to pedestrians.

- Small businesses would shut in Ryton – lunch time trade.
- What is the logic behind building a new school on greenbelt land versus refurbishment of an existing school which has the potential for this?
- Concern about the location of the school, so close to a busy by-pass where there have already been numerous accidents and fatalities.
- Concern regarding additional vehicles on Western Way which is already a rat run during busy periods.
- Pedestrian access into site needs to reflect residential amenity and parking on the estate.
- If Ryton School closes, what will happen to the present buildings and site?
- A by-pass was built to stop traffic going through Ryton. Now they want to build a school on the by-pass.
- Proposed site for the new school is greenbelt land. What sort of example is that setting for the school children? The curriculum constantly educates on looking after the environment then we totally disregard this to build a new school.
- Both my children will attend Ryton CS and I feel this is a complete waste of public money. Ryton CS is on a site which has been given to develop the existing site further.
- The proposed site has numerous problems, poor bus access from narrow roads from Ryton Main Street, bottle neck for traffic, and a junction on the by-pass that is an accident blackspot.
- The current site is ideally located next to the infants and juniors. Do the sensible thing and redevelop the current site!
- Public transport, particularly out of normal school day will need to be enhanced particularly for children travelling from Rowlands Gill and Chopwell.
- I would also wish to see much improved safe access to new site to allow children to be able to walk to school.
- A new build would enable the school to have a new identity I would be concerned about existing Ryton being a building site for an extended period.

- If Hookergate cannot be saved – then the best use of public money is a refurbishment of the current RCS suite.
- Long term effects for community of Ryton (sympathise with Hookergate losing community facility).
- Please listen to outcomes of consultation this time as a lot of people are disillusioned from the last democratic process.
- Please ensure transport strategy is sound whatever the decision.
- There will be a lot more rain water run-off on the proposed new school. How will the additional water from the playgrounds, school, tennis courts etc be controlled? Please bear in mind, there is still occasional overflow from the current pond overflow.
- Everyone in Ryton is happy with the school's location. Are the Council concerned about the thousands of people/residents who do not want this change?
- Is the vision for more green space for the children? If so why is the new site smaller, but the school population much bigger?
- Site not suitable – 9 acre field.
- Waste of money to stop need new schools.
- Like phased transition plan happy to come to Ryton.
- Good phased transition plan, aware of issues at Blaydon.
- Local Resident – Grange Estate – no objection to new school on the new site but interested to know if there are any proposals for road or pedestrian links into the site from her estate? Nice to have investment.
- Local residents who overlook the site – very unhappy with the site proposed. Don't see why it should have a school built upon it. Very unhappy with the fact that no one knew about the consultation or that a school should be built on new site.
- Have the ward Councillors been to Ryton school site? Do they know the fields?
- Safety of children paramount – by-pass at site.
- Have already been fatalities and numerous road traffic accidents. 1 child already killed.

- Cost of school is an issue when trying to save money.
- Residents of Ryton need to be informed.
- Ideally for Ryton to be refurbished. New site small, will break up community and infants and juniors currently being on same site.
- Main concern for children at school today. Will cause chaos if by-pass is brought down to 20 mph.
- Got infrastructure on this road, why move around?
- Have police been consulted?
- Is it really about children or what goes into Gateshead?
- Why take another green belt site if this site is a green belt site?
- Very few parents at Hookergate, why should it be revolved around them?
- Council will get money from sale of existing Ryton site – its all about getting money.
- Has major refurbishment of current site been costed?
- Thought this had been stopped, people don't know these meetings are taking place.
- Greenfield and water site can only build on this land in extenuating circumstances. Gateshead already own current site why use another Greenfield site?
- Money could be spent on Hookergate children being accommodated here.
- Is it correct that there is a problem with Hookergate parents sending children as they feel their children will be bullied?
- Working on transition is nothing to do with new site. Using taxpayers' money still talking about new site. How would district auditor feel?
- Who is Chair of Governors – why is he involved. Doesn't live in area. People who live in Ryton know what's best for them. Governors told categorically that this site wouldn't be included. Said Ryton will stay open.

- Gateshead Council were successful in bid to accelerate BSF – why isn't it stopping.
- What's wrong with Hookergate?
- If enough people are against it will it be cancelled?
- Community weren't aware of meetings, 1 poster in doctors' surgery, why wasn't it in Council News which goes to every household? Meetings should have been advertised more widely.
- Would be cheaper to remodel. What about existing school, what about new sports hall, music room and science block, money would have to be given back. Forced to have hub – money wasted. No reason to have a new site need to save money.
- Kids will be killed on the road - kids will be kids!
- School will be built no matter what otherwise it would be Gateshead admitting they are wrong.
- Look at decision why was Ryton site not included what was argument for new site?
- Don't believe in democracy. Where is the democracy if people are against it? Labour party didn't win on weight of arguments they win on number of votes.
- PfS have stopped process, why still proceeding?
- What does 'vision' mean, why existing site not in the vision?
- Where are Cabinet papers available are they available to the public?
- Cabinet went against the consensus of opinion.
- Document mentions preferred site. Abuse of process.
- The Council has contacted landowner without consulting residents.
- How were the 8 possible sites narrowed down to 1?
- No notice was taken of consultation when Blaydon closed.
- How will pupils be contained – they will be on the road?
- What about buses for after school clubs? Children will just cut across the by-pass.

- Have Hookergate had chance to fill in forms?
- Cabinet need to see what facilities are available currently on Ryton site.
- How many people have to be killed on the by-pass before being listened to?
- Do you know the size of the site? Need to know size of site to see if it is big enough to do what you want.
- When Hookergate come to Ryton initially will there be transport? Will need to be buses to either site.
- Why was that site best? Expected to be told it's a good location, good road system etc.
- Which site would Headteacher choose to build school on?
- Could current site be bigger than the proposed site?
- Catchment area takes in a big geographical area – no public transport!
- Ward Cllr indicated that recent ward visits were undertaken to current Ryton site and proposed new site. Also had discussion with Leader about the importance of what is already here and the history of the site which goes back 200 years. Cllr confirmed she wants what is best for the children as does the Headteacher.
- People don't know what's happening unless they trawl the web for information.
- This is the route the Council decided to take. Current site has been decided against without costing.
- Only based on Cabinet opinion.
- Need to come up with valid idea of bringing the communities together to look at current Ryton site.
- Need to undertake a feasibility study on 2000 people attending school everyday.
- Flooding is a major problem on new site.
- Site should have been considered after all forms were filled in
Governors couldn't vote for current site.

- All things that want to be done can be done on this site.
- Will there be more than one entrance at the new school on the new site?
- Safety could be increased on current site.
- Do you think it's good to keep young adults on site all day i.e 16-18 year olds?
- Kenton school stopped children leaving the school during the school and is now much better.
- Current site is big enough to build new state of the art school.
- Increasing numbers on this site isn't an issue. Better to build on what we've got – better infrastructure. No issue with integration – strong leadership at Ryton.
- Joint meetings would be better – Governors and parents would have been much better. Not a good idea to keep everyone apart.
- Site choice a major issue – what will happen to the current site? What will happen to existing infant and juniors? Transition – good now.
- Worried about the primary schools they could be next to a boarded up building. Who would use it if it was a community facility?
- Prospective Ryton Parent – Gateshead Council did not listen re hub – walked over local residents – won't take any notice of community. Strong school strong leadership. Massive upheaval.
- Couldn't complete forms on line at the start of the process. Plan-vision/tunnel vision – why is the site the best site?
- Did the Cabinet consider the informal consultation last year where 89% of people preferred to keep Ryton on existing Ryton site.
- Not meeting with Governors of linked primaries was not a good idea.
- Not invited to last night's session. Governor of infant/junior.
- Why isn't there a plan B?
- Quote from Dave Anderson read out ending in “ensure everyone's voice is heard”.

- Can people speak at public meeting of Cabinet? Can this meeting be advertised in Council news?
- Need to cost out refurbishment of school.
- If new school is built on new should would there be changes to the road? It was built as a by-pass to miss houses etc building a school there will necessitate change in speed limit. What was the point in building the by-pass in the first place?
- This site was never an option to be considered?
- Hookergate is being given more consideration than Ryton.
- Disagree that starting from scratch is better. This building can be utilised to be state of the art.
- Could be eco-friendly here.
- Cabinet should be here – would another meeting with Cabinet be possible?
- Has been rumoured that someone high up in the Council lives at Greenside and was against that site.
- Settling pond floods. Flooding is an issue.
- Only heard of meetings by chance/word of mouth.
- 2000 people will be descending on the site every day.
- We can show photographs of flooding on Woodside Road shown.
- Gateshead always talking about sustainability. Not sustainable if knock building down and rebuild. Could easily refurbish current school. Has new sports block and music block.
- Other schools have reused buildings.
- Call it Gateshead West Academy.
- Parents have already bought uniform – will money be available from the Council to buy the new uniform?
- Cost of transport is a cost to taxpayer.
- Have parents been invited to look at site at Ryton?

- Do Hookergate parents know where new site is?
- In the past people went from Ryton to Hookergate to go to school.
- Council is not socialist they are building at Ryton because it's a Lib Dem area.
- Ryton ward councillor didn't know where site was.
- Hookergate kids being bullied.- £29m being spent to stop bullying?
- Can consultation period be extended to give people more time to respond?
- Have you applied 'best value' to your proposals?
- No one wants to know about the "vision"!
- Council still ploughing ahead – because it's a Labour Council!
- Would it not be better value for money to put money into a school here not buying land and rebuilding?
- Have you told Councillors that it's an abuse of public spending? Councillors should be told!
- How long has the consultation period been on?
- How were people supposed to know about it? Found out by word of mouth didn't find out through official sites or Council website.
- Have Partnerships for Schools been told that Council are still proceeding? If they were to be contacted would they confirm that they are aware that things are still going ahead even without any money?
- Press said things have stopped and have gone ahead with meetings. People aren't coming because they think the meetings are cancelled due to funding being stopped.
- No revision of transition plan in consultation document. Documents should have been revised for this meeting.
- Information on meetings could have been in Council News.
- Hookergate parents are steering the process; the decision is made.
- Once Gateshead Council decides on something – there is no going back.