

## APPENDIX F

### THE ST GUTHLAC SCHOOL, CROWLAND AND THE GEORGE FARMER TECHNOLOGY AND LANGUAGE COLLEGE, HOLBEACH PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

16 FEBRUARY 2011 AT THE ST GUTHLAC SCHOOL,  
CROWLAND

PANEL MEMBERS: Paul Holmes (LCC) (Chairman) (PH)  
Andy Breckon (Assistant Director LCC) (AB)  
Andrew Atherton (University of Lincoln) (AA)  
Chris Penney (Chair of Governors) (CP)  
Steve Baragwanath (Headteacher ) (SB)  
Steve Gamble (School Admissions) (SG)  
David Robinson (School Transport) (DR)

Approximately 110 members of the public were in attendance including parents, local councillors, press and television and members of the local community.

Paul Holmes introduced the members of the panel and briefly explained that this meeting is part of the consultation process on the proposal to close The St Guthlac School and The George Farmer Technology and Language College giving members of the public opportunity to find out more about the proposal and express their views. He went through the potential timeline for this consultation process.

He also explained that there will be a separate consultation conducted by the sponsor on the proposed new Academy which will start around the end of February.

The following is a record of the questions and answers at the meeting.

**Q** The consultation letter said that the Academy consultation would run alongside the LCC consultation but this is not the case as it has not started yet.

**A** There are 2 separate processes with different start and finish dates.  
AA – confirmed that the consultation on the Academy will start at the end of February/beginning of March, with a date to be set in April for a public meeting to discuss how the Academy might work with opportunity for all to contribute. We want to encourage feedback.

**Q** The biggest concern is for the children, with extra time to get to and from school and concern over the road to Holbeach which is dangerous and has tight bends. There are big health and safety issues. It would be better travelling to Spalding if the school closes. Can a road organisation check the road – is it OK for buses?

**A** The person from LCC responsible for home to school transport is still en route and will be here as soon as possible to answer questions. Not all parents will want their children to go to the Academy. There is also a separate consultation out on all home to school transport at the moment regarding designated transport areas.

**Q** Will buses to Spalding be free? It is safer and nearer.

**A** There is no definitive answer. We are out to consultation on home to school transport in Lincolnshire. Children should get transport to their nearest appropriate school. Also any child on roll at St Guthlac or George Farmer that qualifies for school transport will get transport until they complete their education to Y11 at the Academy. William Webb (Executive Councillor Highways LCC) who is responsible for 24,000 children on school transport confirmed that he is concerned for all highways to be safe, and buses and taxis fit for purpose. His main objective is for all children to get to and from school safely.

**Q** I am concerned for children currently at the school (I have one in Y8 and 1 in Y9). The uncertainty is affecting them and they have stopped trying at school. When will we know when the school is closing?

**A** All Y9 and Y10 children will be able to maintain their options and complete their GCSE courses here at Crowland. The timeline indicates that a decision is likely to be taken on 5 July by the Executive Committee.

**Q** Teachers at Crowland are not being replaced. What effect will this have on the teaching at the school?

**A** We have consulted HR on how we can deal with staff vacancies during this consultation process. We have always wanted the best teaching for pupils. It is likely that Y8 also will continue their education here.

**Q** Can you make the ramifications of this consultation clear regarding proposal to close two schools and open an Academy across two sites?

**A** This is the statutory process which we have to undertake to allow an Academy to open on 1 September and we would encourage people to let us know their views.

**Q** People believe the Crowland School will close after 2 years and the primary school will move here. It might be OK to agree to this proposal but if it is known at the outset that the site will only continue for 2 years people's responses may be different. Tell us clearly what the agenda is.

**A** In the Expression of Interest for the Academy which we presented to DfE we looked at a range of possibilities for this site and tried a number of solutions including federation but the budget deficit is projected to increase whatever we do. We had an independent review and the results of this

are clear; whatever option is taken to continue St Guthlac School by 2015 there will be a significant deficit. We have to find a solution and we feel the current Academy proposal is the best proposal. LCC and the Academy Trust (AT) have both said that the future of this site is only viable for a number of years. But we do plan to maintain the community aspect of the site, for example the site would be excellent for a primary school and a community facility.

**Q** But this is not part of the consultation – not in the consultation document. This information regarding the primary school has been guessed at by the community. This should have been made public a few years ago. Also the budget has been in surplus up until last year. It is incorrect to say that the budget has been in deficit for the last couple of years.

**A** This consultation is regarding a particular process. We cannot put in speculative items. We must go one step at a time. Regarding the budget we must look to the future using projections. The independent review findings will be public in the near future and these show significant financial concerns.

**Q** The consultation document is flawed. It states that the school is not viable but there is no conclusion. How can anyone make a decision on that basis. The consultation document should refer to the £8m. Funding started at £20m and is now down to £8m. What are the plans? It is taxpayers' money – we have a right to know.

**A** You are trying to obtain answers before the process has been gone through. No-one has the complete answers for where the money will be spent. The Governing Body had a review done on how best to use the funding. We did try for more money but the deal now is for £8m or nothing. We have successfully gained money for children in Lincolnshire having recently obtained funds to invest in Sleaford, Skegness and Grantham. The Academy process depends on a sponsor. We will be working through a project management company which has only just been appointed and will assist the sponsor on how best to spend money.

AA – DfE has said we will only get £8m although we did put in a bid for £11m. It is better to have £8m than nothing for the children of Lincolnshire.

**Q** I started here in the 60s; this school was built for the children of Crowland. Parents don't know what is happening so will not want to send their children here. Children are already leaving the school.

**A** The local community is already taking children elsewhere and was doing so before this consultation started. Just under half of the local population of children already go elsewhere.

**Q** Why bother about children not coming here. We need to concentrate on those already here. I chose the school because I wanted it. Now I don't

know what to do and it's not fair on us. When will the first children move from this school to Holbeach.

**A** The process of when children move depends on what capacity is available at Holbeach. It is difficult to say when children will move. The sponsor's consultation document will have more detail and it will be published before the deadline for the LCC consultation response is due. In recent years we have closed 3 small secondary schools. At one school parents said "Please could our children stay there as long as possible." The school became very small and this was not good for the children there. In another consultation we decided on a date to close a site but after consultation we kept one site open one year longer than planned. The Academy and LCC want your comments to do the best for children here and what parents would prefer to see, if at all possible.

**Q** Why does £8m have to go the Holbeach? Why not keep the school here and spend £8m here. Are children at a school not good enough to go to university? Why have they got to go to an Academy to be able go on to university. Surely no more children will go to university because they are going to Academy.

**A** We need to concentrate on general issues not personal ones. There are revenue consequences of maintaining two sites. We feel that this is the best solution for this area. The long term sensible way of spending £8m is on one site and this is not Crowland.

**Q** Regarding admissions there are only 39 first choices this year for Crowland, but why not quote figures regarding admissions from previous years.

**A** We can give figures for preferences over last 5 years. Please email [schooladmissions@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@lincolnshire.gov.uk) to request this. Parental preference is not something LCC have influence over.

NB Please see the end of this document for figures confirming first preference applications for The St Guthlac School over the last 5 years which have been added for information after the close of the public meeting.

**Q** What about the idea of an all-through school here at Crowland?

**A** We have considered an all-through school but that also proves to be financially non-viable.

**Q** The school has not promoted itself well enough. Why should we be forced to send our children elsewhere. Gleed Boys is going down, Spalding has poor results, Deepings is oversubscribed, Holbeach is too far.

**A** We try and get right the number of school places in Lincolnshire. We are due to have a meeting with the headteacher at Deepings to discuss what

they might need if Crowland closes. We can only talk about possibilities at this stage. Also for your information an independent view of schools in the area can be seen in recent OFSTED reports which found Gleed Boys to be a good school but Crowland only satisfactory. There are very few failing schools in Lincolnshire if any. Staff are working very hard in Lincolnshire and Gleed Boys is no exception. We want to make all Lincolnshire schools good schools.

The Chair of Governors appreciated the support given to St Guthlac. The best way of promoting is improving results. We have had an upward trend of results but this has still not attracted pupils to the school.

**Q** There has been a failure to promote the school. An open day was organised only one week ahead of the date, it was held during a working day and was poorly attended. There may only be 37 first preferences but there are also lots of second and third preferences.

**A** That is correct, there are 37 first preferences. (Last year there were 44). We have collated all the applications and are working on the draft allocation now ie allocating the highest preference for each child (in this process 43 offers would be made for Crowland at this point in the process).

**Q** My son came here as second preference and he has done well. The staff deserve applause from all of us. He didn't get his first choice, so put other second and third choices here and we will get a thriving school.

**A** The way it works is that parents identify their preferences in order. The system identifies the highest preference available to them. It would be unlawful to put second and third preferences into Crowland if a higher preference was available.

**Q** In 08/09 there were 377 on roll and in 09/10 there were 355 on roll and this number on roll is falling further but is it a coincidence that rolls started falling when rumours regarding the closure started? Do you consider adverse effects on the town in the consultation? All after school activities will be anywhere except Crowland. There will be no secondary aged children in Crowland between 9.00am and 4.00pm

**A** We want to make sure children are educated in the widest sense. It is agreed that if the site closes there won't be secondary aged children in Crowland between 9-4 but the governors and headteacher have been doing their best to keep this school open. The school was under threat of closure five years ago. We are now reaching the point of no return in finance terms. LCC want to have stability for people in the area and it is looking at working with other schools in the area to manage this.

In this country the government sets targets which schools have to achieve. Standards next year will be 35% 5 ACEM. The government has now introduced the English Baccalaureate and all schools had to publish their

results retrospectively. When schools did the exams they didn't know they would be publishing their results. The English Baccalaureate lists certain subjects and the school has a duty to offer all these subjects. Where schools also want to offer vocational courses this cannot all be provided in a small school. To be fair to children a school must offer a breadth of curriculum and this would not be possible at St Guthlac alone.

**Q** I accept that education has to be of a certain standard but the school is also part of the community eg offering meals on wheels. If the school goes this will be a loss to the community.

**A** LCC has supported village schools for many years, but now no longer has the flexibility to continue this support, especially the financial element.

**Q** If five years ago this school was facing potential closure why didn't you tell us and give us the chance to promote the school?

**A** If you tell people a school is likely to close it becomes a self fulfilling prophecy. We have to try and balance when to consult with local communities however it should have been evident at that time for example we couldn't get a full quota of governors for this school.

**A** I was Chair of Governors then. I think there has been a slight misunderstanding. The Governing Body worked tirelessly to federate with George Farmer and to get governors. In the federation document it said that the purpose of this was to secure secondary education in the town of Crowland. I am disappointed to be here now discussing this but I still support partnership with George Farmer. The community feeling is that the school is on the up and I'm sad to read this consultation document.

**A** AB – There was the notion that if we put a federation together we could raise standards and draw back pupils from Deepings and other schools. However although standards have improved we have still not attracted pupils back. It has improved and the school is working but the numbers have still not come. Providing a breadth of curriculum is challenging unless there is a large number of children.

**Q** With regard to the breadth of curriculum can't we use IT eg pupils taught by a teacher projected on a screen. Homework could be done on line. Technology can be used rather than close the school.

**A** At the University we have done a lot of work on online teaching but we can't do it all on line. Part of being at school involves social interaction and the aim of education is to produce a rounded individual. We can use technology to enhance but not replace the classroom.

**Q** The failure to promote the school has caused falling rolls. Also a press release by LCC caused confusion. There was also the email stating the intention to close the school. Is it a done deal? Will there be an intake in September 2011?

- A** This is part of a genuine consultation. Councillor Mrs Bradwell is here and is keen to hear your views. In March last year the Secretary of State's press release confirmed Lincolnshire would receive £70m in BSF funding and one of the projects planned by LCC would have been the Holbeach Academy. Unfortunately the BSF programme was cancelled by central government and funds withdrawn. There will be an intake in Y7 in September 2011.
- Q** Where is the counter proposal to get the school going? Why is there no plan to keep it open?
- A** A plan was set in motion 5 years ago when George Farmer was asked to work with St Guthlac. In spite of results going up this has still not worked to attract sufficient numbers to make it viable.
- Q** Teachers and pupils have done their best. Is it just LCC not doing their job to promote the school?
- A** We fully agree that teachers and the pupils at the school have worked hard to improve results. In the background LCC has been working to maintain the school but it is now clear that the existing solution is not economically viable.
- Q** If the decision is made to close the school how long will it be until the children are moved elsewhere?
- A** If the decision to close the school is taken on 5 July the school will close on 31 August. There will then be one Academy on 1 September. The Academy consultation process will decide on the formation of the Academy. The consultation document will consider various options and will take on board comments. The Governing Body and sponsor can't presume but must allow consultation. If the proposal goes through it will be one Academy, one headteacher, one Governing Body with 2 sites. Pupils will still be on the Crowland site. There will be a Y7 intake on this site in 2011 but we can't prejudge the 2012 intake.
- Q** What of the possibility if the site closes of using it for the primary school?
- A** This is a possibility but LCC can't guarantee this at this point. The site may not become available. It depends on what the university and the Governing Body want for the Academy.
- Q** Residents of Crowland have an interest in what happens to the site.
- A** Agreed but LCC might not get the site back for primary use if the Academy want to keep it for secondary education. The Academy Trust will honour agreements with the community.

**Q** We have been assured that all options have been looked at but have seen no evidence of this. What about the option of a free school?

**A** Under the free school concept it is for groups or the local community to come forward and make a proposal. We have had no proposals for a free school in the area. LCC has no right to veto a free school. The idea of a free school is a government initiative which can be taken forward by the local community.

**Q** The number on roll would be the same if a primary school was on site as compared to the current on roll figures for the secondary school. The secondary school is losing money so how can a primary survive?

**A** We are talking hypothetically here, but the premises could be remodelled for best use of the buildings so that they are of a required standard.

**Q** So there is money for that but not for this school?

**A** The funding is available for capital investment in a primary school but the issue here is revenue funding. Also secondary schools need specialist teachers and delivering a broad curriculum puts great pressure on the budget, therefore revenue costs are higher. Also there would not be the same buildings to manage for a primary school.

**Q** At the last meeting one option that was suggested was to put the primary and secondary schools together. Has anyone looked at this?

**A** 3 models were looked at by an independent consultant (not by CfBT staff). The full figures will be available but none of the options looked at will produce a balanced budget – and all will be insignificant deficit by 2015.

**Q** Has any research been done as to why parents choose not to send children here?

**A** None has been done. It was thought that improvement and better results would attract pupils and their parents.

**Q** If the Academy goes ahead and LCC has no control over how the buildings will be used, will the Academy honour existing community agreements?

**A** Any existing arrangements will have to be renegotiated between the legal representatives of the Academy and LCC (eg Chance to Share agreements etc) to see how these can be best managed in the future. Such agreements will be safeguarded by the legal processes that we have to go through. The Academy has the right to set its own admission policy but this will be done in liaison with LCC. Transport will still be the responsibility of LCC.



We have maintained all such existing schemes in previous Academies in Lincolnshire. In one the District Council did not want to continue an agreement but a new agreement with the Academy was able to be set up. The Academy Trust has the desire to keep community use.

**Q** Re the independent investigation of the alternative options, when will the paper be available? It will be useful to see it before the end of the LCC consultation process. Also regarding transport – is it true that a bus to the Deepings will be put on?

**A** A summary of the independent review will be attached to the paper presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 25 February 2011. This will then be available as a public document.

Transport – no decisions have been made as this is still a proposal. If the proposal goes ahead any children at St Guthlac will continue to receive transport as at the moment and also if they want to move to Holbeach. The town of Crowland is likely to become part of the Designated Transport Area for Deepings and if the distance is more than 3 miles a child would be entitled to transport to Deepings if it was their nearest school with places.

**Q** But Deepings is an oversubscribed school.

**A** We are going to work on a solution for Deepings if this process continues.

**Q** You say Year 7 will continue at Crowland in September 2011 but will my next daughter have to go to Deepings in 2012?

**A** We can't give an answer for 2012 when 2011 has not yet been decided.

**Q** But I have to submit my preferences in October 2011 for September 2012 admission so when will it be sorted?

**A** The decision will be on 5 July 2011.  
The Academy Trust is looking at the possibility of assisting with transport difficulties for children living outside Lincolnshire and further details will be in their consultation document.

**Q** The Academy can set its own admissions policy. I have experience of when this happened at Thomas Deacon Academy and have concerns at what the Designated Transport Area will be for the Holbeach Academy. Crowland children have not been able to get into Deepings in the past yet you are now saying transport will be paid to go to Deepings?

**A** We will evolve what is required over a period of time. We have looked at what will be the nearest school if Crowland closes.  
AA added that it would be easy for the Academy Trust, as an independent body, to do what it liked but it will not do this. The admissions policy will be in keeping with what is going on in the area.

**Q** Are you going to do a survey for the safest route as the road to Holbeach is very dangerous?

**A** We will do an assessment of the route. We will make sure that if views express a preference for either single or double decker buses this will go into the consultation. The survey will be undertaken by LCC staff but will be based on national standards.

**Q** If this proposal goes ahead, is there capacity at the Academy for all Crowland and Holbeach young people? What does it mean for teachers – are they guaranteed their jobs?

**A** In the Expression of Interest increased capacity at the Holbeach site is planned for. All staff at 31 August will go into the Academy on 1 September. All children currently at the two schools who wish to go the Academy will be able to do so. All existing permanent staff will be employed at the Academy through the TUPE process.

**Q** Please clarify this consultation process – I understand that all parents and the community can respond but how?

**A** Please refer to the details on the overhead slides and within the consultation document.

**Q** If the school closes and transport is provided to other schools will parents have to pay a subsidy?

**A** All children on roll now at St Guthlac, if it becomes part of the Academy, will be entitled to all transport necessary to continue their education there until the end of Y11. Regarding transport for Post 16 education, the LA has had to introduce some charges. If parents choose a school which is not their nearest school then the LA would not pay for that transport.

**Q** Can we have clarity for teachers? What about their jobs in the future?

**A** We cannot predict the future. However long this site is open teachers will have jobs here. If the site closed vacant jobs at the Academy will be offered internally. Staff will then have to go through an interview process for these posts.

**Q** Will these minutes be available to the public?

**A** All Questions and Answers will be on the website together with any appropriate questions which might arise during the consultation process. We can send copies to the two schools and we will provide copies on request to those who do not have internet access.

**Q** Is the Academy Trust a private company?

**A** It is a charity

**Q** Will the Academy Trust be buying or leasing the buildings?

**A** LCC will have a short term lease with the Academy Trust whilst building work takes place, including a 12 month defects liability period. LCC will then enter into a 125 year lease with the Academy Trust but the ownership of the land always remains with LCC.

**Q** In the National Press we have read of 2 Academies closing with the County Council still having to continue to pay as contracts were signed for 25 years.

**A** This example in the press refers to PFI (Private Finance Initiative) Contracts where a school is delivered and maintained for 25 years by the PFI provider. This proposal does not involve PFI. If there is any surplus money this will be reinvested in the Academy.

**Q** Would a free school also get buildings at a peppercorn rent?

**A** A free school is an Academy in law so the same rules apply. By law if the buildings do not continue to be used for education then they revert back to LCC. The lease here will be a full maintaining, repairing lease and the Academy gets money from the government to do this.

**Q** I run an out of hours club which relies on the use of the school premises. If the school closes what does future hold for our club?

**A** Any current contracts with outstanding agencies would cease on 31 August 2011 but the Academy Trust will renegotiate them. The Academy Trust will honour all agreements currently in place. If the site should subsequently close and revert to LCC use then these contracts would have to be renegotiated with LCC.

**Q** What happens if the Academy makes a loss?

**A** Academies are funded by the Young People's Learning Agency. They are not allowed to run at a loss. They would have to have a balanced budget and have properly audited accounts.

**Q** If a free school option is proposed what would happen to the Academy and this consultation?

**A** Consultation would continue. There is the National Network for advice on free schools and the government department would discuss possible options.

**Q** Would that take precedence over this proposal?

**A** We would have to take guidance from the DfE. They have given us approval and the money for this proposal but we do not know what would happen if a free school was proposed. The LA would not stand in the way of a free school but clearly there are already good proposals in place.

**Q** We need a directive – as parents we need to know how to access and respond to this consultation.

**A** If a group of parents want to discuss free schools or any other strategy then LCC will give advice or help where possible.

As this meeting drew to a close at 20.30 a member of the public confirmed that a further meeting would be held at the close of this public meeting to discuss how parents might move forward on the situation for Crowland.

NB Please see below for figures confirming first preference applications for The St Guthlac School over the last 5 years which have been added for information after the close of the public meeting.

September 2011	39
September 2010	52
September 2009	44
September 2008	50
September 2007	44

**PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE ST GUTHLAC SCHOOL,  
CROWLAND AND THE GEORGE FARMER TECHNOLOGY  
AND LANGUAGE COLLEGE, HOLBEACH**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING**

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PANEL MEMBERS: Paul Holmes (LCC) (Chairman) (PH)  
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Approximately 90 members of the public were in attendance including parents, local councillors, press and local community members.

Paul Holmes introduced the members of the panel and briefly explained that this meeting is part of the consultation process on the proposal to close The St Guthlac School and The George Farmer Technology and Language

College giving members of the public opportunity to find out more about the proposal and express their views. He went through the potential timeline for this consultation process.

He also explained that there will be a separate consultation conducted by the sponsor on the proposed new Academy which will start around the end of February.

The following is a record of the questions and answers at the meeting.

**Q** How is the Admissions Policy going to change? The distance from school becomes an issue for Crowland Pupils.

**A** It is incumbent on the Academy Trust (AT) to recognise that the Academy will serve 2 communities. We must have a policy that gives an equal chance to pupils of both communities to gain admission. The policy must be fair and rigorous. It will not be easy to achieve this and we hope to publish our views on how we can achieve this in the AT consultation document. Any decisions regarding the admissions policy will be made in time for parents to know what the admissions arrangements will be when making their preferences in October 2011 in choosing a school for the September 2012 intake.

Those parents who have already stated a preference for George Farmer or St Guthlac and wish to continue at the Academy will continue to receive transport to the Academy until the end of year 11.

**Q** What is really motivating Lincoln University to be the sponsor? What does this mean to the University of Lincoln?

**A** The reason for the University being set up in Lincoln was to increase participation in higher education. We have been discussing for some time how to engage with young people throughout Lincolnshire. The University has a campus next door to George Farmer so the University is already involved in this area. Part of our mission is to increase the percentage of participation of students in higher education.

The University would have two representatives on the Academy Board which would clearly not be a controlling interest. We hope to work closely with schools within the AT e.g. encouraging Y12 and Y13 to start degrees and also encourage staff also to be involved in further study. Our main aim is to improve the aspirations of all with regard to educational opportunity.

**Q** My question is regarding transport. The sites are diverse, children will have to be transported. How will this cost be met?

**A** The cost of home to school transport will continue to be met by Lincolnshire County Council. We have given a guarantee that children at St Guthlac will be transported to Holbeach if this proposal goes ahead.

**Q** Could you clarify that please, is that to both schools?

**A** Transport is provided to the nearest appropriate school. We support the federation and want to ensure that children will be able to get to the Academy at whichever site it is on. The Crowland Designated Transport Area (DTA) will not be permanently linked to the Holbeach DTA. There is a consultation exercise currently taking place within Lincolnshire County Council to link home to school transport to postcodes. We want balanced transport areas.

**Q** Is the system of parental choice regarding gender still available? Where would the nearest single sex schools be?

**A** Under the admissions code parents have three preferences and we have to allocate the highest preference available.

Currently there are single sex schools in the area eg the two Grammar Schools and the two Gleed schools in Spalding. However, the allocation of places does often come down to distance. Parents must put their true preferences down but bearing in mind distances they must also be realistic and put down acceptable 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> preferences.

**Q** There is a deficit of £1m at Crowland. Who will pay for this?

**A** Crowland doesn't have a £1m deficit. At the end of March the deficit is estimated to be running at £300,000. The County Council must deal with the deficit and there are a number of people looking into this and trying to reduce it.

**Q** The consultation document says that the deficit is £1.3 million.

**A** The figure of £1.3 million refers to 2012/13. At the financial year end 2010/2011 the deficit is estimated at £300,000. The figure of £1.3m quoted in the consultation document is the estimated deficit if the school continues in its current form. Lincolnshire County Council has to pick up any debt if a school closes.

**Q** Will you think of including primary within the Academy?

**A** There is no intention of including primary education within the Academy at the moment.

**Q** How do you intend to integrate Crowland children when there is only one site?

**A** We will not move the children all at once. If we do move all the children to the Holbeach site serious consideration will be given to this as we understand the impact of moving children during their education. A

sensible point to make such a move would be between Key Stage 3 and 4. This could vary if children want to move to a different school as schools vary as to when they start Key Stage 4 work.

We will need extra capacity at this school. Integration has already started, e.g. school trips. Also 70+ children currently come to the Holbeach site to follow vocational courses at Key Stage 4.

**Q** My child is in Year 7 and in 2014 will be starting GCSE. How can these children integrate with children coming from Crowland? This will impact on their education.

**A** We already have a shared timetable. We have large sized school timetable blocks which enable us to run small groups. We have a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 146 now which potentially will rise to 180 in the Academy. How we organise children will be part of consultation. We hope to maintain the same group sizes as are currently used. There is already a lot of integration of pupils at schools across the whole of South Holland and it is very successful and beneficial to the pupils.

**Q** If the Academy moves to one site only eventually how much of the grounds could be lost?

**A** If the move to one site happens the overall area is sufficient for a school of the required size. The green playing field space will not be encroached on by the build and team games area is protected by Sport England. The footprint is expected to remain much as it is.

**Q** The infrastructure of the town is already under pressure. Have you thought about the impact on the town if all the children come to one site in Holbeach - for example the impact on the traffic?

**A** We are clearly aware that schools do impact on traffic twice a day. We can try and influence the way things are developed and Planning and Highways will have an important input here.

Additional comment from the County Councillor responsible for Highways – “My responsibility is for 24,000 children and their home to school transport. I will not permit a route to be used if it is not suitable, nor any child to travel by unsuitable transport. We are aware of the difficulties and we will make recommendations if the routes need to be altered. We do have an interest in the impact on the areas where schools are situated”.

**Q** You mentioned higher participation in education - what if this doesn't happen, what about your aspirations then?

- A** Whatever happens we have forged stronger relationships between the University and schools, particularly George Farmer, and we look forward to continuing these links even if the proposal does not go ahead.
- Q** “If the Academy goes ahead other educational opportunities may arise in Crowland” This is stated in the consultation document, what does this mean? Your comments please.
- A** This is referring to the fact that we are keen to maintain the site for educational use if the proposal does go ahead. One option would be to move the primary school there, but whichever option is implemented we would be keen to maintain community use.
- Q** I would be very disappointed if the Academy doesn’t go ahead. It would be a travesty if South Holland didn’t get the £8m investment. We hope the MP will support the proposal. There are some imbalances in the recent Ofsted reports for the two schools, what are the governors going to do about getting these equalised?
- A** The reason we are here at St Guthlac is to try to improve academic standards at Crowland. This has been achieved but there is still work to do and the Academy will enable this. Crowland is not a bad school and has made tremendous progress but there are still issues to deal with. This may be due to the small size of the school e.g. the difficulties that arise with one person departments and this proposal will help to improve this situation.
- Q** In the consultation document it says that there is a wide access to a range of extensive services. What does this mean?
- A** There will be a wider range of courses for Y10 and Y11. The new Academy will be able to fund a range of support in school e.g. 1 to 1 teaching support and a wider range of books and resources. We would like to see an increase in learning mentors. There will also an opportunity during the AT consultation process on the Academy for parents and pupils to say what they would like to see too.
- Q** Primary schools already have links with George Farmer, will they continue?
- A** These links are valued. We would be keen to share any enhanced facilities with the primary schools. This makes for stronger primary and secondary schools.
- Q** If the proposal goes ahead, how do you plan on working with the wider community?



- A** The work of the campus is closely linked with agricultural and food businesses in the area. This sort of experience will be brought into the Academy. Also the AT consultation will look at this area.
- Q** How many years have the sponsors committed to the academy?
- A** This has not been actually discussed but the answer is indefinitely - as long as the Academy is here. If the process goes through the sponsor and LCC will sign a lease for 125 years.
- Q** In the consultation document it quotes “focus on agro-economics”. What is this?
- A** The headteacher and team have an educational vision and we would not want to restrict this. At the Holbeach campus we have a centre for food manufacturing which is a key industry in this area and this relates to the “agro-economics” item mentioned.
- Q** But what curriculum subject does this agro-economics come under?
- A** What we mean by this is that the centre of excellence around food production eg food and analytical laboratories would be available to the Academy students. There are a number of curriculum subjects that would be enhanced eg horticulture, science, food technology, design and technology in general, engineering and the use of the centre would help develop these subjects.
- Q** So is this an academic focus and not concentration on a manufacturing process?
- A** The aim is to have both vocational and academic routes to cater for all students. George Farmer is one of the most successful schools in the UK in offering apprenticeships as these are rarely available through a school. We hope to develop A level courses through the Academy. The Sixth form has increased dramatically and last year had a 98% exam success rate. We want to have a seamless link through school into higher education either via the traditional academic route or a more vocational route. There is also the challenge of the English Baccalaureate and the Academy will help to make this available to more students than would be possible if the two schools remain separate.

The curriculum will become broader if the Academy proposal goes ahead. There will be greater engagement between the University and the school teaching staff.

**Q** There are other vocational subjects e.g. hairdressing, mechanics which have not been referred to. How will the other sponsors help with those subjects?

**A** Although originally it was envisaged that there would be other sponsors the University will be the only direct sponsor. Businesses already work with the federation to provide work placements. I see the Academy as an opportunity to expand these. It is important that the Academy relates to the business community. Also the University has links with over 300 companies and these include a variety of other employers e.g. Siemens.

**Q** You said that any building would keep to the current footprint, but surely we will need more space, so where will we move to?

**A** There are no designs yet, they will come later this year if the decision to become an Academy goes ahead. There will be a detailed design process involving pupils and community to get the best use of space. We will aim to keep the green areas around the school.

**Q** My son will be a Yr 10 in September doing GCSEs at the Academy. What disruption can be expected e.g. from building work? Is it too late for him to benefit from the Academy?

**A** There will be some disruption, but this is something we have managed before and will be minimised. We have had 5 or 6 building programmes recently. We will ensure it doesn't impact on pupils. There will be enhanced facilities and we hope your son will stay on into the sixth form and so benefit from these.

**Q** Who will be the new headteacher and governors?

**A** A Principal has not appointed. We are about to go through the due process i.e. interviews and applications. The appointment will be made by the Academy Trust. The existing board of governors will be invited to be members of the Academy Board and the only change will be that 2 places on the board will be held by representatives of the University as the sponsor.

Paul Holmes closed the evening by stressing that the Local Authority would like to hear your responses – positive or negative. It is important for the views of all to be heard and considered in the consultation process.