

APPENDIX B

Consultation on the proposed expansion of Athena School, Lincoln Notes from the Information Event held on 21 June 2019 at Athena School

In attendance:

Matthew Clayton, Admissions and Education Provision Manager, Lincolnshire County Council.
Bridget Robson, Executive Head Teacher, Athena School.

Parent and other Interested Parties Meeting

For the parent meeting there were 3 parents present and we discussed a range of subjects in relation to the expansion plans:

- **Some concern about how parent access could be improved for drop-off and pick-up, particularly if there are more taxis/cars.**
 - o The school capacity is increasing by 32 from 72 (currently 75 on roll) to 104. Based on actual numbers now (75) to the new capacity (104) that is a 39% increase. Car parking spaces are going from 28 to 49, which is an increase of 75%. So proportionately more car parking provided. This will help relieve pressure on the site where cars are parked in undesignated spaces which currently make access more challenging than it will be if the expansion goes ahead.
- **Will it improve the overall provision?**
 - o It will provide more flexibility across the whole site to give more opportunity for independence of older pupils, improved spaces and learning environment. All pupils will benefit, not just additional pupils that join the school.
- **How does the capacity compare to Fortuna and does it help ensure Fortuna pupils can attend Athena?**
 - o Fortuna has 75 on roll, but not all Fortuna pupils move on to Athena. Some will join mainstream schools or other special school settings, and new pupils from mainstream will join Athena. It provides additional places in the sector to help with overall SEMH provision as part of the wider solution.
- **Will teacher/pupil ratios be the same?**
 - o Yes. There will be some new classrooms and we will recruit new teachers so that ratios remain as they are now. The same model will be in place as it is now, with specialist teaching areas retained in the main buildings
- **Can't see it is a bad thing if staffed and resourced appropriately with accommodation being adapted to the standard required.**
 - o Positive comments noted. The extra places created would be carefully phased into use over a period of time and not all in one go, so staffing and resources could be gradually increased and managed as pupil numbers increased.
- **Site and security must be maintained.**
 - o Yes, and this will be factored into the project to adapt the site and effectively merge the two sites into one with the appropriate level of perimeter and internal security.
- **Will emergency vehicles be a distraction on South Park with the new Blue Light facility?**
 - o No more than at present, and teachers and pupils have said that they get used to it and it soon becomes "the norm" for the school, as it is now.
- **Can appropriate signage be considered for replacing where it still says "Sincil School" on road signs?**
 - o We will take this into consideration.

Generally parents were very positive and went away content with all questions answered.

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Staff Meeting

For the staff meeting there were over 50 present and a short introduction was given by the Head and then opened up to questions and discussion:

- **Is there office space over in the new buildings?**
 - o Yes, there will be some office space created.

- **Is dining being looked at as part of the expansion?**
 - o Yes, we are exploring options to ensure that appropriate dining capacity is in place to cope with the increase of pupils. This is being looked at to see what adaptations (if any) need to be made.

- **Will the two site be connected or kept separate?**
 - o It is intended that the two sites will be merged into one, with new pedestrian access put in place directly between the two buildings.

- **What timescales are we looking at for this happening?**
 - o Still only at the consultation stage so no guarantee that it will go ahead. A long way to go first, starting with this consultation. If it is agreed to proceed to the formal stage of the expansion process then we would expect a final decision from the LA around November 2019. If approved then work would begin on site in November with it expected to be ready for April 2020.

- **Would all new pupils start in April 2020 or phased in?**
 - o The increase in capacity would come into use gradually over a longer period through to 2021. Although the buildings would provide the extra capacity for April 2020, not all of those places will be filled immediately as they are carefully managed into use over a period of time.

- **Is there scope to do anything with the outside space?**
 - o The boundary fencing will be looked at, but there won't be significant landscaping or tarmac work. External spaces will be tidied up and handed over in a suitable condition to allow the school to do what they want to do with it going forward.

- **Will much work need to be done to the existing site and buildings?**
 - o The main infrastructure is already in place and the buildings of the former St Christopher's Annex are generally in good condition. There will be some removal of internal walls, some new stud walls put up and the existing spaces refurbished to provide the suitable facilities and accommodation required to meet the needs of the children attending Athena.

- **Will there be more car-parking?**
 - o All of the car-parking currently assigned to the St Christopher's Annex will be made available to Athena, so the proportionately the school will increase the car parking capacity by more than the increase in the capacity of the school.

Generally staff were very positive and excited, and see this is a great opportunity for the school.