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8.7.06

Dear Mr Wells and Mr Murphy,

This is my detailed reply to your letter of 27.6.06

Page 2 re: plann: app: The remit of the Development Control Committee is to judge planning applications on their planning merits. On 20.3.06 they refused plann: app: 2006/07415 for the reasons stated in your letter. That decision referred only to that application. If the Executive Board were to decide to submit another application the D.C Committee would again judge on the planning issues before them.

Page 2 consultation questionnaires: The covering letters and questionnaire were sent out on 27.6.06 and the covering letter went on the web site on 27.6.06. The letter gives details of how to obtain copies of the questionnaire. If I did not make that sufficiently clear at the Council meeting I apologise. I said I would be looking at the completed questionnaires. That is to ensure I am fully appraised of the views expressed. In my view the questionnaire, which I approved, is clear, fair and impartial.

Questions:

1. Already answered. Yes it is ready and I approved it before it went out.
2. The questionnaire has not been independently reviewed. I am satisfied it is impartial and would stand up to independent scrutiny.
3. The process has started.
4. The standard consultation procedures will be followed and staff available to clarify issues. If members of the public have concerns about the process they can make a formal complaint to the Chief Exec and if still not satisfied to the Local Government Ombudsman.

5. All questionnaires will be carefully scrutinised and careful consideration given to all views. I am on record as saying we will make the right decision to provide the best educational provision for the children of Stockton Heath now and for future generations. The questionnaires allow for the analysis of the respondents views according to their stakeholder interest group e.g. resident, parent etc. We will want to use this analysis to properly inform our decision. If members of the public are dissatisfied with this they can follow the procedure above.
6. Ensure mistakes not repeated: I was not part of the previous process so am not aware of any mistakes. All information has been shared with the community, copies of the supporting documentation has been provided when requested and no comments have been received from the information provided. Two feasibility studies were commissioned to look at both a refurbishment and a new build option. The results of these studies suggested that the refurbishment option would have cost more, taken longer and not meet all the aspirations of the teaching staff and Governing Body. However, these studies have been given to an independent architect to evaluate to see if any judgements have been flawed. When we receive the full report the Council will share information with the community and address any issues that are raised from the independent inspection.

Both options were costed. However, it was stated that a true cost could not be provided because that would be determined from the tender procedures. All figures before this stage can only be estimates. They were fully documented and supported, but this documentation was not shared because of the market sensitivity as has already been explained.

I do not consider it appropriate for a member of the Action Group to observe the process. All questionnaires will be available for inspection and that is being publicised. As already stated, all information has been shared with the community, detailed supporting information provided when requested and no comments received from this information provided

Thanks you for reconfirming your concerns which you have laid out very clearly. I am please that you also have the education of the children at heart as well as the built environment. That is the key to this whole debate. We must provide the very best for our children and their teachers now and in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Sheila E Woodyatt