

Summary of Consultation on Land Disposal Sale High School June 23rd 2021.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to the consultation- it is very much appreciated. We will now pass on the responses to the consultation directly to the Department for Education as part of our section 77 application for disposal of the land.

The Department for Education will take into account all responses to the consultation. If they accept and allow our application to dispose of the school land then purchasers will have to engage in a planning application process should they wish to develop the site. There will be an opportunity to raise issues at that stage of the process.

Please see below an overview of all the responses we received:

We received 21 responses to the consultation. They can be summarised as follows:

Three local schools both responded.

- Lime Tree, a primary school within a half a mile radius said they had no use for the site, having their own landscaped areas and fields.
- Sale Grammar, a secondary within a mile radius, also responded that they had no use for the site having their own playing fields.
- St Anne's, a primary school within half a mile, said they had no use for the site.

Three local property developers responded asking how to bid for the land should it come up for sale.

Five responders raised objections. They are concerned about the impact on habitat- including the destruction of trees bordering Baguley Brook at the far end of the parcel of land. Their suggestions included utilising the land as a forest school instead of building or alternatively, preserving the tree line at the edge of the land. They also raised the potential of increased flooding from Baguley Brook if the land were to be built on.

The school's former school business manager responded that she was in favour of the land disposal and sale. Her reasons being that she knew the building well and understood the issues the school faced and the need for funding. She said, 'It is evident that the needs of the building and investment required far outweigh any need for the area, which is accessible to the public and therefore not secure for the school.'

A parent responded concerned re impact of any potential building work on their children from a noise and health and safety aspect and asked whether mitigations would be put in place. The school responded that any work would be subject to planning restrictions and rigorous health and safety requirements as the site bordered a school. The response was that they were satisfied and in favour of the disposal.

A further parent misunderstood which land the school was planning to dispose of and had thought that it was the current playing fields that the school uses. She was directed to the plan on the website.

Six other local residents responded with concerns about impact on parking, their homes being overlooked and property prices being depreciated as the open land they bordered would be possibly sold for development.

A further respondent had a number of questions re the school's status, what the school had done to raise revenue and also the intended use for the land. They raised these questions with Mike Freeman, local councillor. His response is copied below:

Sale High School is a Foundation School which means that it has greater freedoms than a community school with the Governing Body employing the staff, being responsible for admissions and also for the land and buildings.

Foundation Schools are funded by central government via the local authority. The Department for Education allocates funding each year to Trafford Council to help maintain and improve the condition of school buildings and grounds. For 2021-22, the School Condition Allocation (SCA) for Trafford Council to maintain 37 primary schools and 4 secondary school was £2.2m, an allocation which could easily be used several times over to tackle priority issues across our school estate.

Sale High School needs extensive block replacements and refurbishment. Funding has already been sought from a range of sources:

- A bid to DfE Priority School Building Programme wave 2 was unsuccessful.*
- The school looked to academise to secure monies but this did not move forward.*
- Trafford Council undertook a feasibility study of the site – whole site development or phased approach – and requested DfE funding to support the outcome but this was also unsuccessful.*
- £1m of Trafford Council's Basic Need funding was awarded for the school to increase the number of places whilst supporting condition needs.*
- Of the School Condition Allocation (SCA) for 2020/21 and 2021/22, Sale High were awarded £45k for asbestos removal, £400k for roofing works and £600k for boiler and pipework replacements.*
- GMCA bid to Salix for funding to support decarbonisation of the estate.*

Trafford Council are supporting the condition needs of the school as best they can within the available funding constraints. However, there is insufficient capital funding available to knock down and replace entire blocks at the school. The proposal to sell the land is a last resort to provide much needed funds to enable the first phase of development works.

As the proposed sale involves school playing fields, a Section 77 application for the disposal of school playing fields must be made to the Secretary of State and there is an expectation that part of the proceeds must go towards the betterment of sports facilities. Therefore a 4G All Weather Pitch is proposed as part of the works which will give the school use of a pitch throughout the year and become a hireable facility for the community too. The balance of monies would be invested into the buildings. We are currently getting estimates for the All Weather Pitch and block replacement. Land valuations will be submitted to DfE as part of the section 77 application, along with the proposed use of any capital receipt.

The Council have liaised with DfE and they have confirmed that as Sale High School are a Foundation School, they are happy for the section 77 process to be submitted by the school with support through the process from Trafford Council.

The section 77 process is to change education land into non-education land and this is what the school is consulting on. If the Secretary of State agrees to this change of use and the land is sold, the use of the land post-sale will be up to the purchaser who would need to follow the usual consultation processes such as planning. This means there will be further opportunity for residents to comment on

the future use of the land if and when a planning application is made by the purchaser in the future. The school are not able to apply for any planning application for the land to boost its value. They can only follow the Section 77 process.

The link you shared with me in your second email regarding guidance on the matter is an out of date link. You may be interested in the link to the new government guidance which was published on 10 February 2021 which is what the Council are supporting the school to work to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/submit-a-school-land-transaction-proposal>

In the circumstances I am supportive of the application to dispose of the land to ensure the school can improve the fabric of the environment in which our local children are educated. As to what happens to the land following disposal, if indeed the Secretary of State consents to disposal, is another matter. Any development will be subject of Planning approval and further consultation and I will of course be supporting Local Residents to ensure their interests are best protected at this stage.

I trust the above information is helpful to you. In the meantime I would encourage anyone with any views or concerns to engage with the consultation the school are running.

Please come back to me if you have any further questions.

Kind regards

Mike Freeman

We hope that you have found this summary of responses helpful.