

## **CYPFS Scrutiny Committee Meeting 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

### **Anonymous Public Question**

1. Can Sheffield City Council explain and justify the choice of headteacher for the proposed merged Holt House infants/Carterknowle juniors school as many feel a conflict of interest is at play here.

The headteacher at Holt house has been appointed to advise the juniors since the school got Requires Improvement in it's Ofsted in January 2015. Since then the infants are proposing to take over the juniors to the point where they physically merge and are consumed by the infants. Do the council feel there is a conflict of interest here? The juniors has been left vulnerable by the absence of its headteacher (through ill health) and an ineffectual governing body (deemed weak by Ofsted).

At this stage, the Council is consulting on a proposal to merge Holt House I and Carter Knowle J schools. A decision about whether the merger should go forward will be taken by Cabinet in January. If Cabinet decide that the merger should go ahead, there will be a recruitment process to decide the best candidate for the Headteacher position in the merged school. The decision about recruitment to the staffing structure of the merged school would be taken by a shadow governing body which would comprise representation from both governing bodies. There is therefore no conflict of interest in the role the Headteacher of Holt House I is currently undertaking in supporting the Carter Knowle J, which has been necessary to ensure continuity in improving outcomes for children at the school.

2. How do Sheffield City Council explain away the fact that they failed to engage all parents in the consultation process? Over 40% of parents of children at Holt house and Carterknowle are of Pakistani descent?

No interpreters have been provided. No literature relating to the consultation, online or otherwise, has been translated.

Given the scale of the proposals under consultation (7 proposals in two areas of the city) the Council has engaged with parents mainly through consultation workshops and through online surveys. However, due to the very specific nature of the proposals for merger of the Holt House I and Carter Knowle J, Council officers have worked closely with the governors of the two schools to engage with parents to seek their opinion. Two parent meetings were held at each school to which all parents were invited. One of these, at Carter Knowle J, was targeted specifically at non-English speakers and had translators on hand to assist parents. Translations of literature will always be provided on request.

3. What criteria will Sheffield City Council use to judge the success and effectiveness of this particular consultation process?

All information relating to the consultation provided was online - discriminating against anyone without access to the internet. Information was drip fed through the council website - there was no facility to sign up for email updates when changes

were being made. It relied on people checking everyday. A new plan was added to the website on the last day of the consultation.

The success of the consultation will be judged not only by the level of response, which has been high, particularly for the proposals relating to the South West, but also by the clarity of the feedback in response to the proposals. As an example, it was acknowledged early in the consultation that there were strong messages coming back about the unacceptability of the original proposals to locate a primary and secondary school on the Holt House Infant site, and the Council has sought to address that feedback in the remainder of the consultation.

It is generally acknowledged in national and local government that increasing use of internet and social media make it practical and acceptable to use online as a methodology for consultation and for timely updating of information. However, Sheffield has also followed up with front facing meetings to engage directly with stakeholders, including 10 consultation workshops, 5 parents meetings and several informal events.