

The background image shows a large, multi-story school building with a complex roofline and numerous windows. Scaffolding is visible around the building, suggesting ongoing construction or renovation. In the foreground, there is a playground area with a large, curved metal structure, possibly a slide or climbing frame. The entire image is faded to a light gray color.

Underhill Junior (Cliff) School Update Information

Background

- Concern about the future use of school sites were expressed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation in 2013 and some ideas were put forward.
- Specific issues about Underhill Junior and New Brackenbury were also raised in the WPBC Working with You consultation.
- PCP was shown as working with DCC to explore these.

Asset for disposal

- Although shown as a contact partner we were not specifically advised as the property was confirmed by DCC Cabinet for disposal in Spring 2015.
- PCP therefore felt that it was duty bound to see if it was possible to retain the site use in line with that expressed by the Community.
- We therefore applied for registration of the site as a Community Asset under the Community Right to Bid regulations.

Community Right To Bid

- This was confirmed on the 10 June 2015 and provided for a period of 6 months to allow the PCP or other relevant organisation to seek funding options.
- We understood that an offer had been made for the site 'in the region of £500k'.
- We held a community consultation in June to receive feedback on how best to proceed.

Consultation Feedback

Feedback from the consultation was that

- Given the circumstances it was understood that a matching offer was the most likely way to secure the site.
- To finance this it was recognised that a community based mixed capital development would be needed as it would be difficult to secure substantive grant funding in the time allowed.

Consultation Feedback

The general feeling about this was

- The bulk of the main building should be kept.
- Modern sections such as the hall could be built on at a height and in keeping with the main building.
- Similarly areas of the playground could be used for single storey housing
- Access , parking and noise issues were raised.

DCC's Objections

- In order to approve the registration PCP had to show that the school building had offered a social and wellbeing role to the community in the past and would do so in the future.
- DCC objected to PCP's registration as it could have set a general precedent for the future.
- The decision was upheld in September 2015 but this had meant that during the summer it was difficult to progress matters. Particularly as we were trying to avoid incurring expenditure

Next Steps

- In late October 2015 we submitted a report on the outline possibilities we had identified but DCC required firmer proposals.
- It became apparent during November that in order to attain anywhere near the purchase price we would have to compromise parts of the main building in particular aspects of wider community use.

Next Steps

- Ideally we would have liked to have held a further public meeting at that time but as you can see the Economic Vision work was our main priority.
- We therefore submitted an outline proposal but this was not accepted by DCC and on the 10 December 2015 our right to bid lapsed.

Position Now

- We understand that DCC have accepted an offer
- The Community Asset Registration is still on the site but can be removed .
- The site development would be subject to planning and the PCP will submit information about communities views as part of commenting on the application.

Lessons Learnt

- DCC are more aware of the need to consult with the Community early in regard to any asset disposal and are reviewing their policies.
- The Community is more aware of Community Rights issues.
- DCC asset team are more aware of the potential uses of sites and future needs .