

# **Proposed school and sixth form, Selly Oak**

## **Statement of Community Involvement and summary of planning consultation output**



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## 1. Introduction

1. This report is submitted on behalf of the University of Birmingham in support of a full planning application to develop land at the University's Selly Oak campus, adjacent to Bristol Road and Weoley Park Road for a building to house the proposed University of Birmingham School and Sixth Form.
2. The submission of the application follows discussions with officers at Birmingham City Council and wide consultation with key stakeholders and members of the public - both in respect of the planning aspects and also in relation to the admissions policy, academic, education and curriculum aspects of the school.
3. This report is in respect of the public and community consultation with key stakeholders and members of the public and is based on feedback and comments received in relation to the planning aspects. A separate report is being prepared in respect of the school and sixth form's proposed admissions policy, academic, education and curriculum.
4. This report includes details of the methods employed in respect of the community and stakeholder consultation, the consultation itself and responses to the consultation.
5. In addition, the report includes recommendations resulting from the consultation.
6. The report has been prepared by Clarke Associates (the Consultancy) who were commissioned by the University of Birmingham and who have previously undertaken consultation work on behalf of the University. The Consultancy work was delivered by David Clarke, managing director and David Beech, associate consultant.
7. All written comments received by respondents to the consultation, and a summary of responses given in discussion, have been supplied to the University of Birmingham for their consideration.

## **2. Community involvement**

This section provides details of the public consultation process and events which took place and demonstrates that the applicant has undertaken appropriate pre-application discussions with the local community and stakeholders and provided opportunities for involvement.

### **2.1 Policy context**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the importance of early engagement and the role of local authorities in encouraging applicants to engage with the local community prior to the submission of applications.

Birmingham City Council's own statement of community involvement (SCI) was adopted in April 2008 and encourages applicants to hold informal discussions with the council, statutory consultees and their neighbours before applying for planning permission. The type of consultation required is dependent on the scale of the proposals, with more significant schemes requiring more extensive consultation such as a public meeting or exhibition.

The applicant has provided a significant number of opportunities for local residents and interested parties to view and make comments on the proposals during an eight-week period.

### **2.2 Consultation period and nature**

The consultation covered both the academic and planning aspects of the scheme although it was recognised that the greatest interest in the planning aspects would be at the public drop-in events held in Selly Oak (adjacent to the proposed site and on the University's Selly Oak campus).

The consultation period commenced Sunday, June 9, 2013 with a drop-in facility and talk/presentation at the University's Bramall Music Building - coinciding with the University of Birmingham's Community Open Day that attracted 12,000 visitors to the Edgbaston campus and which was well publicised to people living within the local area. The drop-in event and talk relating to the proposed school and sixth form was publicised in the material available to all visitors.

The fully-staffed event included literature on the school, data capture and display panels. Staff representing the University and Clarke Associates were on hand to discuss the proposed school and sixth form - both in terms of academic and planning aspects. An estimated 80 people visited the drop-in event with 60 attending the talk and afternoon presentation by Professor Edward Peck, Pro-Vice Chancellor at the University of Birmingham.

Public exhibitions/drop-ins were held in the period June - July 2013 at the following locations, each in the vicinity of the nodal points that form the basis of the proposed admissions policy (with each nodal point being effectively regarded as a front gate for the school):

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June

**Community Open Day**

Bramall Music Building, University of  
Birmingham, Edgbaston

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June,

**Ladywood**

3.00pm – 8.30pm

Ladywood Community Centre, St  
Vincent Street West, Birmingham,  
B16 8RP

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July,

**Hall Green**

3.00pm – 8.30pm

Centre Court,  
1301 Stratford Road , Hall Green ,  
Birmingham , B28 9HH

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July,

**Small Heath**

3.00pm – 8.30pm

Small Heath Community Forum,  
Heather Road, Small Heath,  
Birmingham, B10 9TA

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July,

**Selly Oak**

10am -1pm

Orchard Learning Resource Centre,  
Hamilton Drive, Weoley Park Rd, Selly  
Oak, Birmingham, B29 6QW

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July,

Orchard Learning Resource Centre,

3.00pm – 8.30pm

Hamilton Drive, Weoley Park Rd, Selly  
Oak, Birmingham, B29 6QW

## 2.3 Media

Press releases were prepared by the University's press office, working in conjunction with Clarke Associates, and distributed to local media. This resulted in print and online press coverage on the consultation programme and drop-in events.

## 2.4 Web coverage

Clarke Associates also issued material to community websites, a number of which featured the proposals and publicised the consultation drop-in events and/or included a link to the University website.

A dedicated section of the University's website was established relating to both the academic and planning aspects of the proposal. As additional material became available, this was added to the website.

## 2.5 Notification

Those that had previously expressed an interest in the school and sixth form (both academic and planning), and whose details were logged onto a spreadsheet held by the University (totalling 650 at the start of the consultation and 1,250 by the time of the last notification issued, in week five of the consultation period) were advised of updates to the website and also details of the drop-in events and the consultation arrangements.

## 2.6 Door-to-door notification

A dedicated/solus door-to-door mailing was undertaken during week commencing 17 June, 2013, on behalf of Clarke Associates by Trinity Mirror, publishers of the Birmingham Post and Birmingham Mail, to a total of 29,336 households in the vicinity of each of the nodal points, including Selly Oak, as follows:

Nodes	Quantity
B10 ODP	18,098
B18 6LE	3,796
B28 8AA	2,933
B29 6QW	4,509

The door-to-door distribution to the Selly Oak area included specific reference to the planning consultation.

Verification of the distribution has been supplied by Trinity Mirror.

In addition, a dedicated door-to-door distribution relating to the planning and academic consultation and drop-in events was undertaken by Clarke Associates during week commencing 1 July, 2013 to 550 properties within the vicinity of the proposed development site. Those streets/roads included:

Bushwood Road  
Castle Road  
Middle Park Road  
Shenley Fields Road  
Gibbins Road  
Weoley Park Road  
Weoley Hill  
Fox Hill  
Witherford Way  
Bristol Road between Middle Park Road and Witherford Way  
Part of Langley Road  
Sellywood Road  
Kingfisher Way  
Kestrel Grove  
Linnet Close  
Holyland Way  
Westholme Croft  
Lower Moor

## 2.7 Other notification

Ward councillors serving each of the nodal points were notified of the proposals, the consultation arrangements and the drop-in dates.

All other Birmingham City Council councillors were informed of the University's proposals, the consultation arrangements and the drop-in dates.

Ward officers serving each of the nodal points were specifically notified of the proposals, the consultation arrangements and the drop-in dates. In addition, offers of speaking at Ward meetings were made. In consequence, University of Birmingham and/or Clarke Associates presented details of the proposals at Selly Oak on Wednesday, June 19 and South Yardley on Thursday, July 11, 2013.

MPs serving Birmingham and specifically the Selly Oak constituency (Steve McCabe, Lab) were also informed of the proposals, the consultation arrangements and the drop-in dates. In addition, offers of meetings with MPs were made.

A comprehensive mailing was undertaken by Clarke Associates to 166 relevant community groups within Birmingham, especially those located within the areas of the nodal points and Selly Oak. This mailing was based on information contained within the Birmingham City Council publication, *Equality and Diversity Directory* that lists community and faith groups. A further mailing was undertaken to all places of worship within the areas surrounding each of the nodes including Selly Oak.

A total of 40 primary schools, in each area of the nodes including Selly Oak, were advised of the proposals, of which five issued 580 letters to parents in order to notify them of the proposed school and consultation. A further 90 secondary

schools and sixth forms in Birmingham, and especially in the Selly Oak area, were also notified.

## **2.8 Meetings**

Meetings were held with local stakeholders and interested bodies including Weoley Hill Village Council on Wednesday, June 26, 2013.

In September 2013, meetings were held with other occupiers of the Selly Oak campus in order to explain the proposals and present plans.

A series of detailed pre-application meetings commencing in May 2013 has taken place with officers from Birmingham City Council. Comments made in those meetings have led to a number of amendments being made to the design of the scheme in order for it to better respond to its location and context. The process of design evolution is set out in greater detail in the submitted Design and Access statement.

All those who attended the drop-in events had the opportunity to discuss the proposals with representatives of the project team including from the University's School of Education, the University's Estates team, the architects and representatives of Clarke Associates whose role was primarily to act as independent advisers and gather response.

A further meeting was held with representatives of schools, including those located within the Selly Oak area, was held on Thursday, July 18 and attended by 20 school representatives. Both academic and planning/transport issues were raised at the meeting.

## **2.9 Questionnaires**

In addition to an online questionnaire, accessible from the University's website and publicised in all written materials, attendees at each of the drop-in events were given the opportunity to complete both planning and academic consultation questionnaires (identical to those online).

When the consultation closed at midnight on August 2, 2013, a total of 102 responses relating to the planning application had been completed. The output of those is detailed in the next section and tabulated in appendix one. Appendix two includes an analysis of responses to open ended questions.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

Both Clarke Associates and the University believe that this comprehensive process of community engagement has been in accordance with local and national guidance on pre-application consultation.

### 3. Summary of the planning consultation

#### 3.1 Overall response

The two drop-in events at Selly Oak were attended by 250 visitors - primarily local people.

A total of 102 questionnaires in respect of the planning consultation were completed (online and written). A numerical analysis of the responses received by this method is included in Appendix 1 (attached). An indicative analysis of the open ended questions is included in Appendix 2 (attached). The headline figures are as follows:

- 89% of those responding were residential owner/occupiers
- 93% of those responding lived within the B29 postcode area
- 77% attended at least one of the consultation drop-in events
- Awareness of the consultation drop-in sessions was principally through direct contact (e.g. direct mail/leaflet drop); the University website and the media.
- 50% were fully or partly in favour of the plans to develop the school and sixth form. 36% were not in favour\*. The balance (14%) was not sure.
- 21% made use of the University grounds for walking/recreation.
- 18% had not used any of the University's facilities during the previous 12 months.

*\*It is interesting to note that the questionnaire in relation to the academic consultation showed that 77% of respondents were in favour of the proposed school and sixth form.*

Appendix 2 (attached) provides an indication of the areas of interest, as they relate to planning, development and transport. Whilst a significant number of local residents expressed concern at potential traffic issues resulting from the proposed school - and were keen to see measures introduced to control congestion and parking - there was a significant proportion expressing support for the overall principle of the school. In particular they welcomed increased choice and the anticipated high level of academic standards. There was a correlation between those saying they were not in favour of the school and those expressing concern over transport/traffic and parking issues.

There was also support for the use of the site for educational purposes and a significant number approved of the design concepts.

Weoley Hill Village Council raised issues in relation to parking and access; the potential impact of any increase in traffic on local road junctions; potential disruption during the build period and the proposed nodal admissions policy. The council's comments are included below, alongside that received from other respondents.

The following comments are based on the overall feedback. All written comments received by respondents to the consultation, and a summary of responses given in discussion, have been supplied to the University of Birmingham for their consideration.

### **3.2 Overview**

50% of respondents welcomed the prospect of a university-led school believing it would extend choice and opportunity. As noted previously, in the academic, admissions and curriculum consultation, undertaken in parallel with the planning consultation, 77% of respondents expressed support for the concept of the school.

It is evident that a significant majority of those not favouring the school do so because of potential traffic congestion, transport and parking issues in the vicinity of the proposed location. Some of those that were supportive of the concept of the school, including prospective parents, were concerned with this aspect.

Whilst some respondents expressed the view that there was no requirement for an additional secondary and sixth form school to be located in the Selly Oak area, more than a quarter responding to the questionnaire believed the proposal would increase choice and, with the University involvement, welcomed the prospect of its anticipated high standards.

### **3.3 The site**

When asked what they liked most about the proposal, a significant proportion were supportive of the site's location and environment. Almost the same number was supportive of the design concepts that were shown at the drop-in events and which were available on the website.

There was no opposition to the proposed demolition of the existing buildings and those that did comment on that aspect were in favour. The possibility of demolishing the adjacent Johnstone House, although not part of the application, was welcomed.

It was hoped by a number that older and more significant trees might be retained within the proposed development. The proposal to retain many of the trees bordering Bristol Road was welcomed.

A small number of respondents asked for consideration to be paid to the retention and increase if at all possible, of wild/un-managed areas in order to provide suitable habitats for wildlife. Concern was also expressed by a small number that the new build would result in a change in ground water levels that might result in flooding in the vicinity.

There was some concern that a school in this location might result in noise and intrusion which could be detrimental to the amenity value of the area.

### **3.4 The design**

Overall, the proposed design concepts for the school, and the use of a part of the Orchard Learning Resource Centre, were welcomed. Whilst a small number did not believe the proposed design concepts to be sufficiently "groundbreaking", and called for a more iconic building, the majority were appreciative of the overall design and the interior schematics.

### **3.5 Community facilities**

The likely provision of school facilities that would be accessible by the community was welcomed, particularly in an area where, according to some, there was inadequate provision. The proposed access arrangements to the community facilities were welcomed.

### **3.6 Transportation, traffic and parking issues**

There was concern expressed at the impact the school would have on transport, traffic and parking within the vicinity of the school; this was one of the concerns raised in the Weoley Hill Village Council collective response.

**Access:** there was concern regarding the use of Weoley Park Road in order to access the site. A number believed that access would be more appropriate from Bristol Road.

The issue was raised of vehicles exiting the site onto Weoley Park Road which could, it was claimed, result in traffic turning left towards Fox Hill and adjacent side roads.

It was thought by some that the junction of Weoley Park Road and Bristol Road would become congested at peak times.

**Parking:** there was concern as to whether sufficient parking had been provided for staff, visitors and in particular, at peak times e.g. parents' evenings.

**Drop-off/pickup:** there was doubt as to whether there would be sufficient capacity to handle the number of vehicles that respondents believed the school might generate within the proposed drop-off/pickup area. Many however, felt that parents/drivers would simply not use the proposed facilities and would instead temporarily park on adjacent roads in order to drop-off and pick-up. Some form of reassurance and control was requested.

**Public transport/dedicated transport:** the provision of the dedicated bus drop-off-of/parking area was welcomed and the vast majority felt the area to be well designed and of adequate size. There was concern that buses would not be able to exit easily from the site turning right onto Weoley Park Road. There was concern that they would instead turn left towards Fox Hill and adjacent side roads.

Whilst the proposed strong ethos of usage of public transport was welcomed, many expressed scepticism as to the number of children that would travel to the school using public or dedicated school transport.

There was additional concern expressed that sixth form students would travel to the school using their own private vehicles and reassurance was called for in that regard.

**Cycle use:** a number of respondents wanted to encourage pupils to travel to the school by bike but there were concerns expressed regarding accessibility by bike especially in the vicinity of Bristol Road.

**Road safety:** there was concern expressed about young children in particular having to cross Bristol Road if arriving at Selly Oak rail station and also by those attending the school but living on the opposite side of Bristol Road or having to cross Weoley Park Road. It was felt by some that the proposed sports facilities to the South East of the school might produce road safety dangers. Greater detail on access to the playing fields was requested.

**Access from Fox Hill:** there was concern expressed relating to the existing access to the campus from Fox Hill. It would appear that the majority, including the Village Council, would prefer some form of restriction in relation to that access - particularly in relation to parents dropping off/picking up children with their making use of that access. However, there was some difference of opinion with some residents expressing a wish to continue to have access - at least on foot - particularly so as to make use of the campus for recreational purposes and also as a convenient shortcut for pedestrians to Bristol Road.

**Other issues:** a number of respondents expressed views relating to other aspects of the Selly Oak campus not directly related to the proposal. These views, together with other aspects of greater detail, will be supplied to the University as part of this consultation process.

## 4. Conclusion and recommendations

As a result of this consultation, our recommendations, based on the level of interest in relation to each of the following areas, would be as follows:

1. Reassessment of parking provision on the site.
2. Reassessment of opportunity for exit onto Bristol Road (subject to City Council Highway Services consideration).
3. A review of the existing access to the Selly Oak campus from Fox Hill and/or an inability to access the school from the Fox Hill entrance.
4. Greater detail in relation to projections of the numbers of parents that are likely to make use of private transport both from within the Selly Oak area and the other three nodal point areas.
5. Consideration of road safety issues.
6. Consideration to the concerns regarding environmental issues.

In addition, we propose:

7. Feedback to consultees and other interested parties in relation to the consultation and its outcome.
8. A further drop-in event(s) in order to provide local residents and other interested parties with feedback on the consultation process and the outcomes of that process.
9. Provision of greater detail specifically on transport and access arrangements.
10. Ongoing engagement with local residents and the community, including local community groups, working in a spirit of cooperation to address any concerns and maximise the positive impact of the school and sixth form.

## Appendix 1: Online and written questionnaire report

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A total of 102 responses were received. However, not all respondents completed every question. We have shown the number of responses to each question below.

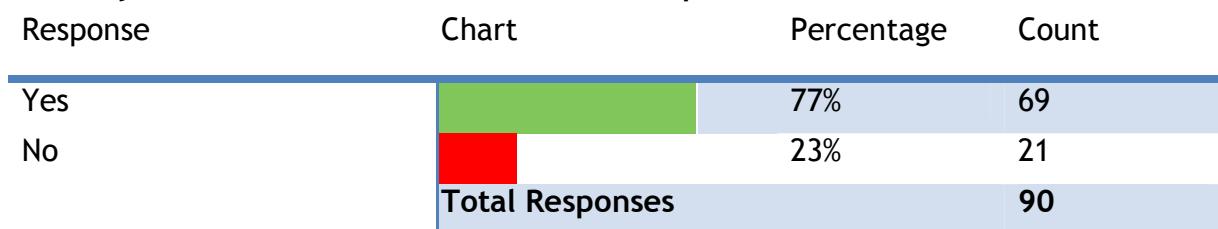
### 1. Are you:

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Residential owner-occupier		89%	83
Residential landlord		4%	4
Residential tenant		6%	6
Business occupier		1%	1
Student: University of Birmingham		1%	1
Student: (other than University of Birmingham)		1%	1
University employee		6%	6
Employed within 1 - mile of the proposed site		8%	7
Local business owner		0%	0
Other (please specify)		13%	12
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>93</b>	

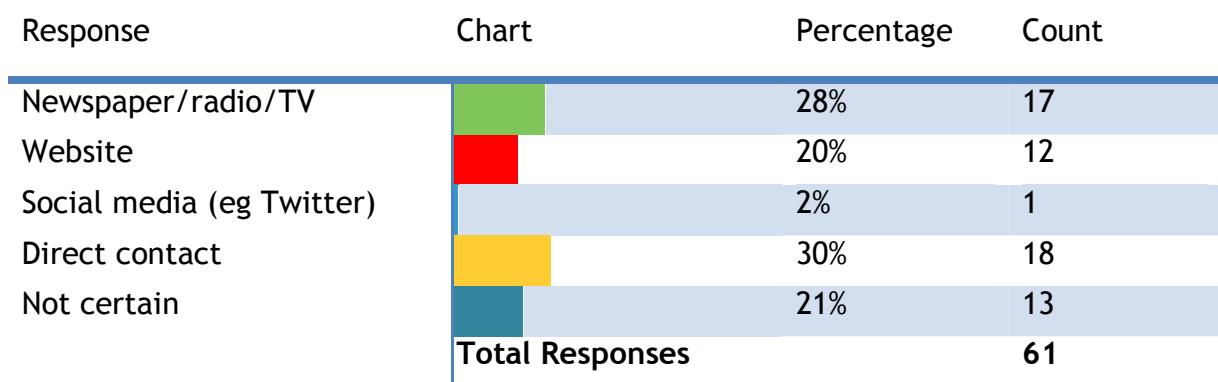
### 2. Your name, address and email address (optional)

Responses to Question 2 have been removed from this document.

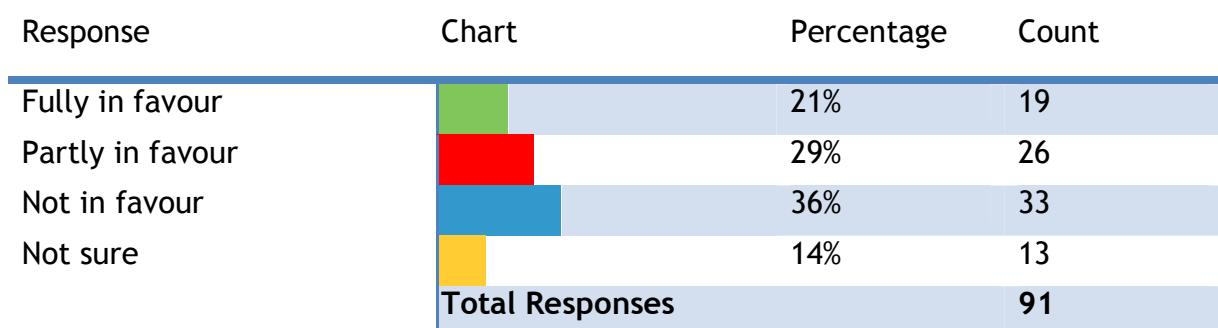
**3. Did you attend one of the consultation drop-in sessions?**



If yes, please indicate how you were aware:



**4. Overall, are you in favour of the University of Birmingham's plans to develop a School and Sixth Form?**



**10. Have you used or visited any of the following University facilities within the past 12 months?**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Munrow Sports Centre		6%	5
Bramall Music Building		7%	6
Running Track		2%	2
Library		4%	3
Barber Institute		15%	13
Farmers' Market		1%	1
Other shops and services		4%	3
University grounds (for walking etc)		15%	13
Other (please specify)		28%	24
I do not use any of the University's facilities		18%	15
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>85</b>	

**5. What (if anything) do you like best about the plans?**

**6. What (if anything) do you like least about the plans?**

**7. Are there any elements of the plans which you feel will affect you, or on which you would like to comment in more detail?**

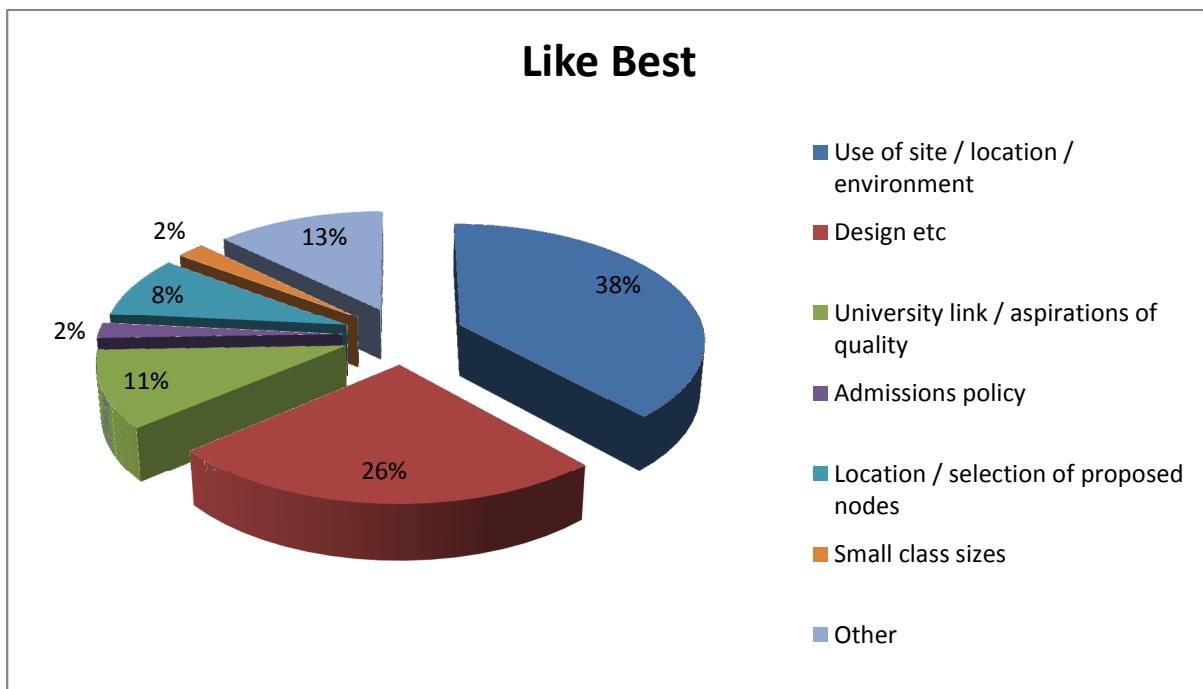
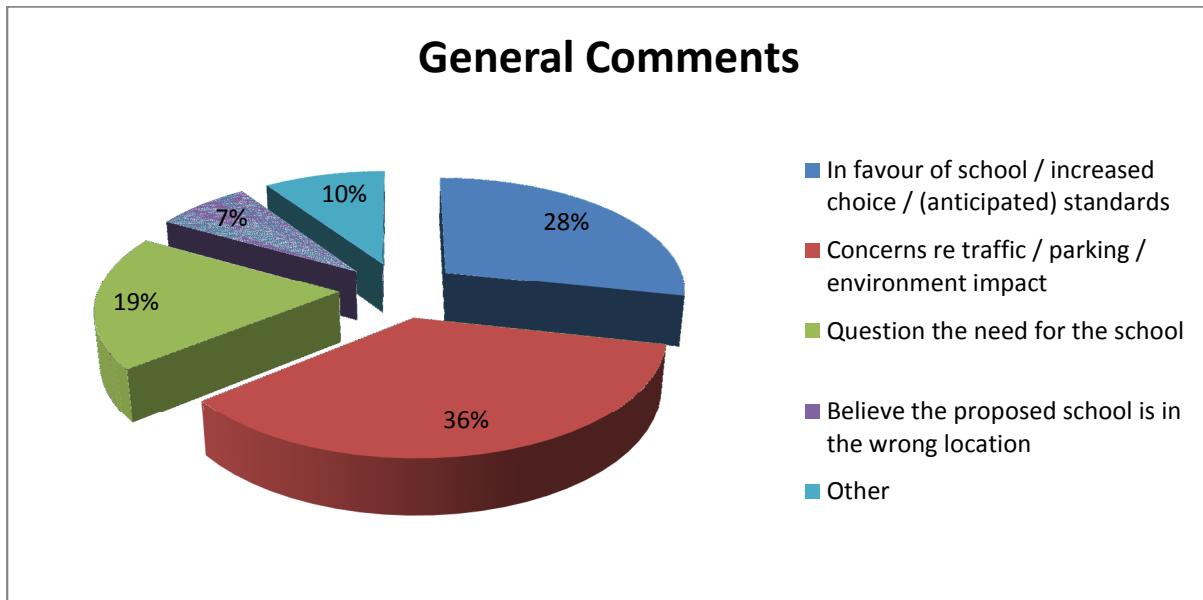
**8. Would you like any further information about these plans? If so please give details of the information you require and ensure you have completed question 2.**

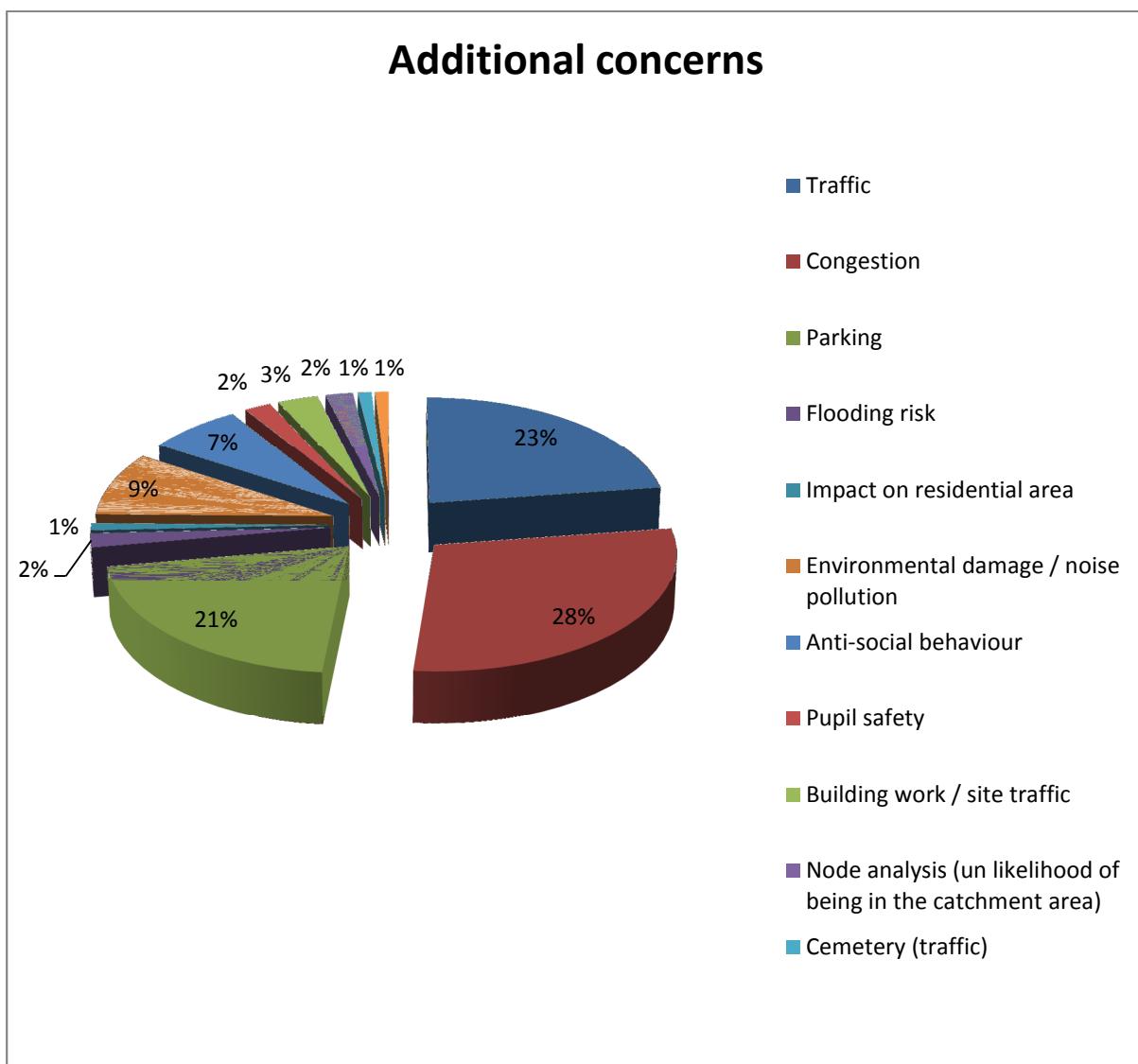
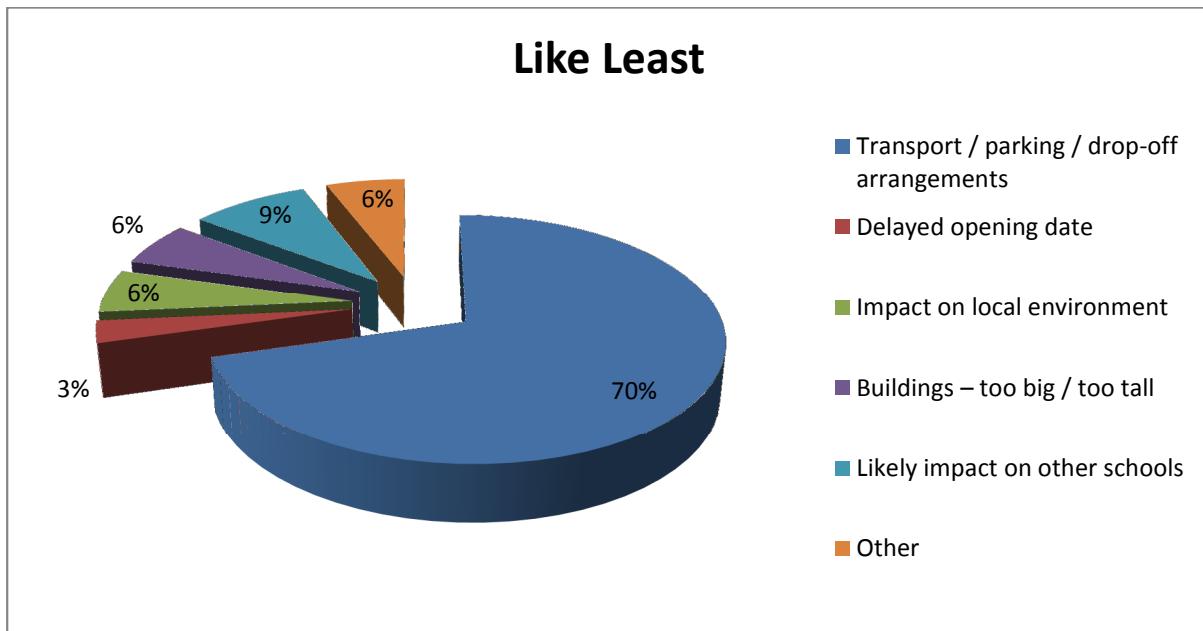
**9. Do you have any other comments you would like to make regarding the plans or the University?**

*All detailed written comments received from respondents to questions 1-10 have been supplied to the University of Birmingham for their consideration. Appendix 2 provides an assessment of the issues referenced in open ended questions.*

## Appendix 2: Numerical analysis of open ended questions

The following charts provide an assessment of the issues referenced in open ended questions.





## Require more info. about:

