

The University of Birmingham
School

Selly Oak, Birmingham

Academic, curriculum and admissions policy
Public consultation and community engagement

Report prepared by:



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is submitted on behalf of the University of Birmingham in respect of a proposal to develop a secondary school and sixth form ('the School') with an eventual complement of 1150 pupils at the University's Selly Oak campus, adjacent to Bristol Road and Weoley Park Road.
- 1.2 Following approval to progress to pre-opening stage, the School is being developed in partnership between the DfE and the University with the vision of creating a learning community that will maximise the personal and academic achievement of all of its pupils.
- 1.3 The University of Birmingham School will take in pupils to years 7 and 12 in September 2015, growing to full capacity over five years. It is intended that the School will open in September 2015.
- 1.4 The proposal is to create a new school housed in a new purpose-designed building. This is subject to receiving the appropriate planning and development permissions.
- 1.5 The proposal 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.
- 1.6 This report is in respect of the consultation and community engagement with reference to the School's proposed admissions policy, educational vision, and curriculum, plus the relationship between the University and the School and the proposal for the Trust to enter into a Funding Agreement with the DfE to establish and run the school. It is based on feedback and comments received in relation to those aspects. A separate report has been prepared in respect of the planning aspects which includes the statement of community involvement (SCI). This SCI- and the University response to the pre-planning application consultation- can be found in the planning submission, via Birmingham City Council website and on the University of Birmingham School website here:
www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/university-school/building.aspx
- 1.7 This report includes details of the methods employed in respect of the community and stakeholder consultation, the consultation itself and also responses to the consultation.
- 1.8 In addition, the report includes recommendations resulting from the consultation. The detailed responses by the School to the recommendations are being considered and will be reported in due course.

2. The public consultation process

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

2.1 Consultation context

The University of Birmingham has a policy of engaging with the communities it serves and stakeholders and, wherever possible, reflecting the views of those communities and stakeholders.

The University appointed Clarke Associates UK Limited, a Birmingham-based independent consultancy, to undertake a consultation programme on behalf of the University and to accurately reflect the views of those consulted. Clarke Associates, working in conjunction with the University, 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 exhibitions held in Selly Oak (adjacent to the proposed site and on the University's Selly Oak campus). The consultation process met requirements of Section 10 of the Academies Act 2010.

The consultation period commenced Sunday, June 9, 2013 with a drop-in facility and talk and 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 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 and Head of the College of Social Sciences, Chair of the University School Steering Group.

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 th June	Community Open Day Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston
Wednesday 26 th June, 3.00pm – 8.30pm	Ladywood Ladywood Community Centre, St Vincent Street West, Birmingham, B16 8RP
Tuesday 2 nd July, 3.00pm – 8.30pm	Hall Green Centre Court, 1301 Stratford Road , Hall Green , Birmingham , B28 9HH
Thursday 11 th July, 3.00pm – 8.30pm	Small Heath Small Heath Community Forum, Heather Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, B10 9TA
Saturday 13 th July, 10am -1pm	Selly Oak Orchard Learning Resource Centre, Hamilton Drive, Weoley Park Rd, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6QW
Wednesday 17 th July, 3.00pm – 8.30pm	Orchard Learning Resource Centre, Hamilton Drive, Weoley Park Rd, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6QW

The drop-in events held at the nodal points were attended by approximately 75 persons in total. The two drop-in events at Selly Oak were attended by 250 persons - primarily local people but with a number being prospective parents from the other nodal areas, some of whom were keen to see specifically the proposed design of the School and the proposed campus.

2.3 Preliminary focus groups

Clarke Associates held three focus groups prior to the main consultation period with the purpose of:

- Gaining a better understanding of the issues that were most likely to concern parents and the type of information they would need during the consultation period.
- Informing / sharing the University's thinking and approach to the proposed school and sixth form.
- Gathering views / feedback ahead of the consultation period.
- Helping to shape the content of the feedback process during those consultations

- Gaining a better understanding of attitudes towards educational capacity in Birmingham - especially in their local community.
- Gaining an appreciation of the likely response / reaction to this initiative.

The three groups were held during March 2013 in Selly Oak and were attended by a random selection of those that had registered an interest in the School via the School website, email or as part of early consultation undertaken as part of the application to DfE to establish a school.

2.4 Media

Press releases were prepared by the University's press office, working in conjunction with Clarke Associates, and distributed to local media. Press coverage in print and on-line resulted in respect of the consultation and the drop-ins.

2.5 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.

2.6 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.

2.7 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 as follows:

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

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

The purpose of this distribution was to ensure that local people were aware of the proposal and had an opportunity to comment on both the planning and academic aspects of the school.

2.8 Other notification

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

All 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 the proposals at Selly Oak on

Wednesday, June 19 and South Yardley on Thursday, July 11, 2013. Further invitations had been issued to the University to speak at Ward meetings (outside the consultation period but useful in respect of promoting the opportunities afforded by the school to families living within the vicinity of the nodal points).

MPs serving Birmingham were also informed of the proposals, the consultation arrangements and the drop-in dates. In addition, offers of meeting with MPs were made (this was achieved through the University's ongoing relationship with local members.)

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.

A total of 40 primary schools, across each area of the nodes, 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 were also notified.

2.9 Meetings

As detailed above, representatives of the University of Birmingham and/or Clarke Associates presented details about the school and its proposed admissions policy at Selly Oak on Wednesday, June 19 and South Yardley on Thursday, July 11, 2013. In addition, a meeting was held with representatives of the local community at Weoley Hill Village Council on Wednesday, June 26, 2013.

During the period May to August 2013, meetings were held with other occupiers of the Selly Oak campus in order to explain the proposals and present plans.

All those who attended the drop-in events had the opportunity to discuss the proposals with representatives of the school project team including those representing the University's School of Education, representatives of Clarke Associates and, at the Selly oak drop-in events, with the University's estates team, and architects.

A number of prospective families/interested parties attended the Selly Oak drop-in events, having attended one of the other nodal point drop-in events, in order to learn more about the proposed building and view the proposed campus.

A further meeting with representatives of Birmingham secondary and primary schools was held on Thursday, July 18 at the University's Edgbaston campus attended by 20 school representatives.

2.10 Questionnaires

In addition to detailed information about the proposed school and sixth form, the website included an on-line questionnaire - promoted through e-mail notification and all written materials. Attendees at each of the drop-in events were also provided with a printed version of the academic consultation questionnaire. A business reply/freepost envelope was supplied to aid response. Results of the survey that were completed either at the drop-in sessions or by post were imported into the online facility in order to aid analysis.

When the consultation closed at midnight on August 2, 2013, a total of 188 responses relating to the academic aspects had been completed. The output of those, combined with comments received by other means such as e-mail, is detailed in the next section.

2.11 Emails and web form

Stakeholders could also provide feedback on proposals directly via an email address or via a web form. Over 25 responses were received this way.

2.12 Conclusion

Both Clarke Associates and the University believe that this comprehensive process of community engagement has afforded effective consultation with prospective parents, stakeholders, schools within the vicinity of each of the nodes and other interested parties and that it has been in accordance with local and national guidance on consultation of this nature.

3. Response to the proposals

This section details the response and feedback that has been received to the proposals and is based on comments made at the drop-in events; feedback to community events; results from the on-line and written questionnaire; other feedback received by e-mail and telephone direct to the consultation advisers, Clarke Associates and to the University.

3.1 Overall response

188 questionnaires were completed in total (online and written), although not all respondents provided responses to all questions.

The key headline figures are as follows (with percentages reported based on numbers responding to each question):

- 99% who responded were doing so as an individual, the balance on behalf of an organisation
- 77% (n=136) of respondents were in favour of the proposed School; 14% were not and 9% did not know.
- 78% (n=138) supported the school's vision; 14% did not and 8% did not know.
- 30% of those responding were interested in their child attending at sixth form; 64% at year seven (it was possible to tick both boxes in the event of having appropriately aged children).
- 83% (n=149) supported the school and sixth form's proposed curriculum.
- 50% (n=87) supported the school and sixth form's proposed approach to admissions in year seven; 33% did not and 17% did not know.
- 72% (n=124) supported the proposed approach to admissions at sixth form; 15% did not and 13% did not know
- 74% (n=131) supported the intention to enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education.
- 74% (n=128) believed that the school and sixth form would be a good learning environment for pupils and teachers.
- 85% (n=148) thought that the relationship with the University would be beneficial to the school and sixth form.

It is clear that amongst respondents to the consultation, there was a significant level of support for the proposed University School and Sixth Form. A large proportion of participants in the consultation process showed interest and enthusiasm - both in terms of the provision of the school and the concept. It is perhaps inevitable that much of that interest came from those whose children may be in a position to attend the school and sixth form - albeit some of that enthusiasm was tempered due to uncertainty as to whether or not their children will be successful in obtaining a place due to the proposed admissions procedures.

Specifically, amongst consultation respondents:

- There was strong support for the vision.

- There was a high level of support for the proposed curriculum and a general acceptance that whilst this is currently in outline, once the school principal is appointed, it will be developed into a more comprehensive offering.
- The majority believe that the school will deliver a good learning environment.
- The close links with the University of Birmingham are expected to provide a beneficial relationship, particularly in view of its reputation as a leading-edge educational research establishment.

It would be wrong however not to represent those who do not share the proposal with such enthusiasm. Local people in particular were concerned about potential implications in terms of traffic, transport, parking and the overall impact of the School, and these are addressed in the separate planning consultation report (see <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/university-school/building.aspx>). Issues were also raised, as might be expected, in terms of the proposed admissions policy for both year seven and sixth form with detailed points and questions relating to the curriculum and the school's governance.

It is perhaps inevitable that a report of this nature gives greater space to the issues that were raised - as opposed to the level of support that is evident from the headline figures.

3.2 Detailed comments

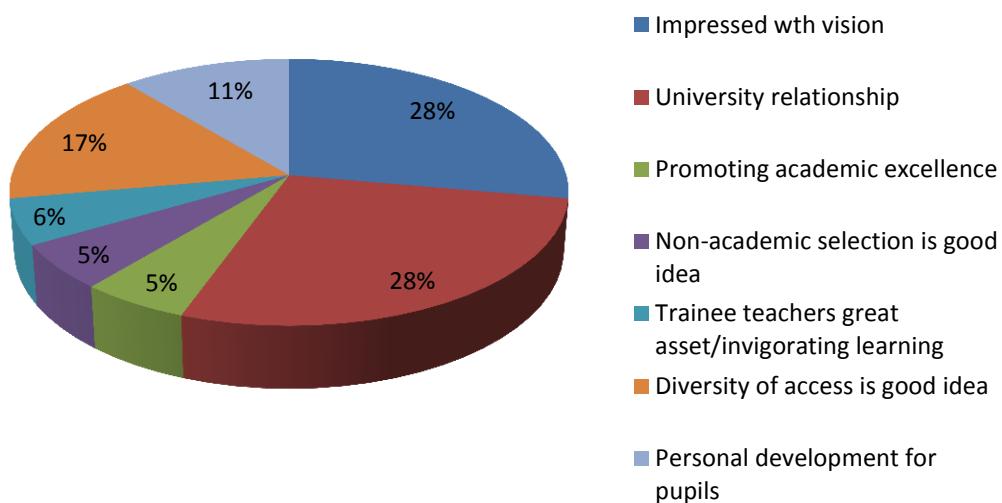
This section includes a summary of the detailed comments made by respondents to the online and written questionnaires, plus, where appropriate, responses received through email and website feedback and directly to Clarke Associates at drop-ins and public meetings. In some cases direct quotes are used (source withheld). Each summary section is prefaced by the results of the online and paper survey questions. In addition, we have included pie charts that provide an indication of the comments made through the questionnaires. The purpose of these is to aid analysis and provide an overview of the main topics raised. However, it should be noted that these pie charts, and proportions attributed to each topic, are based on our interpretation of the responses given and they should therefore be treated only as an indication.

3.2.1 Vision

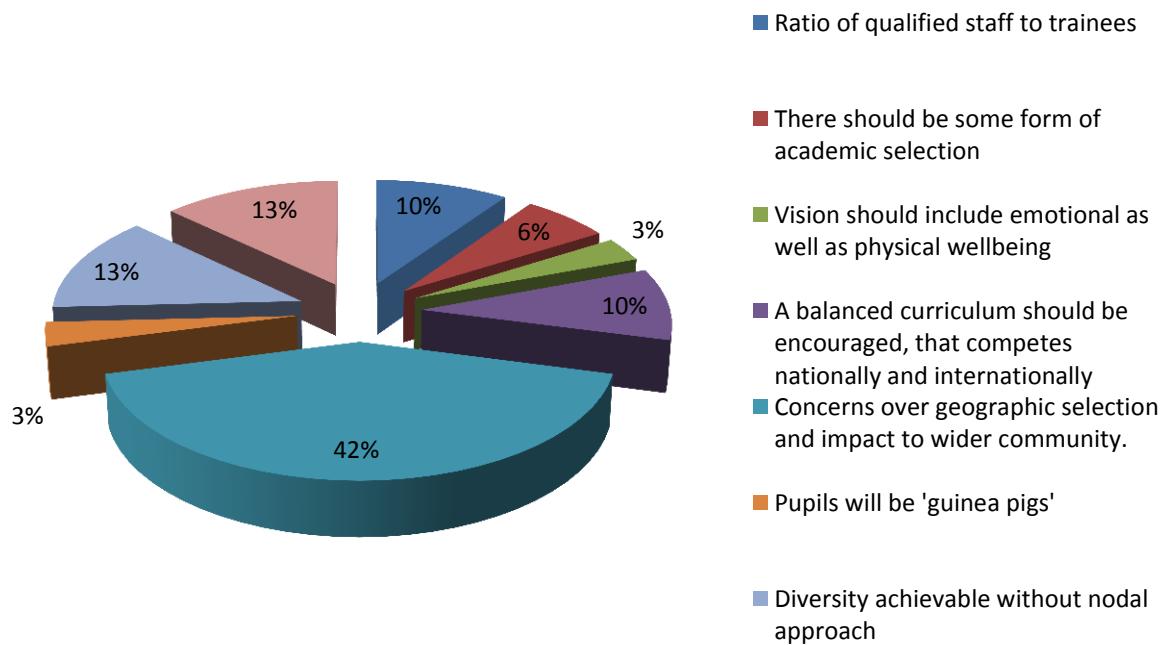
Do you support the University School and Sixth Form's vision?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		78%	138
No		14%	25
Don't know		8%	15
Total Responses			178

Vision: Supportive comments



Vision: Considerations



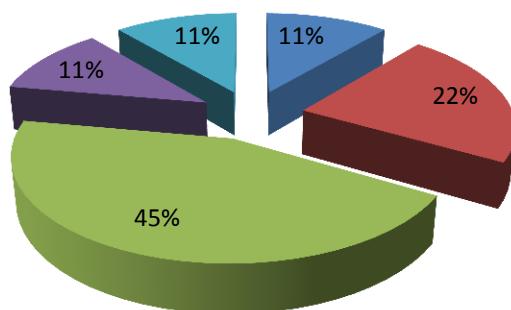
- The relationship with the University overall was seen to be particularly important and there was praise for the concept based upon the School's relationship with the University's School of Education. Links to the University, and the perception of the University overall, gave many parents considerable reassurance.
- Some respondents suggested that the proposed partnership with the University would benefit not only the new school but many of the other "neglected state schools" by producing the "teaching leaders of tomorrow".
- It was hoped by some that the School's vision might be replicated across the city as one of a number of "community-based schools" offering excellent opportunities to local children.
- There was support for the concept provided it was to "provide good quality education and not as another means to generate profit". Similarly, a number expressed the belief that the school was a "recruitment ground" for entrance to the University.
- A number of respondents were supportive of the addition to the educational landscape in Birmingham, offering something distinct from the existing grammar and comprehensive schools; however, there were also a couple of criticisms of the free school/ academy policy and of the involvement by the University in the potential "atomisation of the city's schools and the whole idea of local, comprehensive and state-school organisation and planning".
- There were a number of questions surrounding the use and role of trainee teachers. Concern was expressed by some that trainee teachers would be too dominant; however, overall, it seemed that the feeling was that that the school would be "invigorated" by trainees who had not had "the edge knocked off them" and whose idealism would be positive.
- There was some concern expressed that "with the emphasis on educational research" pupils would be "guinea pigs" with the potential implication that their education could suffer as a result of "new theories being tried out".
- It was suggested that with the expansion of school-based training, it was vital that the University focused on transforming its expertise to match this.
- Responses on the vision for the intake and admissions varied, with many respondents suggesting that the School would provide an excellent environment for the personal development of pupils and a significant number supportive of the diversity that would result from the proposed admissions policy. There were also concerns expressed about the geographic selection and impact on local and wider community. The responses in relation to admissions are detailed in 3.2.3 and 3.2.4.
- Disappointment was expressed by a number that the launch date had been put back a year. Many prospective parents asked whether it would be possible for those entering year seven in September 2014 to be taken into a separate school or alternative accommodation so that they might enter University school in September 2015 at year eight.
- It was thought that a new school with the word "University" in its title was likely to attract parents and pupils from existing secondary schools; "It seems likely that more educated parent power and potential pupil highflyers will be lost to the secondary schools nearby/and near to nodal points".

3.2.2 Curriculum

Do you support the University of Birmingham School and Sixth form's proposed curriculum?

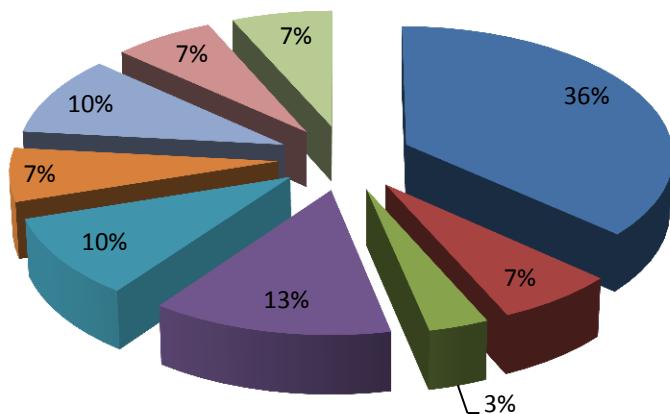
Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		83%	149
No		10%	18
Don't know		7%	12
Total Responses		179	

Curriculum: Supportive comments



- Refreshing to see a school promote personal development
- Concentrating on the core subjects is welcome
- Excellent curriculum
- International Baccalaureate concept
- Specialist sixth form is an excellent idea

Curriculum: Considerations



- Will curriculum compare to the top grammar and independent schools?
- Arts subjects should be a major consideration
- Foreign languages should be a priority
- Secular approach to education
- International Baccalaureate should be considered
- Any focus on sport?
- Greater detail required on non-core subjects
- Refreshing to see a school promote personal development
- Concentrating on the core subjects is welcome
- Excellent curriculum
- Specialist sixth form is an excellent idea
- International Baccalaureate concept

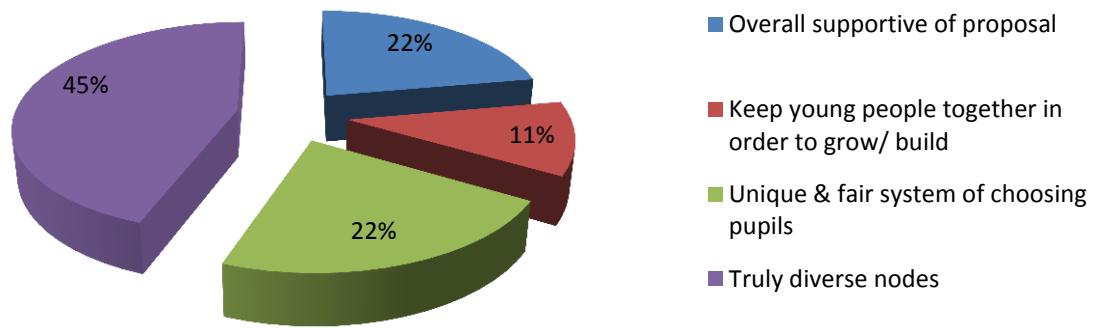
- There was general positive response to the proposed curriculum with support for the focus on academic excellence and the “refreshing” aim of promoting character development and preparation for (university) life. Respondents (particularly parents) wanted much more detail on the curriculum proposals and on extracurricular activities.
- Questions were raised as to what might be regarded as an “excellent academic curriculum”; “It would be good to know,” said one respondent, “that pupils will receive a curriculum which equates to those found in the best grammar/independent schools”.
- A number of people were unsure of how the focus on academic curriculum, plus elements such as three distinct sciences and key stage 3 starting in year 9, would fit with the comprehensive admissions policy and it was suggested that the School would need to be more flexible. Questions were raised as to whether the school would be also preparing pupils for vocational work; there was concern expressed that those with “non-academic strengths” might be seen as “second-class pupils”. For some, the current proposal was not felt to be “appropriate for all children” sending negative messages to those who did not wish to pursue a career related to Russell Group universities.
- Many parents asked about class sizes and as to how different abilities might be accommodated/streamed and whether that would be for all subjects.
- Several asked about the emphasis on sport. There was concern expressed that there were inadequate facilities immediately adjacent to the School but this was offset by the proposal for playing facilities on the opposite side of Bristol road (albeit that there was some concern over access issues).
- Questions were also asked about the provision of foreign language teaching (“a broad range, rather than just the usual three of French, German and Spanish”). Similarly, respondents also asked for more detail on what would be offered in humanities, music and the arts.
- There was specific reference by a minority of respondents to the Sixth Form curriculum and ensuring that it was based on “achievable academic ability”.
- A number of respondents asked whether they were still plans to offer International Baccalaureate (IB) at Sixth Form. Some suggested that the Sixth Form curriculum was very traditional.
- There were questions regarding intended transition of pupils from the School’s Sixth Form to “selective universities”: were those Russell Group or those based within 20 miles radius? “The information should be more transparent”. This issue was also raised in the Education Professional session (see section 3.3).
- A small number asked about the commitment to regular homework requirements.
- There were a minority of respondents who raised issues related to religious education, with views split. One respondent, for example, pointed out that the proposed school campus was a former “leading Christian/ecumenical campus” and it was hoped that religious education would “gain solid attention”; however, the School’s proposed “secular approach” to education was welcomed by many.

3.2.3 Admissions: year seven

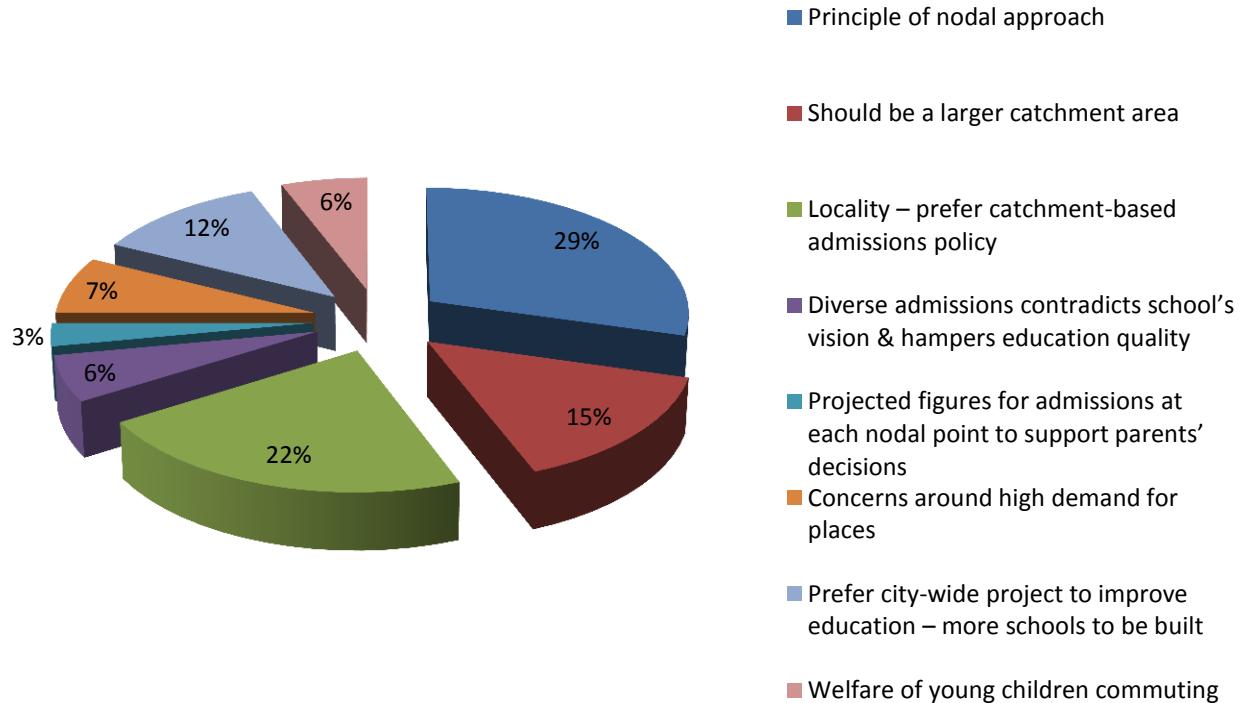
Are you in favour of the proposed approach to admissions in Year 7?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		50%	87
No		33%	58
Don't know		17%	30
Total Responses			175

Year 7: Supportive comments



Year 7: Considerations



- The proposed admissions policy was, to many respondents, the most contentious issue; in part due to responses from disappointed parents whose children were unlikely to meet the geographic admissions criteria.
- The nodal admissions policy, being a rare approach, resulted in many views, with both support for the aim of creating diversity and providing opportunities for a range of children and concerns, particularly expressed by those living in Selly Oak, that children were being "shifted" from other parts of the city. There was concern expressed that by drawing in children from different parts of the city, it would not be easy for them to develop relationships - as opposed to when their school friends were local. It was argued that "a close, local school encourages a sense of community and enables children to return home quickly with sufficient time in the evening for extracurricular activities and homework". The same respondents said that children should be aware of their locality - "to walk to school, have local friends, play in the local park and volunteer in the local area". In consequence, there was support for a catchment-based admissions policy. There were reservations expressed by one respondent that the University was taking a massive risk, with the logistics presenting a real challenge, calling it "crude social engineering."
- There were questions about the selection of the nodes and allocation of places: Hall Green, it was suggested, already had "an excellent school" so it was argued there should be less children from that node. Those living locally were concerned that there would be a "very slim chance" of gaining a place at the School. It was noted that the potential increase in housing on the former Selly Oak Hospital site would also increase demand the school places in the local area.
- Many respondents supported the aim of achieving a diverse pupil population but questioned whether the nodes would deliver the desired diversity. For example, one respondent suggested that the current nodal approach was targeting two areas of the Muslim population at the expense of Sikh and Hindu populations. It was also suggested that Black/African/Caribbean / Black British community may be under-represented in the intake. It was suggested that there were people from "different backgrounds, abilities and ethnicities" in Selly Oak - and immediate surrounding areas - and that the school should meet local requirements - "not places miles away".
- The information provided by Birmingham City Council on anticipated under-capacity of school places was not widely known and so the arguments underpinning the selected nodes were not always fully appreciated.
- The impact that pupils travelling to the School from other parts of Birmingham would have on local traffic was raised- these concerns are detailed in the Planning consultation response- see section 1.6.
- The logistics associated with transporting pupils was raised as an issue. There were some concerns about commuting distances for young pupils; although it should be noted that parents from nodes did not express this as a particular concern. There was criticism that the nodes were defined by railway stations that were not on direct line to Selly Oak. It was felt by some that the selection of the other three nodes would encourage travel by car.
- Information on the use of dedicated school bus services in other schools would be welcomed to establish what proportion of students travel by public transport in comparison with those travelling by car.

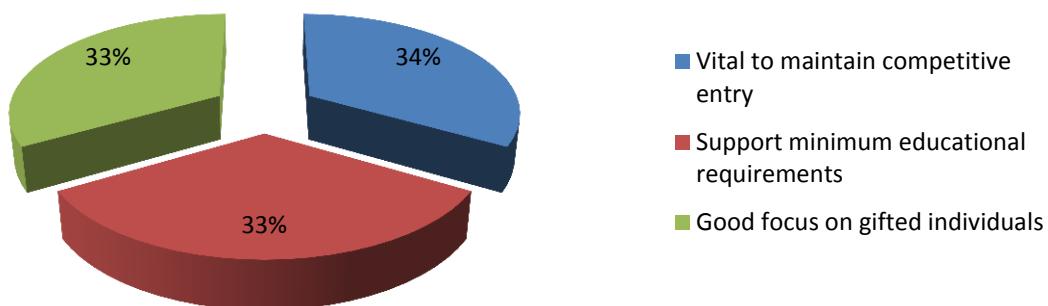
- It was felt by one respondent that the current approach might discriminate against families on low incomes due to transport challenges.
- The importance of clear communication for parents in terms of their likelihood of meeting admissions criteria was emphasised.
- It was felt unlikely that the school would be undersubscribed from any nodal area.
- There was overall support for the non-academic selection process at year seven although a small number supported some form of academic selection as part of the entrance criteria.
- A small number of those employed by or working at the University of Birmingham asked whether consideration would be given to the admissions policy being extended so as to enable children of those working at the University to attend the proposed school - even if they were outside the nodal points.

3.2.4 Admissions: sixth form

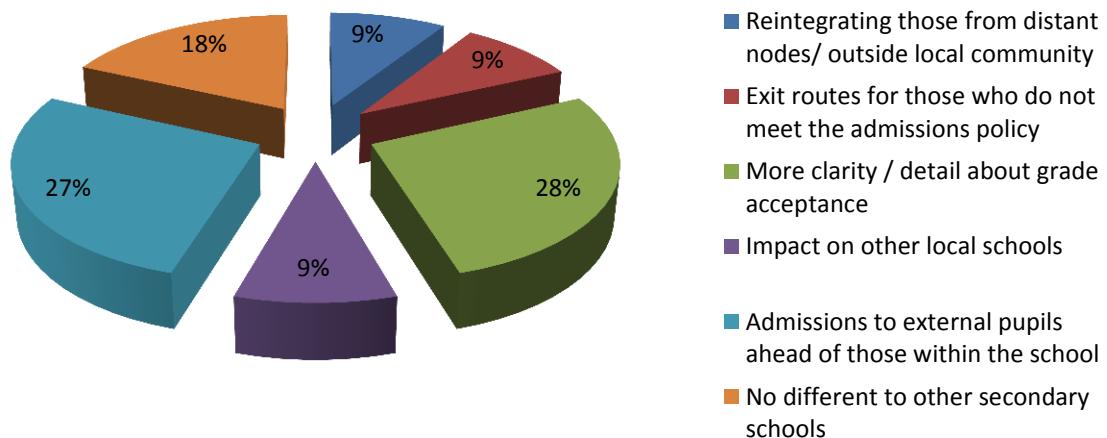
Are you in favour of the proposed approach to admissions at Sixth Form?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		72%	124
No		15%	26
Don't know		13%	23
Total Responses		173	

Sixth Form Admissions: Supportive comments



Sixth Form Admission: Considerations



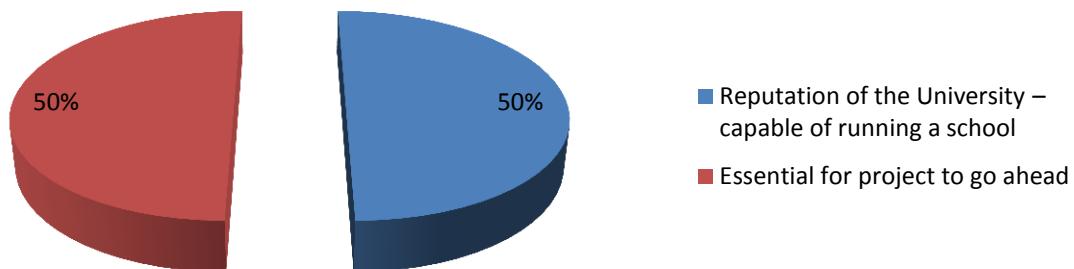
- In terms of overall support, this was split quite evenly and there were fewer issues raised in terms of Sixth Form admissions.
- Clarification was required on the "exit" routes of those pupils having entered in year seven but being unable to meet the standard of entry required to Sixth Form; some expressed concern that those who had joined the School at year seven were not guaranteed a place in the Sixth Form despite the fact that they may have made good academic achievements.
- It was hoped that the intention to create a diverse intake at year seven would be also applied to Sixth Form and some respondents expressed concern that the Sixth Form would not be representative of the city.
- Another parent expressed the view that admission should be based on academic achievement first, geography second - with the ability to admit from outside Birmingham.
- Again, as with year seven feedback, a number of respondents wanted the community directly local to the School to be prioritised.

3.2.5 Funding Agreement

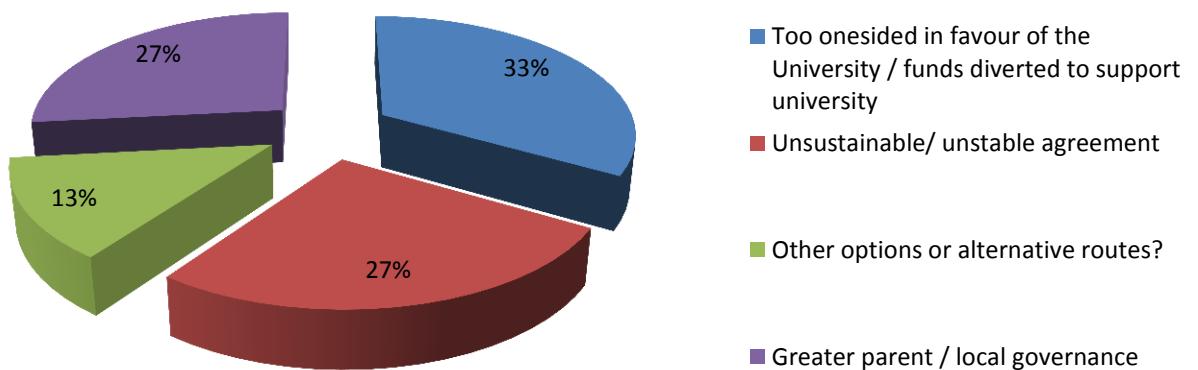
Do you support the intention to enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		74%	131
No		14%	24
Don't know		12%	21
Total Responses			176

Funding Agreement: Supportive comments



Funding Agreement: Considerations



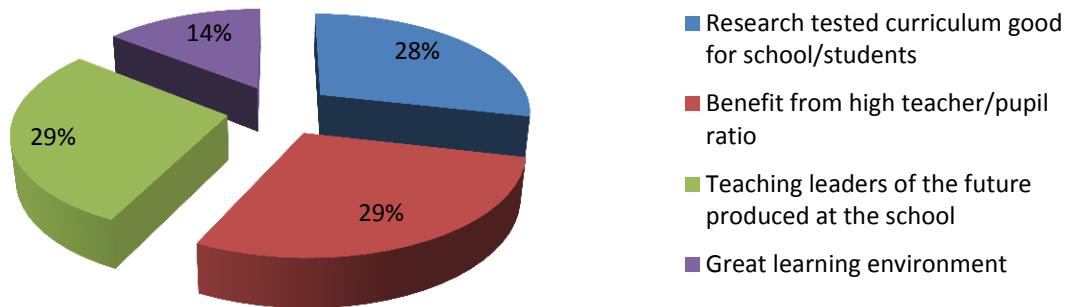
- As set out in section 3.2.1, there was overall support for the relationship between the proposed School and University.
- There was some concern expressed that the purpose of the School might be another means of generating money for the University.
- The importance of local representatives and community and parent governors was emphasised and it was argued that the governance arrangements should not give the University too much power at the expense of other stakeholders.

3.2.6 A University Training School

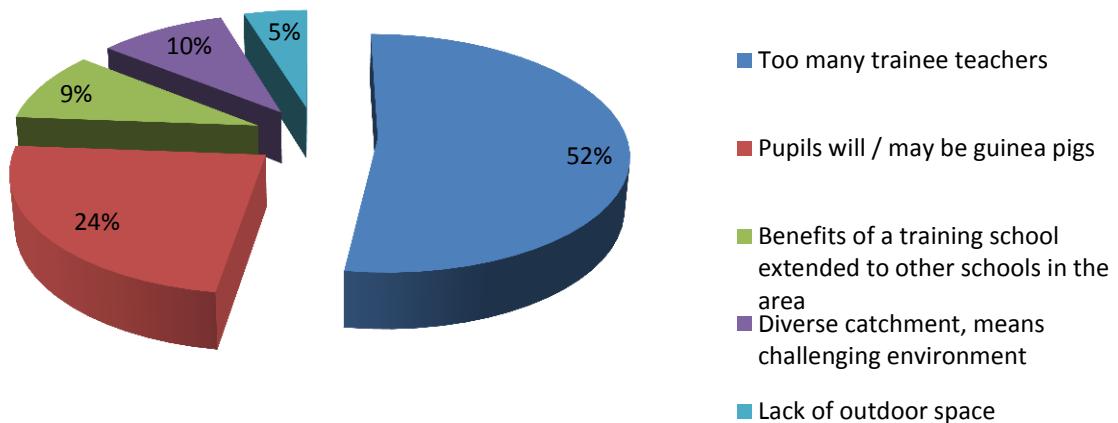
Do you think the University Training School will be a good learning environment for pupils and teachers?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		74%	128
No		10%	17
Don't know		17%	29
Total Responses			174

A good learning environment: Supportive comments



A good learning environment: Considerations



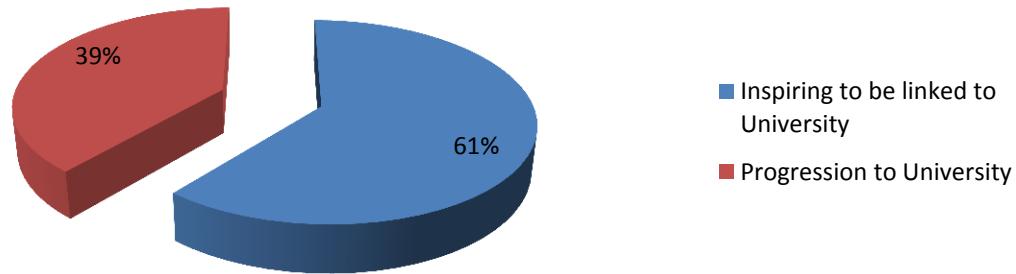
- Overall, it was felt that the proposed school would provide a good learning environment - "a fabulous opportunity"; "the most exciting prospect close quotes; a "win-win" situation.
- The role as a teacher training school would result in the "teaching leaders of the future" being produced at the school to benefit children across the city.
- Questions were raised as to whether there were other training schools in the UK that might act as a template for best practice.
- There were some suggestions that the School would need to be careful that pupils did not feel like guinea pigs being used to try out potentially ineffective teaching methods.
- There was some concern that the potentially high number of trainee teachers could be a disadvantage although a number said it was "a good idea if the students' education (was) not affected by the training of new teachers".
- It was hoped that teachers would be rigorously monitored and the students would not be "overburdened with trainees".
- It was suggested that the School, with "such a diverse catchment" would be an extremely pressured and challenging environment, "Working with such diversity is a huge challenge for very experienced teachers".

3.2.7 Relationship with the University of Birmingham

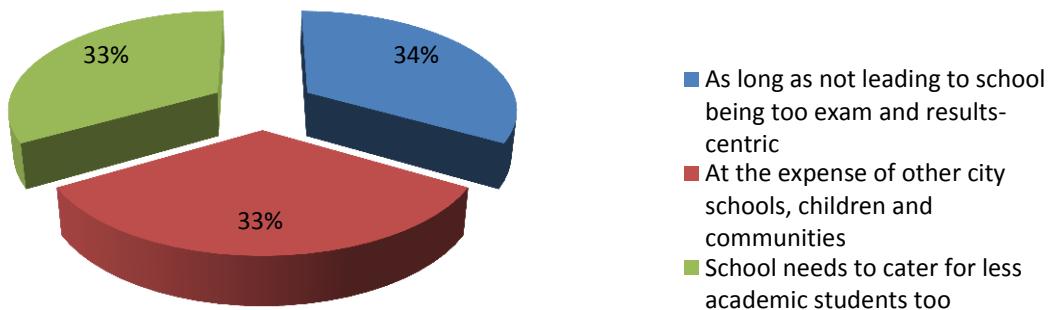
Do you think that the relationship with the University of Birmingham is beneficial?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		74%	128
No		10%	17
Don't know		17%	29
Total Responses			174

Relationship with the University: Supportive comments



Relationship with the University: Considerations



- Three quarters of respondents felt that the relationship with the University of Birmingham would be beneficial. "I think it will be inspiring to young boys and girls to be linked to a major university and encourage aspirations for higher education"; "... the reputation of the school will reflect on the University so there will be pressure to ensure the school is performing".
- There was some concern expressed that the relationship with the University might lead the school to being exam results-centric.
- The infrastructure of the University was thought to be excellent "so if it can provide the same to (school students) that would be good".
- It was suggested by one respondent that preparation for University life could be improved with sixth formers being "integrated into specialist lectures" to help with career planning.
- Other suggested the student should be given opportunities to engage with and contribute University research projects.
- At drop-ins some questions were raised about exactly how the relationship between the University and School would operate in practice, including whether governors would be appointed solely by the University; and whether control of the school would rest with the Vice Chancellor of the University, the Principal or the governors.

3.2.8 Other commentary

Many of the other comments contained within the survey related to the school's proposed location in Selly Oak and the impact that it would have on the area especially in relation to parking, traffic and potentially road safety. These issues are covered in greater detail in the separate report on the pre-planning application consultation, part of the planning submission and available on the School website here:

www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/university-school/building.aspx

The University was encouraged to engage with other local secondary schools to ensure provision for all children in the locality. It was also suggested that a neighbourhood-link group be established for the first five years to help the mutual integration of school and community.

3.3 Meetings with other educational establishments

This section summarises feedback given at a meeting with head teachers and staff from other schools in the Birmingham area held on July 18, 2013 at the University of Birmingham. Due to the distinctive nature of this event and the particular concerns of the attendees, we have reported these results separately.

3.3.1 Vision/general

- There was concern about the impact that the proposed School and Sixth Form would have on other schools and sixth forms in the city. The Sixth Form's aspirations to enable progression to Russell Group universities was deemed by some to be "elitist". There was felt to be some conflict in those aspirations with the school being positioned as comprehensive.
- It was suggested that the brand and the "desirability of the name" could impact on intake at other sixth forms.
- Some doubt was expressed as to the need for a secondary school in this particular area with the view expressed that it was a "static" population. After explanation that the population of Selly Oak was indeed growing and would continue to do so as a result of the proposed residential development of the former Selly Oak hospital site there was an acceptance of the potential demographic needs.
- Some questioned the funding of the School and whether the University would be supporting it.
- The issue of transport road safety was raised. Concern was expressed about year sevens in particular making the journey to the school from more distant nodal points. It was noted that the nodal points were not on the direct line to Selly Oak station.

3.3.2 Curriculum

- There were particular questions over the teaching of languages and whether it was proposed that the school would be teaching the classics.
- There was an observation from a teacher of a local school that it (his/her school) was "just hanging on" to the teaching of minority languages and it would only need "to 3 pupils to be at the University Sixth Form to mean that

it would be impossible for us to provide those subjects sixth form level. You may well end up reducing the opportunities at my school".

3.3.3 Admissions - year seven

- It was felt by a small number that the association with the University and the proposed name would attract pupils from "high aspiring parents". Questions were raised as to how the University was proposing to reach those with lower aspirations.
- There was some questioning as to how the School might meet its objective of being ethnically and socio-economically representative of the city.
- The need to manage expectations and teaching of different pupils given their different cultural, socio-economic and faith backgrounds was emphasised.

3.3.4 Admissions - sixth form

- Concerns were expressed about progression for the School's year 11 students who did not meet the attainment criteria.
- Concern was also expressed that 'low achievers' entering year seven that progressed well might be dispirited if, despite their progression, they were unable to progress to sixth form.
- It was thought by at least one attendee that its reference to "selective universities and Russell Group" was problematic: "There is no such thing as selective universities... all universities are selective."

4. Conclusion and recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

Amongst the respondents to the online and paper survey, at the University Community Day, via email/ website and at drop-ins there was a high level of support for the proposed school and sixth form in relation to the vision of providing excellent academic opportunities, curricular and pastoral approach, and the relationship with the University. Overall, in these areas, respondents indicated they felt the School offered a good opportunity for the city and potentially their own children. In terms of the Section 10 consultation, 77% of respondents to the online and paper survey (n=136) were supportive of the proposed School and 74% (n=131) supported the intention to enter into a Funding Agreement to establish the School.

Admissions, as would be expected as it inevitably results in disappointment for some parents, was a more contentious issue with 50% support for the year seven admissions (n=87) and 72% (n=124) support for the Sixth Form proposals. The high proportion of respondents picking 'Don't know' in response to the question about year seven admissions indicates how vital it is that the School communicate this policy- both rationale and operation.

Local people in particular expressed concern about the school's potential impact on traffic, transport, parking on the overall impact of the school. It was noticeable to us, as we monitored the completion of the online survey, that the headline support for the school decreased prior to, during and immediately after the drop-in sessions held at Selly Oak that were attended by many local people. This, we believe, was due to local people in particular being concerned about the school's local impact even though many also expressed support for the provision of high quality school and sixth form facility. The findings in relation to the planning proposal are available on the School website here:

www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/university-school/building.aspx

4.2 Recommendations

We recommend that consideration is given to the following areas:

Curriculum

- *(Noting that a number of these will be implemented by the Principal working with the University and other stakeholders)*
- Development of the proposed curriculum and extracurricular opportunities, including consideration of curriculum suited for comprehensive intake.
- Consideration of educational pathways for children through the School from year 7 onwards, both for those pupils who will go on to sixth form and those who may pursue other opportunities.
- Identifying and building on links between the University and the School to maximise the benefits to the latter of the link with an excellent University.
- Engagement with local schools in the development of the curriculum and school policies, where appropriate

Admissions

- Consideration of the messages around the admissions policy- at both year 7 and sixth form- to ensure that the policy is clear and understood and that potential pupils and parents are encouraged to consider the School as an option for them.
- Consideration of how to support pupils from further away to access the School.
- Clearly communicating the rationale behind the admissions approach- including demographic and other information used to inform the decisions.

Governance

- Consideration to wider representation on the board of governors particularly from parents and the local community.
- Clarity on the relationship between the School and the University

Local considerations

- See the University School website for recommendations in relation to local resident considerations, plus the University response to them:
www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/university-school/building.aspx

Overall

The University was correct, we believe, in its approach to this consultation process. The facts were laid out fairly and without rhetoric.

We believe that the University should set out the case for the School in more detail. In particular, we are aware that the proposed choice of nodes have been determined after consultation with Birmingham City Council and consideration of a range of factors and are designed to provide secondary schooling for those areas where there is most likely to be a projected shortage - whilst also satisfying the ambitions of achieving a school that is reflective of the demographics of the city.

We believe also that the local community would find the school of overall benefit particularly in relation to the provision of additional facilities that will be accessible by the public.

In consequence, we would recommend the implementation of a concerted programme of communicating the benefits - coupled with a programme of strong community liaison that we believe will benefit the School, University - and the community in which it is proposed it resides.

Response to the consultation findings

The detailed responses by the School to the recommendations are being considered and will be reported in due course.