

# Ley Park Wed 28th June 06

## Speaker key

JW	Jane Wilson
LM	Lindsay Martin
FQ	Female Questioner
PR	Paul Ray
MQ	Male Questioner

JW Good evening ladies and gentlemen. It's just after seven o'clock, so I think there may be one or two more people coming but we'll make a prompt start, and [unclear]. I'd like to welcome you to this public consultation. It's the second one. We had one on Monday evening as well, and I can see there are some familiar faces, so welcome to those who were here before, and welcome to those of you who weren't. For those of you who weren't here, I'll just run through who I am and how we're going to run the evening. My name's Jane Wilson, and I work with a company called Accent, who are an independent market research company. I stress the independent because that's exactly why I'm here. I'm here to provide an independent view on what is going on, to help proceedings run in a fair and proper manner, and to compile a report at the end of this evening, so you will see me taking notes. I will provide a report to Accent, who then will collate it into their report about the consultation process in general, in all of the schools. That will go to Herts County Council, and will be posted on their Website. It's a completely independent report, about your views and what you have said in these consultation meetings. We're going to start with a short presentation that Major Martin will give, and then after that we will open the meeting for questions. We will run until a quarter to nine, at which point there will be quarter of an hour when people can actually talk to the panel individually should they so wish. Can I just draw your attention to the paper on your chair? You have a copy of the slides for this evening's presentation, which you can make notes on, to remind you of questions you might want to ask. Secondly, on the front is stapled this sheet, which is the Accent feedback sheet. I will remind you later on, if you feel that your voice hasn't been heard, that you haven't got an issue across, then please put it on this sheet and give it to me, and it will go into the process. That's all I want to say at the moment, and I'll hand over to you, Major.

LM Thanks. This is the structure you need. Jane's already outlined. I'll introduce my colleagues, make the presentation of the County Council's proposals, and then we'll have the open questions and comment session. I'm Lindsay Martin; I'm head of School Access. I'm responsible for a batch of things relating to access to schools across the county in terms of planning, admissions,

transport, property, those sorts of things, and I have with me Clive Mitchell, the Head of Primary Schools Effectiveness, that is the head of Primary Advisory Service, our advisory service to primary schools, our most senior primary schools professional, Paul Ray, who's my Area Planning Manager, and he and Kate Maguire, Planning Officer, are part of the team that has done the detailed work, on this review. And my colleagues will help me to answer questions and provide you with additional information as we go through the evening. So, the purpose of the review. The slide shows the purpose at the top, and then a couple of reasons underneath, and the principle purpose is to address the issue of surplus or empty places. In this area, as in many parts of the county we have a large percentage of surplus or empty places. Now you might say, isn't that a good thing, surely? If there are fewer children in schools, we can have smaller classes, and that's a good thing, not a bad thing. Well, it isn't, and there are a couple of reasons for that, largely around how local authorities in schools are funded. 80% or thereabouts of the funding that the school gets is dependent on the number of pupils it has. Each pupil, in a sense, carries a value, depending on their age. The more pupils you have, the more money you get as a school, the fewer pupils, the less money you have. Much of the costs of money in school, in terms of the fixed costs, [unclear] buildings and so on, stays the same, but you have fewer pupils to spread that cost around. We tend to find that smaller schools, schools with falling numbers of pupils, have less money to spend directly on the children in the classroom, on the teachers, books and so forth, and more money on other buildings and site related things, in proportion. So we think that that is not an efficient and effective way of using limited resources that the County Council has. We would prefer to target those resources on the direct needs of children in the classroom, rather than on maintaining buildings, which are partly empty. There are other risks to the school that are not only financial, that affect the school's financial viability, but also affect the range of staffing that the school has. The smaller that the school is, the fewer staff it has, the less management time it has, and it affects the curriculum, what goes on inside the school, and Clive can say more about that later on if you want to. So those are the principle reasons we feel that a large proportion of places empty is something that we need to do something about. We simply cannot leave an area with a significant proportion of empty places. And this gives some brief headline illustration of that. The number of Reception places in all the schools in Hodderston and Wormley [?] at the moment is 509. There are no more places available; as of April the number of children in them is 416, which meant that 93 of them were empty. That is just over 18% of that Reception year was empty. Our forecast for five years time is that there will be 400 in those 509 places, which leaves 109 empty, which is just over 20% empty, and expressed in terms of entry at the bottom here, and I'll explain that better, I think, on the next slide, the form of entry is standard measure of a school's size, that is a class of 30 children per year makes 210 children in a primary school, two classes per year group, 60 children, 420 in a school. What we're saying here is that per year, effectively three classrooms will be empty, and in a few years time three and a half classrooms will be empty per year group. That will help you to visualise how much empty

space there is, and that's what we're talking about. Our view therefore is that we need to reduce the number of places available in the area by about three forms of entry, which will leave about a 4% surplus in five years' time. The Audit Commission recommends a surplus. The Audit Commission is the government's public spending watchdog for local government and the health service, recommends a range of surplus of between five and 10%, and as you can see, we're at the bottom end of that range, and we can say a bit more about that during the evening if you would like to and maybe something about the reason why a 5% surplus is a good idea. I'm happy to answer questions about that as we go along. As we've done a number of these reviews over recent years we've developed a set of tests that we feel any option that we're consulting on ought to be able to meet, or at least meet largely, if not absolutely. The first of those is about reducing surplus places and providing places where they are needed, which is the basis of this whole review, and our options address that issue. The second test is about enhancing the capacity to raise educational standards, and reduce the risk of underperformance or serious weakness. As I think I said earlier, schools, literally one for every school with falling numbers are vulnerable both financially and educationally, and we feel need to be addressed [unclear] that test. The third point is having acceptable implications for building design, environmental impact and cost. In other words, there's no point putting up proposals that County Council simply couldn't afford, saying something like, we'll rebuild all the schools, when in fact we haven't got the money to rebuild all the schools. That wouldn't be a sensible option, and we wouldn't bring something like that forward for consultation. The last one is that options have to have acceptable transitional arrangements for affected pupils, and clearly there can be a debate about what's acceptable for the option. What that means in principle is that we will try to affect as few children as possible, through the proposals. So those are the tests that we feel we need to apply. So what is it that we're actually proposing for this southern part of the review area? The proposal is the closure of this school, which is nominally a two form entry primary school, but actually running at something less than, or just under one form of entry, and the expansion of Wormley from 1.6, or 28 children per year group, to two forms of entry, 60 per year group from 2008. And for completeness, there are three alternative proposals for the north part, of the review area, each of which would reduce the number of places there by one and a half forms of entry. That means in the north and the south we will be reducing, the proposal would reduce the number of places by one and a half forms of entry each, totalling three forms of entry, which I mentioned on an earlier slide. So what are the implications of the proposal for pupils? Essentially this school would remain one until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008, but would not admit Reception pupils, would not have an intake, in September of next year, September 2007. Pupils already at the school however will continue to receive their education here until the end of the summer term of the academic year of 2008. We will provide mobile accommodation at Wormley from September 2007; providing the space for the extra 12 places that we expand the school from 1.6 to two points of entry, and will help the school to manage while the building work is built, permanent accommodation there for that

size is provided. And if Ley Park were to close completely on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008, all the pupils then attending the school, that is all the year groups except the first, because there wouldn't be an intake in 2007, would all be offered a place, if parents so wished, at Wormley. Now, we've made that proposal because we believe there are benefits and advantages to year groups and friendships being kept intact, all pupils being able to move to a single other school. However, if parents want a place at any other school, where a place is available in the appropriate year group for their child, they would of course have the right to go for a place there as indeed parents have at any time of a child's school career. But the offer of Wormley is there, but it isn't a requirement. So what happens after this evening? What's the rest of the process? Well, these public meetings extend until tomorrow; we've got the last one tomorrow evening. The consultation period itself, however, goes on till 27<sup>th</sup> July, just after the end of term, to give you plenty of time to send in responses either on the form at the end of this consultation document, by letter or email or going on to our Website. Over the summer we will be looking at and analysing the responses and writing the report to the Education Panel, which will meet on 12<sup>th</sup> September to consider the response from the consultation exercise and to make a recommendation to the County Council's decision making body, the Cabinet, which meets on 16<sup>th</sup> October. And if the Cabinet decides to progress with some change in the area, it could publish the necessary legal notices, called statutory notices, which run for a six-week period and to which objections can be made. If objections are made, the matter goes to the School Organisation Committee for Hertfordshire, which stands on behalf of the Adjudicating Secretary of State, making decisions about school reorganisation. Now the Education Panel, the Cabinet, and indeed the School Organisation Committee are all open to the public. In a sense, the best one to go to is probably the Education Panel, because that is where the debate will take place. At the Cabinet it's usually quite brief, and it's a decision making process, but at the Education Panel there is discussion, and indeed representatives of schools and representatives of pressure groups are usually allowed to speak and present the case on behalf of the school or the pressure group; fairly standard practice. It will clearly help us, if you want to do that, so let us know in advance, so the Chairman can know who wants to speak and how much time to allow for it. It will also help us to know if significant numbers of you want to attend the Education Panel, so we can make sure we have it in a room or a venue, which is large enough, as there is limited space in some of the rooms in County Hall. That's probably enough about process, but I'm obviously happy to answer any questions about that. I just want to conclude, the first point that's often met with some cynicism on these occasions, but no decisions have been taken yet. This isn't an officer decision. It's not taken by myself or my colleagues here, it's a decision taken by elected members. The Cabinet, which is the decision making body, has not met to consider this, and has not made a decision, so we are very keen to hear your views by 27<sup>th</sup> July, in whatever form you want to send them to us, as identified in the last point, we'd like to hear from you. Thank you Jane.

[Overtalking].

JW Just hang on a minute, before we start questions I just want to make sure everybody understands [overtalking].

FQ It's not a question.

JW Could you just wait, and I'll come to you in just a moment? Thank you. Right. This is the part where we take questions from the floor. Just before we begin, can I just say that we do understand that there are a certain amount of very strong feelings obviously, and we do, as Lindsay said, want to hear you. I particularly want to hear you, because I've got to make notes, but also we have a transcript that will come to us. This is being recorded, which is why we have these microphones, and you will also be passed the microphone if you're going to ask a question, and that's because we want to record it. We really do want to know what was said so we can go back and go over it, and that transcript will also be available on the Website. So when you want to ask a question, as some of you know, because you were here the other night, then you take a microphone, ask the question, and as far as possible we'll keep the discussion going, but as I say, we want as many people to give their opinions as possible. I will try to go round the room and catch as many people as I can. Please try and catch my eye if it's getting a bit hectic and I haven't come to you. And for those of you who have already been here a couple of occasions and have asked a lot of questions, I will come to you, but I will first take people who have not been here and who are asking new questions [unclear]. And with no more ado, I think we'd better start. So if you'd like to make your point just quickly?

FQ I was at Wormley last night, and you also left this proposal out also till it was pointed out to you about part of the proposal the County Council will be repaying their part site as part of Wormley C of E primary school until any work there was completed. If town planning is saying to make its selection to the Wormley size impossible, the only C of E primary school will transfer to Ley Park site and be extended to two FE. You left that out last night till it was pointed out to you, and you haven't mentioned it again tonight.

LM I didn't leave it out deliberately, I don't intend, and I have never intended to read through the entirety of this document as part of my short opening presentation. When questions came up during the evening, I was more than happy to talk about that as I am more than happy to talk about it this evening, so if that is a question about what we would do about this proposal in the light of town planning, I'm happy to go over it this evening, if you would like me to.

[Overtalking].

LM You suggest from the way you ask the questions that I'm intending to hide it. If we intended to hide it, we wouldn't have printed it in the consultation

document in the first place, but let me reiterate it, and it is an important note. The County Council's proposal is that if this school is closed and the pupils are transferred to Wormley, our preference for that would be on the Wormley site. However, if town planning constraints, and we can talk about what those might be, if town-planning constraints make expansion on that site not workable, or impossible, then we would look at using this site instead. And that, essentially, is what the document says.

FQ Hi, Keelie Cicero, parent and governor. We have found that the following role [?] in this area is a problem and that this is a perfect opportunity for the LEA to merge two nearly two-entry schools to become a single two-entry school. We feel that you have considered the wrong school site for this proposal. We think there are many advantages to this site, and also disadvantages to Wormley site. But what are the [unclear] arguments for choosing the Wormley site over Ley Park? And I would like to clarify that I'm talking sites, because we know that there is a smaller amount of children here to move, but we really don't feel that is a good enough argument, so if you could tell us what else is your reason.

LM There are two; the second one you've already mentioned, and you said that you don't [unclear]. I suggest to you that's a matter of judgement, and that there are arguments for and against both of the sites. And it's one of the features of planning that you rarely get everything stacking up in the same direction all at once. The fact is that the Wormley School on the Wormley site at the moment has more pupils in it, and is the more popular school, so those are the two reasons we favoured the Wormley site. There are disadvantages [overtalking].

JW Sorry, could you just not...

LM The Wormley on the Wormley site at the moment has more pupils in it, and is the more popular [overtalking].

FQ I did say [overtalking].

LM It's more popular in terms of the number of parental preferences for going there.

JW Before we go any further, sorry Lindsay, can I just say, we really can't take a meeting where people are just calling out; it just doesn't work. [Overtalking].

FQ But [overtalking].

JW No, sorry, hang on a second, I'm talking. It really doesn't work [overtalking]. It really doesn't work if you're all shouting and I'm not being rude; I would like to hear everybody, and it won't be recorded, so please could you, as I outlined, could you please work with me so that I can hear, and so that we can all ask questions without you shouting out [overtalking].

FQ ...school.

JW Yes, and I think. Did you answer that in terms of site?

LM I haven't; I've only got halfway through. I think what you've got is a set of balancing reasons; it's like a pair of scales, and you've got sites in both pans of the scales, and there are arguments for and against each, and the weighting you put on them is a matter of judgement, and you might come to a different conclusion to some other parents and to us and so on, but I think the issues are, I think we need to identify the things that are in the scales, things that weigh down one side or the other. We feel what you've got is numbers of pupils and popularity on the one hand, but you've got things like access and site size and stronger site features on the other, and you've got to take a view about which of those you think outweighs the other and then comes to a judgement on which site you think it should be on. And that's something that I think everybody can make a judgement about for themselves, and put on their forms, and tell us what you and what they think. And obviously the members will receive that and hear that. Now, the whole thing may become an academic exercise in the sense that if town planning permission is simply not obtainable to accommodate the numbers of pupils that we will need to accommodate on the Wormley site, that, in a sense rules it out. But at the moment our preference is for the Wormley site. I understand that other people will come to a different view based on the factors, and that in any case the town planning system might have the final say. Paul, can you just add a little bit to that.

PR We do understand that there are particular Highways issues and access issues at the Wormley site, and the size of the site as well, and the need for land across the river, and so on. We do understand all those things, and we will be working with whoever in terms of trying to see if there is a way through that, but one of the other things is from the architects' point of view, they are saying to us, it will be much easier to alter the Wormley site to create the two entry level school at Wormley because it will mean a building of an extension to that school, whereas here, because of the way this school was designed, in the period when it was designed, where it was so much open plan kitchen [?] and so on, to create an appropriate school for today will be much more disruptive. But it's not something that couldn't be overcome, but there are those factors as well.

MQ [Unclear]. You stated that the second reason, moving children from this school to the next school was because of less disruption to children. Why is it then that the North Hodderston review, options one and three, move larger numbers of pupils in the short term?

[Applause].

LM A fair point. Again, it's a balance of factors. Let me try and explain before you shake your head, before you know the answer. What we feel is, yes, indeed we acknowledge that. Option one for the northern area [unclear] because that's our preferred option, does indeed involve more pupils, but we feel that the compensation for that is that it leaves within the area a more robust and longer lasting system of schools than the other options do, and reduces the likelihood of disruption to more pupils in the future. We're saying we want to take measures that are going to last, and last for some time, and are not going to disrupt future generations of pupils. If we don't do that and enrolments continue to change, there may be a need to do something in the future. That's one part of the answer. The other part is that actually quite a bit of the alteration in option one for the north is either not, or not very disruptive to pupils. For example, one of those is the reduction in Forest [?] from one and a half to one form of entry. That won't disrupt the existing pupils at all. They will continue in their one and a half entry leading up to the end. There's no building work there, there will be no disruption. There'll just be fewer children entering for a particular year. No disruption at all. So not all of the elements of the preferred option, although more pupils are, in a sense are affected, because there are more schools involved. The reality is the disruption for many of those is either non-existent or very small. So that's two parts to that answer.

MQ So you're using different objectives for this area and that area.

LM No. I'm using the same objectives, but we're balancing factors. There is no mathematical answer to any of this. You can't say, let's put some numbers into a machine, and out will come the answer that says, that's what you do there, and that's what you do there. There are always judgements involved. Our judgement is that in this area, our option is about the only thing you can do with these schools in order to reduce one and a half levels of entry, [unclear] no other option available. In the north of the area we've got a range of options, so we want to try and [unclear] the best pattern of schools that we can afterwards. The room to manoeuvre here, when you've only got, effectively, a couple of schools involved, is inevitably very much less than when you've got a larger number of schools and a larger number of permutations of change. But our objectives remain the same, which are to leave a stable, and longer lasting system of schools at the end of the process than we have now. Schools are less vulnerable to future change, less vulnerable to financial difficulty, to educational difficulty, and so forth.

PR The only other thing I would add is that because we do recognise that it would be more disruptive in that northern part if we were to go at that third option, there are other options here, which would be less disruptive, but wouldn't leave as good an outcome in terms of the spread of two form entry schools, but they're in there for people to comment on, and for members to make a decision on.

MQ You mentioned about percentages. We all know percentages and the way that you put them across on the screen there was total fiction, because you've done the sum and then you make up, and you don't know what's going to happen in this area in six years from now. You have no whatsoever what the amount of migrants come into this country. We have so much building going on around here, how on earth can you say that the school numbers will be down? It's just not possible for you to say that. I think it's quite obvious to everybody here that this is the site you want to clear because it's dead easy for residential. Someone's going to make a fat buck out of putting properties on this ground.

[Applause].

MQ [Overtalking] you're agreeing with me, you know what I'm saying is true. Someone's making a fat buck out of this at the expense of the children in this area and [overtalking].

LM I don't tell lies, and please don't, in public, accuse me of telling lies.

MQ But the bottom line is you've got to look at the building going on here. Every single brown site has been demolished. Garages have gone, Canada fields. You can't tell me there are no children here. So many children. The child rate is on the way up, and you always get these waves where it goes up [overtalking] and what you're doing or what you're proposing or what your bosses are proposing is wrong.

[Applause].

LM It's a very important point that you made, and I'm quite happy to talk about them and answer them as best I can. I think it's not true to say that we don't know at all what's happening in the future. We have quite a number of sources of information that help up to forecast numbers in the future. It's not an exact science of course. If it were an exact science, it wouldn't be a forecast, because we would know, but as we don't know, it's a forecast. We have to make an estimate. But we have to use sources of information to help us to do that. And if we didn't do that at all, we couldn't plan [overtalking]. Absolutely, I agree, and I'll come to that. So what do we use? Well we use live birth data, we collect live birth data from GPs, so we know that each year, pre-school, how many children have been born, how many children are in each year. That doesn't necessarily take account of people suddenly moving into the area, but we collect from GPs data on live births. We also collect from district councils information about all known planning applications, and how many units are planned to be built, and where they are known, and how many children those planned developments are likely, using historical data, to generate. We also have data about movements of children in and out of areas. We have those historical patterns of movement mapped, and all of those factors go into making a forecast. And that's why we only forecast; think back to my slide, five years ahead. Because we've only got

five years' worth of live births before they start statutory school age. Before that, they haven't been born, so you don't know how many there are. Now, we do that, and that shows us a decline in some parts of the County Council, a steady state in other parts of the County Council, and some increase in numbers in a small number of parts of the County Council. We've got that pattern because generally we have a birth rate, which means that numbers of primary aged children are falling, and falling nationally. In some areas we have modest house building, so the numbers are still going down. In some areas we have more house building, so the numbers balance out, and you have more or less an even number of children. In some areas you have lot of house building, and numbers are going up a bit, despite the falling birth rate. Although we only forecast pupils, the government, and the Office of National Statistics forecast populations, and they forecast that much further ahead than we forecast pupil numbers, in fact till 2021. And the Department of Education Skills has recently published its forecast of national figures, for primary aged pupils, and it's on a chart that does this. Where this top point here, the peak, is 2004, there's then a decline, an increase, and by 2021 it's about here. But here is still lower than the peak was in 2004. That's a longer-term forecast, but I mention it because that national forecast follows the same general pattern as our forecast for pupils in Hertfordshire. Now the common sense that you mentioned is of course very important. The common sense is about those areas where we don't have actual data. In other words we collect housing information from District Councils, where that is known, but of course developments that are a long way in the future, or quite a long way in the future, won't have reached the planning stage, and therefore we won't have information about them. But common sense will say that there may be areas, particularly if they're not green belt, sometimes they are green belt, could be developed also. And so it's sensible to leave something in the margin for that sort of development, hence the five to 10% of surplus of places, part of the reason behind that, that I mentioned earlier. So you've still got a bit of slack in the system. But I think it's also important to say, especially as the regional spatial strategies figure that is the East of England plan, housing figures for Borough Councils have recently been issued in an updated form. It shows, for example, that the Borough of Hopstable [?] now has a target of 5,600 houses between 2001 and 2021, five years [unclear] still. But that there is a 500 house increase. Obviously we don't necessarily know where, in the period up to 2021, all those houses will go, because knowing where houses will go is quite important for primary schools, because their catchment areas tend to not be that wide, that large. Secondary schools take a wider area, primary schools quite local. Of course if the housing development comes along in large enough chunks, anything from 1,500 houses upwards, as a single development, we would expect the master plan for that development to include provision for new primary schools, and for the planning again, money that the developer has to put in to contribute to the services for the extra population that's being produced by the housing, would pay, they provide the land or the development would pay most of the money towards building a school. So those size of developments tend to be

quite self-contained, without implications generally, for existing primary schools. That's rather a lengthy answer, but it was a question that had quite a lot in it.

MQ You did miss out the bit about [unclear] more meat on the bones.

LM Oh yes, the sale of the [overtalking].

MQ No, not especially, well that too, but there's also the fact that Romania and Bulgaria [overtalking] 700,000 people walking over these borders in the next 18 months, and Hertfordshire's luck, they'll all be here.

[Overtalking].

MQ Do you live here?

LM No, I don't live here, I live down the road.

MQ Well you live in Hertfordshire.

LM No I'm just over the border in Enfield.

MQ Well, that's why you're here talking about it because you know nothing.

LM Well, I don't think that's entirely relevant. I can know something [overtalking].

MQ Well, what you know is, you'll give it as fiction, which is what [overtalking].

LM No I'm not giving you fiction [overtalking].

MQ You are.

LM No I'm not.

MQ You are.

LM I entirely reject that.

MQ Well you've just said that. You've actually said that, because you're going for percentages, that were in 2021. You don't know what's going to happen in 2021. There's no way you can stand there and tell me you know what's going to happen [overtalking].

LM I've just told you [overtalking].

MQ It's fiction.

LM I've just told you what the government report [unclear]. That's what I've done. That's [overtalking].

MQ You've got an agenda, and you're sticking to it.

LM I'm trying to give you information. I'm trying to provide that in as objective a way as I can. I have no agenda. I'm an officer; I have no agenda here. It is the members to take the decision. It's my job to simply to try and find the information, receive your feedback, listen to your questions, and make sure what you say and what you ask gets recorded and relayed to members who do make the decision. Let's just talk about the fat bucks about this site, actually, because I missed that. Because this comes up most evenings, [unclear], and it's a perfectly reasonable point, and we expect people to make it. So let's run through the situation. In recent years all the primary reviews that we've done have, in terms of income from sites, versus expenditure on schools that have made a loss, the County Council has ended up spending than it has gained. And I'll say something about why that is, because it hasn't necessarily been the case in the past. These days the central government and town planning protection on playing fields is such that we only aim to develop, if we develop a site at all, the brown field existing buildings on site. We don't even bother to apply for planning permission to develop on playing fields, because it's almost impossible to obtain. I can tell you more about that if you want, but there are both national and local government protections on playing fields. That means any developed part of the site is the brown field part of the site, on which we can normally get, on average, some 35 to 40 units, or a developer would get on average 35 to 40 units. What that means is the sites are not worth a huge amount. There are some bucks, but they're not that fat. They're probably fairly thin bucks actually, so the income is not huge. And [overtalking].

MQ [Overtalking] say, if they build on here they can't build on the grass?

LM That's correct.

[Overtalking].

LM As I say that is a relatively recent increased protection. I'm talking about the last two to three years. Both the central government protection, and the town planning process also add protection to playing fields. And playing fields is essentially any grassed area. It doesn't cover the existing buildings, and it may or may not cover the hard play area.

MQ You've heard [unclear] have you?

LM I've heard of John Moore School. I know what happened at John Moore School, and that was earlier than the government protection that I'm talking about.

JW Okay, I think we've probably gone round this one, and I know that a lot of people want to ask questions.

FQ I'm a resident and I'm also a parent. My children went through this school about 28 years ago. I've read the booklet, and it seems to me that the main preference, the main reason for keeping Wormley School open is parental choice. On the question of parental choice, going back to when this school was new, people wouldn't send their children here because it was a new school, so it was primarily for the children of people living on the estate. By the time my children left here it was a very good school, and my children were both up [unclear] Broxbourne [?] School, and that seemed to be the level, admit probably still is. What I would say about Wormley is, it's a church school, so that could be a choice, it could be it's an older school; it's the old Wormley village one. Not so much village, but when it was a village school; that could have been a choice. And it could be just plain snobbery really; they just don't want them to go to a state school. So when you consider reasons for closing Ley Park, instead of Wormley, parental choice cannot be a valid reason for closing this school.

[Applause].

LM To be honest, [unclear] why not? The reasons why parents choose are reasons that are theirs. Whatever the reasons are, they are still making those two choices. They are still more parental preferences for that school, for whatever reason, than there are for here. I don't know the reasons why people choose particular schools, we don't ask them to say so; in fact we're not allowed to ask them to say so, so we don't know what their reservations are, but going simply on the numbers, more parents express a preference for Wormley than for this school. And the reasons you give may be the right ones, why people choose, nevertheless those are the reasons, and they have made the choice. Paul, do you want to say something about the new numbers? I think it's probably worth saying how many first preferences there are between the schools, just to exemplify the...?

PR Well at the moment, or certainly at the beginning of this term, the numbers in the schools, there were 304 children at Wormley, excluding any nursery children, and for the same age groups here there were 189. Now that means spare capacity at Wormley of 36 places, but here, it leaves spare capacity of 232, I think it is. [Overtalking].

FQ Is the educational standard at Wormley School so much higher than Ley Park School then?

FQ No.

FQ There has to be a reason, because they've got two schools within a stone's throw of each other. If they're both good schools, you need to find out why people are choosing Wormley. Because that must have a big influence in why that school is staying open, because to me this is such a better site, it's got easy access, they've got two divided schools, there are two different buildings, it's modern, it's just a lovely school, so why are people choosing Wormley? I think really you need to do your homework, and find out. And if there are valid reasons, to that, then fair enough, but I've, really, going back, I know we've got small schools, but when my children went to Broxbourne school. If your children are up at [unclear] in Broxbourne, they'd do really well, like mine did. If they're not upper-banded [?] if they're lower-banded [?], they don't do as well, but parents will still opt to send their children to the lower-banded Broxbourne School, for the sheer snobbery of it.

PR The only comment I can say is that at Wormley, for this coming September, there are 42 parents who want their children to go there, there are eight parents who want their children to come to Ley Park.

[Overtalking].

PR That was all decided before this review started.

[Overtalking].

MQ Could I just deal with the issue of parental preference? Because you say that Wormley is the school of parental preference, but the reality is, if you carry this proposal through, the school of preference for the Wormley parents is not going to be the school that they're going to get. So the parental preference completely goes out the window. That's no longer a valid argument. The Wormley parents' school of preference is a 1.6 form entrance school. They choose that because they clearly like the environment, they perhaps like the location, but I don't think that's the necessary factor; they've got smaller classes. You are not telling me that the Wormley parents' school of preference, after a merger of these two schools, is a 2.6 form entry school for the first couple of years, where their children are going to be placed in portacabins for a couple of years until the building's finished, and their schooling's going to suffer, the environment's going to suffer, it's going to be overcrowded, you're not telling me that that is their parental preference. Wormley will no longer become the school of preference, because it will no longer be Wormley School. It will be Wormley Park, or Wormley Ley, or whatever it is, it will be a school which houses well it's nearly 500 students. That's the first point. You say that Wormley ...

[Break in recording].

MQ ...the reality is that when we moved in we all knew what the school of preference was, and it's the church school just across the other side of the river, and that's Broxbourne C of E. It's not the other side of the river, it's this side of the river, but it's the church school. That's the school of choice. If you're going sit there as you did on Monday, and say to us, I've heard it all before, that that isn't the school of preference, why doesn't that school appear in your proposals? The reason it doesn't appear in...

[Applause].

MQ The reason it doesn't appear in your proposals is it is a church school, you won't be able to sell that land as easily as you'll be able to sell this land, and the same applies to Wormley site. You'll not be able to sell that land as easily as you'll be able to sell this land to a developer. I don't want to hog the mike, and I apologise if it seems as if I am, but just one other point I want to raise, because the other justification we heard on Monday night, we've heard it again tonight, is the argument that it will be less upheaval. Hertfordshire County Council's own facts show the percentage of how many children live this side of Broxbourne High Road, 60% of Ley Park students live on this side of the road, 55% of Wormley students live on this side of the road too. It's difficult to see how that can justify therefore sending across a very busy road, which has got no safety issues addressed, and I asked, sorry, I don't know the name, but the man third from the left, whether the Highway Agency had been approached about this and considered, and didn't he think it was relevant that it should have been considered before you formulated your plans? And the simple answer I got was, no. And that will be considered after you've put this proposal to the Education Panel. I can't understand how you've not decided to consider the safety of our children, but when you're then asking for 280 children to cross a main road, when we already know there are accidents. I was speaking to a local councillor on the telephone this afternoon, quite irate after Monday's meeting. He told me that an ambulance was called to the road, I think it's St Lawrence Close [overtalking]. St Lawrence Drive. An ambulance was called to that road last week. It couldn't get into the road because of the cars that were parked down that road when people were being taken to and from school. The suggestion of upheaval is absolute nonsense. There will be upheaval to everyone involved in this, even the students that remain on Wormley site. They will be put under immense pressure at such a young age. It's far more conducive to an education environment if you leave the school here, build on this site, expand this site, and then gradually move the students over. I came from Chingford [?] where they actually built a brand new school, Chaselands School, whilst the school was still operating on the playing fields; they knocked the school down and then created playing fields where that school was originally built. A brand new, state of the art school. Why can't you do that in Broxbourne?

FQ Hear, hear.

[Applause].

JW There are about four different points there. Are you going to just put them all in?

LM I'm interested in the Chingford example. I wonder what the existing pupils would use as playing fields, while the new school was being built on their playing fields?

[Overtalking].

MQ You had your school within its own grounds, which had its own football pitch; that was used as the foundations for the new school. Just outside the grounds, literally down the footpath, was playing fields, a public park, where they ended up there. They literally cordoned it off, and they built a brand new school.

LM I think if you've got those circumstances where you've got alternative playing fields closely available, the children don't have to go far, then you can do that, but that, I suggest, is not very often the case [overtalking].

MQ That's exactly what you're planning to do with the students if you put 500 students across the road. They've got to cross a public footpath, a bridge, which you cannot affect, with planning permission. You will not be able to get rid of that public footpath.

LM Which public footpath?

MQ The bridge. I understand there's a public footpath across the fields, across the river. So you want kids of a very young age, primary school age, to cross a river, which is dangerous in itself.

LM I would argue that that crossing is perfectly safe. It will be perfectly safe when the palisade fencing, which is on the school side is repeated on the far side. The bridge is a high height, very high for small children. The distance between the gate that will be used from the school and the entrance to the field is no further away than using a field [overtalking].

MQ Yeah, but it will be a public path, where out of school time, people of the public can use, they can take their dogs to run across, they can [overtalking] pooh everywhere they want, health hazards, and then you want our children to go and do their school recreation in that environment. Well, I'm sorry, I don't want it, and I don't believe that you'd want your children to do it either.

LM I'm saying that it is a situation, which is not different from other schools, we have schools, which have public rights of way, they have footpaths going through school grounds. Schools take measures to deal with circumstances of

those kinds. But on the changes to Wormley, yes, Wormley would grow, under these proposals, from 1.6 to two points of entry, temporarily as you say it will be larger. It's not actually 2.6, because there isn't one form of entry here, it's less than one form of entry, so it will be less than 2.6, but that is, in longer term, an extra 12 children per year, and I suggest that [unclear] huge change in the character of the school. On the congestion issue [overtalking].

MQ It's a big change for my child and these people's children who have got to spend those years in that school [overtalking].

FQ And Wormley children as well.

MQ You may think it's a temporary issue, but these early years are very important.

LM I accept that. That's a perfectly valid point, and I'm happy to take that on board. I understand that.

MQ The point I'm making is you've got capacity here, you've already got a two-form entry school here. It will not take so much upheaval to bring those children here, and make the classes more manageable.

LM I'm saying it would take more upheaval, because there are 300-odd children who have got to change sites [overtalking].

MQ In the north you're going to do that [unclear].

LM Well in the north we're doing a whole pattern of things, of varying degrees of disruption, depending on what the measure is, but we also have alternative proposals, which members may take, which have less disruption. So we have a range of possibilities there. Here, as I've said before, it's less possible to have a range of options, because there are only a couple of schools involved, so the number of permutations inevitably gets smaller. The choice is essentially between two sites. And part of our argument is that to use this site would mean 304 children changing sites, and that is a larger measure of disruption than 189 children changing sites.

MQ I can see people have got their hands up, and I promise I'll pass the mike over, but can I just ask this, has the Highways Agency been approached? Has it been discussed? The answer I had on Monday was no. And the other one is, I see you've raised fee [?]. Have the fire brigade been considered and approached with regards to the health hazards? If something were to happen in that school, when the fire engines come in, we can't even get a school coach into the Wormley car park. How on earth are you going to get a fire engine in?

PR We have approached the Highways about this, but we haven't formally made proposals, but we've been talking with them, as we've been talking with others, although we haven't talked to the fire brigade as yet. But the fire brigade would report things to us if they felt that there was something that they felt we should be aware of. [Overtalking].

MQ Do they know about this proposal?

PR They will have read their [overtalking].

MQ [Overtalking] if you don't tell them what you're proposing.

PR As I said, these proposals are public proposals, but we have not approached the fire brigade specifically on any of these proposals as yet.

[Overtalking].

MQ [Overtalking] that's what you're asking us to do. You've not looked into this but you're putting forward proposals, in which case for an Educational Panel, so you're putting this proposal forward to the Cabinet for a decision, and you've not even considered the safety issues.

[Overtalking].

MQ They're our children, not yours.

[Overtalking].

MQ Can I just say to the people who weren't here on Monday, the response of these gentlemen who are sitting here, when it was about the safety, of people being taken over to the park, your answer as to who is going to be responsible for the safety of it is, well, we'll create this proposal, we'll make this school, and then we'll leave it to the responsibility of the management of the school, i.e. we'll wash our hands of it, security of your children; nothing to do with us, we're going to put your children there, but then we'll cast off our responsibility [overtalking].

LM That's a quite unfair paraphrases of what we said [overtalking].

MQ Your answer was, it will be down to the management of the school.

LM And it is indeed. That doesn't mean we wash our hands of it. You've gone a stage further than what we said, put a spin on it if I may suggest that [overtalking].

MQ [Overtalking] statistics you've just read out.

LM The internal management of the school is always the responsibility of the Head and the governing body. It is our job to help them, to advise them, and to assist them, but at the end of the day, legally it is their responsibility. We cannot usurp that responsibility. We do not have that role. We do have a role to assist, advise and help. You can shake your head as much as you like, but I'm just telling you what the legal position is. [Overtalking].

MQ Well I don't understand how you're going to block off the public park to secure the safety of my children.

LM Well I haven't said that we will block off [overtalking].

MQ I know you're not going to block a public path. That's my worry.

LM It's only public in the sense that it has a footpath across one corner of it.

MQ My kids will be playing on a public park.

LM The rest of it will be managed and maintained by the County Council, and we will be discussing with the district Council about exactly how that management and maintenance will take place. In terms of the safety and congestion, we are not proposing to leave the entrance to the school at Wormley to be as it is now. We would look to amend the entrance and change and increase the level of car parking from the front of the school [overtalking] areas at the back, and to get more car parking off the streets surrounding it, and to improve the drop off area. And I did mention it; I have mentioned it on other evenings. [Overtalking].

PR The things is [overtalking] because we will have to go through a town planning process, which will involve all of those people that you're talking about; the Highways people, the town planners themselves, the environmental people, the fire brigade. All those people would need to be involved in the planning process, but we are pre that process at the moment, [overtalking] and the advice that we've been given from the consultants that have been employed, the Highway consultants and our own town planners, was that, yes, there would be difficulties, but they, at that stage were saying we don't think the difficulties cannot be overcome. But we don't know yet, whether those difficulties can be overcome or not.

LM But if they can't, [unclear] we've said that if we cannot get town planning permission because of those very issues, then we will have to look at this site instead. So we're not doing it come what may [overtalking].

MQ [Overtalking] proposal in your document.

LM It is in the document [overtalking]. I hear what you're saying [overtalking].

MQ [Overtalking] knew full well what you were doing when you were drafting that document. I'm sure you spent a lot of money in drafting that document.

LM No we didn't actually.

MQ I'm sure you probably did. It's a lot more money than I have and my children have [overtalking]. The way you did [unclear] education I would put my children in private education, to make sure [unclear]. Unfortunately I don't have [unclear] because I've got no faith in the way you're going to handle my children's safety.

FQ Yeah [overtalking].

[Applause].

PR In relation to something you said earlier, about we have got a two entry school here, now, this was built as a two entry school, but this does not meet current two entry standards for a school, and there are significant alterations that would be required to these buildings, if this were to be the site [overtalking].

MQ [Overtalking] Wormley proposal.

PR Possibly. Possibly not.

[Overtalking].

JW We've got a lot of hands up. You two ladies, I know you've had a really good crack at the whip in the last couple of times. I will come to you, but I want to take people whom we haven't heard.

FQ I just don't understand why you won't consider this school, considering it's got less pupils, a lot more room, more grounds, safer environment, good access. I just don't understand the reasons to go and pick a smaller school, you've got to waste time and money looking at highways, trying to get planning permission, spending a lot of money...

MQ Our Council Tax.

FQ ...yeah, our Council Tax, dangerous roads, not enough access. Just doesn't make sense.

FQ No it doesn't.

[Applause].

MQ I [unclear] school, but I also live in St Lawrence Drive. Now, considering this is not a done deal and no decisions have been made, why have I had a gang of surveyors marking on my road, footpaths, for all gas, electric, cable? Now, when I approached him, I got absolutely no joy. We phoned the council, and they said, they didn't have to be informed of anything that goes on here. Now, [unclear] point about the entrance that is only one occasion. I can't go near my house between the hours of quarter to nine and half past nine and three o'clock. It's absolutely impossible for me to get in and out of my road. Now, I live past the school, now, I can walk my dog, which he was on about earlier on, across that bridge, which leads into the public access field. Now, he's right in exactly what he's saying, you have got to build some alternative improvement before you even think about building on allotments. I just can't see how it's involved. You've got one road access, one way in, one way out. There are children being knocked over. So what are all these surveyors, if this is not such a done deal, someone's blowing a load of hot air someone.

FQ Yeah.

[Applause].

PR What we have to do, if we were to keep to this timetable, of change, then we've got to do some preliminary work. Now, a moment or two ago someone was asking why have we not involved the fire brigade? Well haven't done that, but we have made some investigations about the services that are in the road [overtalking] with the option that we had proposed. However, if all of that proves futile in terms of not being able to get town planning permission, then we would swap that information [overtalking].

MQ If it's not a done deal, it should have been done on both sides.

PR Because that [overtalking].

MQ The whole thing should have been done here as well as there.

PR Because at this stage that's the preferred option [overtalking]. But we've also pointed out that should that not be possible, then we would be looking at this site.

MQ You were saying about the time scale, if you've got a time scale, then you should be marking [?] things out as well.

MQ It should have been both sites.

FQ Yeah.

PR We've done some preliminary work here [overtalking].

FQ You're joking.

MQ It's a foregone conclusion.

[Overtalking].

JW Could we just, it won't tape record, and I want to record what you're saying.

FQ You say that you're going to choose the Wormley site because of its reputation as a school, really, over all the other aspects why you should choose Ley Park, this is a bigger site, parking, it doesn't affect any of the residents, in this area, safety aspect, children, when they go on school trips have to pick up the coach in the High Road for Wormley, whereas here it's safe. This school has pre-school as well. And all you're going on is the reputation of Wormley. So why not move it here, and call this Wormley, then, or call it a new name?

[Applause].

FQ Because that's all you're saying; you're choosing Wormley because of Wormley's reputation. A school is only as good as the Head Teacher. You look back at Sheridies [?] Secondary School, and that had a very good reputation, and when Miss Stead [unclear] they got a wet weekend of a Headmaster and it died. No one wanted to send their children to Sheridies Secondary School. So if you merge the schools, put them here, change it's name or change it to Wormley.

LM Yes, I can go into it again, you're absolutely right; schools do go up and down in popularity and reputation. At the moment though, and this is the moment that we're dealing with, Wormley is the more popular school, and it has more pupils on it, and those are the reasons. The other reasons you've given are reasons for using this site, and it's perfectly right. There are reasons for using this site, there are reasons we might be using the other site [overtalking].

FQ Those reasons must outweigh the safety [unclear].

LM Well [overtalking].

FQ Must outweigh [overtalking].

LM I think the reasons will be a matter for your judgement as to which way [overtalking].

FQ Why was Hodderston given three choices, yet here it was close this, move to one of them? We won't give them the two.

LM I explained earlier to the gentleman on this side that there are a larger number of schools involved in [unclear] north, therefore there is a greater possibility of options. Here there are effectively only two schools involved, so the number of options available is necessarily much more limited, because you're dealing with two schools, as opposed to half a dozen schools.

FQ Yeah, but surely if there are only two schools, it's close one, move one, and vice versa [overtalking].

LM That's effectively what we've said. We've said, in our view, the Wormley site is the preferable site.

FQ Why?

[Overtalking].

LM For the reasons I've stated earlier. I'm not going to say [overtalking], but they are, there are that there are more children there, and hat it is a more popular school.

[Overtalking].

LM And I will say that every time you ask me that question, I will give you the same answer. But I will also say that there are other factors, like the ones that you mentioned, that might lead you to decide that the other site is preferable, and you are as entitled to take that view, and to make that judgement, and to tell us that, as we are to have the view ourselves. So we want to hear your view, that those factors that you very cogently put, the whole list of things you think makes this site a better site, then tell us that on your forms. Other people who make that judgement can tell us that on their forms, and then we will get the weight of opinion about that. And that's very important, but I'm not telling you that the Wormley site is absolutely right, I'm saying is that is our preferred option, that is our professional view, you're entitled to take a different view. I'm sure many of you do. You're telling me that this evening. You told me that on Monday evening, and you told my colleagues, and you'll put that on your forms and send it in. And that's the point of this consultation exercise, to give you the opportunity to do that. Now we have said in the document, although, I accept, not as an option, but as an important note to an option, that this other site could be used if that is the way that the system, the town planning system in particular, takes it. For all the sorts of reasons that we've talked about, we would have to satisfy, or the town planning application would have to satisfy, the Highways Authority, and indeed the County Council Development Control Committee. We couldn't do it if they weren't satisfied, if the Highway Authority wasn't satisfied about the safety of the proposal.

MQ I've got to reply to the comment made in the front [unclear] the Head Teacher that's here. I'm [Unclear] Thomas. I'm the head Teacher of Ley Park.

[Laughter].

MQ We were Offstead [?] in 02 and it wasn't that favourable actually, but since the 02's Offstead I've become the sub-standard [?] Head here, the school actually is good. Offstead would actually say satisfactory, but [unclear], and your review actually came across that we were quite good. I would love Offstead to come along. I don't think they will in [unclear] proposal that's [unclear], so it's a shame that they're not come along. Standards are actually comparable to Wormley, so [unclear]. But the school's as good as the Head, I think it's cool, thank you.

[Applause].

[Overtalking].

FQ I wasn't criticising you. I was saying the reputation of the school can go on the Head Teacher. That's why people want to go to Broxbourne JMI. That's why they chose that. So if you're going to close this school, are you taking away parents' choice to send their school [sic] to a non-church school?

FQ Yes.

[Applause].

LM That's a great point, and that's a very important one as well. To some extent, yes, that's absolutely right, I'd agree with that.

FQ [Unclear] to a church school [unclear] put them?

LM Possibly not. They will have to go to a community school [overtalking].

MQ My background is Muslim, my surname is Hamil [?]. I don't particularly want my child to go to a C of E school.

LM Right, fine [overtalking].

MQ Where do you want me to send them then?

[Overtalking].

PR Part of the proposal for the northern bit of the town, which actually [overtalking] comes down as far as Sheridies, Sheridies, as part of the proposal, would expand to a two FE so there would be 15 more places in every year for

Sheridies, [overtalking]. There are also places at Longlands, which is a little bit [overtalking].

FQ So you mean you walking to school [overtalking]?

PR There is no doubt that if you take one school out of the system, and we believe we need to lose 60 places, [unclear] even with this very small area, we believe we need to lose that because you cannot keep operating with eight children coming in, in a year.

FQ [Unclear].

PR Effectively.

FQ Yeah.

PR So we feel we've got to reduce the number of schools, and obviously that does reduce the capacity for choice.

[Overtalking].

FQ Have you noticed tonight there's karate going on in the other building? We've had two coaches pull up at 5:30 to drop children off from a trip they've been on, plus 60 parents. We've still got karate going on over there, we've got a whole [unclear] of people here, with yourselves and us, and we've caused no disruption to the neighbours. Is that not a perfect example then we could extend the school [unclear] community?

[Applause].

LM Yes.

FQ Do you believe that portacabins are a suitable environment for children to be educated in?

LM The short answer is yes, but I'll ask my colleague Paul to say a bit more about that, because he knows more about them than I do.

PR I think this takes us on to the point of if we were to bring the two schools together, what that would mean in terms of pupil numbers in each year group, and what it would mean and where they would be educated. We are proposing to provide a double mobile classroom unit, as well [overtalking].

FQ How many?

PR A double mobile means two classrooms, joined together as a block, and that would be probably on the site for three to four years. That does not mean we would be working on the site, it means we would be, in the first year, that year 2007 to 2008, when building works would be going on, on the site, it would allow the school some flexibility in where they could use temporary classrooms, those mobile classroom units, to vacate the areas that would be possibly next to where the building work might be going on. [Overtalking]. The following year, then when the children of both schools would be on the site, there would be, at that stage, according to the figures of the children who are in the schools at the moment, and if you take that on for the two years, because your current year six and year five children will have gone, and it will be the others who remain, and at that period of time, there would be 48 more children than in a full two FE school. That doesn't mean to say you're going to have larger classes. There would be more classes that will be provided because by then you would have the 14 classrooms all available by 2008, but you would still have the two temporary classrooms available on the site, and they would remain for another couple of years, probably until the numbers, as we have forecast, would decline, so that there would be fewer than 60 per year group, in the lower age groups going through the school. So that's what we mean by temporary classrooms, and the use of temporary classrooms. Temporary classrooms are not as they were 20 years ago, they have to comply with all the current building regulations in terms of acoustics and ventilation, in accessibility and all of those things, and we believe that they are a very good environment for teaching and learning.

[Overtalking].

FQ I just want to know whether or not these portacabins would be available for us as parents to view, before we decide whether or not we would consider them as suitable for our children? And whether or not the relevant risk assessments, fire risk assessments, and staff training, written [unclear] procedures will be available for us to view?

LM We can make available viewing of equivalent mobile [unclear] so you can see the same things we've got there, and in use if you want, and certainly obviously, as Paul has said, portacabins have to meet all the building control standards, and DFES regulations for the classrooms. But in addition to that we can our own health and safety audit done of them, but as actually they're relatively standard units, and in use in a number of schools at the moment, without issues, and without problems, we would welcome your viewing them, and we can tell you where the nearest ones are, of the same sort of design. There's no point looking at a 20-year old one, because it won't be similar, but we'll put you in touch with the right place. Do you happen to know where the nearest new one...? No? We can do that.

PR Could I just say one other point though, if the move were to be this way, rather than to Wormley, we would still need to have a double mobile here, as well, for that short period of time.

[Overtalking].

MQ Who actually owns the land that Wormley School stands on?

LM The church owns the site of the building, and the County Council owns the playing fields.

MQ Well I put it to you that you prefer that site because it's church land, and you can't purchase it, that's one of the reasons why you're not preparing [sic] to build on that school and knock this school down.

[Overtalking].

MQ You say that you've made things for each classes and things. Have you considered the kitchen facilities and the dining facilities over there? When you have these extra children going to that school?

FQ And the hall. They've only got one hall.

MQ Because they're still, the actual hall and the dining facilities, and kitchen are so small.

LM I'll ask Paul to deal with the second part. The first part in terms of selling the land. If the town planning works the other way, and this site is used, rather than the Wormley site, then we would indeed sell the Wormley site. We would agree a land swap with the church, and the contribution from the sale of that site would go towards the necessary works that are needed here, so it doesn't actually make any difference in terms of our income which site it is, so that isn't a reason.

PR There are two halls here, absolutely right, at the moment there is only one hall at Wormley, but as far as the building work, we would include a second [unclear] hall. A much smaller hall, because that would meet the current DFES requirements, but in terms of dining, yes, the dining room at Wormley is a thoroughfare as well, but it certainly is an appropriate size for a two FE school. But where there is a shortfall, we would be making up any of that shortfall within the building, so that it conforms with the current regulations.

FQ You said earlier that you are actually moving more pupils in the north of the Hodderston area. Don't you feel therefore that your view of turning Wormley into a bigger school is a rather shortsighted view? As the man also at the front said, you don't know what's going to happen. Quite a lot of people actually move

to Broxbourne because of Broxbourne's senior school, so you can't take birth rates completely into account where schools figures are concerned. I moved to this area because of the Broxbourne senior school. My children are young, so we've got a way to go, but I wanted to make sure I was in the area. That site cannot possibly take more than a two-form entry. This site here could take a three-form entry without a problem. Now, I think your view is very shortsighted, and for you to have the opportunity as Mr [Unclear] said earlier to make this site a landmark school. You could build a school at the end of this field, it wouldn't disrupt, we'd still have the field in between, to play on, you could make a landmark school here, brand new with all the wraparound facilities that are necessary, all on one site. Your site at Wormley cannot possibly do that.

[Applause].

LM [Unclear] talk about site capacity here, but certainly your [unclear]. If the County Council had the money to build a brand new school here, then, yes, it could do that, as it could on a number of other sites around the County Council. We've got 416 primary schools; many of them are this kind of age. But we don't have the money at the moment to do that, nice that that would be. But I entirely take you point about site capacity. Certainly the Wormley site has more limited capacity [overtalking]. No, two form entry I guess is it's maximum.

FQ Which doesn't allow for growth.

LM It doesn't, absolutely right. [Overtalking].

PR The capacity of this site is certainly more than two, but it's not quite three.

FQ No, but you could have two and a half.

PR You could have two and a half, but that's not ideal [overtalking]. But yes, it could expand a little bit, but not [overtalking].

FQ So that would be your five to 10% then, here. You haven't even got 5% over at Wormley.

PR No, that's right. You would have a maximum of two [overtalking].

FQ So in this area we haven't got enough schooling from 2008.

FQ Sorry, from 2008 you will not have enough schooling for his area, for growth.

[Overtalking].

[Applause].

PR If we have growth in this specific area [overtalking].

FQ Which we could well have.

PR It would mean that children would go a little bit to the [overtalking].

FQ So they would have a car journey to a local school, rather than walking to their actual local school.

[Overtalking].

LM Your point is premised on growth in this area. [Overtalking] forecasting [overtalking].

[Overtalking].

PR [Overtalking] this area we don't see the places where there could be significant growth in terms of new housing, if there was new housing [overtalking].

FQ According to you.

PR Yes, okay.

FQ As the man said, are you a fortune-teller?

PR No, but we can see where there is currently built land, and we can see [overtalking].

FQ But what about people, families, moving into the area? That live out here at the moment.

PR yes. There could be a change in the pattern of how many children are coming out of [overtalking]. We forecast that all the time. That's included within our forecast, the trends that are happening, over the last three years, in every instance, we update that so we are taking account of the trends of people moving into an area. The people in Canada fields are in our schools now, and we have surplus capacity.

MQ You yourself said, there are 5,600 extra houses being built in the borough of Broxbourne. If every other house has one child, that's what, that's quite a few kids. Where are they going to go?

LM I said the target is 5,600 houses over a 20-year period from 2001 to 2021. So five years' worth of those have already been built. Our historical data, which

we collect on the numbers of children coming out of dwellings, is calculated at 1,000 houses creating or filling a one-form entry school, that is 30 children in each year. So throughout all the years of schooling from entry to primary to end of secondary is about 30 children each of those [unclear] 1,000 houses to generate [unclear].

MQ You said at the moment the government prohibits building on school playgrounds.

LM Playing fields, yeah.

MQ But if this school does get merged with Wormley, then that would cease to be a playing field, so that could all be built over?

[Overtalking].

MQ So you're saying that's not going to be a school playing field and that's not going to be allowed to build on?

LM Correct. Once it is established as a school playing field it is regarded by central government and town planning system as a school playing field, even if the school in the middle of it closes.

MQ So how long does that last for?

LM It's open-ended.

MQ So it could be six months, and it could be [overtalking].

LM No, what I mean is there is no limit on the protection. It is ongoing.

MQ That's what I'm worried about.

LM It's ongoing.

[Overtalking].

MQ Until legislations change.

LM Well, legislation can always change.

MQ But until the local council says; and the government [unclear].

[Overtalking].

FQ First of all I've had children from pre-school to the nursery, and I've also had children at Wormley, I live in Church Lane, so I know about the Wormley site. Where do you propose to put the entrance to Wormley School if it's expanded?

PR The entrance?

FQ Yes. For the car park facility. And also, like everybody else here, I particularly don't want Wormley to close, and I don't think anybody wants Ley Park to close, and I think we all ought to be united in to keep both schools open, and not to close either of them.

[Applause].

PR Just on the entrance issue, then proposal, as it stands at the moment would be to retain the entrance as it is, and to increase the size of the car park and to include the hard play area, which is at the front [unclear] of the school site at the moment. And [unclear] hard play at the back part, the bit away [unclear], [overtalking].

FQ So a small site will be made smaller.

[Overtalking].

LM That changes with the hard play [unclear] the Head Teacher very much welcomes. She feels it would be very much easier to use the hard play at the back. It's her professional opinion at the moment is that she'd prefer that. She thinks it would be manageable to have the hard play out at the back of the school than the front of the school.

FQ But it is a small site, and you are going to be making it smaller still.

JW Thank you, I think we've got that point several times, so we can move on.

FQ This is very important to me so I am going to reiterate it.

JW We have recorded it a lot this evening.

FQ It is a consultation after all.

JW Yes, perfectly. But write it on the sheet as well.

FQ I'd like you to tell the parents here how many children are going to be in each class, over at Wormley in 2008. In each year.

PR In each year?

FQ Starting from year six now.

PR What we cannot tell you is how the classes will be organised. All we can tell you at this moment is that they won't be classes of more than 30. But the numbers of children in each of the year groups, there would be 80...

LM Sorry Paul; this is just assuming that every single child transfers.

FQ [Unclear] [overtalking].

PR On the basis of [overtalking].

FQ Okay.

PR That's assuming no one chooses to go to Longlands or Sheridies, where there will be new places available [overtalking].

FQ Won't Sheridies be taking the two schools that you shut down in the north? They're going to Sheridies and St Catherine's, aren't they?

PR No. What we're proposing with that option is that all the places will be available at St Catherine's for the two schools that are proposed for closure under option one [overtalking].

FQ Trouble is all the parents are refusing to go to St Catherine's from Westfields [?], because I was there at their meeting. They'll probably end up at Sheridies, so that won't be an option for us to go to Sheridies.

PR Well I think you would be as close as people from Westfield would be [overtalking].

FQ Not quite.

PR The normal admission rules will apply and operate, but getting back to the point you're asking, assuming that everyone from here were to transfer to the Wormley school, then there would be 80 pupils in year six. That's 20 over, in year five there would be 67. That's seven over, but as I keep saying, that doesn't mean to say you're going to have two classes of 33 and 34, that's for the school to organise with additional staffing, with additional classes. And in year four, there would be 69 children, and that's nine over the 60. And in year three there would be 12 over, that's 72. And from then on it goes to minus four, in other words you would have 56 children, and the year after you would have 50 children, and the year after we're assuming, if the school were full, that there would be 60. But that's the trend that we are seeing at the moment, and that's what's being forecast.

FQ Okay, so the school's going to be well over-subscribed then.

PR There will be 48 more children for the full school.

FQ That's quite a lot over, yeah. So you said you don't know how you're going to organise the school yet, so you don't know if it's going to be two classes of 30, plus what's left over, or will it be over 30 in a class? You don't know yet.

PR No, what we're saying is, we would not advise any school to have classes of more than 30. But what we would be saying, I mean it would be for the school to manage that, with support from their local authority, to divide up the classes in an appropriate way...

[Break in recording].

PR ...if you break the children of two schools together, and that needs to be managed, and managed very carefully, and managed appropriately.

FQ So that will make Wormley not a two FE school. Would it be a 2.6?

PR No. 2.2 is the nearer figure [overtalking].

FQ [Overtalking] 2.2. Okay.

PR For three years [overtalking].

FQ Three to four years you said last night, because the portacabins could be there for up to four years while the oversubscribed children work their way through the years, and levels itself off.

PR Yes. But in the fourth year we're talking about 12 children more than the 420.

FQ Okay. Right. I just wanted the parents here to know how cramped and many children would be over there, just so they all knew what was going to be happening to their children. You're talking about a large temporary accommodation, about extra car park spaces, providing additional buildings for all these children, which will reduce the school even further, and we're already struggling to get two-form entry in, let alone 2.2 entry. Is all this space that you're using up, is it going [unclear] legal requirements, illegally [?] [unclear] the DFES the amount of land per head per child once you're a 2.2 over there? Where are you going to get this extra space from, if you've got portacabins, extra building, a new playground, a new car park, is that not going to take way; I mean you're struggling to get a two form entry in there and you're going to try and get a 2.2

entry in there now. Are you going to manage that, or how are you going to manage that?

PR There will be more pressure in the short term, there's no doubt, because if we've got a mobile classroom on the site that will be there for three to four years, that uses space. When the building work is going on, that uses space. The DFES accept that happens on many school sites from time to time, but there will be the opportunity, as we understand it, to make use of the, we don't know the extent of the field, on the other side of the new river, that we would be able to have, but there are extensive fields over there, but I understand the management issues that are related to use of those fields.

FQ Will this grant [?] be, you know when you're paying funding to the school, will you be paying the school as a two FE, or will you just be paying them per head? Or are you going to make sure that that school is going to have enough money to manage all those extra children that you're going to have in there?

PR Where we have a changing situation like that, there are transitional arrangements in terms of funding as well, but remember that with the children, the money follows the children; the money comes with the children, by and large, and therefore the school, if a school is larger, it has more finance to distribute for use within its own establishment.

JW We've only got about five minutes left of the open meeting, and several people haven't had a chance to speak yet.

MQ I'm speaking as a parent, but mainly also as a resident, as I live next door, at Clifton Close. If these proposals, which we're not sure, but will probably go through, how long will this land be derelict? What type of buildings are going to be here, i.e., is it going to be private, social? I moved here for a reason. I don't expect all of a sudden this land to be derelict, or a percentage has to go to social or whatever. I don't want to say I'm prejudiced or anything, however it takes time, and I'm going to be living next door to it. So I'd like to know how long, and what's going to happen with that?

LM It's impossible to say exactly, because the town planning process is the town planning process, and that's not even a County Council matter but a District Council matter. But bear in mind that this is a staged process. We're saying pupils will continue to be on this site, if this were done, until summer of 2008. So that's quite a long time for preliminary work to be done in terms of marketing the site, if that's what happens to it. There is a process in the County Council, when buildings are declared surplus to service requirements, the requirements of one particular service, in this case Education, we have an internal process of offering those premises, that accommodation, to other services, and it may sometimes be that another service wants it. That is probably not very likely with a building of this size, [unclear], but it does sometimes happen. Once that process is

concluded, it takes just a few months, the Hertfordshire Property Services, which is the corporate [?] services, would instruct our land agents to prepare the prospectus for the sale of the site. Now, as I say, as we've got from now until the summer of 2008, that's quite a lot of time for marketing and sale to happen. What sort of things would be built on it will be up to whoever purchases it; it would be up to the developer. I'm not sure whether the size of the site means that the District Council's target for social housing will apply, because there is a minimum level of unit that you have to have before that percentage cuts in, and I don't happen to know what it is in Broxbourne. It varies in each of the ten district councils in Hertfordshire, but you [overtalking].

FQ 15, and it's 40%.

LM Right, so let's say 35 to 40 units on here, on this site. You would expect 40% of those to be social housing. So that's the District Council [unclear].

[Overtalking].

MQ [Overtalking] up to the councils outside of this borough [unclear] Harringate, Enfield, [overtalking]. That's what I'm worried about. I'm not worried about all this social stuff. I know for a fact that they can be offered elsewhere.

LM It will be sold to the highest bidder.

MQ Exactly.

[Overtalking].

MQ I don't mean this to come across in the wrong way, but I could have all sorts of people living next door to me.

LM Afraid so.

MQ And unfortunately then I'm in a [unclear], because who the hell's going to want to buy my house, and haven't these sort of people living next door to them?

LM It's entirely up to them [overtalking].

MQ It's all about money.

[Overtalking].

JW We're literally on the countdown.

FQ Thank you. I'm Chris Mitchell. I'm Borough Councillor for Wormley Terraford [?]. A lot of your suppositions are based on whether Broxbourne

Borough Council will allow you planning permission for this, whether the Borough can accommodate that. Have you actually made any contact with the Borough Council offices to see whether these look feasible within the terms of the plans that you're putting forward?

PR They have been informed, but there has been nothing in terms of presenting a proposal [overtalking].

FQ [Unclear].

PR Because we're not there yet. But we have talked to an Officer. There's also the Broxbourne Borough that if it were necessary for the land on the other side of the new river that there would be an option for the County Council to make use of that. That was a decision, as we understand, that was certainly confirmed by the leader of your Council at the public meeting, where we were, I forget which school it was, but somewhere [overtalking].

FQ Yes that was agreed in the policy. It was [unclear] meeting that I attended. But that was a year ago. That certainly wasn't in the light of this proposal that's being put forward now. I mean have you discussed with Planning Officers what the likelihood is of the planning permissions that you're seeking?

PR Yes we have. Our planning officers are discussing with Broxbourne Borough planning officers on the ideas, the proposals that are not really formulated to an extent where we would be submitting a planning application at this stage, but they are discussing that with them and with Highways people and so on, because we know there are significant issues as we've mentioned.

FQ And of course it will be a Member decision anyway.

PR Indeed, very much so.

JW We've virtually reached the end of the open session. I hope I've managed to get a lot of you who wanted to speak. There will be a lot of people who didn't get their chance to speak, and I apologise for that. It's very difficult to make sure that you get as many people as possible, and as many views on the wider issues. Please will you make sure that you write on your form if you [unclear] any particular issue so we have it on record, and do, as Lindsay Martin was saying earlier, if you wish to make your feelings known, make sure you email, make sure you [unclear], make sure you send back the sheets and the review documents, so that we do have a very full record of your strength of feeling that there is about a particular issue.

MQ Sorry, can I just ask; it's not a controversial issue, about this, can I just ask two things? It's about the way this meeting's been held, not [unclear].

JW Yes, certainly. Can I just say that after this you're going to an individual session, where you can talk individually?

MQ Sure, but it's important that everyone gets this information as these gentlemen may give us. Can I ask why it is a public meeting that's been held, one meeting here at this school, one meeting at Wormley, one meeting at another school. It's a public meeting; everyone should hear what everyone's got to say. Because it seems to me as though the purpose of these meetings, well, the underhand purpose of these meetings is to divide and rule. Because what you're having is you're getting people put into camps. You're getting people from Wormley trying to fight their case, you're getting people at Ley Park trying to fight their case; people at Wormley are not hearing what the Ley Park parents and residents are having to say, we're not hearing what Wormley are have to say. We have to wait until you've published this on a Website. I don't want to hear from the people who are addressing us the suggestion there isn't capacity in halls within the Borough of Broxbourne to accommodate 100 or 200 people at a public meeting, because I went on to the Website today and they offer two halls for hire. Why wasn't it done in that way? And the second things, I want to know who's actually on the Hertfordshire County Council Cabinet that this is going to be put to, because my understanding is that it's not going to be a total Hertfordshire County Council decision, where everyone votes, the 77 members, it will be a small Cabinet, and I'd like to know whether any of the Councillors who actually live in Broxbourne and are going to be affected by this, that are going to make the decision. My understanding is they're not.

LM The County Council's Cabinet is the decision making body of the County Council for this type of decision. All the members of all the Cabinet, all of the Cabinet Panels are on our Website, which is publicly available information [overtalking].

FQ Which Website's that?

LM Sorry?

FQ What's the Website?

LM The Hertfordshire County Council Website.

JW The address is on the back of your [unclear].

LM The Website's on the document. On the first question about size and divide and rule, we've always had a meeting at every school, which is mentioned in the option. We've always, in the past, and now, currently, had a meeting in every school. A few years ago we used to have just one meeting at each school, and pack as many people in as we could. And it was often 100, 200, sometimes 300 people. The problem with that is that people simply didn't get an opportunity

to ask, even if we went from 7:00 to 10:30, which we sometimes did, with so many people in the hall that they didn't get an opportunity to ask a question. We're trying to have more meetings, which are a bit smaller, so that more people actually have an opportunity to ask something. So we're not trying to divide and rule, are actually trying to give people a greater number of opportunities to make their point [overtalking].

MQ Why not in neutral territory? Why not say five meetings, one whole evening five meetings for 50 people?

LM I don't know whether neutral territory will actually make a lot of difference. I think it's important that meetings are held in the schools, which are actually affected, and that's important. Last night when I was there, there were quite a number of Ley Park parents. We found that it's not completely sealed to just that school, and we found that again when we were in the meetings in the north, there was quite a bit of cross attendance between the schools. That happened quite a bit. I think it's quite important that the meetings actually are in the building, for example, as they are public meetings, and they're open to non parents, I think it's better that non parents come into the school and see it, than go to a neutral venue, for example. I think it's possible to [unclear], but those are our reasons.

MQ And who are the Cabinet Members? You haven't told me who are the Cabinet Members.

LM Well I'm not going to list their names off the top of my head, I'm afraid [overtalking].

MQ [Overtalking] know who they are?

LM Do I know who they are?

MQ Yeah.

LM Yes, I do know who they are but I can't remember all their names [overtalking].

MQ If I can show you a list, then you'll be able to tell me? I'm happy to do that afterwards.

LM Yeah sure.

JW Okay. Thank you very much. You've been a very patient audience, and I hope I've managed to get around to enough of you, but as I say, if I haven't, if your view hasn't been heard, please do reinforce it by filling in the form. And now we'll have individual time where you can approach the panel and talk about

issues [unclear] that you haven't been able to bring up before. Thank you very much.

[Overtalking].