

Worcester City Secondary School Consultation 2021/2022

Key results and findings



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Introduction

In November 2021 Worcestershire Children First (WCF) and Worcestershire County Council (WCC) began a consultation on the proposal to establish a new secondary school in Worcester as considered by Worcestershire County Council Cabinet in November 2021. This consultation marked an opportunity for parents, residents, and young people of Worcester City and surrounding areas to comment on the proposal as put together following the results of an engagement survey in Summer 2021, the results of which can be viewed here: [New Worcester Secondary School | Worcestershire County Council](#)

The consultation was designed to ensure the vision and parameters of the design and specification of a new school are in line with the hopes and expectations of those directly impacted by the scheme.

Thank you

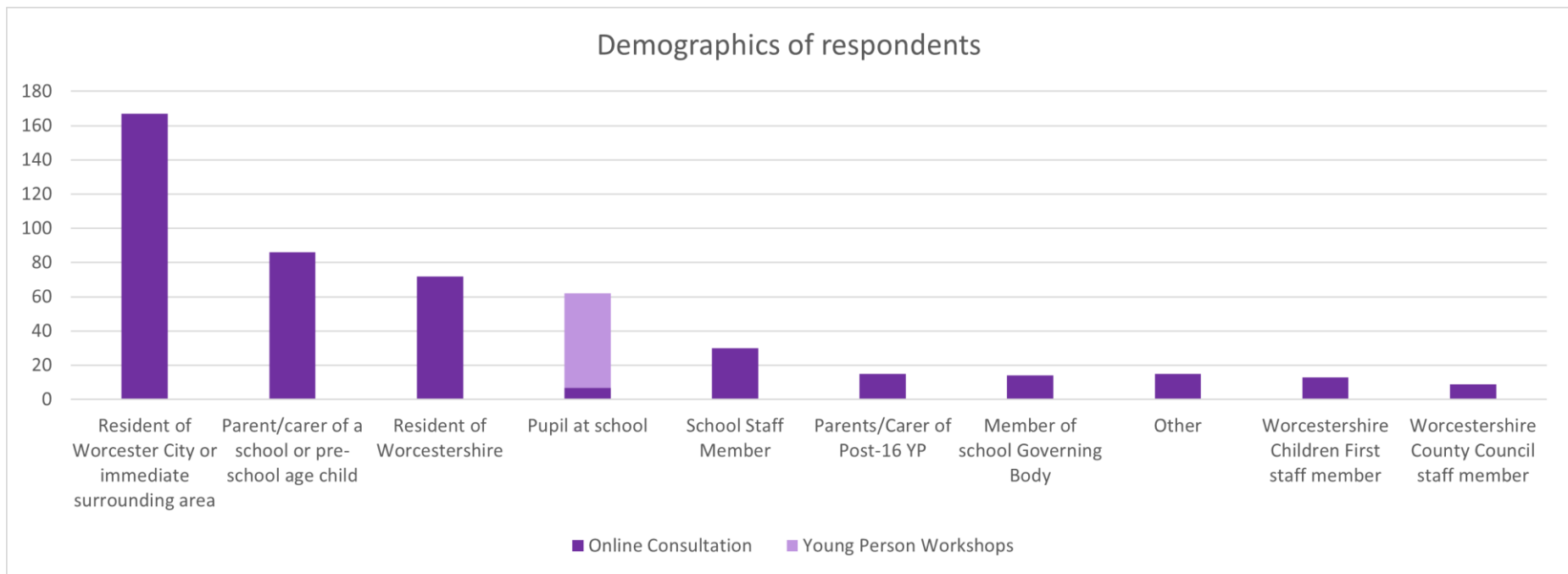
We want to thank all 238 people who took the time to respond to the consultation, their contribution is invaluable. As well as the 55 primary school children who took part in workshops. We want everyone to know that colleagues across WCF and WCC involved in this project are using the results to finalise the specification and guide future decision making in the delivery of the new school. A full breakdown of how these results have and will affect the project are outlined in the section “You Said, We Will”.

Overview

Demographics

The consultation was published on the Worcestershire County Council website and advertised in Crowngate Shopping Centre and the Hive. The consultation was also shared across social media; emailed to local schools, organisations and representative bodies; shared with the Worcestershire Viewpoint Panel; and published in local media. The consultation was also adapted into three workshops suitable for primary age pupils.

In total 238 responses were received to the online consultation: 71% were residents of Worcester City and surrounding area; 36% of respondents were parents/carers of current school or pre-school age children, 19% were current schools staff members or members of Governing Bodies. In total 55 year six pupils also took part in the workshops and provided their feedback to the proposals.



154 respondents provided their postcode, this showed a fair distribution across Worcester City and surrounding areas.

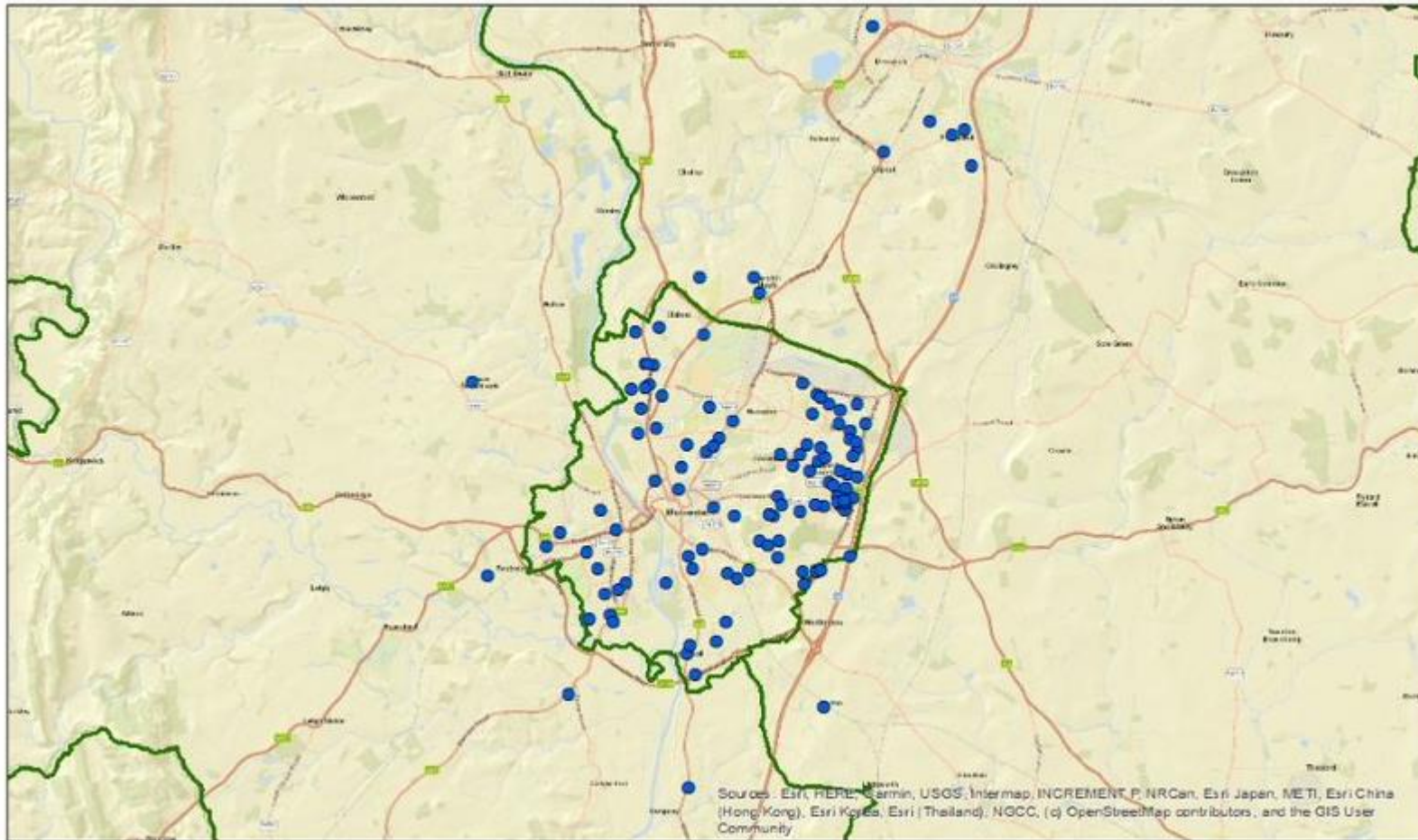


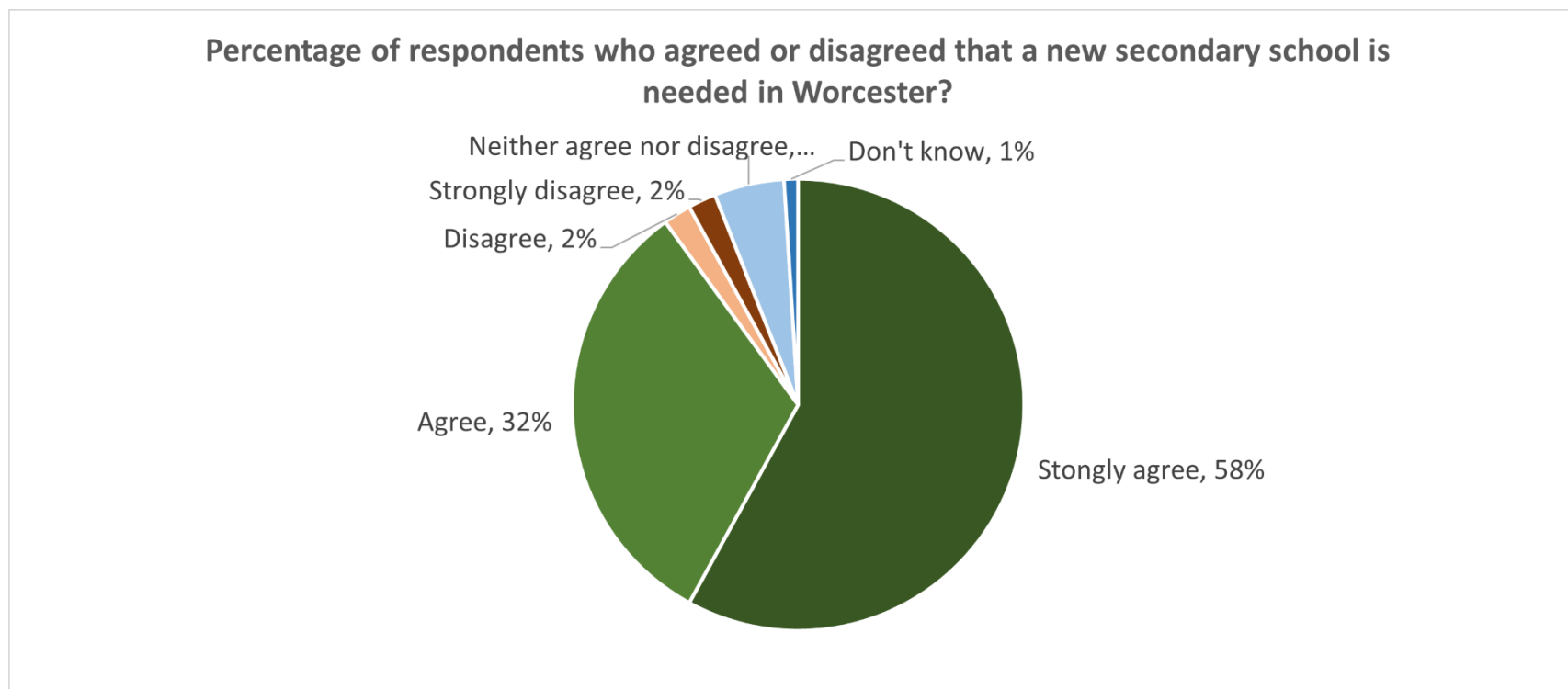
Figure 1 Map of respondents

Consultation feedback on:

We asked respondents whether they agreed with various aspects of the proposal for the delivery of a new secondary school. The outcomes are summarised below.

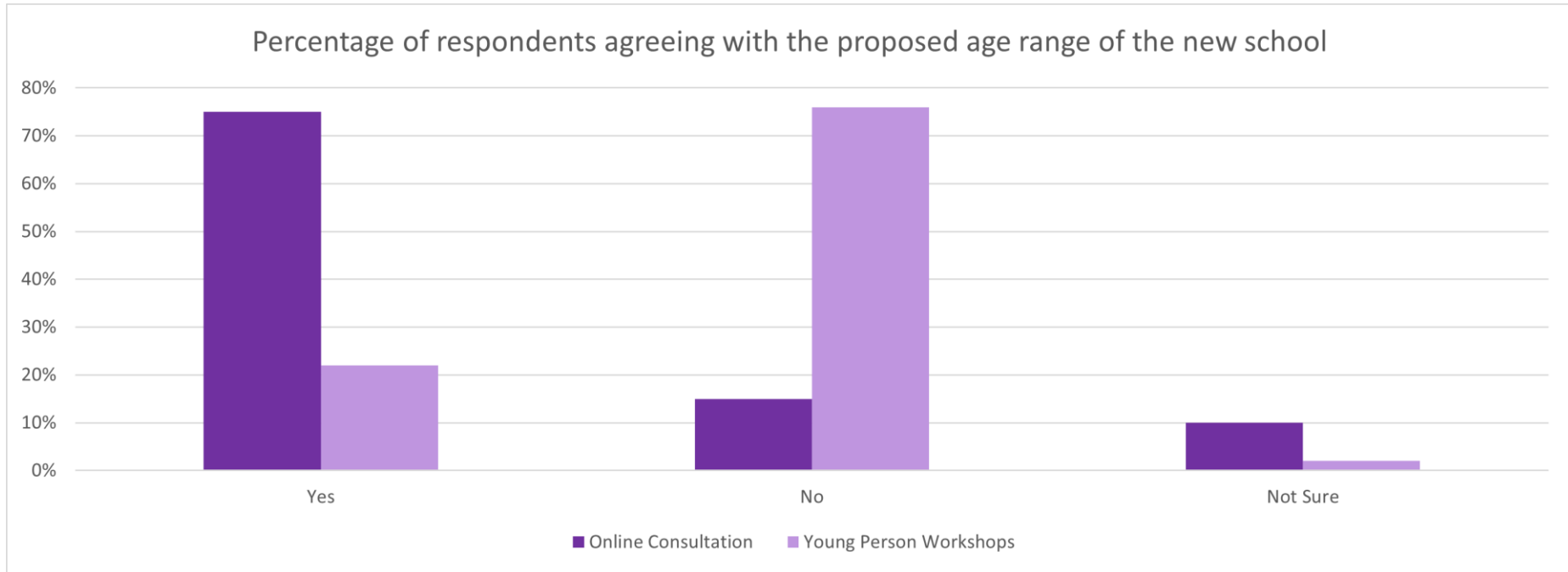
Delivery of a new secondary school in Worcester City

Most respondents agreed that a new secondary school is needed for Worcester. 90% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, just 4% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, 5% neither agreed nor disagreed and 1% were unsure. This is an improvement from the engagement results which saw 83% agree or strongly agree.



Proposed Age Range

The new school is proposed to have a secondary school age range, i.e. for pupils aged 11-16 and it was not proposed that this school will have a sixth form. The majority of respondents to the online consultation supported this proposed age range. Those that were unsupportive wished to see a sixth form included at the school and therefore wanted to see the proposed age range of the school varied to 11-18. This was significant feedback from the primary school workshops where a majority of participants wanted to see a sixth form as part of the new secondary school proposal.



Values

The school is proposed to have the following core values:

- A focus on the wellbeing and mental health of students and staff
- An ethos and practice of inclusivity
- Strong behaviour policy
- Strong leadership from senior staff
- Non-faith basis

83% of respondents to the online survey agreed with the proposed values of the Secondary School as outlined in the Consultation. A further 11% were unsure, with just 6% disagreeing. Feedback suggested a greater emphasis on academic achievement should be ensured. Questions were also raised in relation to using an Academy Sponsor and the influence of the Local Authority. The majority of pupils in the Primary School Workshop supported the proposed principles, in particular the focus on wellbeing and mental health.

"I am extremely pleased to see non-faith has been recognised, given the existing level of faith provision within the city."

"I think that all of the outcomes are valuable and right, but wonder how stringently these will be applied in the agreement with an academy sponsor and what ongoing measures will be in place to ensure these are maintained."

"It is important that school is truly inclusive- it should not discriminate on the basis of SATS results or previous behaviour."

"High educational standards should be the highest priority."

Location

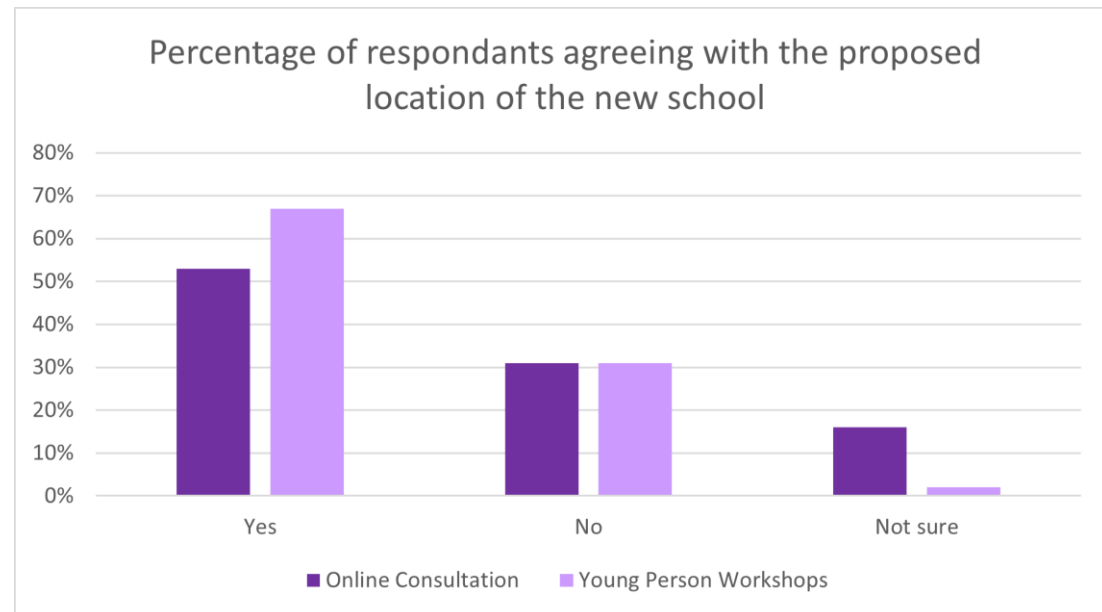
The proposed location for the new school is a parcel of land at Newtown Road in Worcester. The majority of respondents to the online survey supported the location of the site, along with most of the pupils in the Primary School Workshop. However, 31% of respondents disagreed with the location and expressed concerns about the volume of traffic due to the close proximity to the hospital, and concern about proximity to Nunnery Wood High School. They also raised concern about whether the school would be accessible via active travel routes.

A number of respondents also commented on the impact of pollution and loss of green space. Popular preferred locations included St Johns, Northwick and St Peters, to support the proposed new housing developments in the South of the city.

“This should take the pressure off Nunnery Wood High School, with all the new houses that have been built or are due to be built around that area.”

“Current proposed location is too close to other secondary school and far too close to major road system and hospital.”

“With most of the new housing proposed to the south of the city surely it makes sense to locate the school closer to those to cut down on car usage”



Size of the School

The school will initially be built to provide 120 places per year group (four forms of entry), with core facilities to enable expansion over the years. The school will fill from the bottom up, opening with 120 places in year 7 only, and filling up year on year with each new intake at year 7. 80% of respondents supported the proposed size of the school and some noted that provision for future expansion is sensible.

Many of those who were unsupportive of the proposed size wished for all year groups to be filled initially to create a better sense of community and allow learning from peers in different age groups, with the suggestion this would also relieve pressure on existing schools. Children in the year 6 Primary Workshop were concerned about having a 'small' school and asked to ensure the school would feel 'big' and 'bright'. Respondents who proposed smaller year groups suggested that this was more appropriate for SEN children as they cope better in smaller settings.

"I would like to see the school fill up from all year groups as needed. This way it would create more of a school atmosphere rather than the initial year 7s being the eldest throughout their high school experience"

"Small schools are certainly better than students being part of institutions numbering 1000 students."

"Keep it small. SEN students find it extremely difficult to cope in busy environments"

Build

The engagement findings showed a desire for the school to be built with a focus on energy efficient building methods and an aim towards carbon neutrality. 88% of respondents agreed with the build principles but some felt that the Net Zero Carbon target should be much earlier than 2050. Concern was also raised about the over-use of 'green' building methods and that practicality must also be considered at every stage. Primary School pupils were particularly keen to see green spaces at the school, and ensure it is built with sustainable materials.

"We need to be building at net zero now, not by 2050."

"The surrounding area needs to be thought through, it should be safe for students and staff to walk and cycle to school."

"It MUST be built with effective self-sustaining operational power capabilities with solar and wind capture of electricity into power banks. As a wholly new school it needs to be a beacon for sustainability and an example to other schools and buildings to be the most eco-friendly as practicable."

"More needs to be done to make the school as easy and safe to get to other than by a car. Specifically safe active travel routes should be provided and to LTN 1/20 standards from all parts of the schools primary catchment area"

'You said, We Will'

The 293 responses provided as part of this engagement exercise have provided guidance to shape the specification and proposals for a new secondary school. The below outlines the key themes presented and how these will be integrated into the design, build, and specification for the new secondary school.

Some matters such as the values and operation of the school will be in the control of the academy trust to be chosen for the school. Wherever a requirement has been identified in these areas, we will include our expectations for this area within the specification, and score applicants against this standard within the application.

Theme	Comments	What we will do
Age Range	Include a Sixth Form at the new school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The option to create a Sixth Form at the school alongside potential future expansions will remain open. The land to be purchased has sufficient space to enable this if considered appropriate in the future. However, it is not proposed as part of the initial build due to the proposed starter size of the school
School Size	Ensure the school can grow with new future housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school will be designed with core facilities sufficient to support a maximum of 1,200 pupils per year group to enable expansion in the future with ample outdoor facilities to ensure the school can expand as needed in the future
School Size	The school should feel big and bright	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school will be designed with larger core facilities such as halls and dining spaces, and the use of external spaces and use of natural light will help the school feel bright.
Location	The school location is too close to the hospital and causes concern for future expansion requirements of the NHS Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not proposed to purchase the entire site available on this land and therefore it may be possible to enable hospital expansion in the future if this is required.
Location	The location will cause more traffic congestion on the Newtown Road and the A4440	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A full traffic impact assessment will be undertaken and Highways Works to relieve any impact to congestion on the Newtown Road has been costed into the project budget and will be proposed as part of the planning application for the new School.
Location	New school should be built near new housing developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers will support a coordinated approach to admissions in the city with the aim of ensuring the new school serves the immediate surrounding communities of the site and enables families on the new housing developments in the south of the City to attend existing Secondary Schools following the release of pressure for places from the East. This will increase the number of pupils able to access a Secondary School in their local area. The specification will outline that "The school will need to cater to local demand, and therefore admissions arrangements will be expected to align with that goal."



Location	Ensure pupils can travel to the school via active travel routes and that clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The location of this site enables good use of active travel routes to the community it will serve and active measures will be taken to encourage pupils travelling via walk and cycling and discourage car use. This will be fed into the design of the build and included in the expectations of the Academy Trust operations.
Values	A greater emphasis on academic achievement should be ensured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Specification provides detail of the expectation for high education standards for all children and young people to make progress and achieve. Officers are satisfied that there is a clear expectation in the Specification for the Academy Trust to meet high educational standards.
Values	There should be a strong anti-bullying policy but staff should be supportive of pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will be asking for details on support for pupils, behaviour management and bullying policy as part of the academy sponsor competition.
Build	Carbon neutrality should be incorporated into the build wherever possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Specification for the build project will consider this feedback further particularly in respect to the most efficient and practical approach towards sustainable building practices.

