

# **CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS FOR CHANGE TO SCHOOLS IN MELTON MOWBRAY AND THE VALE OF BELVOIR**

## **Introduction**

1. At the beginning of May 2006 the County Council began the first stage of public consultation on the organisation of schools in Melton Mowbray and the Vale of Belvoir, to invite views on the future shape of secondary educational provision within the area.
2. The consultation builds upon the earlier review by Barbara Hughes, an independent consultant, supported by surveys of parents in Melton Mowbray and the Vale of Belvoir, undertaken in 2005, which had identified the need, and level of support for change and improvement.
3. Prior to the public consultation process, to inform the content of the consultation document, discussions took place with organisations/stakeholders associated with the delivery of services to children and young people within the area, for instance the Melton Brooksby College, Learning and Skills Council, representatives of the Diocese etc.

## **Consultation Process**

4. To ensure a comprehensive feedback the consultation process involved four specific aspects of work as follows:
  - the distribution of 8500 consultation booklets to parents, pupils, school staff and governors, and associated stakeholders, setting out a range of options for choice.
  - a series of meetings held at Bottesford Belvoir High School, and each of the three Melton Mowbray secondary schools, at which further explanation of the choices were given. Overall 440 people attended the meetings, taking the opportunity to have their say upon the proposals – minutes of these meetings are available to view on the dedicated website [www.leics.gov.uk/meltonvob](http://www.leics.gov.uk/meltonvob)
  - discussions with pupils attending each of the Secondary Schools and representatives of the catchment Primaries (these meetings are currently in progress).

This report concerns itself with the response to the consultation booklets as the primary source of opinion to date upon the proposals.

## **The Options**

5. The consultation recognises that there are lots of different ways, and exciting new examples from across this country, of organising school places. To make the right choice for children and young people in the area, we need to learn from these. All share a common aim of enabling young people to maximise their life chances by transforming the learning process.

Discussions with headteachers, governors, local councillors, and the response to the previous parental surveys had identified four main options. The consultation presented these options not as a finite list, but as a starting point for discussion. A key message of the consultation process was to invite other proposals, capable of transforming secondary educational provision, to be put forward for evaluation.

6. The four options set out in the consultation booklet are:

- Option 1: Secondary education in the Vale of Belvoir to become 11-16 and in Melton to become one 11-16 and one 11-19 school.
- Option 2: Secondary education in the Vale of Belvoir to become 11-16 and in Melton two 11-19 schools.
- Option 3: Secondary education in the Vale of Belvoir to become 11-16 and in Melton two 11-16 schools. All three new high schools would work in collaboration with a new Learning Centre which would cater mainly, but not exclusively for, young people aged 16+.
- Option 4: Leave everything as it is and change nothing.

7. Two other options emerged through the consultation meetings:

- a proposal for one 11-16 school in the Vale of Belvoir with three 11-16 schools in Melton, all working in collaboration with a new Learning Centre. This is now referred to as Option 5 and;
- a proposal for one 11-16 school in the Vale of Belvoir with two 11-16 schools in Melton each with its own governing body committed to working in partnership plus one advanced learning centre managed by and located alongside one 11-16 school and working in close partnership with Melton Brooksby college. This proposal put forward by the Governing Body of Melton King Edward VII School introduced the learning hub concept to be delivered through a North East Leicestershire Learning Partnership model.

### **Analysis of Responses**

8. By the close of consultation on 26 May, a total of 631 responses had been received, approximately 60% received through the post and the remainder on-line.

The returns represent a response rate of 7.5%, but in terms of actual pupil numbers in excess of 10% (this is because most parents having more than one child made a single return, often for children attending different schools, and within different areas).

### **Preferred Options**

9. The bar chart attached as Appendix A indicates the preferences for each of the six options described in paragraph 5 and 6 above, showing the support for each arising from respondents in the respective areas of Melton and the Vale of Belvoir.

It should be noted on the bar chart that:

- some respondents preferred (any of) several options indicated as 'multiple' preference. This is particularly relevant to the Vale of Belvoir where all three options 1-3 offered the potential for a local 11-16 school.
  - some respondents did not express a preference, only a dislike for a particular option in most cases the no change choice (Option 4), they are listed as 'non-specified'.
  - parents responding with children at schools in both Melton and the Vale are shown as 'both areas', and those whom gave no indication are classed 'unspecified'.
10. The results indicate a clear preference for Option 3, influenced by a strong response from the Vale of Belvoir parents. However it should be noted that there is also considerable support for Option 2 and the new Option 5. In numerical terms only, there is much less support for the other three options.

The pie chart attached as Appendix B emphasises more clearly the individual option preferences, and the accompanying Appendix C from which group of consultees the responses have been received.

### **Reasons for Choices**

11. The majority of respondents have taken the opportunity to provide an explanation of the reasons influencing their particular option choice, and these reasons will be of considerable help in determining the best solution for the future shape of schools in the area.

In order to effectively analyse the responses, the reasons have been broadly grouped based upon the perceived main issue of concern. The table at Appendix D provides a summary of these issues, indicating from where they have originated, and to what extent they have influenced the results of the consultation.

12. These issues of concern show that the responses have been influenced by a wide range of factors, covering academic progress, children's welfare, children's integration, as well as some general principles of schools' organisation and the practical implications of any changes to current provision.

### **Conclusions**

13. The number of responses received to the consultation and comments made, indicate that the issue of secondary education provision in Melton Mowbray and the Vale of Belvoir is one of key concern. Although no consensus has emerged, in numerical terms the consultation has shown a preference for Options 3 and to a lesser extent Option 2. This reaffirms the findings of the previous parental surveys which show a real concern towards the transfer of pupils at age 14 from high to upper schools, and the disruption to those leaving primary school at 10 years rather than at the end of Key Stage 2.

There is also considerable support for Option 5, based largely upon the responses received from parents and those having an interest in Long Field High School.

14. Consideration should be given also to the reasons that have underpinned the response to the consultation, these are perhaps a better indicator of how an effective solution to the reorganisation of secondary schools in the area could be achieved.

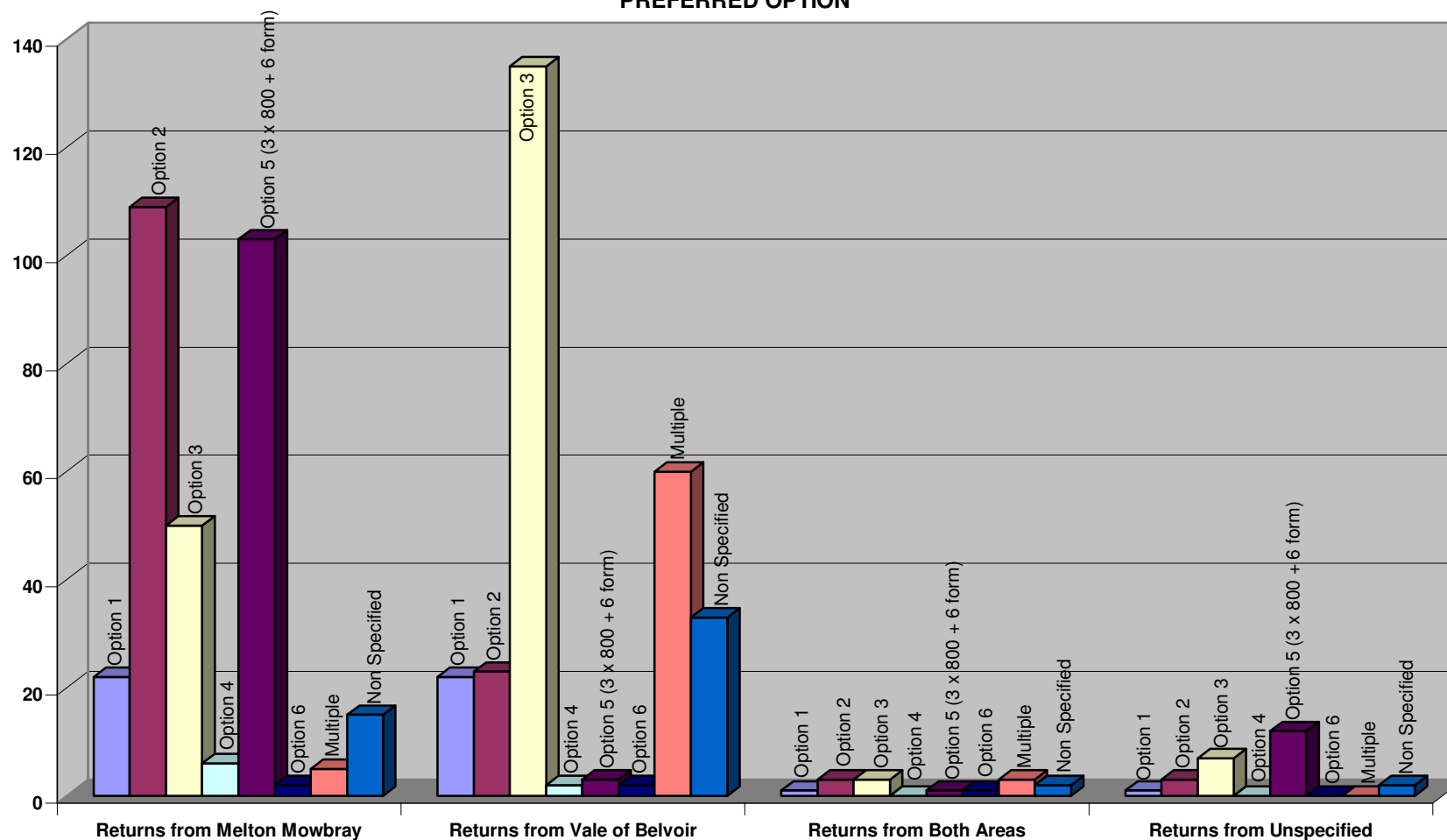
There appears a strong wish for schools to remain local, not only in terms of the advantages to access and travel, but also to recognise their community focus. Such schools should be of sufficient size to deliver the required breadth of curriculum, supported as necessary by collaborative arrangements, but not too large as to lose the value of personalised tuition which is important to pupil development. This is a distinct issue to that of personalised learning which will be brought about through changes to the curriculum. The need for choice and equality of opportunity remains paramount.

### **Next Steps**

15. Each of the options that have emerged during consultation will be evaluated carefully to assess their suitability. This will encompass not only the response to the consultation, but how each might deliver an effective, sustainable and affordable solution to secondary educational provision that is capable of offering the breadth of curriculum needed, and bringing about a real transformation to the organisation of schools within the area.

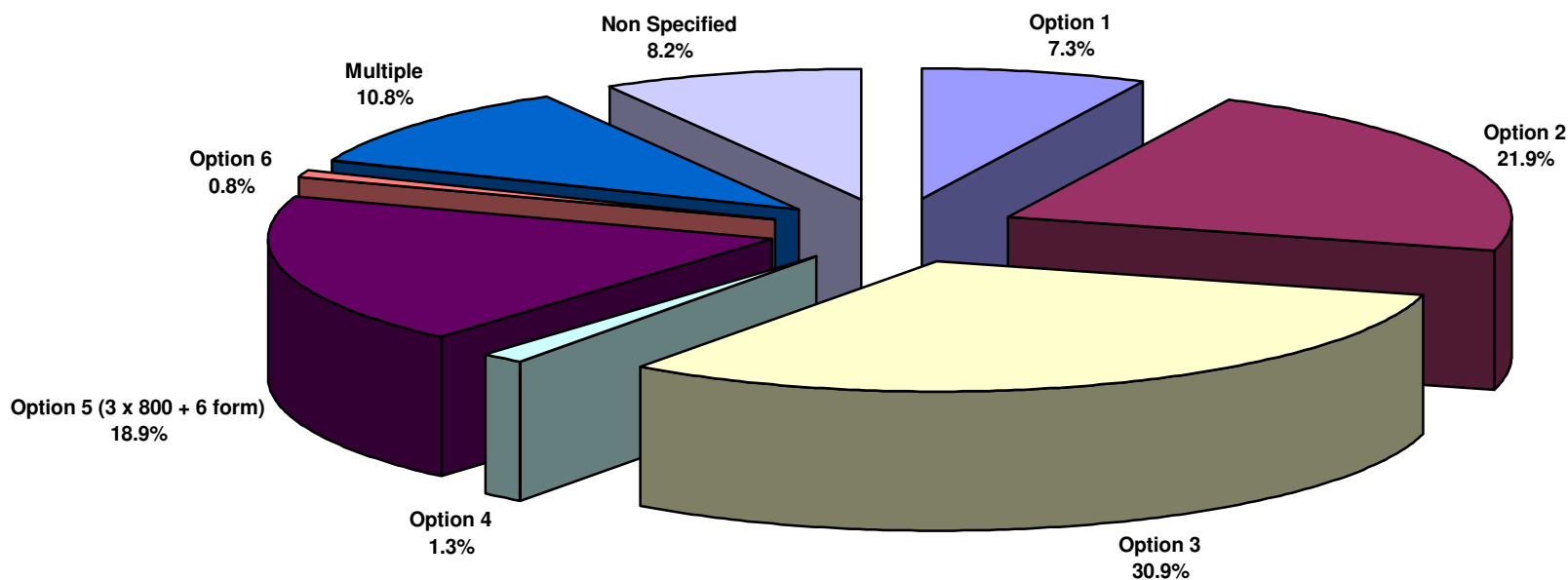
The findings of the evaluation will be presented to the Cabinet in September and decisions sought on a further round of consultation to look at the detail of the preferred choice(s) and to commence early in the Autumn term

**OPTIONS FOR CHANGE TO SCHOOLS IN MELTON MOWBRAY & THE VALE OF BELVOIR  
CONSULTATION RESULTS JUNE 2006  
PREFERRED OPTION**



	Returns from Melton Mowbray	Returns from Vale of Belvoir	Returns from Both Areas	Returns from Unspecified Area	Totals	% Returns for Each Option
Option 1	22	22	1	1	46	7.3%
Option 2	109	23	3	3	138	21.9%
Option 3	50	135	3	7	195	30.9%
Option 4	6	2	0	0	8	1.3%
Option 5 (3 x 800 + 6 form)	103	3	1	12	119	18.9%
Option 6	2	2	1	0	5	0.8%
Multiple	5	60	3	0	68	10.8%
Non Specified	15	33	2	2	52	8.2%
	<b>312</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>100%</b>

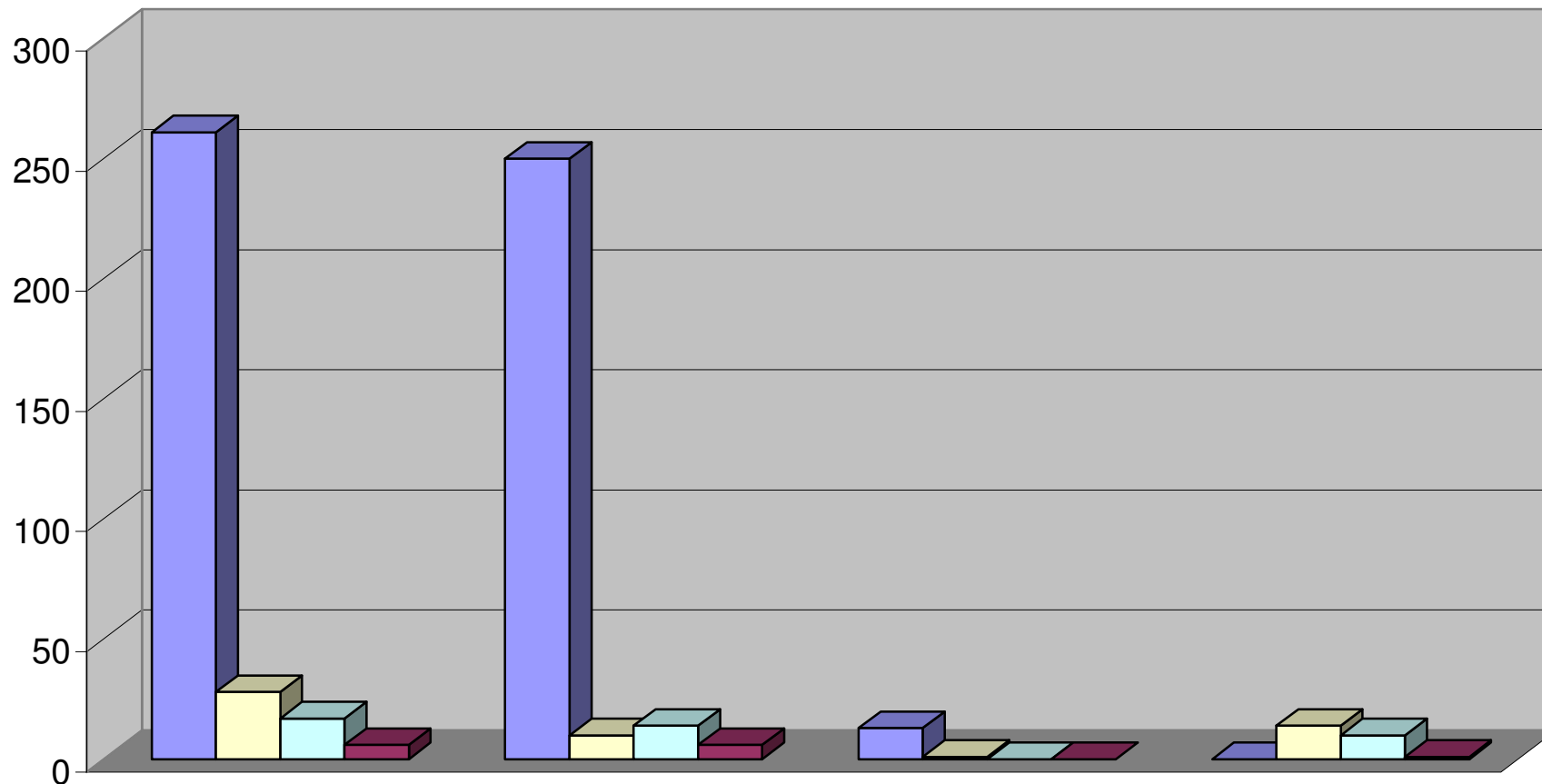
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CONSULTATION RESULTS JUNE 2006  
PREFERRED OPTION**



- Option 1 Secondary education in the Vale of Belvoir to become 11 to 16 and in Melton to become one 11 to 16 school and one 11 to 19 school.
- Option 2 Secondary education in the Vale of Belvoir to become 11 to 16 and in Melton to become two 11 to 18 schools.
- Option 3 Secondary education in the Vale of Belvoir to become 11 to 16 and in Melton to become two 11 to 16 high schools; in collaboration with a new Learning Centre.
- Option 4 Leave everything as it is and change nothing.
- Option 5 Secondary education in the Vale of Belvoir to become 11 to 16 and in Melton to become three 11 to 16 schools (+ Learning Centre or 6th form).
- Option 6 Secondary education in the Vale of Belvoir to become 11 to 16 and in Melton to become two 11 to 16 + Learning Centre schools operating as North East Leicestershire Learning Partnership.
- Multiple combination of the above.
- Non Specified.

■ Option 1 ■ Option 2 □ Option 3 □ Option 4 ■ Option 5 (3 x 800 + 6 form) ■ Option 6 ■ Multiple ■ Non Specified

**OPTIONS FOR CHANGE TO SCHOOLS IN  
MELTON MOWBRAY & THE VALE OF BELVOIR  
CONSULTATION RESULTS JUNE 2006  
ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS**



	Returns from Melton Mowbray	Returns from Vale of Belvoir	Returns from Both Areas	Returns from Unspecified Area	Totals
Parent	261	250	13	0	524
Teacher	28	10	1	14	53
Pupil	17	14	0	10	41
Other	6	6	0	1	13
					631

**CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS FOR CHANGE TO SCHOOLS IN  
MELTON MOWBRAY AND VALE OF BELVOIR  
REASONS FOR PREFERRED OPTION**

**APPENDIX D**

	<b>Melton Mowbray</b>	<b>Vale of Belvoir</b>	<b>Not Specified</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Non Specified</b>	53	74	2	129	20.44%
<b>Disruption at transfer age 14</b>	25	37	0	62	9.83%
<b>Avoids disruption to children transferring at 10years (Yr 6)</b>	14	46	2	62	9.83%
<b>Benefits of small high schools</b>	49	7	4	60	9.51%
<b>Benefits of 11-16 schools (generally)</b>	18	33	1	52	8.24%
<b>Benefits of three Melton 11-16 schools</b>	38	10	3	51	8.08%
<b>Benefits of 16+ Learning Centre</b>	10	24	0	34	5.39%
<b>Provision of 11-18 schools (In Melton)</b>	26	4	1	31	4.91%
<b>Locality of schools important</b>	23	7	1	31	4.91%
<b>Multiple comments (Combination of Above)</b>	13	12	1	26	4.12%
<b>Concerns about excessive travel</b>	10	9	1	20	3.17%
<b>Opportunity for collaboration</b>	10	2	6	18	2.85%
<b>Prefer current 6th form structure (not Learning Centres)</b>	11	3	0	14	2.22%
<b>Current system not working</b>	6	5	0	11	1.74%
<b>Prefer wider choice (generally)</b>	6	4	0	10	1.58%
<b>No change</b>	5	2	0	7	1.11%
<b>Offers better curriculum choice</b>	5	1	0	6	0.95%
<b>Avoids transfer at age 16</b>	2	1	0	3	0.48%
<b>Benefits of large upper school</b>	3	0	0	3	0.48%
<b>Benefits church school status</b>	0	0	1	1	0.16%
	<b>327</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>100.00%</b>