



***Report of the UH mini-charrette workshop
for the launch of the Roundwood Park and Sir John
Lawes Trust***

Tuesday 22nd March 2011 - 12.30 – 6.30pm

Room R140 de Havilland Campus, University of Hertfordshire

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1. Purpose of the mini charrette and this report

The purpose of the mini charrette process (about which more below) has been to explore a range of issues surrounding the development of the *Roundwood Park and Sir John Lawes Trust*, which is in its formative stages. The University of Hertfordshire is a Trust partner and offered to design and facilitate the process as part of its commitment to partnership working. The mini charrette was held on Tuesday the 22nd of March 2011, from 12.30 to 7pm, at Room R140 of the de Havilland Campus, at the University of Hertfordshire.

Those present included students, staff and Trustees of the Roundwood Park and Sir John Lawes Schools, representatives from Trust partner organisations and facilitators and other staff from the University of Hertfordshire. All participants worked exceptionally hard to make the session worthwhile and this report documents the 'mini charrette' event in some detail. In particular it covers the many excellent ideas that emerged from the group work sessions.

2. Some background on charrettes and mini charrettes

'Charrettes' are stakeholder and community engagement processes that can be used to help work through development opportunities and issues. Charrettes are often focused on designing places, and they are also a very useful technique for scenario building and visioning processes. They can bring together all the stakeholders with an interest in the future of, for example, a building, a place, a service, an institution or a governance structure. Charrettes are particularly useful when a range of different issues or aspects are at play, which need to be thought about together in a holistic way. UH is increasingly undertaking such charrette processes with partners in suitable circumstances. Through its Centre for Sustainable Communities, the University also offers training in running charrettes, based on the National Charrette Institute accredited programme (see http://www.uh-sustainable.co.uk/short-courses/NCI_Charette_042011.html).

Mini charrette engagement sessions use some key charrette methods over a much shorter timeframe – a day or half day. The most important technique is building in a 'feedback loop' so that people can together develop and refine their ideas about the mini-charrette topic. The CSC has recently designed and run a mini charrette for UHArts, and previously ran a similar event on the future of Hanbury Hall as a 21st Century Community Centre (<http://www.uh-sustainable.co.uk/events/tinag.html>). A mini charrette is worthwhile as a standalone event or it can act as a 'pre' charrette event for a fuller charrette workshop at a later date. The mini charrette process is sometimes the best option in terms of purpose, time commitment and partner resources.

3. The mini charrette event in detail

This mini charrette began at 12.30pm with participants arriving from both schools and partner organisations before the formal work began at 1pm. At 1pm there was a hello and welcome

from UH including from Registrar Phillip Waters and Director of Education Liaison Ross Renton, while Dr Mary Reid (Head of the School of Education), Dr Craig Bourne (Admissions Tutor in Humanities, Law and Education), and Dr Emma Greening (Outreach Manager at UH) were present. Also speaking were official partners including Trust Board members Stephen James and George Hanna, and Chair of Governors Moira Hart. Meanwhile SJL and Roundwood School Heads Alan Henshall and Clare Robins and senior staff representatives including Jonathan Mountstevens and Kirk Dumpleton also spoke over the course of the event, while teaching staff Helen Cox and Nicki Adkins were also present. Nicki very kindly worked as a facilitator during the small group work.

Dr Susan Parham of UH provided an introduction to the purpose of the mini charrette, and ran through 'housekeeping' and ground rules. Dr Parham then gave a short briefing on 'mini-charrettes' as an engagement process, along with an introduction to the session as a 'mini' charrette process and explained how the session would be structured. This built on discussion held previously with school pupils and staff before the event.

At 1.30pm representatives from the Roundwood Park and Sir John Lawes Trust set the scene, presenting their thoughts on *The Roundwood SJL Trust: past, present and possible futures – issues, constraints, visions, and opportunities*. There was a short question and answer session in plenary so that any immediate questions could be covered.

The mini charrette participants then broke into three groups to discuss (and draw) options for the new Trust. The task for the approximately 30 participants was to develop and draft proposals. The three small groups each covered a number of topics that were relevant to the Trust's future. A detailed topic list was provided as a separate sheet for use by groups and their facilitators. This proposed the following topics for discussion:

- Teaching and learning – collaborating, sharing resources/specialisms and good practice
- Sustainability – making the schools really sustainable 'green' places
- Getting there – transport and access issues
- Resources – IT, learning facilities and other things
- The Trust 'community' – working with Trust partners (Rothamsted, UH etc) and others
- Other important topics?

The small groups worked hard covering the topics and then paused for afternoon tea at about 3.45pm. After the intensive small group work the mini charrette again moved into a plenary session. A volunteer from each group fed back key ideas and specific proposals for various aspects of the Trust's future to the whole group. These ideas included some diagrammatic and drawn proposals and options in each of the topic areas. There was an interesting discussion of ideas for the Trust in plenary.

At around 4.45pm a number of representatives from SJL, and Roundwood as well as the mini charrette participants reflected on the process so far. They looked at how the ideas generated in the session could help in developing the SJL/Roundwood Trust. Trust representatives then

explained the next steps in terms of how session material would be used to inform the development of the Trust.

At close to 5pm Dr Parham described what would happen with mini charrette reporting and circulation of the report. Dr Parham explained that the mini charrette process and the content of the small group discussions would be documented in a report, sent round to participants, and posted online.

After this there was a break and Trust representatives, parents and other stakeholders from UH/elsewhere arrived to share a buffet supper. The mini-charrette reconvened at about 5.45pm to present ideas to the wider group of stakeholders. Ross Renton, SJL and Roundwood students and staff representatives all spoke. Then there was a lively discussion in plenary and a chance for last comments to be made. The mini charrette closed at 6.30pm.

The session was videoed by CSC staff (with permission from pupils' parents and schools) and in due course a mini charrette highlights video will be available on the Centre for Sustainable Communities website. This report is also being posted on the website.

4. Discussion group process

Each of the three discussion groups of students from the two schools (who were 'mixed and mingled in terms of which school they attend) was 'facilitated' to help make sure the discussion flowed well and focused on the issues. A small group discussion topic sheet was provided to help with this. It explained that the topics were in no particular order of importance but they did reflect previous discussions with students, staff and other people involved in the development of the Trust. The topics were:

- Teaching and learning – are there problems, issues or opportunities in this area? What are they? Are the links to Trust partners like Rothamsted well developed? Could they be further developed to foster good learning opportunities? What specific ideas or proposals could make this better?
- Sustainability – what does 'sustainability' cover? Is it mostly about environmental or 'green' aspects for the school buildings, grounds or students - like reducing energy use and better recycling? Does it include other things? If so, what? How much will the Trust be able to bring about the results it wants? How much can it deliver? What are the opportunities and the constraints?
- Getting there – are there issues and opportunities in how people get to the Trust locations (especially to the schools) in a sustainable way? Are people driving when they'd rather walk, cycle or take a bus? What are the reasons for that? What could be done to improve things? Is it about better design and maintenance of streets and pathways? Better facilities at school like secure bike parking? Showers? Are there other

things that could help like car sharing? More buses?

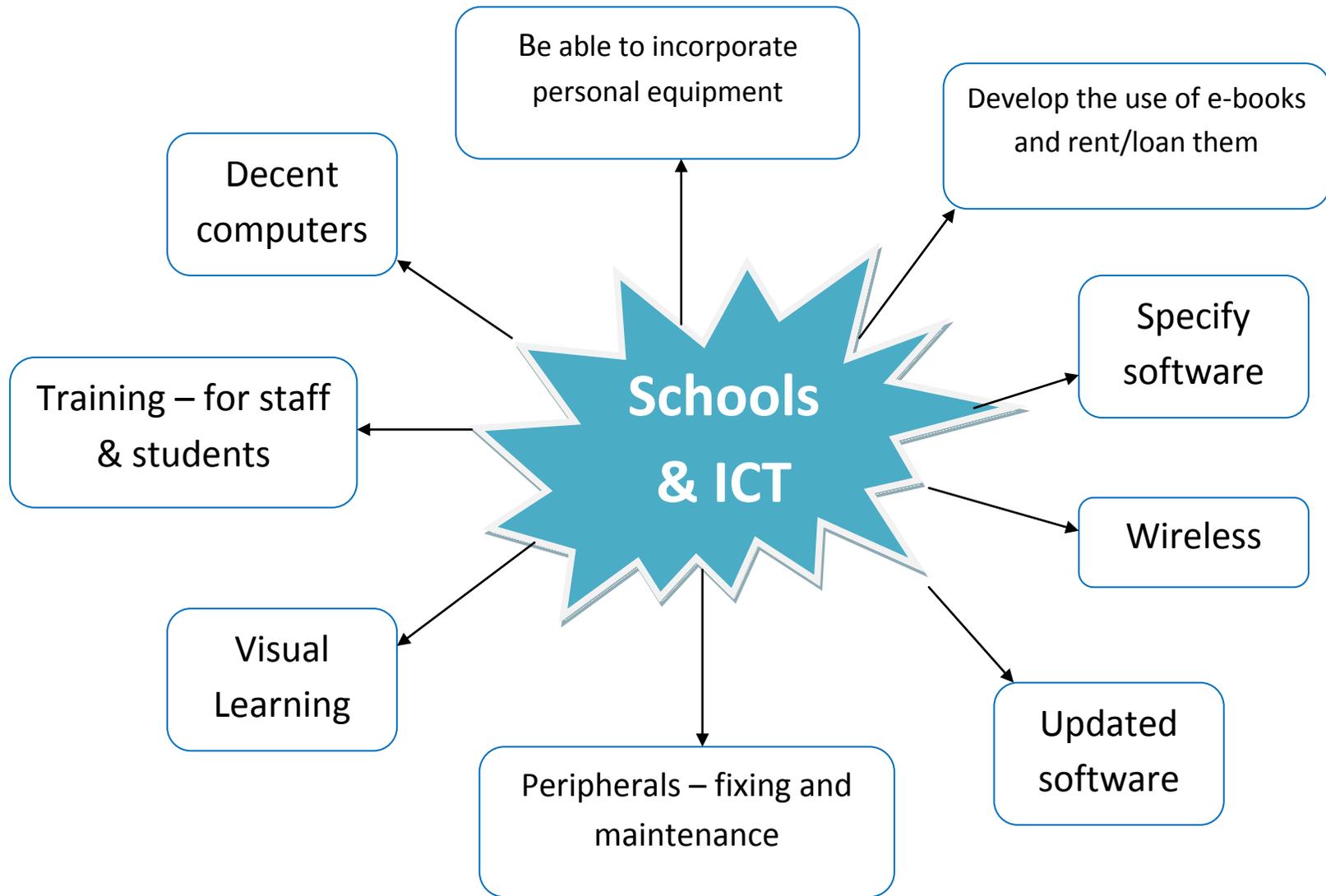
- Resources – what kind of resources do the schools need as part of developing a great Trust? Are there issues or opportunities in relation to any of the following? IT? Other learning resources? The buildings/classrooms themselves? Other spaces in the schools? Sports facilities? Arts facilities? Language facilities? Other things?
- Planning and design (this topic relates closely to the previous one and to the one on sustainability) – Are the locations and design of the schools right? Could they be improved? How? Could there be some sharing of facilities? What could be done about more sustainable design to make the schools more energy efficient, and produce less waste etc?
- Making great links with the Trust ‘community’ and others - How can the schools develop good relationships with Trust ‘stakeholders’ like other members of the Trust (e.g. Rothamsted, University of Hertfordshire) and the local community? What sort of educational connections could be made? What would they be like? What sort of connections could be made to other people/organisations that have an interest in the Trust’s future?
- Are there other things that are important? Is there anything we need to discuss in launching this new Trust we haven’t touched on?

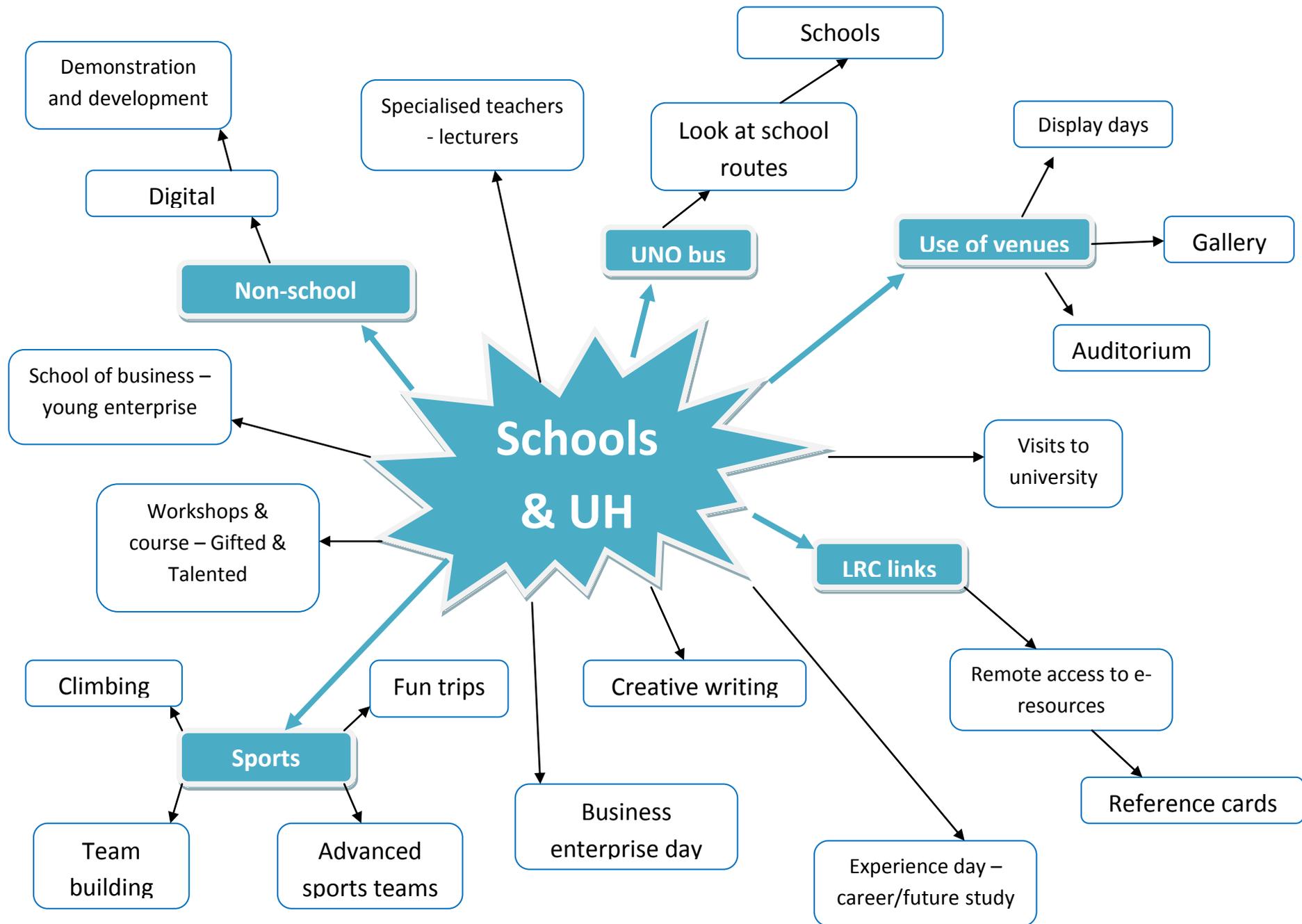
4.1. Group 1 Discussion Results

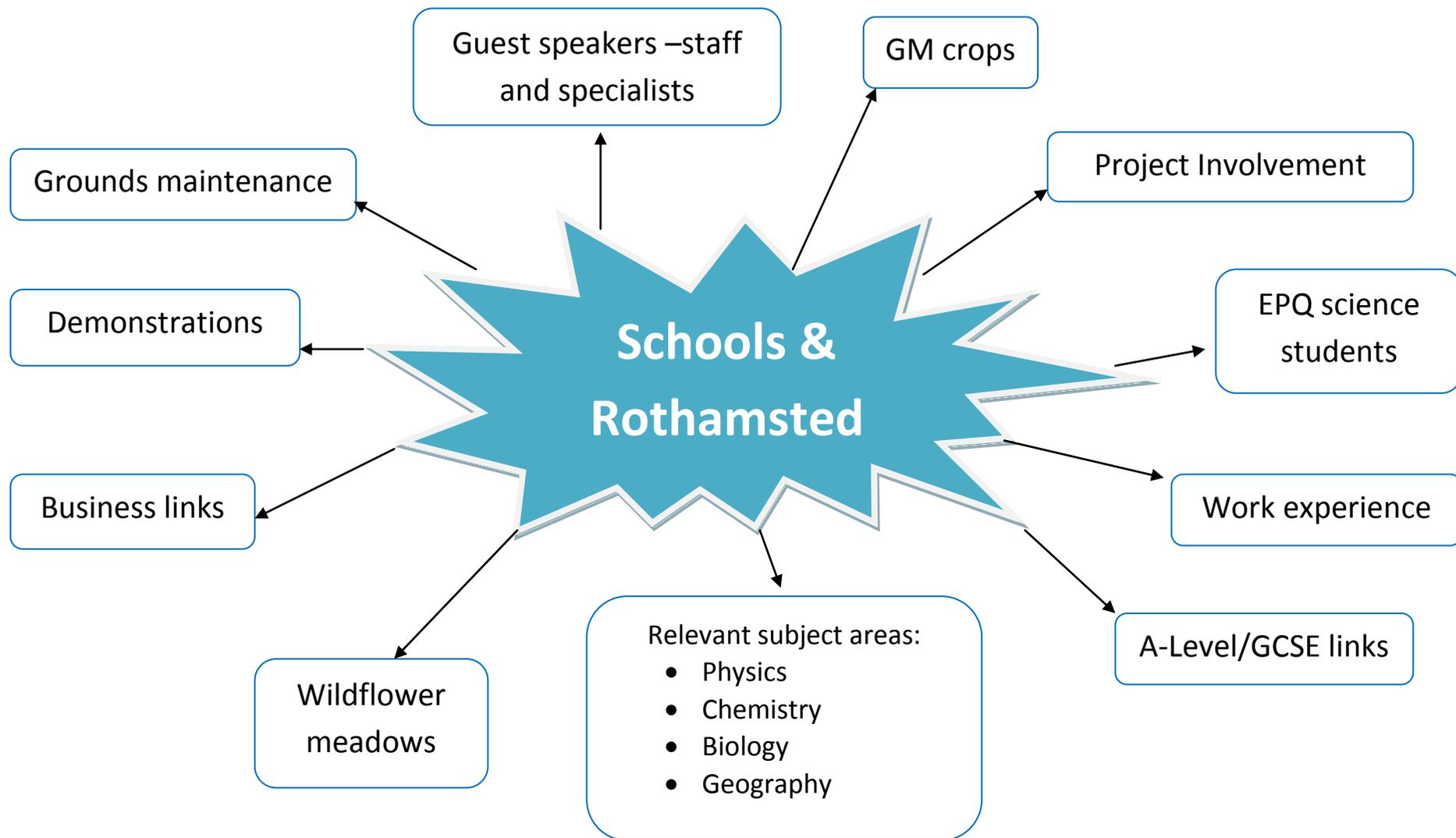
Each group recorded their ideas in different ways. This group recorded their ideas diagrammatically as shown on the following pages. Group 1 came up with a proposed Term programme that would incorporate some of the ideas they suggested in discussion. For Summer Term 2011 this would run as follows:

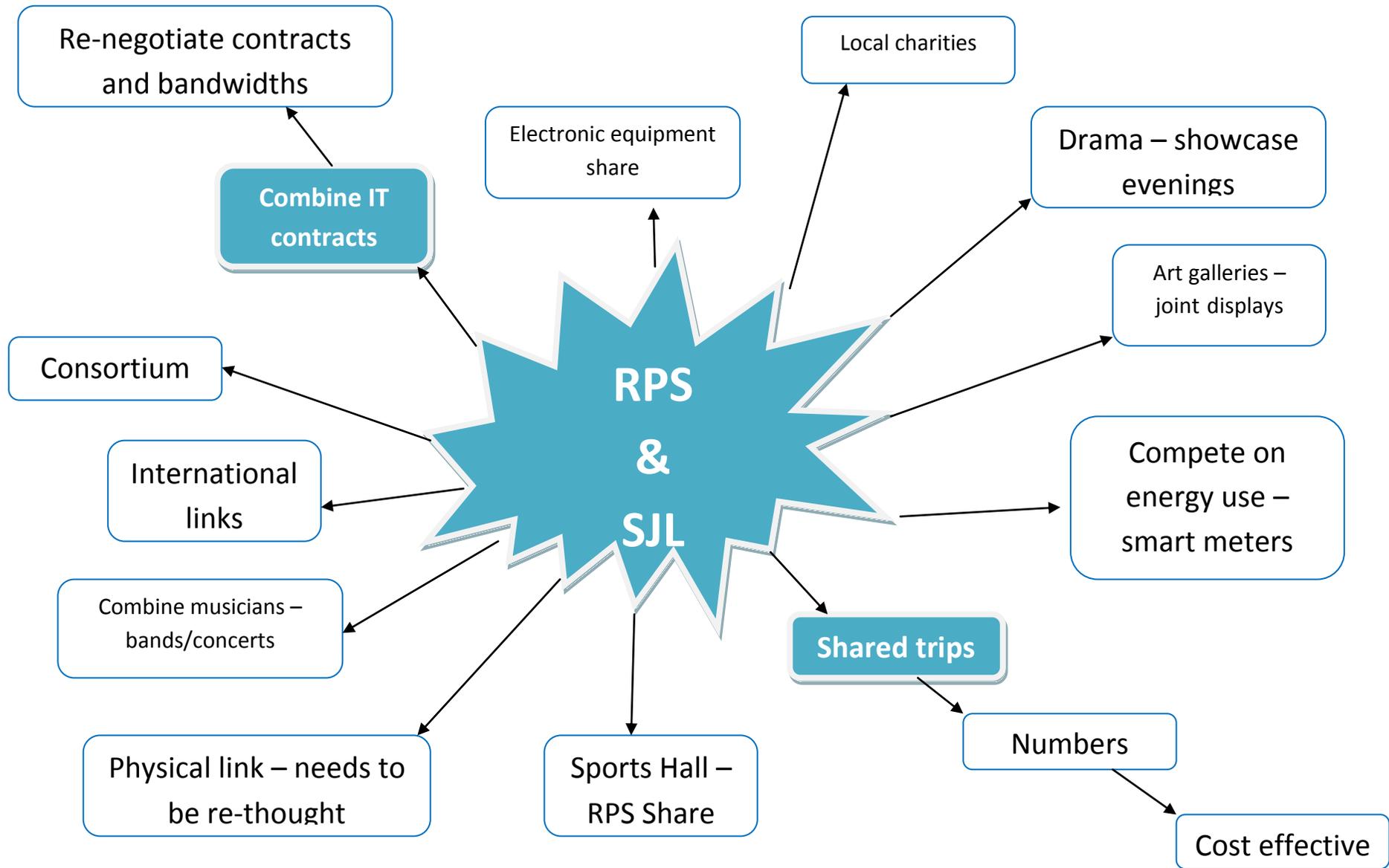
- Week 1: Visit to Rothamsted to enrich learning
- Week 2: Assembly from an inspirational speaker
- Week 3: Talk with students from UH, perhaps also visit the Learning Resource Centre
- Week 4: Video classes
- Week 5: Work experience opportunities
- Week 6: Involvement in community projects
- Week 7: Taster day of university student life for sixth formers
- Week 8: Rothamsted involved in teaching science lessons

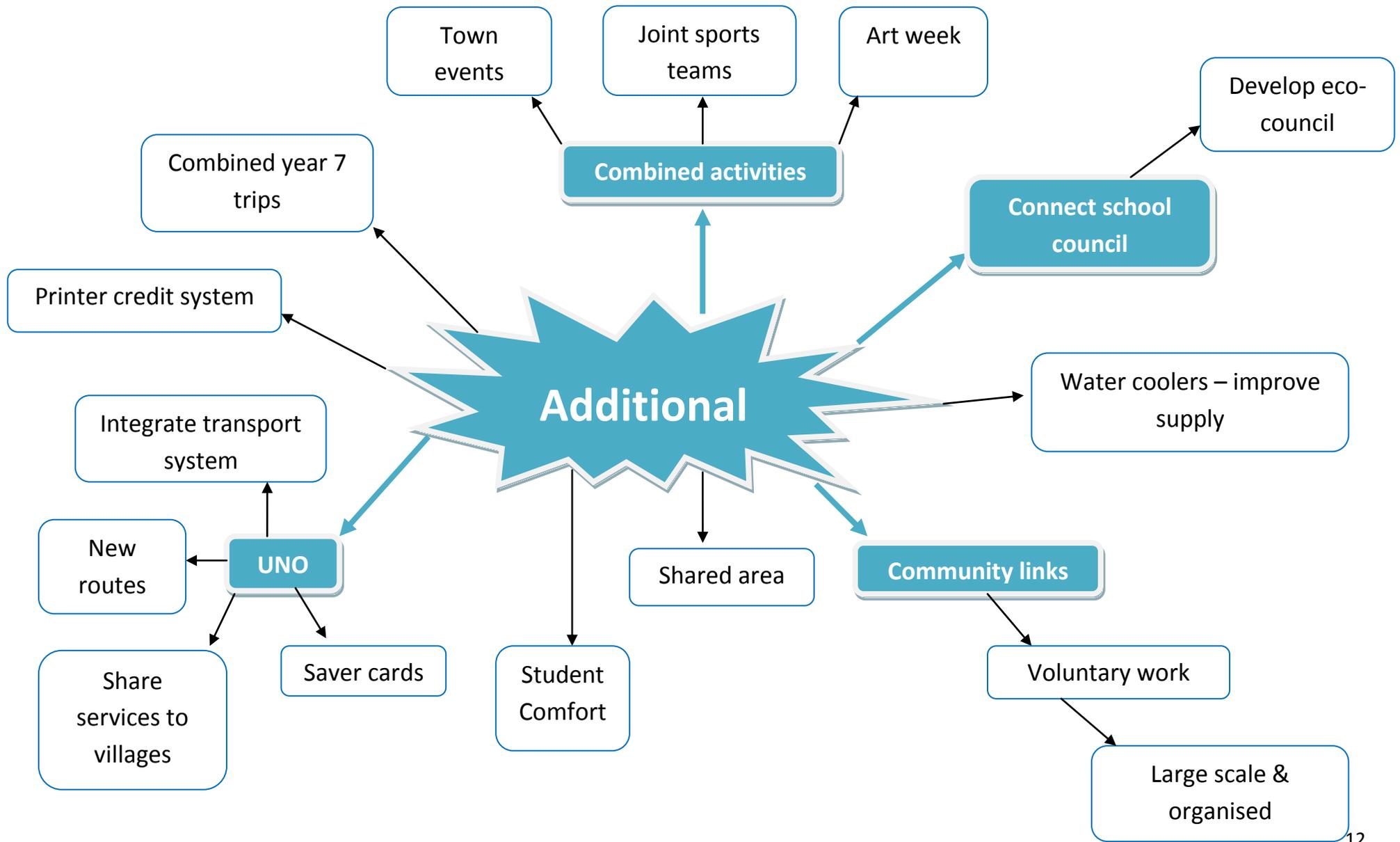
- Week 9: Improve international links through video conference or through student forum.
Speak to a native speaker
- Week 10: Trip to the theatre to see play studied in English Literature
- Week 11: Talk from a local charity











4.2. Group 2 discussion results

Group 2 also worked through the topics in some detail using bullet points rather than diagrams. Their points are detailed below under a series of topic headings, relating to the small group discussion topics:

Work Experience

- With more people involved in the Trust there is more chance to find work experience placements
- End of Year 10 did work experience – not fantastic
- Website seemed rushed – could have been better arranged
- If we are more independent, we may be freer to do work experience unique to the schools
- If we have partnership with Rothamsted, we can use this as an opportunity to get more work experience
- Work experience is becoming more important
- Work experience needs to be more focussed – more related to future career
- Website could help you learn more about jobs you like, what they cover etc
- Prior to this year, Year 12 haven't had much to do with careers/universities (before choosing A-Level options)
- Could have a list of companies/careers
- Website – contact info for the person you could speak to (preferably from the real world) if you wanted to do a particular subject (e.g. science)
- At Roundwood Year 9 had a work experience day which was quite useful for deciding options
- Can be hard to get work experience if you are under 18 – lots of companies say that there are health & safety issues
- Could have classes to explain the concept of work experience and help the pupils look into details for practical jobs
- It could be worth using Rothamsted for science, and they may be able to offer other useful contacts

Resources

- Schools have lower budgets and limited access to what they can do, therefore can gain opportunities through the Trust i.e. expertise, physical infrastructure
- Would be good for science to use Rothamsted's lab equipment
- Not just about physical resources also about expertise on the teaching side
- Would the partnership enable teachers to go between schools?
- Can see some problems in implementing – could the value of resources/expertise be quantified? Some sort of currency – e.g. Trust Credits? – this would require careful management
- People from UH with specific expertise could help define/promote input and info, as well as external expertise across the curriculum

Transport

There are issues – things wrong which need fixing:

- Who can use the school buses/coach?
- Road safety - crossing lights broken
- Maintenance of the Nickey Line cycle path which runs from Redbourn
- The Trust would have more bargaining power
- Lack of facilities for safe cycling therefore less people cycle
- If more people cycled then it would then more people would be arguing for better, safer facilities
- At school commuting times some parts of the routes are quite dark to cycle on (in the winter) – need for better lighting in the town centre and down some of the alleys
- Overgrown trees/bushes can cause an obstruction
- Sixth formers are not allowed to get the bus to school as it's oversubscribed and they are over the age where there are statutory responsibilities to get them to school
- Sixth formers often use cars as Nickey Line is not lit
- Parking is a problem – staff have allocated parking bays but students often find it hard to find parking areas nearby

- A possible solution would be to develop a school travel plan with a travel plan coordinator

Education/Learning

- Would it be possible to attend a day of lectures at UH? (or elsewhere)
- Better advertising to schools about open lectures at universities
- Gifted & Talented provision is not very well organised within individual schools – perhaps working together would be a better option
- UH have good sports facilities – perhaps the Sports Village staff could come and talk to the students – encourage people to choose P.E as an option for GCSE
- Perhaps new sports hall which is being built could be used more widely by the community
- Would be good to get people at UH/Rothamsted to teach topics relating to GCSEs/A-Levels
- Possibility of using video conferencing between students and external experts: pupils tend to engage more deeply with outside speakers
- The Trust could maybe build some specialised subjects
- Development of a regular programme of events to stretch Gifted & Talented pupils with input from UH, to replace the set of individual days currently run
- Idea to cover one main topic each term at university level to demonstrate kinds of learning styles and also level of complexity. This should be open to anyone who is interested – funding could potentially be sought
- Idea of 2 schools working together on projects to promote teamwork focussing on a specific subject area for a day, mixing the schools
- Would be interesting to find out if people are interested in working together – collaborating or competing?
- Could do a competition together for a day between the schools ‘off-timetable’ on a specified topic

Sustainability

- Have undertaken a lot of eco-school projects but would like to do a wider collaborative project learning from others examples

- SJP has eco-schools group – does RPS? Talking across the schools would be good. For example, student voice conference at UH was very good
- Simple things are good starting points
- Our school has recently put paper recycling bins in the classrooms which could be extended to encourage recycling
- There are only a big clump of recycling bins at the back of the school: smaller units around the school would be beneficial
- Consistency in the shape/style of bin helps
- Composting bins have been discussed
- Phasing out 'normal' bins would make it more convenient to recycle
- Behavioural change is the hardest aspect
- Need a strategy in place, rather than just telling people
- A survey was conducted questioning people on why they litter, the most common response was that "it's too much effort to use the right bin"
- If there are more bins in common areas then people will use them more
- It would be worth finding out approximately how much of our materials could be recycled

Planning, design, kit

- If facilities are better people will want to learn more
- Sometimes programmes are used in ICT which can't be accessed at home
- A Virtual Private Network (VPN) was suggested – possible compatibility issues
- Quite a lot of money is spent on licensing whereas there are other priorities?
- School and home email system do not link: could better links be made?
- Email has no memory because of server space: need more space
- Perhaps the Trust would provide economies of scale
- It was suggested that as a charity it may be cheaper to buy licenses and that this may drive costs down
- Extension of the laptop loan scheme?

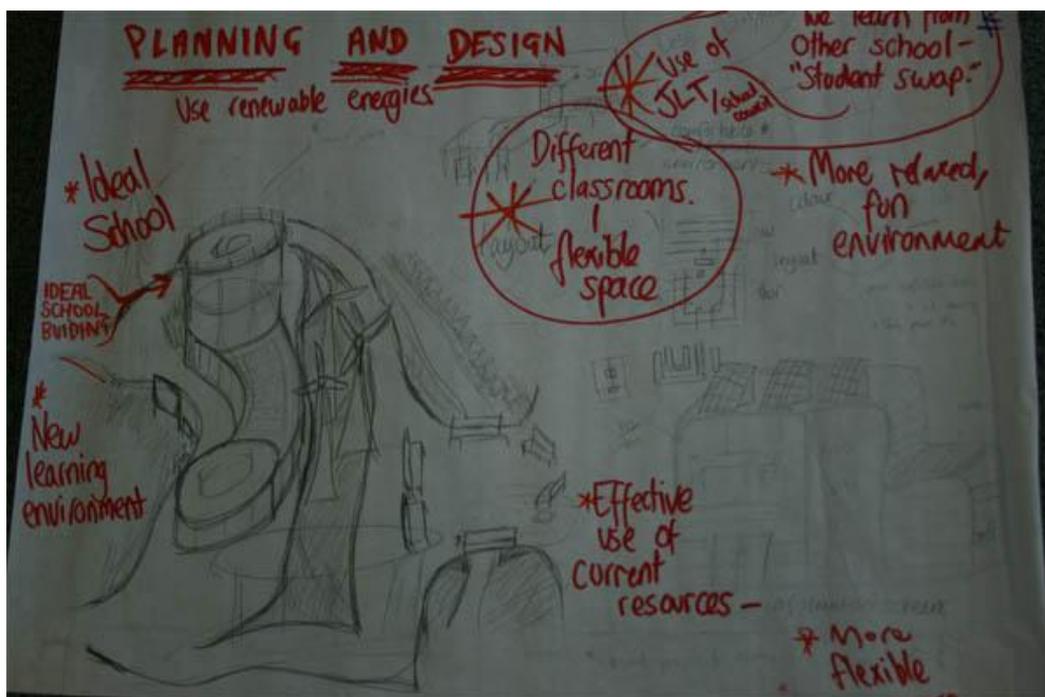
- Idea for sixth formers to contribute to an online system where they can document their views/experiences of a particular course which would act as an archive for both schools

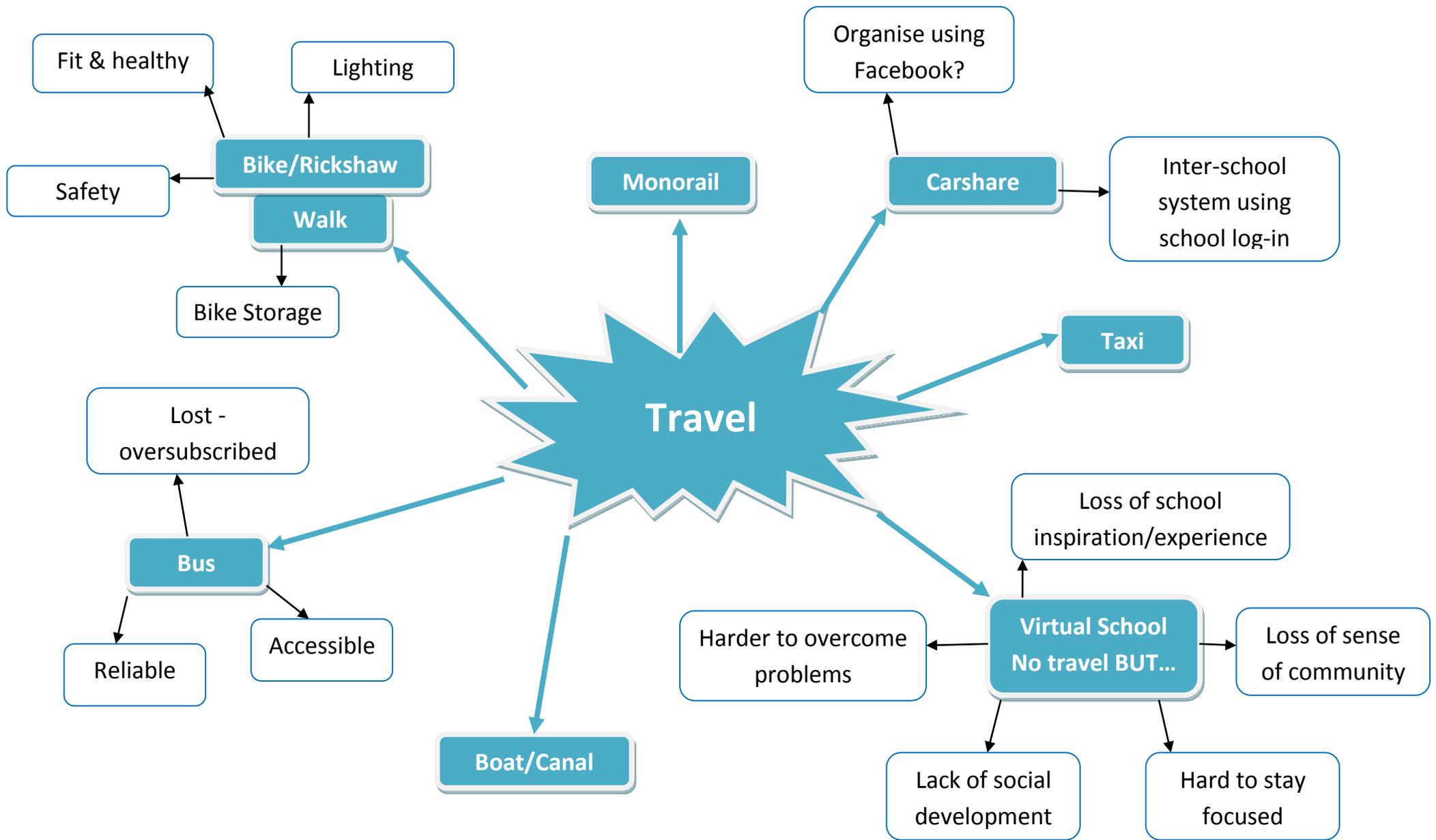
Connecting to others

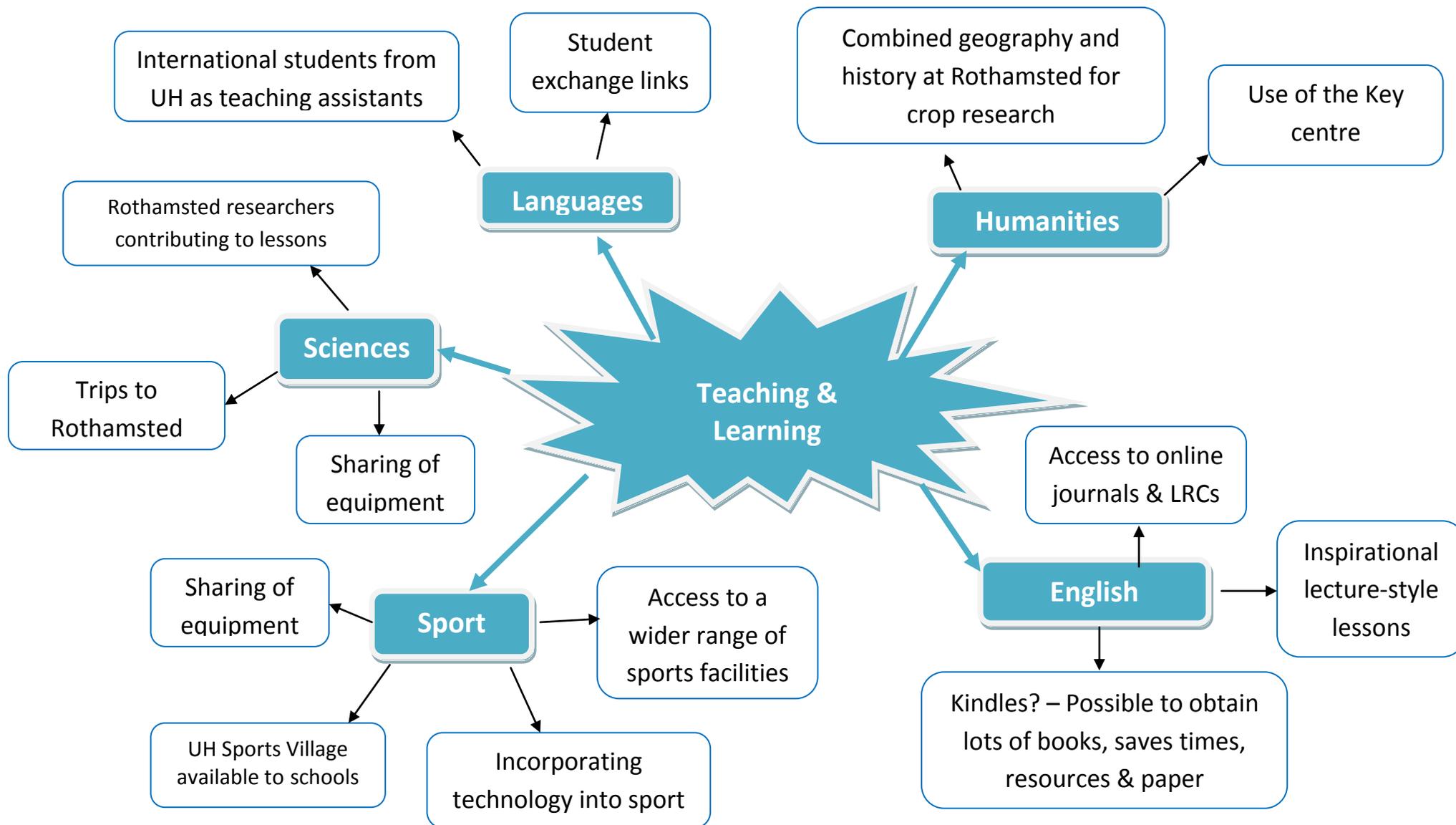
- More links in all directions can only help
- Sports centre – the new public one - will provide links
- A school in St Albans (Francis Bacon?) with falling numbers (unsustainable) asked SJL to help them turn things around
- Collaboration possible in individual subjects – planning study together
- Trust could be a very good way of dispelling slightly negative reputation/image of teenagers – do something for charity
- Subjects such as music could benefit from linking and putting on a concert for example, UH Arts may also be able to get involved
- Media – would be good to see recording studios at UH
- Could Year 9s go to other schools for other subjects?

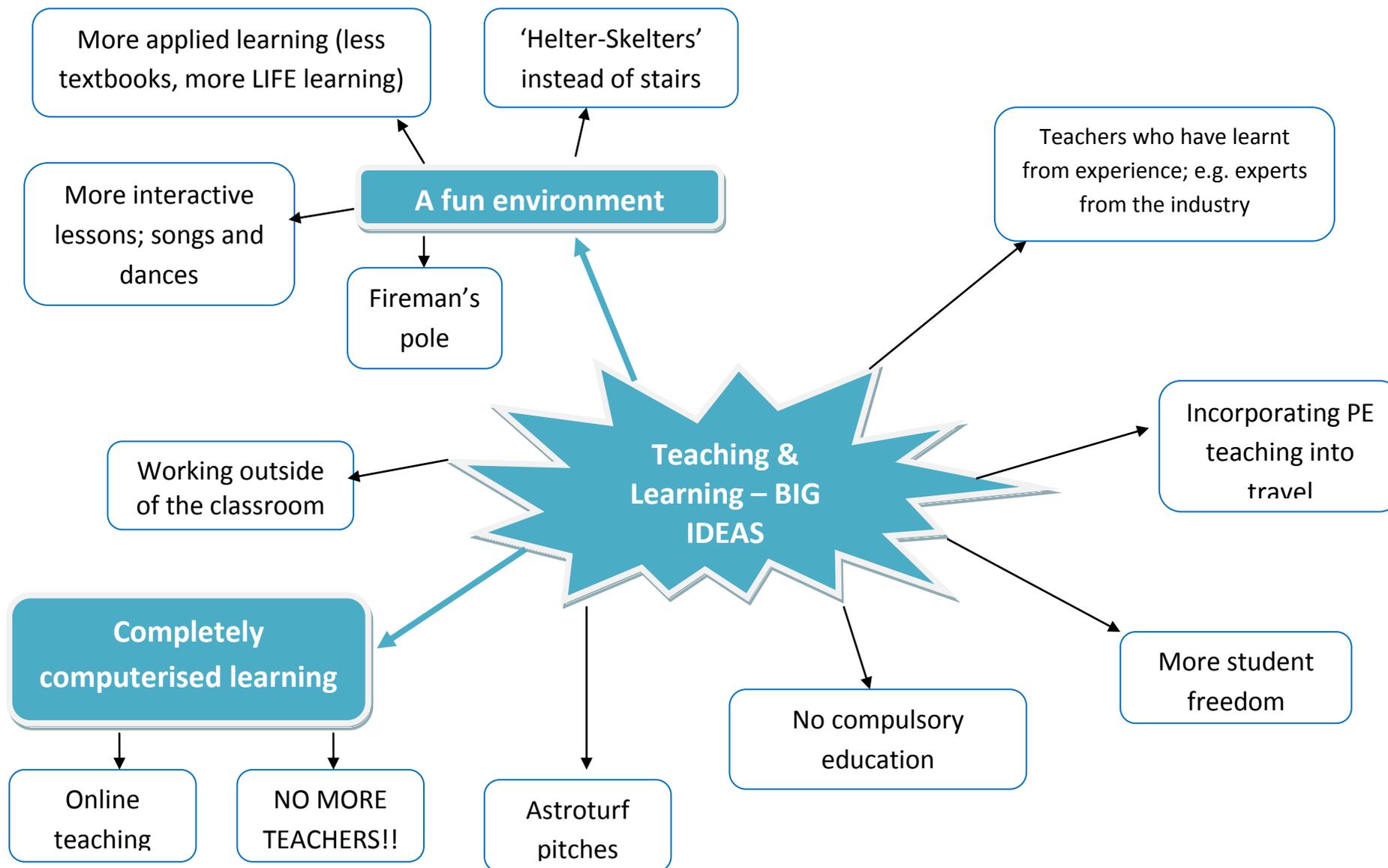
4.3. Group 3 Discussion Results

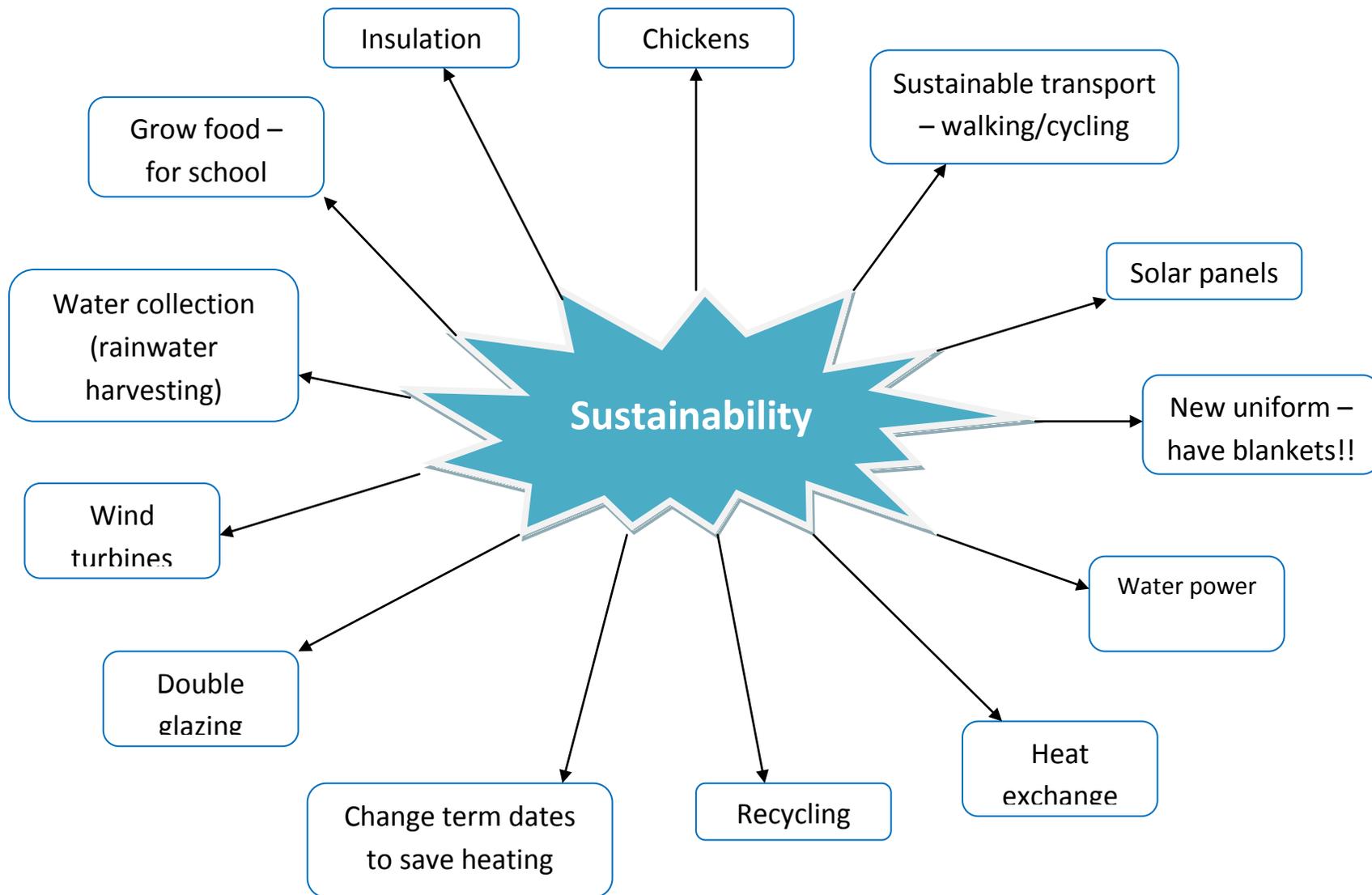
Group 3 showed its *planning and design* ideas graphically (see photograph below) while other topic areas were arranged diagrammatically (see following pages):

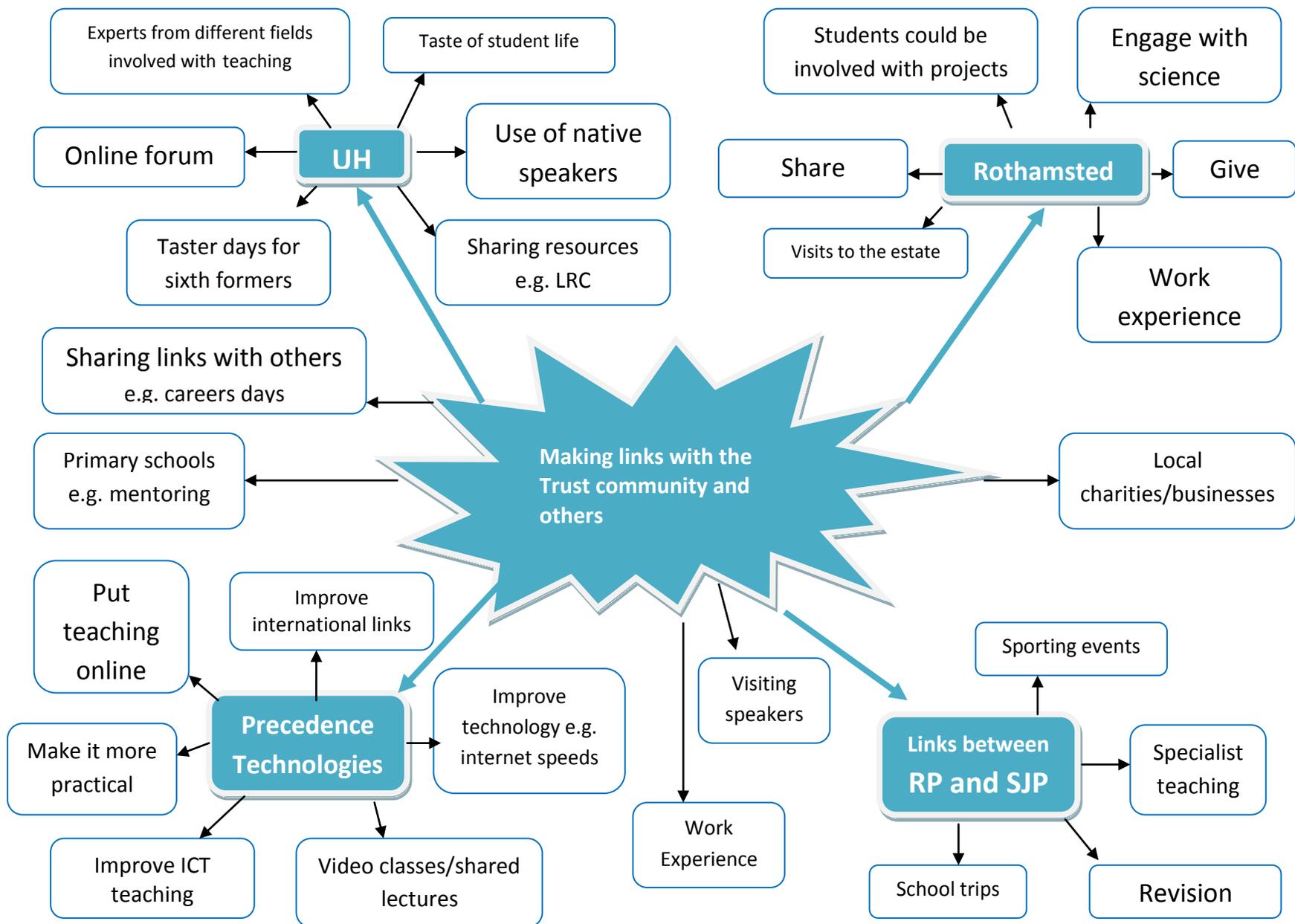












Group 3 asked the question - have we looked at what all the partners might gain?

They also noted the following points and questions:

- More considerations to how the schools can work together
- Joint revision sessions bring a new perspective to learning
- “Universal” classrooms, increased flexibility with comfortable chairs
- How would school swapping work?
- How would you develop a way of capturing the information that students find/discover on these swaps? (Also teachers’ swaps)?
- Extend mini-bus relays between schools
- Split more between virtual learning and actually attending school?
- Charging points for electric vehicles
- Redesign packaging in the canteen to reduce waste
- Joint experiments using Rothamsted facilities that can’t be replicated in the schools
- Student observations of teachers they don’t usually have – go into each others’ schools

Group 3 finished with some key thoughts:

Links – speakers/professionals coming in to share resources

Sustainability – reduce package (waste), grow food

Travel – improve transport links between schools – buses and cycle routes

Planning and design – student swap, flexible spaces – different classrooms

Learning and Teaching – more applied learning in a fun environment

5. Next steps

Dr Parham explained that the mini charrette report would be written up and made available online at the Centre for Sustainable Communities website. It is intended that the report will be as useful as possible a reference for the development of the Trust. It is clear from the wide variety of excellent ideas forthcoming that many of the issues the Trust will need to consider have been explored by the mini charrette participants. Most notable is the focus on practical and workable solutions coming from the student body – with students providing a remarkable input into the process and making the event a great success.