

## **Annex 2 – Proposal to enlarge Downs Way School**

### **Summary of Consultation**

The consultation process ran from 21 September 2015 to 19 October 2015. On 7 October 2015, a consultation meeting was held with interested parties. At this meeting, the following issues were raised and discussed:

- Demand – a question was raised with respect to whether there was sufficient long-term demand to justify the expansion of this school. An explanation of the projections for the Primary Planning Area (Oxted & Limpsfield) was provided in response. These numbers show a peak in demand over the next couple of years, followed by a stabilisation of the numbers at or around the current level thereafter. Given that there was sufficient demand this year to warrant the expansion of the school (even though there was a projected surplus in the area), it would appear that a permanent expansion will meet with demand. Furthermore, it was noted that, in contrast to other Boroughs, for which this information is available, the current forecasts for this area do not include an allowance for future housing development. As such, the Council will expect demand to be higher than projected, thus strengthening the case for expansion.
- Selection of Downs Way – it was asked why Downs Way School was chosen to expand to meet local demand, in preference to other schools in the area. It was explained that the reasoning behind the selection of this school was twofold. Firstly, the alteration made sense from a school organisation perspective, in terms of enabling the school to operate with full forms of entry, as opposed to the current situation, which can be difficult from a financial and curriculum planning point of view. Secondly, being a 0.5FE expansion, the proposal is neatly aligned with the profile of demand in the area. A larger, 1FE expansion, would be both more expensive and likely to lead to a surplus of places in the area.
- School Building – a question was raised as to how the new classroom would be integrated with the current building. The school responded that the current intention was to link the new building with the existing by way of a covered walkway.

In addition, interested parties were invited to return responses to the consultation, via the Consultation Response Form, included at the end of the Consultation Document. In total, 7 such formal responses were received. 3 of these responses were from local residents; 3 were from members of the school staff; and 1 was from a parent/carer of a child attending another school. Of the responses received, 6 agreed with the proposal and 1 disagreed with the proposal. Many of the responses raised issues in line with those set out above. However, a number of new issues were raised, as set out below:

- School Management – one response lent its support to the proposal on the basis that it would enable single age classes and, consequently, effective year group teaching and budget planning.
- Site Access – A concern was raised in relation to a feeling that access to the site was restricted and thereby problematic, especially at peak drop-off/pick-up times. It was felt that this translated into a Health & Safety concern in relation to children’s welfare and that, in order to avoid this situation being worsened, the Council should look to invest in a site for a new school, rather than expanding “already stretched services”. However, at present, the pupil forecasts do not indicate sufficient levels of demand to warrant the creation of a new school in the area and, as such, expansion of Downs Way is considered to be the best available option in school organisation terms. All such Highways matters will be properly considered as part of the Planning Process and suitable highways measures will be introduced to the scheme, if it is deemed necessary to mitigate the proposed level of expansion.