

Annex 2 – Summary of Consultation Feedback

Public Meeting – 3rd February 2016, 6pm

Held at Furzeffield Primary School

The consultation process ran from 18 January to 15 February 2016. As part of this exercise, on 3 February 2016, a consultation evening was held with interested parties. A summary of the meeting is provided below:

Public Meeting – 3 February 2016, 6pm

Held at Furzeffield Primary School

Present: Susan Chrysanthou (Headteacher), Gordon Cookson (Deputy Head), Melanie Roberts (Acting Deputy Head), Sharon Morgan (School Business Manager), Kelvin Webbe (Premises Manager), Rev Val Williams (Chair of Governors), Graham Jones (Vice Chair of Governors), Jan Knott (Governor), Oliver Gill (School Commissioning Officer, Surrey County Council)

5 members of the public also attended

Oliver Gill explained that SCC was proposing to expand the school and that this part of the process considers the educational implications of expanding Furzeffield to 3 forms of entry. The planning consultation is a separate process, although he would try his best to answer any questions relating to this.

Pupil forecasting is based on births, migration factors, and housing. Currently in Merstham there is a projected deficit of ½ a form of entry, and in the wider area of Redhill (incorporating Redhill, Reigate, Earlswood and Salfords), the shortage in available places increases to 2 forms of entry.

The educational consultation closes on 15th February 2016, and the cabinet decision will be made on March 3rd 2016.

Oliver Gill gave a short power point presentation showing estimated pupil numbers for future years in the relevant areas, clearly indicating the need for expansion.

The public were then invited to ask questions:

Q. What is the rationale for SCC's projected numbers when a new school (Lime Tree Primary) has just opened?

- A. The intake for Lime Tree Primary has been included within SCC's projected figures and there is still a shortfall of 60 places for September 2016 across the wider area, which is concentrated within the Redhill area.
- Q. Does this mean that children would be expected to travel to Furzeffield from areas outside Merstham?
- A. Yes, some pupils would likely have to travel from further afield. However, there is still projected increased demand local to Merstham and the fact that the school is both supportive of expansion, and capable of being expanded, are key assets. Surrey would not want to force schools to expand, on a permanent basis, if they didn't want to.
- Q. What happens if the PAN (pupil admission number) of 90 doesn't materialise for Furzeffield?
- A. We expect all places will be filled. Last year there were 107 applications.
NB: checking records today (4/2/16) there have currently been 110 application requests for Reception, September 2016.
- Q. If there is a shortfall in admission numbers this would affect the school's funding, (which has happened in other schools).
- A. Funding will be protected for KS1 places. Surrey can only use their best estimates. Last year's forecasts for the area were lower than the actual number that materialised.
- Q. How will the school accommodate an extra 30 students in September 2016? Is there enough time to recruit suitable staff?
- A. The current reception building can accommodate another 30 pupils as there are 3 classroom spaces already. We are lucky to have a stable staff and have had a very good field of candidates recently.
- Q. Will Forest Schools continue?
- A. Absolutely! Other staff are being supported to take on outdoor learning and another teacher is doing the Forest School training to become a leader like Mel Roberts.
- Q. What is the timescale re the expansion?
- A. Furzeffield would take on a bulge class in reception for September 2016 and then the new build would be ready for September 2017.
- Q. There is a concern about the safety of the pupils who will be on site during the build.
- A. Contractors will set clear site boundaries, and safeguarding is factored in to any school expansion. The whole project will be managed effectively. Members of the senior leadership team have already visited another school who had a similar expansion and the Headteacher was very happy with the project and the children used the build as part of their topic work, etc. and met various people involved and were fully informed all the way through – it was exciting for them!
- Q. Will pupils be consulted on the new building?

- A. Due to standardisation of processes and functionality, flexibility is limited unfortunately for personalised design.
- Q. What happened re academy status?
- A. The DfE won't take single school applications at the moment, Furzefield would have to go academy as part of a multi academy trust. The 'status' of schools makes no difference to SCC re the need for expansion.
- Q. Will there be additional funding for resources?
- A. The standard allocation will be used.
- Q. Will the PAN of 90 be protected in KS1?
- A. Yes! School can try to negotiate to continue receiving protection in KS2 but at the moment SCC say this isn't likely.
- Q. Local residents have concerns over parking, traffic and access for emergency vehicles.
- A. This is a very common concern and SCC will try to reduce the situation where they can at source, (i.e. by looking to reduce traffic movements, through a revised Travel Plan). Highways Consultants will undertake detailed traffic assessments and provide recommendations which might include speed bumps, parking restrictions, etc. in accordance with the identified need, (although the report may equally state that no additional measures are required/possible). The flow of traffic and parents dropping off/picking up will also be considered. This will be looked at in detail at the planning stage.
- Q. Would there be a possibility of providing a bus which could bring in children from the wider Redhill area and thereby alleviate some of the traffic concerns?
- A. The provision of a bus service is inherently demand led and a shuttle service is provided for the very small number of children who are currently eligible for home-to-school transport. The Home-to-School Transport Department could consider the viability of a bus service, should sufficient need arise from pupils with longer journey times. Ultimately, this would be assessed in accordance with the annual intake of the school and it is possible that this need may emerge in the medium-to-long-term.

The meeting concluded at 7pm. Notes will be published on the school website and a copy will also go to the cabinet member on March 3rd 2016.

A number of questions were submitted by a member of the public who was unable to attend the meeting. These questions are presented below, along with the associated answers:

- Q. How much will the building work impact on the children whilst they are at school? How will the noise and general dust/pollution be kept to a minimum so as not to disturb their learning or playtime?

- A. All the contractors working on the Council's school expansions schemes have extensive experience of delivering buildings on school sites and are aware of the particular challenges this raises. We would expect the contractor to work closely alongside the school in devising their strategy for working on the site and this will be conscious of the need to avoid disruption to pupils' learning.
- Q. Will there be some sort of parking available for parents to drop off children? It is bad enough now around the local roads, it's an accident waiting to happen with the amount of parked cars. Much as we may like the idea of walking to and from school, many parents have to travel say 2 or more miles to the school; and it is impossible for a working parent to have time to walk back home from school then drive to work. We usually park 400-800m away from school, yet it's hard sometimes even then to find a parking space. More children equals more traffic.
- A. This is an issue that is common around school sites and is a challenge that is frequently encountered in respect of the schools expansion programme. At this stage, it is too early to comment on particular elements of the building project, as this will all be part of a separate design programme. This process will involve a consideration of all relevant planning and highways issues such as that referred to above. Ultimately, though, it is unlikely that dedicated parking would be established for parent for pick-up and drop-off, as this is not something that is typically encouraged through the planning process.
- Q. Will there be an additional hall built for PE etc.? At present classes miss PE of another class is using the hall for wither play rehearsals or assembly rehearsals, most of December is already a month without a PE lesson, so to have more classes would mean more use of the hall.
- A. As above, the proposals for the building project are not yet in place. However, once these plans have been sufficiently developed, they will be the subject of a separate consultation exercise, (again, at the school), to which all interested parties will be invited. The actual question of whether additional space for PE will be provided is ultimately determined by an assessment of the school's current provision, relative to the national area guidelines for schools indicated in *Building Bulletin 103*.

Formal Responses

In addition, all interested parties were invited to return formal responses to the consultation, via the completion of the online feedback form (supplied on both the school's and the Council's website), or otherwise. In total, two formal responses were received; one from a local resident and the other from a parent/carer of a child at the school. Of the responses received, one disagreed with the proposal and the other neither agreed, nor disagreed. The themes raised in the responses are summarised below, along with responses:

Issue1: Further concern was raised in relation to the impact that the increase in numbers would have in relation to inconsiderate parking in the vicinity of the site, during the school pick-up and drop-off period, and it was suggested that parking restrictions be introduced to the rear of the site. In addition, it was felt that the proposal would result in an increase in traffic

movements on the local highway network and that this was in conflict with SCC policy in relation to sustainability.

Res. 1: As referred to above, these highways matters are properly considered as part of the planning process. As part of this process, a survey will be undertaken of traffic movements to/from the site at peak times, with a view to assessing the potential impact of expanding the school and making recommendations as to mitigation measures that could be taken in this respect.

Although it was accepted at the meeting that not all of the additional demand was being generated in Merstham, the projections indicate⁴ that over 0.5FE of additional demand is being generated in this area specifically, with further significant demand projected for the wider Reigate & Redhill area. As the Council and its schools prefer to manage expansions in multiples of whole forms of entry, to expand another school instead of Furzefield would result in at least as many vehicular journeys in the opposite direction, relative to the current proposal. In this respect, the expansion is being closely as closely aligned with local demand as practicable.

Issue 2: One respondent asked why Lime Tree Primary was not simply built with an additional form of entry, rather than expanding Furzefield Primary School. This respondent felt that Lime Tree Primary School was in a preferable location to take the additional pupils.

Res. 2: Although the Council cannot comment on the question of whether it would have considered 3FE to be a suitable size for Lime Tree Primary School, the reason that this was not considered at the time was that the pupil forecasts were lower at the point of planning this new school than they are presently. Increasing birth rates in the area have resulted in the Council having to formulate a strategy for further expansions to the school estate, of which the proposed expansion of Furzefield represents a key part.

Issue 3: One respondent felt that SCC had failed to take into account the impact of Lime Tree Primary School in terms of providing places to the locality. In addition, this respondent felt that the fact that Merstham Primary School's 2015 'bulge' class was not full was indicative of there being insufficient local demand to warrant the expansion of Furzefield.

Res. 3: In planning school places, the Council works in terms of 'Planning Areas', within which schools' capacity and pupil demand are mapped against one another. Lime Tree Primary School is contained within the Redhill Planning Area and is, therefore, factored into the capacity vs. Forecast numbers provided for the wider Reigate & Redhill area, within the presentation provided at the consultation evening. As such, the impact of these places in providing for demand is very much included within the modelling undertaken in formulating this proposal. Whilst it is true that Merstham Primary School's 2015 'bulge' class is not full (the October census shows it having 50 of the available 60 places occupied), this is entirely in line with the projections. Ultimately, as the Council operates in terms of whole forms of entry, it was anticipated that the provision of a bulge at Merstham would create surplus

capacity. The alternative was to provide too few local places, which would conflict with the Council's statutory duty in this respect.