

Appendix 2

Proposed expansion of Saltdean Primary School to three forms of entry from September 2015

Public Meeting Notes

Meeting date 20th May 2014 at 19.00Hrs
Attendees Michael Nix, Gillian Churchill from the Local Authority (LA)
 Katherine Eastland Chair of Governors and Suzanne Morgan Head Teacher St Andrews CE Primary School
 Councillors Hyde, Mears and Smith
 Approx 20 members of the public

Michael Nix gave a short presentation outlining the process and why the LA was making the proposal. He also stated that this is a genuine consultation, no decision has yet been made and that the final decision will be made by elected members not by officers. The LA has been considering the need for expansion in the Saltdean area for a while and it now believes that expanding the school by one form of entry is the correct action to take for the community and the school.

All responses to the consultation will be made available to members before the decision is made. The decision is made on balance bearing in mind the responses to the consultation and the need to provide additional school places.

Work has started on feasibility plans in conjunction with the school and the current intention is to provide the additional buildings to link the two existing buildings.

The floor was then opened to questions.

Why should parents of pupils currently at the school support this proposal?

A larger school can provide wider opportunities for pupils and staff alike. There are local examples of larger schools which have had outstanding Ofsted inspections recently. The success of a school is not necessarily linked to the size of the school: it is about exceptional teaching and leadership and management.

This proposal will bring additional congestion outside the school.

If the community of Saltdean is growing the school needs to grow too. As part of developing the scheme prior to submitting a planning application the Council will engage a traffic consultant to look specifically at the issue of traffic safety. If the school does not expand it is likely that some parents will have to be driving their children past the school to get to another school which would

also add to traffic congestion. Traffic safety is important to the school but it is difficult to change behaviours. The Head Teacher confirmed that the school does challenge poor behaviour by parents when they see it.

The school needs a larger car park to ensure that staff do not park on adjacent roads.

This is something that can be looked at as part of the design process but cannot be promised at the present time.

Can the current head teacher confirm that she will stay at the school for the foreseeable future?

The head teacher confirmed that she had no intention to move at the present time. She was confident that the school site could accommodate the additional pupils proposed and would ensure that the resultant school had a cohesive feel. The school was working with the architect to ensure that the year group clusters would remain and that a larger hall space would be provided. The Chair of Governors said that the school firmly believed that leadership, quality teaching and relationship with parents and pupils were what was important in a school. The head teacher stated that she would still be able to know each child individually if the expansion went ahead. As the expansion would 'fill from the bottom' it would also provide extra accommodation for a period of time that could be used in a creative way to benefit the pupils.

How will the disruption be managed and minimised during the construction phase if the proposal goes ahead?

The Council has a strategic partnership for the delivery of projects such as this. This partnership includes the architects, constructor and all the specialists necessary to deliver a large construction project. The constructor, Westridge Construction will work closely with the senior leadership of the school to ensure that the disruption is kept to an absolute minimum.

Will there be an opportunity to look at any building plans prior to a planning application being made?

Yes, we normally hold a meeting at the school just prior to submitting a planning application. This allows people to see the plans and make any comments they have. Where appropriate we will include amendments to the drawings.

What contribution will East Sussex County Council (ESCC) make to the cost of the proposed scheme?

ESCC has been approached to see if they would be able to make a contribution to the scheme but it is unlikely that this would be the case. All capital funding for projects such as this comes to LAs from central

government. Revenue funding follows the children regardless of their home address.

Will the systems for managing pupils with additional needs cope in the event of an expansion?

Yes. The school will always take these matters on board and build provision accordingly. The provision is always focused on the children and their needs and the proposed expansion would not change this. As a school Saltdean has been able to demonstrate that they have been 'closing the gap' and this too will continue. It is at the heart of the success of the school.

Will the proposed expansion cater for pupils who should properly go to other schools?

The data we have shows that there are very few pupils attending the school from outside the Saltdean / Rottingdean communities.

What will happen if the proposed budget is insufficient for the project?

The budget has been set on the basis of experience of similar projects. In the event that the cost of the scheme is higher than anticipated a value engineering exercise will be undertaken. Initially we will look to use different products that will not materially affect the end project. This will be carried out in conjunction with the school. Another benefit of using the partnership is that all parties, including costs consultants, are on board from an early stage which means that we have far fewer surprises in terms of costs than a more traditionally procured project.

What will happen is there are insufficient pupils within the catchment area to fill the school?

The admissions arrangement for primary schools is on the basis of distance from the school not catchment areas. It is not possible to refuse admission to the school until the school reaches its Published Admission Number (PAN). If a school is oversubscribed the council uses its published admission priorities to decide who gets offered a place.

Will the school engage additional staff?

Yes the school will need to engage additional staff as it expands. Schools are dynamic places with staff progressing to new positions and other schools all the time. The proposed expansion would be managed as part of this usual strategic planning process. The school will only ever recruit outstanding teachers. The pupils are involved in the recruitment process.

Are staff in support of this proposal?

Yes and very excited about the opportunities it brings for the school.

When would any works be completed if the proposal was to proceed?

The intention is that there would be sufficient accommodation available for September 2015 for the current bulge classes and the additional form of entry. The remainder of the project would be completed by Christmas 2015.

Meeting ended.