

Appendix 4: Letter from Chair of Governors, St Andrew's CE Primary School, received 2 July 2014

The governing body of St Andrew's school met on 1st July 2014 to consider its response to the Local Authority's proposal to expand St Andrew's school to 3 forms of entry from 2015. The governing body considered the best interests of the current school community as well as the need in the wider community for additional school places as identified by the Council through their planning process. As a Church of England school this approach was strongly supported by the National Society and the Diocese of Chichester. The governing body also took into account the results of the consultation process and any new information received during the process.

The governing body acknowledged the strength of opposition to the proposed expansion from the results of the consultation. There were a wide range of reasons for this opposition but many of the concerns were linked to the LA policy and communication regarding key issues.

These issues included a questioning of the specific need for St Andrew's to provide additional school places, as well as concerns regarding the potential impact on other local schools. There was concern that insufficient information had been provided for the school community to fully understand the context of the request for St Andrew's to expand and decisions were being made too quickly.

There was also dissatisfaction with the proposed expansion plans largely on the basis that there was no provision of any additional land to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers. There was a concern that the Haddington St car park had not been incorporated in the planning options. This was the initial favoured option of the governing body but the LA advised that this would not be possible without a "land swap" or significant reimbursement from the building project funding. However, the LA's position seems to have moderated on this issue during the consultation.

The issue of traffic congestion is a major concern and concern was expressed about the lack of information regarding this key issue.

In response to this feedback, the governing body has made a decision to defer its final submission regarding the proposed expansion to provide an opportunity for the Council to communicate more clearly and directly with the school community regarding the above issues. It specifically requests the following:

- LA representatives agree to meet with interested and concerned members of the school community to provide additional information and respond to questions;
- The LA provide clear information regarding the specific need for additional school places in the area immediate around St Andrew's and the potential impact on other local schools. This should include the current numbers attending local schools for September 2014. An infographic providing a map of demand, and spare places, would be helpful.
- The LA must provide new plans which include the use of Haddington St car park and would not require a land swap from our existing site or compromise the project funding allocation. This is essential to being able to address a wide range of concerns.
- The LA must set out a clear and detailed procedure, including a timeframe for developing a safe travel plan for children if the school were expanded.
- The LA reconsider the timeframe regarding the next stage of the consultation process to ensure that the above information can be provided to the school community prior to the governing body making a final submission. Once the LA has confirmed the timeframe, the school community will be informed as to when the governors' final submission will be made.

Finally the governing body acknowledges that these were not the only issues to be raised by the school community, however at this stage we have decided to defer our final submission on the basis of the issues related to the LA policy and communication which we consider could helpfully be addressed by the LA. The outcome of this communication and other issues raised during the consultation will be taken into account as part of the governing body's final submission.