SMITHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL PROPOSED PERMANENT EXPANSION

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES REPORT (Revised)

The purpose of this report is to present the outcomes from the stakeholder engagement period in relation to the proposed expansion of Smitham Primary School by one form of entry (an additional 30 reception pupils) from September 2018.

1. Background

1.1 There are insufficient primary pupil places available in the South West of Croydon to meet future demand. To help meet its statutory duty, the Council is proposing to permanently expand Smitham Primary school by one form of entry, thereby increasing the size of the school. An initial feasibility study shows that the school size can accommodate the proposed expansion.

1.2 The Council, in partnership with the school, sought the views of stakeholders about the proposed expansion during a four week engagement period - 21 September to 19 October 2015 - including a public meeting at the school on 28 September 2015.

1.3 The original proposal was to expand the school by one form of entry from September 2017; however, following careful consideration of all the information available during the engagement period, we are recommending that proposed expansion takes place from September 2018. We have discussed this change of date with the leadership team at Smitham Primary.

1.4 Stakeholders will have another opportunity during the representation (formal consultation) period – 04 November to 02 December 2015 - to express their views in writing - comment on, support or object the proposed expansion of Smitham Primary School by one form of entry from September 2018.

2. Engagement

2.1 There is not a statutory requirement to consult stakeholders before the publication of a statutory proposal; however the Council recognises the benefits of seeking the views of key stakeholders at an early stage of the proposal.

2.2 During the period - 21 September to 19 October – the school community, involving staff, governing body, parents/carers and local residents were able to express their views about the proposed expansion verbally and in writing.

2.3 A stakeholder engagement document, with an accompanying response sheet was used as a means of informing and seeking initial views of stakeholders on the proposal to permanently expand Smitham Primary School. The document outlined details about the proposed expansion of the school, the reasons for the proposed change and details of how those with an interest can respond.
3. Communication and Engagement activities

3.1 A range of methods were used to inform and facilitate feedback from stakeholders on the proposed expansion of Smitham Primary School. Communication activities included the circulation of the consultation document, including response sheet and leaflet via:

- **Schools' E-bulletin**
  - circulated to schools within the Borough

- **Email**
  - sent to Ward Councillors / MP
  - schools within neighbouring/adjourning borough

- **Website:**
  - consultation document and response sheet published on the Croydon website
  - Consultation document, questionnaire on school’s website
  - Online questionnaire (survey monkey)

- **Printed documents**
  - consultation documents /response sheet available at school
  - consultation leaflets distributed to local residents informing them about the consultation and invitation to public meeting - 1829 leaflets were distributed to residents / businesses within the vicinity of the school
  - document sent/given to parents/carers by school

- **Posters advertising consultation and public meeting dates**
  - displayed in local library

- **Public meeting at Smitham Primary School**

4. Summary of Responses

4.1 **Response sheet**
Respondents were asked for their views on the proposed expansion of Smitham Primary, by selecting either ‘strongly agree’; ‘In favour’; ‘Not sure’; ‘Not in favour’; and ‘strongly against’. Respondents were also given the opportunity to make comments on the proposal.

4.2 The Council received a total of 72 written responses from parents/carers and local residents during the engagement period. The majority of respondents (49) selected ‘Strongly against’ the proposed expansion of the school. Of the 72 respondents; 65 identified themselves as parents/carers of children at Smitham Primary School.

4.3 **Public meeting**
There were 55 people, including parents/carers and local residents, in attendance at the public meeting on 08 October 2015. Representatives from the Council and the Smitham Primary leadership team explained the rationale for the proposed expansion and answered attendees’ questions.
4.4 Comments/concerns about the proposed expansion
The main comments/concerns cited on the questionnaire and mentioned at the public meeting fall under the following broad themes:

- Traffic related
- Loss of ethos / feel / atmosphere
- Disruption to teaching / learning
- Communal space
- Need to build a new primary school

4.5 The table at Annex A outlines the concerns and our responses to these.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Overall, the responses received during this engagement period indicate that the majority of respondents object to the proposed expansion of the school. Of the 72 respondents who completed the questionnaire:

- 59 object to the proposal (strongly against or not in favour)
- 9 support the proposal (strongly agree or in favour)
- 4 not sure about the proposal

5.2 The main reason given by those who object to the proposed expansion focused on the additional traffic and parking problems that would be caused if the proposal is implemented.

5.3 Some of the concerns raised can be addressed through the design and planning stage of the process. Smitham Primary senior leadership team, including the Governing Body supports the principle of expanding the school.

6. Next steps

6.1 Stakeholders will be able to make representations – comment on; support or object the proposed expansion – during the formal consultation process – 04 November to 02 December 2015.

7. Annexes

- Annex A - outlines the Concerns / Questions raised by respondents and our Responses.
- Annex B - detailed analysis of the responses

End
### Annex A

#### Summary of Key Concerns / Questions and Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Concerns / Questions</th>
<th>Council / School Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traffic related</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Transport issues/congestion in the area</td>
<td>The Council will commission a transport impact assessment around the school to ascertain how the local area would cope with all modes of movements by people and vehicles, taking account of accessibility and safety issues. This assessment would take place at peak times, including when parents/carers ‘drop off’ and ‘pick up’ children; and would give an indication of any potential impact of traffic as a result of the additional pupils at school, and mitigating actions against any identified risks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The extra traffic would be a safety issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The parking is already a major issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It’s dangerous and impossible to park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parking is awful in residential roads - access driveways and on pathways. More children will only make this worse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inadequate parking as it is at the moment. Staff car parking already over capacity. Parents’ park all over the roads.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Loss of ethos / feel / atmosphere</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Concerned about losing the unique 'feel'</td>
<td>Smitham Primary is a popular and successful school with strong leadership and governance. We are confident that the strong leadership and excellent teaching staff at the school will maintain the ethos/feel/atmosphere of the school if the proposal implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The school will lose its small school identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ...taking away the community feel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lose its 'village' feel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Will destroy the community feel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- School would lose its uniqueness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Smitham Primary is a popular and successful school with strong leadership and governance. We are confident that the strong leadership and excellent teaching staff at the school will maintain the ethos/feel/atmosphere of the school if the proposal implemented.</td>
<td>There are also benefits to be derived from the expanding an existing school, such as, better recruitment and retention of good teaching staff; wider curriculum offer; and improved facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Disruption to teaching / learning**

- …building works etc will be too disruptive through term time learning
- Disruption to existing children during building
- ..concerned about how the building work will impact on children and staff
- Building works etc will be too disruptive through term time learning
- Will have a negative effect on the school
- From previous experience - expanding the school will affect the school and pupils- at my sons school it went to inadequate from outstanding.

**Insufficient communal space – play space; dining room**

- The grounds of the school are not big enough to build on without impacting on children’s outside learning and exercise
- Loss of outside playing space and pressure on remaining space with extra pupils
- Outside spaces is limited and building on this is detrimental playground space would be lost is a concern
- School is 2 form purpose built it cannot absorb a 3rd classroom around the 'shared space'
- An increase in pupils will put a strain on the current facilities

**Communal space**

Initial viability study shows that the school site has the capacity to be expanded.

A detailed feasibility study will be carried will be carefully out and options considered by the Council, school leadership team and the architect which include ensuring that the size of communal areas are increased to accommodate the additional pupils at the school.

In relation to play space, Sport England will be consulted and the Council will adhere to national guidelines.

A range of measures, e.g. staggered play and lunch times will be explored to enable pupils to have sufficient space.

The expansion proposal includes additional classrooms with associated cloaks/toilets required for the additional number of pupils.
Need to build a new primary school

- why not build another school - especially with the new cane hill development underway
- Build another primary school on cane hill and another high school
- Two schools close together is bad enough let alone with increased traffic through the cane hill development. Need a new school
- Why have developer not been asked to build a new school as part of the plans
- 700 homes in Cane Hill alone is still not going to be enough spaces by expanding the school. A new school would make more sense to reduce disturbance to current pupils

A key part of the Council’s strategy for providing additional pupil places is to firstly invest in expanding existing successful and popular schools in areas of demand. This strategy helps in meeting parental preference as well as ensuring value for money for Croydon taxpayers.

Every year we project the number of school places that will need in the borough in future years. The methodology we use to project pupil numbers includes the number of children we expect to live in new housing developments. Information from the Cane Hill housing development is included in our most recent projections for pupil places required in the South West of the Borough.

The plan is for this additional demand to be met through the expansion of Smitham Primary and other proposed school expansions in the South West.

The option of building a brand new school on a new site to provide additional pupil places is a potential alternative. However, there are a number of reasons for considering the expansion of existing school site rather than building a new school.

These are:

- Changes in legislation - the Education Act 2011 changed the arrangements for establishing new schools and introduced section 6A (the free school presumption) to the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Where a LA thinks there is a need for a new school in its area it must seek proposals to establish an academy (free school).
- However, it is still possible to publish proposals for brand new maintained schools outside the competitive arrangements in certain circumstances, for example, where a competition does not identify a suitable academy/free school.
- As under the previous new school competition arrangements, the Local Authority is responsible for providing the site for the new school, and meeting all associated capital costs. Currently all funding from the latest financial settlement
from central government have is committed to existing identified projects. The full DfE guidance on ‘The free school presumption’ is attached to this report.

- Lack of Council owned sites
- High cost of other sites that could for educational use.
- Available sites not in area of demand for pupil places
- Building a new school takes a longer time to complete and might not be ready in time to meet the demand for pupil places.
- Expansion of existing school means that we have more certainty of high quality education.
Annex B – Analysis of Responses - Proposed expansion of Smitham Primary

What is your view of the proposal to expand Smitham Primary School to create places for 30 additional places?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your view?</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In favour</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in favour</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly against</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The 1 respondent that said ‘Strongly agree’ with the proposal to expand Smitham Primary School was a parent/carer and a local resident.

- Of the 8 ‘In favour’ of the proposal
  > 7 are parent/carer; and 1 is also a local resident
  > 1 said ‘other’

- Of the 4 ‘Not sure’ about the proposal:
  > all are parent/carers; and 3 of these are also local residents.

- Of the 10 ‘Not in favour’:
  > 8 are parents/carers; one is a local resident; and one also said other.

- Of the 49 ‘Strongly against’
  > 45 are Parent/Carer; and of these 12 are also local residents and 1 of these also stated other.
  > 4 of these are local residents; and 2 of these also said other

Tell us who you are?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who are you?</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent/carer</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local resident</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Of the 65 Parent/carer
  >18 are also local residents; 1 of these is a pupil; and 1 said other.

- Of the 5 local residents
  >2 also said other

- 2 said other