

## **SCHOOL ENLARGEMENT – FAQs**

### **How accurate are your forecasts?**

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) produces pupil forecasts each year to ensure projections of future demand are based on the most current data available.

The county wide forecasts are generally well within the Audit Commission's guidelines of +/-1% accuracy year on year.

### **What is a planning area?**

For forecasting purposes the county is divided into secondary and primary school planning areas. These planning areas are administrative boundaries, based on geographical areas containing either single schools or groups of schools.

There will always be movement across planning areas as a result of parental preference and because some children may live close to the border of one administrative planning area boundary, whilst their closest school may actually be in the adjacent planning area.

### **How have you evaluated whether this school has the potential to expand?**

The county council considers the potential expansion options against the *Four Tests*, which are as follows:

- Does it provide the right number of places in the right location?
- Does it support and not undermine school effectiveness?
- Are the implications for buildings, environment and cost, feasible and affordable?
- What are the transitional implications?

### **What is the legal basis for the county council to increase the number of pupils at a community or voluntary controlled school?**

HCC is the "admission authority" for all community and voluntary controlled schools in Hertfordshire (section 88 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998) and has responsibility for all decisions about how many pupils schools admit and under what arrangements.

### **Which statutory codes can be used to make the decision to request an increase in pupil numbers at a community or voluntary controlled school and in which year was this published?**

Paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 of the current School Admissions Code (published in December 2014) allows any admission authority to admit pupils over a

published admission number (PAN) after admission arrangements have been determined (as long as the local authority retains the ability to deliver coordination effectively). This is also confirmed by Regulation 14 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.

### **What is the timeline for implementation/procedure for decision making?**

The following timetable outlines the decision-making process for the enlargement proposals the County Council is currently consulting on. Please note that meetings marked with \* will be open to the public.

<b>Process</b>	<b>Date</b>
Public consultation	11 February – 1 April 2019
Education Panel*	10 May 2019
Cabinet*	13 May 2019
Statutory notice period (4 weeks)	Week commencing 13 May 2019
Cabinet * (for final approval if objections received)	8 July 2019
Implementation	September 2020

### **How are you ensuring the full engagement of the local community?**

The consultation letter and the online response form are both available on the Hertfordshire.gov.uk website and letters have been sent to libraries in local areas to increase the awareness of the local community to the public consultation on the proposals. Other consultees have been contacted directly via email or letter.

These include:

- Local County and District councillors and MPs
- Parish/Town councils
- Residents living in the area around the school
- Local schools, colleges and early years settings, including Children's Centres
- The Anglican and RC Dioceses
- Local NHS trusts and the Primary Care Trust
- Relevant trade union organisations

### **How can I influence the decision?**

Send us your views using the online response form at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/consultations/consultations.aspx>.

All comments will be collected and taken into account by elected members who will then make the final decision.

**Has the school to be expanded been involved in the consultation process?**

The Head Teacher and Governing Body, alongside all teachers, parents and carers of children at the school, are aware of the proposals and are also being consulted through this process.

**Will enlargement benefit local children?**

Yes, by enlarging this school we will be able to continue to ensure that there is a place for pupils in the locality.

**Will the numbers of infant pupils per qualified teacher increase?**

No. Government legislation on Key Stage 1 class sizes limits the numbers of infant children in a class to 30 pupils per single qualified teacher. The county council will continue to follow this legislation.

**How is the county council addressing any traffic implications arising from this proposal?**

The county council has sought advice from Highways consultants in considering the implications of this proposal. Planning permission will probably be required for subsequent building work which would mean that there would be a separate consultation locally through the town planning system on the details of any proposed enlargement scheme. Any specific town planning matters associated with the school site would need to be addressed as part of the planning application, including highways and parking issues.

**Will there be building works on the school site and how will pupils' education be affected?**

Additional classrooms will be required and the county council will work closely with the school to ensure that appropriate accommodation is provided to enable them to operate effectively. The work would be managed by the council using contractors who would ensure a safe environment for pupils and staff, and minimise the impact of any building works at the school.

If a decision is made to enlarge the school, the county council will work closely with the school to provide the additional accommodation required. We would work hard to make sure that the accommodation supports pupils' needs while also ensuring that good value for money is achieved in the context of restrictions on public sector finance. The work would be managed by the council using contractors who would ensure a safe environment for

pupils and staff, and minimise the impact of any building works at the school.

The proposed building scheme will probably be subject to a separate town planning process which itself will be subject to a separate formal consultation with the local community. Any specific town planning matters associated with the school site would need to be addressed as part of the planning application, including highways, parking and conservation issues.

### **How can I keep in touch with progress/outcomes of the proposals?**

Although it will not be possible to inform everyone individually of the decisions made, access to this information is available at:

<http://cmis.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertfordshire/Calendarofcouncilmeetings.aspx>

### **If I am not happy with the final decision what further steps can I take?**

No decisions have been taken yet and we do encourage you to give us your views. These will all be made available to County Councillors for consideration in their decision making process.

You can respond on line at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/consultations/consultations.aspx>

### **What if the proposals are not supported and so do not go ahead?**

If the proposals are not supported then there is unlikely to be a sufficient number of school places for reception age children in this area. This will mean very young children having to travel further to school.

### **Will the primary school enlargement have an effect on the number of secondary school places required in the future? What steps are being taken to plan for this?**

Inevitably, the increase in demand for primary school places that we have experienced over the last few years is following through into the secondary sector. This means additional secondary places are now required. The County Council is already monitoring secondary demand and planning additional places where they are required. Our latest forecast by planning area provides an insight in to the areas with the greatest pressure for secondary places. Further details can be found at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolplaces>

### **Where is the money for this school enlargement coming from?**

Where additional school places are needed as a consequence of new housing developments, the county council will expect developer contributions to pay a proportionate percentage of the cost of the expansion.

Housing developer contributions will continue to be closely scrutinised to ensure they contribute proportionately towards the overall cost, the remainder of which will be funded by the county council.

### **What will the physical enlargement scheme look like?**

The school will require additional classrooms and the use of additional land for a playing field which will require some work in order for it to be used by the school. In order to ensure minimal disruption to the school community during the building works, the county council will utilise modern off-site construction methods which offer quality buildings, reduced on-site timeframes and value for money. Planning permission will probably be required for the building work, which would mean that there would be a separate consultation locally through the town planning system on the details of any proposed enlargement scheme.

### **Who can I talk to for more information?**

Should you have any queries that are not answered in these FAQs or the related documentation available at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolplaces>,

Please contact the Customer Service Centre in the first instance on 0300 123 4043.