



**County Hall  
Hertford, SG13 8DF**

**Tel: 0300 123 4043**

**My ref: School Planning**

**Date: 26 January 2017**

Dear Consultee

**Consultation on the proposal to enlarge the premises of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Great Hadham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 2NL**

We are consulting you on the following proposal:

**The enlargement of the premises of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Great Hadham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 2NL by 15 places (0.5 form of entry<sup>1</sup>) from September 2018.**

The proposal will support a permanent increase in the size of this school by 15 places (0.5 form of entry). This means the school will then have the capacity to admit 60 reception aged children in September 2018 and in each subsequent year thereafter, growing to a full 2 form entry (f. e.) school (with 420 places available) by September 2024. The current capacity of the school is 315 and the eventual capacity will be 420 pupils (excluding Nursery pupils).

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has been successful in its bid, as part of the Government's Priority School Building Programme Phase 2 (PSBP2), which means significant works to improve the school built environment. As part of the planning for these works we have been in discussions with the school and the Diocese of Westminster around expanding the school to 2 f. e. which would assist in meeting a local Catholic need.

### **Why is this being proposed?**

Analysis of recent applications for primary school places in Bishop's Stortford indicates an unsatisfied demand for Catholic provision in the town.

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<sup>1</sup> One form of entry is 30 pupils per year group

The planned PSBP2 building scheme at St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School offers the opportunity to consider the potential enlargement of the school which is likely to offer a value for money solution for 0.5 f.e. of additional places.

The county council considers it important to ensure that there are sufficient places available for very young children as near as possible to their homes. There is more information on how we plan **to meet the demand for school places** and our methods for forecasting at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolplaces](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolplaces).

### **The position in Bishop’s Stortford**

The total number of permanent reception places available in Bishop’s Stortford is 480. In 2016/17, an additional 30 places were offered on a temporary basis to ensure every child was able to access a local reception place.

The following table shows the forecast demand for places and the surplus or shortfall based on the current number of permanent reception places available.

<b>Summer Term 2016/17 Forecast</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
<b>Demand</b>	516	468	453	445
<b>Surplus/Shortage</b>	-6	12	27	35

Although forecasts indicate a surplus of places from 2017/18 onwards, for the last three years the county council has had to add an additional 30 temporary reception places at local primary schools each year to meet actual demand. Alongside this the county council has implemented strategies to manage in-year demand where, in a number of primary year groups, there are no vacancies available across the whole town which means new families moving into Bishops Stortford with primary aged children potentially left without access to a primary school place into the town.

The county council is planning new primary schools to serve the proposed new housing development at Bishops Stortford North which will be located in the heart of the development and will be established in line with the developer’s programme of house building. However, we are aware of other new housing proposed in Bishop’s Stortford, which isn’t taken account of in terms of additional primary provision proposed within the Bishop’s Stortford North development. This new housing growth will further increase demand for school places across the town.

In order to ensure that the existing demand can be met locally and in light of the anticipated future housing growth, an additional 0.5 f. e. in the town would be helpful in meeting local need, could avoid the need for further temporary expansions and also potentially assist in meeting future in-year demand. Thus the county council is proposing to permanently increase the number of reception places available at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School from 45 to 60 from September 2018.

### **Why this school has been chosen for enlargement**

The proposal to enlarge this school has been assessed against, and is considered to meet, the County Council’s *Four Tests*. These are:

- 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?

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has been selected as it is located close to the area of demand and will assist in meeting a demand for catholic primary places which has been evidenced by recent application/allocation data. Initial feasibility work concludes that the site is capable of accommodating an enlargement, subject to further design work and town planning permission. An increase of 0.5 f. e. will mean the school becoming 2 f. e. permanently which is the county council's preferred size, offering a broad curriculum and enhanced opportunities for staff development. The proposed enlargement will provide the opportunity for pupils to be taught in straight year groups.

For further information on the possible options that were considered, please see [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolplaces](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolplaces). Frequently asked questions are also available through this link.

### **The alterations required for enlargement**

The PSBP2 scheme is being managed by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) on behalf of the Government. If the county council makes a decision to enlarge this school, we would work to ensure that the additional accommodation supports pupils' needs whilst also ensuring that good value for money is achieved in the context of restrictions on public sector finance.

Planning permission will be required for any building work which would mean that the EFA would progress a town planning application. There would then be a separate consultation locally through the town planning system on the details of any proposed building work. Any specific town planning matters associated with this school site would need to be addressed as part of the planning application, including highways, parking and conservation issues.

### **Have your say**

The county council believes that the enlargement of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will have a positive impact for its existing pupils, staff and local community by improving access to school places, providing for enhanced education opportunities and for improved facilities in new buildings.

You have until 15 March 2017 to let us know your views. The easiest way you can do this is by completing the online form on our website at <http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/your-council/consult/schoolsconsult/>. You can tell us if you agree or disagree with the proposal and leave your comments.

If you do not have access to the internet you can visit your local library where free access is available to all Hertfordshire residents. Should you wish to request a hard copy of the response form or need help understanding this information you can email

[contact@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:contact@hertfordshire.gov.uk) or alternatively please call us on the number above. An interpreting service is available for those who need it.

Your comments must be received by 15 March 2017. We will not be able to acknowledge or respond individually to your comments but they will be taken into account, as explained below.

### **How the decision will be taken**

This is a consultation and no decision has been made yet. All comments received will be made available to elected members who make the final decision. All responses may be made available in public reports, although personal details will be removed to respect individual privacy.

The following timetable outlines the decision-making process. Please note that meetings marked with \* will be open to the public. Although it will not be possible to inform everyone individually of the decisions made, you will be able to access this information throughout the process at:

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

<b>Process</b>	<b>Date</b>
Public consultation	26 January – 15 March 2017
Education Panel*	6 April 2017
Cabinet*	10 April 2017
Statutory notice period (4 weeks)	Week commencing 8 May 2017
Cabinet* (for final approval if objections received)	10 July 2017
Implementation	September 2018

Yours faithfully



**Simon Newland**  
Operations Director, Education