Hertfordshire County Council
County Hall
Hertford
SG13 8DF

Tel: **0300 123 4043**

My ref: School Planning

Date: 6 December 2018

Dear Consultee

Consultation on the proposal to change the age range of York Road Nursery School, Hitchin by altering the lower age limit to enable the school to offer nursery provision to 2-year-old children from 2 September 2019

We are writing to consult you on a proposal to change the age range of York Road Nursery School (a community school), York Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 1XA ("the school") by altering the lower age limit. This will change the age range from 3 to 5 years to 2 to 5 years, enabling the school to start offering places to 2-year-old children from 2 September 2019.

This proposed change of age range is a 'prescribed alteration' which requires Hertfordshire County Council, as the proposer, to follow a statutory process, which will include a public consultation. We would therefore like to hear your views on this proposal.

Why is this being proposed?

By lowering the admission age of the school, we can ensure that 2-year-old children in the community, particularly the most vulnerable, are able to access the free place that they are entitled to. The take-up of the entitlement for 2-year-old children in this locality is lower than the county and national average. The ability of the school to offer this entitlement from September 2019, combined with effective marketing and a good working relationship with York Road Family Centre, will ensure that families are offered this provision, and increased awareness of the offer will stimulate demand and increase take-up.

Currently the nursery has capacity for 96 children in the morning and 88 children in the afternoon including children accessing the day care on site; it is proposed that this number will not change, but 12 of the children will be 2-year-olds.

There is a surplus of places across the maintained and private, voluntary and independent (PVI) childcare sector in this locality for 3 and 4-year-olds and the school have confirmed that there are 92 children[1] of this age attending the school at present. Therefore, it is not anticipated that lowering the admission age to the age of 2, will have a negative impact on children aged 3 and 4.

Children access either a morning or afternoon session, each running for 3 hours. The school has sufficient and suitable space to accommodate 2-year-old children. Therefore, no additional spaces or buildings are required to implement this proposal.

The proposed change of age range will bring the school in line with the vast majority of other maintained nursery schools in the county which admit children from the age of 2.

Have your say.

You have until 30 January 2019 to let us know your views on this proposal. The easiest way you can do this is by completing the online form on our website at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/yorkroadschoolconsultation.
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 or alternatively please call us on the number above. An interpreting service is available for those who need it.

Your response must be received by 30 January 2019. 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 responses 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:
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/yorkroadschoolconsultation.

[1] autumn term 2018 school funding return

Process	Date
Public consultation (8 weeks)	6 December 2018 – 30 January 2019
Education, Libraries & Localism Cabinet Panel*	4 April 2019
Cabinet*	15 April 2019
Statutory notice period (4 weeks)	26 April – 23 May 2019
Cabinet* (for final approval if any objections are received)	8 July 2019
Implementation	2 September 2019

Yours faithfully

Jenny Coles,
Director of Children's Services