**Consultation on the Relocation and Expansion of School Premises at Cotton End Primary School**

**Background**

Notice is given in accordance with the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 that, Bedford Borough Council (‘Local Authority’) intends to make a prescribed alteration to Cotton End Primary School. It is proposed that, with effect from the 2018/2019 school year intake, the school should be expanded and its admission number should be permanently increased from 15 to 90 in a phased way over a 3 year period.

 In order to expand the school needs to relocate to an alternative site opposite the current site. The current permanent capacity of the school is 105. If the expansion and relocation of the school is approved, its capacity will increase to 630 when the school is full. This will happen overtime. The current number of pupils registered at the school (as at November 2016) is 92.

The current admission number for the school is 15 and the following phased increase is proposed:

September 2018 – 30

September 2019 – 60

September 2020 90

The number of places made available will take account of the latest housing information and the school will grow incrementally from the lower year groups.

The proposed new site for the school moves is opposite the existing site in High Road. This land is in the ownership of the Local Authority.

The school numbers if the expansion proceeds could increase as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **R** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **TOTAL** |
| 2016 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 105 |
| 2017 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 105 |
| 2018 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 150 |
| 2019 | 60 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 195 |
| 2020 | 90 | 60 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 15 | 15 | 270 |
| 2021 | 90 | 90 | 60 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 15 | 345 |
| 2022 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 60 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 420 |

The fact that the capacity of the school will increase by over 30 pupils and by 25% or 200 pupils (whichever is lesser) means that the Local Authority must follow a statutory process as set out in the Prescribed Alterations Regulations – the process is set out in the table below.

 **Why does the school need to expand?**

There is population expansion in the area around the school and the Local Authority has a duty to secure a sufficiency of school places. The school is currently located in Victorian buildings and whilst these have been improved as much as possible, these improvements have been constrained by the site. In moving to a new site the school will have the benefit of modern accommodation designed to deliver a 21st century primary curriculum. The Governing Body are looking to maximise the opportunities the new site gives them, creating an outstanding environment for outdoor learning.

In addition the new site will provide much needed external green space for play and sports. It is anticipated that the new site will include a Sports Hall, and a tennis court. These would be made available for community use outside school hours and would complement, rather than compete with, existing facilities in the surrounding areas.

As the new site is so close to the existing site, there will be no travel disruption for current staff and pupils. There will be car parking arrangements within the new school grounds which, together with the improvements to the school accommodation that a new build will bring, will mean a better learning and working environment. Improvements to roads and access are part of the overall build proposal.

The increase in population is due to the housebuilding in the Eastcotts area. There is capacity on the new site for the school to expand up to the 3 forms of entry forecast to be needed. The Council is experienced in extending schools so that teaching and learning continues without disruption during the construction process.

The school is popular and successful. Expansion will give the school a larger budget, which will enable it to have a broader curriculum, with a greater variety of teaching expertise and specialisms; and enable more collaboration and sharing and observation of good practice by year-group teachers and teaching assistants. It will also mean that pupils will no longer be taught in split age classes.

The total capital cost of the project is £8,000,000 with all costs being met by the Local Authority.

Please note this consultation is about the educational decision to expand the school. Any building works that may be required will be subject to the planning process in accordance with Bedford Borough Council policy and procedures. This will involve further consultation, where appropriate.

Without the additional places that this proposal will provide, the Local Authority would be reliant upon a strategy of finding additional places away from where families live (giving rise to additional travel and the difficulty on securing continuity for siblings), which is considered to be a less than ideal solution compared with permanent expansion, given that the shortfall of places is predicted to continue unless additional places are made available. It would also represent poor value for money compared with permanent expansion on the new site, which enables the school’s facilities to be enlarged proportionately in response to long term need

The admissions policy will need to be revised as the school will serve a larger geographical area. The Local Authority is consulting on this change as required by the Admissions Code of Practice. The admission consultation is available on the Local Authority website at <http://www.bedford.gov.uk/education_and_learning/schools_and_colleges/school_admissions/2018_consultation.aspx> it is expected that the Pupil Admission Number will increase from 15 to 30 from 2018, to 60 in 2019 and to 90 in 2020. The school will expand in lower year groups first and the school will grow incrementally.

The Local Authority will consider the views of a wide range of stakeholders. We have arranged consultation events, details of which are shown below, which will provide an opportunity to learn more about the proposal and discuss the project.

The timescale for the consultation process is set out below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 21st October 2016 | Portfolio Holder decision to consult on the expansions and, after reviewing the consultation, to publish statutory proposals if necessary. |
| 23rd November 2016 | Consultation starts  |
| 5th December3pm – 5.30pm | Public consultation event at Cotton End Village Hall |
| 16th December6pm – 8pm | Public consultation event at Cotton End Village Hall |
| 25th January 2017 | Consultation ends |
| January 2017 | Portfolio holder to review consultation and decide whether to publish statutory proposal to expand the school. |
| 1st February | Publish statutory proposal with a 4 week representation period(should decision be taken to proceed with the expansion) |
| 8th March | 4 week representation period ends |
| April 2017 | Executive Decision to enact the statutory process (should decision be taken to proceed with the expansion) |

**How to have your say**

Please take the time to read the consultation document, and hopefully attend one of the consultation events. We are interested to hear your views.

More information can be found at: [www.bedford.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations)

You can email us at consultingbedford@bedford.gov.uk

You can write to us at Consulting Bedford, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, MK42 9AP

We are particularly interested to hear your responses to the following:

1. Do you support or oppose the proposal that, with effect from the 2018/2019 school year intake, the school should be expanded and relocate, with its admission number permanently being increased from 15 to 30 in 2018, 60 in 2019 and 90 in 2020.
2. Any comments you may have on the proposal including any alternative ideas or suggestions.
3. In what capacity/capacities you are responding (parent, member of governing body, local resident etc.)

The consultation runs between **23rd November 2016 – 25th January 2017**. Comments received may be published. Details of what will happen after the consultation can be found in the ‘key dates’ section above.