

## **CABINET**

**8 AUGUST 2017**

### **OUTCOMES OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION FOR THE PROPOSED PRESCRIBED ALTERATIONS AT ST MARY'S ISLAND CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Portfolio Holders:	Councillor Andrew Mackness, Children's Services (Lead Member)
	Councillor Martin Potter, Educational Improvement and Attainment
Report from:	Ian Sutherland, Director of Children and Adults Services
Author:	Paul Clarke, Programme Lead School Organisation and Capital Services

#### **Summary**

This report outlines the outcomes of the formal consultation (statutory representation) period on the Council's proposals to enlarge the premises and change the lower age limit at St Mary's Island CE Primary School, by way of statutory prescribed alterations.

#### **1. Budget and policy framework**

- 1.1. The proposals to make prescribed alterations to St Mary's Island CE Primary School are consistent with the provisions of the School Organisation Plan 2011-16, with the Council Plan outcome of 'All children achieving their potential in schools' and are within budget. This would therefore be a matter for Cabinet.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1. On 27 September 2016, the annual review of the School Organisation Plan 2011-16 highlighted the forecasted need for additional capacity in the St Mary's Island area. Under decision 114/2016, the Cabinet approved the expansion proposals to provide sufficient additional primary places at St Mary's Island Primary School.
- 2.2. At the same meeting, under decision 117/2016, the Cabinet agreed to authorise the Director of Children and Adults Services to commence the statutory processes, at the appropriate time, for the expansion of St Mary's Island Primary School.

- 2.3. The first stage in the process comprised a four week informal public consultation. This took place over a four-week period between 9 January and 5 February 2017, and the results of this were set out in a Cabinet paper on 4 April 2017 (<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgconvert2pdf.aspx?id=35698>).
- 2.4. At the Cabinet meeting on 4 April 2017, under decision 35/2017, the Cabinet authorised the Director of Children and Adults Services to commence the formal consultation stage of the statutory process. This took place over a five-week period between 15 May and 18 June 2017. The results of this formal consultation are set out in section 4 of this paper.
- 2.5. At the same meeting, under decision 36/2017, the Cabinet agreed to delegate the authority to approve the proposed expansion to the Director of Children and Adults Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Children's Services (Lead Member) and Educational Attainment and Improvement, on condition there were no objections. However, as an objection has been received, the proposal must now be determined by Cabinet.

### **3. The Proposals**

- 3.1. The proposal is, by way of statutory prescribed alterations; The 'Enlargement of the Premises at St Mary's Island CE Primary School' to provide adequate accommodation for the additional children who will attend the school as a result of an increase in the Published Admission number (PAN) from 60 to 90.
- 3.2. The consultation also included proposals to lower the age limit from four to two to enable the school to operate a nursery class. Whilst this does not require a formal statutory process to implement, there is an expectation that views will be sought and it was considered good practice to incorporate the proposals into the main consultation to gauge views.
- 3.3. It is proposed, subject to the decision of the Cabinet, to formally implement the changes on 1 September 2018.

### **4. Results of the Formal Consultation**

- 4.1. As part of the statutory process, there was an informal consultation where the views of all interested parties could be expressed, and all views taken into consideration prior to formal publication of proposals. The period of informal public consultation ran for four weeks from 9 January to 5 February 2017.
- 4.2. Following on from the informal consultation, there was a five-week formal consultation, or statutory representation period. This is required by law to be at least four weeks long, but was extended to five weeks as the late May School Break fell within the period. Therefore the period ran from 15 May to 18 June 2017.

4.3. There were three responses to the formal consultation. One supported the proposal, one did not object but raised concerns about parking and traffic, and one formally objected to the proposal on three main points:

- Parking in the area around the school
- Traffic
- Children coming from off St Mary's Island

4.4. These points are addressed in section 5.

## 5. **Advice and analysis**

5.1. St Mary's Island CE Primary School is a community primary school, which currently provides education for pupils aged 4 to 11. The school is popular with parents, and at the last full Ofsted inspection in April 2014 the school was rated as 'good' overall.

5.2. Under its current admissions arrangements (PAN 60) the school was oversubscribed for the reception intake in September 2016, receiving 70 first preferences for the 60 places available and 127 preferences overall.

5.3. The proposals to expand the provision at St Mary's Island Primary School are demand led, and the popularity of the school is likely to continue, due in the main to an increasing local population, with ongoing housing developments likely to continue to produce future demand.

5.4. Consultation will take place as part of the school admissions consultation process at the appropriate time to ensure that the PAN has formally increased to 90 in time to take effect from September 2018.

5.5. National policy emphasises that the Local Authority has a key role to support parents and families through promoting a good supply of strong schools and should focus on supplying enough good spaces rather than reducing surplus places. Medway's School Organisation Plan principles state that popular and successful schools should expand.

5.6. It is not expected that the proposals will have a detrimental impact upon the numbers or standards at the other primary schools in the area. Forecasts indicate that without expansion of provision in the area, there will most likely be a shortage of spaces in reception classes from September 2018, and the expansion of St Mary's Island Primary School will help to alleviate that pressure.

5.7. The remainder of this section sets out officer responses to the objection received during the statutory representation period, highlighted in section 4 above.

5.8. **Parking and traffic.** As part of the expansion project to provide additional buildings, parking and traffic management will be considered. The Council's Safer Journeys team are involved as part of the planning consultation, and will continue to have input as the project develops, as will officers from Highways and Transport. In partnership with the school, officers will explore

opportunities to alleviate residents' concerns. Options include the reintroduction of more extensive walking buses, encouraging more cycling and scooting, together with other non-vehicular initiatives, extended out of hours provision, such as a wider range of after school clubs as well as the arrangements for parents to pick up and drop off their children. The adjacent community centre/surgery car park is private, and parking there is managed by a private company. Issues already arise with congestion in this car park. If the school were not expanded, then this would not alleviate the parking issues. Not all parking and traffic issues on the island are created by parents coming from off the island.

- 5.9. **Pupils attending from off St Mary's Island.** Medway does not have catchment areas for schools; therefore parents can express a preference for any Medway school through the admission process. If the school is oversubscribed, then preference is given on a number of criteria including distance from the school; island residents will therefore generally have priority over non-island residents. Under the oversubscription criteria, 30% of the school's places are reserved for children of faith and these may come from off the island. There is also an access area in place to ensure that a number of places are reserved for children from St Mary's island. Some children who live on the island choose to attend schools off the island.
- 5.10. Therefore, the Cabinet is recommended to note the formal objection to the proposal as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report, the response set out in paragraphs 5.8 and 5.9 of the report and approve the proposals to enlarge the premises and change the lower age limit at St Mary's Island CE Primary School, by way of statutory prescribed alterations.

## **6. Diversity Impact Assessment**

- 6.1. A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) screening form is attached as Appendix 2. The DIA looks at how the proposed changes could impact upon various groups. The report shows that there could potentially be some impact upon certain groups; however it shows that any impacts are expected to be positive ones. The screening form indicates that a full DIA is not necessary.

## **7. Impact of the proposal on arrangements for looked after children**

- 7.1. Looked after children receive the highest priority for admission to all Medway schools. If necessary, the Admissions Code allows the council to place looked after children in schools that would otherwise be deemed full. This ensures that the Council can secure appropriate provision for children that are looked after by the local authority. This strategy covers both mainstream and special schools and as such includes St Mary's Island Primary School.

## **8. Risk management**

- 8.1. The following risks arise if the proposals as stated in this report are not implemented. These are:

- A risk that it could undermine the Council's need to ensure the most effective use of resources, and in turn, the aim to raise standards across all schools.
- The Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient good quality school places will be at risk if additional provision is not made available in the St Mary's Island area.
- That by not increasing the provision at St Mary's Island Primary School, more parents will be required to transport their children to schools further afield, which would mean increased traffic in the wider Medway area.
- Parents dissatisfied at not being able to access their local school, potentially leading to parents having children at different schools and the logistical problems that this would bring.

8.2. The following risks could arise if the proposals are implemented:

- If the expected numbers of additional pupils do not materialise, then the school may find itself having surplus places as well as larger buildings to maintain without the funding to do so. Current forecasts based upon roll numbers, birth rates and inward migration together with St Mary's Island Primary School being a good and popular school indicate that this risk is likely to be minimal.

## **9. Financial and Legal implications**

- 9.1. Medway's maintained schools are funded from central Government via the local authority in the form of the dedicated schools grant. This is a ring-fenced grant for the provision of education across Medway and must be used to fund schools (and certain specified services to schools), and cannot be used to fund other Council services.
- 9.2. The expansion of St Mary's Island Primary School will be funded via the Children and Adults Capital Programme, which is mainly funded by Government grants, targeted grants and section 106 developer contributions.
- 9.3. The Council has the power under sections 18 and 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to make "prescribed alterations" to a maintained school. The procedure for making prescribed alterations is set out in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.
- 9.4. From 24 January 2014 there is no longer a prescribed 'pre-publication' (informal) consultation period for prescribed alterations, there is however a strong expectation on Local Authorities to consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to formal publication as part of their duty under public law to act rationally and take into account all relevant considerations. The previous informal consultation satisfies that expectation.
- 9.5. The Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient good quality school places.

## **10. Recommendation**

10.1 The Cabinet is recommended to note the responses to the formal and informal consultations, together with the advice and analysis from officers and approve the proposals:

- (i) For the enlargement of the Premises at St Mary's Island CE Primary School to provide adequate accommodation for the additional children who will attend the school as a result of an increase in the Published Admission number (PAN) from 60 to 90;
- (ii) To lower the age limit from four to two to enable the school to operate a nursery class.

for implementation from 1 September 2018.

## **11. Suggested reasons for decision**

- 11.1. Where an objection has been made during formal consultation to the proposals for prescribed alterations to a School, the Cabinet must consider the objection(s) and decide whether to approve the proposals.
- 11.2. Subject to Cabinet's agreement, approval to proceed with the proposals would ensure that the Council meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.

### **Lead officer contact**

Paul Clarke, Programme lead - School Organisation and Capital Services  
Tel 01634 331031  
Email [paul.clarke@medway.gov.uk](mailto:paul.clarke@medway.gov.uk)

### **Background papers**

1) Making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools (A guide for proposers and decision makers) April 2016.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/514548/16-04-06\\_FINAL\\_SO\\_Guidance\\_PA\\_Regs.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/514548/16-04-06_FINAL_SO_Guidance_PA_Regs.pdf)

2) The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/3110/contents/made>

3) Medway's School Organisation Plan 2011 - 2016

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/School%20Organisation%20Plan%202011-2016%20revised.pdf>

### **Appendices**

- 1) List of consultees
- 2) Diversity Impact Assessment screening form
- 3) Consultation document
- 4) Transcript of Public Meeting
- 5) Map of residents consultation document drop

## Appendix 1

<b>List of Consultees for Public Consultation Documents</b>	
All Councillors	Councillors via email address in address book
Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny members	Email Teri Reynolds to distribute
Medway Youth Parliament	Email Angela Cox to distribute
Kelly Tolhurst MP	MP via email distribution list
Rehman Chishti MP	MP via email distribution list
Tracey Crouch MP	MP via email distribution list
Patrick Leeson, Director of Educational Services, KCC	Kent LA via email distribution list
Alex Tear, Director of Education	Diocese & O&S via email distribution list
Professor Anne Bamford, Director of Education	Diocese of Southwark via email distribution list
Lesley Dwyer, Chief Executive (PA – Mandy Cordwell)	Medway NHS Trust via email distribution list
Dr Peter Green, Shadow Accountable Officer for Medway Clinical Commissioning Group	Medway PCT via email distribution list
Neil Davies, Chief Executive	Medway Council via email in address book
Richard Hicks, Director of Regeneration, Community & Culture	Medway Council via email in address book
Ian Sutherland, Interim Director of Children's & Adult Services	Medway Council via email in address book
Mark Holmes, Early Years (cc Caroline Webber)	Medway Council via email in address book
Helen M Jones, AD Commissioning & Strategy	Medway Council via email in address book
Pauline Maddison, AD Inclusion (SEN)	Medway Council via email in address book
Ruth Dulieu, AD Frontline Services (BCC Mark Johnson)	Medway Council via email in address book
Perry Holmes, AD Legal & Corporate Services	Medway Council via email in address book
Phil Watts, Chief Finance Officer	Medway Council via email in address book
Carrie McKenzie, Head of Organisational Change	Medway Council via email in address book
Anne Robinson, Governor Services	Medway Council via email in address book
Norman Gregory, Insurance Officer	Medway Council via email in address book
Tracey Barefoot, Health & Safety Adviser	Medway Council via email in address book
Jan Guylar, Head of Legal Services	Medway Council via email in address book
Dave Harris, Head of Planning	Medway Council via email in address book
Jill King, Section 106 Monitoring Officer	Medway Council via email in address book
Customer Contact Seniors	Medway Council via email in address book
Simon Harrington, Student Services Manager	Medway Council via email in address book
Shelley Marsh, Student Services Operations Manager	Medway Council via email in address book
Jacqui Moore, School's Commissioning & Traded Services	Medway Council via email in address book
Rochester Contact Point	Contact Point – via post
Gillingham Contact Point	Contact Point – via post
Rainham Contact Point	Contact Point – via post
Strood Contact Point	Contact Point – via post
Black Lion Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list
Splashes Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list
Deangate Ridge Sports Complex	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list
Hundred of Hoo Swimming Pool	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list
Kings Rochester Sports Centre (formerly Sterling Centre)	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list

## Appendix 1

Strood Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre – via email distribution list
Chatham Library	Library – via email distribution list
Cuxton Library	Library – via email distribution list
Gillingham Library	Library – via email distribution list
Grain Library	Library – via email distribution list
Hempstead Library	Library – via email distribution list
Hoo Library	Library – via email distribution list
Lordswood Library	Library – via email distribution list
Luton Library	Library – via email distribution list
Rainham Library	Library – via email distribution list
Rochester Library	Library – via email distribution list
Thomas Aveling School Community Library	Library – via email distribution list
Twydall Library	Library – via email distribution list
Walderslade Hook Meadow Library	Library – via email distribution list
Walderslade Village Library	Library – via email distribution list
Wigmore Library	Library – via email distribution list
Mr Mike Ongley	GMB via email distribution list
Karen White – Delce Junior	NAHT via email distribution list
Ms Julia Harris	NASUWT via email distribution list
Nicola Brocklesby	ATL via email distribution list
Mr Nick Childs	NUT via email distribution list
Mr Michael Barton	Voice via post – 38 Arden Street, Gillingham, Kent. ME7 1HR
Kim Gunn	ASCL via email distribution list
Assistant Branch Secretary Medway Towns LG Tania Earnshaw	UNISON via email distribution list
Ms Sharon Wentworth & Malcolm Bonnet	UNITE via email distribution list
Baha'I Community of Gillingham – Mr F Forghani	faran.forghani@blueyonder.co.uk - BCC field
Bangall Language School Shishu Kishor Club – Nilufar Chowdhury	niluchy@hotmail.co.uk - BCC field
Community Interpreting Service – Elizabeth Bird	cis@medway.gov.uk - BCC field
Hindu Sabha – Mr Ajay Attra	ajayattra@hotmail.com - BCC field
Kent Muslim Welfare Association - Dr Craig Kennett AKA Azeem Nader General Secretary	anwarkhan1987@hotmail.com - BCC field
Kent Ramgarhia Darbar Sikh Temple & Community Centre – Mr M S Paddom	jasmissan@hotmail.com - BCC field
KUT O Chinese Association	enquiries@kut-o.com - BCC field
Medway English Training Community Interest Company – Cathy Rahmanzadeh	cathy@metcic.co.uk - BCC field
Medway Town Gurdwara Sabha – Parminder Singh Upple	psupple@hotmail.co.uk - BCC field
Siri Guru Ravidass Bhawan	info@ravidassia-medway.co.uk - BCC field
Swarah Arts Foundation – B Balagopal	balagopalkent@gmail.com - BCC field
Medway Human Rights & Equality Council	emcap@hotmail.com - BCC field
Polish Saturday School – Monika Limanowska	mlimanowska@yahoo.com - BCC field
Czechoslovak Society in Medway – Lenka Wyatt	lenka.wyatt@medway.gov.uk - BCC field
All Playgroups, Pre schools & Nurseries within Medway	Email addresses in consultation folder on w drive – BCC field
Medway Parents and Carers Forum	medwaypcf@googlemail.com
Medway Community Healthcare	Via email distribution list
Adjacent Residents to school	Paul Clarke



## Appendix 1

All Governors, staff & students	Paul Clarke
Chairs of Governors	All Medway Schools – via email to Governor Services
All Headteachers (schools forum & SIB)	All Medway Schools
Medway Website	via Alterian web publisher
Local press	Paul Clarke



# Diversity impact assessment

## Appendix 2

<b>TITLE</b> <i>Name/description of the issue being assessed</i>	Enlargement of physical premises and the extension of the lower age range at St Mary's Island Church of England Primary School.
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<b>DATE</b> <i>Date the DIA is completed</i>	16/02/2017
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<b>LEAD OFFICER</b> <i>Name of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.</i>	Paul Clarke
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**1 Summary description of the proposed change**

- What is the change to policy/service/new project that is being proposed?*
- How does it compare with the current situation?*

The proposals are to enlarge the premises and extend the lower age range in order to accommodate extra pupils at St Mary's Island Primary School. This is to meet forecast demand for more primary school places in Strood. The proposals are in line with the School Organisation Plan 2011-16 and its subsequent reviews. The school is popular and therefore there will be a greater percentage of first preference satisfaction amongst parents. In recent years the school has been oversubscribed in reception and these proposals will cater for that level of demand. The enlarged buildings will be designed to improve the learning environment for pupils.

**2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment**

- Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc.*
- Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile*

A public consultation has been carried out over a 4-week period when views were expressed and any concerns regarding issues could have been raised. Of a number of concerns raised and comments made, none related to the potential for any impact on any protected characteristic groups.

**3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?**

*Is it likely to :*

- Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*
- Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't?*

*(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)*

<b>Protected characteristic groups</b>	<b>Adverse impact</b>	<b>Advance equality</b>	<b>Foster good relations</b>
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# Diversity impact assessment

Age		✓	
Disabilty		✓	
Gender reassignment			
Marriage/civil partnership			
Pregnancy/maternity			
Race			
Religion/belief			
Sex			
Sexual orientation			
Other (eg low income groups)			

#### 4 Summary of the likely impacts

- *Who will be affected?*
- *How will they be affected?*

None of the current pupils are intended to be displaced and there will be no reduction to staff numbers made as part of this proposal. There is however expected to be an increase in the number of pupils who attend the school and it is possible that there could be an increase in the number of pupils with disabilities. It is expected that these extra pupils will benefit from the improved facilities that will come as part of the enlargement of the premises, and as such it is expected that the outcomes for these pupils will be positive. A public consultation has been carried out over a 4-week period when views were expressed and comments received however none relating to this issue were raised. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.

#### 5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

- *Are there alternative providers?*
- *What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?*
- *Can demand for services be managed differently?*

# Diversity impact assessment

The alternative schools in the area closet to St Mary’s Island were also considered for expansion. Brompton Westbrook has recently been expanded to meet initial demand as has Saxon Way; Burnt Oak is 2FE school which is situated on a very constrained site and expansion would be extremely challenging.

Expanding schools in another area would require pupils to travel further, and therefore would disadvantage lower income families, and the Council could incur transport costs.

Parking issues were raised at the public meeting and through written consultation responses. As part of the design and planning process work will be undertaken to minimise any impact of extra school traffic due to the increased number of pupils.

## 6 Action plan

- *Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence*

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Involve the Council’s Integrated Transport, Parking, Highways and Safer Journey’s Team as part of the design process to ensure parking and road safety issues are addressed	Paul Clarke	Sept 2018

## 7 Recommendation

*The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:*

- *to proceed with the change implementing action plan if appropriate*
- *consider alternatives*
- *gather further evidence*

*If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.*

To proceed with the change

# Diversity impact assessment

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## 8 Authorisation

*The authorising officer is consenting that:*

- the recommendation can be implemented*
- sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned*
- the Action Plan will be incorporated into service plan and monitored*

**Assistant Director**

**Date**

Contact your Performance and Intelligence hub for advice on completing this assessment

RCC: phone 2443 email [annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk](mailto:annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk)

C&A: phone 1031 email [paul.clarke@medway.gov.uk](mailto:paul.clarke@medway.gov.uk)

BSD: phone 2472 or 1490 email: [corppi@medway.gov.uk](mailto:corppi@medway.gov.uk)

PH: phone 2636 email: [david.whiting@medway.gov.uk](mailto:david.whiting@medway.gov.uk)

Send completed assessment to the Corporate Performance & Intelligence Hub (CPI) for web publication

# Consultation on the expansion of St Mary's Island Church of England Primary School

9 January to 5 February 2017



*Raising achievement through quality learning environments*

# Enlargement of the premises and extension of the age range at St Mary's Island Church of England Primary School

This document is designed to:

- **Notify you of Medway Council's proposals to make statutory prescribed alterations at St Mary's Island Primary School with effect from 1 September 2018, which will result in the enlargement of the premises and the extension of the lower age range from age four to two at the school to allow for the expected increase in pupil numbers**
- **Explain why these changes are being proposed**
- **Invite your comments on these proposals**
- **Inform you of, and invite you to, a public meeting to be held at St Mary's Island Primary School on Wednesday 25 January 2017 at 6.00pm where this proposal will be discussed and questions answered.**

## The statutory process

The Department for Education (DFE) has set out the requirements and processes for making changes to the governance arrangements in maintained schools in the guidance 'Making prescribed alterations to maintained schools'.

The purpose of the guidance is to ensure that additional good quality school places can be provided quickly where they are needed; that local authorities do not take decisions that will have a negative impact on other schools in the area, and that changes can be implemented quickly and effectively where there is a strong case for doing so. It is also expected that, where possible, additional new places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'.

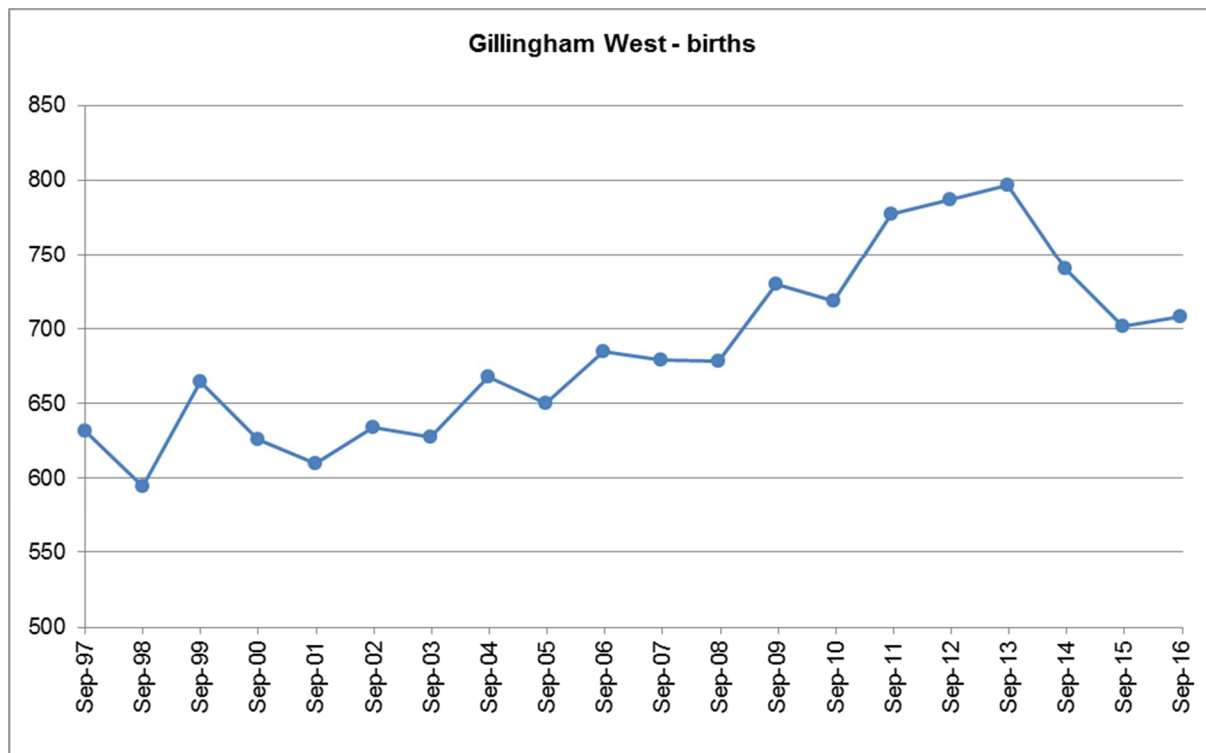
With this in mind, Medway Council is confident that the proposals set out within this document to expand provision at St Mary's Island Primary School meet these criteria.

The guidance also sets out the processes required to implement these enlargement proposals, and this consultation period is the first stage in that process.

## Why is there a need to expand schools in the St Mary's Island area?

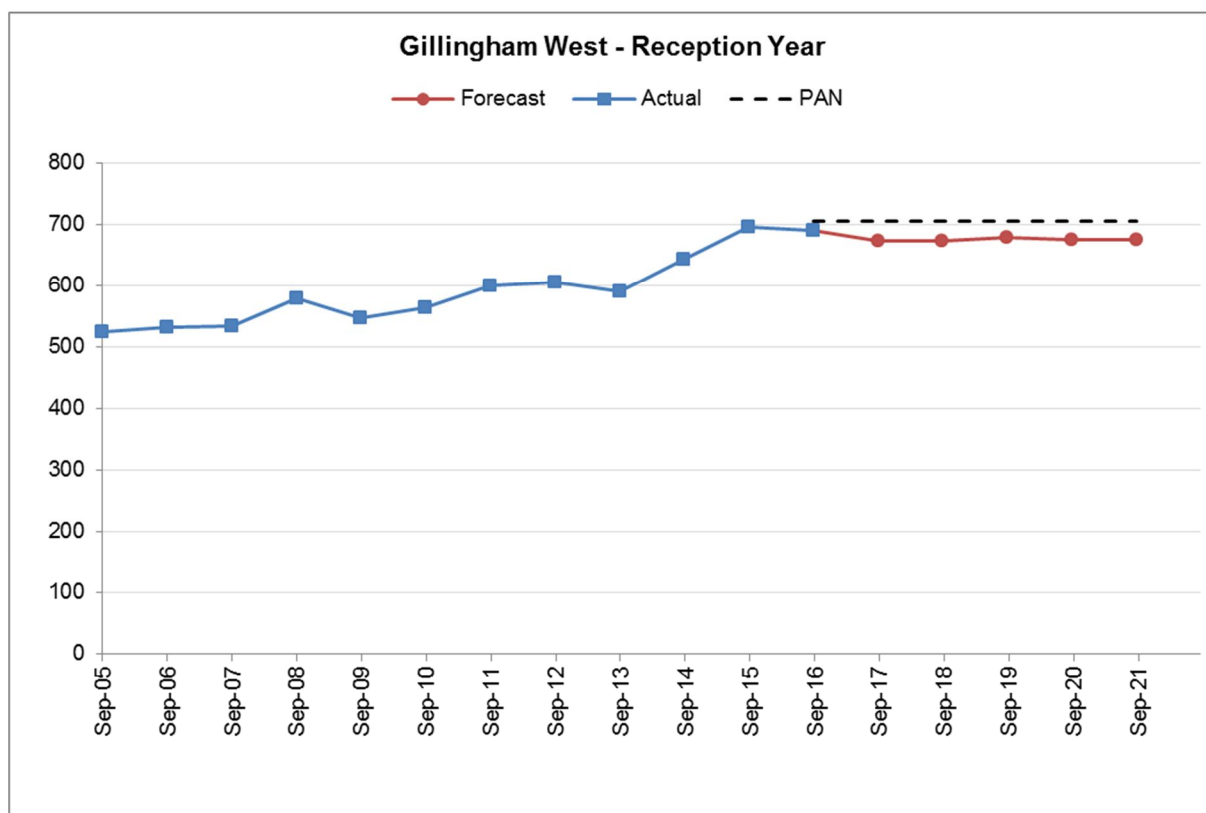
In Gillingham West, the school place planning area into which the school falls, as the graph below shows, the birth numbers have been steadily increasing since 2001 and although there was a decline between 2013 and 2015, last academic year the number of births started to rise again, and birth figures from the register office suggest that this year the number will rise again. This is likely to continue to increase as there are a number of developments underway, or due to start, in the area. This includes the final housing phase on St Mary's Island.





## Actual and forecast Year R – Gillingham West

The next graph below shows the actual and expected numbers of children requiring a reception place in the area, with the red line showing the current number of available places. These forecasts take account of expected numbers of children who will move into the area prior to requiring a school place. As these increased numbers progress through the schools, they will replace the smaller year groups in the older primary years. The forecasted number of pupils would leave less than 5% surplus capacity in the Gillingham West area in Reception Year. 5% is the nationally accepted buffer necessary to ensure sufficient school places are available to meet demand. If more families move in than expected, then there will not be sufficient school places for everyone.



The uncertainty surrounding future births and inward movement of families with children means that the council needs to be cautious when deciding how much, and when, additional provision is required. However, the recent trend of higher birth rates, together with significant levels of ongoing and new housing developments in the area, does suggest that the increase in children requiring a reception place will continue for the foreseeable future.

The proposed expansion of St Mary's Island Primary School is just one of the measures planned to address the expected pressure on primary school places in the local area. Additional provision at Saxon Way Primary, Brompton Westbrook Primary, Napier Primary and Woodlands Primary in Gillingham, together with the new 3FE provision at New Horizons in Chatham and the additional Key Stage 1 capacity at The Delce Academy in Rochester has ensured that sufficient places have been available to meet recent demand. However, further provision is required to maintain a sufficiency of places and this particularly relevant in the St Mary's Island area.

## **Why is the enlargement of the premises to St Mary's Island Primary School being proposed?**

The school currently provides Key Stage 1 and 2 education for children from the age of four until they transfer into secondary schools at age 11. It has been one of the most popular primary phase schools in Medway in recent years.

The school is currently a 2 Form of Entry (FE) with a published admission number (PAN) of 60. This means that the school admits 60 pupils into the reception year group each year. Following the proposed expansion, the school will admit 90 pupils into the reception year group; the school will then grow year on year.

As a 2FE primary school the pupil capacity is currently 420 and as a 3FE primary school pupil numbers could rise to 630, plus the nursery children, when all year groups are full.

In April 2014 Ofsted carried out an inspection at the school, and gave a rating of 'good' across all aspects of the report. This has led to an increase in the popularity of the school. For the intake in 2016 there were 70 first preferences, and 127 overall, for the 60 places available. In 2015 there were 92 preferences in total. The proposals are, therefore, in line with current local and national policy, which allows good and outstanding schools to expand to meet the preferences of parents.

Furthermore, there are a number of ongoing and proposed housing developments in the area, not only on St Mary's Island itself, but also at Victory Pier, Colonial House, Kitchener Barracks, Chatham Waters, and the interface land at the Dockyard. These housing schemes will undoubtedly add further pressure to primary school places in the immediate locality.

We are consulting on the proposal, by way of a statutory prescribed alteration, to enlarge the premises to give the school sufficient capacity to provide for the additional pupils. A feasibility study to explore the options for the physical expansion of the school is underway. The feasibility study will consider the requirements for the additional accommodation, the suitability of existing accommodation, and the access arrangements to the site, including the management arrangements for additional staff, pupils and parents. To minimise disruption to the education of pupils it is likely that the building works will be phased in line with expected demand.

The project to expand the premises will be financed using the Central Government basic need grant, which is a fund for the creation of additional school capacity to ensure that sufficient school places are available in each local area. Further funding as required will come from developer contributions from new housing schemes in the area. This is where developers of new housing schemes pay a contribution to the Council to assist in the enhancement and expansion of essential community facilities.

## **Why is the 'extension of the age range' being proposed?**

With the increase in pupils numbers highlighted above, there will also be an increase in demand for nursery places. Currently, the school does not offer nursery places, which results in local children having to travel some distance to attend a nursery. By extending the lower age range from four to two the school will be able to offer a

full early year's foundation stage. The 'enlargement of the premises' will incorporate suitable buildings for the nursery provision on site.

It is Medway Council's policy that where possible and practical a nursery stage will be included within expanded primary school provision in Medway.

## The next stages

Following the four-week consultation period, Medway Council's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee may ask to see a report on the responses and comments to this proposal, which would be presented to them in March 2017.

On 4 April 2017 Medway Council's Cabinet will consider the responses to this consultation and the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. They may then decide not to proceed with the proposal, or to authorise a four-week period of statutory representation when notices will be published to give interested parties the opportunity to formally object or comment.

If there are no objections to the statutory notice period in the late spring 2017, Medway Council can decide to go ahead with the proposals. If there are one or more objections Medway Council, as Schools Commissioner under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, will consider the objections before determining the outcome.

## Consultation timetable

Four week Public Consultation period	9 January to 5 February 2017
Public Consultation meeting in St Mary's Island School Hall	Wednesday 25 January 2017 at 6.00pm
Report to Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Outcomes of Consultation	9 March 2017 (TBC)
Report Outcome of Consultation to Cabinet	4 April 2017
Four week Statutory Notice period	24 April to 21 May 2017
Council decision on proposals	June 2017
Implementation of expansion proposals if approved	1 September 2018

No decisions will be made until the consultation has been completed and local views have been carefully considered.

## How to make comments

We would like to hear your views on these proposals.

Email your comments to **prim.reorg@medway.gov.uk**

Alternatively you can hand the form below to the school office at St Mary's Island Primary School or send it to: **FREPOST RRUY-ZBTJ-CZZC, School Organisation, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR**

Unfortunately it will not be possible to acknowledge receipt.

All responses must be received by **Sunday 5 February 2017.**

It would be helpful to have the following information:

Name .....

Address .....

I am (please tick)

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Parent/ guardian

Member of staff

None of the above (please specify)

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Governor

Local Resident

With regard to the proposal to enlarge the premises and extend the lower age range at St Mary's Island Primary School, to enable the school to increase its numbers in line with demand for places:

Please tick one box

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

I **approve** of the proposal to enlarge the premises and extend the lower age range at St Mary's Island Primary School

I **object** to the proposal to enlarge the premises and extend the lower age range at St Mary's Island Primary School

### Comments

Please give your reasons as fully as possible to help us build the arguments for and against the proposals.

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This information can be made available in other formats from **01634 333333**

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If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring 01634 335577

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**PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING**

**ST MARY'S ISLAND C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**HELD ON 27<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2017**

- Chaired by: Cllr Martin Potter, Education Portfolio Holder
- Listening Panel: Cllr Adam Price, Gillingham North Ward, Labour  
Cllr Roy Freshwater, Peninsula Ward, UKIP,  
Cllr Habib Tejan, River Ward, Conservative
- Officers: Paul Clarke, Programme Lead School Organisation and Capital Services - responsible for ensuring sufficient school places
- Rebecca Smith, School Challenge and Improvement Lead, working directly with Mrs Easton and Mr Goad for the school
- Jacqui Moore, Head of School Organisation and Commissioning
- Simon Harrington, Programme Lead for School Services -including admissions
- Christine Easton, Headteacher
- Kevin Goad, Chair of Governors

**Welcome by Cllr Martin Potter who chaired the proceedings.**

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls as well. You will see behind me here we have two tables, on one side we have elected members representing different parties on the Council and on the right hand side we have officers from the Council. We will have a presentation on the proposals and I will open the floor to questions at that stage.

The Members to my left hand side are part of what is called the listening panel, and are here tonight to ensure the proposals are presented in an accurate way, and they get a fair hearing. Also, when the minutes of the meeting are put into reports, as part of the process which leads on from tonight, they are here to make sure there is a fair representation of what is discussed here tonight. The first thing I am going to do is allow the members and the officers to introduce themselves.

I am going to hand over to Jackie Moore who is going to present the proposals tonight.

Jacqui Moore

Thank you all very much for coming along this evening. This evening is the first stage in a longish process and is the informal stage of the consultation. It is really an opportunity for you to ask questions, make comments, or indeed listen to what we talk about this evening and take away one of the consultation forms and write down on that form your comments, suggestions anything you want to offer up to us. So it's really the informal stage that starts tonight and we are looking for your comments. We want you to contribute.

This slide just outlines the purpose of the meeting. We want to explain to you what is being proposed and why. To invite questions and comments, to explain what happens next and, as I said previously, to encourage you to express your views. As Cllr Potter mentioned, we are recording this session tonight. That recording will be transcribed, and all your responses will go into the Cabinet reports we do.

The Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient school places and, in doing that, we adhere to the school organisation principles. Those are that: we promote high standards, ensure schools are viable, that successful and popular schools expand, and that we meet parental preference. In all of our work, that is what we adhere to.

A little bit of context as to why we are looking to expand St Mary's Island. The births in Medway, including around St Mary's Island and in north Gillingham have been increasing on an upward trend. There has been a slight dip recently but that has now ceased and that is now upwards. I will show you a graph in a minute that demonstrates that.

We have got inward movement of families migrating into the Medway area, in particular around this area. As you are probably aware, there are a lot of housing development and this all leads to increased demand in school places.

The graph you see there, the final point on the graph, on your right hand side, is September 2016. As you can see, the continued upward trend, the slight dip and now the upward trend again. We know that trend is continuing from the figures that we are getting on a very regular basis from the registry office about births in Medway.

This graph shows inward movement into the area and as you can see on your far right hand side, an obvious, very tall bar showing that there is a very high level of inward migration of pre-school age children in the area.

Also, just some outlines of the housing development which obviously contributes to an increase in children of school age in the area. I will let you read those off the slide but as you can see, a quite high level of development. I am not sure that you can see the map very well but you can probably see the river, where the school is. The blue blobs if you can just about see them, are where the developments are so it gives you an idea of the level of development around the area and where the school sits in amongst the developments that are going on.

If we look at standards, as you are probably aware, St Mary's Island is a good school across all aspects, it had its last OFSTED in 2014. The Year 6 results for the last academic year were above average for combined reading, maths and writing.

[Lights were turned off at the front of the hall to make the screen more visible] Do you want to go back then Tom? So you can see now better the blue patches, you can see where the river goes around, you can see the blue patches which are the developments on that map. I will just let you have a look.

So on standards, obviously good Year 6 results, and just a final comment on that slide is that this supports the principle of expanding schools and encouraging high standards.

Just to look at pupil numbers and this slide demonstrates quite nicely that this is a popular school. So 70 first preferences, and 127 overall for this year, for the 60 reception places, so we know it is an over-subscribed school.

The recent increase in demand is expected to continue from the developments and from the increase in birth rates that we've seen.

The proposal is to increase the number of children coming into reception by 30 in each year. So in the first year there will be an additional 30 children in reception and as those children move through and each new reception comes in, then obviously each subsequent year group will then have an extra class of 30. The capacity of the school will rise from the 420 now, to 630 by the time all of those classes move through the school.

This slide will give you an idea of the proportion of children coming to the school from on the island and those coming off the island. It is about one third come from off the island and two thirds from on the island. Then obviously some children, who actually go elsewhere to school, not to St Mary's Island.

So the formal proposal is to expand the physical size of the school and extend the lower age limit. A statutory process is required to put this into effect. This as I said, is the informal stage and the consultation and the planning of the building will come through the planning process later on.

As far as the design goes, at this stage all we have done is a feasibility study. That feasibility study just lets us know that it is possible to do the expansion. It is just in principal we know it would work. Detailed design commences later on and that will include assessment of the access to and egress away from the school, of the site of both staff and pupils. That is something that will come through the planning process and the design process working with architects. As well as the architects, we work closely with our Transport Team, our Safer Journeys Team, Highways teams to look at all those aspects, the logistics of getting to and from school.

As far as the build process goes, in these projects we do aim to do as much of the noisy disruptive works during the school holidays. Contractors, as part of the tender submission, are expected to show how they will make sure there is minimum disruption. how they will work around the school and work with the school in making sure when there is an event on and so forth that there is minimum disruption to school life and children's learning and they work to a Considerate Contractor programme.

So as I said, this step is the first step in the statutory process. A four-week informal consultation period. At the end of that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may wish to see all of the responses that you have put forward. They will want to see a transcription of this meeting and then the Cabinet will review the report that comes out, all the responses that we will put forward. They will take all that into account and then they will decide whether they want to progress with the project or not at that point.

What happens then is, if Cabinet decide that the programme will go forward there is a statutory representation period. This is the statutory formal representation where there is a chance to object or support the project and, as I say objections can be raised. That will be about April / May time if it all goes forward.

Should no objections be raised during that time, then the Cabinet can delegate the powers to the Director of Children Services and the Portfolio Holder of Children Services to make a decision about the project formally going forward. If there are objections then the decision has to be one taken by Cabinet, so it will go back to Cabinet for that decision to be made.

On that last slide there is an overview of all the timings. The final decision on proposals is around June, Statutory Notice Period around April, then Cabinet following this informal process around about 4<sup>th</sup> April so that gives you an idea of the sort of timescale that we are working to.

Cllr Martin Potter

Thank you Jacqui for that presentation. I am now going to welcome Christine Easton and Kevin Goad to make any comments that they wish to.

Christine Easton (Headteacher)

I wanted to say I think it is an exciting project in terms of the fact that the school has been successful and therefore it can expand; because of its success really. We are at the moment, as you know from the casual admissions, that sometimes we have to turn children away. I don't think it is the best way forward that you have to send children who have just moved onto the Island away from their community to go to school; from that point of view I think it is essential that we have to look at where we can contribute extra classes.

We should celebrate that the school has been successful. As you know, for some of you who were here before, the school was in a different place a few years back, and I think it is something that should be celebrated. That is the reason why this has been allowed to go forward because the

results have been turned around. Your children have benefited from that and I think maybe we should think of how many more can benefit from that success.

#### Kevin Goad (Chair of Governors)

I think Christine summed up our position very nicely. This is an opportunity for the Island, the school and for all the parents and children on the island. We have discussed this at governor meetings over the last 18 months or so. It is exciting, I think we broadly give it support, but I think you do need to get your views and concerns out tonight. We can probably pick the top three; it will be parking, traffic and disruption. So I think, let's have that debate. One thing that I would like to ensure, and I know the Council Officers want to work with us on this, is that we do have that close engagement around those key issues. Because the school will grow, there will be challenges around the infrastructure. People live and work around here, and we will want to ensure they are not disrupted too severely during the build and whilst the school is operating.

It is an exciting time. We will provide opportunities for those young people moving into the area, as this is a significant build programme around this area. All the stuff that currently doesn't have houses on, is probably going to have houses on, and we are at the centre of that opportunity to create a really good academic environment for young people coming into the area.

#### Cllr Martin Potter

Thank you very much Christine and Kevin for those contributions. Just a reminder of who we have sitting here in front of you today. The listening panel; they will not be answering your questions but they will be listening to your views, and they are here tonight to ensure these proposals are presented accurately and get a fair hearing. And going forwards, you saw the timetable of action to be carried on from tonight, that what is recorded from this meeting is done so accurately.

Your questions will be answered by the panel of Officers and of course we also have the Headteacher and Chair of Governors here to answer your questions.

#### Resident of St Mary's Island

I have been here over 20 years. Basically my concern is not only the ones you have raised about the traffic and the noise. As a past member of 'Speedwatch', I know we actually targeted the parents because they do speed greatly and it is a huge concern. Not only of the residents but I am sure parents who do actually walk their children. Speeds have been recorded of over 30 and 40mph, and that is a matter of record which is with the police and can be checked with the PCSO.

In addition to that, you say you have done a feasibility study. My concern is that in order to expand this school you have either try and go upwards again, having already increased upwards. Or otherwise you have got to start taking the chain away, the nature area for the whole Island. Or you have got to start to take away the actual playing fields used by the pupils. I am sure more discussions have gone ahead, it would be nice to hear how you envisage doing the expansion on a physical basis.

#### Jacqui Moore

The feasibility study has been done and whilst there is no design to share because obviously that comes in the planning later on, and will be on the Medway website so everyone will have a chance to comment on that. The feasibility looks at adding to the existing building, it gives a number of options. But certainly the one thing through that we can see, is that it can be done with minimum impact on the playing area, and certainly the feasibility study wouldn't necessarily take it up higher. It would be able to fill in some of the annex on some of the existing building. So it could be done with fairly minimum impact. As I say there is a feasibility study, the planning would need to be done, residents would have a chance to comment on that later on. That is a whole process to go through.



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Are you saying that you aren't envisaging going beyond the actual boundaries of the school as they are at the moment?

Jacqui Moore

We wouldn't envisage that no, it would be within the boundaries of the school space. It depends what you mean by the boundaries of the school. We will need to build on to the school.....

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The physical edge of the land?

Jacqui Moore

No, we would do it within the physical boundaries of the school in that respect.

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You say the impact on the playing field, as a teacher of 30 years' service myself I know the importance of physical education. Hopefully you are not going to be reducing that area, because it is vital to the children.

Christine Easton

We looked at that and that is one important aspect that we don't want to reduce. We have an interest in sport that we develop in our school for obvious reason, and Sport England wouldn't let us get rid of it even if we contemplated it. They have a say in how much land is available for play, and for sports purposes, and we have to plan around that. The plan is around making sure that the field does not disappear, so even if a little part is built on it, it will be minimal disruption. It will be towards the top end of it, and not the bottom end. It will be the part that is facing the car park. It is minimal disruption to that amount of space that we have got out there.

Cllr Martin Potter

There was a final part to your question with regard to speeding motorists and concerns that perhaps is associated with parents? Could you comment on what work you do with regards to working with parents?

Christine Easton

We do a lot of work around talking to parents about safety, we send letters regularly. Those of you who are parents will have seen them from me, about car parking, about driving onto the island safely, about dropping children in a safe fashion. We man the car park, we go out there to make sure that people are sensible. We are educating the children as well, to talk to their parents about speeding and so on. We work closely with the PCSO as well. I think every school has a problem with parents about dropping off and speeding. We are vigilant and we are monitoring and obviously we will continue to do that.

Parent of a student and also resident

I am not really sure if this is a question, or just a concern in general. I think as you have already said, it is an excellent school and it has really turned round, and I fully appreciate why more people want to come here. I think there are a lot of people who like it because of the size of it. I certainly wouldn't have chosen for my son and daughter to go to a bigger school. I think the size of a school impacts on so many things. There are all the logistics and everything else. You have just talked about a school of sporting excellence. Well actually if you have got 90 children in a year there is less opportunity for those children to represent their school. When you come to nativities, there are less

opportunities, I know how disappointed some of them were this year when they didn't have a full part in their eyes, and by increasing by half as much again, it just changes the dynamic in my opinion and it changes the feel. I can understand if we lived in an area where if my local school wasn't good or outstanding, I would want to go to a different school. But for me, I think there is something about investing in their local schools so their children can walk to their local schools, and that school is a better provision, rather than thinking actually, I can go to that and I can drive. I don't really have a question. I think there are a lot of things that have made it good and outstanding, I don't think there are many things that can be changed or compromised.

### Christine Easton

The growth is progressive as you have heard. You get one class at a time, which means you can also encompass all the children that come new to the school, and make sure you that don't change the nature of that. I can assure you, as the Headteacher I don't intend at all to get a drop in the ratings. It is so important for the children we have got currently, but also for the ones coming along. I would say to you, because it is one class at a time, you are expanding the school at the same time as well as you are growing the children that are coming to you. I am saying in terms of the impact, we would minimise it as much as possible, because obviously I understand your concerns. It is quite a large group of children, but it is part of our job as well to make sure that we cater for every child and every child, you know the statement, the fact that every child matters. As far as I am concerned, if I can provide the best education for as many children as possible, that is what I want to do.

### Resident

It is a fantastic school, both my children have gone through from beginning to end. My concern is basically the parking. I know this is going to be a hot subject. I have nearly written my car off three times. I think a lot of parents are not taking action on the letters that you are sending out. The parking here up by Main Street and the roundabout is just really, really inconsiderate. Three times I have nearly written my car off with a head on collision because of the blind spots. I am not too sure what you are proposing to do about the car park. I have never seen the local PCSO move people on. It is an adopted road we know, but there isn't anything there to say no parking. It is an accident waiting to happen and I think, sadly, it is going to be a pupil of this school that is going to come out in between two cars. I do speak on behalf of a lot residents as well, it is brought up on many occasions. I know it was brought up at the AGM, sadly there wasn't enough time and we were cut short on the conversation.

### Jacqui Moore

I understand your concerns about parking. It is one of the things that is considered in planning. Planning access to the site, and the ability to move away from the site, is something that is factored in, and the architects will look at that. What we will also be able to look at is, there was a consultation done recently about parking on the Island. We have the information for that from our parking colleagues and can look at that in conjunction with your comments and suggestions tonight when we start to develop the next stage of the process. As I said, this is a very early stage. What I would encourage you to do is put on the consultation forms your concerns and also your suggestions, what are the points that are causing most concern, so that when we come to look at that planning we will then have all the information from you to look at and take into account when we are putting together all the plans for the future expansion if it goes ahead, which we hope it will.

### Resident also grandmother of 5 children in the school

Two ladies here who have spoken, the lady here about the size growing and the number of pupils in the school, I share those concerns. I share the concerns about parking. I live in very close proximity to the school, and there have been occasions where the road has been blocked. They park on people's front doors and residents can't get out of their homes. It is a concern, you are not doing anything about the parking with the numbers you already have, what are you going to do about the extra, how many, 90 per year, 60 a year? It is not working now, we are already very disgruntled and I wish we had a bigger support here this evening for those people I have spoken to when I walk my dog there are lots of people out there angry. Can you tell me what you are doing about it now?

### CLlr Martin Potter

I am not going to further that with the panel because I think Jackie answered that with the last question. It is part of the consultation process, please put your suggestions and views on their, as part of the planning process, all that is taken into account, including the staff parking as well.

### Resident for 5 years,

My daughter has just turned three. In answer to the remarks previously stated, being a working mum I am glad the school is expanding. I am glad you are taking younger children as well, because it was a real nightmare when it came to finding a nursery place for my daughter. Obviously, the ladies have already spoken, their children already have secure places in the school. I have lived here, had my daughter here and now I ideally want her place guaranteed at the school as well. Any other parent who is going to have a toddler, or expand their family should be given every opportunity of their child going to their local school and, living on the island I can walk to the school.

### Simon Harrington

I have managed the admissions processes for Medway and I can clarify what the lady has said there for reception, so children going into Year R for the first time, no-one ever living on the island has ever been turned down. The criteria for the school does give island residents a slightly higher priority than those off the Island, based on distance.

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### Simon Harrington

There are no guarantees ever in the admissions process. I have been in Medway now in 7 years and in those 7 years the school has never turned away an Island resident at reception stage. The difficulty comes when people move onto the island with children in other year groups, when the school is already full, as we can't offer a place when the school is already at its capacity which obviously is part of the reasoning for the expansion.

That covers increased birth rates, for reception children coming through, the increase in migration and obviously yes, I notice tonight because I haven't been on the island for a few months, that they have started building across the road. So obviously housing is constantly growing as well, so the expansion is obviously to combat all of that. From an admissions perspective island residents will have as much opportunity as they have always had to gain a place. As I said, no-one has ever been turned down.

### Parent, two children

Go through the school, one he is now 18 and I have seen the school expand previously when building work was done quite a long time ago now. I think it is a really good time for the school to expand, because they have a really good leadership team and if you are going to do it, you need to strike while the iron is hot, and you can implement those changes. My question was, what would the criteria be for the nursery school? Will it be church places, will it be for anyone to come to, how will that work for new children?

### Simon Harrington

I am actually going to pass this over to Mrs Easton because the admissions criteria kicks in at Reception, so obviously the criteria at nursery could be different

### Christine Easton

That is under review at the moment, we are discussing that at governing body level at the moment and a decision has not been finalised as yet. It is a debate currently taking place and as you said,

the criteria starts with year R currently, so foundation stage, we are currently consulting and talking as to how it happens for the nursery places as well.

Parent (as above)

So you could have children who would get into the nursery school, and then they wouldn't get into reception? For friends that have got children, they would want to know if their children have got a place in the nursery or the pre-school. Would they automatically get a place or not?

Simon Harrington

Under current admissions criteria, no child in a nursery anywhere in Medway has a priority for a school place in an attached school. The thing with that is that the nursery criteria could be quite different to the school criteria. Therefore you may have children in the nursery from much further away, which then hinders the school serving its local community in Year R if the nursery children get in. So at the moment, no school in Medway has adopted criteria that gives their nursery children a guarantee, or a higher priority, so that is a decision for the governing body to make regarding the nursery.

Parent (as above)

I think if we are going to have a nursery over here, then that needs to serve the local community, and then off the island, rather than people coming off the island and using our facilities. Well, not our facilities, because everyone's the same, you know what I mean. It would be a shame if they use the car park, it disrupted the road, it disrupted build, and then it's for people who aren't even going to use the school and it shouldn't be disrupted for other people.

Simon Harrington

The school admissions code currently has limitations on what schools can do in regard to giving priority to nursery places. It is only children who meet a certain criteria under the school admissions code. Whether the Department for Education will change that in the future? That will be something the governing body will do in the future, to assist families who have children at the nursery, having the greatest opportunity possible of gaining a place in reception.

Resident for 15 years, 2 children at the school

I think it is a fantastic school, I think the leadership team do an amazing job. One of the things I love most about the school is the size of it and the relationship that the staff have with the children that are here. Because it is so small you feel that they know you and care for you. I think if the school grows in size, you will lose that, it is natural, because there will be more things going on. It does worry me because I think it is so lovely as it is now. Looking at the table you showed with the admissions and how many pupils don't actually live on the island. Do we need to expand or do we just need to concentrate on the new development on our Island, and don't let people from off the island come into the school until we know that the residents on the island have their places and then you don't need to expand? The money you would use for this expansion could be used to expand a school somewhere else, where other parents can have a local school, where they can walk to school, they can cycle to school and enjoy what we have here. Rather than get into the car, drive the car, battle through the traffic. Concentrate on the local school near where they live so that they can enjoy what they have, invest in them, so that we can enjoy the island.

Jacqui Moore

I think the school places is a lot down to parental preference, so we are making sure they are available, as it said on the Principles, we need to make sure we are looking at where parents are, which are the popular schools, which are over-subscribed. So that's I think the first thing. Secondly we work on planning areas, so we have to look at an area. Because children travel to school, we look at an area and make sure there are sufficient places within that area. Before we did the feasibility study, we do an options appraisal. We will look at all of the schools in that planning area

and see what the possibilities are. So it's not just picking one school or the other, and we have done that prior to the feasibility study. And what that showed is that the land wasn't available to build another school anywhere. A couple of the schools simply haven't got the space to expand, they are up to the capacity of their site already. And other schools that we could look at are either expanding already, or have expanded in recent years. So having done that options appraisal, we are looking at a popular school, giving opportunity for more parents to use the school, giving more places to the island and the developments that are around there. The feasibility study was done on St Mary's Island because that is the optimum position for the places to be.

Cllr Martin Potter

Kevin or Christine can you comment on the admissions policy of the school?

Christine Easton

I would like to reassure you in terms of "not knowing", if you like, if the school expands and not knowing families which you mentioned in your comment, or not knowing the children. That is part of good leadership. If you lead a school, if you run an outstanding school or a good school, my view is as a good leader the first thing that you need to know is the families that you cater for. You know who is coming but you also know what they are about. At the moment the school has got 420 children as you know, but I know every single one of them, I know every single family, and I know the siblings that are coming, because very often I will talk to the little ones who are about to come.

Now, I have worked in schools with 3FE, which we are about to become if the proposals go forward, or 4FE, so double the amount of children. Can I say, as a person and as a leader, I knew every single family and every single child. So, I would reassure you on that front because that is who I am and who I represent, if you like, as the leader of this school, and what I expect my leadership team to also carry on. So I would reassure you from that point of view.

Cllr Martin Potter

This is directly relating to this point is it?

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I just wanted to ask, you said in the options, the pre-bit, you looked at all the schools but I know that I read in something that you only look at expanding 'good' or 'outstanding' schools. So did you look at all schools or did you look at all schools that were 'good' or 'outstanding'?

Jacqui Moore

We would have looked at the 'good' or 'outstanding' schools but within the planning area. There are, I think, about five within the area that we could look at, there are about five schools, and of those five schools within the area, they are either expanding already or have been expanding in the last few years, or they simply haven't got the space to expand.

Christine Easton

There is a DFE criteria for that, you cannot expand a school that is failing or that requires improvement for obvious reason. So it is only 'good' or 'outstanding' schools that can be looked at

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Yes, but you could spend money to invest in them to bring them up and give them good leadership teams like we have. Because that is what happened here right? It was a failing school, we brought in a good leadership team to bring them up. I think that is what I am trying to convey, there is no reason not to do that elsewhere.

### Resident

I have lived on the island for about 19 years, my two children have gone to the school, I have got no problems whatsoever with the school, I think it has been a very good school. I am aware there has been a house sale that has fallen by-the-by, because the people could not get a place in the school for their children. So I think, living in the community we need to be aware of that from a very personal selfish way, but my concern is with some of these other things that are going on, the parking? Has there ever been an audit done of the students at the school of how many children are travelling on to the island? Because I know it is far greater than the church percentage that is allocated. Medway's Local plan includes things like reducing pollution, building sustainable communities and if you are actually shipping students into the school you are going against Medway's Local Plan.

### Cllr Martin Potter

Thank you for the question. Christine, in terms of how children are travelling to school, do we have an answer on that?

### Christine Easton

Yes, I have to say that we have some residents on the island who are a little bit naughty as well in terms of travelling to school in their cars. I will be targeting those as well again, they should be walking to school. We advertise that with the children, we have put scooter places at the front of the school and at the back of the school we have got a bike shed, where they can bring their bikes. We promote that all of the time, we do a lot of work with the children about walking to school and about respecting the environment, which you mention as well, but we have parents who still, no matter what, will drive around. It is not just people driving a distance it is sometimes people close by. We tried when I first came to this school and a year and a half after that, I was supported by Andrew Mackness on that. We tried to reinstate the walking bus. I don't know whether you have heard of that, which is where you have different positions on the Island in the community, where you have different points on the island, where your children can be dropped off and walk into school. We could not round up any volunteers, we could round up anyone to help with it, and in a school of 402 pupils, only 20 children were going to join the scheme. So in a way, everybody has got to take a responsibility in that, it can't just be the school. We are promoting it as much as we can but we need parents to come on board as well.

### Resident (as above)

I absolutely agree. The question is more towards the Council, the planning for the parking, the planning for the drop off zone. If you think, there are school events that we all turn up to, I am a working parent, sometimes we have to bring our car if we come straight from work, for a parents' evening, it could be a sports day, that type of thing and there is nowhere to park, absolutely nowhere to park.

### Cllr Martin Potter

That will be a consideration in the planning process as Jackie mentioned earlier. I don't know if there is anything that you would like to add to that at this stage?

### Jacqui Moore

No, I think it is just making those points, obviously we are making them here, they are being recorded and we will take those into account. If there are specific points, you know pinch points, you can put them on the consultation form. If you put as much information as possible when we do go through that consultation planning process to look at what all of the options are. And suggestions, you may have suggestions in talking with Christine and colleagues and other residents about what could be put in place. Not everything is possible but at least if the suggestions are there on the forms, at least we have all those ideas to take into account.

Resident and a parent

I may not be up to date, but isn't there a nursery planned to be built over as part of this development over here?

Cllr Martin Potter

Do we have any knowledge of that?

Resident (as above)

In the Countryside development on this side of the island, in one of the versions of the plans, as I say I may not be up to date, I understood a nursery was going to be part of that?

Cllr Martin Potter

I don't think the panel have knowledge of that at this stage?

Cllr Mackness

There is nothing on the plans in terms of a specific nursery. It is a private development. Should Countryside, should they choose to let it to a nursery it is up to them, it is their property. The likelihood is it will be an office or some provision of some services, but there is nothing specific at this stage that it would be a nursery, it was a kind of 'blue sky thinking' idea.

Resident (as above)

They were certainly selling it as a nursery.....

Cllr Mackness

They can have commercial buildings on there and that is subject to planning permission as the planning permission has got coffee shop, various things within that.

Resident, also a director of Smiler

A couple of things that maybe some people don't know is that the road that is going to run around here is going to have two zebra crossings placed in it, and it is being placed there because of the residential home that is being built on the opposite side of the roundabout. These zebra crossings will then take away the parking that is there already, so you are going to move the cars further into the estate.

It is a good thing there is going to be a crossing there, it's about time children can cross safely, so it's a good thing.

The other thing is, you say you will look at the traffic in the plan. You can't change the roads, they are built now, there is no way to expand them, there is no way of putting another bridge across to bring cars in, it is as it is, so you can't change any of that.

The last thing is, not only do you bring in more pupils, what about school dinners how is that catered for, where do the children go for their lunches? The amount of space on the playground for additional children will be reduced, so you will pack them in even tighter than they are. The other thing which might be contentious is where is the money coming from to bring in the teachers, the extra teachers required going forward?

Jacqui Moore

I will start with the playground. So when we extend, build a school, there are building bulletin regulations that are guidance that we work to. So in building a new school we will have to take those into account, to ensure there is enough play space for all the children that will be on site. That is a similar thing for all the facilities, so for dining halls, kitchens and all the other central facilities. When the plans are being done, that may need to be taken into account. So there may be adjustment to other areas of the school to take account of the additional pupils you will need. For example, kitchen facilities. In some schools where we are increasing the number of children, you need to extend the kitchen. I'm not saying exactly what we will need here but the architects will work with us.

As far as funding goes, we fund this through what we call the Basic Need Fund, so we have funding from the Government to ensure sufficiency of places. That is a statutory requirement we have to adhere to. We have Basic Need Funding for that, but also within that pot, we have developer contributions. So where new developments go up, depending on the size of the development, if it is a large development and actually warrants a new school, the developer may build a new school, but on the smaller developments there is a method by which they give a contribution towards, extensions, development of the schools to take account of the extra pupils so that is how it is funded.

### Parent and also resident

I obviously do hire the hall of an evening on a Wednesday for Rainbows and Brownies, my two questions are, SENCO: with the increased amount of children you are going to be having will there be more of a dedicated team for SENCO because obviously the percentage will go up? Also, will the hall be of use, or is it going to be under construction outside the school holidays?

### Christine Easton

Obviously in the same way as you have to look in terms of numbers and fluctuation in special needs as you mention, that would be something that has to be considered. We have got a person now that is trained for that purpose and as you said, dedicated time would be allocated, has to be allocated, so that is not something we need to. I am not worried about that because that is something that is in my planning of how we would develop the school.

As far as the hall is concerned, if work needs to be done to it, there may be a period of time I am not sure, but we have also got the church here on a Saturday and a Sunday so there is more than one set of groups that we have to cater for. All of that is being considered by the team working with us in terms of how the expansion would take place.

To come back to the dinners that you mentioned earlier on. The kitchen has been looked at, there is an expansion planned for it, so that it can cater for the extra people that will need to be there to cater for the extra cooking and also for serving the children as well so that has been looked into.

So going back to Mrs Warren's question, as far as we are concerned in terms of the use of the hall, as I said minimum disruption is what they go for anyway, so if there was a need all agencies would be forewarned and catered for.

???

It is relating to the proposal about it being a phased building. It says in the consultation that as numbers will increase there will be a phased building. Does that mean there will be building work going on for 5 years? I have worked in a school where they had building works and it was very, very disruptive.

### Cllr Martin Potter

If we start off with Jackie and perhaps Rebecca you can talk about your experience of schools expanding and how they maintain high standards.

### Jacqui Moore



We wouldn't anticipate that the building would go on for five years. The children would be phased in and initially a reception class, then obviously the new reception class and they move to Year 1. It depends on how the plans are... It depends on the final plans on how it will be phased and built. It would be anticipated, I think, that depending everything being in line, it would all be done say by, if we are looking to finish 2018 and open September, then you would be looking to hand over prior to that summer holiday. It does depend. We wouldn't be looking at a 5-year plan, it is something we should be able to do and complete in a shorter period of time. So the disruption, I wouldn't anticipate in going through a whole child's life as it were. The building will be phased according to the plans.

As far as disruption goes, and I will pass over to Rebecca in a minute, but contractors do have, as I said earlier, need to say in their tenders how they will work with the school. It is a two-way process and I know Christine and the team would be working with the contractors to be clear on when they need quiet time, when it is possible to do noisy work. For example, we tend to try and do as much noisy work in holiday periods, so there is less disruption and there is the health and safety to take into account and so forth. Often it is a really good opportunity for the children in the school to get engaged with the project, see what is going on, see how the building is going up, see the plans, all that sort of thing. I don't know if Christine wants to comment on that? But if you actually build a relationship with the contractor that can actually work really well.

### Christine Easton

What has been discussed so far and what I have looked at so far with the various agencies that have come into school has been about minimal disruption. I don't want the school disrupted for that length of time, it wouldn't be manageable. They have looked at phasing it to be ready for 2018, yes we might have some classrooms that are not in use at that point but the main part of the building work would be finished and completed by then. So we are phasing the children over a period of time but not the building work.

Certainly, in terms of, we were talking about disruption and the various agencies that have to work with, one consideration I have mentioned to them straight away is about how you implement all of that without us having implications in terms of the teaching, and in terms of what goes on with the children. They will work with us and they will go with what we say and already certain dates have been put in place that they cannot interrupt some of the work that we do. For example, the year 6 SATS, they can't have building work going on around the hall in the middle of them doing their test, that is just one example. All of that has been taken into consideration. This is early stages obviously and we will need to see how things develop further.

### Rebecca Smith

It has been delightful to hear tonight the confidence the parents and local community have in the school leaders and the team here every day, and that is absolutely unquestionable. My point really is in working with the team in the school as regularly as I do, I have the confidence that this lady in particular is not going to allow building work to disrupt the learning of your children. She is not somebody who puts up with any disruption lightly and she will, I know, navigate her way through with the fantastic team that she has to be able to make sure that children and families arrive safely and happily, and are educated to the highest standards that you know now they receive and achieve in the school and that will not be shaken.

I know as well in my experience of being a Headteacher in the past that your relationship with the contractor is absolutely pivotal, to being able to say no, we are going to do this activity now, we do not want the noisy work you have planned this morning, we are going to ask you to stay away until half past ten for example and they want to, it is in their interest to be able to work with the school and consequently the ongoing benefit that brings the school to be able to give the children, the families and the local community deserve becomes very, very clear, so I have every confidence in Mrs Easton and the Team.

### Cllr Martin Potter

Thank you very much Rebecca and the rest of the team.

???

Working in a school that only opened its doors last year, we were faced with a number of problems, one of them being the building wasn't ready. So we had two and a half weeks when the students have nowhere to go. What contingency plans do you have, or would you put in place for the students if unforeseen circumstances happen and the building wasn't ready? Particularly as they will be reception children, it will be their first experience of the school. What will you do to ensure if the building does go ahead, they will have a building to come to? Because I have experienced it, albeit with a secondary school and it is not pleasant, with the parents and the students, it is not a nice place to be.

Jacqui Moore

As part of the process of building it, and working with the contractor, we monitor very closely the progress of the building project. So at the outset it is difficult to say what contingency would be until you know actually what you have got to deal with. But what we do is we monitor on a very close basis the progress of that building, and as you go through there are various contingencies you can put in place, part way through to make sure either the right bits are going to be finished in time. So in this case, in 2018, we need a reception class and that has got to be the priority and making sure the rest of the school is fit for the children. So there is a general track record of things being finished on time but that is because of the close monitoring that we do as we go through, and pulling up contractors pulling back time. We have completed some projects in some quite short spaces of time in some adverse conditions, so it is down to that so yes, we keep a close eye.

Cllr Martin Potter

That I am conscious we are coming up to the hour mark, do we have any final questions before we wrap up tonight?

???

Just in the world where we live, are the children being consulted on if they would like a bigger school or not?

Christine Easton

As we were saying just now, part of the project is to involve the children, so they are involved in the process of when it comes to fruition, if it does come to take place. At the moment, because we needed this meeting first, the children have not been spoken to in terms of the expansion as such, apart from the fact that there are new things come, because you have received a letter and they know about that. We haven't done any work about involving them in the project yet but it is part of what we have debated. The team were talking on Monday about how to incorporate that into our curriculum so I can tell you that.....

???

Christine Easton

We were looking at the curriculum if it goes forward, we haven't discussed it with them at this moment in time in terms of whether or not they want a larger school. I take your point, we have got the school Council, they will be interested in debating that, so I will put that forward, thank you.

???

With the new intake, we are going to have some new teachers, is the local authority doing anything to encourage really good quality teaching staff to come to Medway and are we giving any incentives for them to come to Medway so that this school keeps its standards?

Cllr Martin Potter

I should probably just qualify that just before we go to the panel. The teachers would be employed by the school and not by Medway Council. Over to the panel to comment on new teaching staff.

Kevin Goad

Can I try and answer that one for you? We have been rather successful since 2000 in attracting good teachers to the school because we have a fantastic Headteacher and generally, good Headteachers in good schools attract good quality teachers. In terms of the recruitment process, we do, as governors, like to get involved, and we work with Christine very closely ensuring the people we recruit are the best. We also have a policy of encouraging new teachers to come on board, NQTs, working with Christine's team and develop those. I think at the end of the day, if this is a good school and is going to be an outstanding school, I think attracting good teachers will not be a problem.

Christine Easton

Can I just say also, I have to interview them, so you have to remember that!

Cllr Martin Potter

Just to sum up with the concerns tonight: about the size of the building itself going forward, whether it will be within the current site, issues around parking and highways aspects, mitigation of disturbance as the school is built. And actually it is great to hear your praise for the school, and also I understand that you are concerned, as it goes forward and expands it continues to go forward from strength to strength. That is what I have heard tonight from you. Thank you very much for your comments and questions.

Just over to the listening panel to ask if they have anything to add to what has been said?

Cllr Adam Price

One of the things I will be interested because as well as being for Medway Labour Group, I represent Gillingham North Ward. It isn't anything I want to ask necessarily now, but just to say I will be looking at what plans are being made for families in Gillingham North Ward which is the neighbouring ward to here, because I understand Saxon Way School might be being expanded, and I would also be interested to know at what stage the actual officers are looking at the five schools in the Gillingham West areas, as to what date they were looking at, because obviously things do change, and now more of the five schools are 'Good' than perhaps when this plan was being thought of. I do take on the point that there are some schools that would be tight in terms of being able to expand in terms of the Gillingham area. Just to give you some idea as to the other things I was thinking about as I was listening.

Cllr Roy Freshwater

One of the big problems which you have identified is in fact parking, I will be very interested in looking at that and how you will be resolving that problem.

Cllr Habib Tejan

As a member of this ward, member representing this school as well and being involved with the previous consultation process, I have listened and understood some of your concerns with regard to parking and drop off area which I believe will be looked at when it does go to planning. Also, I am very proud of this school, my children went to this school many years ago, my son went to the school, my daughter unfortunately I had to take her out of this school because of the performance, I am glad

we have the opportunity for more students to be coming back here with the achievements they have been saying. I just want to say thank you to the staff for making this school what it is.

Cllr Martin Potter

Just adding to what Cllr Price has said there with regard to what is going on in the neighbouring ward, there were also concerns raised tonight about admissions and the admissions policy going forward so that will also be taken into consideration.

Before we finally wrap up, the consultation is open. Could we just have a bit of information about that consultation. I know you covered it in the presentation, but just a reminder of how the residents can engage in that process.

Jacqui Moore

The consultation document, there are copies here, Tom has some, if you would like to take one of the hard copies and complete that, by all means take that from Tom before you go. The consultation is on the school's website, the consultation document, so you can access it there. And online on the Medway Council website as well but if you want a hard copy, Tom can give you one that you can take one now.

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How do we drop off the.....?

Cllr Martin Potter

I know you can complete them on line, I think you can post them in.

Jacqui Moore

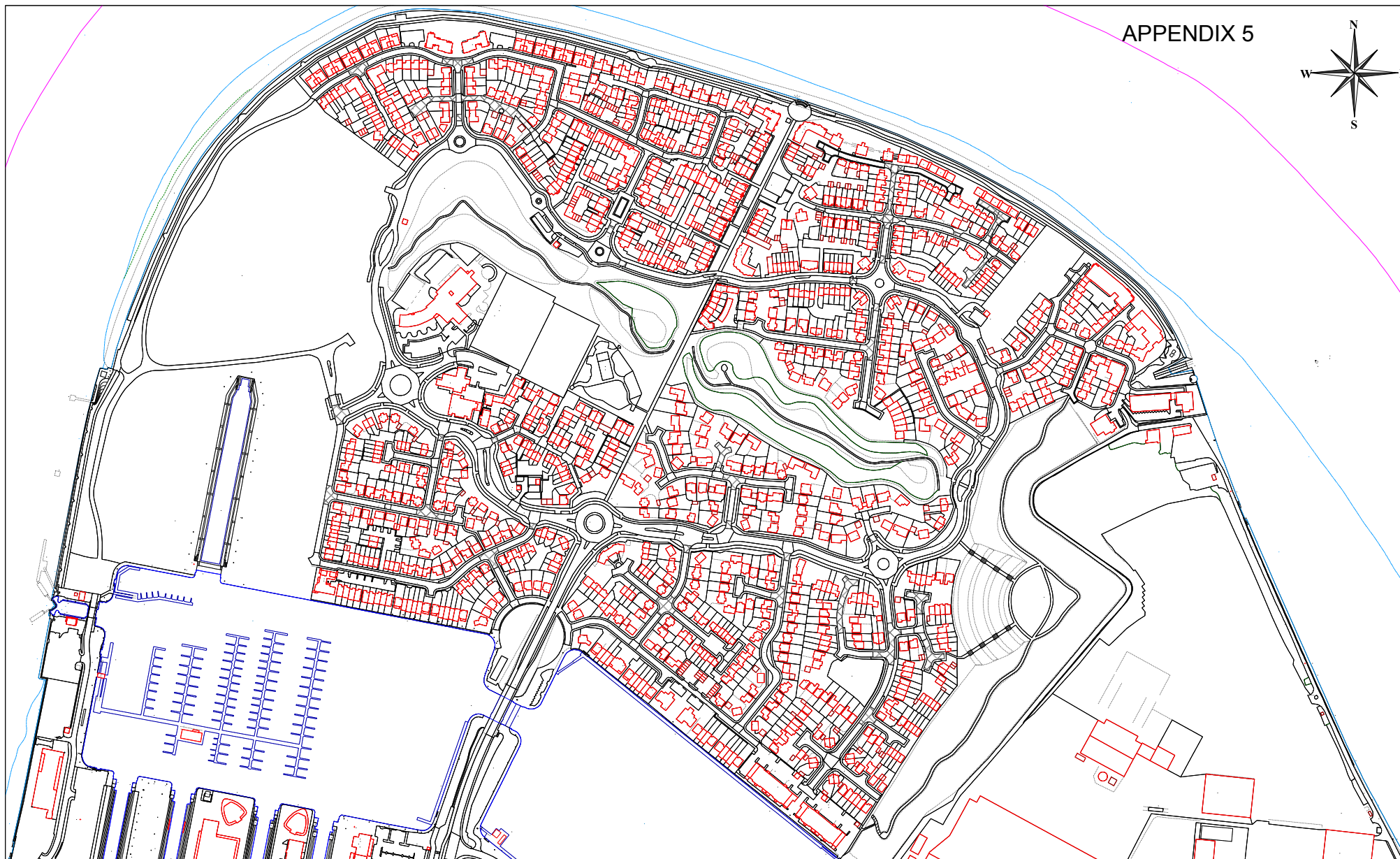
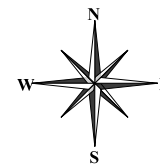
If you wanted to drop them into the Council offices, by all means do that too.

Cllr Martin Potter

So for the sake of anyone listening, they can be dropped off at the school as well.

Thank you to everyone for attending tonight.

APPENDIX 5



Title:

