

# Consultation Analysis

Proposal to expand Freemantles School



**SURREY**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

# Consultation Analysis – Proposal to expand Freemantles School

## Introduction

This paper is an analysis of the responses received during the informal consultation period for the proposal to expand Freemantles School, Woking.

Statutory notices are due to be published in May 2021. Analysis of the responses during the statutory notices will be added to this paper and will be submitted to the Lead Cabinet Member for All Age Learning as part of the Lead Cabinet Member report, for consideration in the decision to determine the statutory notices on 6 July 2021.

The [Surrey Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) Partnership Strategy 2019 - 2022](#) includes an action to create additional school places in Surrey for children with SEND, both in special schools and in specialist provision in mainstream schools. This will reduce travel time, enable pupils with SEND to be more a part of their local community and help to increase their progress, attainment, and outcomes.

## Consultation Summary

The aim of the consultation was to seek views on the proposal to expand Freemantles School from all interested parties and in particular from parents and their families who attend Freemantles School, pupils and their families who may attend in the future, staff at the school and the local community.

The informal consultation was open from 22 February 2021 to 19 April 2021. The associated documentation was published on the Surrey County Council 'Surrey Says' website and circulated to local stakeholders. Interested parties were invited to return responses to the consultation via an online form or alternatively email or post responses.

A virtual public meeting was held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 16 March 2021 at 7pm.

An Equality Impact Assessment is being completed throughout the informal consultation period and will continue during the statutory notices. Responses to the consultations will contribute to Equality Impact Assessment.

## Key points from the consultation responses:

- There were **38** responses to the consultation
- The majority of respondents (**86.8%**) agreed with the proposal, **7.9%** disagreed and **5.3%** did not know.
- Members of staff at Freemantles all agreed with the proposal (**39.5%**)
- Parents/carers with a child attending Freemantles accounted for **52.6%** of responses and **85%** of these agreed with the proposal

## Recommendations:

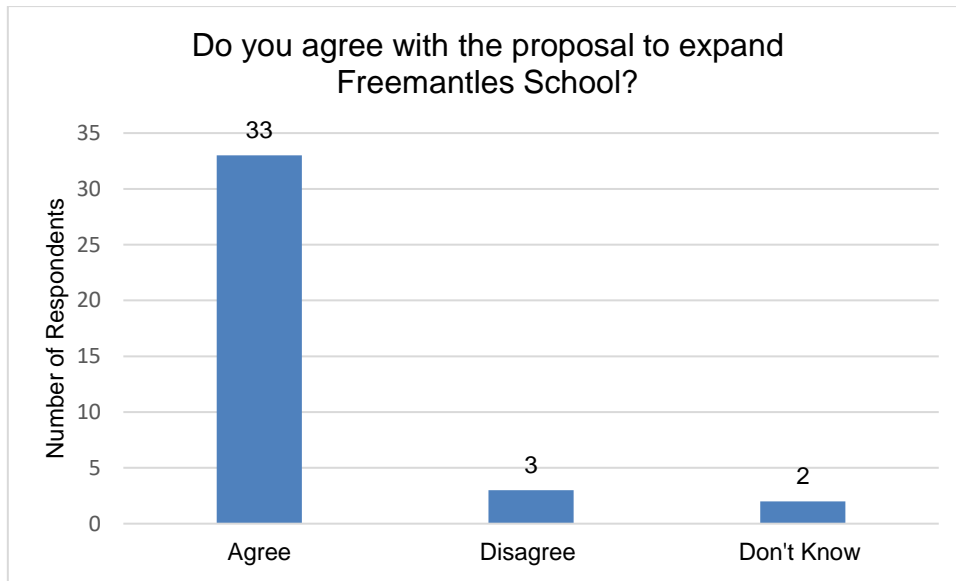
- To proceed to publish Statutory Notices.
- Approach the Lead Cabinet Member for approval of the proposal taking into account the analysis of the further responses received during the statutory notice period.

## Informal Consultation

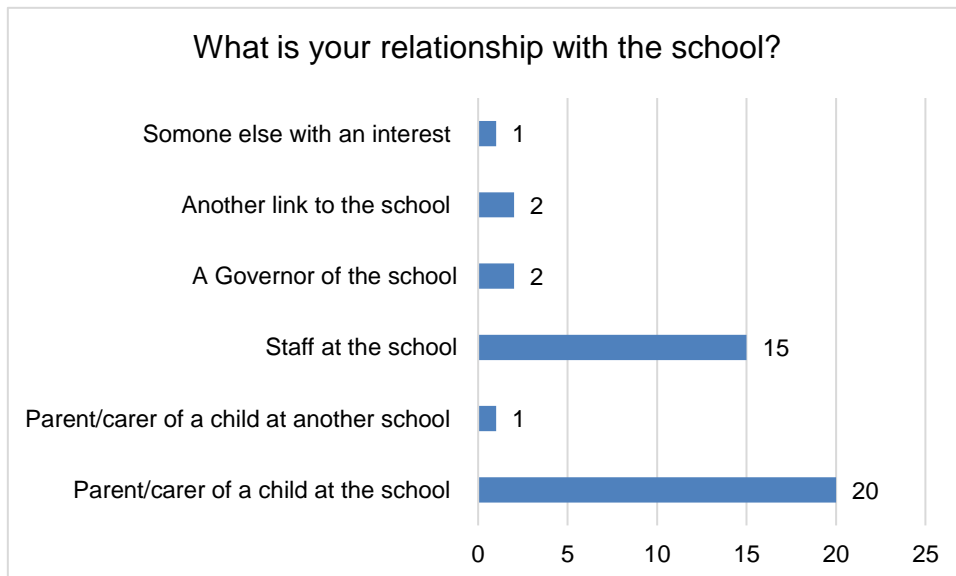
### Quantitative Analysis

In total, there were 38 responses to the consultation. Respondents were asked “Do you agree with the proposal to expand Freemantles?” and were given the option to select Agree, Disagree or Don't know.

Of the 38 responses, 86.8% agreed with the proposal, 7.9% disagreed and 5.3% did not know.



All 38 responses indicated their relationship with the school. The chart below shows the distribution:



Note: some respondents selected more than one relationship.

## Qualitative Analysis

Respondents had the opportunity to add comments at the end of the survey and 19 did so. Comments left in reply to free-text questions were tagged drawing on seven possible tags. Each response could have more than one tag attached. The overall frequency of each of the tags provides an indicator of respondents’ main views regarding the proposal.

Tags	Number of responses	Prevalence (% of comments)	Prevalence (% of overall responses)
Positive impact – providing a suitable environment for autistic children	6	31.6%	15.8%
Positive impact on children and young people with SEND	8	42.1%	21.1%
Meeting the demand for specialist provision	11	57.9%	28.9%
Positive comments about the school	3	15.8%	7.9%
Negative impact on staffing	2	10.5%	5.3%
Negative impact	3	15.8%	7.9%
Questions and comments	3	15.8%	7.9%

Note: some comments have been tagged with multiple themes.

## Key themes from the consultation

### Positive impacts

The majority of respondents mentioned the positive impacts of the proposal to expand Freemantles School. Comments mentioned the terms “essential”, “fantastic” and “quality provision” when expressing their positive thoughts on the proposal. Six respondents mentioned the importance of providing a suitable environment for children and young people with autism.

*“This is the right environment for autistic children from reception to college age children. To increase the number of children at Freemantles would take less pressure off mainstream schools who don't have the understanding of autism and all the behaviours that go with this disability”.*

*“...There is an urgent need for more places for children like ours - too many are being failed in mainstream settings. Given the correct placements, early on in their educational journey, makes a massive difference to these children reaching their potential and, most importantly supports and protects their mental health”.*

### Meeting the demand for specialist provision

Several respondents mentioned the demand for specialist provision in Surrey. Many respondents stated that the expansion will contribute to meeting the demand for specialist places whilst positively impacting children and young people with SEND.

*“The borough needs more provision for children with autism and Freemantles is an excellent school well placed to provide quality provision that parents want”.*

*“Providing an educational service for young people with autism and complex communication needs for Surrey is essential in order to facilitate the increasing numbers of pupils requiring a specialist educational provision”.*

*“More specialist SEN places are needed in Surrey and this project will provide good value for money in the longer term to avoid NMI placements”.*

*“For an excellent school to increase its number of cohorts is the light at the end of a very dark tunnel”.*

### **Negative impacts**

Just over a quarter of respondents indicated their concerns on the potential negative impacts of expanding Freemantles School.

Two respondents felt the expansion would have negative impacts on the retention of staff.

*“Freemantles struggled with staffing and lack of specialist rooms provided throughout the school as it is, let alone after this expansion”.*

*“Can’t get the staff to fill the current roles, staff always working at risk”.*

One comment from a parent of a child at Freemantles School mentioned the effects an expansion may have on the staff and their relationship with parents.

*“My main concerns about this expansion are that the bigger the school gets, the less time senior staff seem to have for parents.... They have way too much to cope with already and I just can’t see how expansion is going to improve this”.*

### **Questions and comments**

A few respondents asked questions or made general comments relating to the proposal. One comment expressed concern with the scale of the new build that would need to take place to facilitate the expansion.

*“...to ensure that there was sufficient manoeuvrability space and rest rooms for staff and students. As well as adequate space for staff to prepare and relax.”*

One comment asked why new schools are not being created, rather than expanding existing ones and risking the quality of the current provision.

*“...Why add to an already excellent functioning school and risk it all going downhill? Why not create more schools to serve more of Surrey?”*

### **Public Meetings**

A public meeting was held virtually on Tuesday 16 March at 7pm via Microsoft Teams. There was a short presentation followed by 45 minutes for attendees to ask questions.

The meeting was attended by 23 people. Themes arising from the public meeting reflect the themes from the responses to the consultation.