

# Consultation Analysis

**(Informal consultation and  
Statutory Notices)**

Proposed change of age range and extension of  
premises at Meadowcroft Infant School



**SURREY**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

# **Consultation Analysis (Informal and Statutory Notice period)**

## **Proposed change of age range and extension of premises at Meadowcroft Infant School**

### **Introduction**

This report is an analysis of responses gathered on the proposal to change the age range of Meadowcroft Infant School from a one-form entry infant school to a one-form entry primary school and expand their premises to accommodate the additional children.

Surrey County Council published an informal consultation from 22 June 2022 to 15 September 2022.

Part 1 of this paper is an analysis of the responses received during the informal consultation notice period and Part 2 is an analysis of the responses during the Statutory Notice period. The summary and key points give a summary of the findings from both consultations. This paper will be submitted to the Lead Cabinet Member for Education and Learning for consideration to determine the statutory notices on 25 April 2023.

### **Consultation Summary**

The aim of the consultation was to seek views on the proposal from all interested parties, particularly from pupils and their families who attend Meadowcroft Infant School, pupils and their families who may attend the school in the future, local schools and the local community.

The informal consultation was open from 22 June 2022 to 15 September 2022. 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 public meeting was held at the school on 6 July 2022.

The Statutory Notices were published from 13 January 2023 to 10 February 2023. The associated documentation was published on the Surrey County Council 'Surrey Says' website and circulated to local stakeholders. The notices were also published in the Surrey Advertiser on 13 January 2023. Interested parties were invited to return responses to the consultation via an online form or alternatively email or post responses.

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed throughout the informal consultation and statutory notice period. Responses to the consultations contribute to the Equality Impact Assessment which can be viewed with the papers for the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning Meeting on 25 April 2023.

### **Key points from the consultation responses:**

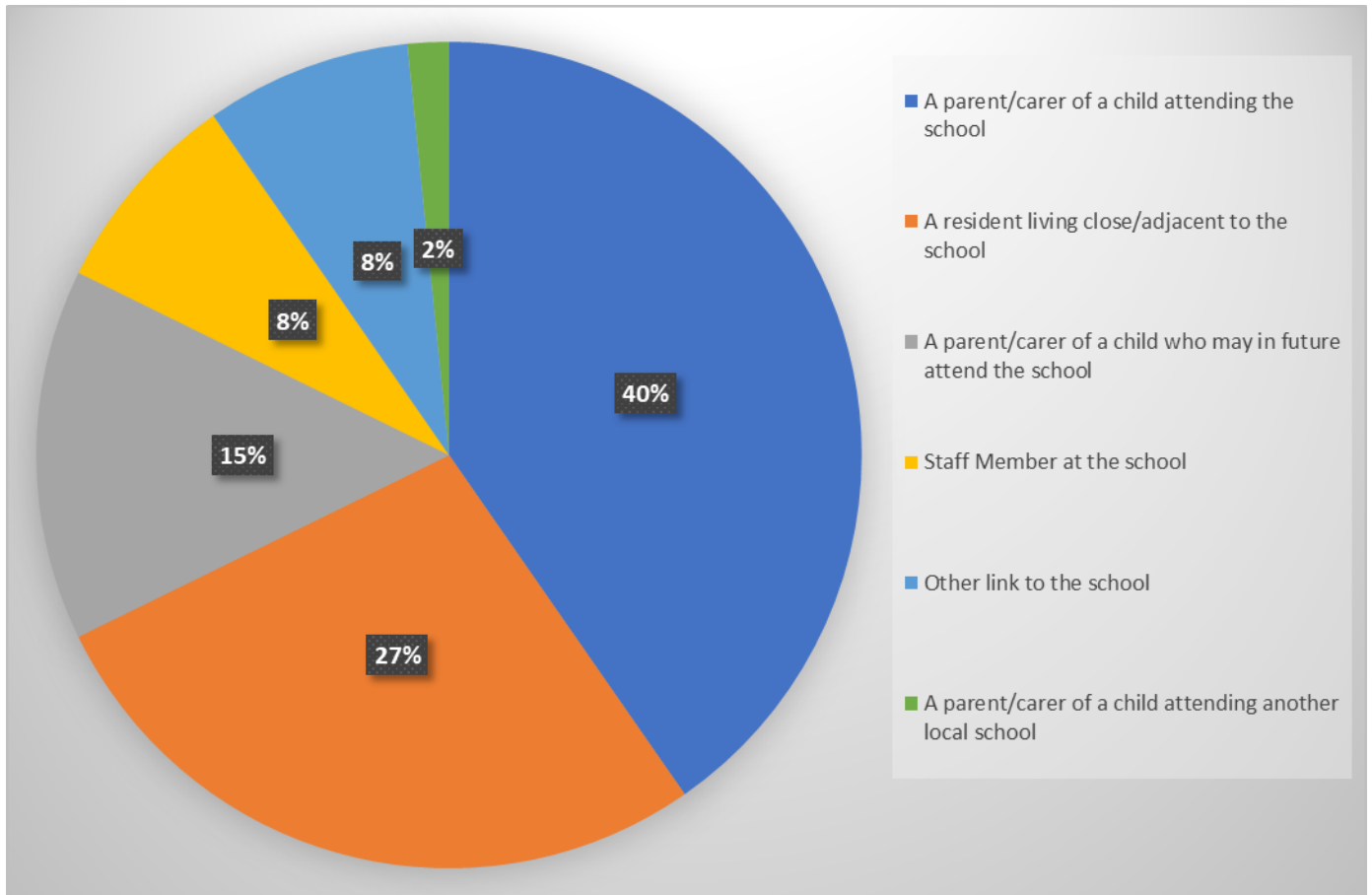
- There was a significant margin of agreement with the proposal: 71% agreed, 17.7% disagreed
- 40.3% of all responses were from parents/carers of pupils currently attending the school
- Members of staff at Meadowcroft Infant School all agreed with the proposal (8% of total respondents)
- Of those who disagreed with the proposal, approximately 90.9% were residents living in the vicinity of the school

## Part 1 – Informal Consultation

### Quantitative Analysis

In total, there were 62 responses to the consultation. 71% of respondents agreed with the proposal, 17.7% of respondents disagreed with the proposal and 11.3% of respondents stated they didn't know.

All 62 respondents indicated their relationship with the school. The chart below shows the distribution of respondents to the consultation.



### Percentage who agreed/disagreed/didn't know by individual groups

#### Responses from parent/carer of a pupil attending Meadowcroft Infant School – 40%

22 agreed with the proposal, 1 disagreed with the proposal and 2 didn't know

#### Responses from a resident living close/adjacent to the school – 27%

4 agreed with the proposal, 10 disagreed with the proposal and 3 didn't know

#### Responses from a parent/carer of a child who may in future attend the school – 15%

9 agreed with the proposal

## Responses from a staff member at the school – 8%

5 agreed with the proposal

## Responses from others with a link to the school – 8%

4 agreed with the proposal and 1 didn't know

## Responses from a parent/carer of a child attending another local school – 2%

1 didn't know

## Qualitative Analysis

Respondents had the opportunity to add comments at the end of the survey. Out of the 62 responses received, 40 comments were made on the proposal. These comments were broadly themed and then separated into 6 possible tags. Comments left in reply to free-text questions were tagged drawing on 6 possible tags. Each response could have more than one tag attached. The overall frequency of each of the tags provides an indicator of respondent's main concerns regarding the proposal.

Sub theme	Tag	Number of responses	Prevalence (% out of total responses)
<b>Positive impacts</b>	Continuation of Primary education	14	35%
	Less travel and environmental factors	6	15%
<b>Negative Impacts</b>	Size of building site	8	20%
	Disruption of building works and school noise	8	20%
	Parking and traffic	20	50%
<b>Ideas and innovation</b>	Ideas	3	7.5%

### Key themes from the consultation

#### Positive impacts

50% of the responses stated their belief that the change of age range and extension would have a positive impact. Many comments mentioned the terms “opportunity”, “benefit” and “perfect” when expressing their positive thoughts on the proposal. Meadowcroft Infant School was described as “lovely” and “fabulous”. One comment declared that it “makes sense to expand” and others “wish it had happened sooner”.

*“It will be perfect as the kids already know the school.”*

*“Shame it wasn't done sooner [...] Just makes sense to expand.”*

*“Lovely school and so wish we were able to stay on”*

#### Continuation of Primary Education

35% of the comments agreed that the extension and increased age range will have a positive impact on the area. One comment noted there is an “acute shortage of primary phase school

places in the local area” and that the current need “to send Year 3 pupils to a school several miles away is harmful to the local community”. Another maintained that extending Meadowcroft Infant School is “crucial for families in the south Chertsey area who have no walking distance junior school places currently.”

*“Meadowcroft is such a lovely school and we do need a primary school in this area.”*

*“I would very much welcome this as a local resident [...] having it as a primary school will be hugely beneficial as it will be less disruptive with the changing.”*

*“I would love for my daughter to go to Meadowcroft but would much prefer it if she could remain in the same school throughout her primary years”*

### **Less travel and environmental factors**

15% of total responses observed that the extension would have a positive impact on travel and environment in the local area, with one describing the current situation as “dreadful”. Another stated that it would enable residents “to walk and cycle to school.”

*“Less travel for parents is good for the roads and the environment.”*

*“Good for more local people to attend and not have to travel for juniors”*

### **Negative Impacts**

Of the 40 comments made, 90% felt the proposal could have negative impacts. A majority of these concerns were regarding parking, disruption and the size of the existing school site. One respondent voiced their belief that, “We have enough schools” and any expansion would “ruin” the school, another felt that expanding the school by over 100% of current capacity would be “inadvisable”.

*“I don’t see how this would be beneficial at all”*

*“Concern over the continuity of educational provision is not significant, particularly when weighed against the quality of education delivered by the well-established junior schools”*

*“I totally disagree to the expansion of the school”*

### **Size of building site**

20% of total respondents felt that the current size of the school site would not sustain a primary school. Specific concerns were raised regarding on-site parking and outside space with one response stating that the lack of space would have a negative impact on educational standards because, “those pupils inside at class will also have the distractions of the noise from pupils outside while trying to learn”.

*“The Meadowcroft School site [...] is too small to be expanded into a primary school”*

*“I am not sure though that the site that the school is on is big enough for a primary”*

*“I don’t see how the school has the space for this as the field and play ground is already very small”*

### **Disruption of building works and school noise**

20% of total respondents felt that the necessary building work and increased school size would be disruptive to the local area. Some respondents raised concerns regarding existing noise when children are playing outside, “I can hear the conversations of the children and teachers from my living room”, and it was felt this would be exacerbated by the extension. Several respondents raised concerns regarding losing sunlight due to the construction of a two-storey building, one felt the building would be an “eyesore” and there was also worry that a tree on the grounds may be removed to accommodate the new building.

*“[...] don’t want to live near to busy school because of the noise and busy street already causes disruption”*

*“I am very aware of the level of sound 90 pupils make just playing normally, [...] should this expansion go ahead, I and other residents will have this for much longer each day”*

*“The residents of the surrounding properties would never get any peace”*

### **Parking and traffic**

50% of respondents stated concerns regarding parking and traffic in the school vicinity; these related to both the situation currently and an anticipated worsening should the extension go ahead. One described matters as “horrific” and commented that residents are “continuously complaining”, another stated the traffic and parking around school drop-off are “making it impossible for residents to get to work”. One respondent felt the extension could be dangerous, as it might restrict “access of emergency services”.

*“There is little parking available for parents to drop off their children”*

*“It’s already very congested at school drop off/pick ups”*

*“The increase in the number of students to over 200 will make Little Green Lane a potential no go area in the mornings and afternoons”*

### **Ideas and innovation**

Some comments offered ideas regarding the continuation of the children’s education. One suggestion was that further parking surveys should be conducted, and implementations made to better manage traffic flow. One respondent felt consideration for secondary school places should be made, with the denominational criterion of Salesian School and distance to Chertsey High School, they felt it might therefore be practical to establish a feeder link between Meadowcroft and Chertsey High School. One respondent felt that further traffic surveys should be undertaken, as the current one was conducted on a day where the weather was fine. It has therefore been suggested that further surveys would provide a clearer picture of the situation. Another respondent felt that road-widening measures might be taken, along with the implementation of traffic lights at the access to the A320.

*“Making Meadowcroft a feeder for Chertsey High when expanding would further ensure Chertsey schools for Chertsey children”*

*“[Problems] may be alleviated if traffic lights were to be installed at the access to A320, when the new Road construction takes place later this year”*

*“there need to be further surveys at different times of the year taking the weather into account”*

## Public Meetings

A public consultation drop-in session took place at Meadowcroft Infant School on 6 July 2022. Themes arising from the public meeting reflected the themes from the responses to the consultation.

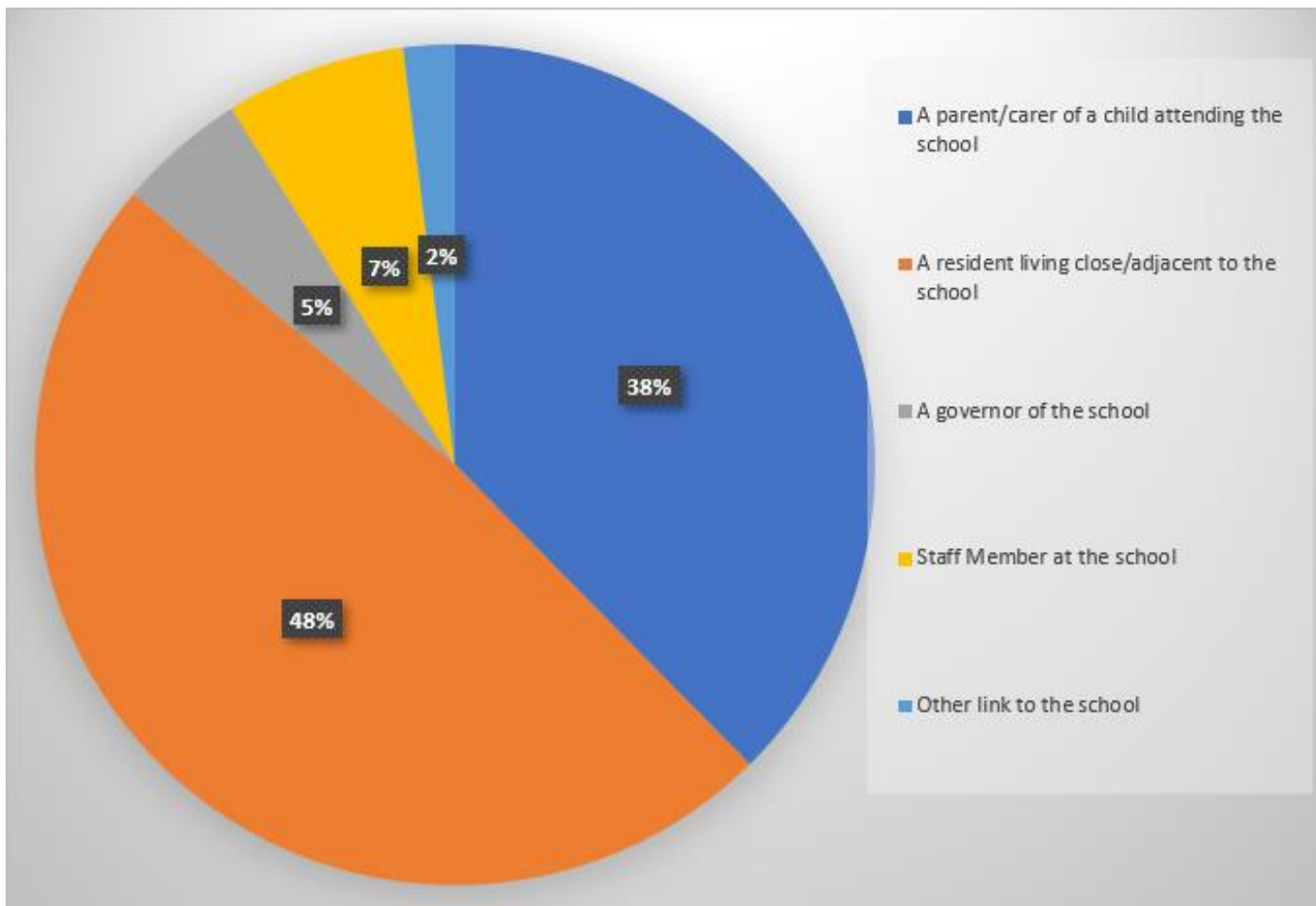
## Questions and Answers

A “questions and answers” document has also been published alongside this analysis to answer questions which have arisen during the consultation process.

## Part 2 – Statutory Notices

### Quantitative Analysis

There were 61 responses to the consultation. 44% (27) of respondents agreed with the proposal, 51% (31) of respondents disagreed with the proposal and 5% (3) of respondents said they didn’t know. The chart below shows the distribution of responses to the consultation. The highest percentage of respondents (49%) selected “a resident living close/adjacent to the school”.



### Percentage who agreed/disagreed/didn’t know by individual groups

#### Responses from a resident living close/adjacent to the school – 49%

0 agreed with the proposal, 29 disagreed with the proposal and 1 didn’t know

#### Responses from parent/carer of a pupil attending Meadowcroft Infant School – 38%

20 agreed with the proposal, 2 disagreed with the proposal and 1 didn’t know

**Responses from a staff member at the school – 7%**

4 agreed with the proposal

**Responses from a governor of the school – 5%**

3 agreed with the proposal

**Responses from other link to the school – 2%**

1 didn't know

**Qualitative Analysis**

Respondents had the opportunity to add comments at the end of the survey. Out of the 61 responses received, 45 comments were made on the proposal. These comments were broadly themed and then separated into 9 possible tags. Comments left in reply to free-text questions were tagged drawing on 9 possible tags. Each response could have more than one tag attached. The overall frequency of each of the tags provides an indicator of respondent's main concerns regarding the proposal.

Sub theme	Tag	Number of responses	Prevalence (% out of total responses)
<b>Positive impacts</b>	Continuation of primary education	15	33%
	Shorter travel distance for pupils	4	9%
	Positive impact for current and future pupils attending Meadowcroft Infant School	6	13%
<b>Negative Impacts</b>	Size of building site	9	20%
	Disruption of building works and school noise	7	16%
	Parking and traffic	22	49%
	Negative impact for current and future pupils attending Meadowcroft Infant School	3	7%
	General concerns	5	11%
<b>Ideas and innovation</b>	Ideas	5	11%

**Key themes from the consultation**

**Positive impacts**

Over half (55%) of the responses stated their belief that the change of age range and extension would have a positive impact. Many comments mentioned the terms “opportunity”, “beneficial” and “much needed” when expressing their positive thoughts on the proposal. Meadowcroft Infant School was described as “lovely” and “fabulous”. One comment proclaimed, “I believe that the expansion of Meadowcroft will be a much-needed asset to the local community” and others described the expansion as “essential to all children in the local area”.



*“Meadowcroft school is a fantastic school with a wonderful community spirit”*

*“This expansion is critical to the area”*

### **Continuation of Primary education**

A third (33%) of the total comments left made reference to the benefits of children being able to “continue their studies in the same school.” Two respondents felt that the continuity of education offered by a primary school was “fundamental for children’s development.” One commenter shared their negative experience of having a child transfer to a junior school at the end of their time at Meadowcroft and how the impact of this is not something they would wish for their younger child.

*“It will allow the children to continue with familiar persons instead of have to recreate relationships which often disrupts learning.”*

*“Strongly agree to the infants children having a continued education in a more sustainable setting.”*

### **Shorter travel distance for pupils**

A few comments mentioned the benefits of pupils and parents having to travel a shorter distance to continue their primary education. One respondent expressed that it would “mean so much to parents and help to keep children at the school beyond Year 2 instead of transferring to another school miles away!” Another respondent observed that the “feeder school is at least 15 minutes drive away” which poses logistical difficulties for parents with children in both the infant and junior settings.

*“...help to keep children at the school beyond Year 2 instead of transferring to another school miles away”*

*“It will be easier for parents like me that live within Chertsey and work in Chertsey and doesn’t have a car. The school will remain easily accessible”*

### **Positive impact on current and future pupils**

A number of commenters (13%) spoke of the positive impact that the change of age range and extension would have upon the current and future pupils at Meadowcroft Infant School. One respondent stated that the school is “caring and nurturing” and “this opportunity will allow the pupils to thrive throughout the primary school years.” Another respondent stated that their child will have left Meadowcroft by the time the age extension would be in place but that “if timings were different I would 100% keep him at the school.”

*“My son has flourished at this school and if he could stay on for more years, I would be happier for him to stay at Meadowcroft than to have to move him on for year 3”*

*“...even if it was the other side of the county, now I know how well my child is doing there, I would choose this school all over again”*

*“The expansion will greatly benefit the children and the surrounding area”*

## **Negative Impacts**

Of the 45 comments made, 60% felt the proposal could have negative impacts. As with the comments submitted during the informal consultation, the majority of these concerns were regarding traffic and parking difficulties, disruption from the building works and noise from the school, the size of the existing school site and the impact upon current or future pupils.

### **Size of the school site**

A fifth (20%) of respondents that left comments were concerned with the size of the existing school site and the lack of space to accommodate an expansion. Most of the concerns about the size of the site were linked to the criticisms about the impact on parking and traffic and the lack of outdoor space for physical education to take place. Several respondents stated that the “area is far too small” to accommodate the development and went on to say that “it will become unworkable and unsafe.”

*“Meadowcroft Infant School does not have the space to be enlarged to a Primary School with an increase in capacity of four levels of pupils.”*

*“I support the idea of a primary school but feel the site is too small to accommodate 120 more children. The field is unusable in winter and after heavy rains, it floods.”*

### **Potential negative impact on current and future pupils**

A few respondents were concerned about the potential negative impact on current and future pupils that attend Meadowcroft owing to a lack of space for sports facilities. Whilst a proposal for has been put forward for students to use the facilities at St Paul’s CofE Primary School in Addlestone, one respondent felt that this was “ridiculous” and another comment voiced concerns that the travel required to reach St Paul’s would “be costly as well as time consuming, cutting into the lesson time.”

*“The school is an incredible infant school but the school site is not big enough to be a primary school... This also does not take into account the space for playtimes even if you split the infant and junior schools there is not enough space in the playground for junior size children to safely play games such as football without other pupils who are not playing getting hurt.”*

*“The second issue is lack of sports facilities. I would like to understand how using an alternate school this will work in practice. St Paul's school is a fair walk away...”*

### **Disruption of building works and school noise**

A number of comments left were in relation to the building works during and post construction as well as the resulting noise from the school once complete. Residents living close or adjacent to the school were the largest group of respondents to the statutory notices. Seven respondents raised fears of the expansion causing “privacy issues to residents” and concerns of a “possible effect on the value of our property.” Several comments were submitted by people who feared that their gardens and homes would be overlooked by any building work to accommodate the additional pupils.

*“...also the noise, when the children are outside at play times, will be very loud and have an adverse effect on the health of local residents as this school is completely surrounded by premises.”*

### **Parking and traffic**

As with the informal consultation responses, the largest percentage of concerns related to parking and traffic. Almost half (49%) of respondents that left comments were concerned with

the impact any expansion would have on parking and traffic in the roads around the school. Many commenters highlighted existing issues with parking and traffic and that “increasing the population of the school will only exacerbate the problem.” At least 8 respondents commented on the roads outside of the school becoming “unsafe” and “dangerous” during drop off and pick up times, voicing fears that “people will get hurt.” Even those who were in favour of the expansion stated that a solution for the congestion at the start and end of the school day would need to be identified.

*“When the school was originally built this was a semi-rural area with roads and infrastructure to match [...] By more than doubling the number of children in the school the traffic/parking issues will become a lot worse.”*

*“I am fully supportive of the Meadowcroft expansion. My main nervousness is centred around the drop off and pick up arrangements as Little Green Lane is already enormously busy with just the three year groups. A parking / drive and drop situation would need to be outlined.”*

*“While I understand the need of a bigger school I do not see how the school drop off and pick up will occur safely as parents will have no space to park.”*

### **Ideas and innovation**

Five respondents who left comments also made suggestions or posed ideas as to how the parking and traffic situation might be alleviated. Some of these suggestions were as follows:

*“A bus service or a park and ride system set up elsewhere would need to be in place for this to be beneficial for both the school, parents and residents.”*

*“A junior school much closer than St Ann’s Heath would be good though - perhaps some of the land on the other side of Green Lane could fit a junior school on it instead of more houses? Or build a full primary over there and put a few houses where Meadowcroft is now instead?”*

*“The only thing I would say is maybe they have staggered pick up and end dates due to the parking. Meadowcroft is a lovely school both my children loved it.”*

*“[...] consideration needed if parents can do a drive in drop off I think something is set up like this at St Ann’s Heath Junior School this elevates traffic and parking in the area around the school.”*

### **Recommendations: what happens next?**

The recommendation is that following the publication of this analysis document on [Surrey Says](#), a final question and answer document will be published addressing the questions and comments that have been submitted during the statutory notice period. Both documents will be published on Surrey Says and can be accessed [here](#).

Following this, the proposal will continue to the next phase for a final decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning at the decision meeting in April 2023.