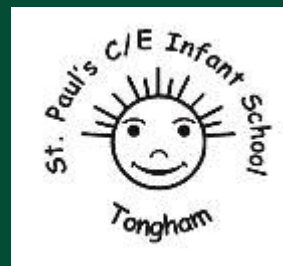


# Consultation Analysis

(Informal consultation  
and Statutory Notices)

Proposed change of age range and  
extension of premises at St Paul's  
CofE Infant School, Tongham



# **Consultation Analysis (Informal and Statutory Notice period) Proposed change of age range and extension of premises at St Paul's CofE Infant School, Tongham**

## **Introduction**

This report is an analysis of responses gathered on the proposal to change the age range of St Paul's CofE 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 18 September 2023 to 5 November 2023.

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 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

## **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 St Paul's CofE 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 18 September 2023 to 5 November 2023. 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 4 October 2023.

The Statutory Notices were published from 24 November 2023 to 15 January 2024. 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 Farnham Herald on 23 November 2023, and the Surrey Advertiser on 24 November 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 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

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

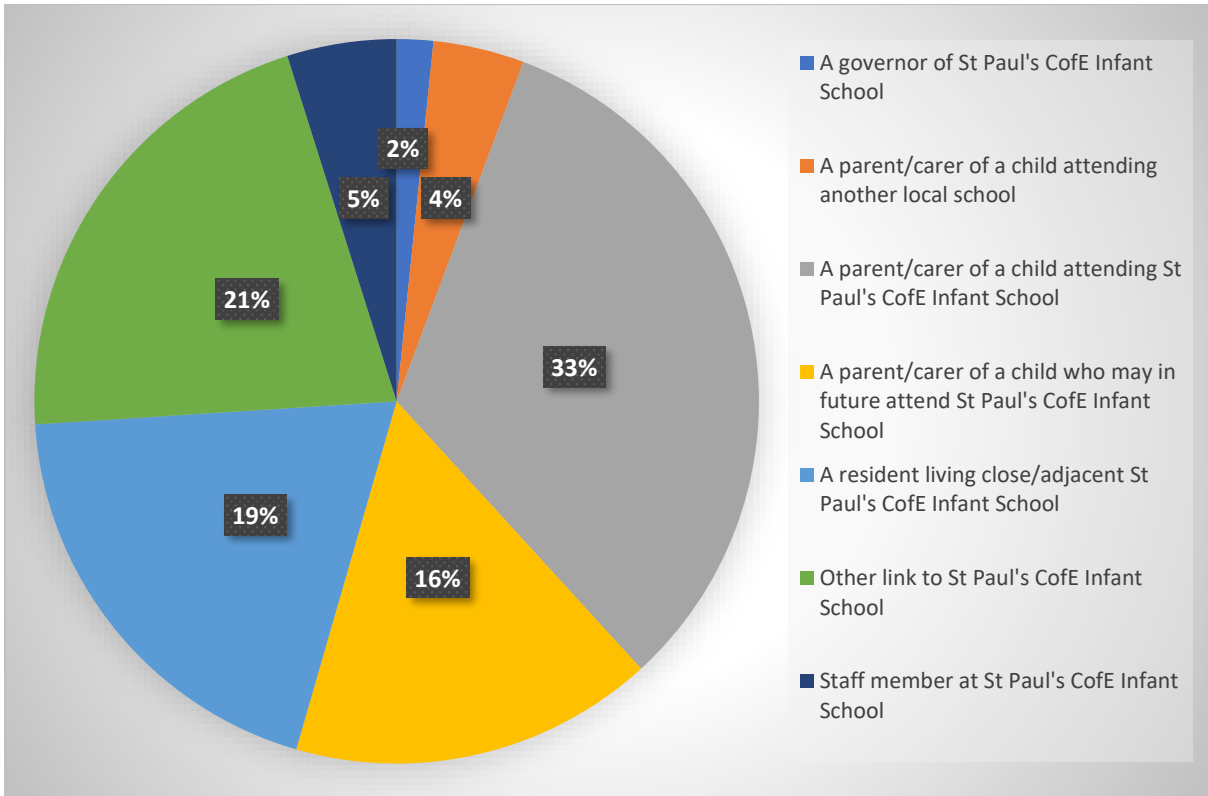
- There was a significant margin of agreement with the proposal: 91% agreed, 6% disagreed
- 33% of all responses were from parents/carers of pupils currently attending the school
- Members of staff at St Paul's CofE Infant School all agreed with the proposal (5% of total respondents)
- Of those who disagreed with the proposal, 36% were residents living close/adjacent to the school, another 36% indicated they had an alternative link to the school. 14% were parents/carers of pupils currently attending the school

## **Part 1 – Informal Consultation**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

In total, there were 246 responses to the consultation. The responses to the notices regarding the proposal to expand the age range at St Paul's CofE Infant School had 91% (224) of respondents agree with the proposal, 6% (14) of respondents disagree with the proposal and 3% (8) of respondents stated they didn't know. Meanwhile, concerning the proposal to lower the age range at St Paul's CofE Infant School to accommodate an on-site nursery from April 2024, 91% (224) of respondents agreed with the proposal, 4% (10) disagreed with the proposal and 5% (12) stated they didn't know.

All 246 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 – Expansion of age range**

### **Responses from parent/carer of a pupil attending St Paul's CofE Infant School – 33%**

75 agreed with the proposal, 2 disagreed with the proposal and 3 didn't know

### **Responses from a parent/carer of a child who may in future attend the school/centre – 16%**

39 agreed with the proposal and 1 disagreed with the proposal

### **Responses from a parent/carer of a child attending another local school – 4%**

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

### **Responses from a Staff Member at the school – 5%**

12 agreed with the proposal

### **Responses from a Governor at the school – 2%**

4 agreed with the proposal

### **Responses from other link to the school – 21%**

46 agreed with the proposal, 5 disagreed with the proposal and 1 didn't know

### **Responses from a resident living close/adjacent to the school – 20%**

41 agreed with the proposal, 5 disagreed with the proposal and 2 didn't know

## **Percentage who agreed/disagreed/didn't know by individual groups – Lowering of age range**

### **Responses from parent/carer of a pupil attending St Paul's CofE Infant School – 33%**

71 agreed with the proposal, 2 disagreed with the proposal and 7 didn't know

### **Responses from a parent/carer of a child who may in future attend the school/centre – 16%**

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

### **Responses from a parent/carer of a child attending another local school – 4%**

9 agreed with the proposal and 1 disagreed with the proposal

### **Responses from a Staff Member at the school – 5%**

12 agreed with the proposal

### **Responses from a Governor at the school – 2%**

4 agreed with the proposal

### **Responses from other link to the school – 21%**

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

### **Responses from a resident living close/adjacent to the school – 20%**

42 agreed with the proposal, 4 disagreed with the proposal and 2 didn't know

## Qualitative Analysis

Respondents had the opportunity to add comments at the end of the survey. Out of the 246 responses received, 132 comments were made on the proposal. These comments were broadly themed and then separated into 17 possible tags. Comments left in reply to free-text questions were tagged drawing on 17 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	43	33%
	Less travel and environmental factors	27	20%
	Meeting demand for Primary places	58	44%
	Meeting need for EYS places	36	27%
	School sustainability	5	4%
	Community Asset	27	20%
<b>Negative Impacts</b>	Size of school site	2	2%
	Demand in other areas for Primary places	7	5%
	Disruption of building works and school noise	3	2%
	Impact on other EYS provision	3	2%
	Parking and traffic	23	17%
	Split Families	4	3%
	Why not for 2024?	5	4%
<b>Ideas and innovation</b>	Ideas	3	2%
<b>Queries &amp; Other Comments</b>	The School Bus	2	2%
	Secondary School	1	1%
	Staff recruitment and retention	1	1%
	Split Families	4	3%

## **Key themes from the consultation**

### **Positive impacts**

Respondents identified several positive impacts for both the expansion and lowering of age range. Many felt the proposal would “support the need in the community”, describing it as an “amazing idea” and “great opportunity”.

### **Continuation of Primary Education**

33% of the comments identified benefits with the continuation of Primary education, with the school being described as a “nurturing environment” and providing “exemplary care”. One respondent felt the children “would really benefit from spending further years there”, another stated, “There are many struggles moving on from St Paul’s”. It was also felt that the children would benefit from “continuing care from a staff that know and value them and their needs and strengths”.

“Instead of having to go to Waverley Abbey or other Junior schools in the area (and therefore having to travel) they can continue to attend their local school with a natural progression to Ash Manor.”

“The continuity of providing a whole primary education at St. Paul’s would be extremely beneficial for the pupils”

“To attend one school until the age of 11 will be absolutely amazing”

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

20% of responses observed that the proposal would have a positive impact on travel and environment in the local area, the potential of being able to walk to the school a recurring theme. One respondent stated, “the distances meant we could not walk to Waverley Abbey, so had to pay for the school bus which was hard to fund at times”, and another felt transporting children to a further away Junior school was “ecologically unsound” and that the current situation “deprives them of meeting up with their friends outside of school”. Another expressed their view that the expansion would decrease the amount of traffic utilising the roads each morning, “it has got to be good for transport issues locally” and stated that at this time the roads through Tongham are “atrocious”.

“Less traffic - better for the environment, better for everyone!”

“Currently I can walk to collect, but I would not have this luxury when my child goes to a junior school as none are in walking distance”

“able to walk to school; Keeping our carbon footprint down and keeping the local air cleaner for all who live here”

“It would be nice to be able to walk to school”



### **Meeting demand for Primary places**

44% of the comments mentioned a perceived current lack of Primary provision in the area, and that this matter could be alleviated by increasing the age range at St Paul's CofE Infant School. Many felt that the need in the area was becoming "desperate", and that with new houses being built and limited local Junior provision, an expansion is a "no-brainer". Commenting on the existing provision, one respondent stated, "There is no local junior school in Tongham and our eldest son has found the need to change school difficult", they also mentioned a lack of "natural continuation in the curriculum".

"Given the increase of families who have come to Ash and Tongham over the last 4 years due to the new developments, the need for another junior or primary school is needed now!"

"It is what the area is in desperate need of given more homes being built and an already lack of spaces in current schools"

"the present offering does not adequately provide for the number of children/demand as it stands"

"The expansion of the school will support the need in the community and allow a good and consistent education for local children"

### **Meeting need for EYS places**

Similarly, 27% of comments reflected a feeling of necessity for early years places in the area, and that the reinstatement of a Nursery setting next to the school would be "amazing". The recent closure of provision has made it "harder to find nursery places" and some respondents felt there is now "a massive gap for nursery/early years care".

### **School Sustainability**

4% of comments indicated that the proposal would have a positive impact on the school's sustainability, mentioning it "makes financial sense" and would "allow for a streamlining of resources and processes right across the school".

### **Community Asset**

20% of responses described the school positively, with many using the word "asset". One respondent believes the proposal could "make a real difference to the lives of the children in the community", and another praised the school's "community focus".

"This would be an asset to the area whereby the present offering does not adequately provide for the number of children/demand as it stands"

"This would be a great asset to the local community, and all for much needed school places within the local area"

### **Negative Impacts**

Respondents also identified potentially negative impacts of the proposals, some expressed “concerns”, while others stated there was “no requirement” and the proposal “shouldn’t be getting the light of day”.

### **Size of school site**

2% of the comments were in relation to the size of the school site, with the feeling that this factor, along with St Paul’s CofE Infant School being one-form entry, would leave children underprepared for Secondary school. One respondent felt “a one form primary school seems quite small to be getting children ready for secondary school”, and another felt that one-form might be too limited, allowing for “no movement to move children around into another class, or make further friendship groups”.

“Concerns for children going from a one form primary school on to a large secondary”

### **Demand in other areas for Primary places**

5% of comments indicated that the proposal would have a negative impact on other local Primary provision. Words such as “adversely”, “decimate” and “suffer” were used in relation to the budgets and numbers on roll of alternative schools nearby. One respondent stated “there are sufficient KS2 places locally, hence, no requirement for further places” and another that “there are many schools in the area that have spaces”.

“There are a surplus of Key Stage 2 places in the area”

“There is evidence that there are too many school places available across Surrey and neighbouring counties, negating any need to expand a school permanently”

“There are sufficient KS2 places locally, hence, no requirement for further places”

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

2% of comments demonstrated a concern regarding the potential impacts and disruption of building works, along with the general noise generated from a Primary School and Nursery. One respondent stated they wanted to know the “impact on the area of the building works” and another mentioned “continual noise” during drop off and pick up times, especially early in the morning due to the previous Nursery.

### **Impact on other EYS provision**

2% of comments identified potential negative repercussions for alternative early years provision in the local area. One respondent stated they “worry about the impact this will have on small private nurseries”, while another felt the proposal would “have a negative effect on other local schools and nurseries pupil numbers”.

“There are many preschool/nursery offers locally to meet need”

### **Parking and traffic**

17% of comments related to concerns surrounding parking and traffic in the area, some expressing frustration at the current situation and therefore feeling this would only be exacerbated by the proposal. One respondent felt that there “needs to be incentives for parents not driving and a better road plan i.e., zebra crossing” while another similarly suggested “parking for the school will need a lot of serious consideration”. Several comments mentioned existing struggles with the Infant school, and that “residents have been verbally abused” whilst “many residents have complained to the school and the council and the police”.

“traffic in and around the school can be tricky in the morning”

“The infrastructure of where the school is placed within a housing estate will not be able to deal with the traffic and parking”

“at times it can be unsafe for pedestrians due to the volume of cars”

### **Split Families**

3% of comments were concerned about the impact on families whose children will have to attend different schools, given the existing necessity for children to transition from the end of Year 2. One respondent provided an example of their elder child now attending Waverley Abbey CofE Junior School, but their younger child attending St Paul’s CofE Infant School. They stated the decision they will have to make is whether to move their younger child, meaning they would then be “parted from close friends” or to keep the siblings at different schools.

“Some parents will have older children at Waverley abbey and will want them to follow”

### **Why not for 2024?**

4% of comments felt that the proposal should be expedited for those children currently in the school’s Year 2. One respondent felt “it would be better to bring forward the proposal” and another that “it would be ideal for there to be a Y3 available in 2024”. One respondent stated their concern that the transition to a Junior school “may be confusing and distressing for the children”.

“would love it to happen sooner”

### **Ideas and innovation**

Some comments offered suggestions for how the proposal could allow for the continuation of the current Year 2 children. This would involve the usage of the current Nursery site, and that “instead of filling this up with 2 nursery classes (2-3 and 3-4) start with only one nursery class at 3-4 for one year and use the other space to accommodate a Y3 classroom for the current Y2 class”. Another suggestion was that the school “obtain a temporary classroom, such as a portacabin” to educate one class while the building works took place in the interim. There was also a suggestion regarding the parking situation, and that a “drop off system” could be implemented, specifically for “years 3-6 or 2-6 as they

will usually have settled into the school by this time so could keep the traffic flowing”.

### **Queries & Other Comments**

Some comments raised questions regarding the continuation of the existing school bus service transporting former pupils from St Paul’s CofE Infant School to Waverley Abbey CofE Junior School. There were concerns from some respondents about potentially detrimental impacts on families whose elder children attended an alternative Primary school having been able to continue at St Paul’s, whilst a younger child continued at the school. Other questions arose surrounding the continuation of the children’s education into Secondary school, while others showed concern towards matters of staff recruitment and retention.

“Would the bus service continue to run to Waverley Abbey for the previous St Paul’s students? This assists us greatly and it would be important to us that it does continue.”

“Some parents will have older children at Waverley abbey and will want them to follow.”

“the option of him staying on means he can’t go there where his brother is, and I’m in a position of him then being parted from all his close friends if I chose to leave St Paul’s and go with Waverley abbey”

“Nothing has been said (that I’ve read) about which secondary schools a St Paul’s primary school would feed into”

“Currently this is clear and established for Waverley Abbey, so I’m curious as to which secondary schools our children would likely get places at if they attend St Paul’s until year 6”

“current strain schools are under with recruitment and meeting needs of students - what is the plan to recruit and retain the necessary extra staff over these next few years?”

### **Public Meetings**

A public consultation drop-in session took place at St Paul’s CofE Infant School on 4 October 2023. Roughly 50-60 people were in attendance, and themes arising from the public meeting reflected the themes from the responses to the consultation.

### **Questions and Answers**

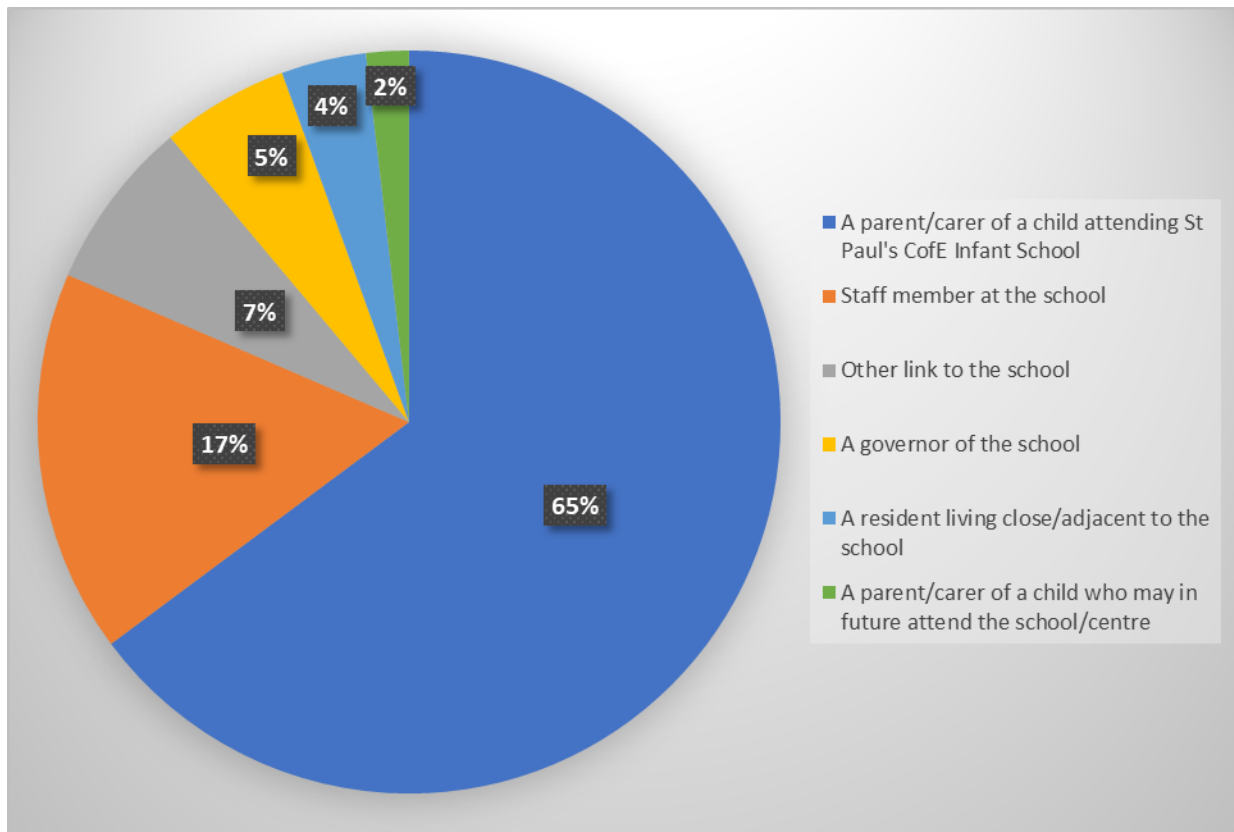
A “questions and answers” document has also been published alongside this analysis to answer questions which have arisen during the consultation process.

## Part 2 – Statutory Notices

### Quantitative Analysis

There were 54 responses to the statutory notices. The responses to the notices regarding the proposal to expand the age range at St Paul's CofE Infant School had 92% (50) of respondents agree with the proposal, 4% (2) of respondents disagree with the proposal and 4% (2) of respondents stated they didn't know. Meanwhile, concerning the proposal to lower the age range at St Paul's CofE Infant School to accommodate an on-site nursery from April 2024, 96% (52) of respondents agreed with the proposal and 4% (2) stated they didn't know.

All 54 respondents indicated their relationship with the school. The chart below shows the distribution of respondents to the consultation. The highest percentage of respondents (65%) indicated they are a parent/carer of a child attending St Paul's CofE Infant School.



### Percentage who agreed/disagreed/didn't know by individual groups – Expansion of age range

#### Responses from parent/carer of a pupil attending St Paul's CofE Infant School – 65%

35 agreed with the proposal

#### Responses from a parent/carer of a child who may in future attend the school/centre – 2%

1 agreed with the proposal

**Responses from a Staff Member at the school – 17%**

9 agreed with the proposal

**Responses from a Governor at the school – 5%**

3 agreed with the proposal

**Responses from other link to the school – 7%**

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

**Responses from a resident living close/adjacent to the school – 4%**

1 agreed with the proposal and 1 didn't know

**Percentage who agreed/disagreed/didn't know by individual groups  
– Lowering of age range**

**Responses from parent/carer of a pupil attending St Paul's CofE Infant School – 65%**

34 agreed with the proposal and 1 didn't know

**Responses from a parent/carer of a child who may in future attend the school/centre – 2%**

1 agreed with the proposal

**Responses from a Staff Member at the school – 17%**

9 agreed with the proposal

**Responses from a Governor at the school – 5%**

3 agreed with the proposal

**Responses from other link to the school – 7%**

3 agreed with the proposal and 1 didn't know

**Responses from a resident living close/adjacent to the school – 4%**

2 agreed with the proposal

## Qualitative Analysis

Respondents had the opportunity to add comments at the end of the survey. Out of the 54 responses received, 27 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>	Community Asset	16	59%
	Continuation of Primary Education	15	56%
	Less Travel	4	15%
	Meeting demand for Primary places	12	44%
	Meeting demand for EYS places	3	11%
	School Sustainability	5	19%
<b>Negative Impacts</b>	Demand in other areas for Primary places	3	11%
	Disruption of building works and school noise	1	4%
	Parking and Traffic	3	11%

### Key themes from the consultation

#### Positive impacts

Respondents identified several positive impacts for both the expansion and lowering of age range, with one describing it as a “fantastic opportunity”. Other responses stated the proposal was “essential” and felt it has “great potential” which would benefit “the children within the community as well as the parents”.

#### Community Asset

59% of the comments highlighted the positive impact this proposal could have on the community, citing the “excellent work” already being undertaken by the school, and that the school is “ideally located” to help meet an increasing need within the area. One respondent praised the Headteacher and staff, specifically their “exceptional record” and “clear vision for the future”. Other respondents saw positive impacts for the community as a whole, one stated “we desperately need our children to get the education and services they need in their own community” and another felt that were the proposal to go ahead it would be “a really positive expansion for the village”.

“extension of provision is much needed in the Tongham community”

“a big part of Tongham community and the extension plans will add so much more”

“a lovely little school”

### **Continuation of Primary Education**

56% of the comments felt the proposal would be beneficial for the children, with several comments using the word “settled” and stressing the importance of this in their children’s education. One response highlighted the importance of preexisting relationships the children “already built with the members of staff”, another stated there would be “huge benefit” and “continuity of care and education from age 2-11”.

“will enhance the learning experience of local children”

“good quality education for local children”

### **Less Travel**

15% of the comments stated their belief that the proposal would have a positive impact on the area by reducing travel times. One respondent mentioned the difficulties they experience as a “working parent with 2 children” and the “next available school being a 10/15 minute drive”. Similarly, one respondent stated the need to only travel to one school “would cut down on car use”.

### **Meeting demand for Primary places**

44% of the comments emphasized a “need” within the community for further Primary school places, with one feeling the area “desperately” needs the expansion. Another respondent concurred, stating “Tongham village has expanded its occupancy and now needs to expand its infrastructure”. Other comments described “great pressure” on existing school provision to meet increased demand, and “no other provision in the village” meant an expansion is “most definitely needed”.

“much needed educational provision in the community and for the surrounding area”

“has been missing from the village for a long time”

### **Meeting demand for EYS places**

11% of comments identified a “need” for increased Early Years provision in the area, with one stating their belief that a lowering of age range would be a “welcome addition”, and that it is “very much needed”.

### **School Sustainability**

19% of comments felt the proposal would be positive for the school as a whole, with one stating it “secures the future of the school”. Another felt the proposal is “the best thing to happen for this school”, with others describing both a lowering and expansion of age range to be “excellent for the school”.



### **Negative impacts**

Some responses mentioned negative impacts and a belief that there is “no need” for an expansion of age range, one respondent argued it could set a precedent for “other infant schools to use the same argument” and that many have a Junior school located 4+ miles away. The main concerns surrounding the proposal stemmed from a worry of the impact it could have on alternative local provision, along with the resultant disruption of building work and further challenges arising from increased traffic and parking.

### **Demand in other areas for Primary places**

11% of comments felt the proposal would impact negatively on schools in the surrounding area. One stated the proposal, if agreed, would cause “pressure on other schools”, and ultimately a “reduction in funding”. Similarly, another respondent felt that an expansion would “have a detrimental impact on other local schools and bring further challenges around sustainability”. They stated an existing “surplus” that is projected to continue moving forward, while another respondent requested that the local authority “carefully consider the implications on these schools who may be impacted by these proposals”.

“I cannot support the move into Key Stage 2”

“extra provision here is not required”

### **Disruption of building works and school noise/Traffic and parking**

15% of comments indicated a concern in the local area regarding the disruption the proposal may cause, in terms of the building works generated on-site and increased daily traffic and parking issues resultant of both the lowering and expansion of age range. One respondent specifically stated their concerns about both “disruption of the building work and the provision of parking”, while another requested the local authority ensure there is “sufficient parking” and due thought is given to “how drop off and pick up at the expanded school will work”, suggesting “a drop off zone for older children”, to attempt to lessen traffic around the school. Another respondent voiced an existing frustration at what they deem “inconsiderate” and “illegal” parking, therefore a need for “much clearer restrictions”.

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

The recommendations are 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 both the consultation and statutory notice periods. 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 on 27 February 2024.