

Consultation Analysis

(Informal and Statutory Notices)

**Expansion of St Andrew's Catholic
School**



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Consultation Analysis – Proposal to expand St Andrew's Catholic school

Introduction

This report is an analysis of responses gathered during the informal consultation for the proposal to expand St Andrews Catholic school, Leatherhead.

Surrey County Council published an informal consultation from 1 March to 26 April 2021 for the proposal.

Consultation Summary

The informal consultation was open from 1 March to 26 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 public meeting was held virtually on 18 March 2021 via Microsoft Teams.

An Equality Impact Assessment is being completed throughout the informal consultation period and statutory notice period and responses to the consultation will contribute to this.

Key points from the consultation responses:

- 98% of all respondents agreed with the proposal to expand the school.
- Three quarters of the responses were from parents of a child at the school (76%).

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.

Part 1 – Informal Consultation

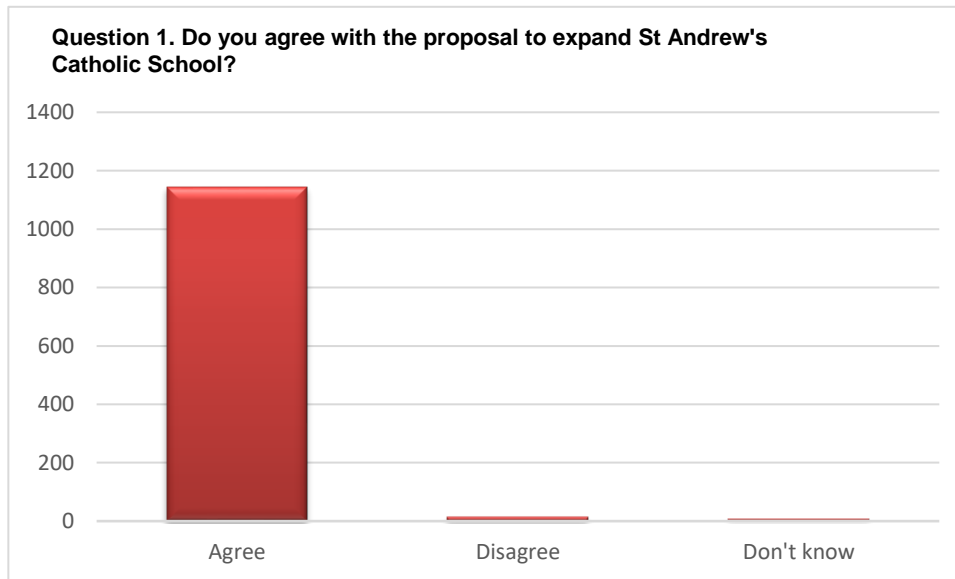
Quantitative Analysis

Respondents were asked “Do you agree with the proposal to expand St Andrew’s Catholic School?” and were given the option to select Agree, Disagree or Don’t know.

There were 1,166 responses to the consultation. 98.11% of respondents agreed with the proposal, 1.29% of respondents disagreed with the proposal and 0.60% of respondents said they didn’t know.

Figure 1 below shows the distribution of responses to the consultation.

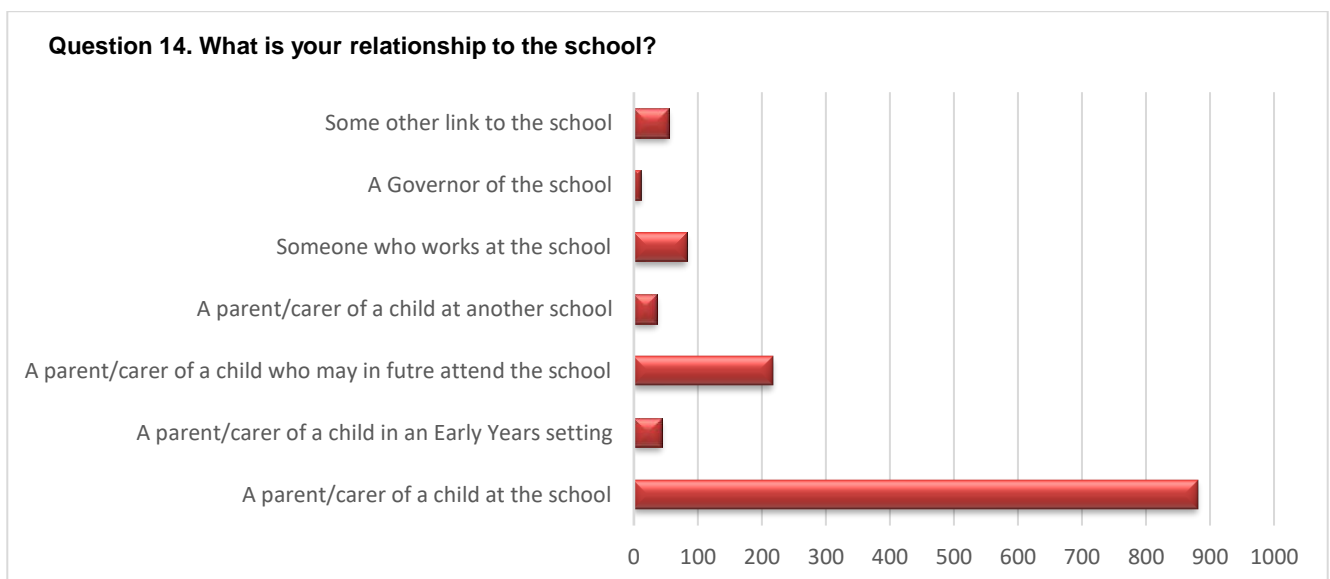
Figure 1



Who responded to the survey?

To understand who responded to the survey, respondents were asked what their relationship to the school is, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2



Qualitative Analysis

Respondents had the opportunity to add comments at the end of the survey and 694 people left comments. 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. There were 3 key themes that emerged from the consultation responses.

| Key theme | Tag | Number of responses | Prevalence (% out of 1166 total number responses) | Prevalence (% out of 694 responses with comments) |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Positive impacts | Positive impact additional funding | 98 | 8% | 14% |
| | Positive impact improvement of facilities | 206 | 18% | 30% |
| | Positive impact - for the community | 39 | 3% | 6% |
| | Positive impact meeting the demand for places | 242 | 21% | 35% |
| | Positive impact for staff | 16 | 1% | 2% |
| | Praise for the school | 339 | 29% | 49% |
| | Positive impacts for children and young people | 199 | 17% | 29% |
| 2. Negative Impacts | Negative impacts | 39 | 3% | 6% |
| 3. Ideas | Ideas | 17 | 1% | 2% |

1. Positive impacts

Additional funding and the improvement of facilities:

A high number of respondents believed the school deserved and “*would benefit from the additional funding*”.

“It’s a fantastic school in a great location, one of the top state schools in the country rated as world class and as such would benefit from the additional funding and additional pupils. It’s a school that Surrey should be proud of and should support as much as possible”.

A respondent also felt the school would “*thrive*” and “*offer*” the “*best opportunities*” for current children at the school and “*future children*”.

“St Andrews Catholic School has an important role to play in the community and this proposed expansion is very much welcomed. Whilst this is a formal process to an intake that is already in operation, the additional funding will enable the school to thrive and to offer the best opportunities for our children and future children; whether they be Catholic or living in the area”

Another respondent recognised the “*additional funding*” would ensure “*facilities*” are “*improved*”.

“This school has already been running well over its official enrolment number and this official expansion will provide an opportunity for the desperately needed additional funding that this school requires along with improved facilities”.

One respondent stated, “*Totally agree to the expansion proposal to allow for future expansion and mitigate the strain on the current resources*”.

A respondent also expressed how the funding would contribute to the school in providing “*high quality provision*”.

“The expansion and associated funding will allow the school to provide even higher quality provision for every child and young person, to reinforce the excellent professional development of its workforce, and the strong partnership working already underway”.

Positive impact for the community:

Respondents recognised the positive impact the expansion would have on the “*surrounding*” areas and “*widen access in the local community*”.

“St Andrews is a lovely school that serves our surrounding community and is in high demand. It seems to have the numbers of students and not the facilities to accommodate them adequately”.

“This will greatly benefit the local community. Places at this excellent school are in high demand”.

“I believe the school is a great success story for education in Surrey and the proposal to expand from seven to eight forms of entry will ensure current and future pupils continue to receive a world-class education, whilst widening access in the local communities”.

Respondents described St Andrew’s as “*a pillar*” of the community and other respondents felt the school is “*an important part of the local community*”.

“St Andrew’s is a pillar of the community and the expansion will help it to better serve this community”.

“St Andrew’s is an important part of the local community and provides an outstanding education as well as pastoral care and outside activities that benefit students and the community at large. My own personal experience is that St Andrews provide well rounded, trustworthy and ethical young adults that all seem to go on to give valued contributions to the community”.

“The school is an important part of the Catholic and local community. I fully support this application”.

Meeting the demand for places:

Over a quarter of respondents who left comments (35%) (or 21% of all total responses) mentioned the demand for secondary school places. The term “*local*” was referenced multiple times.

“This is much needed, with school places filling up and local schools being oversubscribed every year, more school places are definitely needed”.

“This will greatly benefit the local community. Places at this excellent school are in high demand. To ensure all Catholics and siblings in the local area can receive a place, the numbers need to be increased”.

Some respondents referred to how the school is “oversubscribed” and how it has already admitted additional children in other year groups.

“To support the demand from Catholic children in the diocese to attend the school which can be seen by the bulge classes the school has needed over recent years”.

“The school already admit more pupils than their "published admission number" and still cannot accommodate all the students who want to attend this outstanding school”

“Happy for this to take place as there are already in excess of 240 children in year 7 in most years. It will only formalise the PAN and allow the necessary funding to accommodate the children who attend”.

An increase in housing planned for the local area was also mentioned in several comments thus increasing the demand for school placements.

“With an ever increase in local housing being built, having extra places for local children is a must! It is already so difficult to get places in local schools so this expansion will be a great benefit”.

“The school needs to expand to meet the needs of local Catholic families and needs more funding to assist with these needs. The community cannot grow in size with new housing, without the social structure of the community growing together”.

Positive impact for staff:

A number of comments cited that the proposed expansion would have positive impacts for the staff. Phrases such as “better environment” and “creating excellent facilities” were used.

Some members of staff at the school commented on the positives of the proposed school expansion.

“The school has expanded and new facilities will mean there are less rooming issues. Staff will also be able to based in fewer rooms throughout the day, which will make a huge difference for a smooth day”.

“As a teacher at St Andrews, I can personally vouch for the shortage of space available to teach lessons and when you are allocated a room, the required facilities aren't always available...Having a purpose built space for the children to learn and for teachers to teach would make so much more sense and enhance the experience for everyone involved”.

One comment mentioned how an expansion will positively impact future generations of teachers.

“As St Andrew's is a teaching school, an expansion would also allow for new generations of teachers to have extra space to develop their own learning and teaching strategies whilst training with their peers and colleagues at St Andrew's”.

Praise for the school:

Almost half of respondents who left comments (49%) praised the school. Many comments mentioned the terms “excellent”, “brilliant”, “world class” and “successful” when expressing their positive feelings towards the school and the proposed expansion.

“St Andrew's is an exemplary secondary school very high in demand and this is the right thing to do to enable more students to benefit from the first class teaching on offer”.

A large proportion of parents/carers of children attending the school drew upon their personal experiences.

“St Andrews is a fantastic school - a real gem and my son has thrived and continues to thrive at this school...”

“...St Andrews is an outstanding school my children have been fortunate enough to have been taught and supported by incredible teachers...”

“My son attends St Andrew's Catholic School, Leatherhead and I am delighted with the standard of education he is receiving. I believe the school is a great success story for education in Surrey and the proposal to expand from seven to eight forms of entry will ensure current and future pupils continue to receive a world-class education, whilst widening access in the local communities”.

Positive impact for children and young people:

A respondent felt the proposal to expand the school is “consistent with Surrey’s Vision for Learning”.

“I believe the plans put forward by St Andrew’s are consistent with Surrey's Vision for Learning strategy and will help improve the outcomes of children and young people who attend the school/ six form”.

There are also comments about the benefits of the proposed expansion. One respondent felt the expansion would have a long-lasting effect for “several decades” for “students”.

“If this school expansion goes ahead. The benefits it would bring to students, teachers and the community would last several decades. It would allow the facilities for these subjects to be upgraded and reclaimed. And would allow St Andrew’s to properly educate its pupils for years to come”.

“This is an outstanding learning institution and this opportunity will give it's pupils and staff a better environment and area to educate those that attend now and, in the future,”.

Other respondents mentioned the “quality” of the education at St Andrew’s which has, and would have, a positive impact for children and young people.

“St Andrews delivers top quality education, and it will ensure more children have access to outstanding opportunities for learning”.

“It is a very good school and it would be excellent if more children could take advantage of it. We have heard that the "lessons" provided during lock-down were truly exceptional.

2. Negative impacts

Some respondents expressed their concerns about the negative impacts the expansion could pose with parking and traffic.

“Parking and the impact of the increased traffic and congestion to name an obvious issue. We must also remember the adjacency of the two other schools that have expanded in numbers”.

“There are significant disruptions and traffic issues in and around the school and with additional pupils not even from the area is going to make the matter worse, there is a bias not even to admit none catholic who practically live less than metres from the school so this does not benefit them neither”.

“I strongly disagree with the proposal to extend St Andrew's Catholic school because 80% of children who attend the school do not live in the area nearby (2 miles radius), the traffic issue during drop off and pick up time is huge. Some days it takes up to 40 minutes to pass the queue in Grange road”.

“There are large traffic problems in the area due to three schools in close proximity, none of which have admissions criteria based on the proximity of the child's residence”.

There was a particular concern expressed about the impact on other local schools and the *“potential to cause significant pressures at other local secondary schools”*.

“... a permanent increase in the PAN could lead, in the future, to those places being taken up by local non-Catholic children which has the potential to cause significant pressures at other local secondary schools”.

3. Ideas and questions

A few respondents asked questions or suggested ideas relating to the proposal. Ideas included ensuring local children are considered for additional school places over Catholic children living at a greater distance.

“But I think priority should be for local parents, regardless of religion - not more Catholics from miles away bringing traffic and making it more unfair”.

“Is it really acceptable that Surrey County Council fund an expansion which doesn't guarantee the places go to local children within Mole Valley or even within Surrey? Should Surrey County Council fund places for children not within Surrey?”.

There was also a comment and suggestion about St Andrew's current PAN.

“We support the retrospective element of this consultation that St Andrew's increase its PAN from 150 to 210. We do believe though, that any further increase above PAN of 210 at St Andrew's should, as it has been in recent years, be managed on an annual basis to ensure that the demand for Catholic places is met without risking a detrimental and unintended future consequence on the numbers at local schools”.

Some comments referenced concerns over the current school site set up and suggested utilising other spaces in the building.

“The current site is badly set up for the existing in-take but a thoughtful and well-planned building expansion could make more efficient use of the space so that children could access the canteen and sixth form rooms, for example, in a less crowded way”.

“Although the school may have room for extending class rooms, has thought been given to recreational areas, library, canteen, benches, places to eat lunch etc. This is a very important part of the children’s day and already the space outside is tight, with very little space for socialising. Most of the space is taken by basketball courts being used during break time, so the space for others is dramatically reduced once these are in use, which is most of the time. I would like reassurance of how they will expand or use existing space to stop the “cramping”.

Public Meetings

A virtual public meeting was held on the 18 March 2021 at 6pm, via Microsoft Teams. There was a short presentation followed by 45 minutes for attendees to ask questions. The meeting was attended by 78 people. These were parent/carers, staff at St Andrew’s school, residents/members of the local community and other stakeholders.

Themes arising from the public meeting reflect the themes from the responses to the consultation.

All representations will be reviewed before a final decision is taken by the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning on 12th July 2021.