

Questions raised at West Ewell Infant School informal consultation meeting with stakeholders

Thursday 27 February 2014 6.30-8.00pm

- Q1 In the consultation document, it shows that West Ewell will be over capacity in 2019-2020 (NOR 570). This will be 150 above the school's final capacity. How will this be achieved?
- A1 This will be a challenge for the architects; the school will reduce from 19 classrooms to 14. There will be some movement until the school finally 'settles down' in 2020.
- A2 As the school (West Ewell) becomes smaller, what will happen to the teachers? Will they leave the school?
- Q2 We hope to retain the teaching staff; however there is normally 'natural wastage' where teachers leave, go on maternity leave and return part time etc. The reorganisation will provide more opportunities for staff, for example for a teacher currently teaching an infant class to move to a junior school class, and vice versa.
- Q3 My child is currently in Reception at Ewell Grove, and will be in the last group of children that has to transfer to a different school at KS2. Will they have to transfer (e.g. to Danetree) or will they be able to remain at Ewell Grove?
- A3 There is no plan to provide special additional classes for siblings.
- Q4 The traffic in the neighbouring roads around West Ewell is appalling. Although there are double yellow lines, I feel that more children will mean more traffic.
- A4 Traffic will be included in the next stage in the consultation. It is on the governing body's agenda and is one of the challenges that will need to be overcome. A school travel plan will be produced, which will be undertaken by a professional consultancy.
However families should have less car journeys in the future, as all their children will be at a single primary school (rather than dropping children off at an infants' school then driving to another school to drop junior children off). Also theoretically children should be attending their local primary, which should reduce the need for car journeys.
- Q5 Can you elaborate on the playing fields situation at Ewell Grove?
- A5 We are currently working on 2 options. Nothing has yet been agreed, but we are looking at issues such as: proximity to school, safest, best sporting facilities.

- Q6 I have a child in West Ewell Reception and another child who hopefully will be in Ewell Grove Reception in 3 years' time. Will they be guaranteed places in the same primary school?
- A6 We are currently looking at the siblings situation, and will give parents information in due course.
- Q7 Will the catchment areas become smaller for each school?
- A7 There are no catchment areas at present; although school places are allocated on proximity to the school where a school is oversubscribed, and schools tend to grow their own 'catchment' from the neighbourhood. It is anticipated that Danetree will grow its own 'catchment' for primary places. Danetree, as an academy is its own admissions authority, but follows Surrey admissions policy.
- Q8 What will happen in September 2015? Will we arrive at school to find a change of teachers and buildings?
- A8 The same teachers will be there, and the building will have been started.
- Q9 What will the sports facilities be at West Ewell? The existing sports pitch is very small.
- A9 We are working with the architects to ensure that there is as much space on the site as possible. However we won't compromise on sport, and will make sure we find a good solution.
- Q9 How will the new 'bigger' children be able to fit in at West Ewell?
- A9 The school will get a grant for new furniture etc. for classrooms. However classroom sizes can be smaller for junior school children (e.g. there is no requirement to provide a reading corner, and children tend to move around less). At the same time, Danetree will be trading in its 'bigger' furniture for 'smaller' furniture, so it may be possible to pool and share resources.
- Q10 How will playtimes be achieved when outdoor space is so small, and there are big children playing in the same space as small children?
- A10 The governing body has set up a working party to address this issue. Currently there are staggered playtimes and lunchtimes, and we will also provide opportunities for collaboration between older and younger children.
- Q11 I am concerned that my child will always be in the oldest year group in the school.

- A11 We will learn from the experiences of staff at Southfield Primary, which started up as a new primary school, and initially their Reception children were the only children in the school. We will ensure that this will be an 'opportunity' for these children. We will develop links with secondary schools to ensure that their transition is smooth and well prepared.
- Q12 Danetree is opening as a primary school in September 2015 – when will architect's plans be available?
- A12 This consultation is about education, which has to be completed before we can move on to the next stage. However architect meetings have started to take place, and plans should be drawn up within the next 2-3 weeks, to allow 12 weeks for planning application. None of the 3 schools will be compromised and will retain their history and character.
- Q13 Will children be kept in their same classes throughout the reorganisations?
- A13 This is considered as a matter of course at the end of every school year anyway.
- Q14 The timescales appear very optimistic, and Ewell Grove is in a conservation area – what is the actual chance of delivering the project on time?
- A14 We are consulting with planners already, and are taking a steer from them.
- Q15 Will the schools each stay on one site, or will they become split site?
- A15 The 3 schools will each remain on a single site.
- Q16 What if the planning predictions aren't correct? Has the proposal taken into consideration the new housing development at NESLOT (91 houses)?
- A16 The proposal is based on the best that we can offer at present based on extensive analysis.
- Q17 I have a child currently in Year 1 at West Ewell, and another who will be joining Reception this September. What are my choices? Will there be a sibling class at West Ewell for Year 3?
- A17 We have to have a cut-off point, and there will be no accommodation for a sibling class, so your older child would need to transfer to another school (e.g. Danetree) at Year 3. Your younger child could then remain at West Ewell, or you could apply to move to Danetree at Year 3.
- Q18 How will Surrey County Council be funding Ewell Grove and West Ewell while school numbers are fluctuating?

- A18 SCC maintains a Growing Schools Fund, which is used to supplement school budgets; therefore the budget per child remains the same.
- Q19 I can understand that the plan is for all 3 schools to become all-through primary schools. However if this doesn't happen, could a Plan B solution be for West Ewell to remain a 4FE infant school, Danetree to remain a 4FE junior school, and Ewell Grove to become a 2FE primary school?
- A19 This solution wouldn't provide the additional form of entry that is needed. It is important that this proposal considers 'the whole package'.
- Q20 Is there another Plan B?
- A20 It is hoped that there won't be a necessity for a Plan B. This proposal has been planned for a number of years and all 3 schools are in complete agreement that it provides the best solution. If the proposal cannot go ahead, then SCC would have to consider building a new school; however land is scarce, and the school would have to be 2FE (as no new single form entry schools are being built).
- Q21 I appreciate that this proposal is a great idea, and there will be a lot of 'winners' as a result. However I feel that my children, who are currently in Y1 and Y2 and West Ewell are not the winners. Their learning has already been disrupted by the building work on site, and I am concerned that 4-5 years of their primary school education will be spent on building sites.
- A21 If your children transfer to Danetree, the building work should be completed by September 2015. They will still benefit from attending 2 excellent schools (West Ewell and Danetree).
- Q22 The current building works at West Ewell has been a major disruption to many aspects of school life, including the after school club, playtime, lunch time, and pupils have been trying learn in an environment of continual noise. To be honest, I wouldn't wish this on anyone.
- A22 The governing body will ensure that the development project is properly resourced and delivered. We can assure parents that despite the environment, children are very adaptable and have continued to make excellent progress; so we can confidently say that the build has not impeded their learning.
- Q23 Is there an option for a new primary school?
- A23 There is no suitable land available, and a new school would have to be 2FE (although we would only actually need 1FE). This is the fallback position, but we would look at other primary schools in the borough first with a view to expanding them by 1FE.

Q24 What will hinder the proposal going ahead?

A24 Potentially planning could stall the proposal. However we would look to address the issues raised and re-submit. We would want to get planning right and make sure that it is accepted. There are further stages to go through, and the Cabinet (elected county councillor) responsible for children, schools and families would need to give approval.

Q25 Would all 3 sites need to go ahead?

A25 The proposal depends on all 3 schools being part of the overall solution, so yes, it would not work with only 1 or 2 schools going ahead.

Q26 My child is currently in Year 1 at West Ewell. Is there a guarantee of a place in Year 3 at Danetree (September 2015)?

A26 There will be a bulge to accommodate movement from Ewell Grove and West Ewell (180 children), but not linked admissions. However children will have a better chance of being offered a place than now.

Q27 I understand the educational benefits of the proposal. However one of my children is in Year 1 and the other will join Reception in September (2014). I am concerned that they will be impacted in the transition period, and I feel it is critical to get transition right for the children affected.

A27 The schools are already working together for smooth transition for the moves between schools that are currently necessary. For example, the leadership teams of all 3 schools had their first meeting this week regarding transition of children transferring from infant to junior schools in September.

Q28 Is there a plan to discuss what is happening with the children?

A28 We constantly talk to the children about any decisions and will make them involved.

Q29 Currently the breakfast club and after school club have fixed places. Will there be spaces in future?

A29 This will also be addressed by the working party; we would certainly like to retain both clubs.

Q30 My child is currently in Reception at West Ewell; my other child will join West Ewell in Reception in September 2015. If I want my elder child to transfer to Year 3 at Danetree in September 2016, will I be able to transfer the other child as well?

A30 We will discuss the sibling issue with the SCC Admissions team and report back.

