

Consultation on the Future Education Offer in Whiteley and Fareham

The Executive Lead Member for Children's Services has approved a period of public consultation on the options for secondary provision in the Whiteley area. This initial consultation will run from **Thursday 28 March 2024** until **11:59pm Friday 31 May 2024**.

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been created so that queries received during the consultation can be logged along with their responses. This is a supplementary document to the information pack and presentation video, so if you have not done so already, please utilise those documents which can provide you with additional information regarding this consultation. They can be found linked on the [consultation webpage](#).

This document will be updated periodically throughout the consultation so please also check this document before responding as your query may be addressed here.

Why are you consulting now?

A new 900 place secondary school is proposed to be built and opened for September 2027. This is based on the timing of the land transfer to the County Council to build the school and ensures there are sufficient pupils arising from the development to ensure its short-term financial stability. The school is being built to accommodate the yield from the existing Whiteley area along with the anticipated yield from the North Whiteley development. In order to ensure delivery of the new school by September 2027 the catchment area and admissions arrangements will need to be proposed by September 2025. To ensure sufficient time to take account of the views of local stakeholders, it is necessary to start that consultation process now.

Why are you building a new school if there is enough space at schools that are already open?

The County Council's guiding principle when planning school places is to provide local schools for local children. Whilst there are currently sufficient places, these are not available in the long-term to meet the future demand from the Whiteley area. A new community of this size requires a new secondary school to serve it. The requirement for a new school is detailed further in the information pack.

What are the problems with surplus places/declining pupil numbers?

Funding for schools is allocated by central government and is directly related to the number of students on roll. A decline in student numbers, and a subsequent reduction in funding, presents difficulties for a school in appointing staff and delivering the full range of curriculum opportunities to students.

Reduced funding could result in fewer teachers and less flexibility around group sizes. Low student numbers can also impact on leadership capacity and the workload of staff.

What consideration has been given regarding the population in this part of Hampshire, for example, population increase in Fareham due to development in the area?

The County Council uses school place planning areas, based upon historic student movements between a small number of school catchments, to help with forecasting the demand across a local area. Data is collected on the historical and current uptake of places in all schools that are maintained by the Local Authority. This data along with other linked information, primarily birth and housing data, is used to forecast school places across the County.

How can you be sure that the number of pupils expected in the future is accurate?

Predicting school place demand is a complex task. Where children go to school involves a range of different factors such as housing growth, inward and outward population migration as well as parental preference. As a result, planning for school places uses historical trends, immunisation and vaccination data, and some assumptions rather than certainties. While pupil forecasts are derived from sound methodology, external influences mean student forecasts come without a guarantee.

All applications will be handled in line with the published admissions arrangements. Some applications may be refused in which case parents will be offered their right to appeal any refusal decisions through the Independent Appeals Service. The Council's School Admissions Team will support each family to ensure they have all the information and guidance needed in those cases.

The School Admissions Code does not allow Hampshire County Council to extend the deadline for applications, nor can the outcome of the public notice period be pre-empted. The School Admissions Team can support parents in identifying their local schools or parents can access the County Council's school catchment finder [GIS | Hantsweb](#) or find a school [Find a school | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#) webpages. Parents are also entitled to make late applications, but it is worth noting that late applications will be considered after all on-time applications.

Has there been any consideration around future uses for the building?

The consultation into the options for secondary provision in the Whiteley and Fareham areas is still ongoing. No decision has been made and therefore we cannot speculate on the future use of any building that may become vacant. If a decision is made to relocate or close a school, options for the site can be fully considered at that stage.

Can I propose other options?

During the consultation the Council would carefully consider any additional options suggested.

Please submit via the survey at:
[North Whiteley Consultation Response Form](#)

You can also email your response directly to Hampshire County Council using the email address: strategicplanningunit@hants.gov.uk

Will I have the opportunity to discuss and comment on the proposals?

Public meetings have been arranged and will provide an opportunity for parents/carers/stakeholders to raise their views directly with council officers.

The meetings are to be held:

- **Monday 22 April 2024** between 4-7pm at The Henry Cort Community College
- **Tuesday 23 April 2024** between 3-7pm at Cornerstone Church of England Primary School

There will be opportunities for parents, pupils, staff and other interested members of the community to meet with Hampshire County Council at drop-in events and comment on the options.

You can give your feedback using the consultation Response Form, available online here: [North Whiteley Consultation Response Form](#)

You can also email your response directly to Hampshire County Council using the email address: strategicplanningunit@hants.gov.uk

If you are unable to email or complete the above survey and wish to make a comment, please write to The Strategic Development Team, Children's Services Department, Ell Court North, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG by Friday 31 May 2024.

What happens after the consultation?

A report setting-out the consultation responses received will then be taken to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in October 2024 to decide how the proposals should continue to the formal statutory consultation stage.

How will my views be shared with the decision maker?

Any comments that are made during the consultation will be included in the decision report.

What about all the additional housing proposed within Fareham, such as Welborne?

A new primary at Welborne is due to open in September 2027, taking a class of 30 initially and growing from the bottom up. A new secondary school is proposed to serve the Welborne development, but it is unlikely that there would be much secondary demand before 2034, depending on how quickly the development builds out and what the demand is for school places at the time. Until that time, as in all new developments, to ensure viability, we would be looking to utilise the wider surplus in Fareham Central and East.

The secondary schools in Fareham are collectively a net importer of students from outside of the area, most significantly from Gosport. Therefore, capacity is within the system to meet more local demand should it be required. The key driver behind this consultation is to provide secondary provision locally for the

growing development area of Whiteley while also working to prevent a detrimental impact on families and young people's education in Fareham.

If option 1 is agreed and The Henry Cort Community College remains open alongside the new Whiteley secondary school, would that mean there is more choice for families and smaller class sizes?

Option 1 would potentially mean more choice for families when transferring to secondary school. However, if one school is significantly more popular than another, leaving one with surplus places, it is likely to have a negative financial impact. Schools are funded by central government on a per pupil basis so low numbers means less funding, putting pressure on a school's budget. Rather than smaller class sizes it is likely that a school would need to instead have fewer classes. Schools need to run classes that are as full as possible to maintain a balanced budget.

Could investment be made to modernise The Henry Cort Community College?

The new Whiteley secondary school is funded by developer contributions and the DfE, not Hampshire County Council. There is no funding available to significantly modernise The Henry Cort Community College.

If The Henry Cort School does either relocate or close, could the building be used for a special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) school?

Any potential future use of The Henry Cort Community College site, should it become available, will be considered after the outcome of this consultation is known. All suggestions, such as a new SEND school, would be fully considered, alongside all current community use.