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Dear Consultees

Enlargement of Oakridge Infant School and Oakridge Junior School, Basingstoke – Consultation

I am writing to invite your views in respect of Hampshire County Council's proposal to permanently enlarge the premises of Oakridge Infant and Junior Schools, Basingstoke.

Hampshire County Council is proposing to increase the physical capacity of Oakridge Infant School to allow them to offer 90 places for Year R (age 4+) and Oakridge Junior School 90 places for Year 3 (age 7+). This expansion will allow the schools to cater for 270 and 360 pupils respectively. Oakridge Infant School has already admitted 90 pupils into Year R in 2015 to reflect the local demand for places.

The pressure for school places is a result of a rise in the number of births in the area and new housing development. It is intended that permanent facilities will be available from September 2018.

Reason for proposal

Hampshire County Council has a statutory duty to provide school places. Owing to an increase in the number of children in the local area, and in particular demand for Year R places, there is a need for additional school places to be provided.

Where a Local Authority proposes to permanently enlarge a school's capacity by 25% or more it must follow a procedure set out by the Department for Education. This information and some Frequently Asked Questions are available on the following website;

<http://consultations.hants.gov.uk/active.aspx>

The Consultation

The primary purpose of this consultation is to seek the view of consultees on the principle of enlarging the schools to meet the demand for additional school places in the local area. We understand that you may have some questions regarding how the school buildings will be expanded to accommodate additional pupils and whether there will be an impact on travel to and from the school as a result of accommodating additional pupils. Both of these aspects are important but at this stage these details will not be available as we need to obtain approval to the expansion before detailed work commences. It is important to hear your views at this stage so we can consider them as part of the detailed work to be undertaken should approval to the enlargement be obtained.

This consultation will run from 25 January to 4 March 2016. Officers will then take into consideration all the consultation responses received before deciding whether the proposal should continue to the formal publication stage.

If so, a statutory Public Notice will be published, setting out Hampshire County Council's intent to enlarge the school. It is anticipated that this will be published on 15 April 2016.

After the date of publication there will be a four week period in which any representations can be made to the local authority. After the conclusion of this period the County Council will decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal. It is anticipated that a decision will be made by the end of the summer.

Further Information

A drop-in session where you will be able to discuss the proposal with County Council officers will take place on the 8th February 2016 between 3 pm and 6 pm at the Infant School.

A website has also been set up with the details of the consultation which includes some 'Frequently Asked Questions' that may address any queries you have. The link is shown above.

The current proposed building plans are being developed with the Headteachers and governing bodies. The plans will be posted on the school website once they have been developed and agreed with the school. There will be a further opportunity to discuss the plans in detail at a pre-planning application consultation and we will notify you of the details once arranged.

If you are unable to attend this session or visit the above website and wish to make a comment then please write to Glenn Parkinson, Strategic Development Officer, Children's Services Department, Ell Court North, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG or e-mail strategicplanningunit@hants.gov.uk by 4 March 2016.

Yours sincerely



**Strategic Development Officer
Children's Services Department**