

Sent: 14 March 2012 22:49

To: Shefferd, Martin

Subject: Amalgamation

Dear Mr Shefferd,

I wish to register my objection to the proposed amalgamation of West End Infant School and Beaumont Junior School. I felt that the Cabinet decision was made with little regard to the views of the 252 parents, staff and local community who disagreed with the proposal.

It was obvious that the Cabinet were discussing the proposal with no actual in-depth knowledge of the schools and the locality. An opportunity for members to actually visit West End Infant School should have been given so that they could have experienced the friendly, caring and committed professionalism of the staff as well as the friendly, confident pupils engaged in their learning.

Parents in Aldershot should be able to exercise their rights to choose a small infant school for their children which has its own dedicated head teacher and management team rather than being amalgamated with a junior school and having to share a head teacher and a management team off site. West End Infant School is showing that it can improve pupil attainment through the staff's in-depth knowledge of the pupils and of this phase of education which also includes the Foundation Stage. A head teacher of a primary school would be unlikely to have such knowledge of two or more phases of education. Managing schools on two sites would be difficult and many schools have experienced problems in the past with appointing suitable a head teacher for a school on one site.

Unfortunately Beaumont Junior school is once again going through yet another period of insecurity with another interim management team whilst West End Infant School, in spite of the Cabinet proposal, still has strong stable leadership and dedicated staff who are still maintaining stability and security for the pupils.

We do not want to lose this in Aldershot.

West End Infant School should remain a small school with its own dedicated head teacher and staff. It is at the heart of the local community.

Yours sincerely,

Dear Mr Shefferd,

Re: - West End Infant & Beaumont Junior Schools

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk to me on the telephone recently. Despite your explanations, however, I feel compelled to register my objections to the proposals to close these two schools and to establish a new primary school.

Firstly, there is inadequate evidence to support the proposed increase in capacity of the local schools. On the contrary, your published statistics for actual and projected numbers on roll predict a diminishing demand. In our conversation you mentioned a possible increase in demand for Year R places. However, I remain unconvinced by your argument and feel very strongly that if your proposals are based on such a possibility, against the evidence of the published statistics of projected numbers on roll, then sufficient evidence should have been presented both to cabinet and to the general public, whom you were obliged to consult.

Regarding the consultation, I fully understand your explanation that many of those who responded offered inadequate support for their disagreement with your proposals. Nevertheless, if you are to have a consultation and the overwhelming majority are against your proposals, it behoves you to publish a very good argument for apparently disregarding the wishes of those consulted. If you do not do so you undermine the confidence of those you are supposed to serve.

Concerning Beaumont Junior School, I understand that Mr Smith was doing a good job of raising standards and that you yourself believe that this will show in the next set of results. Indeed, Ofsted's "most recent monitoring inspection in October 2011 judged the school to be making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement." In these circumstances it seems unnecessary to take such a drastic step as closure of the school at all. You told me that this proposal has been formulated because you fear that, if you do not do something this drastic, Ofsted will step in, take control and impose its own solution. Actually, in basing your plans on your fears of what might happen, you are already no longer in balanced control of the situation. The rational course of action, it seems to me, is to consult with Ofsted to ascertain whether your fears have any foundation in reality and to propose an assessment of whether Mr Smith's actions have done enough to render such a radical proposal as closure unnecessary.

In large measure, the lack of continuity of leadership would seem to be a central factor in the underachievement of the school in recent years. Perhaps it is a pity, then, that Mr Smith, good though his achievements seem to have been, was

appointed to the post so close to retirement age as he was. Nevertheless, his good leadership seems to have been successful in beginning to turn the school around. Good leadership, especially with some continuity, could continue the process without the necessity for any knee jerk reaction. As it stands, your proposals have created a situation where there is still no continuity, only continued uncertainty; because of which you are currently unable to appoint a substantive head teacher, further aggravating the situation.

Concerning West End Infant School, to close it because of the failings of another school seems bizarre. And, although it has not made great improvement in its Ofsted rating over several years, it remains a satisfactory school.

Actually, there are two proposals in one, one short term and one longer term. I quote: - "This would operate initially from the two existing sites ensuring they both remained open for the time being but with the current intention to create a single school on the present Beaumont site subject to capital funding being available..." Both scenarios involve the closure of the West End Infant School as it is, but each has a different set of consequences for the local community and each, therefore, needs to be objected to on slightly different grounds.

The short term proposal is to spend £350,000 on building a new classroom and toilets on the West End site. Whether or not this additional capacity is actually necessary seems highly uncertain (as discussed above). Also, the current building is of architectural importance and any significant alterations should be resisted on these grounds. Furthermore, the longer term proposals are that, when the funds are available, the school should be removed from this site completely, thereby making the new classroom and toilets obsolete, and the expenditure of the £350,000 a complete waste. You, yourself, expressed to me your doubts as to whether this was a good use of tax payers money. It is not.

Another objection to the short term proposal is that, with a split-site school under a single head teacher, the head is necessarily absent from the site for a considerable portion of the time. Can this possibly be an improvement?

The longer term proposal to close the current West End site completely leaves the local community with a severely reduced choice in terms of the type of school available. As parents, my wife and I chose West End Infant School for our son because it is local to us and because it is a small school. We feel that a larger school would have been much less suitable for him (also for either of our other younger children). In this context I would like to point out that Ms Jenkin, the head teacher, knows all her pupils and most of their siblings by name. It would be a catastrophic decision were you to remove the possibility for parents to take this same choice of a small school for their children.

Regarding the distance of the school from our home, we are currently able to walk to the school, crossing only two quite minor roads. To access the Beaumont site, it might still be just possible to walk. However, as well as being further, this would require negotiating several busier roads. In which context, I should mention the

recent accident close to Beaumont. I think it highly likely that, in those circumstances, we would feel compelled to drive, further congesting the roads, burning precious fossil fuels and making parking outside the school even more difficult. In your document "Matters To Be Specified In Section 15 Proposals To Discontinue A School", under the heading "Travel" (section 15) you consider only the case of "the establishment of a primary school on the existing schools' sites", stating that it "will have no impact on the community in terms of length of journeys". Your expressed aim, however, is not to retain both sites. If that aim is realised, it will have a considerable impact on the community in terms of length of journeys. The information that you have presented to cabinet and public is again inadequate or misleading.

All of these objections result because you are afraid of what Ofsted *might* do, and because you are not prepared to wait long enough to see whether, as you yourself expect, Mr Smith's actions have brought about a significant improvement to a school that was ailing because of a lack of continuity and quality of leadership!

You boast that "Hampshire was judged to be an 'excellent' authority in the recent Annual Children's Services Assessment in November, one of only 28 out of 144 authorities in the country so far to achieve this." I fear that with these proposals, the information presented to the public and your handling of the "consultation" process, you are seriously blotting your copy book.

Appendix 1 – Quotes from Ofsted

Grounds for objecting to closure of West End Infant School

- (1) The main grounds for objecting are the total failure of Hampshire County Council to engage in meaningful consultation with the local community, the parents of children at West End Infant School, the Board of Governors of West End Infant School, and the Headteacher and Staff of West End Infant School – all of whom are completely opposed to the closure of West End Infant School.
- (2) This opposition is apparent in the report considered by the County Council's Cabinet on 23 January 2012 (Table 2, Item 6). The Minutes of that Cabinet meeting also mentioned that a deputation attended from West End Infant School:
 1. Nicky Dymott – Chair of Governors
Phil Knott – Governor
 2. Samantha Hodgson – Community Governor
 3. Susanna Rees – Parent of child in Year R
Samantha Stacey – Parent of child in Year R
- (3) However, the Minutes do not record that the Deputation was there to object strongly to the decision to close West End Infant School. The Minutes do not record what the Deputation from West End Infant School said.
- (4) No proper consideration at all was given to the data in Table 2 indicating the overwhelming opposition to the closure of West End Infant School – **252 "Disagree"** with only **23 "Agree"**.
- (5) Given that the 14 Governors of Beaumont Junior School unanimously agreed with the proposal – that is 14 of the 23 in the "Agree" category – then, apart from these 14 Governors of Beaumont Junior School, **97% of all other respondents opposed the closure of West End Infant School.**
- (6) For the Cabinet on 23 January 2012 to have gone against such a clearly expressed view beggars belief and makes a mockery of the "consultation".
- (7) The Cabinet was also advised that "In the case of West End Infant School a follow up monitoring inspection on 13 December 2011 had drawn the conclusion that the school was making inadequate progress in making improvements, and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement."
- (8) However, it is clear from the Ofsted letter of 14 December 2011 that that view was expressed as an "opinion" by HMI Melanie Knowles. That "opinion" did not take sufficient account of the increase in the number of pupils joining the school who are from Asian and Eastern European heritages, many of whom are at an early stage of learning English - or that the HMI's visit took place in the run up to Christmas, just when the Governors, the Headteacher and the Staff were very much under pressure trying to save their school from closure.

- (9) From the point of view of Human Resources, this last point is of great concern. In its determination to close West End Infant School, Hampshire County Council seems to have forgotten its duty of care to employees by putting them under so much stress for such a lengthy period of time. This time was protracted unduly because the Cabinet was originally due to make its decision on 19 December 2011. However, the Cabinet delayed consideration until 23 January 2012, following the apparently hastily arranged Ofsted visit by the HMI on 13 December 2011, on which the Cabinet then relied.
- (10) It is almost unbelievable that the HMI could have ended her letter of 14 December 2011 stating "***I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school***", when it is clear that the Cabinet was going to cite her "opinion" in reaching the decision to close West End Infant School.
- (11) Another strong point of concern in the local community is the wish to safeguard the wonderful building that houses West End Infant School, which is seen as being threatened by the apparent eventual intention to build a new all-through primary school on the Beaumont Junior School site and to sell off the site of the West End Infant School for development.
- (12) West End Infant School was mentioned in the ***Hampshire Treasures Survey, Volume 3, Hart and Rushmoor***, published by Hampshire County Council in 1980.
- (13) Rushmoor Borough Council Planning has this month assessed the West End Infant School against the appropriate criteria and consider that it should be added to the ***List of Buildings of Local Importance***.
- (14) West End Infant School is a fine Victorian school building, Completed in 1898, it is a significant presence in our local environment at the top of Municipal Gardens. It has a very close affinity with the local community, many of whom commenced their education there. The school building has historical and aesthetic value. In particular, it features a unique roof, which is large and imposing. The school building warrants local listing.
- (15) Hampshire County Council would be failing our local community if the Cabinet persists with this decision to close West End Infant School, which has overwhelming support from the parents, the Governors, the staff and the local community.

3 March 2012

Wednesday 14th March 2012

FAO Martin Shefferd,

Objection to the proposal to amalgamate West End Infant School with Beaumont Junior School

When the proposal was first discussed the whole school community was led to believe that this was a genuine consultation. However, within all the public meetings and those held for different stakeholders at West End the message could not have been clearer – parents, staff, governors and the local community are against this proposal. In deciding to press ahead the Cabinet and the Local Authority (LA) have ignored the voice of the school. Outlined below are the some of the reasons why people feel so strongly about this issue.

West End Infant School is set within an exciting and richly diverse catchment area. The vast majority of parents and carers are very supportive of the school and value the contribution that it makes to all aspects of their children's education. This was born out in the overwhelming negativity demonstrated towards the proposal to amalgamate the two schools during the public consultation process. The building holds strong memories and links with the past for many members of the local community who, together with the staff team have created true community cohesion. In an area which sees much inward migration, and where feelings often run high, the school values the contribution made by all families and offers a warm welcome and support to vulnerable families. Children learn to respect cultural diversity and to celebrate difference from an early age – skills which will enable them to grow into responsible citizens. Visitors to the school often comment upon the calm, purposeful and happy atmosphere. This does not happen by accident but is due to the hard work and commitment of the staff and the trust placed in them by the parents/carers. In an area many children do not experience a stable and harmonious home life West End Infant School provides a place of security, where all feel valued and all children are enabled to make good progress. Despite data on entry showing that many children enter school with below average skills, data at the end of Key Stage 1 shows that the standards achieved are broadly in line with those found nationally. West End truly is a community school.

The following comments are offered in response to the report presented to the Cabinet by the Local Authority:

1. Within the report three instances of successful school amalgamations were sited. Two were where infant and junior schools shared the same site and the third was where the schools were on separate sites before amalgamation, but moved within a year to one site after a considerable amount of money was spent on a refurbished single site school. In the short term this isn't on offer for West End and Beaumont – just £350K, to pay for new permanent build classroom on the site of West End to create a two form entry primary school.

2. The amalgamation of the schools on two separate sites will have the following **advantages:-**
 - Both schools will lose their data
 - The current negative reputation of Beaumont will disappear
 - It will be longer until the next Ofsted inspection so the school will have time to prove itself

3. The opening of a new school on two separate sites could have the following **disadvantages:-**
 - The local community will continue to refer to the schools as West End and Beaumont – despite the inevitable renaming of the school, as nothing physical will have changed
 - Establishing the continuity and progression, which the LA has held as so important in driving improvement, will be incredibly challenging to establish and maintain with the school on different sites. Opportunities to unite staff so that they work together as a team would be made all the more difficult by the split site as there would be little or no opportunities for staff to meet informally so that they get to know each other, only more formal directed times.
 - It is essential that the local community which West End Infant School continues to support the school. With a very tight timeline for appointing the substantive Headteacher, in a climate when 28% of Headteacher posts are re-advertised, there is a great deal of pressure on the new governing body to make a good appointment first time. For the proposed new school to have an interim Headteacher would have a devastating impact upon the already dubious trust that both the staff and the community have in the LA.

4. The fact that the "school" will share the same name and Headteacher is not a guarantee of success. Parents will need to develop confidence in the new school before opting to send their children there. There seems to be a perception that parents and carers of children already on role at West End will wish their children to remain within the new primary school through to Year 6. The history of changing leadership over the past ten years has left the community very bruised and sceptical of change. It will be a real challenge to the new leadership team to work with the community to regain its confidence and stop families seeing Surrey schools as a better option for their children's education.

OBJECTIONS set out in bold below

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

Contact details

1. The name of the local education authority or governing body publishing the proposals, and a contact address, and the name of the school it is proposed that should be discontinued.

Local Authority (LA):	Hampshire County Council, Children's Services Department, The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UG
Contact:	Martin Shefferd Tel: 01962 845746 email: martin.shefferd@hants.gov.uk
Schools:	West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools

Implementation

2. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

Closure of West End Infant School and Beaumont Junior School with effect from 31 December 2012 and establishment of a two forms of entry primary school to cater for 420 pupils aged 4 – 11 on the present schools' sites with effect from 1 January 2013.
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Objection

Much play is made about the intention to cater for 420 pupils – but there is no indication where these extra pupils are to come from, since the current total numbers on roll are 256 (see para 10. below)

Consultation

3. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

The LA confirms that all applicable statutory requirements have been complied with.

Objection

Consultation should really mean taking into account the results – and it is clear that, of those who responded, 253 “Disagreed” with the proposals and only 23 “Agreed”. Also, there were 21 respondents, who did not have any connection with the West End Infant School, so it is

likely that all those who had a connection with West End Infant School were in the “Disagree” category – so how can the consultation comply with the statutory requirements if the proposals were unanimously rejected by those consultees?

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including—
- (a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;
 - (b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
 - (c) the views of the persons consulted; and
 - (d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

Full details are given in the report approved by County Council’s Cabinet on 23 January 2012. “Review of school places at West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools, Aldershot” (copy attached and available at http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&pref=Y&item_ID=3564&tab=2)

Consultations have been carried out with:

- the governing bodies, staff, pupils, parents of pupils attending West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools
- other local schools
- Guildford Church of England Diocese and the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
- Rushmoor Borough Council
- the Member of Parliament (Gerald Howarth MP)
- Trade unions who represent staff at the schools
- Local Early Years Child Care Partnership

Objection

Consultations were not carried out with the local community in the area served by West End Infant School. For example, the Cargate Area Residents Association, which immediately adjoins West End Infant School and which includes over 400 households, many with school-age children, and its members were not consulted.

Objectives

5. The objectives of the proposal.

The closure of West End Infant School and Beaumont Junior School and the establishment of a two form entry community primary school on the sites occupied by the two schools.

Objection

This bald statement of the real objective of the proposal lays bare the fact that the proposals are purely structural, whereas, with respect to West End Infant School, the objective should have taken into account the wishes of the parents, the staff, the governors and the community.

Standards and Diversity

6. A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

Closing West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools and creating a 420 place primary school on the schools' sites is designed to improve primary school provision. Such a strategy coupled with Local Authority advisory support will bring about the rapid improvement in the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils.

Objection

There is no supporting evidence to support this statement.

Provision for 16 -19 year olds

7. Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on—

- (a) the educational or training achievements;
- (b) participation in education or training; and
- (c) the range of educational or training opportunities,

for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Not applicable

Need for places

8. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

The need for places is covered in paragraph 5.1 of the Cabinet report of 23 January 2012 (see link in section 4 above). No pupils will be displaced by these proposals.

Objection

The proposals set out an expansion in the number of places without any indication of where these additional pupils will come from.

9. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

Not applicable

Current School Information

10. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

West End Infant School caters for children of both sexes aged 4 – 7 years and has a current number on roll of 144.

Beaumont Junior School caters for children of both sexes aged 7 – 11 years and has a current number on roll of 112.

There is no provision for boarding pupils.

The schools do not have provision which is recognised by the Local Authority as reserved for children with special educational needs.

Displaced Pupils

11. Details of the schools or further education colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including—

- (a) any interim arrangements;
- (b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the local education authority as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- (c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by local education authorities other than the authority which maintains the school.

Pupils on the rolls of these two schools at the time of closure will be offered places at the new primary school on the schools' sites.

12. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or further education college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

30 additional KS1 places and 30 additional KS2 places will be provided as a result of this amalgamation.

Objection

There is no evidence given that shows where the extra pupils will come from to fill these place.

Impact on the Community

13. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

Discontinuing West End Infant School and Beaumont Junior School and establishing a two forms of entry community primary school on the schools' sites would retain primary school provision in the area and address standards. The Local Authority is determined to achieve the highest possible standards for the pupils by the time they leave the primary education phase. The creation of a robust primary school with a new culture, ethos and vision together with the formulation of policies, practices and expectations consistently implemented across the whole school will provide high quality learning. As such there would be opportunities for staff development, including developing teaching and learning methods across the whole age range whilst potential disruptions to pupils' learning such as transition, would be minimised.

Objection

The Local Authority has had many years to address standards. West End Infant School has

generally been rated Good, apart from issues which seem associated with the demography of the community it serves, as there are increasing numbers of pupils whose parents' first language is not English and who are not integrated into the local community – which makes it difficult for the school to persuade them to meet the required standards (such as time-keeping and taking days off). More Local Authority support for West End Infant School should be sufficient to enable it to achieve a Good standard overall.

14. Details of extended services the school offered and what it is proposed for these services once the school has discontinued.

All extended services offered will be continued within the primary school.

Travel

15. Details of length and journeys to alternative provision.

The closure of the existing infant and junior schools, and the establishment of a primary school on the existing schools' sites, will have no impact on the community in terms of length of journeys.

16. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.

Not applicable

Related Proposals.

17. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the local education authority or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.

This proposal is related to proposal for the establishment of a new community primary school on the sites occupied by the two schools.

Rural Primary Schools

18. Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15 of the EIA 2006, a statement that the local education authority or the governing body (as the case may be) considered—

- (a) the likely effect of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
- (b) the availability, and likely cost to the local education authority, of transport to other schools;
- (c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- (d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,

as required by section 15(4) of the EIA 2006.

Not applicable

Maintained nursery schools

19. Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out—

- (a) the consideration that has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and the grounds for not doing so;
- (b) the local education authority's assessment of the quality and quantity of the alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- (c) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

Not applicable

Special educational provision

20. Where existing provision for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the local education authority or the governing body believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

Not applicable

OBJECTIONS set out in bold below

**MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 10 AND SECTION 11
PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH A NEW SCHOOL: Mainstream
schools**

Contact Details

1. The name of the proposer or proposers and a contact address.

Local Authority (LA):	Hampshire County Council, Children's Services Department, The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UG
Contact:	Martin Shefferd Tel: 01962 845746 email: martin.shefferd@hants.gov.uk

2. Whether the proposals are being submitted independently or jointly with another proposer or proposers.

Independently

Category

3. The type of school that it is proposed be established (a foundation school and, if so, whether it is to have a foundation, a voluntary school or a community school) and, if required by section 10 of the EIA 2006, a statement that the Secretary of State's consent has been obtained to publication of the proposals.

The proposal is to establish a 420 place (two forms of entry – 2fe) community primary school on the sites of West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools.

Objection

Much play is made about the intention to cater for 420 pupils – but there is no indication where these extra pupils are to come from, since the current total numbers on roll are 256.

Consultation

4. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals have been complied with.

The Local Authority confirms that all applicable statutory requirements have been complied with.

Objection

Consultation should really mean taking into account the results – and it is clear that, of those who responded, 253 “Disagreed” with the proposals and only 23 “Agreed”. Also, there were 21 respondents, who did not have any connection with the West End Infant School, so it is likely that all those who had a connection with West End Infant School were in the “Disagree” category – so how can the consultation comply with the statutory requirements if the proposals were unanimously rejected by those consultees?

5. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including—

- (a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;
- (b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- (c) the views of the persons consulted; and
- (d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

Full details are given in the report approved by County Council’s Cabinet on 23 January 2012. “Review of school places at West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools, Aldershot” (copy attached and available at

http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&pref=Y&item_ID=3564&tab=2

Consultations have been carried out with:

- the governing bodies, staff, pupils, parents of pupils attending West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools
- other local schools
- Guildford Church of England Diocese and the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
- Rushmoor Borough Council
- the Member of Parliament (Gerald Howarth MP)
- Trade unions who represent staff at the schools
- Local Early Years Child Care Partnership

Objection

Consultations were not carried out with the local community in the area served by West End Infant School. For example, the Cargate Area Residents Association, which immediately adjoins West End Infant School and which includes over 400 households, many with school-age children, and its members were not consulted.

Objectives

6. The objectives of the proposal.

The closure of West End Infant School and Beaumont Junior School and the establishment of a two forms of entry community primary school on the sites occupied by the two schools. Such a strategy coupled with Local Authority advisory support will bring about the rapid improvement in

the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils.

Objection

This bald statement of the real objective of the proposal lays bare the fact that the proposals are purely structural, whereas, with respect to West End Infant School, the objective should have taken into account the wishes of the parents, the staff, the governors and the community.

There is particular resentment among parents, who are very satisfied with the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils at present, and who see excellent staff being undermined and threatened with losing their jobs in the next few months, while the Local Authority implements these proposals, when really the Local Authority should be acting responsibly and providing any advisory support now.

Extended Services

7. Information on the extended services which it is envisaged will be provided on the site of the school.

All extended services offered will be continued within the primary school.

Pupil numbers and admissions

8. Information on—

- (a) the number of pupil places the school should provide;
- (b) the upper and lower age limits of the school;
- (c) where it is intended that it should provide sixth form education, the number of pupils for whom it is intended that such education should be provided;
- (d) where it is intended that it should provide nursery education, the number of pupils for whom it is intended that such education should be provided;
- (e) where it is intended that the school should provide for boarding pupils, the number of pupils for whom it is intended such facilities should be provided;
- (f) the number of pupils to be admitted to the school in each relevant age group in the first school year in which the proposals will be implemented or, where it is intended that the proposals should be implemented in stages, the number of pupils to be admitted to the proposed school in each stage that the proposals will be implemented;
- (g) whether it is proposed that the school should admit pupils of both sexes or boys or girls only and, in the case of a single sex school where it is intended to provide sixth form education, whether both sexes or boys or girls only are to be admitted to the sixth form.

The new school will cater for pupils between the ages of 4 and 11 and ultimately provide places for 420 boys and girls. The school will admit 50 pupils at the age of 4+ for the 2013/14 school year. In addition the school will admit a further 10 pupils at age 7+ for the 2013/14 school year. In the school year 2014/15, and subsequent school years, the school will admit 60 pupils at age 4+ with no further admissions at age 7+.

It is not proposed that the local authority will provide nursery education in the new school other than for those children admitted to Year R.

The school will cater for children of both sexes.

Objection

The proposals set out an expansion in the number of places without any indication of where these additional pupils will come from.

Ethos/Religious Character

9. A short statement suitable for publication setting out the proposed ethos of the school, including details of any educational philosophy, which it is proposed that the school will adhere to.

The ethos of the new primary school will be to maximise pupils' educational potential and well-being.

Objection

There is no evidence that this ethos is not in place in West End Infant School.

10. If the school is to have a religious character, confirmation of the religion or religious denomination in accordance with whose tenets religious education will, or may be required to be provided at the school; and a statement that the proposers intend to ask the Secretary of State to designate the school as a school with such a religious character.

Not applicable

Area or community that school serves

11. The area or particular community or communities which the new school is expected to serve.

The school will serve the area currently served by West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools within the Borough of Rushmoor.

Admission Arrangements

12. An indication of the proposed admission arrangements and over-subscription criteria for the new school including, where the school is proposed to be a foundation or voluntary school or Academy which is to have a religious character—

- (a) the extent to which priority for places is proposed to be given to children of the school's religion or religious denomination; and
- (b) the extent, if any, to which priority is to be given to children of other religions or religious denominations or to children having no religion or religious denomination.

The Local Authority will be the admission authority for the school. Pupils will be admitted to the school in accordance with the arrangements that are published each year prior to the date on which applications for admissions must be made. If the school is oversubscribed, places will be offered in the priority order specified in Hampshire County Council's admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled primary, infant and junior schools.

Transport to the school will be provided for pupils who qualify in accordance with the County Council's published policy. The new primary school will deliver community cohesion by

providing facilities and shared opportunities for families living in the locality.

Grammar schools

13. Where the school is to be established in substitution for one or more discontinued grammar schools, a statement to this effect and a statement that the school may be designated as a grammar school for the purpose of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of SSFA 1998.

Not applicable

Schools with a religious character or particular educational philosophy – parental demand

14. Where the school is—

- (a) proposed to have a religious character, evidence of the demand in the area for education in accordance with the tenets of the religion; or
- (b) proposed to adhere to a particular philosophy, evidence of the demand for education in accordance with the philosophy in question that is not already met in other maintained schools or Academies in the area.

Not applicable

Sixth Form Education

15. Where it is proposed that the school will provide sixth form education, how the proposals will—

- (a) improve the educational or training achievements;
- (b) increase participation in education or training; and
- (c) expand the range of educational or training opportunities,

for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Not applicable

Early Years Provision

16. Where the proposals are to include provision for pupils aged between 2 and 5, the following information must be provided—

- (a) details of how the early years provision will be organised, including the number of full-time and part-time pupils, the number of places, the number and length of sessions in each week, and the services for disabled children that will be offered;
- (b) how the school will integrate the early years provision with childcare services, and how the proposals for the establishment of the school are consistent with the integration of early years provision with childcare;
- (c) evidence of parental demand for additional provision of early years provision;

- (d) assessment of capacity, quality and sustainability of provision in schools, and in settings outside of the maintained school sector who deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage within 3 miles of the school; and
- (e) the reasons why schools and settings outside the maintained school sector who deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage within 3 miles of the school and who have spare capacity, cannot make provision for any forecast increase in the numbers of such children.

Not applicable.

Specialisms

17. Whether the school will have any specialisms on implementation and whether the promoter intends to apply to the Secretary of State for the school to be a specialist school from implementation.

The school will not have any specialisms.

Effects on Standards and Contributions to School Improvement

18. Information and supporting evidence on:

- (a) how the school will contribute to enhancing the diversity and quality of education in the area; and
- (b) how the school will help to raise the standard of education in the area and contribute to school improvement.

The creation of a robust primary school with a new culture, ethos and vision together with the formulation of policies, practices and expectations consistently implemented across the whole school will provide high quality learning.

As such there would be opportunities for staff development, including developing teaching and learning methods across the whole age range whilst potential disruptions to pupils' learning such as transition, would be minimised.

Objection

There is no supporting evidence.

Also, there is no evidence of disruptions to pupils' learning in transition from West End Infant School to Beaumont Junior School.

19. Information and supporting evidence on how the proposals will contribute to enabling children and young people to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to the community and society, and achieve economic well-being.

The *Review of school places at West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools, Aldershot* reflect the County Council's corporate strategy:

- Hampshire safer and more secure for all
- Maximise well-being
- Enhancing our quality of place

This will be achieved through the provision of a primary school with a new culture, ethos and

vision together with teaching and learning methods across the whole school age range to provide high quality learning.

The retention of a primary school in this area of the county will contribute greatly to children's life opportunities at an early stage in their development.

Objection

The closure of West End Infant School does nothing to make our local area of Hampshire safer and secure for all, does not maximise well-being and does not enhance our quality of place.

Indeed, it does just the opposite. By seeking to destroy the strong links between our local community and West End Infant School, the proposals make us feel alienated from the Local Authority and less secure, they undermine our sense of well-being and, eventually, they could lead to the demolition of a splendid Victorian building that was listed as a Hampshire treasure in 1980, and is very treasured by our local community in the Cargate Avenue Conservation Area.

Community Cohesion

20. The following information relating to the proposals—

- (a) how the school will promote and contribute to community cohesion;
- (b) how the school will increase inclusion and equality of access for all social groups; and
- (c) how the school will collaborate with other schools, and in relation to secondary school proposals how the new school will collaborate with colleges and training providers.

The Local Authority through its “Maximising well-being through education” policy document and the infrastructures developed to create Children’s Trusts puts the creation of inclusive learning communities at the heart of its commissioning role. The Local Authority has placed considerable emphasis on partnership working, and there are a wide range of opportunities for all stakeholders to be actively engaged in improving service delivery to ensure that Every Child does indeed Matter.

The changes as a result of this review and major capital investment will assist with building a truly inclusive learning community. The key driver in the programme is the engagement with all stakeholders and, most importantly, the children and young people.

Objection

It is impossible to see how these proposals advance inclusive learning communities, when the Local Authority is overriding the views of the local community, the parents, the staff and the governors by insisting on closing West End Infant School against their express wishes. If the local community has learned anything it is to be very sceptical about “consultation” of this sort.

Single sex or co-educational school

21. Where the school is to admit pupils of a single sex—

- (a) evidence of local demand for single sex education and how this will be met if the proposals are approved; and
- (b) A statement giving details of the likely effect the alteration will have on the balance of provision of single sex education in the area.

Not applicable

Location

22. A statement about—

- (a) the location of the site (including, where appropriate, the postal address or addresses if the school is to occupy a split site);
- (b) whether the school will occupy a single or split site;
- (c) the accessibility of the site (or if the school is to occupy a split site the accessibility of the accommodation);
- (d) the current ownership and tenure (freehold or leasehold) of the site and the proposed use of any buildings already on the site;
- (e) details of the tenure (freehold or leasehold) on which the site of the school will be held, and if the site is to be held on a lease, details of the proposed lease including details of any provisions which could obstruct the governing body or the head teacher in the exercise of any of their functions under any of the Education Acts or place indirect pressures upon funding bodies;
- (f) whether the site is currently used for the purposes of another school which will no longer be required for the purposes of that school. If so, provide details as to why the site will no longer be required for the purposes of that school; and
- (g) the estimated costs of providing the site and a statement about how the costs will be met.

- (a) The school will occupy the current sites of West End Infant (York Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3JG) and Beaumont Junior (Alexandra Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 1QJ) Schools.
- (b) This will be a split site school
- (c) Both sites are within reasonable walking distance for all pupils living in the catchment area
- (d) Both sites are freehold. Existing buildings on these sites will be used by the school.
- (e) Not applicable
- (f) Not applicable
- (g) There will be no capital costs involved in providing the sites

Implementation

23. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

The new school will open on 1 January 2013.

24. Where the proposals are to establish a voluntary controlled or foundation school, a statement as to whether the proposals are to be implemented by the local education authority or by the proposers, and if the proposals are to be implemented by both,

- (a) a statement as to the extent that they are to be implemented by each body, and

- (b) a statement as to the extent to which the capital costs of implementation are to be met by each body.

Not applicable

Project Costs

- 25.** A statement of the estimated capital cost of the proposals and the extent to which the costs are to be met by the proposers and/or the local education authority.

Up to £350,000 to be met by the Local Education Authority

Objection

Given that the eventual objective seems to be to build an all-through primary school on the Beaumont Junior School site, it would seem a great waste of resources to spend this £350,000 on an interim measure, which could be better spent elsewhere in Aldershot (for example on a new Discovery Centre, which has been long promised but not forthcoming).

Also, any extension would need to be in keeping with the existing building, which Rushmoor Borough Council has this month assessed against the appropriate criteria and considers that it should be added to the *List of Buildings of Local Importance*.

- 26.** A copy of a confirmation from the Secretary of State or local education authority or the Learning and Skills Council for England (as the case may be) that funds will be made available (including costs to cover any necessary site purchase).

Costs will be met from the Local Authority's capital programme.

- 27.** Details of how it is proposed to fund the proposer's share of the capital costs of implementing the proposals (if any).

The local authority will meet all the costs implementing the proposal from its capital programme resources.

Travel

- 28.** The proposed arrangements for travel of pupils to the school.

In accordance with the local authority's published policy.

Federation

- 29.** Details of any proposals for the school to be federated with one or more schools (by virtue of section 24 of EA 2002 and section 12).

Not applicable

Curriculum

30. Confirmation that the school will meet the general requirements in relation to curriculum contained in section 78 of EA 2002 and an outline of any provision that will be in addition to the basic curriculum required by section 80 of EA 2002, in particular any 14-19 vocational education.

The headteacher will have the primary duty to secure the implementation of the National Curriculum. The Local Authority, together with the governing body, will exercise their functions to ensure this is the case.

Voluntary aided schools

31. In addition, where the school is to be a voluntary aided school—

- (a) details of the trusts on which the site is to be held; and
- (b) confirmation that governing body will be able and willing to carry out their obligations under Schedule 3 to SSFA 1998.

Not applicable

Foundation Schools

32. Where the school is to be a foundation school, confirmation as to whether the new school—

- (a) will have a foundation established otherwise than under SSFA 1998 and, if so, the identity of that foundation;
- (b) will belong to a group of schools for which a foundation body acts under section 21 of SSFA 1998; or
- (c) will not fall within sub-paragraph (a) or (b).

Not applicable

33. Where the school is to be a foundation school which has a foundation—

- (a) the name of the foundation where known;
- (b) the rationale for the foundation and the particular ethos that it will bring to the school;
- (c) the details of membership of the foundation, including the names of the members;
- (d) the entitlement to appoint charity trustees and the number of trustees to be appointed;
- (e) the proposed constitution of the governing body;
- (f) details of the foundation's charitable objects;
- (g) where the majority of governors are to be foundation governors, a statement that a parent council will be established in accordance with section 23A of EA 2002;
- (h) a statement that the requirements set out in the School Organisation (Requirements as to Foundations) (England) Regulations will be met;

- (i) a statement of how the foundation will contribute to the advancement of education at the school and how it is envisaged it will help to raise standards; and
- (j) a statement of how the foundation will contribute to the advancement of community cohesion and the impact the foundation will have on the diversity of school provision in the area.

Not applicable

Special educational needs

34. Information as to whether the school will have provision that is recognised by the local education authority as reserved for children with special educational needs and, if so, the nature of such provision and the proposed number of pupils for whom such provision is to be made.

The school will not have provision which is recognised by the local authority as reserved for children with special educational needs.

35. Details of the proposed policy of the school relating to the education of pupils with special educational needs.

The policy of the school relating to the education of pupils with special educational needs will be determined by the governing body, once appointed, with due regard to the statutory Code of Practice.

36. Where the school will replace existing educational provision for children with special educational needs

- (a) a statement on how the proposer believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for these children;
- (b) Details of the specific educational benefits that will flow from the proposals in terms of—
 - (i) improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment with reference to the local education authority's Accessibility Strategy;
 - (ii) improved access to specialist staff, both education and other professionals, including any external support and/or outreach services;
 - (iii) improved access to suitable accommodation; and
 - (iv) improved supply of suitable places.

Not applicable

Relevant experience of proposers

37. Evidence of any relevant experience in education held by the proposer, or proposers (other than a local authority) including details of any involvement in the improvement of standards in education.

Not applicable

Planning permission

38. Where the establishment of the new school involves development for the purpose of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, a statement as to whether planning permission has been obtained and, if it has not been obtained, details of when it is anticipated that it will be obtained.

Planning permission will be obtained before any additional buildings are provided.

Independent schools entering the maintained sector

39. A statement that the requirements of section 11 (3) of the EIA 2006 are met.

Not applicable

40. A statement as to whether the premises will meet the requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and, if not,

- (a) details of how the premises are deficient; and
- (b) details of how it is intended to remedy the deficiency.

The new primary school will meet the requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999.

Sent: 14 March 2012 09:45

To: Shefferd, Martin

Subject: FW: Comment for Item: Review of schools places at West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools,Aldershot (3564)

From:

Sent: 13 March 2012 16:44

To: Members Services

Subject: Comment for Item: Review of schools places at West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools,Aldershot (3564)

Comment for Item: Review of schools places at West End Infant and Beaumont Junior Schools, Aldershot

Name:

Email:

Message:

Despite living a stone's throw away I was not consulted on the likely loss of my local infant school, to which I was hoping to send my child. The consultation was inadequate.

Sent: 15 March 2012 10:00

To: Shefferd, Martin

Dear Mr Shefferd,

I would once again register my objection to the proposed amalgamation with Beaumont Junior School. I feel this would not prove to be the answer to the problems that Beaumont are having and that our children would suffer as a result of the amalgamation.

Yours sincerely,

Objection to amalgamate West End Infants & Beaumont Juniors Schools

Dear Mr Shefferd,

I am the parent to three children one who currently attends West End infants school and one due to start in Sept this year. I feel I must object to the proposed plan to close the school and reopen as an amalgamated split site school from January 2013.

The school has in fact been in our local community for so many years I in fact went to this school myself it will be a shame to see it closed.

As a matter of great importance to our children, I ask that you please consider the final decision.

If you saw how well my daughter has settled into the school and the great deal of good work they are doing there for the children you couldnt fail to be impressed. I amongst other parents feel this could disrupt our childrens education which is of vital importance to their future.

I feel this decision could only disrupt my daughter and my other children who will attend in due course to close our school in its current format.

Yours Sincerely

Objection to amalgamate West End Infants & Beaumont Juniors Schools

Dear Mr Shefferd,

We are the parents of two children who attend West End Infants school, and feel we must object to the proposed plan to close the school and reopen as an amalgamated split site school from January 2013.

We are in full agreement with the comments made by Alex Crawford, Mayor of Rushmoor, in the Aldershot News article dated 20th February 2012. The Mayor used the words 'total failure' and the extract below indicates our feelings:

The cabinet made the decision based on a report, in which it emerged that 252 people had disagreed with the proposals, compared with 23 people who had agreed.

"No proper consideration at all was given to this information indicating the overwhelming opposition to the closure of West End Infant School."

"Hampshire County Council is failing our local community with this decision to close West End Infant School, which has overwhelming support from the parents, the governors and the community."

Mr Crawford also said the minutes from the meeting have not included the strong objections put to the cabinet by the school's chairman of governors, community governor or parents.

As a matter of great importance to our children, the children who attend West End Infants and to all who have a connection with the school, we urge you to please consider the final decision.

We feel it is only right that you and the cabinet visit our school, attend the classes and speak to the pupils, come to Friday celebration assembly, see all the good work that is being done with children from very diverse backgrounds. Only then will you be able to assess the great disservice you will be doing to our children if you chose to close our school in its current format.

Yours Sincerely