





Farley Junior School Expansion

Statement of Community Involvement

Prepared on behalf of Luton Borough Council by



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Introduction

Luton Borough Council is proposing to expand Farley Junior School as part of its wave of investment in primary, infant and junior schools in Luton.

As Luton's community continues to grow, so must local schools. Farley Junior School is expanding the number of school places available to accommodate rising pupil numbers.

The expansion is required to allow the school to continue to admit 90 pupils per year to its Year 3 intake, an increase of 26 pupils on intake prior to September 2012. This will increase the School's capacity from 282 to 360 places by September 2015. As the pupil numbers grow, expanding facilities at Farley Junior School will ensure that the required amount of classrooms and staff facilities are available.

The plans for expansion include additional modern classrooms, new and improved staff facilities, additional parking spaces, improvements to existing classrooms, new toilet facilities, and extended play areas.

From 26 November 2012 to 21 December 2012, Local Dialogue on behalf of Luton Borough Council conducted a pre-planning application public consultation on the initial design for the expansion of the school. Its aim was to gather feedback from parents, residents, and other key stakeholders on the expansion proposals and account for them in the design and implementation of the works.

This document details the public consultation that Local Dialogue on behalf of Luton Borough Council has undertaken.

The consultation took place in addition to formal pre-application consultation, and negotiations, with the local and strategic planning authorities, statutory public agencies and other relevant bodies. Consultation with these organisations is reported in other documents submitted within this planning application.

Executive Summary

Luton Borough Council has undertaken extensive pre-application consultation around the plans to expand Farley Junior School increasing the school's capacity from 282 to 360 places by September 2015.

The process was designed to raise awareness of the proposals, and most importantly it also provided the public with a narrative as to why the school needs to expand. It also provided the community an opportunity to scrutinise the plans and provide feedback to the project team.

The consultation period ran from 26 November 2012 to 21 December 2012 - four weeks all during term time - and comprised the following:

- A public exhibition on the evening of 11 December 2012 the plans were on display at the exhibition, allowing residents, parents, and staff to comment on them and direct any questions they may have to members of the project team including those from the Council, Local Dialogue and Farley staff;
- A dedicated external online consultation website displaying the proposals and allowing visitors to submit feedback that was also hosted on Luton Borough Council's website;
- An extensive leafleting and poster campaign targeting approximately 400 households surrounding the school, 350 leaflets directly sent to the school for distribution to pupils, staff and parents, and an additional mail out to community centres, churches, political representatives, and Council officers across the wider Luton area the leaflets advertised the public exhibition and introduced the proposed expansion; and,
- Targeted stakeholder letters to local head teachers, school governors, ward councillors, and the regional teachers union representative.

The pre-application consultation found that from the feedback supplied, the local community overwhelmingly and enthusiastically supported the expansion of the school, recognising the school's important role and acknowledging the need for more school spaces as pupil numbers in the area rise.

Overall 96% of written feedback was found to be in strong support of the proposals, 4% not indicating a preference and no opposition.

The responses to the consultation broke down into the following two categories:

- Those who strongly supported the proposals; and,
- Those who supported the proposals but were concerned about parking and traffic issues in the area.

While the consultation has now closed the project team will remain contactable and address any queries from the community.

Full details of the consultation, including the materials used, have been included within this document as part of the appendices.

About Local Dialogue

Local Dialogue was commissioned by Luton Borough Council to assist with the preapplication public consultation around proposals for the expansion of Farley Junior School in Luton.

Local Dialogue is a specialist public consultation agency with wide expertise of advising on and implementing consultation programmes for both public and private sector clients. Our extensive experience includes working with local authorities, housing associations, and other public sector bodies as well as private sector organisations on consultation, facilitation and communications for masterplanning, regeneration and development proposals.

We have a dedicated team of 23 consultation professionals based in offices in London and Leeds supported by an extensive network of freelance consultants.

Local Dialogue is a corporate member of the Consultation Institute.

Why Consult?

Consultation is vital to the planning process. It allows communities to view and comment on proposals, and for applicants to consider this feedback as they develop their schemes.

This can make the planning process easier by addressing issues and explaining proposals before applicants are submitted. Consultation often leads to significant support for development projects amongst those communities and stakeholders affected.

Government Policy

Government Planning Policy Statements and related documents encourage organisations making proposals for developments to engage local communities from an early stage in their work.

This policy and advice supports 'front loading' public engagement as proposals are developed and before the official submission of planning applications to the relevant local authorities. It also recognises all parties will benefit from a programme of communications ensuring all those with an interest are fully informed of proposals.

The basic need for consultation in planning has been emphasised with particular vigour with the Government's passage of the Localism Act in late 2011. This legislation seeks to hand political authority back to local communities with regard to planning decision-making.

The Localism Act seeks to shift power back to communities by removing bureaucratic barriers at the top, cutting red tape, and ensuring that local communities are at the forefront of planning policymaking rather than MPs at Westminster.

Commencement orders have been brought in as a key measure of the Localism Act, which includes the provision of new neighbourhood powers for local people in shaping planning.

In essence, the Localism Act places a greater emphasis on the centrality of public consultation as a core component of planning.

Luton Borough Council's Policy

In line with Government Policy, and as set out within the adopted Joint Statement of Community Involvement (Dec 2007), Luton Borough Council state that "developers involved in larger schemes…are encouraged to undertake some form of wider public consultation."

The consultation process involved a wider stakeholder engagement strategy including letters being sent to local area councillors, Luton MPs, headteachers and governors of surrounding schools, and community organisation heads. This comprehensive consultation is in keeping with Luton Borough Council's policy on consultation with the community.

Luton Borough Council's own guidelines on consultation involve various methods of contact with the public regarding council services and planning decisions. These include exhibitions, public meetings, comment cards, and various channels of conducting surveys ranging from postal to online forms. All of these procedures and policies have been adhered to and followed throughout this consultation activity. The neighbours surrounding the planned expansion have been made fully aware of the Council's plans and have been appropriately and thoroughly consulted.

Consultation Activity and Responses

This section sets out the scope and conclusions of the pre-application consultation undertaken by Local Dialogue on behalf of Luton Borough Council. The overall aim of the consultation has been to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted and provided with an opportunity to give feedback on the proposed expansion of Farley Junior School. The consultation period ran from 26 November 2012 to 21 December 2012, a period of four weeks.

This consultation follows a previous joint consultation on expansions of Whipperley Infant School and Farley Junior School conducted between 19 April 2010 and 17 May 2010. During that consultation, a public exhibition was held on 5 May 2010 and 8 May 2010 at Whipperley Infant School concerning the expansion of both Whipperley Infant School and Farley Junior School. During that consultation, feedback received was overwhelmingly positive on the expansion proposals.

Public Exhibition

The exhibition provided the public with an opportunity to meet with the project team and was the focus of the consultation, with plans and detailed information on display. The local community, parents, and school staff were encouraged to attend on the evening of the exhibition, however, a range of other options to provide the team with feedback, such as freepost comments forms, a bespoke consultation website, and a dedicated project phone number, were also made available.

The public exhibition was held on Tuesday 11 December 2012 between 3.30pm and 7.00pm and had 15 attendees comprising staff, parents, and community members. The event was held in the school's hall and theatre.

The exhibition consisted of a series of display boards, which introduced and explained the expansion plans for Farley Junior School. The exhibition was staffed by project team members who were on hand to explain the proposals.

The boards guided attendees through a step-by-step explanation of the proposals. An introduction provided information on the context of the plans, followed by a layout of the plans themselves. The exhibition culminated in a 'Have Your Say' section where attendees were encouraged to comment on the proposed plans. Directions to further sources of information were provided, with attendees advised to address additional questions to project team members available on the day. An explanation of the decision-making process was also provided by the team, demonstrating how the proposals will move forward following the end of the consultation period.

The exhibition was well-publicised using the following methods:

• 400 A5 leaflets (Appendix I) were hand delivered to households surrounding the school. A map of the distribution area is included in Appendix II. The leaflets introduced the proposed plans to expand Farley Junior School and

explained the context behind the expansion. The date for the exhibition was clearly displayed on the leaflet and a map with directions to the venue was provided. The leaflet also contained the project team's contact details; an email address and the phone number for the project information line. Recipients were encouraged to attend the public exhibition, fill out a tear-off feedback form, call the project information line to speak to a project team member directly or email their thoughts to the consultation email address. The leaflet was also made available as an online survey through the consultation website, providing the public with an alternative way of submitting feedback.

- 350 A5 leaflets were hand-delivered to the school and given to pupils to take home to their parents.
- Ward councillors, local headteachers, and the chairs of school governors from other schools were sent a copy of the leaflet and a letter introducing the proposals, outlining the scope of the consultation and how they could comment on the proposals.
- A4 posters promoting the exhibition were produced and put up around the school. The posters introduced the proposed expansion of the school and provided the project team's contact details should the community want more information. The public exhibition was also clearly advertised with the date and map of the venue provided.
- A dedicated consultation hotline (0845 262 0138) was created to provide the public with direct access to the project team. The consultation hotline was and continues to be staffed between 9.00am and 5.30pm on weekdays.
- The exhibition was advertised locally with 'Here Today' posters and directional signage was provided to ensure that attendees knew exactly where to go. These were posted at the key meeting point and thoroughfare around the school to guarantee maximum exposure.
- A link to the consultation website (www.farleyschoolexpansion.co.uk) was provided on Luton Borough Council's consultation page website.
- A member of the project team reminded parents picking their children up from school that an event was taking place that day.

Analysis of Consultation Feedback

Luton Borough Council sought to fully engage with the community throughout the consultation process. All identified stakeholders were given the opportunity to examine the plans and provide feedback via an extensive mail-out, tear-off freepost comment forms and exhibition day comments forms.

Through the tear-off freepost response form attached to the project leaflet and the online feedback form, the public were asked three questions in relation to the proposed expansion, while the exhibition day feedback form asked the same questions. Consultees were asked three questions on the proposals. These were kept broad to ensure consultees were not restricted and could provide feedback on any element of the proposals. The questions were the following:

- 1) What do you think, in general terms, about increasing the size of the school?
- 2) Is there anything you would like to highlight in respect of our plans?
- 3) Do you have any other comments?

Demographics of respondents

The leaflets and feedback forms also included an 'About You' section which asked for details on ethnic background, age, gender, disability status, and whether the respondent was a pupil, parent, a resident, or none of these. Diversity monitoring allowed the project team to assess whether 'hard to reach' sections of the community were being included in the consultation. Leaflets in large print and other languages were available on request.

Of the respondents who submitted feedback, six were parents and 11 were residents. Six respondents stated they were none of the selected options which included a mix of residents and school staff. The overwhelming majority of respondents were female, 14, while only five reported themselves to be male.

The overall age demographic was fairly evenly split between younger and older respondents: two were 18-24, three were 25-34, five were 35-44, six were 45-54, three were 55-64, and three were 65 and over.

In terms of ethnic background, the overwhelming majority who reported identified as White - 17. Four identified as Asian or Asian British, one as Black or Black British and one as Other.

One fifth - five respondents - identified themselves as having a disability.

The Consultation Feedback

The nature of these questions allowed the public to respond freely to the proposals allowing the greatest possible scrutiny of the plans. A total of 25 written responses were received by the project team via feedback forms and leaflet tear-off forms, in

addition to the verbal comments provided by community members at the exhibition events. No comments were submitted via the online form.

The responses received demonstrated nearly unanimous support for the expansion of the school from community members, parents, and staff. Of the 25 responses:

- 24 expressed a positive view of the plans, many of whom were quite enthusiastic about the prospect of an expansion of Farley Junior School; and,
- · One leaflet form received presented no particular leaning

Some of the responses included:

- "I think that it is a good idea as the schools pupil capacity is increasing."
- "Right thinking towards educating children."
- "Any idea project that benefits the school staff in any way is great."
- "I think it is a wonderful thing if it makes classes smaller."
- "Will meet the needs of local families."
- "I think it's a very good idea and much needed."
- "This will be good for the community."
- "A brilliant idea."
- "Would be beneficial to the children as they could attend a school in their catchment."
- "Excellent!! Would be great to have extra space and facilities for the children and staff!!"
- "It's needed due to the increase of children population on Farley."
- "I think its very good."
- "Good idea. Local school for local kids."

The consultation received an enthusiastically positive response from local ward Councillor Mahmood Hussain who was happy to see the proposals for expansion. Robin Cowan, Chairman of Governors for nearby Hillborough Junior School and Governor of Farley Junior School also submitted a positive response welcoming the expansion.

Parking and Traffic

Of all the 25 responses received via feedback form and leaflet, three expressed concerns about parking and traffic:

- "Parking can't drive along Northdrift Way now at school time."
- "Parking over residents driveways, loud music, doors banging, rude remarks when you ask them to move."
- "How it affects properties around school; travel impacts..."

This is an issue for many schools in Luton and across the country. Schools can and do seek to mitigate this impact, however, the choices parents make are ultimately their own. Schools can only do a certain amount to minimise its effects on local

communities via peak drop off and pick up times lasting roughly 15 minutes in the mornings and afternoons. Residents also stated that parents park in their driveways during drop-off and pick up peak times in the morning and afternoons on school days ignoring private properties.

It should be noted that Farley Junior School staff have gone to great lengths to record license plates of parents who park up on resident driveways and do their utmost to encourage parents not to drive their children to and from school. They have attempted to alleviate the situation by encouraging parents and children to walk to and from school but problems persist related to parents parking disregarding private properties.

The expansion plans for Farley Junior School do not relate to this parking issue and will not affect the traffic situation along the main thoroughfares surrounding the school.

The purpose of the consultation was to gauge public attitudes towards the plans and feed back key critical information back to the project team to accommodate community concerns. These concerns are addressed in the final planning application submitted to Luton Borough Council.

Conclusion

During the course of the consultation the project team has sought to provide the public with as much access to project details and senior members of the team as possible.

A mixture of parents, residents and members of the wider community attended the public exhibition, indicative of the success of the engagement strategy. Those who responded to the Council's request for feedback provided nearly unanimous support for the project each of which have been considered in turn.

Following the end of the consultation period, the following was clear to the project team:

- That the community understood the need to expand the school and improve facilities for both pupils and staff;
- That nearly all consultees supported the expansion of the school; and,
- A small minority of people voiced concerns regarding parking and traffic issues outside the school, which the school has and will continue to address.

The issues raised by several consultees regarding parking and traffic during pickup and drop off times was considered by the project team and the school management prior to the submission of a planning application for the expansion of Farley Junior School.

Appendices

Appendix I - Leaflet



Luton Borough Council plans to expand Farley Junior School in order to continue to meet the needs of local families. We will create:

- Additional modern classrooms
- New and improved staff facilities
- Additional parking spaces
- Additional learning and specialist spaces
- New toilet facilities
- Extended play areas

This is your opportunity to view the plans, meet the project team and have your say!







www. farleys chool expansion. co. uk

PLEASE COME ALONG AND FIND OUT MORE!

As Luton's community continues to grow, so must local schools. Farley Junior School is expanding the number of school places available to accommodate rising primary pupil numbers.

The expansion is required to allow the school to continue to admit 90 pupils to its Year 3 intakes, an increase of 26 pupils on intakes prior to September 2012. This will increase the School's capacity from 282 to 360 places by September 2015.

Please come along and tell us what you think! We are seeking the views of the local community before submitting a planning application to Luton Borough Council in January 2013. Members of the project team will be on hand to answer any questions you may have



Farley Junior School Northdrift Way, Luton, LU1 5JF

GET IN TOUCH

For further information please contact: Eugene Resnick

- t. 0845 262 0138
- e. eugene.resnick@localdialogue.com

If you would like to receive this leaflet in large print or in other languages - Urdu Punjabi Gujarati Turkish(বাংলা খুপনার জনা) রুর

262 0138

For general school/student enquiries, please call 01582 725 069

HAVE YOUR SAY...

To have your say on the proposals fill in this feedback form and return to the FREEPOST address overleaf.

to the riveer our address overlean.	
Name	
Telephone	Postcode
Email	
What do you think, in general terms, about in	reasing the size of the school?

Is there anything you would like to highlight in respect of our plans?

Do you have any other comments?

ABOUT YOU...

re	you?		A parent	A pupil	A resident	None of these
re	you?	tick	one box only	Male	Female	Prefer not to say
				 	 and the second second second	

□ Under 18 □ 18-24 □ 25-34 □ 45-54 □ 55-64 □ 65 and over

Which of the following groups best describes you? Tick one box only

White Asian/Asian British Black/Black British

Mixed Chinese Other Prefer not say Do you feel you have a disability? tick one box only ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please ensure consultation responses are returned to us by Friday, 21 December 2012.

FARLEY JUNIOR SCHOOL CONSULTATION

Local Dialogue LLP FREEPOST NAT3717 London SE1 2BR

Appendix II - Leaflet Distribution Map



The area of leaflet distribution included Northdrift Way, Whipperley Way, Red Rails and Red Rails Court, Bretts Mead and Bretts Mead Court, and Wilsden Avenue.

Farley Junior School





Public exhibition



Luton Borough Council plans to expand Farley Junior School in order to continue to meet the needs of local families.

Please come inside and tell us what you think!

Here today

www. Farley School Expansion. co.uk

Appendix IV - Consultation Website



Appendix V - Stakeholder Letter

Political Stakeholder Letter

Stakeholder Title Stakeholder Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3

22 November 2012

Dear NAME,

Consultation on the Expansion of Farley Junior School

Luton Borough Council has now launched its consultation on the expansion proposals for Farley Junior School. The expansion is required to allow the school to admit 90 pupils a year, an increase of 26 pupils on its previous intake, from September 2013 onwards.

The additional intake, many of whom joining from Whipperley Infant School, will increase the total capacity at the school from 240 to 360 places by September 2015.

The proposals will see additional new classrooms, an extension to staff facilities, additional learning and specialist spaces, new toilet facilities, and extended playground areas. There will also be an addition to car parking.

The exciting plans will invest around £550,000 into the school and create around 12 permanent jobs.

I would like you to come and see our plans for the expansion at our public exhibition at Farley Junior School on Tuesday, 11 December between 3.30pm and 7.00pm - you can view an online map of the location here: http://goo.gl/maps/UY147

Following consultation with the community, the application will be <u>finalised</u> and submitted in early December.

Enclosed is a leaflet with an attached feedback form. Please complete it and return to us. Alternatively, you can visit www.XXXXX.com to submit your comments online and read more about the proposals.

If you have any further questions or would like to arrange a meeting to discuss the proposals, please contact me on 0845 262 0138 and I would be happy to speak with you about the proposals. Alternatively, you can also reach me at Eugene.Resnick@LocalDialogue.com or by writing to Farley Junior School Expansion Consultation, Local Dialogue LLP, FREEPOST NAT 3717, London, SEI 2BR.

Yours sincerely,

Eugene Resnick Local Dialogue LLP

Community Stakeholder Letter

Stakeholder Title Stakeholder Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3

22 November 2012

Dear NAME,

Consultation on the Expansion of Farley Junior School

Luton Borough Council has now launched its consultation on the expansion proposals for Farley Junior School. The expansion is required to allow the school to admit 90 pupils a year, an increase of 26 pupils on its previous intake, from September 2013 onwards.

The additional intake, many of whom will be joining from Whipperley Infant School, will increase the total capacity at the school from 240 to 360 places by September 2015.

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Following consultation with the community, the application will be <u>finalised</u> and submitted in early December.

Enclosed is a leaflet with an attached feedback form. Please complete it and return to us. Alternatively, you can visit www.XXXXX.com to submit your comments online and read more about the proposals.

If you have any further questions, please contact me on 0845 262 0138, at Eugene.Resnick@LocalDialogue.com or by writing to Farley Junior School Expansion Consultation, Local Dialogue LLP, FREEPOST NAT 3717, London, SE1 2BR.

Yours sincerely,

Eugene Resnick Local Dialogue LLP

Appendix VI - Exhibition Display Boards

Farley Junior School





Welcome



Welcome to our consultation and thank you for taking the time to view our plans for the expansion of Farley Junior School.

Luton Borough Council plans to expand Farley Junior School by creating additional modern classrooms, new and improved staff facilities, additional parking spaces, improvements to existing classrooms, new toilet facilities, and extended play areas.

Farley Junior School will benefit from significant investment of over half a million pounds and the creation of around 12 new permanent jobs.

As Luton's community continues to grow especially in the Farley area, this investment will allow the school to ensure it can accommodate more children and improve facilities for all students and staff.

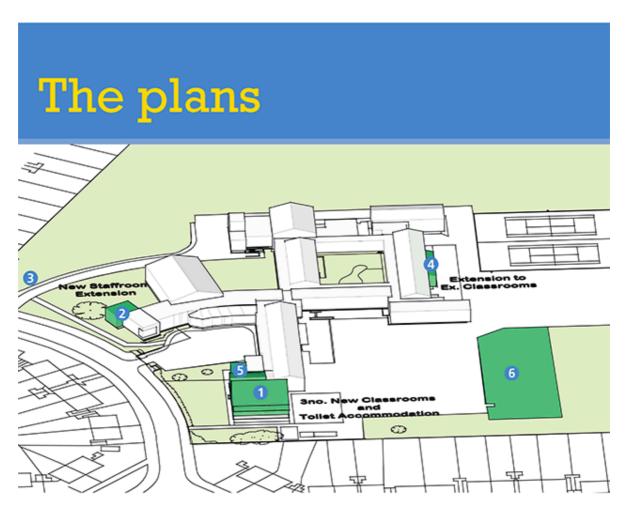


www.FarleySchoolExpansion.co.uk

Farley Junior School







Our proposals will include:

- Additional modern classrooms
- New and improved staff facilities
- Additional parking spaces
- 4 Improvements to existing classrooms
- Sometimes of the second of
- 6 Extended play areas

www.FarleySchoolExpansion.co.uk

Farley Junior School





Have your say



This is your chance to let us know what you think and give us your feedback. We then propose to submit a planning application to Luton Borough Council in January 2013.

If our plans are approved, we will seek to start work in early summer 2013.

Most of the works will be completed in time for the new school year in September 2013. We will ensure that pupils' studies remain unaffected by the works.

Thank you for taking the time to attend our exhibition and for your feedback. If you have any questions, please ask a member of our team today.

www.FarleySchoolExpansion.co.uk

Appendix VII - Feedback Form





Farley Junior School

HAVE YOUR SAY...

Let us know what you think about the proposals. Fill in this form and post it in the ballot box provided or alternatively send it back FREEPOST to Farley Junior School Consultation, Local Dialogue LLP, FREEPOST NAT3717, London, SE1 2BR – it won't cost you more than two minutes of your time!

Name	Postcode
Phone	Email
■ What do y	ou think, in general terms, about increasing the size of the school?
Is there an	ything you would like to highlight in respect of our plans?

■ Do you have any other comments?
ABOUT YOU (Tick all that apply) Are you?
Please ensure consultation responses are returned to us by Friday, 21 December 2012. Data Protection Act - Luton Borough Council is collecting this information only in connection with the proposed expansion of Farley Junior School and to ensure fair participation in the consultation process. The information will not be shared with any third party and will not be used for any marketing purposes.

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Appendix VIII - Exhibition sign-in sheet





Farley Junior School

PLEASE SIGN IN...

Name	Postcode	Email/Telephone

The information you provide will only be used for the purposes of this consultation exercise. The data will be held securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1996 and will not be published on an individual basis.

Appendix IX - Consultation Website Online Survey

FARLEY JUNIOR SCHOOL
Have Your Say Title Name Address Postcode Email
What do you think, in general terms, about increasing the size of the school? Is there anything you would like to highlight in respect of our plans?
Do you have any other comments? About you Are you?
A parent A pupil A resident None of these Are you? check one box only Male Female Prefer not to say Which age group do you belong to? check one box only Under 18 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65 and over Which of the following groups best describes you?check one box only White Asian/Asian British Black/Black British Mixed Chinese
 Other ☐ Prefer not to say Do you feel you have a disability? ☐ Yes ☐ No Please ensure consultation responses are submitted by Friday, 21 December 2012. Submit form
The information you provide will only be used for the purpose of this consultation exercise. The data will be held securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will not be published on an individual basis.