





Stopsley Community Primary 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 Stopsley Community Primary School as part of its wave of investment in primary, infant and junior schools in Luton.

This is driven by a projected 19% growth in pupil numbers between September 2011 and September 2016 across Luton. The number of reception-aged pupils will rise by 16%, an increase of 472 children, over this period. As the pupil numbers grow, expanding facilities at Stopsley will ensure that the required amount of classrooms and facilities are available.

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

In September 2011, Stopsley Community Primary School created 30 additional pupil places in the Reception Year and another 30 in Year 1 in September 2012, bring the total pupil capacity in these year groups to 90.

The expansion is required to allow the school to continue to admit 90 pupils a year, an increase of 30 pupils on its previous intake. The school's capacity will increase from 480 to 630 places over a five-year period.

The plans for expansion will include building three new classrooms and remodelling other spaces to create additional classrooms for 30 more pupils in Years 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

From 17 October to 26 November 2012, 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 the thoughts of 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 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 an extensive pre-application consultation around the plans to expand Stopsley Community Primary School, increasing pupil capacity to 90 places a year.

The process raised awareness of the proposals and 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 17 October to 26 November 2012 and comprised of the following:

- A public exhibition held over one evening on 6 November 2012 the
 plans were on display during the exhibition allowing the public to
 comment on them and direct any questions they may have to
 members of the project team including those from the Council, Local
 Dialogue, BCAL (transport consultants), and Stopsley staff;
- Display of presentation boards outlining proposals over two days at Parents Night on 17 and 18 October 2012;
- A project email address to receive online comments and questions and dedicated external consultation website that was also hosted on Luton Borough Council's website enabling the public to comments via an online form
- An extensive leafleting and poster campaign targeting 250 households surrounding the school along, 500 leaflets directly sent to the school for distribution to pupils, staff, and parents, and an additional batch sent to political representatives and Council officers across the wider Luton area - the leaflets advertised the public exhibition and introduced the proposed expansion and,
- Information mailouts to local residents, parents, local head teachers, school governors and ward councilors.

The pre-application consultation found that the local community supported the expansion of the school, recognising the school's important role and acknowledging the forecasted rise in demand for additional school places and improved facilities.

Overall 69% of written feedback was found to be in support of the proposals, 28% in opposition and 3% percent did not indicate a preference. 7% of respondents submitted a form but did not identify themselves and thus are not counted in the final tally of consultee feedback.

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

Those who supported the proposals

- Those who supported the proposals but were concerned about the proposals' effects on circulation, parking and traffic in the area
- Those who opposed the proposals on the basis of traffic and parking concerns, increased class numbers on quality of education for pupils, and the physical appearance of the plans.

While the consultation has now closed the project information line will remain active, with queries addressed by the project team.

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 pre-application public consultation around proposals for the expansion of Stopsley Community Primary School.

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 over 27 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.

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 Stopsley Community Primary School. The consultation period ran from 17 October to 26 November 2012.

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.

A one-day exhibition was held on Tuesday 6 November 2012 between 3.30pm and 7.30pm. The event was held in the school's hall and gymnasium.

The exhibition consisted of a series of display boards, which introduced and explained the expansion plans for Stopsley Community Primary 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 the need for expansion and 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, demonstrating how the proposals will move forward following the end of the consultation period.

The exhibition was well-publicised using the following methods:

• 250 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 Stopsley Community Primary 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.

- 500 A5 Leaflets were hand-delivered to the school which pupils were encouraged 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. The posters introduced the proposed expansion of the school and provided he project team's contact details should the community want more information. The public exhibitions were also clearly advertised, with dates and a map of the venue provided. The posters were mailed to various community organisations along with copies of the leaflet. Appendix IV provides a list of venues that received the posters.
- A dedicated consultation hotline (0845 262 0138) was created to provide the public with direct access to the project team.
- 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 key meeting points and thoroughfares around the school to guarantee maximum exposure.
- A link to the consultation website was provided on Luton Borough Council's 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 public 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 website form, the public were asked three questions in relation to the proposed expansion, while the exhibition day feedback form asked the same questions. The questions asked in both the feedback forms and leaflet tear-offs were:

- 1. What do you think, in general terms, about increasing the size of the school?
- 2. Are there any potential issues 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, 16 were parents and six were residents. Six respondents preferred not to answer the question. Twice as many women, 12, reported themselves compared to men - six.

The overall age demographic leaned toward older respondents: four were over 65, two were 55-64, four were 45-54, and five were 35-44. Two respondents identified as 25-34.

In terms of ethnic background, the overwhelming majority who reported as such, identified as White or White British - 14. Two identified as Asian or Asian British and one identified as mixed.

The overwhelming majority of respondents did not consider themselves disabled - 16. Only one respondent reported having a disability.

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 29 written responses were received by the project team via feedback forms,

leaflet tear-offs and the online form, in addition to the verbal comments provided by community members at the exhibition event.

The responses received demonstrated that a significant proportion of the local community supported the expansion of the school. Of the 29 responses:

- 20 expressed a positive view of the plans, many of whom were enthusiastic about the prospect of an expansion and modernisation of Stopsley Community Primary School
- Of the positive responses, four mentioned parking as a possible concern coming off the heels of the proposals
- 8 expressed a negative view ranging from the expansion's impacts on traffic and parking congestion in the area, bottlenecking problems at the school's entrance, and the physical characteristics of the proposals' architectural design and layout
- One leaflet respondent did not express an opinion on the proposals
- Two feedback forms received did not identify their name or contact information and thus are not counted in the final tally of those submitting consultation feedback

Of the 19 responses received prior to the day of the public exhibition, the vast majority - 16 - were positive. Some of the responses included:

- "Absolutely thrilled! Very state of the art plans, will give a real boost to the school."
- "Very good idea."
- "Children have to be educated somewhere."
- "Positive thing for community, school and children."
- "No problem if it is to benefit school and community."
- "Fantastic idea!"

Three negative comments were submitted prior to the exhibition day including:

- "Completely disagree with plans. Area already overcrowded during peak school hours and noisy. Hitchin Road is too narrow...increased traffic is very dangerous to the children."
- "Parking has increased considerably in the last few years and expansion will only exacerbate the problem."
- "Class numbers are already high. Money used for new staff facilities.... should be going to the children."

The public exhibition was attended by various political stakeholders in Stopsley including Stopsley Ward Councillors Jenny Davies and Michael John Dolling, and neighbouring Wigmore Ward Councillors Roy Davies and Diane Paulette Moles.

29 parents and community members attended the exhibition. Of those, 19 signed in and eight filled out a feedback form. A majority of these - five - expressed positive views of the plans including:

- "Connecting the two buildings is great."
- "Families in the area would benefit from expansion."
- "Like the plans for the school so far"
- "It needs to be done."
- "Providing adequate classrooms no problem."

Those who expressed a critical view through submission of the feedback forms - three - wrote the following:

- "The proposals are lacking windows, don't take into account the children....play area is unappealing and oppressive. Plans are extremely vague and hard to read."
- "Concrete-like feel and look...very little green, congested, family room looks detached. Play area looks like a prison."
- "An increase in number of pupils would increase parking problems in the area."

Parking

Of all the 29 feedback forms, online forms and leaflets submitted, whether positive or negative, a substantial amount of people - nine - expressed concerns about parking and traffic implications as an aftereffect of the proposals. Some of the comments submitted included:

- "Parking is issue."
- "Parking problems...parents parking cars in my driveway!"
- "Parking is a problem with double yellows ignored."
- "Traffic's parking on the school run is a problem at the moment, only will get worse."
- "Parking and road safety are a concern; enforcing no parking areas."
- "Traffic is a major problem in the village. This will increase all be it at certain times of day. These people if not local will park a block off all drives and side roads a residents nightmare."
- "The traffic will also increase in what is already a chaotic area at this time of the day. The restricted road infrastructure is already pushed to its maximum."

Response to Concerns

With regard to residents' concerns about the traffic and parking implications of the expansion proposals, two traffic consultants were present at the public exhibition to address these and other issues raised by

attendees. The traffic consultants were there specifically to assess the area and input feedback into the expansion proposals where necessary.

Regarding bottlenecking issues and circulation of pupils around the school, the project team have incorporated the concerns of several consultees regarding this matter into the final proposals and will ensure that circulation of pupils will not be an issue upon completion of the new entrance. BCAL, the traffic consultants working on the project, have noted that all schools have issues with brief but unavoidable busy periods at the beginning and end of the school day regardless of the amount of entrances or number of pupils at any one individual school.

The purpose of the consultation was to gauge public attitudes towards the plans and feed back any critical information back to the project team to accommodate community concerns. These concerns will be 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 process. Those who responded to the Council's request for feedback provided valuable insights for the use of the project team, which have been considered in turn.

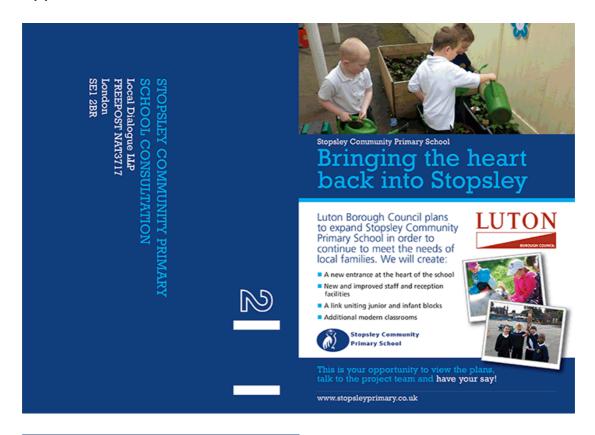
Following the end of the consultation period, the following was clear to the project team:

- That the community understood the need to expand the school;
- That a majority of the consultees support the expansion of the school; and,
- Some concerns were raised about the expansion. These included the traffic and parking situation outside the school, the physical appearance of the designs in the proposals, and the layout of the school entrance regarding bottlenecking issues during peak times.

The issues raised by the public were considered by the project team and the school management prior to the submission of a planning application and have been fed into the design process where appropriate.

Appendix

Appendix I - Leaflet





If you would like to receive this leaflet in large print or in other languages

For general school/student enquiries please call 01582 611 035.

Name Phone		Email	Po	stcode
	u think, in gene		increasing t	he size of the school
Are there ar our plans?	y potential issu	ues you would lii	ke to highligh	nt in respect of
n				
Do you nave	any other com	nments?		
Do you nave	any other com	nments?		
Do you nave	any other com	nments?		
Do you nave	any other com	nments?		
,				
ABOUT	YOU (Tid	k all that apply)	1 A resident	□ None of these
ABOUT Are you?	YOU (Tid	k all that apply)		□ None of these
ABOUT Are you? Are you?	YOU (Tid	k all that apply) A pupil Female	Prefer not to	
ABOUT Are you? Are you? Which age	YOU (Tid	k all that apply) A pupil Female belong to? Tick of	Prefer not to one box only	say
ABOUT Are you? Are you?	YOU (Tid	k all that apply) A pupil Female belong to? Tick of 25-34	Prefer not to one box only	say 1 35-44
ABOUT Are you? Are you? Which age Under 10 45-54	YOU (Tid	k all that apply) A pupil Female belong to? Tick of 25-34 65 and of 55 a	Prefer not to one box only wer	say 1 35-44 1 Prefer not to say
ABOUT Are you? Are you? Which age Under 18 45-54 Which of the	YOU (Tid	k all that apply) A pupil Female belong to? Tick 25-34 65 and or oups best descri	Prefer not to one box only wer C bes you? Tick	say 1 35-44 1 Prefer not to say
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HAVE YOUR SAY...
Let us know what you think about the proposals. Fill in and send this form back FREEPOST – it won't cost you more than two minutes of your time!

www.stopsleyprimary.co.uk

(Polski বাংলা খুপয়নী ঘঁলখা شُرُو) 🕿 0845 262 0138

Abbas Raza

Data Protection Act Luton Borough Council is collecting this information only in connection with the consultation on expansion proposals at Stopping Community Primary School and in an effort to involve parents and residency with the new development. The information will not be infamed with any third party and will not be used for any marketing purposes.

Appendix II - Leaflet Distribution Map



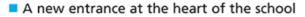
Appendix III - Poster

Stopsley Community Primary School

Bringing the heart back into Stopsley

HERE TODAY

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



- New and improved staff and reception facilities
- A link uniting junior and infant blocks
- Additional modern classrooms









PUBLIC EXHIBITION DATA

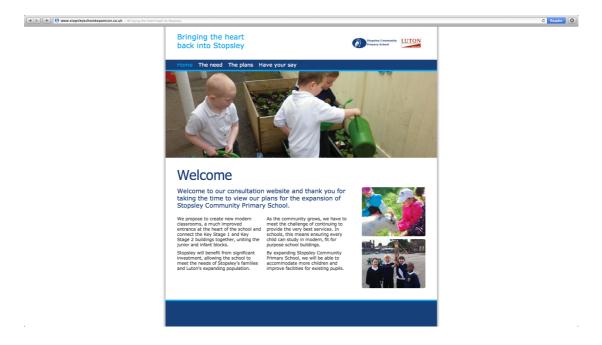
6 November 2012 3.30pm to 7.00pm

Stopsley Community Primary Schoo

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

www.stopsleyprimary.co.uk

Appendix IV - Consultation Website



Appendix V - Stakeholder Letter

Political Stakeholder Letter

Leader - Liberal Democrats Councillor David Franks 1st Floor, Town Hall George Street Luton LU1 2BQ

26 October 2012

Dear NAME.

Consultation on the Expansion of Stopsley Community Primary School

Luton Borough Council has now launched its consultation on the expansion proposals for Stopsley Community Primary School. The expansion is required to allow the school to continue to admit 90 pupils a year, an increase of 30 pupils on its previous intake.

The proposals will see Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 buildings linked together. This will include the creation of new classrooms, a new and improved school entrance, new staff and reception facilities, a newly located family room, and a remodeled specialist teaching room.

I would like you to come and see our plans for the expansion at our public exhibition at Stopsley Community Primary School on 6 November between 3.30pm and 7.00pm - you can view an online map of the location here: http://goo.gl/maps/isRuR

Following consultation, the application will be finalised 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.StopsleySchoolExpansion.co.uk to submit your comments online and read more about the proposals. If you have any further questions or would like to arrange a meeting, 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 Abbas.Raza@LocalDialogue.com or by writing to Stopsley Community Primary School Consultation, Local Dialogue LLP, FREEPOST NAT3717, London, SE1 2BR.

Yours sincerely,

Abbas Raza Local Dialogue LLP

Community Stakeholder Letter

Name Address Address Address Address Address

26 October 2012

Dear NAME,

Consultation on the Expansion of Stopsley Community Primary School

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Enclosed is a leaflet with an attached feedback form. Please complete it and return to us. Alternatively, you can visit www.StopsleySchoolExpansion.co.uk to submit your comments online and read more about the proposals. In the meantime, if you have any questions please contact me on 0845 262 0138, at Abbas.Raza@LocalDialogue.com or by writing to Stopsley Community Primary School Consultation, Local Dialogue LLP, FREEPOST NAT3717, London, SE1 2BR.

Yours sincerely,

Abbas Raza Local Dialogue LLP

Appendix VI - Exhibition Display Boards

Bringing the heart back into Stopsley





Welcome



Welcome to our consultation and thank you for taking the time to view our plans for the expansion of Stopsley Community Primary School.

We propose to create new modern classrooms, a much improved entrance at the heart of the school and connect the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 buildings together, uniting the junior and infant blocks.

Stopsley will benefit from significant investment, allowing the school to meet the needs of Stopsley's families and Luton's expanding population.

As the community grows, we have to meet the challenge of continuing to provide the very best services. In schools, this means ensuring every child can study in modern, fit for purpose school buildings.

By expanding Stopsley Community Primary School, we will be able to accommodate more children and improve facilities for existing pupils.







The need

In September 2011, Stopsley Community Primary School created 30 additional pupil places in the Reception Year and another 30 in Year 1 in September 2012, bringing the total pupil capacity in these year groups to 90.





Our plans for expansion will see the school grow from 480 to 630 places over a five-year period. This will include building three new classrooms and remodelling other spaces to create additional classrooms for 30 more pupils in Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

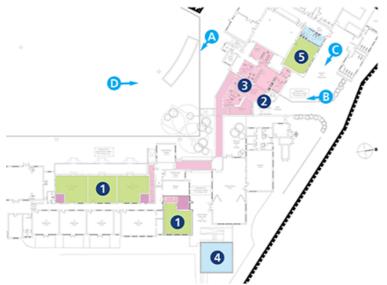
This is driven by a projected 19% growth in pupil numbers between September 2011 and September 2016 across Luton. The number of receptionaged pupils will rise by 16%, an increase of 472 children, over this period. As the pupil numbers grow, we will have to ensure that we provide the classrooms and facilities they require.

Bringing the heart back into Stopsley





The plans





- 1 The creation of new classrooms
- 2 A new and improved school entrance
- New staff and reception facilities
- 4 Family room new location
- A remodelled specialist teaching room



A view of the new Year 2 classroon



A view of the improved entrance



A view of the improved entrance



View of the link between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage

Bringing the heart back into Stopsley







This is your chance to let us know what you think and provide us with your feedback. We then propose to submit a planning application to Luton Borough Council at the end of November 2012.

If our plans are approved, we will seek to start work in early 2013 with the first phase work completed before the start of the September 2013 term. The school will remain open during the works, which will be phased to avoid too much disruption.

Disruptive work will be carried out over the holidays. 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.

Appendix VII - Feedback Form

Stopsley Community Primary School

Bringing the heart back into Stopsley





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 Stopsley Community Primary 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 you th	ink, in general terms, about increa	sing the size of the school?
Are there any p	otential issues you would like to h	ighlight in respect of our plans?

Do you have any other comments?	
ABOUT YOU (Tick all that apply)	
Are you? A parent A pupil A residen	t 🔲 None of these
Are you? □ Male□ Female □ Prefer not to say	
Which age group do you belong to? Tick one box on	· ·
☐ Under 18 ☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35- ☐ 65 and over ☐ Prefer not to say	44 🗖 45-54 🗖 55-64
Which of the following groups best describes you? T	ick one box only
☐ White/White British ☐ Asian/Asian British	☐ Black/Black British ☐ Chinese
□ Mixed □ Other	☐ Prefer not to say
Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes No Prefer not to say	
,	
Please ensure consultation responses are returned to us by I	Monday 26 November 2012.

Data Protection Act Luton Borough Council is collecting this information only in connection with the consultation on expansion proposals at Stoppley Community Primary School and in an effort to involve parents and residents with the new development. The information will not be shared with any third party and will not be used for any marketing purposes.

Appendix VIII - Exhibition Sign-In Sheet

Stopsley Community Primary School Bringing the heart back into Stopsley

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 1998 and will not be outlined on an individual hour.

Appendix IX - Consultation Website Online Survey

