



Consultation on the provision of
primary education

Flax Bourton C of E Primary School

September 2016

What are we consulting upon?

North Somerset Council is consulting on the possible expansion of Flax Bourton C of E Primary School (Flax Bourton School) from a 105 to a 210 place school, formally with effect from 1 September 2018.

The Department for Education has agreed policies and protocols for considering whether a school should be enlarged and/or remodelled. There is a three stage statutory process underpinning such a change and this consultation is part one of that process.

This document aims to:

- explain why there is a proposal to enlarge and remodel Flax Bourton School from its current 105 pupils to a capacity of 210 pupils
- inform pupils, parents, staff, governors and the wider school community what is proposed, and how it will affect the children of the school
- provide an opportunity for stakeholders to comment upon the proposals before a final decision is taken.

Information sharing events have been arranged for parents and the public, to which you are invited:

- 2.45pm and 7.15pm on
Wednesday 21 September 2016

At the meetings, council officers will explain why we need to increase the size of the school and show provisional site plans. Please attend the event most convenient for you.

The first stage of the consultation will run from Monday 12 September 2016 to Wednesday 12 October 2016. This consultation document and a response form are also available on the council's website at <http://consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult.ti>

Background

Local authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. They must also promote diversity and increase parental choice.

There is a growing demand for primary school places in the village of Flax Bourton and its surrounding area. Pupil forecasts tell us that demand for reception year places from September 2016 onwards is likely to exceed the 15 places available at Flax Bourton School on a regular basis. Unless additional school places are made available, it may be necessary to offer pupils places at schools some distance from their homes. This goes against the Council's aspirations of, where possible, providing local school places for local children.

Whilst the council has been able to resolve sufficiency deficits by temporary single year solutions, it now feels it is the right time to ensure that permanent extra places are created at Flax Bourton School on a long-term basis. This includes the creation of additional accommodation to resolve both the class base and, where possible, other infrastructure needs for the school. The strategies, processes and protocols followed when making changes at schools are published in the council's 'Education Provision in North Somerset – Commissioning Strategy 2015-2018', which can be found at:

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/education-commissioning-strategy.pdf>.

In terms of primary school places, where possible, schools will normally enable at least one form of school entry (30 places per year group and 210 places overall) or two forms of entry (60 places per year group and 420 places overall).

Increases in capacity are only normally considered at school(s):

- with good or outstanding Ofsted outcomes
- where there is proven demand for places
- where the site can accommodate the extra pupils with the resulting increased buildings and resources
- where any building works will increase capacity but also, where possible or needed, enhance the current site and assist to resolve any condition issues
- where the increase fits with the council's strategic principles as outlined in its commissioning strategy.

The school fulfils all of the above requirements for expansion.

Flax Bourton School is an outstanding school.

The council's proposal

To meet increased demand from local pupils it is proposed to increase the numbers of places available to pupils attending Flax Bourton School from 15 to 30 pupils per year group (105 to 210 places overall) permanently with effect from September 2018. The increases will be implemented on a phased basis from the reception year onwards. Noting the breaches in class sizes made to date, it is likely the school will take 30 pupils into all cohorts by September 2021. This proposal includes the need to expand the school buildings, as well as increase the numbers of pupils admitted to the school from 15 to 30 per year group (cohort). The Diocese of Bath & Wells, as the school's trustees, are supportive of the expansion proposal.

What other options have been considered?

The council has already expanded other schools in villages neighbouring Flax Bourton School. Birdwell Primary Academy in Long Ashton has increased from 210 to 420 places and West Leigh Infant School has increased in size from 135 to 180 places. A site assessment of Northleaze C of E Primary School found that it is not possible to expand this school to take additional children.

If the council is not able to expand Flax Bourton School, pupils unable to secure a place will be offered alternative provision at the next nearest school to their home address with a vacancy. With developer requests for housing expansions in other nearby villages, this could be some distance from their home community. Other nearby schools are either not capable of expansion or may need to consider expanding in the future to provide for their own local need. In the council's opinion, an expansion of Flax Bourton School best meets the needs of their local community.

What will happen on the school site?

Flax Bourton School currently has five class bases and supporting accommodation.

To help accommodate the additional pupils, the council is proposing to expand the school and is looking at the feasibility and costs of adding two class bases, expanding the school hall and kitchen/curriculum kitchen area and relocating the school office and reception area. Plans may also need to include the re-provision of two existing demountable classrooms. It is also looking at options for increased staff car parking.

Any plans to change the site would be subject to planning approval within a process that will need to be run in parallel to later parts of this three-stage consultation.

When could additional places be made available to pupils?

It is intended that the school should grow incrementally, formally from September 2018 onwards. To meet the demand for places in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years the school agreed to exceptionally 'breach' its admission levels and accept up to 30 pupils into its reception classes in September 2015 and 2016. School admissions legislation allows for this change on an exceptional basis without the need for formal consultations.

Consultations about the Admission Arrangements for the 2017/8 school year commenced in December 2015 and were agreed in March 2016. At that time, an admission level of 15 pupils was approved. It may be appropriate to 'breach' the admission level again in 2017.

If the formal case to increase the size of the school permanently is agreed, up to 30 Reception Year places will be offered from September 2018 (and each year after that).

How will the community resolve the issue of the increase in school traffic?

All schools experience some issues with traffic on and around the school site at the start and end of the school day and we are aware of the concerns of parents and residents. Increasing the numbers of places available at the school will increase the numbers of pupils requiring access to the site.

As part of the planning application process, a traffic assessment will be undertaken to take into account the flow of traffic to the school and factor in changes to this to account for different seasons and weather conditions.

We recognise that the only way to resolve many of the problems experienced by parents and residents around schools is to encourage those who can use more sustainable forms of travel to school to do so. The Council is working with representatives of the school and is exploring ways in which there may be options to reduce congestion, traffic speeds and improve the safety of the school environment

through effective traffic management measures. Such measures could include:

- reduced speed limits and crossings
- pupils encouraging parents to change behaviours
- where the car is the only option, parking further away from the school or choosing to car share with another family
- options for short-term parking at other local venues
- more walk to school schemes for those pupils who are able to do so
- controlled parking for those with extra needs
- active management of traffic.

We would encourage the community to engage with us through the planning and consultation processes to gather and work to mitigate transport issues.

While the council wants to promote and provide local school places, parents/carers need to commit to respecting the school's neighbours and to using sustainable methods to access school when they can. A failure to obtain planning permission to build new accommodation because too many children rely on the car for their journey to school is a real risk to the implementation of the changes proposed.

What happens next?

- This document forms a part of the consultation process and is aimed at staff, parents/carers, pupils, neighbours, governors and any other interested parties of this and other local schools.
- After the consultation period, officers, governors and senior school leaders and your elected representatives will consider the responses. A decision whether or not to move to the next stage and publish a public notice will be taken by The Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services.

How can I have my say?

We want to hear the views of the local community. We would therefore encourage you to complete this questionnaire.

You can also respond online using the Council's Econsult facility at <http://consult.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult.fi>

About you: please tick all appropriate boxes:

Name (please print):					
Please tell us about your relationship with the school		Please tick	Please tell us about your relationship with the school		Please tick
Parent/Carer			Pupil		
Staff	Teacher		Other employee		
	Teaching assistant		Governor		
	Care staff		Member of the community		
	Admin/Support staff		Other (please state)		

Based on the information you have been given, do you agree with the proposals to enlarge Flax Bourton C of E Primary School from 1 September 2018 onwards?

Yes No No view

If you wish to expand upon your responses and/or make additional comments, or if you have a child and he/she wishes to make any comments and/or observations on the proposals, then please use the space below.

If you have answered yes, please use the space below to tell us why you are supportive of this proposal.

If you have answered no, please use the space below to outline any concerns you may have about the proposal.

Additional comments

Signed

Date

Council documents can be made available in large print, audio, easy read and other formats. Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

For more information contact:
01275 888 359
or julia.burgess@n-somerset.gov.uk

Please return your completed questionnaire by **4pm, Wednesday 12 October 2016** either directly to Flax Bourton School, or to:

**School Organisation Officer
North Somerset Council
People and Communities
Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road
Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ**

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