

Response to consultation on The Kite Academy Trust proposal to reduce the PAN of Cross Farm Infants School

In response to the consultation regarding Admissions Arrangements at Cross Farm Academy for September 2023, The Prospect Trust would like to raise the following concerns:

Serving children in the local community

Currently (and historically) Cross Farm School has had more than 30 on roll every year. This means that every year there are in excess of 30 children wanting to attend the School. While acknowledging that Surrey CC is forecasting a decline in birth rates, this cannot be relied upon. As stated in the consultation paper, in 2016 Surrey predicted a rise in numbers that never materialised in reality: "the school was expanded to meet a growing demand in the area, with the added benefit of equalising a historical PAN which was causing the school challenges in making effective use of resources. This was supported by Surrey County Council, as the projected numbers in the area were higher, but in fact the school never fulfilled this."

The question arises: what if the predicted decline doesn't happen? SCC forecasting has been historically unreliable and inaccurate. If the reduction in PAN is implemented, in our opinion this will result in a number of local children who want to attend Cross Farm, probably as their nearest school, who will no longer be able to do so. In the case of the current Y1 cohort, this would mean that about 22 children would not be able to attend their local school.

Environmental and health concerns

If the proposal is implemented, a significant number of children will no longer be able to walk to school if - as they have historically always done - applications for places exceed the PAN of 30. This will inevitably mean that these displaced children will therefore have to be transported by car to another school, with a concomitant increase traffic on the road resulting

in the likelihood of congestion, delays to public transport, an increase in air pollution and other environmental damage at a time when the country is actively seeking ways to reduce car usage. There are consequences also to the health and well-being of children who will not be benefitting from the exercise of walking to and from their school.

The traffic around the Frimley Green Road area and the roads neighbouring Cross Farm School is already extremely heavy, particularly at school journey times. The local Council will testify to this. In recent years, school children have been involved in several serious road traffic accidents. This proposal, if implemented, will inevitably put significant further strain upon the already over-pressured infrastructure.

Concern for siblings

We ask whether the impact of this proposal, should it go ahead, on siblings and their families has been properly considered. The consultation document does not indicate what provision is to be made for the siblings joining the School each and every year. We estimate that this could be as many as 30 children. If the proposal is implemented, it could mean that younger siblings are no longer able to go to the same school as their older sibling which has inevitable adverse consequences for families.

If a child has a sibling at Frimley CofE Junior School now, the start and end times of the days at both Cross Farm and Frimley have been adjusted to allow families adequate time to walk between the two schools in the mornings and afternoons. If a child with a sibling at Frimley now has to attend another infant school, because with a reduced PAN (of 30) meaning that Cross Farm is full, the parents may be faced with almost insurmountable logistical and therefore child care problems if they are not able to drop off and collect from both schools if times clash.

This could therefore mean upheaval and disruption to the learning and mental health of the Frimley child whose education might be severely and unnecessarily disrupted if the family believe they have no choice other

than to remove the older child in order to attend the same school as their younger sibling.

In summary, the serious misgivings we have concerning this proposal all relate to the potential harm it does to the community, an aspect of the proposal about which the consultation document is largely silent.

This proposal risks harming the health and well-being of children and their families, and will have a negative impact to the local environment. Taken together, this proposal if implemented will serve to erode the quality of community life in the Frimley and Frimley Green area.

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The Prospect Trust,