**Notes of consultation event held on 21 November 2018, at Swaffham CofE Junior Academy**

**Attendance**

14 members of the public and governors

Sharon Short, Headteacher, Swaffham CofE Junior Academy

Marion Link, Headteacher, Swaffham CofE VC Infant School

Simon Morley, Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust

Karen Gay, Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust

Paul Dunning, Diocese of Norwich

Eric Clarke, Head of Admissions, Norfolk County Council

Jamie Tolman, Capital Projects Officer, Norfolk County Council

Caroline Money, School Organisation Manager, Norfolk County Council

Simon Morley welcomed everyone to the consultation event and introduced the panel.

Simon set out the proposal for the Junior Academy to become a primary school from September 2020, the context for the proposal and its link with a proposal for the Infant School to become a primary school.

Mrs Link explained the benefits of expanding to a primary school as;

* Both schools believe it is better to become primary schools, as it will reduce the need for transition to Key Stage 2. Although the schools work well together on the transition from Infant to Junior, some children can take a while to settle, which means learning time is lost.
* It is good for the children’s social development, taking on more responsibility and older children supporting younger children
* Opportunity for staff to get to know the children and parents better, to be more supportive to individual needs
* There will be limited building works to change to a primary school.

Mrs Short explained the benefits for the Junior School proposal to become a primary school as;

* The school agree that all through primary school is best for children’s education and development, as the needs of children can be better met by sharing good practice across the years
* Staff in both schools are trained and qualified to teach all year groups in a primary school
* Both schools will be growing one year at a time and not all at once.

The following areas were discussed during the event;

* The provision for 2 year olds – both schools will have provision on site for 2 year olds
* Concern that children from outside Swaffham will use 2 year old provision in the town and then not return to their village school.
* The choice of school offered to parents and how admissions will be managed. Parents will have the choice of an Academy Primary or a Local Authority Maintained school. The catchment area for both schools will be the Swaffham Town boundary. Parents of Reception and year 2 children will be invited to state their preference for school and the usual over subscription criteria will apply i.e. siblings
* The amount of building work needed to turn the schools into primary schools. If the proposals are agreed the building work could start at the Junior Academy next summer however the programme is still to be considered/confirmed in discussion with the Academy. The contractors will work with the school to ensure that noise is minimised. The first stage of the building works will be to ensure the new block for reception children will be ready by September 2020. Before the planning application is submitted, there will be an event for parents to see the plans.
* The impact on parking, with additional children. The numbers of extra children will grow over time, as each school is only growing by one extra year group at a time. Will look at the use of ‘walking buses’. The Highways Agency are responsible for looking at our plans and deciding if paths or cycle paths are needed.
* Capacity at the High School for extra Primary School children. Confirmation there is capacity for all the extra primary school children, but the choice is through parental preference.
* Management of drop off and pick up from schools. It may well be that these will be staggered between schools, to help the traffic flow.
* Coping with more children in the Junior School at lunch time. There may be two sittings, which is a system used by other schools, for the older and younger children.
* Staff recruitment. Whilst it can be difficult to recruit staff, the school will be growing slowly, allowing for plenty of planning for any staff changes.
* Existing building condition of the junior school, built in 1970’s. DNEAT as the Academy Trust are responsible for the general condition of the school site. The County Council has funding for the extra provision needed for the new places, due to the housing growth.
* Admissions process – parents of children in Year 2, will be invited to make an application for a Year 3 places, with upto 3 preferences. Both schools are within the Swaffham catchment area.
* The statement in the consultation document that the ‘driving force is in the best interest of children’s education’ implies that the system of infant and junior has not worked. The proposal to grow the schools into primary schools has been an aspiration for both schools for some time. The impact of the planned housing in Swaffham has provided the opportunity to achieve this.
* The impact of closing St. Andrews Primary School, North Pickenham recently, when these proposals are about expanding the Swaffham schools to cope with additional children.

Simon Morley thanked everyone for attending and encouraged people to complete the consultation forms by 13th December 2018.