**Notes of consultation event held on 22 November 2018, at Swaffham CofE VC Infant School**

**Attendance**

5 members of the public and governor

Marion Link, Headteacher, Swaffham CofE VC Infant School

Sharon Short, Headteacher, Swaffham CofE Junior Academy

Eric Clarke, Head of Admissions, Norfolk County Council

Jamie Tolman, Capital Projects Officer, Norfolk County Council

Caroline Money, School Organisation Manager, Norfolk County Council

Gavin Cowley, Adviser Partnership Development

Caroline Money welcomed everyone to the consultation event and introduced the panel.

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

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

* Within the current situation, the school is just getting to know the children when they move to the Junior school. Becoming a primary school cuts out a transition stage which is better educationally.
* Often children can be very unsettled during their move to Junior school, despite the work that both schools do minimise any disruption.
* It will be good for the older children to take on more responsibility.
* Staff have the experience and qualifications to teach in Primary Schools at both Key Stage 1 and 2.
* The primary school would grow slowly, so we will have time to build our staff needs.
* We have wanted to do this for some time and now able to propose this change, due to the planned housing growth.

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

* We agree that all through primary school is better and has educational benefits
* It allows us to get to know the children well and plan well in advance to address their needs
* Transition can see a dip in education achievement during this time.

The following areas were discussed during the event;

* Families will have children in both schools for a while, will schools work together or be different. It is only reception and year 3 children that will be invited to make an application for a school place. The schools will be run individually, but will have similar views on education for primary education.
* Classroom space for additional children. There will be minimal disruption at the Infant School as it will focus on the re-organisation of space internally.
* Staggered drop off and pick up times. Both schools will continue this to start with, but will review it together.
* Concern amongst some parents about the current staff qualifications to teach key stage 2. All staff, in both schools, have the experience and qualifications to teach both Key Stage 1 and 2. Both schools are keen to ensure that standards don’t drop as they transfer into a primary school.
* Concern about parental pressure to decide early on choice of school to keep friendship groups together
* Admissions process. Parents will be invited to make an application for a Year 3 place, with upto 3 preferences. Both schools are within the Swaffham catchment area. There is the right to appeal, if you do not get the school of choice.
* The catchment area around schools is based on parish boundaries, in this case the boundary of Swaffham Town Council.
* Will the Infant school have less children. The current number of 217 includes the nursery children. The Infant school will expand by 30 children.
* The impact of more children attending two growing primary schools on the traffic flow and pollution levels.
* Parents will have the choice of three primary schools in Swaffham. There are three proposals for primary schools; Swaffham Infants, Swaffham Junior Academy and Sacred Heart. Primary places are needed due to the housing growth in the area. The schools all offer choice to parents.

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