

## Considerations about the proposal in relation to the Decision-Makers Guidance

The decision maker for these statutory proposals is the local authority, and this report presents the proposals to Cabinet for determination. If the local authority fails to decide proposals within two months of the end of the representation period the local authority must forward proposals, and any received representations, to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for decision. This two month period will end on 1 February 2015.

Decision Makers are required to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State when they take a decision on proposals. New school organisation regulations and associated guidance came into force on 28 January 2014. The guidance documents are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>.

'Annex B: Guidance for Decision-makers' sets out some the factors that decision-makers should consider when deciding a proposal. These factors are not exhaustive and the importance of each will vary depending on the type and circumstances of the proposal. All proposals must be considered on their individual merits.

The format of this Appendix follows the framework of the Annex B guidance.

- The headings and text in italics at the start of each section contains extracts from the guidance that are directly relevant to the statutory proposals to assist members to understand the factors to be considered.
- The text beneath the extracts in each section contains officer comment in relation to the factors.

### Consideration of consultation and representation period

*The decision-maker will need to be satisfied that the appropriate consultation and/or representation period has been carried out and that the proposer has had regard to the responses received. If the proposer has failed to meet the statutory requirements, a proposal may be deemed invalid and therefore should be rejected. The decision-maker must consider all the views submitted, including all objections to and comments on the proposal.*

Consultation about the proposal to expand Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School was conducted from Monday 8 September to Monday 20 October 2014. The consultation was originally scheduled to close on Friday 17 October 2014. However, at the request of attendees at the consultation meeting including Harrow Weald Ward Councillors:

- the date for consultation responses to be received was extended until Monday 20 October 2014;
- further distribution of consultation papers was delivered on 16 October to properties in The Avenue and Wilsmere Drive. Also, to addresses in Chestnut Drive, Weald Rise and White Gate Gardens where there had been reports that addresses had been missed in the original distribution.

The consultation responses and outcomes (see 'Views submitted' section below) were reported to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Young People when making the decision to publish statutory proposals.

Statutory proposals to expand to expand Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School were published on 3 November 2014 for a four week representation period which closed on 1 December 2014. In order to make the nature of the proposals explicit and clear for all

stakeholders, the brief notice and the full proposal stated as full information as possible. It is considered that all necessary information was provided and made available for stakeholders and interested parties to see.

The brief notice and full proposal were developed with close reference to the Government guidance. It is considered that the published brief notice and full proposal comply with the statutory requirements.

## **Education standards and diversity of provision**

*Decision-makers should consider the quality and diversity of schools in the relevant area and whether the proposal will meet or affect the aspirations of parents, raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.*

*The decision-maker should also take into account the extent to which the proposal is consistent with the government's policy on academies as set out on the department's website.*

### **Quality of schools**

Schools in Harrow perform well in comparison to national and statistically similar local authorities. The vast majority of primary schools and secondary schools are judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by OfSTED. As at October 2014, 87% of Harrow's primary and secondary schools are judged 'good' or 'outstanding', compared to 85% in London and 80% nationally (Source: Ofsted Data View).

### **Diversity of schools**

There is a range of schools in Harrow offering diversity to parents both in terms of ethos and size. Harrow has a Church of England primary school, a Hindu primary school, a Jewish primary school, six Roman Catholic primary schools and two Roman Catholic high schools. Primary sector schools are organised as separate and combined infant and junior schools and have a range of planned admission numbers from one to four forms of entry.

Harrow is committed to securing greater autonomy, flexibility and scope for schools to drive their own agendas within a collaborative whole-borough framework. Harrow's success in this approach is demonstrated through the Harrow School Improvement Partnership and the Harrow Collegiate.

The community of Harrow schools has a tradition of collaboration and cooperation and is confident to develop and embrace innovative solutions. Within this context the local authority, in partnership with schools, will continue to explore routes that provide creative and innovative solutions for challenges faced by individual schools and groups of schools, and provide a means to secure school improvement.

Two primary schools established an academy trust to drive improvements in education attainment. Another primary school joined an academy trust with a high school.

### **Aspirations of parents**

The responses to the consultation undertaken on Phase 2 school expansion proposals in September – October 2013 indicate broad agreement with the Council's approach to creating additional school places in Harrow. Over 60% of respondents agreed with the Council's approach to creating additional school places in Harrow.

The responses to the consultation from parents and staff of Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School on the proposals to combine and expand the two schools indicate strong agreement with the Council's proposal to amalgamate and expand the Weald schools.

The responses to the expansion consultation from local residents indicate a level of agreement with the Council's approach to creating additional school places in Harrow with nearly half supporting the approach, though nearly a third disagreed with the approach.

Nearly three quarters of the responses from local residents to the second consultation question disagree with the Council's proposal to expand the Weald schools.

However, only 39 responses were received from local residents to the consultation about the proposed expansion of Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School. This response level of 39 needs to be viewed in the context of 425 consultation papers distributed to local residents. Also the publicising of the online consultation response portal on the Harrow Council website.

The consultation responses and outcomes are summarised in the 'Views submitted' section below.

### **Raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps**

A key principle identified by officers and representative primary headteachers in the work to develop expansion proposals was the maintenance of high quality education standards, and all schools with council support as necessary will work to ensure high education standards are promoted through the expansions. The governing bodies and senior leadership teams of the schools will ensure appropriate structures are in place to manage the increased numbers of pupils and deliver the curriculum.

Suitable accommodation and facilities will be provided to accommodate the increased pupil numbers. Revenue funding is based on pupil numbers and the funding for increased numbers of pupils can enable opportunities for schools to be creative in use of resources to promote pupils' learning.

Closing the Gap is a fundamental part of Ofsted's school inspection process, and accordingly, the Local Authority monitors the attainment of identified groups of pupils in its schools.

### **Government policy on academies**

The Government's policy on academies is not directly applicable to this expansion proposal. The proposal does not create a new school which is when the 'academy presumption' applies. The governing body of the school is at liberty to consider conversion to academy school status regardless of whether the school is expanded or not.

## **Demand**

*In assessing the demand for new school places the decision-maker should consider the evidence presented for any projected increase in pupil population (such as planned housing developments) and any new provision opening in the area (including free schools).*

*The decision-maker should take into account the quality and popularity of the schools in which spare capacity exists and evidence of parents' aspirations for a new school or for places in a school proposed for expansion. The existence of surplus capacity in neighbouring less popular schools should not in itself prevent the addition of new places.*

*Reducing surplus places is not a priority (unless running at very high levels). For parental choice to work effectively there may be some surplus capacity in the system as a whole. Competition from additional schools and places in the system will lead to pressure on existing schools to improve standards.*

The Greater London Authority (GLA) prepares the pupil projections for Harrow Council. The GLA uses a range of information and data to prepare the projections including the number of births, number of pupils in Harrow schools, migration to Harrow and new housing development. Across London the population is growing, and the main reason for this is increasing birth rate.

The demand for Reception class places (for pupils reaching 5 years of age) in Harrow schools is increasing:

- In January 2006 there were 2,224 Reception aged pupils in Harrow schools;
- In January 2013 there were 2,879 Reception aged pupils in Harrow schools;
- In January 2014 there were 3,030 Reception aged pupils in Harrow schools;
- In January 2016 it is projected there will be 3,463 Reception aged pupils in Harrow schools.

To ensure sufficient school places to meet the increased demand, temporary additional Reception classes have been opened since 2009. In order to meet the actual and predicted increased demand in the next few years there is a need to increase the number of permanent school places, in the primary sector initially and in the secondary sector in due course. Additional places are also required to meet increased demand for provision to meet special educational need.

In September 2012 there were a total of 2,550 permanent Reception class places in Harrow's primary sector schools. Phase 1 of the primary school expansion programme was implemented in September 2013 with 8 schools in the borough permanently increasing their Reception intakes. In September 2015, when all the Phase 2 schools are expanded, there will be 3,240 permanent Reception places.

In order to ensure sufficient school places to meet the predicted increased demand by September 2016, Harrow needs to increase the number of permanent Reception places by at least a further 300 places to a total of 3,540. The Phase 3 proposals, that include Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School, aim to ensure sufficient school places at the right time and in the right location to meet the increased demand up to 2016/17. Full information about the projected demand for school places and the planning to increase school places across Harrow can be viewed in the 17 July 2014 Cabinet papers (item 21 School Expansion Programme Appendix B) at

<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=249&MId=62354&Ver=4>

## **School size**

*Decision-makers should not make blanket assumptions that schools should be of a certain size to be good schools, although the viability and cost-effectiveness of a proposal is an important factor for consideration. The decision-maker should also consider the impact on the LA's budget of the need to provide additional funding to a small school to compensate for its size.*

Harrow's school expansion programme is very significant and is expected to involve all schools in opening additional classes on either a permanent or temporary basis. Over half the primary

schools in Harrow will be permanently expanded by the end of the school expansion programme.

School revenue budgets are funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As the Department for Education (DfE) allocates DSG based on pupil numbers, any increase in pupil numbers results in additional revenue funding for the expanding school. The revenue funding is allocated to schools based on the Harrow Schools' Funding Formula. School budgets are based on pupil numbers in the October prior to the start of the financial year, so there is always a funding lag when schools increase their pupil numbers. To ensure that schools who agree to an additional class are not financially penalised, the Harrow School Funding Formula provides 'Additional Class Funding' for the period from September to the end of March, following which the mainstream funding formula will take effect. This ensures that schools have adequate funding for at least the average costs of a teacher.

## **Proposed admission arrangements (including post-16 provision)**

*In assessing demand the decision-maker should consider all expected admission applications, not only those from the area of the LA in which the school is situated.*

*Before approving a proposal that is likely to affect admissions to the school the decision-maker should confirm that the admission arrangements of the school are compliant with the School Admissions Code. Although the decision-maker cannot modify proposed admission arrangements, the decision-maker should inform the proposer where arrangements seem unsatisfactory and the admissions authority should be given the opportunity to revise them.*

No changes to admission arrangements arise from these proposals. Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School is a community school that draws pupils from its local area and the admission arrangements of the school are compliant with the School Admissions Code.

No changes to post-16 provision arise from the proposals.

## **National Curriculum**

*All maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum unless they have secured an exemption for groups of pupils or the school community.*

Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School follow the National Curriculum and no changes to this arise from these proposals.

## **Equal opportunity issues**

*The decision-maker must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of LAs/governing bodies, which requires them to have 'due regard' to the need to:*

- *eliminate discrimination;*
- *advance equality of opportunity; and*
- *foster good relations.*

*The decision-maker should consider whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise from the changes being proposed, for example that where there is a proposed change to single sex provision in an area, there is equal access to single sex provision for the other sex to meet parental demand. Similarly there should be a commitment to provide access to a range of opportunities which reflect the ethnic and cultural mix of the area, while ensuring that such opportunities are open to all.*

Equalities Impact Assessments have been undertaken on the proposals to permanently expand Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School. The conclusions of these assessments are that the implications are either positive or neutral in that the combining and expansion of the schools will help to ensure all children in Harrow have access to a high quality school place. The assessments have not identified any potential for unlawful conduct or disproportionate impact and concludes that all opportunities to advance equality are being addressed.

Harrow's schools are successful, inclusive and provide a diversity of provision. The school expansion programme will ensure sufficient school places for the increasing numbers of children in Harrow and will build on the successful provision that already exists in Harrow's schools.

## **Community cohesion**

*Schools have a key part to play in providing opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to learn with, from and about each other; by encouraging, through their teaching, an understanding of, and respect for, other cultures, faiths and communities. When considering a proposal, the decision-maker must consider its impact on community cohesion. This will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the community served by the school and the views of different sections within the community.*

These are community schools which draw pupils from their local area and the pupil profiles reflect the ethnicity of their area. The October 2014 School Census demonstrates that the schools have an ethnically diverse pupil population.

## **Travel and accessibility**

*Decision-makers should satisfy themselves that accessibility planning has been properly taken into account and the proposed changes should not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups.*

*The decision-maker should bear in mind that a proposal should not unreasonably extend journey times or increase transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable walking or cycling routes.*

*A proposal should also be considered on the basis of how it will support and contribute to the LA's duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school.*

There would be no change to travel or transport arrangements arising from this amalgamation proposal because all the pupils attending the schools at the time of implementation would transfer to the combined school.

Schools that are proposed for expansion are located around the borough so that additional school places are available locally to where the children live. This approach minimises distances that children and parents have to travel to school and serves to promote accessibility. This helps to limit the need for car use by parents at the beginning and end of the school day. As far as possible, it is believed the schools chosen for expansion would be a popular choice amongst parents wishing to secure a place at their local schools.

The schools proposed for expansion, as is the case at many schools in Harrow, already have a degree of traffic and congestion issues from the current school intake and the expansions will exacerbate the problems if no mitigating measures are taken. To minimise the impact of the

additional pupils a cross-council approach has been adopted to bring officers together from the Children & Families and Environment & Enterprise directorates to work with schools and local residents. Transport Assessments at schools approved for expansion and Transport Statements at additional special educational needs place provision are undertaken and are submitted as part of the planning application for building work at the schools. Particular emphasis is being given to School Travel Plans as a means of focusing attention of the issues and to seek to bring about change in people's behaviour in delivering and collecting children.

The Weald Schools Federated Governing Body takes traffic congestion issues extremely seriously. In its formal response to Harrow Council about the expansion proposal the governors strongly urge that, in order to achieve the successful expansion of the schools, both schools and the Federated Governing Body work closely in partnership with Harrow Council, parents, carers and the local community to achieve a lasting solution to the problems associated with the access of traffic, parking and the travel behaviour of Weald Schools' parents and carers.

## Capital

*The decision-maker should be satisfied that any land, premises or capital required to implement the proposal will be available and that all relevant local parties (e.g. trustees or religious authority) have given their agreement. A proposal cannot be approved conditionally upon funding being made available.*

*Where proposers are relying on the department as the source of capital funding, there can be no assumption that the approval of a proposal will trigger the release of capital funds from the department, unless the department has previously confirmed in writing that such resources will be available; nor can any allocation 'in principle' be increased. In such circumstances the proposal should be rejected, or consideration deferred until it is clear that the capital necessary to implement the proposal will be provided.*

Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School will be rebuilt by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) as part of the Government's Priority School Building Programme. The rebuild would incorporate functioning as a combined school if the amalgamation proposal is approved. The expansion element of the rebuild would be funded by Harrow Council and the build would be delivered by the EFA.

Scoping work has been progressed by the EFA at the Weald schools with a view to completion of the rebuild by 2017.

The design proposal will be subject to open pre-planning engagement with the school community and local residents so comments can be taken into account and influence the final design that is submitted in the planning application.

The budget for the school expansion programme, including primary school expansions in Phase 1 and Phase 2 and three expansions at Phase 3, secondary school expansions and provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is £89.534m. Based on current estimates and market conditions it is expected that it is possible to deliver this programme with Education Funding Agency capital grants, without the need for council capital funding. If the programme is not deliverable within the current programme then borrowing may be required. This risk is being monitored closely in consultation with Cabinet Members.

## **School premises and playing fields**

*Under the School Premises Regulations all schools are required to provide suitable outdoor space in order to enable physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum; and for pupils to play outside safely.*

*Guidelines setting out suggested areas for pitches and games courts are in place although the department has been clear that these are non-statutory.*

The regulatory requirements and Government guidance will be considered by the Education Funding Agency throughout the rebuild programme.

## **Closure proposals (under s15 EIA 2016)**

*The decision-maker should be satisfied that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils in the area, taking into account the overall quality of provision, the likely supply and future demand for places. The decision-maker should consider the popularity with parents of the schools in which spare capacity exists and evidence of parents' aspirations for those schools.*

The proposed legal closure of Weald Junior School is to effect the amalgamation of the two Weald schools and does not displace any pupils. It is also proposed to expand the school(s) by one form of entry to ensure there are sufficient places for the additional children living in the area. All the pupils attending the schools at the time of amalgamation would transfer to the combined school. The combined school will have the same number of pupils overall as the two separate schools. The responses by parents of the schools to the consultation questions indicate strong overall agreement with the Council's proposals to combine and expand the Weald schools.

## **Schools causing concern**

*For all closure proposals involving schools causing concern, copies of the Ofsted monitoring letters for the relevant schools should be made available. Decision-makers should have regard to the length of time the school has been in special measures, requiring improvement or otherwise causing concern. The decision-maker should also have regard to the progress the school has made, the prognosis for improvement, and the availability of places at other existing or proposed schools within a reasonable travelling distance. There is a presumption that these proposals should be approved, subject to checking that there are sufficient accessible places of an acceptable standard available to accommodate displaced pupils and to meet foreseeable future demand for places in the area.*

Weald Junior School is a school causing concern. The school became subject to special measures following the Ofsted inspection which took place in March 2014. The link to the Ofsted inspection report and monitoring letters is <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/102200>

The Department for Education Guidance for Decision-makers is written on the premise that a school may be closed for because it has been made subject to special measures. In this instance, however, Harrow Council's Amalgamation Policy is being implemented and the discontinuing of Weald Junior School has been triggered by the resignation of the headteacher. The amalgamation would be effected in accordance with Harrow Council's policy by the discontinuing of the school where the headteacher vacancy has arisen, which is at Weald Junior School.



Monitoring inspections are made by Her Majesty's Inspectors and, following the most recent visit on Tuesday 18th November 2014 and Wednesday 19th November 2014, the inspectors identified that the school is making reasonable progress. If Cabinet decides to approve the amalgamation, Weald Junior School would no longer continue as a legal entity.

## **Community Services**

*Some schools may be a focal point for family and community activity, providing extended services for a range of users, and its closure may have wider social consequences. In considering proposals for the closure of such schools, the effect on families and the community should be considered. Where the school is providing access to extended services, provision should be made for the pupils and their families to access similar services through their new schools or other means.*

The school(s) will be rebuilt by the Education Funding Agency within the Priority School Building Programme. The rebuild will be as either separate or combined schools of three or four forms of entry depending on the outcome of the statutory proposals to combine and expand the schools. This rebuild should benefit the local community by providing modern and fit-for-purpose school facilities for the education of local children and for community use outside school hours.

Harrow's schools view themselves as serving their local communities and the expansion proposals would not change this. Indeed, by meeting the increased demand in their local area, schools would reinforce their position at the heart of their communities.

## **Views submitted during the expansion consultation**

Consultation about the proposal to expand Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School was held between Tuesday 16 September 2014 and Monday 20 October 2014. Officers attended open consultation meetings for parents and for residents in September and October 2014 to present information and enable discussion of the proposals.

## **Outcomes of the statutory consultation**

117 responses were received to the consultation. Separate consultation questions were given to the school communities from those given to local residents because the amalgamation proposal was not relevant to the local residents without children attending the schools.

- 78 responses were received to the consultation questions for the school communities.
- 39 responses were received to the consultation questions for residents

A number of comments were included with the responses given and these are themed below with officer response. The formal response to the consultation by the Governing Body of Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School is also summarised below.

## **Responses from the school communities to the consultation questions about amalgamation and expansion**

Questions were asked in the consultation about the two proposals. They were:

- "Proposal One: Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School are joined together to form one combined school on 1 April 2015."
- "Proposal Two: To expand the combined school to four forms of entry (120 places) with effect from 1 September 2016."

Both questions offered the option to respond 'Yes', 'No', or 'Not Sure' to each question. Opportunity was given for comments to be added after each question if the respondent wished to do so.

The following tables provide overall responses to the consultation questions.

**Proposal One: Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School are joined together to form one combined school on 1 April 2015.**

	I support combining the two schools	I want the schools to stay separate	I am not sure	Total
Infant School parent	9	2	1	12
Junior School parent	14	3	2	19
Parent in both schools	16	5	5	26
Member of staff in Infant School	10	3	2	15
Member of staff in Junior School	2	0	0	2
Other interested stakeholder:	3	0	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>69.23%</b>	<b>16.67%</b>	<b>14.10%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Proposal Two: To expand the combined school to four forms of entry (120 places) with effect from 1 September 2016.**

	I support expansion to four forms of entry as either combined or separate schools	I do not support expansion to four forms of entry as either combined or separate schools	I am not sure	Total
Infant School parent	4	5	1	10
Junior School parent	15	1	5	21
Parent in both schools	11	1	8	20
Member of staff in Infant School	6	4	1	11
Member of staff in Junior School	2	0	0	2
Other interested stakeholder:	3	0	1	4

Total	41	11	16	68
%	60.29%	16.18%	23.53%	100%

The responses made to the first consultation question indicate strong agreement with the Council's proposal to amalgamate the Weald schools.

The responses made to the second consultation question indicate strong overall agreement with the Council's proposal to expand the Weald schools.

### **Responses from local residents to the consultation questions about expansion**

Two questions were asked in the consultation. They were:

- "Do you agree with the approach to creating additional school places in Harrow?"
- "Do you agree with the proposal to permanently expand the Weald Schools?"

Both questions offered the option to respond 'Yes', 'No', or 'Not Sure' to each question. Opportunity was given for comments to be added after each question if the respondent wished to do so.

The following tables provide overall responses to the consultation questions.

The overall responses to Question 1 were:

#### **Question 1: "Do you agree with the approach to creating additional school places In Harrow?"**

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	18	46.15%
No	12	30.77%
Not Sure	9	23.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The overall responses to Question 2 were:

#### **Question 2: "Do you agree with the proposal to permanently expand the Weald Schools?"**

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	7	17.95%
No	28	71.79%
Not Sure	4	10.26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The response to the statutory consultation questions by respondent type is as follows.

<b>Numbers Overall</b>	
Harrow Resident	32
Parent/Carer	3
Pupil	0
School Staff	0
School Governor	0
Other	1

Blank	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

The responses by respondent type for the first consultation question were as follows:

Do you agree with the approach to creating additional school places in Harrow?	Harrow Resident	Other	Parent / carer	School Staff	Pupil	School Governor	Blank	Total
Yes	16	0	2	0	0	0	0	<b>18</b>
No	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	<b>12</b>
Not Sure	6	0	0	0	0	0	3	<b>9</b>
No Response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39</b>

1. The responses by respondent type for the second consultation question were as follows:

Do you agree with the approach to permanently expand Weald School?	Harrow Resident	Other	Parent / carer	School Staff	Pupil	School Governor	Blank	Total
Yes	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	<b>7</b>
No	22	1	2	0	0	0	3	<b>28</b>
Not Sure	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>4</b>
No Response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>39</b>

### Monitoring information

When completing their responses to the consultation, respondents were invited to provide information about how they perceive their social identity to assist with monitoring the effectiveness of the consultation outreach. Anonymous information was requested under the following categories: disability; ethnic group; and religion. The following tables show the responses received under these categories.

#### Respondents by Disability

	Number	Percentage
Not Disabled	32	82.05%
Disabled	3	7.69%
Not Stated	4	10.26%

#### Respondents by Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Number	% of total response
Asian Or Asian British	5	12.82%
Black or Black British	1	2.56%
Other Ethnic Group	2	5.14%
Mixed ethnic background	0	0%

White	25	64.10%
Did Not Specify	6	15.38%

### Respondents by Religion

	Number	Percentage
Buddhism	0	0%
Christianity	20	51.28%
Hinduism	3	7.69%
Islam	1	2.56%
Jainism	0	0%
Judaism	1	2.56%
Sikh	1	2.56%
Zoroastrian	0	0%
Other	4	10.26%
No Religion	1	2.56%
Not Stated	8	20.52%

The responses from local residents made to the first consultation question indicate a level of agreement with the Council's approach to creating additional school places in Harrow with nearly half supporting the approach, though nearly a third disagreed with the approach.

Nearly three quarters of the responses from local residents to the second consultation question disagree with the Council's proposal to expand the Weald schools.

The response level from local residents of 39 needs to be viewed in the context of 425 consultation papers distributed to local residents. Also the publicising of the online consultation response portal on the Harrow Council website.

### Other responses to the consultation

#### Governing Body

The formal response to the statutory consultation by the federated Governing Body of Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School recommended that the Proposal One: Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School are joined together to form one combined school on 1 April 2015 and Proposal Two: To expand the combined school to four forms of entry (120 places) with effect from 1 September 2016 are adopted by Harrow Council.

#### Petition

A petition signed by 154 people was presented to Cabinet on 16 October 2014 with the following terms:

"We, the undersigned, are extremely concerned about the impact of the proposed expansion of Weald Schools on the longstanding and intolerable traffic and parking conditions in the surrounding roads, which pose a serious safety risk to children, residents and others. We would not be willing to support expansion without significant measures to tackle these problems and improve the situation. Any new school buildings must also be designed and positioned in a way that respects the character of the area and the amenity of local residents".

Cabinet referred the petition to the Interim Corporate Director of Children and Families, Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holders for Children, Schools and Young People and Business, Planning and Regeneration for consideration.

### Other responses

The London Borough of Barnet, Children's Service, School Place Planning responded welcoming the creation of additional primary school places that can help to meet the current and future demand being experienced. Weald Infant and Junior school are over 2 miles from Barnet's border and are unlikely to be significantly affected by Barnet's current demand for primary school places.

A letter and an email was received from a resident in the generic email account [SchoolReorganisation@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolReorganisation@harrow.gov.uk) about the proposed expansion. These communications expressed concerns about the insufficient road infrastructure around the school for the volume of traffic, unsafe driving practices, inconsiderate parking and antisocial behaviour by drivers towards residents. The authors were encouraged to respond to the consultation via the Harrow Council website so all the consultation responses could be collated together.

## **Officer response to the consultation comments**

The two main themes in consultation comments and responses relate to:

- ensuring strong leadership of a combined and expanded school and quality of education;
- traffic and congestion issues.

### **Leadership and quality of education**

The governors and Harrow Council are very mindful of the need to secure the leadership of a combined school, if the amalgamation is agreed. In accordance with Council policy and practice, the post of Headteacher for the combined school would be ring fenced to the substantive Headteacher. A process would be developed to satisfy the Governing Body that the post holder has suitable qualifications, experience and ability to undertake the role including consideration of any development needs that may be identified.

The schools are maintaining an absolute priority on the improvement of educational standards and will continue to do so through the construction processes. Progress is being made through the focus, hard work and efforts of the school staff.

The senior leadership team and governors will ensure that the focus on quality is not diluted during the building programme. The school(s) will be supported through the rebuild processes so the focus can remain on the core business of educating the children. There will be a project manager from the Education Funding Agency to ensure smooth progress with the rebuild and liaison with the school on any issues and school operational matters to minimise any disruption to education. The Harrow Council Children's Capital Team will be available for support should this be needed.

### **Traffic and congestion issues**

The concerns expressed about traffic congestion, parking and road safety in the area are fully recognised and are the consistent major theme arising from the expansion consultations. To minimise the impact of the additional pupils attending the schools proposed for expansion, a cross-council approach is being implemented. This approach brings officers together from Children and Families, Enterprise and Environment and Communications to co-ordinate work.

Additional resource has been committed to ensure an appropriate profile to all the school expansion projects in particular.

- Transport Assessments are being undertaken at each of the schools proposed for expansion. The assessments provide an independent view of the proposals by reviewing baseline information about current traffic volumes and current issues and make recommendations about any impact as well as setting out any actions required. The assessments take account of the consultation responses already received.
- A Transport and Travel Planner Officer for the expansion projects has been working with schools to develop and implement effective travel strategies in conjunction with the schools. This is a key role in influencing and engaging with all stakeholders to change attitudes to travel through the review and the development of School Travel Plans in order to minimise the use of private car travel to the school, particularly by parents. This role also liaises with the Highways, Traffic Management and Enforcement teams to ensure that any necessary engineering work and enforcement action, including Safer Neighbourhood Teams, is provided in line with the travel plans developed. This officer is also involved in the pre-planning engagement activities and input into the planning applications.
- The Transport Assessment and School Travel Plans are submitted as part of the planning applications.
- There is a communication strategy for the expansion projects which includes raising the profile of school travel planning. An additional Communications Officer has been appointed to give communication and engagement work a high profile.
- Parking enforcement officers visit the areas of all schools in Harrow and issue tickets when applicable. Two automatic number plate recognition CCTV cars have been introduced to reinforce enforcement work. They are dedicated to schools exclusively.

The rebuild of the Weald schools, whether or not expansion is approved, will require a building programme, for which planning permission will be needed. A decision on this will be a matter for the Planning Committee which will consider highways and traffic concerns and the impact of the development on the local area. Residents and parents who believe they are impacted by this decision are entitled to make representations to the planning committee during the statutory planning consent timescales.

## **Representations about the statutory proposals**

Three representations in relation to the statutory proposals were received by Harrow Council by the closing date of the representation period on 1 December 2014. The representations are attached in Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report.

### **Governing Body of Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School**

The Federated Governing Body of Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School at its meeting held on 26 November 2014 reiterated its support for the two proposals: that Weald Infant and Nursery School and Weald Junior School are joined together to form one combined school on 1 April 2015 and the combined school is expanded to four forms of entry (120 places) with effect from 1 September 2016. The Governing Body wishes to achieve a lasting solution to the problems associated with the access of traffic, parking, safety and the travel behaviour of Weald Schools' parents and carers. The Governing Body strongly believes there is a real urgency to address these issues now with the school working with officers from the Council's Highways Department, parents, carers and the local community. The Governing Body request a meeting with officers from the Council's Highways Department to take these issues forward as soon as possible.

### **Representations by email**

Three representations were received by email to the [SchoolReorganisation@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolReorganisation@harrow.gov.uk) email address. The representations are from local residents who object to the proposed

expansion and highlight the traffic congestion issues in the area of the schools. The issues highlighted include: parents drive and park recklessly with no thought at all for local residents; the schools are in a residential cul-de-sac of sorts and should not be expanded; the grass verges are damaged on a regular basis by cars driving on them; litter is dropped daily by school children and their parents; The Avenue becomes grid-locked with vehicles twice a day; no evidence that the current school travel plan addresses the problem; no evidence that there is a plan to mitigate the construction traffic access problems; regular congestion and the road being completely blocked; drives being parked over; beeping horns due to drivers getting frustrated; parents parking in drives.

#### **Officer comment about the representation by email and letter**

The representations clearly set out a range of existing traffic issues in the area of the Weald schools and resident concerns that these issues will be exacerbated by the proposed expansion.

The traffic congestion issues are recognised and are being addressed within the school expansion programme processes as far as possible. The approach includes:

- Schools are being expanded across Harrow to provide the additional school places close to where the children live. This approach reduces the need for cars to be used to take children to and from school and reduces car use across the borough. The scale of the school expansion programme is huge, with over half of Harrow's primary schools with Reception intake expanded by September 2015 and more will be expanded in Phase 3 of the programme.
- Transport Assessments are undertaken at all schools approved for expansion as part of the Planning process. These Transport Assessments are done by independent specialist contractors and include surveys and observations of traffic behaviour in the area around the schools. The outcomes and recommendations from the Transport Assessments are considered so plans can be put in place to address them. The planning applications include the Transport Assessments and will be consulted upon fully in a separate process that includes opportunities to comment.
- Updated School Travel Plans are submitted as part of the planning application. These travel plans can include a number of techniques for reducing car use and altering parent behaviour. School Travel Plans are a powerful way to influence parental behaviour and have been proven to encourage walking to school and actually reduce car use. They are accredited by the Mayor of London, and other expansion schools in Harrow have achieved Gold accreditation, which signifies a decrease in car use of 6% or 90% of pupils travelling sustainably.
- For both the Transport Assessment and School Travel Plan work it should be born in mind that schools expand by admitting an additional Reception intake each year so that the school fills incrementally over a 7 year period. This gives time to work at addressing issues on a planned basis before the schools are fully expanded.
- Parking enforcement activity occurs at all schools. Schools that are increasing pupil numbers are targeted for additional enforcement visits.
- The Weald schools will be rebuilt by the Education Funding Agency, either as separate or combined schools and/or expanded depending on Cabinet's decisions. A planning application will be prepared and submitted for the rebuild. Distribution of consultation information on the expansion proposal has deliberately included local residents to bring the proposal to early attention because of traffic congestion issues around schools at drop-off and collection times. When design proposals have been developed there will be public engagement activity to help inform the final design proposal. This includes a drop-in event to see work in progress on issues including traffic and design and contribute



thoughts and suggestions. Architects, Education Funding Agency officials and school representatives will be available at the event, including traffic and travel planning officers.

- The design proposals will need to address the access by construction traffic and the planning for this will be part of the public engagement activity to help inform the final design proposal.