

Consultation on the proposed expansion of Roecroft Community Lower School, Stotfold

to provide new lower school places
for children in Stotfold

**Monday 8 September 2014 –
Monday 6 October 2014**

1. Introduction

Councils have a duty to ensure there are enough suitable school places for children aged 5-16 (as per Section 14 of the Education Act 1996). The Council's role is to promote parental choice, diversity, high standards and fair access to education (Education and Inspections Act 2006).

This document explains the reasons for proposing to expand Roecroft Community Lower School, Stotfold and how you can have your say.

2. Background

In April 2009 Central Bedfordshire Council inherited the legal obligation to carry out the former County Council's proposed relocation of Roecroft Community Lower School and to enlarge it by one full form of entry from a school of 150 places. The enlarged school was to provide a total of 300 lower school places (2 forms of entry) on its new site on Buttercup Road, Stotfold by September 2010. The relocation and enlargement was needed to accommodate the increasing number of children as a result of the major housing development on land south of Stotfold.

In November 2009 the Council's Executive approved the capital funding for the project but with an amended opening date of September 2011. The design for the new school was also approved which included flexibility for potential further expansion. It was agreed that the new school site would accommodate Pippin Pre School within the main school building, but as a separate and independent provision.

Pupil numbers in the enlarged school have grown since it was completed and it has accommodated total numbers on roll of approximately 158 in 2011, 194 in 2012, 242 in 2013 and 269 in 2014. This has resulted in limited spare capacity as each year group moves through the school.

The rate of continued housing development, the local impact of the increased birth rate (which is evident also at national level) and the inability of neighbouring authorities to accommodate the preference of some Stotfold parents applying for a school place outside of the area have all contributed to the additional pressure on local school places.

The School Admissions allocation process for the national offer day of 16 April 2014 illustrated the impact for catchment applicants who were unsuccessful in achieving their preference of a Stotfold school place with next nearest allocations potentially taking children beyond their local community.

As a result the Council commissioned a third reception class for September 2014, utilising spare capacity within the school.

3. Our proposal

In order to accommodate forecasts of sustained pupil numbers in the immediate area the Council is proposing to provide additional lower school places required in Stotfold by permanently expanding Roecroft Community Lower School.

The current school has a capacity for 300 and this proposal will provide local places for very local children promoting sustainable modes of travel and will create a lower school of the maximum size of 450 places. It will mean the expansion of a popular and Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' school.

A designer has been appointed by the Council, in liaison with the school to ensure that capital investment in the proposed expansion of the school can deliver the inspirational learning environment provided in the school's original design. This proposal has been developed in consultation with the school's governing body who are supportive of this proposal.

The new accommodation for the school is scheduled to be available from September 2015

4. Why is Central Bedfordshire Council consulting with you?

This proposal constitutes a significant expansion of Roecroft Community Lower School, Stotfold which requires both consultation and the publication of Statutory Proposals, in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Consultation enables all interested parties to express their views on the proposal and thereby influence the decisions and actions to be taken by the Council regarding the additional provision of school places.

Starting on page four of this document you will find a list of 'Frequently Asked Questions' which may help to address some immediate concerns that you may have.

5. The consultation process

You can **have your say via the online form** which is available on the Council's website at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations or you can complete pages six and seven of this document and return them to the FREEPOST address provided at the end of the form.

Completed forms should be returned by **5.00 pm Monday 6 October 2014**.

A meeting will be held with the staff, union representatives and governors of Roecroft Community Lower School.

There will also be a **public meeting** which will be open to all interested parties. This meeting will be held at **Roecroft Community Lower School, Stotfold on Tuesday 16 September 2014 at 7.00pm**.

The timeline for the process will be –

Action	Timescale/Deadline
Four week consultation period begins	Monday 8 September 2014
Staff and Governors meeting	Tuesday 16 September at 4.00pm
Public meeting	Tuesday 16 September at 7.00pm
End of consultation period	Monday 6 October 2014
If decision is made to proceed with the proposal, Statutory Notices will be published on	Monday 13 October 2014
Four week period for the submission of comments and/or objections in response to the Statutory Notices	From 13 October until Monday 17 November 2014
End of Statutory Notice period	Monday 17 November 2014
Final decision regarding the proposal to be made by the Council's Executive Committee on	Tuesday 9 December 2014

If a decision is made to permanently expand Roecroft Community Lower School, formal implementation of the expansion will commence in September 2015, for the 2015/16 academic year.

6. Frequently asked questions

Q – Why did the Council not address the growth in pupil numbers in Stotfold and plan for this expansion sooner?

A - Pupil forecasting undertaken in March 2014, using data from the January 2014 school census along with area health authority and housing trajectory data, was compared to school capacities in the area and enhanced with information on admissions applications made in the Starting School round for September 2014 which closed in January 2014. This indicated the further need to provide additional Year R places for September 2014 ahead of those that would be added to local capacity through the expansion of St Mary's Academy already planned for September 2015, and Fairfield Park Lower School in Spring 2014 at a increased level of demographic demand that is now forecast to be sustained.

Q – Is the proposed expansion sufficient to cope with future demand for school places in Stotfold?

A- Area health authority data indicates total pre school numbers of children already living within the area who may seek a reception year place in a mainstream school in Stotfold of 112 in 2015, 126 in 2016 and 126 in 2017. In addition, through to 2018 further housing development on existing housing sites, on land with approved planning applications and site allocations, could eventually provide 328 dwellings and associated pupil yield of just below 15 additional pupils per year group.

Roecroft Lower School currently provides 60 places per year group, as will St Marys Academy from September 2015. Based upon the pupil forecast figures, the 30 new places to be provided in each year at Roecroft Lower School is expected to be sufficient to meet the additional demand.

Q – Are there any interim proposals in advance of the new accommodation being ready?

A – The Council commissioned an additional reception class to be admitted at Roecroft Community Lower School in September 2014, utilising a single surplus classroom. A further allocation of these places, by the Council's School Admissions Team, took place on 24 April 2014 which resulted in the provision of a local school place to all catchment children whose applications had been submitted on time.

Q – Does the Council have the funds to build and equip this new accommodation?

A - The Council's New School Places Programme currently represents approximately £108m of capital investment in new and expanded school provision over the next five years. Separate revenue funding is available to ensure that new and expanded provision is appropriately resourced.

Q – When will the new extension open?

A - Subject to obtaining all the necessary consents and planning approvals it is proposed that the additional accommodation will be operational from September 2015.

Q – What will the new extension look like?

A – The Council is working with its appointed designer, with the school and with the Council's Planning Teams to develop a design that will provide the additional classrooms and other accommodation required by a school of the proposed size. A separate consultation will be undertaken as part of the process to secure planning approval for the eventual design.

Q – Will there be sufficient parking spaces available for the increased number of parents and staff?

A – The proposed expansion of the school is to provide places for the local community of Stotfold. A requirement of the planning process for the design and layout of the new school, including any requirements to amend parking arrangements on site will be the production of a revised travel plan for the school. This travel plan is required to articulate how the school will continue to promote sustainable modes of transport for staff and for parents of children attending the school and is a key part of the process of securing planning permission for the eventual design.

Q – What will happen to Pippin Pre-school?

The increased number of children in Reception Year from September 2014, which is forecast to be repeated in September 2015, will eventually feed through the school in Year groups of 90 children who will require accommodation not currently provided by the school buildings. If the demographic forecasts indicated that this would be temporary rather than a sustained demand, the commissioning of temporary accommodation, although not ideal, could be considered.

The Council has considered options on the school site and has determined that the accommodation currently used by Pippin Pre School provides the most appropriate accommodation required by the school to manage the increased numbers of pupils through the school and, if approved following this consultation, is also the preferred location of a permanent expansion of the school building.

The Council has worked with the Pre-school's leadership and with its management committee and has agreed to fund and provide permanent new accommodation in an alternative location on the school site to sustain the pre school's existing capacity. Design work on the new building has been undertaken with the pre school and planning consent is intended to be sought to enable the new accommodation to be constructed in time for handover in March 2015.

The Council is also considering options for commissioning further Early Years provision in the area as a result of the sustained demographic growth in Stotfold.

Q - Will the catchment area and admissions procedure for the expanded school stay the same?

A – Yes, the catchment area and admissions procedure will remain the same.

There may be other questions you wish to raise and we will be happy to respond to these at the public consultation meeting on 16 September

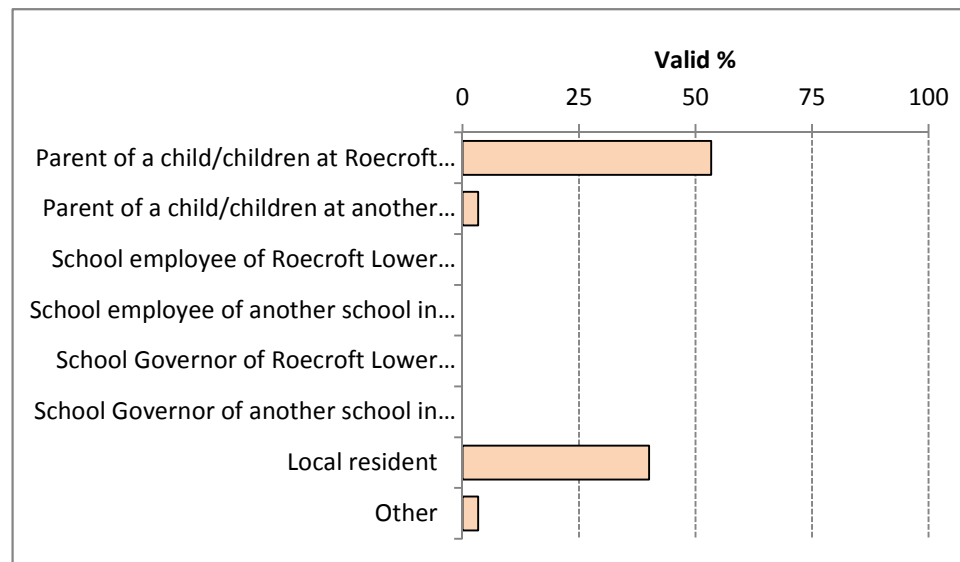
For more information about this proposal please contact Sue Barrow by telephone on 0300 300 5700 or email sue.barrow@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

**Edwina Grant, Interim Director of Children's Services,
Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford
SG17 5TQ**

Consultation regarding proposed expansion to Roecroft Lower School, Stotfold
30 responses

Q1: are you:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Parent of a child/children at Roecroft Lower School	16	53.3	53.3
Parent of a child/children at another school in the area	1	3.3	3.3
School employee of Roecroft Lower School	0	0.0	0.0
School employee of another school in the area	0	0.0	0.0
School Governor of Roecroft Lower School	0	0.0	0.0
School Governor of another school in the area	0	0.0	0.0
Local resident	12	40.0	40.0
Other	1	3.3	3.3
Total	30	100.0	100.0



Q1.a: If other, please specify

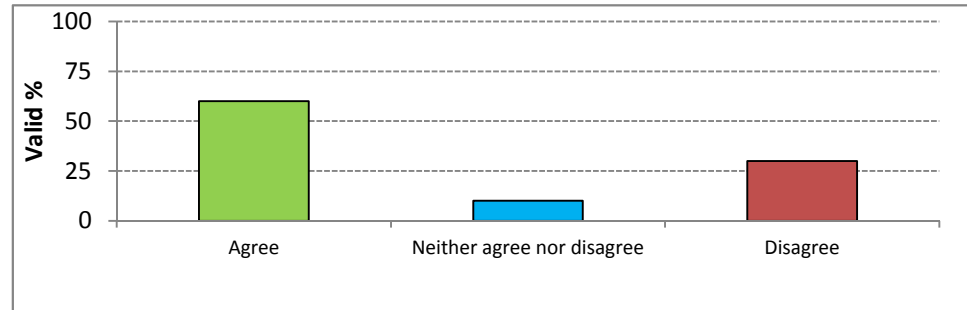
	Frequency
Valid I live near Haynes Lower School	1
Total	1

Q2: If you are the parent of child/children currently at another school, or the employee or governor of another school, please tell us which school.

		Frequency
Valid	Samuel Whitbread	1
Total		1

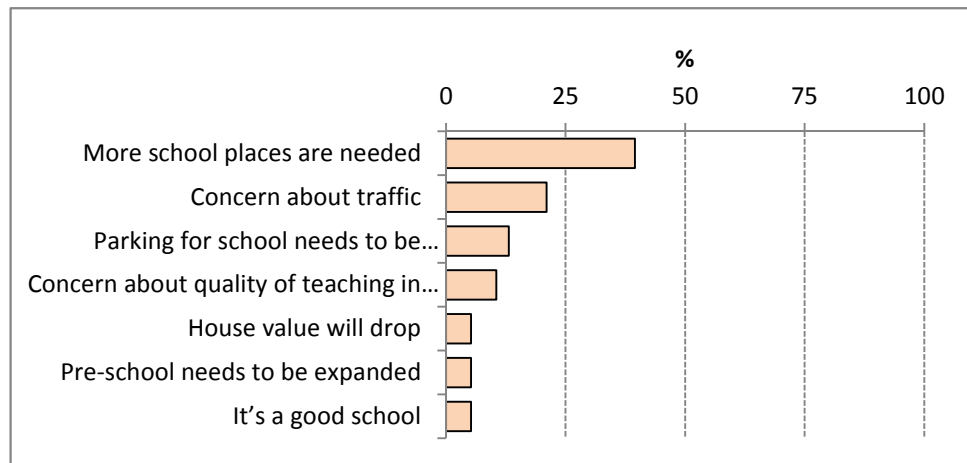
Q3 - Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to expand Roecroft Lower School?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Agree	18	60.0	60.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	3	10.0	10.0
	Disagree	9	30.0	30.0
Total		30	100.0	100.0



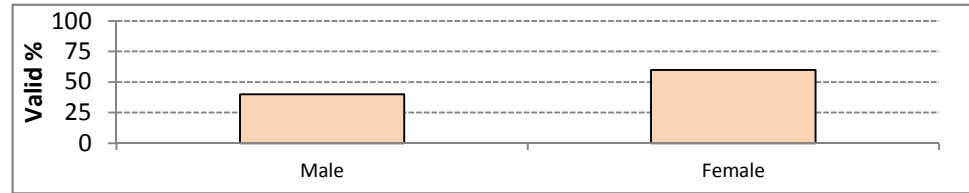
Q4 - Please give us your reasons why you agree or disagree with the proposed expansion of Roecroft Lower School.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	More school places are needed	15	39.5
	Concern about traffic	8	21.1
	Parking for school needs to be addressed	5	13.2
	Concern about quality of teaching in larger school	4	10.5
	House value will drop	2	5.3
	Pre-school needs to be expanded	2	5.3
	It's a good school	2	5.3
Total		38	100.0



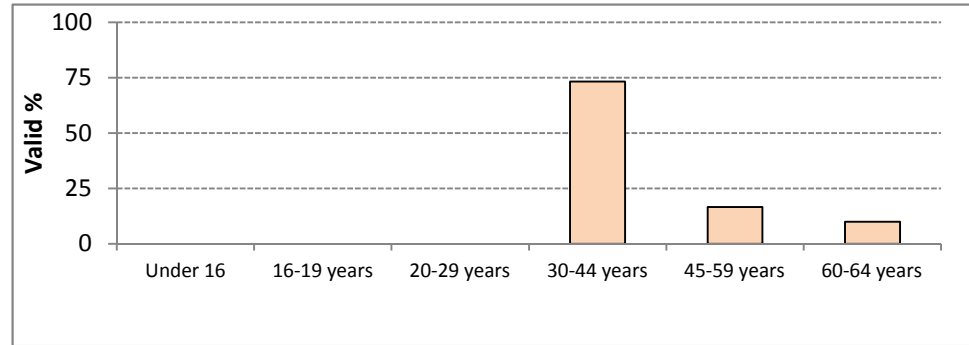
Q5: Are you:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Male	12	40.0	40.0
	Female	18	60.0	60.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0



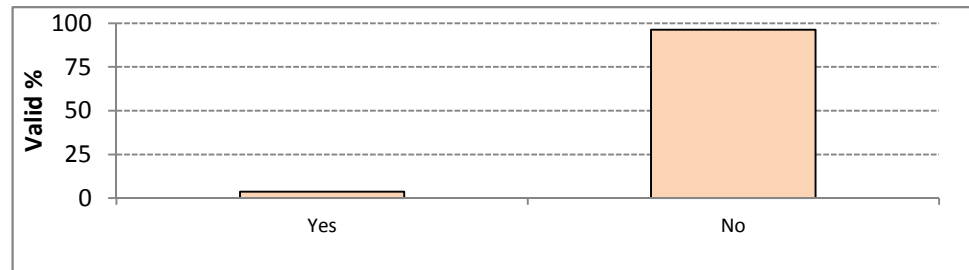
Q6: What is your age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Under 16	0	0.0	0.0
	16-19 years	0	0.0	0.0
	20-29 years	0	0.0	0.0
	30-44 years	22	73.3	73.3
	45-59 years	5	16.7	16.7
	60-64 years	3	10.0	10.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0



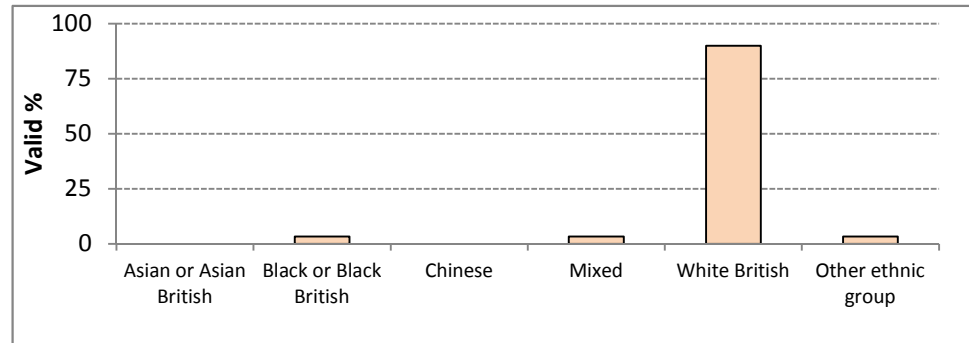
Q7: Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	1	3.3	3.7
	No	26	86.7	96.3
	Total	27	90.0	100.0
Missing		3	10.0	
Total		30	100.0	



Q8: To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Asian or Asian British	0	0.0	0.0
Black or Black British	1	3.3	3.3
Chinese	0	0.0	0.0
Mixed	1	3.3	3.3
White British	27	90.0	90.0
Other ethnic group	1	3.3	3.3
Total	30	100.0	100.0



Q8.a: If other, please specify:

	Frequency
Valid White English	1
Total	1

Proposal to expand Roecroft Community Lower School, Stotfold to provide new lower school places for children in Stotfold, Bedfordshire



Notice is given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Central Bedfordshire Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to Roecroft Community Lower School, Buttercup Road, Stotfold, Bedfordshire SG5 4PF from 1 September 2015.

The intended prescribed alteration is to expand the school from a 300 place lower school for pupils aged 4+ to 9 to a 450 place lower school for pupils aged 4+ to 9.

The current capacity of the school is 300. Following implementation the proposed capacity will be 450. The current number of pupils registered at the school is 300.

The admission number for the current school is 60 for each year group and the proposed admission number will be 90 for each year group.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: The Information Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council, Room DC2, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1LF. It can also be viewed on the Council's website at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices and on the school's website at <http://www.roecroftlower.co.uk/>

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may support, object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to the Director of Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford, Beds, SG17 5TQ.

Signed: Sue Harrison

Director of Children's Services

Publication Date: 13 October 2014

Explanatory notes:

New lower school places are required in Stotfold as a result of significant continued housing development within the town, the local impact of the increased birth rate which is evident also at national level and the inability of neighbouring authorities to accommodate the preference of some Stotfold parents who have previously applied for school places outside of the area.

**PROPOSAL FOR PRESCRIBED
ALTERATION**

Roecroft Community Lower School, Stotfold

Dated - Monday 13 October 2014



**Central
Bedfordshire**

1 - Name of Proposer

(Local Education Authority or Governing Body)

Central Bedfordshire Council

2 - School Name

Roecroft Community Lower School

3 - School Address

Buttercup Road,
Stotfold,
Bedfordshire
SG5 4PF

4 - Description of proposed prescribed alteration

To expand Roecroft Community Lower School from its current capacity of 300 places to 450 places, with a published admission number of 90.

5 – Evidence of demand

In November 2009 the Executive of Central Bedfordshire Council approved the capital funding to relocate and enlarge Roecroft Community Lower School, Stotfold with an original implementation date of September 2011. The enlarged school was required as a result of demographic growth arising out of the major housing development on land south of Stotfold.

The final design for the new school included flexibility for potential further expansion and also provided accommodation for Pippin Pre School within the main school building, but as a separate and independent provision.

Pupil numbers in the new, enlarged school have grown since it was completed and it has accommodated total numbers on roll of 158 in 2011, 194 in 2012, 242 in 2013 and 269 in January 2014. Limited spare capacity now remains within the school as its year groups of 60 feed through the school.

The rate of continued housing development, the local impact of the increased

birth rate (which is evident also at national level) and the inability of neighbouring authorities to accommodate the preference of some Stotfold parents applying for a school place outside of the area are all contributing to the additional pressure on local school places.

Pupil forecasting undertaken in March 2014, using the January 2014 school census plus area health authority and housing trajectory data, was compared to school capacities in the area and enhanced with information on admissions applications made in the Starting School round for September 2014 (which closed in January 2014). This indicated the further need to provide additional Reception Year places for September 2014 ahead of those that would be added to local capacity through the planned expansion of St Marys VC Lower (Academy) in 2015, at a level that would be sustained.

The resulting admissions allocation process for the national offer day of 16 April 2014 illustrated the impact for catchment applicants who were unsuccessful in achieving their preference of a Stotfold school place with next nearest allocations displacing children beyond their local community

As a result, and with the School's consent, the Council commissioned an additional reception class to be admitted at Roecroft Community Lower School in September 2014, utilising a single surplus classroom. A further allocation of these additional places took place on 24 April 2014 providing a local place to all on-time catchment applicants.

Area health authority data indicates total pre school numbers of children already living within the area who may seek a reception year place in a mainstream school in Stotfold of 112 in 2015, 126 in 2016 and 126 in 2017. In addition, through to 2018 further housing development on existing housing site could eventually provide 328 dwellings and an associated pupil yield of just below 15 additional pupils per year group.

In order to address this pressure on school places it is proposed to expand Roecroft Community Lower School, which is an Ofsted 'Outstanding' school, from its current capacity of 300 places to 450 places, with a published admission number of 90.

A consultation was carried out regarding the proposal from 8 September to 6 October 2014. The consultation document is attached at appendix A

Copies of the consultation document were provided to –

- The Governing Body of Roecroft Community Lower School
- The staff of Roecroft Community Lower School
- The parents and carers of Roecroft Community Lower School

And copies of the consultation document were made available to –

- The Member of Parliament for Stotfold
- Stotfold Town Council
- Neighbouring local authorities to Central Bedfordshire Council
- Local dioceses
- The Members of Central Bedfordshire Council
- All schools and academies within Central Bedfordshire

A press release was issued advising of the consultation. The consultation document was also available on the Central Bedfordshire Council website with an on-line response facility.

Two meetings were held at Roecroft Community Lower School on 16 September 2014; the first at 4.00 pm for school staff and governors, followed by the second meeting at 7.00 for parents, carers and the general public. The presentation that was given at both meetings is attached at appendix B. Notes of both meetings which include the concerns and questions that were raised, are attached at appendix C.

During the 4 week consultation, 30 responses were received, 60% of which were in favour of the proposal. The results of the consultation are available at appendix D.

6 – Objectives

Roecroft Community Lower School is an Ofsted 'Outstanding' school. The current school has a capacity for 300 and is now coming under increasing pressure for places.

The Council has invited the school to submit a business case to outline how the expansion will meet Central Bedfordshire Council's Policy Principles on Pupil Place Planning in Schools. The business case will be considered by the Council's Executive in December 2014.

7 – The effect of the proposed alteration on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area

There are two lower schools within Stotfold: Roecroft Community Lower and St Mary's VC Lower (Academy).

In December 2013, the Council's Executive approved the expansion of St Marys VC Lower (Academy) to provide a total of 300 lower school places by September 2015.

Pippin pre school currently occupies accommodation within the school building. The need to permanently enlarge Roecroft Community Lower School has indicated the need to relocate Pippin pre school by re-providing its accommodation in an alternative location on the school site. Design work is now underway on this proposal in liaison with the pre school and planning consent has been sought to enable the new accommodation to be constructed in time for handover to the pre school in February 2015.

8 – Project costs

The proposed expansion of Roecroft Community Lower School is contained within Central Bedfordshire Council's New School Places Programme 2014/2019. The capital cost of the project is to be funded through the Council's New School Places programme, which is funded by a range of capital resources. Separate revenue funding is available to ensure that the expanded provision is appropriately resourced.

The capital cost for the new provision for Pippin pre school will also be funded through the Council's New School Places Programme

9 – Implementation

It is proposed that the expansion of Roecroft Community Lower School will be ready for occupation for the start of the new Autumn term in September 2015

10 – Procedure for responses; support, objections and comments

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal (i.e. by Monday 17 November 2014), any person may support, object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to the Director Of Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford, Beds, SG17 5TQ