

11th February 2020

Dear Councillor Lindsay-Gale

The Future of Radley Primary School

Over 500 new homes are scheduled to be built in Radley parish over the next few years. For that reason, the local community warmly welcomes OCC's decision to expand Radley Primary School from half-form to one form entry. A primary school big enough to cater for all our children will be at the heart of a flourishing community in years to come.

The whole village is very much engaged with this project. The parish council and the largest local employer, Radley College, are together expecting to fund the expansion of the school hall which, we are advised, is beyond OCC's budget. This is essential if the whole school is to continue to be able to gather together in one place at one time. The parish council and College are also working with the school on the redesign of the nearby public carpark so as to improve the safety of children at drop off and pick up times, and on the best location for a new pedestrian crossing to be funded by the developers.

We are writing now to seek your support over the decision which is about to be taken on the design and layout of the new buildings. The option greatly preferred by the school staff and governors involves an extension of the existing buildings (option 2). The option proposed at a recent OCC/ school liaison meeting involves the creation of new classrooms in a separate block (option 1). We are told that the latter is now favoured because it is cheaper.

The reasons for preferring option 2 are fully set out in a separate letter from the primary school's chair of governors. In essence, they are that the sense of community, so important to the ethos of the school, will become fragmented with two separate buildings; that having the school operating in two separate buildings will create a range of safeguarding problems (eg the receptionist will not be able to oversee access to both buildings); and the carbon footprint and running costs will be higher. Option 1 also limits the scope for a successful extension of the school hall, an aspect of the project to which we are very committed locally, and which we expect to fund.

We understand that our preferred option is likely to be more disruptive to the school through the building process but are assured by the headteacher that this can be managed successfully.

OCC is eligible to receive £1.9m from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) due from the Radley developments. We appreciate that, unlike the former s. 106 payments, this money will not flow directly to projects which address the local impact of development, such as the need to expand the school. However, we would argue strongly that it is only fair and reasonable that some of this money is deployed by OCC to ensure Radley does not have to live with what we consider to be a flawed design solution for our expanded school.

We would therefore be very grateful for your support for a school expansion plan based on design option 2, incorporating the new classrooms in the existing building rather than a separate block.


Many thanks



Lynda Crowley
Chairman, Radley Parish Council



Dan Pullen
Chair of Governors, Radley Primary School



Andrew Ashton
Bursar, Radley College