

## Appendix A Responses to the statutory consultation

### Responses to the formal (statutory) consultation 13/02/2020 to 13/03/2020

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
Barkham Parish Council	I write on behalf of Barkham Parish Council on the Farley Hill School Proposal.	Supportive comment, but wishes to see the roll of the Coombes school protected.
Clerk	The council is supportive of the proposals, their only concern is the roll number at the coombes being affected.	
Governor (school not stated, but understood to be Finchampstead CoE VA)	<p>I should like to defer the opening of the New Arborfield School because:-</p> <p>Most existing schools in the area are not at full capacity and the new school would impact on those children already being taught at these schools from Arborfield.</p> <p>One local school has shut a classroom because of a lack of children.</p> <p>So far the new houses have mostly been bought by local families or families with elder or no children. (Are there statistics of the number of children at present who could fill such a large school now?)</p> <p>Farley Hill have many children who now walk to school.</p>	<p>Would like to see the deferral of the opening of the new school.</p> <p>See commentary on frequently raised issues point A below.</p> <p>The council has surveyed residents of new homes, and this shows that there are a significant number of children of primary school or in their early year (0 to 4) living in them. The surveys show that the child yield of these homes exceeds that of established communities.</p> <p>Only a small number of children attending Farley Hill Primary school live in Farley Hill Village. Other children are driven in, because there</p>

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	<p>By deferring the opening of the new Arborfield School until the new houses are built, the birth rate has risen, the research shows that there are higher number of children requiring a large school and all existing Wokingham schools are at capacity.</p>	<p>are no safe walking routes to the school from other communities. While no surveys have been completed, the number of cars in the Village at the beginning and end of the school day supports this view.</p> <p>The new community will be built out over a number of years (possibly a decade) and opening a new school at that point would require children to travel (in most cases by car) to schools outside their home community.</p>
<p>Clerk Finchampstead Parish Council</p>	<p>Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the proposals for the new Arborfield Green Primary School. Comments from Finchampstead Parish Council are as follows.</p> <p>We note that the background information provided in Appendix A does not fully consider Finchampstead. It is imperative that the existing Finchampstead Schools and their catchment areas are recognised, specifically the following points.</p> <p>A. Meeting the needs of the new Arborfield Green Community This section should include the 3 Finchampstead Primary Schools – the Gorse Ride Infant and Junior Schools; Nine Mile Ride Primary School and Finchampstead Primary School – and relevant statistics as for the other schools. Figure 2 is factually incorrect. The figures for Arborfield, Barkham and Finchampstead are incorrect. The Arborfield SDL includes very few dwellings in Arborfield Parish – most of the 2000 dwellings at Arborfield Green are in Barkham</p>	<p>See commentary point (B) below.</p> <p>The background information document clearly establishes that the housing figures relate to the</p>

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	<p>Parish, and significantly for us a number in Finchampstead – of which around 150 are already occupied. The Finchwood Park development is underway and we understand at least 4 dwellings here are now occupied.</p> <p>B. Supporting local schools At present 30 children from the Arborfield Green development attend the Gorse Ride Schools in Finchampstead. This section needs correcting to reflect this. We do not have any information on whether any children from Arborfield Green attend the other two Finchampstead Schools but you will be able to check this.</p> <p>In terms of the options for the future management of the school, we support in principle the expansion of Farley Hill Primary School on to the site, effectively meaning the relocation of the existing school to the new site.</p> <p>However, we are very concerned that existing schools – including the 3 Finchampstead Schools not currently mentioned in the report - are not adversely affected by the provision of the new school and that measures are put in place to protect the viability of these schools. It is imperative that the capacity of the new school is equivalent to that of Farley Hill Primary School and that its catchment area reflects this. Any additional capacity should be retained to serve new residents of the Arborfield Green development, not to take children who would otherwise have gone to existing schools – including the Finchampstead Schools. We fully support the intention that children attending the new school</p>	<p>Barkham, Arborfield and Arborfield Green communities. This may be a reference to an older document, used in the preceding informal consultation exercise.</p> <p>As noted in point B below the fact that some garrison children attend Finchampstead schools is noted in the background document.</p> <p>The proposal is that the school expands in line with the development of the new community and not take children from other areas, who would otherwise have attended Finchampstead Schools. It should be noted though there is no provision in School Admissions Law that would prevent other children being admitted if there was surplus capacity.</p>

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	<p>should be able to walk to school, which again relates to the catchment area for the school.</p> <p>Finally, we are aware that a new primary school is planned for Finchwood Park, the southern part of the Arborfield SDL which lies within Finchampstead. As noted above this development is underway with some properties occupied. The timing of the construction of the new Finchwood Park school should be taken in to account when considering proposals for the Arborfield Green School. If pending delivery of the Finchwood Park School a significant number of children from the Finchwood Park development attend the new Arborfield Green school, the new Finchwood Park school could have significant spare capacity which would adversely impact the existing Finchampstead Schools. We appreciate that this may be some years off, but feel it is still relevant here.</p>	<p>The programme for the development of the Finchwood Park School has not been agreed. It is likely this will not be required until towards the end of the current decade, though.</p>
<p>Executive Headteacher/CEO, The Keys Academy Trust</p>	<p><b>TKAT Response to Arborfield Primary School 14012020</b></p> <p>The later documents submitted by the Keys Trust are appended as Appendix B and C.</p> <p>The summary, provided in the accompanying email was:</p> <p><b>Our response is as follows:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is capacity within the existing schools</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) This is true – but this is a relocation proposal, with expansion only following on when it can be justified.</li> </ol>

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	<p>2. The impact on neighbouring vulnerable schools such as The Coombes, Finchampstead CE Primary and Gorse Ride Infant and Junior Schools and St Sebastian's CE Primary School is understated in the proposal</p> <p>3. The reliability of the forecast numbers given earlier expansion in schools across WBC</p> <p><b>Capacity within existing schools</b></p> <p>The proposal states that the expansion from 210 to 420 will be phased from September 2024. However, we consider there is a threat that parental demand for additional places within an established and oversubscribed school rated good by OFSTED will lobby for early opening of additional classes prior to September 2024. This will have a detrimental impact to neighbouring schools as there is already capacity within them to meet the predicted numbers.</p> <p><b>Neighbouring Vulnerable Schools</b></p> <p>The proposal in Appendix A page 7 states that only small proportions of Finchampstead CE Primary and Gorse Ride Schools live in Arborfield and does not acknowledge Arborfield residents attending other schools. From discussions, we understand that the</p>	<p>2) The initial relocation will have no impact on these schools.</p> <p>3) Available evidence is that new developments do lead to significant increases in demand for school places. The current roll projection and needs assessment does take account of reduced numbers of live births.</p> <p>This is true – but the council will still need to way up the undoubted advantages to the new community of having sufficient local capacity (something that has been planned for for over a decade) with the impact on existing schools.</p> <p>Most of these issues are covered by points A and B below.</p>

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	<p>impact in the proposal document is understated due to the small size of these schools. Therefore, the financial impact on these schools will cause significant disruption to the quality of education provided.</p> <p>The capacity in neighbouring schools is:</p> <table><tr><th>School</th><th>School Capacity</th><th>NOR October 2019</th><th>Surplus capacity</th></tr><tr><td>The Coombes Primary School</td><td>525</td><td>418</td><td>107</td></tr><tr><td>St Sebastian's Primary School</td><td>182</td><td>141</td><td>41</td></tr><tr><td>Gorse Ride Infant School</td><td>180</td><td>142</td><td>38</td></tr><tr><td>Lambs Lane Primary School</td><td>210</td><td>200</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Finchampstead CE Primary School</td><td>119</td><td>111</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td><b>TOTAL</b></td><td></td><td></td><td><b>204</b></td></tr></table> <p><b>Reliability of the forecast numbers</b></p> <p>Whilst we appreciate the challenge of producing reliable predictions of the demand for spaces in schools, consideration should be given to the impact of over expansion in an area where there are a significant number of surplus places within existing schools. There</p>	School	School Capacity	NOR October 2019	Surplus capacity	The Coombes Primary School	525	418	107	St Sebastian's Primary School	182	141	41	Gorse Ride Infant School	180	142	38	Lambs Lane Primary School	210	200	10	Finchampstead CE Primary School	119	111	8	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>204</b>	<p>This analysis extends the range of schools to be considered to include Lambs Lane and St Sebastians. Neither of these schools is within walking distance of the Arborfield Green community. Out of 40 children allocated these schools, only 1 child lives in an area associated with Arborfield Green. Taking these schools into account would be to discount parental preference and increase the reliance on the home to school transport service (with a consequent increase in spend).</p> <p>Firstly, three of these five schools were expanded by the council, in response to rising need for school places. The view was taken at the</p>
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	<p>are an increasing number of Headteachers struggling to manage balanced budgets due to falling pupil numbers across Wokingham. By way of example, allocations for school places in September 2019 demonstrate over expansion in existing schools and the impact to neighbouring schools.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>School</th><th>Planned Admission Number</th><th>Places Allocated</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Loddon Primary</td><td>90</td><td>55</td></tr> <tr> <td>Hawkedon Primary</td><td>90</td><td>75</td></tr> <tr> <td>Beechwood Primary</td><td>60</td><td>34</td></tr> <tr> <td>Highwood Primary</td><td>60</td><td>31</td></tr> <tr> <td>Radstock Primary</td><td>60</td><td>40</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>For these four schools where additional places were created, the places allocated present extreme challenge financially due to infant class size prejudice legislation i.e. not to exceed class sizes of 30 pupils.</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Whilst we recognise the need for additional places in the area and the rationale for the expansion of Farley Hill Primary School on the Arborfield Green site, we strongly believe that it will be to the detriment of existing pupils and their families within Wokingham. We believe it is the Council's responsibility to review the timeframes and support the existing schools within Wokingham, their staff and communities.</p>	School	Planned Admission Number	Places Allocated	Loddon Primary	90	55	Hawkedon Primary	90	75	Beechwood Primary	60	34	Highwood Primary	60	31	Radstock Primary	60	40	<p>time that the best approach to meeting these needs was by permanent expansion, rather than a series of bulge classes in temporary accommodation. This reflected high birth numbers locally and nationally. Birth numbers have since fallen and current projections take account of this. More importantly, the new capacity is planned to meet the long term needs of the new Arborfield Garrison SDL (Arborfield Green) community. There is good evidence that new homes do generate large numbers of children, who need local, accessible school places.</p> <p>Secondly, the consequences of taking surplus capacity across the borough into account (the five schools listed are all in Earley and Woodley, with closest school being at least a 4 miles drive from the edge of the Arborfield Green area), would undoubtedly be that large numbers of children would need to be bussed across the borough from new communities. These issues are explored in Points B and C below.</p>
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Head teacher The Coombes CoE Primary Academy	Please read this response to the proposed new school in Arborfield. The damage it could cause to The Coombes is catastrophic.  (This accompanied a further copy of the Keys Academy Trust response).	See point D) below: analysis of the Keys Trust response.
<b>The Keys Academy Trust</b>  <b>Chief Finance Officer</b>	<b>The two appended documents are attached as Appendices B &amp; C.</b>  <b>Appendix B:</b> TKAT response to Arborfield Primary School March 2020  <b>Appendix C:</b> TKAT response to Arborfield Primary School March 2020 Appendix A	See point D) below: analysis of the Keys Trust response
Martin Gater  Head Teacher  Saint Sebastian's Church of England Primary School and Nursery	<b>Response attached as Appendix D</b>  <b>Key points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible future need acknowledged</li> <li>• School has a number of children living in the Arborfield area.</li> <li>• The school is very vulnerable to any fall in rolls – it currently has 41 unfilled places (out of a total capacity of 181).</li> <li>• Given that the classes with the smallest classes are in Key Stage 1 the overall roll is expected to fall to 120 in 5 years time.</li> <li>• Given this funding is also expected to decline, making the current staffing structure unsustainable.</li> </ul>	It is undoubtedly true that a number of schools are experiencing very low rolls. It would though be problematic (see points A, B and C below) to rely on these schools (and particularly so if they are further than walking distance to provide the places for new SDL communities.
Parent Arborfield Green	I am writing to you regarding the proposed expansion of Farley Hill Primary School into Arborfield Green. I am a parent of a child at Farley Hill, and a resident in Arborfield Green.	By law the admissions arrangements for 2020 and 2021 have already been made and cannot be altered.



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	<p>We fully support the expansion onto the new Arborfield Green site, and look forward to being able to walk our daughter to school.</p> <p>We do however, have one concern regarding the catchment area: although we live inside the current catchment, there are many residents on the Green (who were promised a new Primary School when they bought) who are currently outside the Farley Hill catchment. We have friends who live closer than us to the new Primary School building, and want to send their children to the school (Reception in September 2020), who are currently outside the catchment area and might therefore miss out on a space for September 2020 and also be unable to transfer to the new school in September 2021, as the class may be full.</p> <p>I would therefore like to suggest/request that, as part of the expansion process, the catchment for Farley Hill should be amended for the current admission process for September 2020, to include the Waterman's view and Barkham Place developments. Those who will be closest to the school when it moves to the new site in 2021 should be included in this year's catchment and admissions process.</p>	<p>Adjustments to the catchment area can be considered for 2022 onwards.</p>
Parent	<p>I have some feedback / questions on the consultation literature which I would like to be considered:</p> <p>1) What guarantees will (or even can be) be put in place to prevent Farley Hill joining a Multi Academy Trust and that MAT increasing the Published Admission Number as they will have the space to take on a higher intake (and will inevitably want to maximise their income and use of space). This would be at the detriment to other local schools</p>	<p>1) While there can be no guarantee the council has to agree advance funding for any expansion, including for classroom furniture and teachers. Expanding without</p>

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	<p>which already have spare capacity, potentially making them non financially viable.</p> <p>2) Will the Council be funding Farley Hill for the spare capacity until the school is full? For example, if when they begin to take on additional children they do not have the numbers to more than half fill a class – how will that be funded (as the income will not cover staffing costs)?</p> <p>3) The consultation documentation is unclear regarding the current site of Farley Hill – it states that the premises will be retained for potential future use but has also stated that the classrooms are not the right size. It is a fairly biased consultation document in terms of the listed weaknesses and benefits of each option and does not mention the additional cost (and who will be footing the bill) for keeping an empty building insured and habitable for years (presumably the only reason it is being ‘retained’ is to allow this to be funded and considered as an expansion rather than what the Council are actually doing – which is just moving Farley Hill? Will Farley Hill really be paying for an oversized building and an empty building for a number of years? Is this the most cost effective option for the Council and the taxpayer?</p>	<p>this provision would be a significant challenge for the school.</p> <p>2) The council is not yet expanding Farley Hill School, and when this is agreed, will do this in line with the requirements of the schools finance arrangements that apply at the time. Currently, the council offers funding for the first 7 months only for new Reception classes, as after this point formulaic funding is expected to be sufficient to meet the costs of running the new class.</p> <p>3) While the current building would need to be kept secure it would not be kept in an immediately usable state (for example, heating systems could be drained down and valuable materials removed from site) or an alternative use for the premises may be found. While simply moving Farley Hill would not have required a formal process, the council would have been open to criticism that this always a</p>

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		precursor to school expansion, and as Farley Hill was in the new premises with expansion potential, this was in fact a fait accompli. While the new building is larger, it is also new and more energy efficient. We do not expect running costs to be significantly (if at all) higher than for the current premises.
The Circle Trust	<p>I am writing in <u>strong support</u> for the published proposal for the phased expansion of Farley Hill Primary School on a new site in Arborfield Green from September 2021.</p> <p>As a local MAT, The Circle Trust is committed to serve the community of Wokingham. As Executive Headteacher I can appreciate the clear advantage and logic in the move of Farley Hill Primary School moving to new premises and serving the Arborfield Green community much of which it already serves.</p> <p>Farley Hill School is a well led, successful and well established local school and this move secures a better physical space for members of the school community as well as expanding to meet growth needs.</p>	The support of a local Trust is noted.
Parent	I live in Finchampstead and have one child currently in year 2 at Gorse Ride Infant school, and another due to start in 2021. My concern is the effect that a new school will have on Gorse Ride which is already undersubscribed and is due to move out of the area with the redevelopment of the Gorse Ride estate. The school is so poorly funded already and if places are not filled this is	See points A and B below.

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	negatively affected even more. I would like to know what consideration for existing schools has been given when making the decision to create new school places, as currently some people come from Arborfield to Gorse Ride.	
Parent	<p>I have read the plans to move the school and I would understand how the below statement can be possible given the school will still only offer the same number of places for the next 3/4 years and the new development is likely to have increased the number of pupils in the area. Surely it is also likely that parents who live in Arborfield would not consider Farley Hill previously (perhaps due to being unable to drive for example) will now apply due to it being walkable.</p> <p>‘Parental choice will be increased because Farley Hill Primary School is oversubscribed so an increased number of those parents that express a preference for the school for their child will receive an offer’</p> <p>There is also no mention of catchment area and how this may change following the move. Currently, parts of Arborfield green are not in catchment as I understand it</p>	<p>It is acknowledged there is likely to be parental interest in the early expansion of the school. This is not a question that can be answered now though (see Point A below).</p> <p>The catchment area can be reviewed for 2022. Currently the school offers places to children living in the dispersed rural communities around Farley Hill and Arborfield Green / Garrison resident children. Any change would need to take account of the needs of the wider community.</p>
Parent	<p>I am writing in response to the consultation regarding the proposed changes to Farley Hill Primary School and the move to a new premises in Arborfield.</p> <p>I currently have children attending Farley Hill Primary School, who will still be at the school at the time of the proposed relocation.</p> <p>I would like to express a concern around the significant lack of parking available at the new site. There is nowhere near enough</p>	<p>The parking provision was agreed as being adequate through the planning process. This required both expert analysis and scrutiny before planning permission was granted.</p>

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	<p>parking for the number of cars we have at the school and it is clear this has not been thought through.</p> <p>At the information evening recently held for parents at the school, we were told that one option the council was counting on was parents being able to park in the neighbouring housing estates - however this has obviously not been considered properly as the newly built estates do not allow parking anywhere other than the handful of visitor spaces they have. A further option proposed was that many of the children who live in Arborfield will walk to school. However on speaking to such families, many have said they live too far away for young children to walk, they are not willing to walk in wet weather so will be driving in those instances, or that walking is not possible as children are dropped at school on route to work.</p> <p>I therefore hope that you will consider providing more parking for parents who need to drive from neighbouring villages such as Swallowfield as the present plans are likely to cause chaos should no further parking be provided</p>	
Parent	<p>As a parent of one child at Farley Hill school and another who will hopefully start in September I am strongly In support of the move to the new site near Biggs Lane.</p> <p>The school is a great school and I feel that this would be enhanced by the new location.</p> <p>The current situation with parking at Farley hill makes for a number of risks to children's safety at drop off any pick up times. Many parents end up crossing the road at the junction near the sports field to get to their cars, this is on a corner on a 50MPH road with buggies or pre-schoolers and I have witnessed recently a near miss when a child stepped out on the road. There is inadequate signage</p>	The support for the proposal is noted.

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	<p>and often cars drive too quickly along the stretch of road directly in front of the school building, particularly in the morning.</p> <p>I would strongly support the move to the new site and my only complaint would be that it's going to take another school year to build the new building and move as the sooner the better in my view</p>	
Parent	<p>I saw online that you are welcoming residents thoughts about the new primary school set to open 2021.</p> <p>We moved onto Arborfield Green 2 years ago on the agreement that a new primary school would be open by the time our little boy went to school (which would be sept 2021). My only input is, if Farley Hill was to move premises would we still be guaranteed a space for our children? I would assume the arborfield green residents would get priority at a new school and wasn't sure if this would still be the case if Farley Hill was to move?</p> <p>This is my only input really.</p> <p>We're excited about the new school opening!</p> <p>Thanks,</p>	<p>Even if the measurement point for admissions ranking purposes is taken as being the existing site (for 2021 admissions), then only Farley Hill and a small number of isolated homes will have higher priority than residents in most of the Arborfield Green community. This is because the Swallowfield, Riseley and Reading Road (Eversley) communities are further away from this measurement point than Arborfield Green homes.</p>
Parent	<p>I feel strongly that if we move Farley hill school what happens to the children not then in the catchment area but already at Farley hill old location?</p> <p>I want my son to go here but if half the school is filled with kids from the Farley hill Catchment area then it's not fair. Unless the kids in Farley hill need to apply again?</p> <p>I would prefer to have a separate school and include people from the right catchment area. Not half filled with Farley hill kids and then catchment area kids missing out.</p>	<p>Until the school expands and the designated area is changed it is likely that some children will be unable to secure places at the relocated school. While admission to a school cannot be guaranteed, residents in this area would still be within walking distance of both the Coombes and the Gorse Ride Schools.</p>

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School Governor, Coombes	I am writing in my capacity as a Local Governing Body member at the Coombes C of E Primary regarding the Farley Hill School Proposal and expansion of places in Arborfield. I want to express my concern at the Council's recommendation to add more primary places when the Coombes currently has more than enough capacity to take on the expected number of primary places needed for a number of years. The Coombes also has an extensive site and grounds that would provide a great setting for new families moving to Arborfield Green. Surely it makes sense to invest in the schools we already have established in the community and filling them before building new premises? I fear that the Council's current proposal could be detrimental to the Coombes and its future, causing even more competition within the local area and affecting jobs and stability for members of the Coombes community. I implore the Council to reconsider this plan and to consider supporting existing local schools to fill all of the places available in their PAN before expanding the number of primary places within Arborfield.	As noted below (point A) the initial action, the relocation of the Farley Hill School, is unlikely to have a significant impact on the Coombes, but any future expansion must take account of the Coombes.  The Coombes does serve Arborfield Green / Garrison residents and this is expected to continue to be the case. Expansion on the current Coombes site would be challenging, because there is no obvious way to mitigate additional car journeys (without adding to burdens on the home to school transport budget)

### Commentary on frequently raised issues:

#### A) That the rolls of other schools will suffer if the new school opens.

It is proposed that Farley Hill School will initially transfer to the new site, retaining its current admission number. While the current admission number (30 per year) is retained, and because Farley Hill School is oversubscribed (and already draws most of its roll from Arborfield Green and its associated communities) there is no good reason to think other schools will see reduced rolls as a result of the proposal.

It will be important to ensure that the interests of all stakeholders are balanced, when the proposed expansion dates are reviewed, though. This process will need to weigh a number of factors, including

- the interests of Arborfield Green residents (who are likely to prefer that the school on the Arborfield Green site expands to meet local needs),
- the likelihood that those Arborfield Green parents who have placed children in Finchampstead schools, will prefer to place younger siblings in the same schools,
- protecting education provision that will serve the garrison and associated communities in the long run (with particular reference to the Coombes CoE School),
- protecting the interests of the schools that some garrison area residents use in the wider community (noting that these schools are not within walking distance of all homes, and most children from the Arborfield Green area would be driven to them),
- wider impacts on the community, including on traffic levels and the carbon footprints of alternatives..

#### **B) That the analysis of local need should take the Finchampstead Schools into account**

Point A) above covers the need to do this, at the point the expansion of Farley Hill needs to be reviewed.

The background information document dealt with this issue:

“Other schools are also attended by Arborfield Garrison SDL resident children, including Gorse Ride (Infant) and Finchampstead CoE Primary. These are though small proportions of both these schools rolls and of the Arborfield Garrison SDL resident population. Finchampstead CoE primary is only accessible by vehicle and the Gorse Ride Schools are over 1.2 miles (by safe walking routes) from the closest point on the edge of the Garrison area. The likelihood of either of these schools being ones that significant numbers of Arborfield Garrison residents would walk to is therefore low.”

The key issue, for the long term is what should the long-term provision look like? Could this be based on an assumption that a significant number of Arborfield Garrison / Arborfield Green residents should look to the Finchampstead schools for their primary school places? The analysis underpinning the expansion case is based on the long established South West Primary Schools Planning Area, which includes Shinfield, Arborfield Green and surrounding communities (Barkham, Arborfield Cross and Arborfield) and Swallowfield. Planning areas are though just tools used to break the borough down into manageable units. While they are largely based on discernible communities, in practice there is always movement across planning area boundaries, reflecting parental preference and the availability of school places. It is reasonable therefore to consider if schools in the adjoining South-East



area (which includes Finchampstead) could provide at least part of the need generated by the growth of Arborfield Green. Until recently there was no usable pedestrian link between Finchampstead and Arborfield, but there are now two such routes, a footpath link from Nine Mile Ride and a surfaced, lit “Greenway” to the north of California Country Park. For homes in the north-west corner of Arborfield Green, the Finchampstead schools are the closest schools. There a number of good reason why this would be problematic, though:

Firstly, parents generally prefer local schools, unless they have specific concerns about school standards. Most responses from local parents (see above) strongly support having local schools in the Arborfield Green development.

Secondly, the council has made a long-term commitment to ensuring that all SDL communities are where practical, served by their own infrastructure, including schools, through the adopted Core Strategy. The Arborfield Primary Schools have been part of the long-term plans for the area, and are embodied in the statutory land use plans for the community.

Thirdly, the most recent Primary School Places Strategy (adopted by the Council’s Executive in June 2018) emphasises the need to ensure that school places are focused on need, and states that there may be a need “to rationalise provision in other areas to ensure schools are sustainable”. The adopted strategy is therefore to adjust provision to match local need, not to move the child population around the borough to match current provision.

Fourthly, if increased numbers of Arborfield Green children were to use Finchampstead schools this would lead to a significant increase in traffic volume on roads in Finchampstead (Barkham Ride and Nine Mile Ride). Only a minority of Arborfield Green homes are within statutory walking distance for Key Stage 1 children of any of the Finchampstead schools, with even the closest homes 1.2 miles away from the closest school. Most Arborfield Green children do not live within statutory walking distance (2 miles for under 8s) of these schools. In practise, it is likely that most children would be driven in by car. The DfT’s National Travel Survey 2014: School Travel showed that where children live less than 1 mile from a school 79% of them walk to school, where they live between 1 and 2 miles, 72% travel by car, and when they live further than 2 miles, 90% travel by car<sup>1</sup>.

The measurement (1.2 miles) is to the closest point on the new Arborfield Green community (Archer Grove), and consequently only the north eastern part of the Arborfield Green / garrison area is within statutory walking distance for Key Stage 1 children (under 8s). Kelvin Close, for example, on the west side of the community is 2.5 miles from the Gorse Ride Schools via this route

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<sup>1</sup> NTS0614: [Trips to school by main mode, trip length and age: England, 2002 onwards](#)

(and 2.8 miles via Nine Mile Ride). The Bohunt School Wokingham's site is 1.8 miles via Nine Mile Ride (so most homes immediately to the north and west of the Bohunt School site are further than 2 miles away).

It should also be noted that the Gorse Ride Schools are the closest schools, and most other Finchampstead schools are significantly further away. Nine Mile Ride School is 0.4 miles and St Sebastian's is 2.2 miles walking distance from the Gorse Ride Schools (so St Sebastian's is beyond statutory walking distance for children of all ages of Arborfield Green homes). Finchampstead CoE Primary School is 2.6 miles from the Bohunt School site, so is beyond statutory walking distance for children under 8, and also for children over 8, for most of the Arborfield Green / garrison areas. This is academic though, as there are no safe walking routes between Finchampstead Village and the Arborfield Green community.

Fifthly, if children are placed in Finchampstead Schools because there are no places available in local schools and they live further than statutory walking distance, they will be eligible for free home to school transport, increasing the burdens on the home to school transport budget (£10Ks on the basis that public transport is available).

**C) That the analysis of needs should take place availability across all Wokingham Schools into account.**

Extending the needs analysis to take account of all surplus capacity across the borough would undoubtedly mean that any additional provision in the Arborfield Green area would be delayed, and might never be required at all. Most of the points against this proposal are already set out in section B above relating to Finchampstead Schools, but the dislocation implied by having homes in a new community and places scattered across the borough (noting that Arborfield Green residents would only be able to access the less popular schools in each community, because of the operation of oversubscription criteria) would be markedly more problematic. This would be:

- a major breach of the commitments made by the council,
- would generate significant opposition by parents (when they were unable to secure places at preferred schools)
- add high volume of additional traffic across a wider area
- significantly increase spend on home to school transport (£100Ks, on the basis that a number of low occupancy vehicles would be needed to ferry children round the borough).

**D) The submission by the Keys Trust**

Most of the points made are covered above. However, there is a specific proposal that the Coombes could "revert to its previous PAN of 90" and that "This would create an additional 105 new spaces on top of the existing surplus capacity of 107, and so generating

212 additional spaces in total". The Trust claims that the relocation of the Farley Hill School would have "a significant detrimental effect on the pupil numbers at The Coombes and hence reduce funding even further". No explanation is given though as to why this should be the case (although other responses are that making the Farley Hill School more accessible will mean that the number of Arborfield Garrison / Green parents expressing a preference for that school will increase, so . They state that their proposal "has significant benefits to not only The Coombes, but to Wokingham Borough Council and new families moving in to the area". Eight specific benefits are listed, and these are set out below with a brief commentary:

1) Supporting an existing school with this additional capacity would safeguard against a multi-academy trust working against the interests of education across the Wokingham Borough as is being experienced in the secondary sector.

**Comment:** the current proposal does not involve an Academy Trust.

2) One of the weaknesses identified in the consultation document is responding quickly to changes in pupil numbers to meet demand of new families. The extensive school grounds at The Coombes are more than adequate to accommodate additional buildings should they become necessary. Within the last ten years, The Coombes benefited from investment in its Key Stage 2 buildings and as an academy within The Keys Academy Trust, the Trust will bid for Condition Improvement Funding to complete the rationalisation of the premises should this be required.

**Comment:** This is highly problematic, as set out below under the heading of "challenges of expanding provision on the Coombes site".

3) One of the challenges of the surplus capacity at The Coombes is the number of children that are diverted from Reading Borough Council. Since September 2019 there have been 38 number of children which have been diverted to The Coombes. These are generally short term placements and this mobility is disruptive to both the existing pupils and teachers and more importantly masks the surplus capacity for families moving into the Arborfield area.

**Comment:** this is true, but it is not clear what relevance it has (see "challenges of expanding provision on the Coombes site below", particularly as most diverted children are older children in Key Stage 2.

4) When new families move into the area, The Coombes will be able to offer places across the year groups until full to capacity which will reduce the travel disruption. This however would not be the case if as the consultation suggests, "total capacity in the Arborfield area can be "frozen" to ensure that the new premises do not create high levels of surplus places in local schools. This would be damaging to the education of children on the rolls of the schools with reduced rolls".

**Comment:** The Coombes has a current capacity of 525 places, and any unfilled places can be offered to any child whose parent wishes to secure a place at the school, irrespective of the council's proposal for the relocation of the Farley Hill school. Place availability at the Coombes will be reviewed when the expansion decision is reviewed. See also "challenges of expanding provision on the Coombes site" below.

5) Additional funding gained through increased pupil numbers will secure the future of The Coombes.

**Comment:** Increased pupils numbers would benefit the school, but the current admission numbers point to a sustainable future for the school.

6) The Keys has already secured rapid improvements at the school as evidenced by the Local Authority Review in December 2019. By supporting the existing school it creates confidence in the local authority from the parent community.

**Comment:** The improvements are noted. The real challenge for the Coombes is parental confidence in the school (see "challenges of expanding provision on the Coombes site").

7) Although both The Coombes and Farley Hill primary schools are used by children living in the Arborfield Garrison area, neither has good walking accessibility. However, The Coombes is on the edge of the neighbouring Arborfield Cross community and is within statutory walking distance (for children under the age of 8) of the northern part of the Arborfield Garrison SDL. Although Farley Hill is a similar distance from the new community, there are no safe walking routes from the Arborfield area to where Farley Hill is currently situated.

**Comment:** Relocating the Farley Hill School would resolve the accessibility issue for Arborfield Green residents.

8) The deferral allows Wokingham Borough Council to only open a new school once demand is guaranteed. The deferral of opening the primary school in Arborfield may release growth funding for existing pupils within WBC.

**Comment:** Firstly, the council is building the school premises, this proposal is only concerned with how it should be managed. Secondly, the construction contracts for new premises have to be let about two years before the school opens. Waiting until "demand is guaranteed" would inevitably lead to late delivery of the new school.

### **Challenges of expanding provision on the Coombes site**

There are two principle concerns with expanding the school:

- That there are significant challenges to the expansion proposal made by the school.
- That it is far from clear that this what parents would want.

The Trust states that the school could revert to offer 90 places, as was previously the case. However, prior to academy conversion the school was formed from the amalgamation of two schools, with different admission numbers. On amalgamation the expectation was that the new school would offer 90 places (and 90 places were duly offered for a number of years). However, during the development of the works package, intended to ensure the new school had the facilities for its final size, the decision was taken to model the school to accommodate 525 pupils / 75 per year. At that time additional accommodation and staff car parking was provided, in line with the new capacity of 525 children (plus the nursery). Increasing the capacity to 630 places would require additional teaching accommodation, external play space, staff car parking, and improved drop off arrangements (noting that most Arborfield Green residents would in fact, drive their children to the school, because the Coombes will be more than 1 mile from their homes). The site is on the side of a hill and is heavily wooded, so there are development constraints. Additional staff car parking could be provided, by encroaching on the school's playing field. There is no obvious way additional parent drop-off space could be created (and parent drop off is a long standing, significant issue for the Arborfield Cross community). However willing the school might be to expand, there is no guarantee that planning permission could be obtained.

The other challenge, is that despite the school's improvement since its conversion to Academy status, it continues to be a school with a low number of applications, relative to the number of places available. This is despite there being sufficient demand in the immediate area of the school to largely fill it. This year (in the admissions round for September 2020 start) 65 children were offered places at the school. However, 17 of these were children who could not be allocated a preferred school. Nine of these came from the local area (Barkham / Arborfield and Newland Parishes) and some of these parents did not list the school, despite not using all their four preferences. The closest neighbourhoods (LSOAs) Arborfield and Barkham alone between them had 64 children allocated primary school places, with 25 (39%) allocated places at the Coombes. The Arborfield Garrison neighbourhood (LSOA) had 27 children allocated primary school places, with just under half (12) allocated places at the Coombes, the remainder being scattered across 10 other schools. This does not give confidence that Arborfield Green parents would opt for the Coombes, and while capacity exists in other schools, would lead to a significant increase in vehicle movement across the borough.

## Responses to the informal engagement exercise 18/12/2019 to 15/01/2020

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
Arborfield Green Resident	<p>As a parent of two young children (Reception, and pre-school), and an owner of one of the new houses on the Green, I just wanted to take a moment to write in support of what appears to be the preferred option - to extend Farley Hill into the new site.</p> <p>My daughter is in Reception at Farley Hill at the moment, and it is an excellent school. Our only frustrations are that the size and fabric of the buildings does not match the quality of the education provided by the school, and that we cannot walk to the school. One of the selling points, for us, of the new Arborfield Green development was that it was 'green'! We were disappointed to learn, on moving in, that the new Primary School would not be open in time for our eldest to attend, and that we therefore didn't have any schools within reasonable walking distance and have to drive every day.</p> <p>With a son due to start at Farley Hill in September 2020, we will have two children at the school. We would be delighted if it moved onto the Green, and we were able to walk our children to and from school each day.</p> <p>One caveat, however: a much-valued aspect of Farley Hill is the excellence of its 'Eat Smart Cafe'. It would be very important to parents that the on-site catering was maintained (or improved) in the new buildings, rather than off-site catering being used.</p>	<p>This respondent supports the proposal to relocate Farley Hill School, noting that their child will be able to walk to school.</p> <p>They are concerned though that the new school should maintain its ability to cook for children,</p> <p>Comment:</p> <p>A clear advantage of the Farley Hill proposal is the reduction in the number of car trips to the school.</p> <p>The new premises will have a full production kitchen.</p>
Swallowfield Garrison	I'm writing to express my concerns about the new school in Arborfield.	The current admissions arrangements give priority (in order) to children in care, children with special medical or social grounds for admission to the

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
	<p>I have a son who is due to start school in September 2022. I currently live in Swallowfield so I was hoping he would go to Farley Hill. If the school moved to the new site in Arborfield would we still have any hope of being in catchment still or what would be our options? It's a shame that unless you move to the new houses the existing community are penalised.</p> <p>I also have two children at Bohunt (my daughter from the start) and although it was supposed to serve the local villages - already children can't get in from the village.</p> <p>It's just such a worry.</p>	<p>school, children living in the designated area with older siblings at the school, children living in the designated area and other children. The tie breaker is distance from the school site.</p> <p>Moving the school to the garrison (which is in the current designated area) does mean that garrison resident children will be closer to the school and so will have priority over other children living in the designated area, within the admissions category that applies to them, including Swallowfield. However, the current school site is approximately 1.7 miles from the furthest dwellings in the Arborfield Garrison SDL, while the significant rural settlements of Riseley and Swallowfield are further away, so in practise only homes that are close to the school site are at risk of being disadvantaged by the relocation. Swallowfield Village Hall is just under 1.9 miles from the existing school site, and Riseley (Bull Lane / Old Basingstoke Road junction) is 2.2 miles away.</p>

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
		<p>This disadvantage has to be set against</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the advantages to Garrison resident children (about 2/3 of the roll),</li> <li>the reasonable expectation that all children (except those few in Farley Hill itself) in the rural areas need to be driven to school now (and places will be available in other local schools) and</li> <li>that in the long run Farley Hill school can grow to offer up to 630 places, to support both the Garrison and south-west rural communities.</li> </ul>
Arborfield Green Resident	<p>I write in response to the Arborfield Green Primary School consultation documents published on the Wokingham Borough website.</p> <p>We live in the “Barkham Place” development in Arborfield Green. We have a daughter due to start reception in September 2020 and twins due to start reception in September 2022.</p> <p>I agree with the overall tone of the consultation document that relocating Farley Hill is the best option. I agree because:</p>	<p>The response supports the principle of relocation of Farley Hill School, but raises the point that the Farley Hill Designated Area excludes a number of homes in the garrison area. The first opportunity to address this will be for the 2022 admission year. It should be noted that unless the Farley Hill relocation is agreed and the school’s admission number is increased, making this change would increase the likelihood that the relocated school would not admit children from outside</p>



Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
	<p>a. It retains more control over the school with the LA and local community rather than with the DfE and a MAT.</p> <p>b. Farley Hill School is known and liked locally.</p> <p>c. The Coombes School needs support and due to current management is not a school of choice for many parents. The recently released performance data for primary schools show that it is struggling to maintain the results of last year and a new academy with two forms of entry would compound the problem of a falling roll.</p> <p>d. Many Farley Hill families live on the former garrison site and have no safe walking route to school at present.</p> <p>e. Families from the north of Farley Hill's designated area have a new closer option in West Shinfield so it is likely that the intake will continue to come mainly from the Arborfield Green community.</p> <p>There is one issue I wish to raise, and that is that currently part of the Arborfield Green community sits outside of Farley Hill's designated area. Your consultation documents name your first aim of consultation as to establish "How best to meet the needs of the new Arborfield Green community". If you are to do this, you need to move the catchment to include the whole of the community.</p> <p>Like many families, a key factor in us deciding to move to Arborfield Green was that we want our children to walk to a local school with their neighbours and chose this development over others believing our eldest would start at the new school. We were devastated when the opening was delayed and although I fully understand the reasons</p>	<p>the garrison area. In time this can be mitigated by the expansion of the school to a maximum of 630 places.</p>

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
	<p>for this (having had a career in education and local government for 15 years) I strongly believe that the council needs to make moves to try and negate the bad feeling that this delay has created amongst local families. One way to do this would be to assure Arborfield Green families that they will be within the designated area for the Arborfield Green primary school.</p> <p>We have submitted our school application for our daughter with Farley Hill as our preferred school because we want her to go to school with the neighbours and friends we have made since moving here and will be crossing everything that she gets a place and that the move goes ahead. I know that legally you cannot change catchments for this year's intake but I hope there is something the council can do to address this issue. We are not the only family in this situation and I hope that the council bears this in mind going forwards, and that should the school move we will not then have to worry about being out of catchment for the school a five minute walk from our house and end up in a situation where we are putting them in a car every morning to drive past said school.</p> <p>I wish you well with the remainder of the consultation and plans going forwards,</p>	
Swallowfield resident	I feel compelled to write to you today regarding the consultation for a new school in Arborfield and in particular the option of relocating Farley Hill Primary School.	<p>A communication from a Swallowfield resident opposed to the relocation.</p> <p>Their primary concern is that rural communities will be unable to gain</p>

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
	<p>My son is due to start primary school this September and having completed several parent tours of local schools, my husband and I decided to put Farley Hill as our preferred choice.</p> <p>However, I am extremely concerned at the plans to potentially relocate the school to a new site in Arborfield. Despite the information suggesting that are various options available, I feel that the documents have been heavily weighted towards the option of relocating Farley Hill and disproportionately benefiting families in Arborfield, whilst seemingly disregarding families in other surrounding villages.</p> <p>Living in Swallowfield, we are hard pushed for school places as it is. The last acceptance into Grazeley within catchment was 0.99 miles from the school last year, and now this year the school have changed their admission criteria to prioritise siblings out of catchment ahead of children in catchment.</p> <p>You mention in the documents about allowing children to be able to walk to school but this will only be advantageous to the children of Arborfield who live the closest. This leads me to a further concern that the catchment of the school will be changed to again to heavily benefit the community in Arborfield and satisfy the legal requirements, to provide a suitable school in line with the amount of development that has been completed and that which is ongoing, but remove our villages from the catchment.</p> <p>You have a ready made easy option of transferring staff and resource to a new site and so will save money whilst doing this, but at the same time be disregarding current families feelings and reasons why other families have chosen the school for their child.</p>	<p>admission to the relocated Farley Hill School.</p> <p>The respondent also values the small “village school” feel of the existing Farley Hill school.</p> <p>They note that there would be considerable challenges associated with re-opening the Farley Hill premises.</p> <p>The counter proposals are:</p> <p>That the new school is built to serve the garrison and the Farley Hill designated area refocused on the rural communities, with parts of Spencers Wood.</p> <p>A claimed advantage is reduced school run traffic.</p> <p>Comment:</p> <p>Farley Hill School, although popular, recruits 2/3 of its roll from the garrison area. Losing the garrison children would threaten the viability of the school, without a significant increase in admissions from other areas. The</p>

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
	<p>I appreciate the school will have new facilities and bigger classroom sizes but after viewing The Coombes which has newer parts, I was left distinctly disappointed by the absolutely soulless feel of that particular part of the school.</p> <p>Also, if there are so many places available at The Coombes and it is so undersubscribed (for reasons I sympathise with - poor Ofsted etc) then why not promote this and readjust the allocation of school starters so that both forms of entry are full at the start of the year? This would surely provide plenty of spaces for families in the new Arborfield developments?</p> <p>We chose Farley Hill as our first choice due to the small village feel of the school and the sense of community which this creates. I strongly believe that moving the school to a bigger site will cause this to be lost and the school will become a sterile, vacuous environment that does not have a cohesive, nurturing feel.</p> <p>You state that you are going to retain the site just in case it is required to reopen anyway. Is the site going to be maintained whilst empty? Surely if you are required to reopen it, it will be at relatively short notice and you could experience failures of pipework, drainage systems etc?</p> <p>I feel relocating Farley Hill would be a monumental error and would greatly affect the local communities of Swallowfield, Riseley and Spencers Wood particularly. It would cause an increase in journey time and more traffic travelling through the village as well as creating congestion at the junction with the A327. Have the environmental</p>	<p>Spencers Wood area (and adjacent parts of Swallowfield Parish) are already served by schools, so there is no reason to suppose parents in this area would prefer the Farley Hill Village location.</p> <p>While, re-opening the Farley Hill site is a real option, but would be planned at least months (and probably a year or more) in advance. The option of an additional 210 places on the current site (which has planning consent) is a valid option and may in time be adopted as the favoured way of maintaining the council's commitment to re-providing the current Farley Hill School capacity, at its own expense.</p>

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
	<p>impacts of this been considered as well as the impact to the roads which are already in poor condition?</p> <p>It would also create a school in which pupils are more at risk of becoming lost amongst the plethora of pupils who will attend and in time, suffer from the same potential problems at The Coombes has.</p> <p>I believe that the better option would be to invest money in maintaining or improving the Farley Hill site as it is currently (this will have to be done anyway if you close and then reopen it). Outdoor facilities could be improved by investing money in the field that is only occasionally used for sports at present or considering purchasing some land from nearby land owners adjacent to the school, whilst still building a new site in Arborfield. Then readjusting the catchment areas so that Swallowfield, Riseley and parts of Spencers Wood have Farley Hill as a priority catchment school and the whole of Arborfield has the new school and The Coombes?</p> <p>This would also have greater environmental benefits as children in the aforementioned villages will be able to share lifts with other families living close by and reduce the need of families from both sides of the A327 to use their cars.</p> <p>I hope you will take this email and the comments within seriously. I look forward to hearing from you soon.</p>	
Finchampstead CoE School (head)	As the Headteacher at Finchampstead C of E (Aided) Primary School I must share my concerns regarding our NOR once the new school is built. This is not just for our Reception places; we now have many families from Arborfield attending our school and we may find that our numbers drop if they can transfer to this local school.	<p>Summary</p> <p>Children from Arborfield are sustaining Finchampstead CoE's school's roll, keeping it viable.</p>

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
	<p>We are very proud of our provision but I am having to dedicate much time to marketing. The number of schools with low NOR for Reception last year was alarming and existing schools need safeguarding. Retaining a cap on the numbers for the new school will be vital to protect our village school.</p> <p>With kind regards Jacquie Vanstone</p>	<p>The new school capacity should therefore be capped.</p> <p>Comment: One current proposal is that Farley Hill relocates at its current size. If this proposal is adopted, the impact on other schools will need to be taken into account when future expansion is considered. Opening an entirely new school would, if demand does not increase significantly in the near future, lead to reduced rolls at a number of local schools.</p>
Coombes School (Chair of governors)	<p>I am replying to this consultation as the Chair of The Coombes Governing Body.</p> <p>Thank you for the clear and detailed background to the issues around the new school. From The Coombes point of view we would very much like to have this new school run by the Keys Academy Trust. I think you might agree that they are building up a good track record locally of running new schools and resurrecting old ones. Your projection of numbers does give me some comfort that places will be needed at The Coombes for the years to come. I am aware that a new school is attractive to parents and we could see a drop in pupil numbers when it opens. This could be mitigated if the new school was run by the Trust as we could coordinate intakes more easily. I admit to being fearful of being in direct competition with another organisation when The Coombes lives with the legacy of a</p>	<p>The Coombes School would prefer to run the new school directly to have a direct say over the admissions to the new school.</p> <p>They note that a new school here would lead to a significant fall in admissions to their school.</p> <p>Comment: The ability of the Keys Trust to run this school is not challenged. It would though present some initial operational challenges (because until demand increases significantly locally, the Coombes</p>

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
	<p>poor Ofsted report from 5 years ago when it is actually much improved as your analysis documents, and the Council's inspector confirms.</p> <p>Thank you for all your work with this. Kind regards Stephen Madgwick</p>	<p>could only operate the new school by effectively transferring most of their future Reception Years to the school, or they would hold the new school empty until application numbers had increased significantly. This would mean that the new premises would not be used to benefit the new Garrison SDL community.</p>
Coombes Governor (in a personal capacity)	<p>I'm .... writing to respond to the consultation regarding the new school at Arborfield Green in my capacity as a governor at The Coombes. I believe the best outcome for children and families living in Arborfield would be that The Keys Academy Trust run any new primary schools built to serve this community. I have only been a governor at The Coombes for one year but I was a governor at two other primary schools in Wokingham for over 10 years and believe The Keys Academy Trust to be well run and to have the ability to set up a new school to serve the interests of this community. The Trust have significantly improved The Coombes since being involved with this school and, indeed, have improved other schools in the borough which were failing. Opening a new school would enable The Keys Academy Trust to expand their portfolio and bring new skills to the Trust, which would not only benefit schools already in the Trust, but also other schools which the local authority may need support for in the future.</p> <p>I believe there is much scope to ensure any new school is different enough to offer diversity and choice to families in this community whilst being underpinned by The Keys Academy Trust principles. It would also allow the schools to support each other and not be in</p>	<p>That the Keys Trust (the body behind the Coombes CoE Primary School) have the strengths to make a success of the new school, while co-ordinating admissions to the school in conjunction with the Coombes School to ensure both schools are successful. Comment:</p> <p>The route to the Keys Trust running the new school as a stand alone school would be through the open and competitive "Free School Presumption" process, that could lead to another trust taking on the school.</p> <p>While the Keys could run the new site as a satellite site, it is difficult to see how they could run both sites, while their admission numbers remain depressed, significantly below 60 allocation per year. Splitting a</p>

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
	<p>direct competition, thereby ensuring parents did not see one school as preferable to the other and maintaining the whole of Arborfield as one community rather than 'those on the green' and 'those in the village'.</p>	<p>Reception roll of 40 pupils into two classes of 20 (for example) would be financially unviable.</p>
<p>Gorse Ride Schools (Headteacher)</p>	<p>I am writing in reference to the consultation for the new school in Arborfield. The consultation refers to schools in the area that service the homes in Arborfield. Gorse Ride Schools are not listed. We currently have 35 pupils living in Arborfield attending the schools.</p> <p>You are aware that the schools numbers on roll are low. Within Reception we have 44 children, which is 16 below capacity. You have sent us the predictions for numbers on roll for the next five years. The predicted reduction is alarming and show in September 2020 we will have a shortfall of 82 students which equates to approximately £320k of funding.</p> <p>If a new school in Arborfield creates more school places in the area, there will be a further fall in children applying for Gorse Ride Schools which will have a detrimental impact on the Schools funding.</p> <p>I understand that one of the options is to move Farley Hill to the new school. Gorse Ride Schools request that either Farley Hill is moved and the new school is just a one form in take thus not creating more school places in the area or that the new school is not opened until the surrounding schools at full capacity. With the new walk way already open, children are able to safely walk to Gorse Ride Schools from Arborfield Green.</p>	



Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
	<p>Thank you for considering our views.</p> <p>Kind regards,</p> <p>Eileen Rogers</p>	
Finchampstead CoE Governor (in a personal capacity)	I write with reference to the proposed creation of the above. As a governor at Finchampstead CofE Aided primary school I am aware of the current over capacity for primary class places in all the primary schools local to us and Arborfield, and I cannot understand why the council would be entertaining the idea of spending tax payers' money on providing any more, or indeed, opening an entirely new school. Madness.	<p>That no additional school places should be provided until all local school places are filled. To do otherwise would be an inappropriate use of public funds.</p> <p>Comment</p> <p>The comments are representative of those that take the view that additional capacity should not be provided unless local schools are full. Finchampstead CoE School is not within walking distance (by a safe route) of the Arborfield Green development.</p>
The Keys Trust	Letter from the Keys Trust annexed to this report (Annex 1)	The Trusts proposal is that opening the new school is deferred until local capacity (in particular at the Coombes School) should be fully utilised before the new school opens. There is capacity to create new provision on the school site, if necessary.

Respondent	Response	Summary and comment
		<p><b>Comment:</b></p> <p>This is an option that could be pursued, with the opening of the new school deferred until all local school capacity is fully utilised.</p> <p>This would though mean that the majority of children living in the Arborfield Green / Garrison area would be driven to school. Although the Coombes is within statutory walking distance of the community it understood that many children are driven to that school. Furthermore, parental preference across the communities associated with the garrison is for other schools. These would be further away and would add to the school run traffic issue across south west Wokingham.</p> <p>Moving Farley Hill Primary School at its current size is the option that presents</p>
Arborfield Green residents	We were forwarded your letter and the attached document by Hazebrouck Nursery, which our daughter attends and are emailing our response to you as parents of a child who will be starting Reception year in September 2021. Given the data presented, the second scenario, where the new school would be opened as an	<p>This email supports the Farley Hill relocation proposal.</p> <p>The response notes that the Farley Hill relocation proposal makes use of</p>

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	<p>expansion or relocation of an existing school (i.e Farley Hill), would seem to make the most sense. Farley Hill is rated a good school, is popular and this scenario fulfils more of the criteria while also solving more of the concerns than the other two options. It is also the most flexible option in terms of adapting to actual vs. predicted child numbers.</p> <p>We do have a concern as regards one of WBC's three areas of focus, as stated in your letter - namely that "the full 420 places are available to serve new residents". As residents of Arborfield Garrison for the last 18 years, we would like our daughter to attend the school most local to us. Prior to the Garrison development, this was Farley Hill. If Farley Hill School is expanded or, more likely, relocated to the site off Biggs Lane, our nearest school would still be Farley Hill. In fact, it would be closer than before, with the additional benefit of being within easy walking distance. The new school must therefore be accessible to all pupils resident in the new community of Arborfield Green, whether they come from housing that was already there, or the new estates mushrooming around us. This area is already one community and all residents must be treated equally. There is also the fact that existing pupils of the school will have to be accommodated: most of them already come from this area, regardless of whether they live in pre-existing properties or newbuilds.</p>	<p>an popular school, provides flexibility given uncertainty over future numbers and enables Arborfield Green (AKA Arborfield Garrison SDL) children to walk to school.</p> <p>They raised a concern that all residents of Arborfield Green, including pre-existing and new homes, should be able to access the school.</p> <p>Comment</p> <p>The current Farley Hill admissions arrangements give higher priority to residents to most of the new homes in the Arborfield Green area compared to residents of other communities through the school's designated area and radial distance tie breaker arrangements. These arrangements can be changed in future, but even as they stand they give high priority to most Arborfield Green residents.</p> <p>The designated area includes the former Arborfield garrison area, the southern part of the Arborfield SDL area (around the Hogwood Industrial Estate), parts of Eversley, Farley Hill, Swallowfield Village and Riseley) and</p>

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		<p>dispersed homes in the associated rural areas. It does not include Arborfield, Arborfield Cross, Finchampstead Village or Nine Mile Ride and a small number of homes on the periphery of Arborfield Green (Archer Grove and Poperinghe Way).</p> <p>Within the designated area, the proximity of the Garrison / Arborfield area to Farley Hill means that this area is closer to the current school site than Swallowfield Village and Riseley, so residents (old and new homes) have high priority for the school, within each admission category.</p> <p>Residents of Poperinghe Way and Archer Grove have alternative schools within walking distance of their homes. Both areas are within walking distance of the Coombes School and Archer Grove is 1 ½ miles (approx) from the Gorse Ride Schools, along the new Greenway route.</p>
Arborfield and Newland Parish Council	Letter attached (Annex 2)	The Parish Council support the proposal, but are concerned that the name of the school should not include

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		<p>“Arborfield” in the title, because this encourages people to believe they live in the Arborfield and Newland Parish Council area (the Arborfield Garrison SDL is largely split between Barkham and Finchampstead Parishes).</p> <p>Comment: The name of the school is a matter for the school’s governing body, not the council. If the Farley Hill school relocation proceeds there is no requirement for the school to be renamed.</p>
Finchampstead Parish Council	<p>...the Council considered the options for the Arborfield Primary School at its meeting yesterday evening.</p> <p>Our first comment is that it is imperative that Finchampstead and the existing Finchampstead Schools and their catchment areas are recognised in the options appraisal document, specifically the following points.</p> <p>C. Meeting the needs of the new Arborfield Green Community This section should include the 3 Finchampstead Primary Schools – the Gorse Ride Infant and Junior School; Nine Mile Ride Primary School and Finchampstead Primary School – and relevant statistics as for the other schools. Figure 2 is factually incorrect. The figures for Arborfield, Barkham and Finchampstead are incorrect. The Arborfield SDL includes very few dwellings in Arborfield Parish – most of the 2000 dwellings at Arborfield Green are in Barkham Parish, and significantly for us a number in Finchampstead –</p>	<p>Finchampstead PC note that the Arborfield Garrison SDL is:</p> <p>(a) also served by three Finchampstead Schools (with 30 children from the Arborfield Green area attending the Gorse Ride Schools and additional children at both Nine Mile Ride and Finchampstead CoE Schools)</p> <p>(b) that the home building figures are misleading because in fact very few homes are built in the Arborfield and Newlands Parish – most homes have been and will be built in the Barkham and Finchampstead Parish areas.</p>

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	<p>of which around 150 are already occupied. The Finchwood Park development is underway and we understand at least 4 dwellings here are now occupied.</p> <p>D. Supporting local schools At present 30 children from the Arborfield Green development attend the Gorse Ride Schools in Finchampstead. This section needs correcting to reflect this. We do not have any information on whether any children from Arborfield Green attend the other two Finchampstead Schools but you will be able to check this.</p> <p>In terms of the options for the future management of the school, we support in principle the expansion of Farley Hill Primary School on to the site, effectively meaning the relocation of the existing school to the new site.</p> <p>However, we are very concerned that existing schools – including the 3 Finchampstead Schools not currently mentioned in the report - are not adversely affected by the provision of the new school and that measures are put in place to protect the viability of these schools. It is imperative that the capacity of the new school is equivalent to that of Farley Hill Primary School and that its catchment area reflects this. Any additional capacity should be retained to serve new residents of the Arborfield Green development, not to take children who would otherwise have gone to existing schools – including the Finchampstead Schools. We fully support the intention that children attending the new school should be able to walk to school, which again relates to the catchment area for the school.</p>	<p>These points made, the Parish Council supports the proposal that Farley Hill takes on the management of the Arborfield Primary School site. They think is essential though, that any decision to expand the school beyond its current capacity takes account of and protects the Finchampstead school rolls, and in particular that additional capacity is reserved to Arborfield Garrison residents.</p> <p>Comment</p> <p>Their suggestion that additional school places at the relocated school should be reserved for Arborfield Green residents cannot be agreed under admissions law, but the decision as to when these places are offered can take account of the impact on other local schools.</p> <p>The Finchampstead Parish Council comments highlight an important issue. At a time when numbers admitted to Reception classes across the borough are markedly less than available capacity, growth in demand</p>

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	<p>Finally, we are aware that a new primary school is planned for Finchwood Park, the southern part of the Arborfield SDL which lies within Finchampstead. As noted above this development is underway with some properties occupied. The timing of the construction of the new Finchwood Park school should be taken in to account as part of this appraisal. If pending delivery of this school a significant number of children from the Finchwood Park development attend the new Arborfield Green school, the new Finchwood Park school could have significant spare capacity which would adversely impact the existing Finchampstead Schools. We appreciate that this may be some years off, but feel it is still relevant here.</p>	<p>for Reception places is seen in the new communities in the SDL areas. These children could otherwise attend other schools, helping maintain their viability. That said, unless the schools attended are immediately associated with the new community, relying on places in these schools will increase the level of school run traffic.</p> <p>Two of the three Finchampstead school settings (the Gorse Ride schools and Nine Mile Ride) are within walking distance of the garrison by safe routes for some parts of the new development. However, the shortest route to a Finchampstead school, from the edge of the Arborfield Green area, via the new Greenway is 1 ¼ miles. Given this, most Reception age children coming from the Arborfield Green area would be expected to be driven to school, adding to local traffic volumes at peak hours.</p> <p>Otherwise, future use of housing figures will make it clear that the data refers to the Arborfield Garrison SDL, and not the Arborfield and Newland Parish area.</p>