



THE COWPLAIN SCHOOL

Headteacher

Mr IR Gates MA NPQH

8th November 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to formally consult with you about the governing body's proposal to dispose of two areas of underused playing field land on the school site. One area relates to a triangular portion of land to the north of the running track totalling 5,315sqm. The second area comprises of a disused tennis court adjacent to Hart Plain Avenue totalling 2,307sqm.

This land is owned by the school but we have to apply to the Education Funding Agency (EFA), whom are part of the Department for Education (DfE), to sell it and, as part of this process, we are required to undertake a six-week consultation period. In addition to this, as the land is considered part of the school playing field (regardless as to whether it is used or not), there is a clear stipulation from the EFA that all funds generated from the sale must be reinvested in improving the existing sports facilities for the benefit of the school and wider community.

The proceeds from the land sale would be ring-fenced to upgrade the condition of the existing pitch with extensive drainage and soil works. As you may be aware the current pitch has issues of waterlogging; the playing field is on clay and so is either too dry or too wet to use for most of the year. It suffers from inadequate drainage, which restricts usage of the pitches during the majority of the winter. Furthermore, surface cracking is a problem in the summer. These issues have a major impact on timetabling of pitch usage.

After the upgrade of the pitch any additional funds would be utilised to provide a performing arts centre with enhanced facilities and opportunities for dance, drama and music. The school has no permanent space to present to a wider audience for school events including drama productions, music concerts and parent presentations and so a new facility is much needed.

The governing body is committed to significantly improving the sports and performing arts facilities we have here at The Cowplain School and are excited by the opportunities afforded by this project. The quality of sports and performing arts facilities would be greatly enhanced, more effectively meeting the needs of the school and local community, and provide a financially sustainable model in terms of lettings potential.

We anticipate that the sale of the land will form part of a residential development. We do not have any additional details at this stage, however to proceed further we need to demonstrate to the DfE that we have sufficient playing fields to accommodate our students, that there is no requirement for other local schools to use this land and that the land is not used or needed for educational purposes. We would hope that the DfE would approve our application.

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We are confident that we fulfil all of the above criteria due to the large footprint that the school occupies in relation to the number of students on roll. Our playing field provision is also currently higher than the stipulated threshold. Selling such a small piece of playing field land relative to the overall amount (8.4%) ensures that we will still retain sufficient playing fields to accommodate any school expansion in the future, should the need arise.

If permission is granted by the DfE, the governing body will start the process of applying for planning permission for a performing arts building on the school campus. At this point in time, we will conduct a further consultation exercise to ascertain your views on this aspect of the project. However, if you wish to share your thoughts with us about the principle underpinning this proposal, please feel free to do so.

The consultation with stakeholders commences on Wednesday 9th November 2016 for a six-week period until 5pm on Wednesday 21st December 2016. To ensure you are fully informed, we are holding an open event at the school where interested parties can come and look at the plans in detail and ask questions of representatives of the school and the architects. This will be held from 3.30pm- 6.30pm on 16th November 2016 in the school gym. Throughout the six-week period a display detailing the proposals will also be available to view in reception.

We look forward to seeing you at the above event but, if you are unable to attend and would like further information, please visit the FAQ section in the news tab on our school website or email Mrs Amanda Simmons, PA to the Headteacher: amandas@cowplainschool.co.uk.

We very much look forward to hearing your views about this exciting proposal which has the potential to greatly enhance the sporting and performing arts facilities for the school and wider community.

Yours faithfully

Mr I R Gates
Headteacher