

Committee: **Lead Cabinet Member for Learning and School Effectiveness**
 Date: **10 September 2013**
 By: **Interim Director of Children’s Services**
 Title of the report: **Proposed expansion of Robsack Wood Community Primary School**
 Purpose of Report: **To seek Lead Member approval to publish statutory notices in respect of a proposal to expand Robsack Wood Community Primary School by September 2015.**

Recommendation:

Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) authorise the publication of statutory notices in respect of a proposal to expand Robsack Wood Community Primary School by 98 places from September 2015; and**
- (2) delegate authority to the Interim Director of Children’s Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.**

1. Financial Appraisal:

1.1 **Revenue:** this proposal will not affect the Schools Funding Formula. Each school’s budget share will increase in accordance with rising pupil numbers.

1.2 **Capital:** capital investment will be required to expand the Robsack Wood Community Primary School. Approximately £17.5m is identified in the Council’s Capital Programme, approved by Full Council on 7 February 2013, to deliver additional places across East Sussex, including Hastings. Feasibility design work is currently being undertaken at the school to determine the level of capital funding required to deliver those additional places.

2. Supporting Information:

2.1 In Hastings the main pressure on primary places comes from births which have risen from 938 in academic year 2001/02 to 1,239 in 2010/11 (an increase of 32%). For 2013/14 and 2014/15 it is estimated that there will be sufficient places across the town. In 2015/16 there is likely to be a significant shortfall of Year R places (three to four forms of entry) with shortfalls in the years beyond that.

2.2 In response, the Council undertook a period of public consultation between 26 June and 24 July 2013 on a proposal to expand Robsack Wood Community Primary School. The proposal would provide an extra half a form of entry (14 places per year group, 98 places in total) in the north west of Hastings by September 2015, an area which has seen an increase in births of 21% between 2001/02 and 2010/11.

2.3 This report details the responses received during the period of public consultation and seeks approval from the Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness to publish statutory notices.

2.4 Proposed changes to the organisation of schools have to follow a prescribed process established by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended by The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2007 which came into force on 21 January 2008 and The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2009 which came into force on 1 September 2009). This process complied with these requirements.

2.5 Public consultation took place over a four week period between 26 June and 24 July 2013. Approximately 1,300 consultation documents were distributed to interested parties in accordance with The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). The full distribution list can be found as part of **Annex 1**. The consultation document was also made available on the County Council’s website.

2.6 By the close of the consultation period, 98 replies had been received. This equates to a response rate of only 7.53% (98 out of 1,300). Of the responses:

- 38 (38.8%) supported the proposal
- 8 (8.1%) neither agreed or disagreed with the proposal
- 52 (53.1%) did not support the proposal

2.7 The majority of responses came from parents and carers (62) followed by members of the local community (14). 13 staff and governors responded to the consultation. The breakdown is as follows:

- 2 (2%) were pupils at Robsack Wood
- 62 (63.3%) were parents/carers of a child at Robsack Wood
- 9 (9.2%) were members of staff at Robsack Wood
- 4 (4.1%) were members of the governing body at Robsack Wood
- 14 (14.3%) were members of the local community
- 6 (6.1%) were identified as 'other'
- 1 (1%) chose not to answer

2.8 The main reasons for people not supporting the proposal were:

- Overcrowding on the Robsack Wood site
- Potential impact on teaching and learning
- Parking
- Traffic congestion

2.9 While these are valid concerns, the Council would ensure that any design solution for expansion makes best use of the site to create an environment that has a positive impact on teaching and learning. Issues about traffic congestion and parking would be addressed through the statutory planning process the Council has to go through before it is able to start building on site. This would provide people with a further opportunity to raise concerns about these particular issues.

2.10 **Annex 1** provides detailed analysis of the consultation process and responses received.

2.11 The majority of people who responded to the consultation do not agree with the proposal to expand Robsack Wood Community Primary School. However, the pressing need for additional places in Hastings together with the low response rate to the consultation (7.53%) lead us to recommend that we should continue with the proposal to expand the school.

2.12 The next stage of the process is to publish statutory notices. The publication of notices would trigger a further four week period of consultation, known as the representation period, when people can again have their say on the proposal. Within two months of the end of the representation period, the Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness must determine the proposal taking into account the views of all those affected by the proposal or who have an interest in it, including for example: pupils; parents and carers; staff; other schools; local residents; diocesan bodies and other providers. It is envisaged that a final decision would be made at the Lead Member meeting on 9 December 2013.

3. Conclusion and reason for recommendation:

3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet current and future demand. In light of the pressing need for additional primary places in Hastings, together with the low response rate to the consultation, it is recommended that Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness:

- i) Authorises the publication of statutory notices in respect of a proposal to expand Robsack Wood Community Primary School by 98 places from September 2015
- ii) Delegates authority to the Interim Director of Children's Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.

GED ROWNEY

Interim Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Gary Langford, School Place Planning Manager Tel: 01273 481758

Local Members: Councillor Phil Scott Background Documents: None

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

1. Background:

- 1.1 East Sussex County Council undertook a consultation between 26th June and 24th July 2013 on a proposal to expand Robsack Wood Community Primary School by 98 places.
- 1.2 The proposal would provide an extra half a form of entry (14 places per year group, 98 places in total) in the north west of Hastings by September 2015, an area which has seen an increase in births of 21% between 2001/02 and 2010/11.

2. Purpose of report:

- 2.1 This report is in two parts:
- Part 1: the consultation process
 - Part 2: analysis of consultation responses

3. Part 1: the consultation process:

- 3.1 Approximately one thousand three hundred (1,300) consultation documents were distributed in accordance with The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). Consultees included for example: pupils; parents and carers; staff; other schools in Hastings; the local MP; the Borough Council; diocesan bodies and local early years providers. The full distribution list is provided in Table 1 below. The consultation document explained the proposal and provided a range of means to respond. These include; by freepost reply, online questionnaire or by emailing East Sussex County Council. The consultation document was also made available on the County Council's website.

Table 1: Consultation distribution list

Organisation	No. of copies
Robsack Wood Community Primary School – pupils and parents/carers	390
Robsack Wood Community Primary School – staff	65
Robsack Wood Community Primary School – governors	20
Robsack Wood Community Primary School – spares for main reception	30
All Hastings primary schools	15 copies each
All Hastings secondary schools	15 copies each
All Hastings special schools	15 copies each
Sussex Coast College Hastings	5
ESCC Councillors	50
ESCC Chief Officers Management Team	7
ESCC Children's Services Senior Management Team	5
ESCC contractors (e.g. catering, cleaning etc)	1 copy each
Amber Rudd MP	5
DFE	1
Hastings Borough Council	35
Diocese of Chichester (Church of England)	5
Diocese of Arundel and Brighton (Catholic)	5
Mayfields Surgery	30
Churchwood Medical Practice	30
South Saxons House Surgery	30
Lower Glen Family Practice	30
Sussex Voluntary and Community Learning Consortium	10
Hollington Library	30

Robsack Children's Centre	30
Churchwood Children's Centre	30
Carousel Nursery School	30
West St Leonards Early Years Centre	30
Little Dolphins Childminding Service	30
Trade Unions (e.g. Association of Teachers & Lecturers / NASUWT / NHT / NUT / Voice of the Union of Education Professionals / GMB / UNISON)	1 copy each
Total	1,300

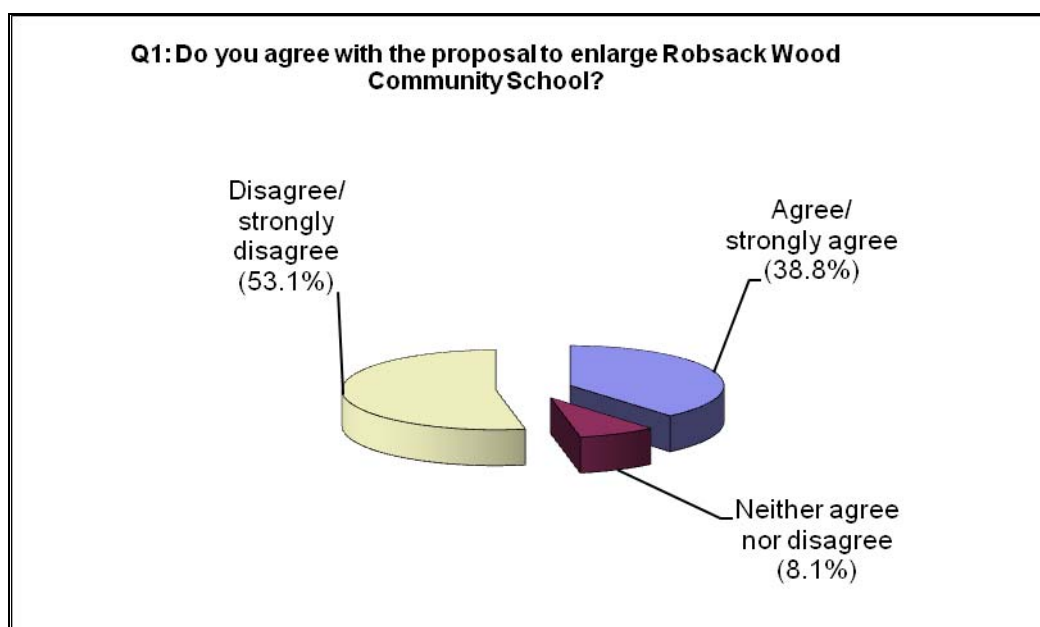
3.2 The consultation period ran from Wednesday 26th June to Wednesday 24th July 2013.

4. Part 2: analysis of consultation responses:

4.1 Question 1 on the response form asked people to indicate whether they agreed with the proposal to expand Robsack Wood Community Primary School. Only 98 people responded to this question, which equates to a response rate of 7.53% (98 out of 1,300). From the 98 responses:

- 38 (38.8%) supported the proposal
- 8 (8.1%) nether agreed or disagreed with the proposal
- 52 (53.1%) did not support the proposal.

4.2 The chart below illustrates the breakdown of responses.



4.3 Question 2 asked people to give reasons for their answers to question 1. The main areas of concern were:

- Overcrowding on the Robsack Wood site
- Potential impact on teaching and learning
- Parking
- Traffic congestion

4.4 While these are valid concerns, the Council would ensure that any design solution for expansion makes best use of the site to create an environment that has a positive impact on teaching and learning. Issues about traffic congestion and parking would be addressed through the statutory

planning process the Council has to go through before it is able to start building on site. This would provide people with a further opportunity to raise concerns about these particular issues.

- 4.5 Table 2 below provides a selection of comments received. A full list of comments is available for inspection.

Table 2: Selection of comments received

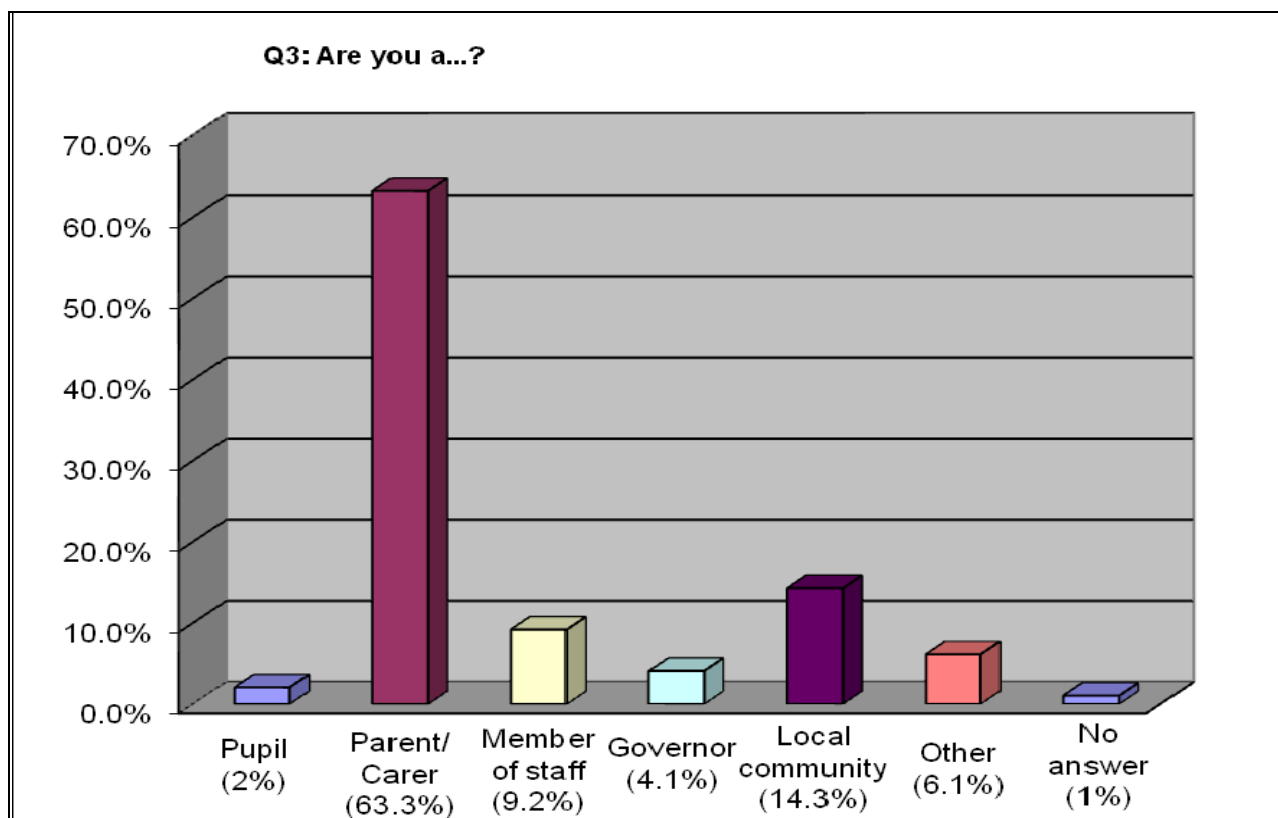
Comment summary	
1	<p>Strongly disagree. Robsack Wood is already too crowded. The Hall is too small, as are the KS1 & KS2 playgrounds. There have been various building works since my children started at Robsack, and I do not welcome any further disruption to their education.</p> <p>It seems to me that this is another short-term fix. You will need more spaces over the coming years. Why don't you build a new Primary School for the town to meet the rising birth rates?</p>
2	<p>Strongly disagree. I feel that to increase the pupil intake would compromise the high standard of education the school currently provides especially with the current headteacher retiring. I feel it's too much change at one time.</p>
3	<p>Strongly disagree. Robsack is a thriving school and I think that is due to being quite small. I think making this school bigger would ruin the school completely.</p>
4	<p>Strongly disagree. As a new convert to the area of 'Robsack School' living in Mayfield Heights, at present Bodiam Drive is taken over by children being dropped off by parents, if you have early doctor's appointments, forget it, trying to get past these parents who throw open doors on passing cars etc (not a thought for others) and forget trying to get to my house when all these parked cars exit after collecting children and they all turn into Mayfield Heights, then you can't get out. So the parked cars would increase, making matters worse, so parking is needed or controlled!</p>
5	<p>Strongly disagree. I strongly disagree with enlarging Robsack Wood, the main reason I chose this school is because it's small and my daughter gets on well here. Also I can't understand where or how you will enlarge it? It has nice surroundings, i.e. woodland and nice playground and field. It would be a shame to take some of that away and make extra classrooms.</p>
6	<p>Strongly disagree. I believe that the amount of cars this would generate would be a problem. It is already a nightmare dropping off and picking up. The side roads are all congested and the schools neighbours get very upset with the amount of cars using the side roads.</p>
7	<p>Strongly disagree. The area cannot currently cope with parent parking, with many parking their vehicles either on yellow lines or on the pavements. This proposal will increase the difficulties and local residents will not tolerate. There is also insufficient play space for children currently.</p>
8	<p>Strongly disagree. The school seems to be at maximum capacity already. The playgrounds are small although they have access to the field this is only possible in summer, dry times. The roads are dangerous with little support from authorities in the way of wardens, zebra crossing or lollipop lady. Also the hall is far too small for the pupils that are there now. Making lunch times rushed in particular.</p>
9	<p>Strongly agree. I wholeheartedly support the proposal to enlarge Robsack Wood school. My daughter has flourished there since attending Nursery. The teaching is of an excellent standard, the facilities are of a high quality and the Extended Schools Childcare is fantastic. Robsack certainly deserves its 'Outstanding' status.</p> <p>My only concern is the increased pressure on parking space in the surrounding streets and the ensuing congestion, especially with regards to buses being able to safely pass. I have witnessed several near accidents between cars, and cars and buses. This is especially a problem with the Icklesham Drive/Bodiam Drive junction. The recently introduced increase in yellow lines around that area means that cars are now being pushed up Icklesham Drive and also into Wittersham Rise. As a local resident, I am concerned that more cars will mean more parking problems further up Icklesham Drive with the prospect of our car not being able to get out of our driveway if someone parks across the driveway. May I suggest that local residents who may be affected have white 'no parking' lines across their</p>

	driveways free of charge? For the record, I walk my child to school and I do not drive her a couple of hundred yards down the road like other local parents do!
10	Strongly agree. For me it's the best school, my child has grown into a lovely person. He is doing very well at school. I moved my child to this school and he is doing so well. I'm very proud to say he goes to Robsack School and he has made me very proud for how hard he has worked. I drive my child to school from Bexhill to St. Leonards and I have to say it's the best thing.
11	Strongly agree. I agree because I believe more places are needed and they should be at a school that provides excellent teaching.
12	Agree. It makes sense to expand the existing facilities at Robsack Wood rather than build a new school. However, the impact of increased traffic and cars in the area needs to be considered carefully.
13	Agree. I agree that more children should be given the opportunity to attend Robsack Wood School, but I am concerned that staffing levels may not increase in line with the extension. However, if staffing levels should increase then I strongly agree with the proposal as Robsack Wood is a fantastic school.
14	Agree. For us it is not the size of the school but the quality of the facilities and the standard of teaching. If the proposed facilities are of a high enough standard and sufficient high quality teachers are placed at the school, then we have no issue. Our son is in favour as he says that if the school is bigger they will get more money to buy things the school needs.
15	Strongly agree. Excellent school - more children would be able to benefit from it. Applications far exceed places available. Size of increase would not affect current success and ethos of the school.
16	Agree. Providing that the traffic mitigation is improved and enforced. We live on Robsack and as the school is at the entrance to the only access road to the estate there are significant problems getting in or out at, or around 9am and 2.00-4.00pm, both for residents and the bus service. Also the community links and usage of the school, as originally planned, must be improved as it is a community school.

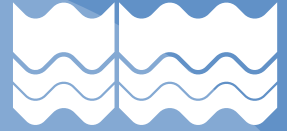
4.6 In answer to question 3, respondents classified themselves as:

- 2 (2%) were pupils at Robsack Wood
- 62 (63.3%) were parents/carers of a child at Robsack Wood
- 9 (9.2%) were members of staff at Robsack Wood
- 4 (4.1%) were members of the governing body at Robsack Wood
- 14 (14.3%) were members of the local community
- 6 (6.1%) were identified as 'other'
- 1 (1%) chose not to answer

4.7 The chart below illustrates the breakdown:



- 4.8 Of the 62 parents and carers who responded, 16 (25.8%) support the proposal, while 40 (64.5%) do not. 6 (9.7%) do not have a view either way.
- 4.9 2 pupils attending the school replied to the consultation. Both pupils (100%) disagree with the proposal.
- 4.10 Of the 13 members of staff and governors who responded, 10 (76.9%) support the proposal while 2 (15.4%) do not. 1 (7.7%) did not have a view either way.
- 4.11 14 members of the local community replied to the consultation. 6 (42.9%) support the proposal while 7 (50%) do not, generally for the reasons outlined in 4.3 above. 1 (7.1%) did not have a view either way.
- 4.12 The 6 people who responded under the heading 'other' included a Hastings Borough Councillor and members of the local community. 5 (83.3%) support the proposal, while 1 (16.7%) does not.
- 4.13 'About you' questions. We collect this information to ensure that we are seeking the views of everyone in our community and to demonstrate that we are complying with relevant diversity and equalities legislation. The responses to the 'About you' questions are available for inspection.
- 4.14 At the time of writing we had received 1 late consultation response, which has not been taken into account in the analysis above.
- 4.15 A copy of the consultation document is provided in **Appendix A**.



June 2013

Have your say on a proposal to increase the size of Robsack Wood Community Primary School

The consultation runs from 26 June to 24 July 2013.



What is the proposal?

The proposal is to permanently enlarge Robsack Wood Community Primary School from September 2015. The school would grow from 322 places to 420 places (ages 4-11). This would enable the school to admit up to 60 children in each age group.

This consultation document is for pupils, parents and carers, staff, the local community and other interested parties. East Sussex County Council will consider all the views put forward before a decision is taken by the Lead Members for Children's Services on whether to continue with the proposal to expand. We welcome your views on this proposal.

What is the background to this proposal?

In Hastings the main pressure on primary places comes from births which have risen from 938 in academic year 2001/02 to 1,239 in 2010/11 (an increase of 32%). This reflects what is happening to the birth rate in other parts of East Sussex and the country as a whole.

Hastings Borough, while constituting one primary school place planning area, is also divided into sub areas based on geographical clusters of schools. Robsack Wood Community Primary School is located in the north west area. Between 2001/02 and 2010/11 births in this area increased by 21% compared to 31% in the south east area, 36% in the north east area, 42% in the south west area and 32% across the Borough as a whole.

East Sussex County Council has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available. Since 2010/11 the Published Admission Number of 46 at Robsack Wood Community Primary School has been insufficient to meet demand for reception year places and the school has indicated that it wishes to permanently expand to two forms of entry (420 places) from September 2015 in order to serve the community.

Robsack Wood Community Primary School is a popular and successful school. It was rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted at its last inspection and has regularly been oversubscribed in recent years.

What size would the enlarged school be?

We propose to increase the size of Robsack Wood Community Primary School from one and a half forms of entry (322 places) to two forms of entry (420 places), enabling the school to admit up to 60 pupils in every year group. Robsack Wood's capacity would increase from 322 places in 11 classes to 420 places in 14 classes.

To support the expansion of the school, the premises would be extended to provide the additional classrooms and associated facilities. If approved, the Council intends to fund the building work from its capital programme.

The Council is very experienced in managing construction projects and the health and safety of children is paramount when any building project takes place. The build programme would be developed to minimise disruption to the school during this time. Concerns relating to planning and transport can be raised as part of the statutory planning process which is subject to a separate consultation.

The Council anticipates that building work would begin during summer 2014 with completion due in summer 2015.

Who makes the final decision and when?

The Council is the decision maker for this proposal. This is not a referendum but all of the views expressed during the consultation period together with other sources of information will be used to inform the decision.

Following consideration of the consultation responses we could choose to:

- stop the process - in this case the expansion of the school would not proceed;
- change the proposal - in this case the next steps would depend on what the proposed changes are; or
- continue with the proposal - we would publish a Statutory Notice for the expansion of the school in the local paper, probably in September 2013, which would be followed by a further 4-week period of consultation (known as the representation period).

We have a duty to make a final decision on the proposal within two months of the end of the representation period. In this instance, a decision would probably be taken in November 2013.

Who is being consulted?

We are consulting with pupils, parents and carers, staff, other local schools and trade unions. We are also consulting with a wide range of other groups including the Borough Council, the local MP, the Church of England and Catholic dioceses and the wider local community.

How do I have my say?

This consultation runs until **24 July 2013**.

You can give your views by:

- completing the attached questionnaire and returning it in the envelope provided
- completing the online questionnaire at: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/haveyoursay
- emailing the County Council at school.consultations@eastsussex.gov.uk quoting Robsack Wood in the subject line.



Consultation – Response Form

Our proposal is to enlarge Robsack Wood Community Primary School from 322 places to 420 places by September 2015. This would enable the school to admit up to 60 pupils in each year group.

East Sussex County Council would welcome your views on the proposal. Please complete this response form and return it to the address at the bottom of the page no later than 24 July 2013.

Q1. Do you agree with the proposal to enlarge Robsack Wood Community Primary School?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q2. If you wish, you can give your main reasons for your answers to Q1 above, and/or any other options you think the Council should consider:

Q3. Are you a...?

- Pupil at Robsack Wood Community Primary School
- Parent/carer of a child at Robsack Wood Community Primary School
- Member of staff at Robsack Wood Community Primary School
- Member of the governing body at Robsack Wood Community Primary School
- Member of the local community
- Other (please say) _____

Once completed, please tear off this page along the perforation, fold and return it in the window envelope provided by **24 July 2013** to the address below.

Please ensure that the address is clearly visible in the window of the envelope.

You don't need a stamp.

Primary School Consultation (Robsack Wood)
FREEPOST BR157
East Sussex County Council
County Hall
St Anne's Crescent
Lewes BN7 1SF

About you... We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally and that no one gets left out. That's why we ask you these questions. We won't share the information you give us with anyone else. We will only use it to help us make decisions and make our services better.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

Q4. Are you.....? Male Female Prefer not to say

Q5. How old are you? **Q6. What is your postcode?**

Q7. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong ? (Source 2011 census)

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British
<input type="checkbox"/> British	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> African
<input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy/Roma	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	<input type="checkbox"/> Arab	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

***Other Ethnic Group** If your ethnic group was not specified in the list please describe your ethnic group:

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q8. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

Yes No Prefer not to say

Q9. If you answered yes to Q7, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you.

You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these apply to you please select other and write in the type of impairment you have.

- Physical impairment
- Sensory impairment (hearing and sight)
- Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy
- Other, please specify
- Mental health condition
- Learning disability
- Prefer not to say

Q10. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief?

Yes No Prefer not to say

Q11. If you answered yes to Q9 which one?

Christian Hindu Muslim Any other religion, please specify

Buddhist Jewish Sikh

Thank you for providing this information, your feedback is important to us.

