Summary of Written Responses

Proposal to

- Expand School Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Culverden Down, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 9SH by increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 240 to 300 Year 7 places from September 2019.

As at 1 November 2018

Consultation documents (hard copies) distributed: approximately 2000
Responses received: 14

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parents/Carers	13	22	2	37
Governors	6			6
Members of Staff	10		1	11
Other Interested Parties (inc pupils)	2		1	2
Total	**28**	**20**	**4**	**56**

Reasons given for 'against' raised by respondents:

- Tunbridge Wells should have a new school rather than expansions (9)
- SKA should be expanded because it is not currently as big as Bennett Memorial Diocesan School and because it has no faith criteria (2)
- There are other outstanding schools in area that could be expanded (1)
- Other local schools not full eg Hayesbrook – funding should be used to increase their popularity (1)
- Admitting more pupils to Bennett may not solve the local problems as because of the faith criteria Bennett draws pupils from beyond the immediate local area (2)
- Extra curricular opportunities will be more limited because of growing size – the school might neglect to expand opportunities proportionately (7)
- The catering and eating facilities are already too stretched and waiting times are too long (18)
- Expansion could dilute or weaken Bennett's Christian character as more non-Christians could be admitted (3)

- There is a risk that the new buildings will be of low quality and unattractive (1)
- The ethos and culture of the school could be negatively affected (10)
- Playing field space is precious and should not be further eroded (6)
- Some of the existing accommodation is substandard is substandard and has not been invested in (3)
- There is too much traffic congestion locally (10)
- Not clear that the revenue funding per pupil would be enough to pay for classroom spaces needed for extra pupils (*NOTE: misunderstood information given*) (3)
- Additional burden on toilets could result in sewage problems (1)
- Money needs to be invested at Bennett to make it more suitable for pupils with disabilities (1)
- Staff might know children less well if there are more of them (8)
- Pressures on supervision and outside space at break and lunch (1)
- Not enough bus provision – students have to stand on the bus (1)
- Not sure how building eg sports hall, gym can be adapted for more students (1)
- Students feel loss of identity as less opportunities to represent school in teams and music groups, less contact with older students (role models) (1)
- Support staff (nurse, chaplain, SENCO, pastoral team) will be more stretched (3)
- Toilet facilities are out of date and not enough
- KCC should build a new school on Knights Park

<u>Reasons given for 'support' by respondents:</u>

- Bennett is an excellent school and more people ought to have the chance to attend it (17)
- Academic outcomes are very strong so it's an ideal school to expand (3)
- Pastoral care is very good so it would be good if more children benefited from this (4)
- The extra curricular opportunities are excellent and more pupils would allow these to expand further (1)
- Larger number of pupils would result in larger numbers doing Bennett's excellent Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme which would be to the good (1)

- The buildings are undersized for demand need bigger performing arts and worship space which funding could pay for (3)
- Provides outstanding teacher training (4)

Consultation event

In addition a public consultation event was held on 30 October from 4.00 to 5.30 pm. It had been advertised on the school website and on the approximately 2000 leaflets distributed. Three people attended this, all parents. One was also a close neighbour of the school.

- One was concerned about the potential impacts on behaviour of expansion, but after reassurance felt that, although her preference was for a new school in Tunbridge Wells, she would support the Bennett expansion as a 'next best' option.
- The second parent wanted reassurance that SEN provision would not be damaged by expansion, which we gave her. It was not clear what her view was once this reassurance had been given.
- The third parent thought the school was excellent and it was probably a good idea to expand, but mostly wanted to ask technical questions about buildings and finance.