

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**DATE: 24 MAY 2016**



**REPORT OF: MRS LINDA KEMENY, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS,  
SKILLS AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT  
MS DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS  
SERVICES AND RESIDENT EXPERIENCE**

**LEAD OFFICER: JOHN STEBBINGS, CHIEF PROPERTY OFFICER  
JULIE STOCKDALE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR SCHOOLS  
AND LEARNING (INTERIM)**

**SUBJECT: ASHLEY C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL, WALTON ON THAMES**

**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

To approve the Business Case for the expansion of Ashley C of E Primary School from a two form of entry school (420 places) to a three form of entry primary school (630 places) creating 210 additional places in Walton on Thames to help meet the basic need requirements in the planning area from September 2017.

This will be a phased building project which involves demolition and rebuilding of part of the school. The Council has received a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contribution from Elmbridge Borough Council to mitigate some of the cost of this project.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that, subject to the agreement of the detailed financial information for the expansion as set out in agenda item 21 in Part 2 of this agenda, the business case for the provision of an additional form of entry (210 places) primary places in the Walton and Hersham primary planning area be approved.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The proposal supports the Authority's statutory obligation to provide sufficient school places to meet the needs of the population in the Walton and Hersham area.

**DETAILS:**

**Background**

1. School rolls have been rising steadily across Elmbridge since 2003. Over this period the birth rate has risen by 24.6%; additionally families have chosen to move into the borough, in part due to housing development. Walton and Hersham primary school pupil numbers have reflected this borough trend and are not expected to peak until 2017. In 2014 there were around 430 applications for Reception places; by 2018 this is predicted to rise to 450 places, or fifteen forms

of entry (15 FE); this is one more form of entry (or 30 Reception places) per year than is currently provided in all the primary schools in the area.

2. The Walton and Hersham primary school planning area is served by six primary schools all delivering the infant curriculum: **Grovelands** Primary 2FE (which was expanded from an infant to an all through primary in 2014); **Bell Farm** Primary 3FE (also re-organised from junior to primary in 2014), **Burhill Primary** 3FE (re-organised from infant to primary in 2014 to create additional places); **Walton Oak** Primary 2 FE, **Cardinal Newman** RC Primary 2 FE and **Ashley** primary 2FE, although originally expanded from a 1 FE school in 2010. The combined Reception Published Admission Number (PAN) is therefore 420, providing 14FE in total. The shortfall is currently being met by schools accepting Reception 'bulge' classes and this has been the case since 2014.
3. To consistently provide the requisite fifteen Reception forms of entry, or an additional 210 primary places to meet the ongoing area demand, Surrey County Council needs to provide an additional form of entry.
4. Officers initially looked at the viability for expansion at all schools in the planning area and have and have concluded that Ashley would be the best option to supply the additional one more form of entry.
5. Details of the other schools in this planning area, which were initially considered for expansion and the reason for discounting each are detailed below:
  - **Cardinal Newman RC Primary:** this is currently a popular two form entry school which provides a catholic education and is Voluntary Aided. As such it sets its own admissions criteria and places are allocated to catholic children. The site is small and does not have its own playing fields; for all of these reasons it would not be an appropriate school to expand at present.
  - **Walton Oak Primary:** this school took a Reception 'bulge' class last year and we added an extra classroom; it is again at capacity and would require more accommodation. The school is organised as two classes in each year group and due to the nature of its intake the Head and governors are unwilling to expand further as they believe this would be to the detriment of the pupils and families they are supporting. A viability study indicated that, whilst expansion was technically possible, because the school is in an area of medium flood risk and the management were unwilling to support expansion we have ruled out Walton Oak.
  - **Burhill primary School:** this highly successful and popular school was expanded to three forms of entry in the recent past. The site is now at capacity and cannot be expanded any further other, than on a very temporary basis.
  - **Bell Farm Primary:** this a three form of entry school primarily serving Hersham. It is located next to Rydens Enterprise School and makes use of the secondary school's playing fields. The school is increasing in popularity and has recently been judged 'Good' by OFSTED. It took a bulge class in Reception in 2015 and cannot admit any more classes without further building work. However, as the school is already a 3 FE primary with potentially 630 on roll, it would be undesirable to make it any larger.

- Grovelands Primary: The school was expanded from a 3 FE infant to a 2 FE primary in 2014. It also has a nursery and a children's centre on site. The re-organisation has required additional temporary classrooms to be installed as the school had admitted a number of bulge classes and these now have to work their way through. The site cannot accommodate any more buildings and thus the school was not considered suitable for further expansion.
  - Ashley Primary: Whilst situated on a very restricted site in terms of building area, a viability study confirmed that the school site was capable of achieving an expansion. It is a very popular school with good academic standards and is situated in the heart of Walton, close to the centre of the demand for places. When approached by Surrey County Council and asked to consider permanent expansion both the school and the Diocese expressed support for the idea, consequently it was decided that this was the most viable option for permanent expansion of the potential schools.
6. The Government expects Local Authorities to expand successful and popular schools wherever possible, and this proposal meets that expectation. Ashley was judged as 'outstanding' by OFSTED at its last inspection in January 2007. It has not been re-inspected since then as its standards have remained high; it is always over-subscribed and is popular with parents locally.
  7. In the past year Ashley has taken a 'bulge class; admitting three forms of entry as a temporary measure. It has also indicated that it will do so again in September 2016 pending a decision from Surrey to fund the permanent building programme. The Ashley Governing Body and representatives of the Good Shepherd Academy Trust have formally determined that the school may expand in 2017.
  8. The building scheme has needed a comprehensive overview to address the complexity of the site and the significant accommodation changes that are required. The project will be delivered in phases in view of the restrictive nature of the site and in order to minimize disruption to the school.
  9. The proposal consists of the demolition of the caretaker's house, to be replaced by a new two storey building of four classrooms and group rooms; it will incorporate a small flat in the roof space for the resident caretaker. There will be two other new classrooms and adaptations to the hall to facilitate better dining arrangements for a greater number of pupils. Overall we intend to supply seven new classrooms in total, one of which has already been delivered through internal adaptations and is being used for the current bulge class.
  10. The proposed scheme is subject to planning permission and an application has been submitted to the Surrey Planning and Regulatory Committee and a decision is expected in June 2016.

<b>CONSULTATION:</b>
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11. The governing body of Ashley CE Primary School, in conjunction with The Good Shepherd Multi Academy Trust and Surrey County Council, consulted on the proposal to make a significant change to the academy by permanently expanding it in size from September 2017.
12. The public consultation was undertaken by the academy's governing body between 30 November 2015 and 10 January 2016. This was for 6 full weeks, The Department for Education guidance suggests that consultations should run for a minimum of 4 weeks and as far as possible run alongside admissions consultations if the change requires changes to the academy's admissions

arrangements. The consultation fully complied with this guidance and included documentation outlining the proposals for changes to the admissions arrangements which are consequent on the decision to expand.

13. A consultation document was published and all statutory stakeholders including parents and local residents were informed. In addition, two public meetings were held at the school on 7 and 9 December 2015.
14. The results of the public consultation were summarised in a report to the Governing Body that met on 14 January. The governors resolved to expand the school subject to planning and the funding being made available by Surrey County Council.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

15. There are risks associated with the project and a project risk register has been compiled and is regularly updated. A contingency allowance appropriate to the scheme has been included within the project budget to mitigate for potential identified risks.

#### **Financial and Value for Money Implications**

16. The project will be subject to robust cost challenge and scrutiny to drive optimum value as they progress. Further financial details are set out in the report circulated as item 20 in Part 2 of the agenda. These details have been circulated separately to ensure commercial sensitivity in the interests of securing best value.

#### **Section 151 Officer Commentary**

17. The Section 151 Officer confirms this scheme is included within the 2014/19 Medium Term Financial Plan.

#### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer**

18. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on a Local Authority (with responsibility for education) to ensure sufficient primary and secondary education provision is available to meet the needs of the population in its area.

#### **Equalities and Diversity**

19. The expansion of the school will not create any issues, which would require the production of an Equality Impact Assessment.
20. The new school building will comply with Disabilities Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations. The expanded school will provide employment opportunities in the area.
21. The school will be for children in the community served by the school. The admissions arrangements will give the highest priority to Looked After Children and pupils on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register and/or those who would benefit from a statement of educational need, thus supporting provision for our most vulnerable children. Children with siblings will receive the next priority, followed by those children living closest to the school. There is a proposal to amend the admissions criteria to enable the admission of up to ten pupils who do

not meet the denominational criterion but who live within 500 metres of the school. The proposals are fully compliant with the Schools Admissions Code.

22. The school will be expected to contribute towards community cohesion and will be expected to provide the normal range of before and after school clubs as are provided in a typical Surrey County Council school.

#### **Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications**

23. This proposal would provide increased provision for primary places in the area, which would be of benefit to the community served by the school. This means it would therefore also be of benefit to any Looked After Children who will attend the school.

#### **Climate change/carbon emissions implications**

24. The design philosophy is to create buildings that will support low energy consumption, reduce solar gain and promote natural ventilation. The school will be built to the local planning authorities adopted core planning strategy.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

If approved, to proceed to complete tenders and subsequent contract award through delegated decision.

#### **Contact Officer:**

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#### **Consulted:**

Tony Samuels, Cabinet Associate for the Built Environment and Local Member for Walton South and Oatlands – Elmbridge  
Julie Fisher, Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director for Children, Schools and Families  
Paula Chowdhury, Strategic Finance Manager – Business Services

#### **Annexes:**

Part 2 report with financial details attached to agenda as item 21

#### **Sources/background papers:**

- The Education Act 1996
- The School Standards Framework Act 1998
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Ashley Governing Body – Public Consultation Report
- Report to Cabinet: Schools Capital Budget Allocations Service update based on latest or most appropriate report year and version

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