

## SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

## CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

DATE: 3 DECEMBER 2013

LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

SUBJECT: PROPOSED EXPANSION OF WEST BYFLEET INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL FROM 2 TO 3 FORMS OF ENTRY



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**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

There is increasing pressure for primary school places in Woking. In addition to the demand generated by an increasing birth rate, there is a need to provide more school places in the Borough as a result of additional housing and net inward migration. The Local Authority has recently consulted on the proposed expansion of West Byfleet Infant and Junior Schools in partnership with the Governing Bodies of both schools.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning determine to publish statutory notices indicating the Local Authority's intention to expand the schools from two to three forms of entry from September 2015.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in Surrey. Permanent expansions have been recently commissioned at a number of primary schools in Woking including Maybury Primary School, Beaufort Primary School, Goldsworth Primary School, Brookwood Primary School, The Marist Primary School and St Dunstan's Primary School. Even with these additional places, most primary schools in Woking are expected to be full and to continue to be full in the future and more schools places are needed. This is the case in the West Byfleet and Byfleet primary planning area.

**DETAILS:****The Proposal**

1. Surrey County Council, in partnership with the Governors of West Byfleet Infant School and West Byfleet Junior School, is proposing that both schools expand from two to three forms of entry with a new Published Admission Number of 90. This would increase the capacity of the infant school from 180 to 270 and the capacity of the junior school from 240 to 360 pupils. The proposal would be effective from September 2015.

**Rationale**

2. Demand for school places – Demand for school places has increased significantly in Woking in recent years. In 2011 the County Council commissioned over a thousand additional school places in the Borough,

permanently expanding primary schools including Maybury Primary School, Westfield Primary, Beaufort Primary, St Dunstan's Primary, The Marist Primary and Goldsworth Primary. Even with these expansions, all primary schools in Woking are expected to be full and to continue to be full in the future. Three further projects are being planned in the Woking area with the West Byfleet Infant and Junior expansion proposal being one of those projects.

3. There are a number of different factors that can affect the demand for school places in an area. The most important is the birth and fertility rates in an area. Based on figures provided by the Office for National Statistics, births in Woking dipped from 1997 to a low point in 2001. Births then rose quite sharply year on year to 2007 before flattening out through to 2008. Births then rose again in 2009 and 2010. It should be noted that the recent increases in applications are unlikely to be the result of the number of births alone. There are other factors such as additional pupils from housing growth, inward and outward migration, parental preferences and the changing percentage of parents applying for independent or private provision - all of which can affect the number of applications in any given year making applications more difficult to model.
4. Housing development in the Borough - Woking Borough Council is the responsible authority for housing, it is for Surrey County Council to ensure there is sufficient infrastructure associated with population growth from housing. Between the period 2010 and 2027 Woking Borough Council are looking to provide just short of 5000 additional homes in the Borough to meet its housing targets – 35% of this will be affordable housing. Most development will be on previously developed land and although the expected additional units in West Byfleet are likely to be modest there is anecdotal evidence of additional units in the area being generated from the existing housing stock (larger houses being divided into two or three units).
5. On top of an increasing birth rate and additional housing, it would appear that Woking has in the past couple of years experienced net inward migration (more people moving into the area than out) which is consistent with the profile of Woking as an urban area with good employment opportunities and transport links to London.
6. In light of the above, it is clear that Woking's population is growing - it is second only to Epsom and Ewell in Surrey in terms of population growth since the last census but its 0-4 population has grown significantly more than any other Borough. There are about 1600 more 0-4 year olds now than in 2001 - a 28% increase. It is crucial that sufficient educational provision is commissioned in the Borough to keep pace with the growing population of school age children.
7. Parental Preferences - the Local Authority has a duty to secure diversity in the provision of schools and to increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of schools. West Byfleet Infant School and West Byfleet Junior School are both popular schools and have been heavily oversubscribed against their published admission number of 60 for the last 7 years by about a class of children. The Local Authority has a presumption to expand popular and successful schools where the demand for those places are demonstrable.

8. Location of pupils – The presumption to expand successful schools is not an absolute. The Local Authority must also consider the location of pupils in relation to schools as it also seeks to plan provision as close to the pupil population as possible so that local pupils can attend local schools. In mapping the location of all 2013 applicants looking for a reception place in Woking this year (and those that will be seeking junior provision in 2016) there were 75 children living within 0.5 miles of the school with 197 pupils living within a mile of the school. The figures were very similar in 2012 with 70 children living within half a mile of the school and 189 living with a mile. There is therefore a large number of pupils within good proximity to the school with a high percentage of those pupils with the potential to walk, scoot or cycle into school.

#### **CONSULTATION:**

9. Public consultation was undertaken on this proposal at the start of the academic year. A consultation document was published to all statutory stakeholders including parents and local residents. The document was published on 17 October 2013 with consultation responses required by 21 November 2013. In addition to this, two public meetings were held at the schools on 11 November 2013 – both at the infant and junior schools. This was an opportunity for parents, pupils, school staff and local residents to learn in a bit more detail what the proposals are and to ask questions to the school and the Local Authority.
10. The public meetings were relatively well attended with 80-90 people attending in total but there has been little response to the consultation with only 16 responses received during the four week period. This includes all written responses either in response form, email or petition format. A breakdown of responses is given below.
- Parent (Nursery, pre-school or main school) – 12
  - Parent of a child who may go to these schools / other school – 6
  - Pupil - 2
  - Local Resident - 1
11. Of those that responded, nine people agreed that more school places were needed in the area, three did not answer either way, and one person disagreed. On the second question, eight people agreed that West Byfleet Infant and Junior School should expand, two people disagreed and the remaining six people didn't offer a view either way or raised concerns without clearly stating their answer to the question.
12. In broad terms, there was very little disagreement with the need for more places – most parents and residents accepted that more school places are needed in the area. However there were concerns raised by parents and residents, the main issues raised are captured below.
- The majority of the concerns related to the nature of the building solution – particularly around whether existing provision would be lost, the nature of the existing buildings (old, small and cramped in places) the sizes of current teaching spaces and central support areas including kitchens and the disruption on site as a result of new building works. There was an acceptance that the proposal was needed but it needed 'to be done properly'.

- (although not subject to the consultation), the next biggest issue raised was about the school admitting a bulge class in the existing ICT suite ahead of permanent expansion on the grounds that this is a very small space and on the grounds that it feels as though this is being 'rushed through'. Some parents felt that 2015 for expansion is OK but that an additional class in 2014 would be too soon.
  - There was significant concern raised about the traffic issues that already affect the school and how this would be exacerbated by an expansion. Camphill Road is a busy road with an existing 'chicane' system that manages flow of traffic outside the school. There were a mixture of views on whether this should be removed or retained and more general views that mitigation measures would be important for this proposal to be successful – possibly by providing parking elsewhere but near to the site.
13. Other concerns / issues raised but less frequently in the responses where the following
- Level of consultation and further opportunities to comment on the proposals as they progress.
  - Why new school provision is not being considered.
  - Whether this is needed in light of recently proposed West Byfleet Free School and proposed expansion at Pyrford Primary School.
  - Potential distraction from the school and leadership and management focus on improving / maintaining good standards.
  - Concerns relating to the construction phase in terms of management, construction traffic, remaining use of land between the two school sites, car parking on the site and impact on local amenity.
14. Given that there are just short of 420 pupils at the two schools, the response rate to the consultation was low but not untypical for consultation exercises of this nature. There was a reasonable number of people in total who attended the public meetings and there was plenty of discussion in these meetings with parents making their views known there. It may be that following this meeting that parents didn't feel a need to formally respond to the consultation based on the information and responses provided at these meetings.
15. Given the response rate, the results of the consultation cannot be said to be representative but all stakeholders have been given the opportunity to make their views known. It is the officer's view that the low response probably reflects general approval for the proposal in principle but there is clearly more work to do to address the building and traffic / transport related issues that were raised in the consultation. It also reflects the high level of informal consultation that has taken place with schools prior to the formal consultation. It is probably fair to say that of the parents that responded they were more comfortable with expansion in 2015 but not happy about the school admitting a bulge class in 2014.

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

16. Surrey County Council will be delivering and managing this project. The in house project management team will have compiled a project risk register and will monitor and update this document on at regular intervals. West Byfleet Infant and Junior School are on a very large site but located tightly to

the highway with challenging access arrangements. The current strategy involves creating new staff parking facilities from Leisure Lane which is not currently in the County Council's ownership which is a significant risk. Early discussions have taken place with the owners of this road which have proved positive but there are no formal agreements at this stage. It will be important that the school, contractor and SCC project management work closely together to manage the risks in this regard to ensure the site is safe, the compound and access points are sensible and that pupil safety is paramount.

17. Other risks relate to the capital budget and programme for the scheme. A full planning application has not yet been submitted so it is not yet clear that mitigation measures might be necessary in terms of local amenity and traffic as well as the capital budgets that might be required for their implementation. This risk will be managed by ensuring a contingency sum is budgeted as part of this project. In terms of timescales, September 2015 is considered achievable and there is some allowance in the programme for delays with the planning application or during the construction phase.

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

18. The full business case detailing the financial and value for money implications will be completed as part of the tendering and contracting phase. This scheme is included in the 2013/18 medium term financial plan.

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

19. The Section 151 Officer confirms that this scheme is included in the current 2013/18 medium term financial plan and that the full financial implications will be detailed in the business case prior to contract tender.

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

20. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on local education authorities to secure that efficient primary education is available to meet the needs of the population of their area. Section 5 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 places a duty to promote high standards. Therefore, there is a duty to provide efficient education and sufficient schools to do so.

#### **Equalities and Diversity**

21. A full equalities impact assessment has not been undertaken on this proposal as it is unlikely that the proposal would have a negative impact on any groups with protected characteristics. The school does serve both traveller families and families from the armed services but this proposal ensures that there will be sufficient places for children from these groups to attend school in the future. The proposal does not change the nature of the admissions criteria for the school.
22. The new school building will comply with all DDA (Disabilities Discrimination Act) regulations. The expanded school will provide additional employment opportunities in the area.

23. The school will be for children in the community served by the school. If there is sufficient provision available, then it would be beneficial for all children, including vulnerable children.
24. The school will be expected to contribute towards community cohesion and will be expected to provide the normal range of before and after schools clubs as are provided in a typical Surrey County Council school.

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

25. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. The new buildings will comply or exceed Building Regulations. The contractor will be required to provide a Site Waste Management Plan.

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

26. If statutory notices are published for this proposal a further four weeks of representations will be allowed for any final comments to be made from members of the public, local business and other relevant organisations.
27. A final report will go to the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning on 12 February 2014 whereupon a final decision will be made on the proposal (which will remain subject to the successful approval of a full planning application and approval on the feasibility cost of the scheme).

#### **Contact Officer:**

Kieran Holliday, School Commissioning Officer (North West), 020 8541 7383

#### **Consulted:**

All schools in Woking (including New Haw and the Grange)  
 Pupils and parents of West Byfleet Infant and Junior School  
 The Governing Bodies of West Byfleet Infant and Junior School  
 Local Residents  
 Local Members

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

- Proposal to expand West Byfleet Infant and Junior School, October 2013. A copy of this report can be found here on the SCC website by navigating to, or clicking on, the following: [Learning > Schools > Education Consultation and Plans](#)