

**CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING****DATE: 13 MARCH 2014****LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR  
OF CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES****SUBJECT: PROPOSED EXPANSION OF SAYES COURT PRIMARY  
SCHOOL FROM 1 TO 2 FORMS OF ENTRY****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

There is increasing pressure for primary school places in Runnymede. 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. In partnership with the Interim Executive Board, the Local Authority has recently consulted on the proposed expansion of Sayes Court from one to two forms of entry by 2015. The Cabinet Member is asked to consider the results of the consultation and to decide whether to publish statutory notices indicating the Local Authority's intention to proceed with the proposal.

**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 Sayes Court Primary School from one to two forms of entry by September 2015.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in Surrey. Demand for school places has increased significantly in Runnymede in recent years. Expansions have been commissioned at a number of primary schools in Runnymede including Darley Dene Infant School, Trumps Green Infant School, St Ann's Heath Junior School, Lyne and Longcross Church of England Infant School and Thorpe Church of England Infant School. Even with these additional places, most primary schools in Runnymede are expected to be full and to continue to be full in the future and more schools places are needed.

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

1. The County Council, in partnership with the Interim Executive Board of Sayes Court Primary School is proposing that the school expands from a 1 form entry primary school with a Published Admission Number of 30 (total capacity of 210 pupils), to a 2 form entry primary school with a Published Admission Number of 60 (total capacity of 420 pupils). Subject to consultation, this proposal will become effective from September 2015. Additional accommodation will be provided at the school to cater for the additional pupils joining the school.

## Rationale

2. Demand for school places – Demand for school places has increased significantly in Runnymede in recent years. 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 Runnymede dipped from 1996 to a low point in 2001 with about 815 births a year. Births have risen since 2006 to just under a 1000 resulting in an increase in the number of families applying for a school place. It should be noted that the recent increases in applications in Runnymede 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 application yields difficult to model.

Increases in demand are not uniform across the Borough with some areas experiencing more pressure than others. Addlestone is an area where the pressure has increased over the last three or four years. There are eight primary schools in Addlestone with a collective PAN of 270 (the number of places those schools admit at Year R). The total numbers on the roll at year R in these schools has risen from 217 in the academic year 2010/2011 to 285 in 2013/14, with the Local Authority commissioning a bulge class at Sayes Court in 2013 to meet the additional demand. A further 30 places at Year R in the area will help meet the additional demand and provide a small number of space places to enable some degree of parental choice.

3. Housing development in the Borough - Runnymede Borough Council is responsible for housing. They are in the process of consulting on their core strategy which will, among other things, identify how many additional homes may be provided in the Borough in the future. Targets range from a minimum of circa 2400 to a high of 4500 additional dwellings in the Borough by 2026. How many additional dwellings are actually provided will depend on the availability and suitability of land in the Borough. Although the number of houses and the timeframes for when development will take place are not yet certain, it should be noted that all primary schools in the Borough are currently near capacity already. It should also be noted that with the exception of the proposed development at the old 'DERA' site, most of the additional housing is likely to be in the existing urban areas of Addlestone, Chertsey and Egham and it is therefore important to build capacity now and in the future in these areas.
4. 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. Sayes Court was oversubscribed in 2013 for the first time in a few years as the pressure for places has increased. The school requires improvement so it is not clear whether the school will continue to be oversubscribed in the future, however the improvements that the school have made to date, and the support that the school is receiving from the Local Authority as well as the Bourne Academy Trust should stand the school in good stead for the future. Growing to two forms of entry will help the school to improve in the future and offers the following key benefits: (i) increased leadership capacity, (ii) economies of scale and financially more viable, (iii) sharing of teaching expertise and staff retention.

- 5. Location of pupils – Parental preference is important, but the Local Authority is mindful that popularity can be transient and that additional provision, where possible, should be located as local to the demand as possible. Surrey County Council believes that local schools should serve their local communities. Sayes Court is in good proximity to the main pupil population in Addlestone. In 2013 there were 96 reception age pupils living within half a mile of the school against an available 30 places with a similar number in 2014.
- 6. Site and Logistics - Sayes Court was formally a 2FE Junior school so there is some spare capacity in existing buildings which will be important when planning the project. The site is more than large enough for a 2FE primary school with no significant planning policy constraints identified at this stage. Surrey County Council will be able to phase the project avoiding the need for temporary accommodation. Given the nature of the sites that other primary schools occupy there are few alternatives to expanding Sayes Court that are deemed acceptable from a cost and planning point of view.

**CONSULTATION:**

- 7. Public consultation was undertaken on this proposal in January 2014. A consultation document was published to all statutory stakeholders including parents and local residents. The document was published on 14 January 2014 with consultation responses required by 14 February 2014.
- 8. A public consultation meeting was held at the school on 29 January that was relatively well attended with school governors, parents and local residents in attendance. There has been only a small response to the formal consultation with only 14 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 – 7
  - Local Resident – 4
  - Someone who works at the school / Governor – 1
  - Other / Not specified - 2

- 9. There were two questions asked in the consultation response and the following responses recorded:

Q1. There is a need for more school places in the area:

Agree: 7  
 Disagree: 1  
 Don't know / not specified: 6

Q2. Sayes Court Primary School should permanently expand to become a 2-form entry primary school from 2015.

Agree: 2  
 Disagree: 7  
 Don't know / not specified: 5

10. Given the relatively modest response there is little value in breaking down the responses by respondent type however a summary of the main issues raised at the public consultation meeting and in the response forms is given below.
11. The most common issue raised in the consultation was related to traffic and parking concerns. A number of residents (mainly from Orchard Way) responded to the consultation describing their concerns about the expansion and that it would exacerbate further what they see as a problem already. This includes the inappropriate parking practices of some parents (including blocking residents' driveways and parking on kerbs blocking the path), the abusive nature of some parents when they are confronted on this, the lack of parking on the school site, the lack of a pickup and drop off area (which many argued should be reinstated) and the general problems generated by the increase in volume on what is already a busy residential area. It should be noted that these issues were not solely raised by residents, with parents concerned about these issues also. Respondents to the consultation are keen to see how these issues could be addressed as part of the School's Travel Plan and as part of the traffic assessment that is carried out prior to any planning application.
12. Whilst many of the parents that responded to the consultation could see the benefits of the school growing they were concerned about the impact this proposal would have given the recent poor Ofsted report on the school. Some parents felt that this could be a distraction from the improvements that the school needs to make to current standards. There were many other issues cited but to a lesser extent – these included (i) the potential noise and disruption from building work, (ii) the quality of the building work and whether other parts of the school (not just classrooms) would be expanded, (iii) the small school ethos that might be lost.
13. 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 many of the objections to the proposal could be overcome if some of the traffic / transport related issues raised in the consultation are addressed.

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

14. 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 at regular intervals. The current strategy is to create additional classroom accommodation to the rear of the site which is well screened from existing residential properties. There are no significant planning risks at this stage. It will be important that the school, contractor and Surrey County Council project management team work closely together to manage the construction risks to ensure the site is safe, the compound and access points are sensible, and that pupil safety is paramount.
15. 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.

16. From April 1 2014 Sayes Court is expected to become an Academy as part of the Bourne Academy Trust. Whilst noteworthy, in the case of expansions to meet basic need, the Local Authority is blind to the organisational status of a school when considering where additional places are best provided.

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

17. 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 2014/19 Medium Term Financial Plan.

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

18. The Section 151 Officer confirms that this scheme is included in the current 2014/19 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**

19. 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.
20. The *School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007* contain the regulations that apply to prescribed alterations. The DfE has published two pieces of Guidance relating to prescribed alterations: *Expanding a Maintained Mainstream School or Adding a Sixth Form* and *Making Changes to a Maintained Mainstream School (Other than Expansion)*. These contain both statutory guidance (i.e. guidance to which proposers and decision makers have a statutory duty to have regard) and non-statutory guidance on the process for making changes to school provision. This Guidance has been followed by the School Commissioning Officer in the development of this proposal.

#### **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. A full business case detailing the financial and value for money implications of this proposal will be completed and submitted to Cabinet for their approval as part of the tendering and contracting phase.

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#### **Contact Officer:**

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

#### **Consulted:**

All schools in Runnymede  
Pupils and parents of Sayes Court Primary School  
The Interim Executive Board / Bourne Academy Trust  
Local Residents  
Local Members

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

- Proposal to expand Sayes Court Primary School, January 2014. 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](#)