

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE: 24 JUNE 2014



REPORT OF: MRS LINDA KEMENY, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

LEAD OFFICER: JOHN STEBBINGS, CHIEF PROPERTY OFFICER

PETER- JOHN WILKINSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

SUBJECT: STAMFORD GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL, EPSOM, PROPOSED EXPANSION FROM A 2 FORM OF ENTRY PRIMARY (420 PLACES) TO A 3 FORM OF ENTRY PRIMARY (630 PLACES) AN ADDITIONAL 210 PLACES

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

To approve the Business Case for the expansion of Stamford Green Primary School from a 2 form of entry primary (420 places) to a 3 form of entry primary (630 places) creating 210 additional places in Epsom to help meet the basic need requirements in the Epsom and Ewell area.

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 1 form of entry (210 places) primary places in Epsom 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 Epsom and Ewell area.

DETAILS:

Background

1. There is a clear need for additional primary school places in the North West Epsom planning area. This is demonstrated by the Pupil Forecast data which is derived using methodology that takes into account births in the borough, housing trajectories and recent trends in admissions and parental preferences. This school place planning area contains three primary schools: Southfield Park Primary, which was rated as an 'Outstanding' school at its last inspection in 2010 and has already been expanded to 2 Form of Entry (FE). It cannot grow any larger as it occupies a compact site.

2. Epsom Primary School: this is currently a 2 FE school judged as 'Requires Improvement' by OFSTED in 2013. It occupies a compact site in the town with very little playground space. It has historically been undersubscribed in terms of parental first preference applications but has been filled up with lower preferences. The frontage of this Victorian building is listed and there are planning restrictions on what may be done on the site. For all of these reasons further permanent expansion has been discounted, although the school agreed to temporarily expand in September 2013 to help relieve the pressure for places in the area.
3. Stamford Green Primary School, also judged 'Good' by Ofsted in 2010, is willing to permanently expand providing it has new accommodation designed to enhance the quality of the educational opportunities on offer. The staff and governors have been working closely with Surrey County Council and an architect to agree a design which would incorporate a block of new classrooms and internally remodel some of the existing accommodation. The governing body is committed to its provision of 'wrap around care' (Breakfast and After School Clubs) and is keen to improve the access to the school for pedestrians and vehicles in response to parents' and residents' concerns about the volume of traffic and safety.
4. The local authority has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and it is not possible to expand either of the other schools in the planning area. Building a new school has been suggested and the council is open to this suggestion in the longer term, should the need for school places continue to rise. However, at present there is a clear need for a maximum of only 30 more places per Reception year up to the end of our forecast period (2029/30). Unless this changes it would not be financially viable to build another school when the places could be provided more economically by expanding an existing high performing school.
5. The Cabinet is asked to approve the business case for the expansion of the school. Financial details have been circulated as agenda item 21 in Part 2 of the agenda. Subject to approval, the works will be tendered and a contract awarded. The project will be delivered by autumn 2015 to provide a total of 210 additional primary school places to meet the demand within Epsom.

CONSULTATION:

6. A public consultation was carried out between 20 May and 28 June 2013. This was a six week period (i.e. two weeks longer than recommended in Department for Education (Dfe) Guidance). A consultation document was produced and circulated to all parents, other stakeholders and interested parties. In addition two meetings were held at the school on 3 June; these were attended by approximately seventy parents and residents. The consultation document was also published on the Surrey County Council website and the local Borough and County councillors received copies of this in time to make representations at the first Cabinet Member meeting on 10 July 2013.
7. The Council has received 136 written consultation responses, a petition opposing the expansion signed by 309 people and a letter also opposing the expansion from Mr D Kitchen, the Neighbourhood Watch representative in Stamford Ward. An analysis of the consultation response forms is given in the table below:

Respondent	Number of Forms /emails received by 1/7/13	Against	For	Don't Know/undecided
Total Responses received	136 + petition + letter D Kitchen	66 + letter + petition	58	11
Employee of the school	15	1	15	0
School governor	5	0	5	0
Parents of children on roll	118	30	41	8
Other parents	4	3	1	0
Other	38	33	2	3

8. The governing body plus 58 respondents are in agreement with the proposal. Eleven people state that they do not know whether or not they are in favour; 66 respondents who sent in individual forms are against the proposal. The 309 petitioners are also opposed to the expansion.
9. The main concerns raised by parent respondents was the need to retain the 'family ethos' of the school; the perception being that this was much easier if a school is small in size. To some extent this concern was addressed by the Head teacher at the public meeting where she explained in some detail how she would manage a larger organisation and how larger schools can be just as successful. Another concern was that the school would not have sufficient resources for the greater number of pupils.
10. Many residents, and some parents, raised the issue of the inconvenience of the building project and ongoing traffic problems associated with access to the school. They stated that the expansion is likely to cause further traffic in what is primarily a residential area served by narrow roads. Residents feel that this is especially likely if there is no vehicular access to the site that would enable parents to drive in, drop off or pick up, and drive out of the school. Officers are aware of the strength of feeling in this respect and a traffic survey has been undertaken with a view to reviewing traffic management issues at the school. This aspect of the proposal will be addressed in the planning stages with pupil safety considerations being of paramount importance. The council's policies on safeguarding, site security and environmental issues are being factored into the final design for the new building and remodelling works.
11. A number of respondents commented that they understood the need for additional school places but stated that their preferred option would be for the council to build a new school to serve the new developments on the former hospital sites in Epsom. The Residents' petition states this as a clear alternative suggestion and suggests that Section 106 planning obligations and funding should finance such a scheme. In fact the Section 106 money received from developers providing the new housing estates on the former NHS sites was used to fund the building and later expansion of Southfield Park Primary School.
12. Those people in support of the proposal recognised the need for more school places and welcomed the opportunity to provide these at Stamford Green

Primary in order to benefit the local community. Some qualified their support for expansion on the understanding that adequate resourcing of the project and traffic management measures would be assured.

13. Permission was given for Statutory Notices to be published and these appeared on the school's main gate and website on 9 September 2013; on the Surrey County Council website and in the local press the week beginning 16 September. The Notice outlined the details of the proposal to expand the school and responses were invited from the public via the County Council's website.
14. The Council received four emails in response to the Statutory Notice: one from a representative of the allotment holders seeking clarification how the proposed expansion would affect the allotments. A reply was sent assuring the enquirer that the proposed building would not affect the allotments as it would not exceed the curtilage of the school site. A second enquirer was asking for advice on the rules governing the Public Notice consultation. A third email submitted comments about the lack of information relating to the Breakfast club and Extended Services provision. Their perception was that there would be inadequate provision for children if the school expanded. It was felt that this aspect also needed to be taken account of within the planning process. This enquirer was referred to the school for an explanation of how this provision would be managed as this is not part of the proposal to expand the school. An additional question was asked by the same person about what the County Council was doing to address the traffic issues. Finally, the same enquirer stated that there had been no attempt to assess the impact on children of the proposal. This again is a matter for the professional staff and the Governing Body of the school to address and will have been taken into account by them as part of their decision to agree, in principle, to expand.
15. 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 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.
16. Having considered the responses to the consultation, the Cabinet Member published notices on 12 December 2013. Following this notice there have been no representations received.
17. The scope of the works include:
 - Remodelling of front entrance
 - Additional amenities
 - 9 Classrooms in a standalone block
 - Linked walkway to main block
 - Soft and hard play
 - Paths and landscaping
18. During the iterative planning and highways consultation process a number of suggested improvements have been received to mitigate the impact of the

expected increase in local traffic. These are being reviewed and adjustments made as part of the planning process.

19. The SCC Local Member has been consulted on the proposal.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

20. The planning application was validated on 12 March 2014 and a decision is expected by 4 July 2014.
21. There are risks associated with the projects and project risk registers have been compiled and are 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

22. 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 21 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

23. Section 151 Officer confirms that this scheme is included in the 2014/19 Medium Term Financial Plan.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

24. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on Local Authorities (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

25. The expansion of the school will not create any issues, which would require the production of an Equality Impact Assessment.
26. The new school building will comply with Disabilities Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations. The expanded school will provide employment opportunities in the area.
27. 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.
28. 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.

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications

29. This proposal would provide increased provision in the area, which would be of benefit to all in the community served by the schools. This means it would therefore also be of benefit to any looked after children who will attend the school.

Climate change/carbon emissions implications

30. 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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Melanie Harris, School Commissioning Officer – 020 8541 9556

Consulted:

Tony Samuels, Cabinet Associate Member for Assets and Regeneration Programmes
Stella Lallement, Local Member, Epsom West, Epsom and Ewell
Julie Fisher, Strategic Director for Business Services
Paula Chowdhury, Strategic Finance Manager – Business Services

Annexes:

None - 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
- Report to Cabinet: Schools Capital Budget Allocations Service update based on latest or most appropriate report year and version