

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: ASHFORD PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL, PROPOSED EXPANSION FROM A 2 FORM OF ENTRY PRIMARY (420 PLACES) TO A 3 FORM OF ENRY PRIMARY (630 PLACES) CREATING AN ADDITIONAL 210 PLACES



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SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

To approve the Business Case for the expansion of Ashford Park Primary School from a 2 form of entry (420 places) to a 3 form of entry (630 places) creating 210 additional places in Ashford to help meet the basic need requirements in the Spelthorne area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that, subject to the agreement of the detailed financial information for the expansion as set out in agenda item 23 in Part 2 of this agenda, the business case for the provision of an additional 1 form of entry (210 places) primary places in Ashford 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 Spelthorne area.

DETAILS:

Background

1. Based on the most recent forecast of pupil numbers, which projects the requirement for school places up to 2020 and beyond, one additional form of entry in this planning area would meet the basic need. Expansion of an existing school is the logical and most financially prudent response to this issue.
2. Ashford Park Primary is fully subscribed with first preferences up to its Planned Admission Number (PAN). It is an improving 2 Form of Entry (FE) school with a roll of approximately 420 pupils in total. At its last OFSTED inspection in

December 2012 the school received a judgement that it required improvement in some key areas. Since then the school has received regular monitoring visits from HMI/OFSTED and support from the Local Authority. The HMI report monitoring report notes that "senior leaders have a clear vision for the school and have had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching throughout the school". The standards at Ashford Park have continued to improve and it is anticipated that the standard of education there will be judged as 'good' at its next inspection which is due by December 2014.

3. Also on the same campus are a private pre-school and a Surrey County Council maintained specialist centre for primary age pupils with moderate learning difficulties. This proposal does not include the expansion of either of these facilities, both of which will be retained.
4. Ashford Park is currently the most suitable primary school for expansion in the area for a number of reasons:

This planning area contains seven primary schools:

- Ashford C of E Primary, which is a 2 FE school on a small site with no room to expand further; this school was also judged by Ofsted as requiring improvement in January 2013.
 - Clarendon Primary: this is currently a very popular 1 FE school which received a Grade 2 interim judgement by Ofsted in 2012, but is unable to expand further due to site capacity restrictions.
 - Kenyngton Manor Primary: inspected in September 2012, placed in the 'special measures' category and subsequently converted to a sponsored academy within The Howard of Effingham Learning Partnership. The school is 2 FE and has no room to expand on its present site.
 - Spelthorne School: inspected in November 2012 and judged as 'good' Grade 2. This is a 2 FE primary that has taken an additional Reception ('bulge') class in both 2011 and 2013 and is already due to permanently expand to a 3 FE school in 2014. St Michael's RC Primary: a 2FE school that serves the local deanery and fills up to its Published Admission Number with catholic children who meet its admissions criteria. The school's last full inspection was in 2008 when it was judged as 'outstanding' and this standard was maintained at its last interim judgement in 2011.
5. The local authority has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and it is not currently possible to expand one of the other local schools in the immediate planning area; consequently Ashford Park is the most suitable school to increase by a single form of entry as it has the space, is popular and is improving standards.
 6. This proposal forms one part of a wider area strategy for the whole of the Spelthorne borough which will provide three additional forms (630 primary places overall) by 2021. The area strategy includes expansion of other schools; some of these are agreed and others are still at the proposal stage.
 7. The Cabinet is asked to approve the business case for the expansion of the school. Financial details have been circulated as agenda item 23 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 Ashford.

CONSULTATION:

8. A public consultation was carried out between 4 September and 16 October 2013. A consultation document setting out the facts and the proposal was produced and circulated to all parents and other stakeholders and interested parties. In addition two meetings were held at the school on 9 and 10 September 2013; these were attended by approximately 40 parents and residents. The consultation document was also published on the Surrey County Council website and the local borough and county councillors were sent copies of this.
9. The council received 22 written consultation responses. An analysis of the consultation response forms is given in the table below. (Please note that some respondents fit more than one category e.g. there are two parents who are also local residents)

| Respondent | Number of forms received | Respondents For proposal | Respondents Against proposal | Respondents who Don't Know |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Total response forms received | 22 | 3 | 15 | 3 |
| Employee of the school | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| School governor | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Parent of child at Riverview | 11 | 1 | 9 | 1 |
| Resident | 14 | 2 | 9 | 2 |

10. The governing body plus three respondents are in agreement with the proposal. Three people state that they do not know whether or not they are in favour or they have submitted a qualified or unclearly expressed view; 15 respondents who sent in individual forms are against the proposal. This is a very low number of responses received, given the potential for many more parents, residents and staff to have expressed an opinion.
11. The main concern raised by respondents opposed to this proposal is the volume of additional traffic that an expansion would generate. The school is situated in a cul de sac and residents and some parents are concerned that there are inadequate parking facilities for parents to drop off and pick up their children from school. Residents note the dangerous parking and discourtesy of drivers currently parking outside the school and they highlight their fears of accidents involving children if the situation is exacerbated by more traffic. One respondent has suggested that an alternative entrance to the school is considered.
12. Other respondents noted the perceived effect on the pupils' emotional and educational needs if the school were to expand. There was a feeling expressed by a number of people that a larger school would affect individual children's potential to do well; and the Headteacher and staff's ability to forge meaningful relationships with a greater number of pupils was brought into question.

13. There were concerns expressed about the size of the school hall and the requirement to share other facilities between more pupils. Some parents say they chose Ashford Park because it was a smaller primary school and they felt that this is what their child needed. Some people also highlighted the disruption a building project would cause. One person put forward an alternative suggestion to expand another school in the area but the specific suggestion would have prohibitive costs attached to it and would involve purchasing another building and relocating the private pre-school and the Specialist Centre for Moderate Learning Difficulties to other sites.
14. 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 is being reviewed and fully addressed in the planning stages with pupil safety considerations being of paramount importance. The council's policies on safeguarding, site security and environmental issues have been factored into the final design for the new building and remodelling works.
15. Statutory Notices were published and a six week public consultation was held, ending on 10 March 2014. No further responses were received.
16. Those people in support of the proposal, including the Governing Body, recognise the need for more places and welcome the opportunity to provide these at Ashford Park Primary in order to benefit the immediate local community and potentially cut down on the number of people having to drive their children to school. Some qualified their support for expansion on the understanding that adequate resourcing of the project and traffic management measures would be assured.
17. The scope of works include a new build single storey classroom block and refurbishment of various areas within the existing school. The works comprise:
 - 9 new general classrooms with associated accommodation
 - Converting 1 existing classroom into hall extension
 - Converting 1 classroom into staff room
 - Converting 1 Year 1 classroom into reception classroom and remodelling of adjacent WC's
 - 10 car parking spaces
 - Hard & soft landscaping
18. During the iterative planning and highways consultation process a number of suggested improvements have been received to mitigate the impact of expected increased 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 25 April 2014 and a decision is expected by 19 June 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 23 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. The 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 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

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:

Keith Brown, Schools and Programme Manager – 020 8541 8651

Melanie Harris, School Commissioning Officer – 020 8541 9556

Consulted:

Tony Samuels, Cabinet Associate Member for Assets and Regeneration Programmes

Daniel Jenkins, Local Member, Staines South and Ashford West, Spelthorne

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 23

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
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