

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING****DATE: 11 SEPTEMBER 2014****LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES****SUBJECT: TO DETERMINE THE PUBLICATION OF STATUTORY NOTICES TO CONSULT ON A PROPOSAL TO EXPAND HEATHSIDE SECONDARY SCHOOL IN WEYBRIDGE****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

In order to meet increasing demand for secondary school places in Elmbridge Borough the Cabinet Member is asked to approve the proposal to publish statutory notices and hold a public consultation to expand Heathside School.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

- The school is enlarged by one form of entry (from seven FE to eight FE). Adding a net total of 150 places in Years 7 to 11 by 2020.
- The school undertakes a programme of building remodelling on its present site to add teaching accommodation and improve the use of space on campus. This will enable the school to accommodate 1200 11-16 students (PAN 240) plus its sixth form which is not due to expand under this proposal
- The expansion is effective from 1 September 2016 and is funded by Surrey County Council as part of its Basic Need Capital programme.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The trend of increased demand for places in primary schools in Elmbridge is due to move into the secondary phase of education in 2015 after which there is a growing need for secondary places that the borough's schools cannot currently meet. These places are required across the borough and most secondary schools are likely to expand by a form of entry over the period 2015-2018.

Heathside is a popular and successful school which delivers high quality education. It was rated by OFSTED at its last inspection (October 2013) as a good school and it is consistently over-subscribed. The proposed provision of 150 additional places at Heathside therefore meets the government's policy position to expand successful schools in order to meet parental preferences.

DETAILS:

Business Case

1. There will be a growing need for additional Year 7 places in Elmbridge from 2015. The current combined Published Admission Number is 912 and the pupil forecast numbers indicate a need for around 904 places in September 2015. This demand will largely be met by adding a further form of entry to Esher High School and increasing the overall capacity to 942. (Leaving a modest surplus capacity of 38 Year 7 places)
2. The forecast data then indicates that another 22 places will be required in 2016 which leaves no capacity for late applications throughout the year. The trend continues to increase to 2020 and more expansions of other schools are planned in order to supply sufficient Year 7 places in future. These figures may be understood with a degree of certainty as the pupils are already in the primary sector. Although there are now five secondary schools in Elmbridge (including the new Cobham Free School) only three of them have the capacity to expand on their present sites.
3. Heathside School campus is a challenging site: it is 48,230 square metres in size but it slopes, has limited circulation outdoor space and has restricted access for vehicles. Indeed there is a planning condition which currently restricts the number of pupils on campus. Surrey County Council officers are discussing this matter with Elmbridge Borough Council to see if some of this restriction can be lifted. It is therefore not possible to expand further on the present site without some sort of traffic mitigation scheme, rationalisation of the existing accommodation and by creating some new classrooms and specialist teaching areas.
4. Originally the school was built to accommodate 900 11-16 pupils but it now has a thriving sixth form and around 1276 students on campus. The original accommodation has been added to in a piecemeal fashion and this has resulted in a set of buildings which present a challenge to architects. Nevertheless the school is willing to expand permanently in order to meet local parents' desire to attain a place for their children there. The budget allocated to this project should also, in theory, allow for a mixture of new, remodelled and refurbished accommodation which will go some way to improving the use of space.
5. This project has been identified as 'Basic Need' and as such is to be funded by Surrey County Council. It will be offered to the market as a single tender under the new National (Regional) Framework and the design contract is yet to be awarded. The school has engaged a Project Management company (WYG) to produce a viability study and the intention is to commission a Design and Build company to develop a final plan in partnership with the school and the County Council's Project Manager. The ultimate design and elevations would then be submitted to the Surrey County Council Planning Committee in due course as part of a full planning application which will include a revised School Travel Plan.
6. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places across the borough and it is feasible to achieve this by a planned approach to the expansion of other local schools or academies within the borough. This would typically create schools of eight forms of entry. The area strategy has

been discussed and formulated with all the schools in question and is accounted for within the Basic Need Capital Programme and the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

- 7. Permission is therefore requested from The Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning to agree to Surrey County Council engaging in a public consultation, over the prescribed statutory period of four weeks, in order to seek the public's views on the proposal to expand Heathside School by one form of entry in 2016.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

- 8. The key risk to this proposal is the dependency on a successful planning application to develop the site. There is also a risk that if permission is not granted for the expansion, the County Council may incur further costs in the provision of sufficient places.
- 9. Weybridge parents, for the most part, expect their children to attend a Weybridge Secondary School. If Heathside does not expand this would mean that the County Council would either have to meet the demand elsewhere or it would have to purchase land to build another secondary school in the borough. This would not necessarily be in Weybridge and any new school would most likely be an academy or Free School.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

- 10. The cost of the proposed project will be funded through the Schools Basic Need Capital Programme and funding for this scheme is included in the current 2014/19 Medium Term Financial Plan.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

- 11. The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 sets out the regulations that apply to prescribed alterations of schools. These include school expansions.
- 12. The Department for Education has published two pieces of guidance relating to prescribed alterations: Expanding a Maintained Mainstream School or Adding a Sixth Form (revised January 2014) 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 considered) and non-statutory guidance on the process for making changes to school provision. The Statutory and Non – Statutory Guidance will be followed if permission is granted to consult on this proposal.

Equalities and Diversity

- 13. There are no direct equalities implications arising out of the proposal although the increase in provision would be open to all applicants with the highest priority being given to Looked After Children, pupils on the SEN register and/or those who would benefit from a statement of educational need, thus supporting provision for the most vulnerable young people.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

14. Heathside School has a robust Safeguarding Policy which is monitored by the designated Child Protection Lead Officer, is regularly reviewed by the governing body and is subject to OFSTED inspection. Site access and security, both during the proposed building programme and afterwards, will be considered and addressed in the planning and design of this building project were it to go ahead.

Climate change/carbon emissions implications

15. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. A safe walking route to the school will be identified for use by residents and facilities will be provided on campus for students and staff who cycle to school.
16. The additional school provision is centred close to an area of demographic demand and therefore will enable young people to attend a local school; thus reducing the need for lengthy school journeys to other schools both in and outside of the borough.

Section 151 Commentary

17. The section 151 officer confirms that funding for this scheme has been included in the 2014/19 Medium Term Financial Plan and scheme costs are expected to be contained within this funding allocation. More detailed costings will be developed as the scheme progresses to tender.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- Subject to Cabinet Member approval, Statutory Notices stating the Council's intent to expand the school will be published. The consultation period will be no less than four school weeks and will include at least one public meeting for parents and residents. There will be arrangements for consultation responses to be submitted either in writing or electronically using the Surrey Says website.
- The Cabinet Member would then receive a final report summarising the outcome of the consultation within two months of the expiration of the Statutory Notices to enable her to determine the proposed expansion

Contact Officer:

Melanie Harris, School Commissioning Officer NE Surrey, Tel. 020 8541 9556

Consulted:

Parents of pupils and prospective pupils of Heathside School

Staff and Governors of the school

Local Councillors

Local residents and other local schools via the consultation document published on the Surrey Says website

Annexes: None

Sources/background papers: None

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