

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE: 16 DECEMBER 2014

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

MS DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

LEAD OFFICER: PETER- JOHN WILKINSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

JOHN STEBBINGS, CHIEF PROPERTY OFFICER

SUBJECT: BISLEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL, WOKING



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

To approve the Business Case for the expansion of Bisley Church of England Primary School from a 1.5 Form of Entry primary (315 places) to a 2 Form of Entry Primary (420 places) creating 105 additional primary places in the Woking area from September 2016.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that, subject to the agreement of the detailed financial information for the expansion as set out in Part 2 of this agenda, the business case for the provision of an additional 0.5 form of entry (105 places) primary places in Woking 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 Woking area.

DETAILS:

Background

1. Previously The Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning determined a statutory notice to approve the expansion of Brookwood Primary School on a split site subject to planning permission on 11 September 2013. This was in response to a buoyant birth rate, planning being granted for circa 300 dwellings at the Brookwood Farm site and an indication from the Army that a significant number of families would be returning to Pirbright Barracks and requiring school places in September 2014. Since this decision, a number of things have changed and the proposed expansion of Brookwood Primary School is no longer viable for the following reasons:

- The Army changed its basing plan with significantly fewer families returning to Pirbright Barracks than originally expected.

- Brookwood Farm Housing development delayed by a year, delaying the Brookwood Primary school project and increasing the costs of the project beyond the capital allocation approved by Cabinet in December 2013.
 - Recently published ONS data suggests that birth rates in Woking which increased by 37.2% between 2001 and 2011, dropped back in 2013 suggesting that demand for primary places will remain high in 2015 and 2016 but will reduce in 2017.
2. However with the prospect of further housing development planned in the area, and with pressure on school places expected in 2015 and 2016, officers recommend that additional places should still be provided in the area. Expanding Bisley Church of England Primary School will provide fewer primary school places (105 in total rather than 210). This is likely to be more commensurate with the demand arising from the housing development and the (reduced) number of families returning to Pirbright Barracks. The capital costs of the scheme are significantly lower than the proposed Brookwood project and it brings the PAN of Bisley Church of England Primary School up to 60 (from 45) which will eventually avoid the need for mixed age teaching at the school which is educationally beneficial for the school and for the local community.
 3. Bisley C of E Primary School is a 'Good' school and it is entirely appropriate to expand good schools in line with government policy. The provision of places meets the increased demographic pressures in the area and new housing on the Brookwood Farm development, in addition to providing for returning Army families. This will allow the Council to admit those pupils whose parents name the school as their preferred option, meeting the wider statutory duty to offer all applicants a school place.
 4. The proposals include a new three classroom block extension to the present school buildings with group room, cloakrooms, amenities, storage and link corridor to the main teaching block. Using a standardised design to drive value, a new two storey teaching block with eight Key Stage 2 classrooms and associated amenities, stores, cloakrooms and storage; an extension to the existing school hall will be included. In addition, the two demountable classroom blocks will be demolished to enable expansion of the hard play area into an area currently being used as parking and re-provision of parking with additional spaces to accommodate additional visitors and the staff required for the expanded school. The building works will be completed by January 2016 for the following September intake.
 5. The project scheme has been developed by the Guildford Diocese in conjunction with their team of property and project professionals. The scheme will be managed by the Diocese, which has a long and successful history of delivering their own school expansion projects.

CONSULTATION:

6. The School, Diocese of Guildford and Surrey County Council consulted on the proposal to expand the school between 27 September 2012 and 25 October 2012, when the Army were indicating that the 2 York's Regiment would be returning 120 families back to Pirbright Barracks in 2013. There were 31 responses to this consultation with 24 agreeing with the proposal to expand the school. A report was issued to the Governors outlining the responses that were received throughout that consultation and Governors determined to publish

statutory notices on 9 November 2012. At that time, the Cabinet Member could not determine the notice because the army moves were subsequently put on hold as part of the Ministry of Defence National Rebasing plan.

7. Given that the proposal to expand the school has remained essentially the same since the original consultation, and given that planning permission has already been sought and granted, there is little merit in re-consulting on the proposal and therefore the Cabinet Member determined the original statutory notice.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

8. The planning application was considered by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 6 March 2013 and approved.
9. There are risks associated with the project and a project risk register has been compiled and is 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

10. 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 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

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

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

12. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on a Local Authority (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

13. The expansion of the school will not create any issues, which would require the production of an Equality Impact Assessment.
14. The new school building will comply with Disabilities Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations. The expanded school will provide employment opportunities in the area.
15. The school will be for children in the community served by the school. The Admissions arrangements will give the highest priority to Looked After Children and pupils on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register and/or those who would benefit from a statement of educational need, thus supporting provision for our most vulnerable children. Children with siblings will receive the next priority, followed by those children living closest to the school. There is no proposal to amend the admissions criteria which is fully compliant with the Schools Admissions Code.

16. 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

17. This proposal would provide increased provision for places in the area, which would be of benefit to 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

18. 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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Consulted:

Tony Samuels, Cabinet Associate Member for Assets and Regeneration Programmes
Guildford Diocese
Adrian Page, SCC Local Member, Lightwater, West End and Bisley
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

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