

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS, SKILLS AND
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT****DATE: 10 SEPTEMBER 2015****LEAD OFFICER: JULIE FISHER, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE****SUBJECT: PROPOSED ALTERATION OF UPPER AGE LIMIT AT REIGATE
PARISH CHURCH SCHOOL****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Governing Body of Reigate Parish Church School, in partnership with Surrey County Council (SCC) and the Diocese of Southwark, has consulted on a proposal to extend the age range of the school from 4-7 (Infant) 4-11 (Primary), so that it becomes a Primary School from September 2016. It is anticipated that the school will grow by one year group per year until it reaches capacity as a primary school in September 2019. The Education Consultation was conducted between 1 June 2015 and 29 June 2015.

On the basis of the education rationale for the expansion and in view of the comments received during the consultation period, the Governing Body of the school voted to proceed with the expansion project. Ultimately, though, due to nature of the proposal, the decision on whether to proceed with the extension of the age range at this school rests with the Local Authority. As such, The Cabinet Member is asked to review the education rationale for the project and summary of the consultation process/feedback provided within this report and associated Annexes and, on that basis, decide whether to determine the associated Statutory Notice.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member determines the Statutory Notice, thereby formally bringing into effect the extension of the age range of the school from 4-7 (Infant) to 4-11 (Primary) for September 2016.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

There is an increasing demand for primary school places in Reigate and the surrounding area, which reflects a rise in the primary-age population over recent years. In order to meet this demand, SCC is overseeing a school expansion programme, designed to increase the capacity of the school estate. The proposal to extend the age range (and thereby expand the capacity) of Reigate Parish Church School is a core element of SCC's strategy to deliver additional places in this area. In line with this, the Governing Body of the school, in partnership with Surrey County Council and the Diocese of Southwark, have undertaken the requisite statutory consultation process and, on this basis, have voted to proceed with the expansion of the school. For these reasons, it is recommended that the Cabinet Member determines the Statutory Notice (appended to this report as Annex 1), so as to bring the expansion of the school formally into effect.

DETAILS:

The Proposal

1. On 1 June 2015, the Governing Body of Reigate Parish Church School, in cooperation with the Diocese of Southwark and SCC, published a proposal to:
 - Enlarge Reigate Parish Church School from a 180-place Infant School, 60 places per year from Reception to Year 2, to a 420-place Primary School, 60 places per year from Reception to Year 6.
 - Grow the school incrementally, year-on-year, with the first Year 3 cohort starting in September 2016 and working its way progressively through the age range, with the school effectively reaching its new capacity of 420 places in September 2019.
 - Build additional permanent classrooms and ancillary space to facilitate this.
2. It was proposed that the school would grow incrementally, year-on-year, with the first Year 3 cohort starting in September 2016 and working its way progressively through the age range, with the school effectively reaching its new capacity of 420 places in September 2019. The incremental expansion in capacity is shown in the table below:

Year	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2015/16	60	60	60	0	0	0	0	180
2016/17	60	60	60	60	0	0	0	240
2017/18	60	60	60	60	60	0	0	300
2018/19	60	60	60	60	60	60	0	360
2019/20	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	420

Reasons for the Proposal

3. Reigate and Banstead is experiencing a significant increase in the demand for school places, reflecting both a rise in birth rate and increased house building and migration within the area. Births in the Borough in 2013 were 21.1% higher than births in 2005. A significant number of primary school places have been provided reflecting this demand and additional growth is anticipated in the period up to 2024, which needs to be accommodated via further expansions of school provision.
4. Within the Redhill Planning Area, there is presently provision for 330 places per year in Reception, composed of the following:
 - Dovers Green Infant School (offering 90 Reception places per annum, subject to Cabinet Member decision);
 - Holmesdale Infant School (offering 120 Reception places per annum);
 - Reigate Parish Church School (offering 60 Reception places per annum);
 - and
 - Sandcross Primary School (offering 60 Reception places per annum).
5. At the Junior stage, intake should broadly align with the number of pupils transitioning from Infant schools (i.e. Dovers Green, Holmesdale and Reigate

Parish), which collectively account for 270 places. Junior provision in the area presently comprises the following:

- Reigate Priory School (offering 150 Year 3 places per annum); and
- Sandcross Primary School (offering an additional 60 Year 3 places [relative to its Reception Year intake] per annum).

6. As can be seen from the above, there is a shortage of Junior provision in the area, with those schools offering Junior intake providing 60 fewer places than their Infant counterparts. It is clear, therefore, that this imbalance needs to be addressed, in order that sufficient Junior places exist for those children transferring from local Infant schools. The present proposed expansion of Reigate Parish Church School represents the proposed means of addressing this imbalance.

7. Importantly, there is also evidence that the present level of demand for school places will be sustained in the medium- to long-term. Demand for primary school places has been rising in Reigate, in line with the general increase across the whole of the Reigate and Banstead Borough. Projections of future demand for school places are presented in the below table:

Year	Inf. PAN	Inf. Projection	Deficit	Jun. PAN	Jun. Projection	Deficit
2015/16	330	342	12	270	288	18
2016/17	330	346	16	270	292	22
2017/18	330	338	8	270	300	30
2018/19	330	323	- 7	270	314	44
2019/20	330	315	- 15	270	315	45
2020/21	330	315	- 15	270	309	39
2021/22	330	318	- 12	270	301	31
2022/23	330	321	- 9	270	298	28
2023/24	330	322	- 8	270	300	30
2024/25	330	323	- 7	270	303	33

8. As can be seen from the above, there is a sustained need for additional Primary places in the area. Whilst SCC is managing the immediate pressure for September 2015 in this and the wider area, via the delivery of a number of “bulge” year expansions, the need for permanent expansions will remain. A core component of the strategy devised to meet this need is the proposed expansion of Reigate Parish into a Primary School, which (if approved) would reduce all of the above projected Junior deficits by 60 places, with the school being ideally situated relative to the profile of demand.

9. Where possible, the SCC’s strategy is to expand high quality provision that meets parental demand. SCC also favours, where possible, provision based on the all-through primary model. The most recent Ofsted report on the school, from July 2013, rates the school as ‘Outstanding’. In particular, this report noted that “Attainment is outstanding. Pupils’ results in reading, writing and mathematics are above those of most schools nationally and have been for a number of years”. The report also commented positively on school leadership: “All leaders are dedicated and aspirational. They have high expectations of what the pupils are capable of achieving”. The evident quality of education provision at Reigate Parish was a key reason underpinning the

move to expand this school and thereby increase the provision of high-quality school places to the local community.

School Building Requirements

10. The school site has sufficient capacity to enable expansion in its existing location. Naturally, though, a building programme will be required to provide the permanent facilities to allow for the increase in pupil intake. To this end, SCC has allowed for an appropriate capital sum for this project, within the Basic Need Capital Programme element of its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
11. Following a series of design workshops with the school to develop the building proposal, a planning application for the associated scheme was submitted in August 2015. This planning application will be considered by the Planning and Regulatory Committee on 11 November 2015. Consequently, a Business Case for the scheme is due to be taken to SCC's Cabinet on 20 October 2015. The full details of the proposed scheme will be the subject of that Business Case.

CONSULTATION:

12. As a Voluntary Aided school, the increase in admission number was the subject of a school-led consultation process which was held for a 4-week period, between 1 - 29 June 2015. This process engaged a range of interested stakeholders, including the school community, local residents, local admissions authorities and the Surrey School Admissions Forum. On 9 June 2015, the Governing Body held a consultation evening at the school, to which all interested parties were invited. A summary of the feedback from the consultation process is appended to this report as Annex 3.
13. The feedback to the consultation was largely positive and in support of the proposed change in age range; in total over 70% of respondents expressed support for the proposal. The feedback also raised multifarious issues, all of which were factored into the decision-making process undertaken by the Governing Body of the school. In particular, three core themes emerged and have been/are being addressed as follows:
 - **Restricted Site** – a significant number of respondents expressed concern in relation to the capacity of the site to accommodate the additional pupils that would be entailed with the proposed change. In particular, these concerns related to the provision of outdoor space for PE and recreation times. It was the view of the school that this could effectively be managed through a combination of staggered playtimes and negotiating the use of offsite sports facilities with third parties in the local area. Both of these solutions are actively being explored as part of the proposed scheme. In addition, it is proposed that a new Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) will be built on the site as part of the expansion building project. This would help to mitigate the above mentioned issues, by providing year-round access to hard play facilities.
 - **Admissions** – a number of respondents were also concerned of the impact that the proposed change may have on admissions, both to Reigate Parish at Year R and to other schools at Year 3. It was explained in the response to the consultation feedback that there would be no adverse impact on applications to other schools at Year 3 as a

consequence of the proposal for Reigate Parish. Furthermore, although there would be the potential for a greater number of applicants to Year R to receive preference under the sibling rule (as a function of the fact that the present cohort will stay at the school for longer), this would be mitigated by the 50/50 'Open' and 'Foundation' place split, the principle of which will remain unaffected under the current proposal.

- **Road Safety** – concern was also expressed in relation to the fact that a greater number of pupils at the school will increase the vehicular movements to and from the site at peak times. There was a view that this could have an adverse impact on the safety of pupils at pick-up and drop-off times, if the situation was not managed correctly and current bad parking practice not addressed. These issues were also raised at the Pre-statutory Planning Consultation Evening and the project team have factored these concerns into their thinking. Discussions are presently ongoing with partners in Highways & Transport, with a view to determining how the present and future situation can be ameliorated. It is also worth noting that, whilst more pupils will inevitably mean more pupils travelling to and from school, the Council is legally obliged to provide school places for all children requiring one.

14. On the basis of the education rationale for the expansion and in view of the comments received during the consultation period, the Governing Body of the school voted to proceed with the expansion project and formally notified the Local Authority of this on 14 July 2015. The record of this decision is appended to this report as Annex 2.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

15. As the education consultation has been completed in compliance with the relevant legislation governing such decisions, there is no outstanding risk in this respect.
16. There are naturally risks associated with the building project required to facilitate this expansion. Ultimately, these are, in large part, related to cost and programme, i.e. the capacity to deliver the requisite project within the defined financial parameters, in time for the opening of the new provision by September 2016. A Risk Register is being maintained and updated on a regular basis by the Project Manager of the scheme and this should serve to both mitigate risk (in part) and to provide early foresight of any issues as they materialise. 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

17. The building project associated with this proposal is included in SCC's Basic Need Capital Programme element of its 2015-20 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). A scheme of works has been developed by Property Services and this is due to go to Cabinet for approval in two phases. The first phase of the project (the delivery of the Multi Use Games Area) will be considered by Cabinet on 22 September 2015. The second phase of the scheme (the delivery of the main building project) is scheduled to go to Cabinet on 20 October 2015.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

18. The S151 Officer confirms that the basic need expansion scheme for this school is included in the 2015-20 MTFP.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

Public Sector Equality Duty

19. The public sector equality duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) applies to the decision to be made by the Cabinet Member in this report. There is a requirement when deciding upon the recommendations to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, foster good relations between such groups, and eliminate any unlawful discrimination. These matters are dealt with in the equalities paragraphs of the report.

Pre-consultation

20. There is a clear expectation in public law that the Council should carry out a consultation process whenever it is considering making significant changes to service provision, particularly including the closure of any of its resources. There is a statutory requirement for consultation in this context as set out in the School Organisation Maintained Schools Guidance for Proposers and Decision Makers dated January 2014 and the School Admissions Code 2014. Alteration of the upper age limit of a school by 3 years or more is defined under Chapter 3 of the Guidance as a significant change. Such consultation will need to involve those directly affected by such changes together with relevant representative groups. It will be important that the material presented to consultees provides sufficient information to allow for intelligent consideration and response in relation to the proposals. This information will need to be presented in a way that consultees will understand. The responses to the consultation will need to be conscientiously taken into account when the Cabinet Member makes any future decision in relation to the school.

Post-consultation

21. In considering this Report, the Cabinet Member must give due regard to the results of the consultation as set out above and the response of the Service to the consultation comments and conscientiously take these matters into account when making its final decision.

General Decision-Making

22. In coming to a decision on this issue the Cabinet Member needs to take account of all relevant matters. The weight to be given to each of the relevant matters is for the Cabinet Member to decide. Relevant matters in this context will include the statutory requirements, the policy considerations, the impacts of the options on service provision, the medium term financial plan, the Council's fiduciary duty, any relevant risks, the results of the consultation and the public sector equality duty.

Fiduciary Duty

23. The Council owes a fiduciary duty to its Council tax payers, analogous to that owed by trustees responsible for looking after property belonging to other

people. Accordingly in deciding to spend money a local authority must take account of the interests of Council taxpayers who have contributed to the Council's income and balance those interests against those who benefit from the expenditure. It will also need to act in a prudent way having regard to the short and long term consequences of the decision.

Best Value Duty

24. The best value duty is contained in s3 of the Local Government Act 1999 as a result of which the Council is under a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The relevant guidance states that Councils should consider overall value, including economic, environmental and social value when reviewing service provision.

School Expansion

25. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on the Council to secure that efficient primary and secondary education is available to meet the needs of the population in its area. In doing so, the Council is required to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Council to secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available in its area. There is a legal duty on the Council therefore to secure the availability of efficient education in its area and sufficient schools to enable this.
26. This report sets out how the Authority will meet its duties in response to increasing demand for school places in Reigate.
27. As the school's capacity and age range will be increased, a consultation and publication of notices was required. Responses to the Consultation were considered carefully and the School Organisation Guidance and Admissions Code 2014 were duly followed.

Equalities and Diversity

28. The expansion of the school will not create any issues that would require the production of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), as no group with protected characteristics will be adversely affected as a consequence of its approval, or otherwise.
29. The new school building will comply with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations.
30. The Admissions arrangements for Reigate Parish are split 50/50 between 'Foundation' places (30 places for children whose parents are active members of a local Christian Church) and 'Open' places (30 places open to all applicants). The Admissions Policy for both entry streams gives the highest priority to Looked After Children (LAC) and children with exceptional medical or social needs, thus supporting provision for the county's most vulnerable children. The next order of priority employs the "sibling rule" and remaining applicants are then sorted on the basis of distance from home to

school. There is no proposal to amend the admissions criteria, which are fully compliant with the School Admissions Code.

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications

31. This proposal would provide increased provision for primary places in the area which would be of benefit to the community served by the school. This would therefore also be of benefit to any Looked After Children who have the opportunity of attending the school, with this grouping of children receiving the highest priority ranking within the school's admission arrangements, irrespective of whether they were applying for an 'Open' or 'Foundation' place.

Climate change/carbon emissions implications

32. 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 authority's adopted core planning strategy. In addition, the provision of additional school places to meet local demand is likely to have a positive impact on reducing journey times (and therefore carbon emissions), relative to the scenario of not so doing.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

33. Subject to Cabinet Member approval of the recommendation of this report, the next steps are:
- To take a Business Case for the associated capital works scheme to SCC's Cabinet on 20 October 2015.
 - If approval to the above referenced Business Case is granted, the project will move to delivery, with a view to having the expanded school facilities ready to accommodate the new pupil cohort in September 2016.

Contact Officer:

Oliver Gill, School Commissioning Officer, Tel: 020 8541 7383

Consulted:

Reigate Parish Church School Governing Body
Parents of pupils attending the school
Local residents
Diocese of Southwark
Local Headteachers
Peter-John Wilkinson, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning
Zully Grant-Duff, Local County Council Member for Reigate
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Unions (ATL, NAHT, NASUWT, NUT, GMB, UNISON)
School Admissions Forum

Annexes:

Annex 1 – Reigate Parish Church School Statutory Notice (Full)
Annex 2 – Governing Body Decision Letter
Annex 3 – Summary of Consultation Feedback

Sources/background papers:

- Reigate Parish Church School Consultation Document
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