

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS, SKILLS AND  
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT****DATE: 7 JANUARY 2016****LEAD OFFICER: JULIE FISHER, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE****SUBJECT: PROPOSED EXPANSION OF GUILDFORD COUNTY SCHOOL****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Governing Body of Guildford County School (academy) in partnership with Surrey County Council (SCC) has consulted on a proposal to expand the school by 20 places per year from September 2017.

Following a public consultation on the education rationale for the proposal, the Governing Body of the academy agreed unanimously on 7 December 2015 with the following motion: following extensive consultation with all stakeholders, the governing body agrees a Published Admissions Number (PAN) increase from 160 to 180 in 2017, subject to sufficient funding from Surrey County Council.

The Cabinet Member is asked to review a summary of the consultation responses provided within this report and to note the Governing Body's decision ahead of the of the request for capital investment due to be put forward to Cabinet in February 2016.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the formal decision of the Governing Body of Guildford County School to expand by 20 places per year be noted by the Cabinet Member.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Demand for secondary school places is increasing in Guildford Town. A number of primary expansions have take place in Guildford in recent years; plans now need to be put in place to ensure secondary places are provided for the increased pupil cohorts transitioning into the secondary phase. It is recommended that Guildford County expands due to the prior expansion of Queen Eleanor's C of E Junior School. Queen Eleanor's has expanded by one form of entry to meet demographic need; this will impact on Guildford County from September 2017.

**DETAILS:****Background**

1. Guildford County School is a secondary academy situated in Guildford town centre. The school currently provides 160 places per year from Year 7, through to Year 11. In addition, up to 210 places are available in Year 12, and 180 in Year 13.

## The proposal

2. On 19 October 2015, the Governing Body of Guildford County School, in partnership with Surrey County Council, published the following proposal:
  - Guildford County School expands by 20 places a year for years 7 to 11, from a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 160 to a PAN of 180 from September 2017.
  - The school will ultimately provide 900 places for ages 11 to 16. It currently provides 800 places for ages 11 to 16, plus sixth form provision.
  - The academy would grow incrementally from Year 7, with each new intake every academic year admitting 180 pupils.
3. The proposal will require the provision of some additional accommodation to facilitate the expansion.

## Reasons for the proposal

4. Demand for secondary school places. There is significant demand for new school places within Surrey resulting from increases in the birth rate and inward migration into the County. Demand for secondary places has increased in Guildford Town, with additional school places required from 2017. A number of primary expansions in Guildford Town have taken place in recent years including Queen Eleanor's C of E Junior School, Worplesdon Primary School (from 2016) and bulge classes at Queen Eleanor's and Northmead Junior School. Plans now need to be put in place to ensure secondary places are provided for the increased pupil cohorts transitioning into the secondary phase.
5. Over 86% of pupils at Queen Eleanor's C of E Junior School typically transition to secondary education at Guildford County School. The table below summarises the recent expansion and bulge classes at Queen Eleanor's and when those will impact on the secondary sector:

<b>Year of change in year 3 at Queen Eleanor's</b>	<b>Change implemented</b>	<b>Year due to transition to secondary education</b>	<b>Number of additional primary pupils requiring secondary places</b>
Sept 2013	Bulge class	Sept 2017	30
Sept 2014	1FE expansion	Sept 2018	30
Sept 2015	Bulge class (in addition to expansion in previous year)	Sept 2019	60
Sept 2016 onwards	Expanded numbers continue	Sept 2020 onwards	30

6. This proposal would provide an additional 20 places per year, a total of 100 additional secondary places within Guildford that will help to meet the increasing need for school places. Due to the size of the school site, it is recognised that Guildford County School is unable to expand further than that proposed.

7. **Educational advantages** - The educational advantages of a 180 PAN versus the school's current PAN of 160 include the following:
- Greater opportunities for curriculum development.
  - Providing an even number of classes per year, thus supporting more tailored teaching.
  - Greater flexibility to deploy staff and curriculum resources effectively.
  - Greater opportunities for staff retention and recruitment.
  - Smoother timetabling, staffing deployment and more class groupings.
  - Positive impact on the day to day management and running of the school, enabling the school to operate more effectively.
8. **Parental preferences** - The Local Authority has a duty to respond to parental preferences and, where possible, the County Council seeks to expand popular and successful schools to meet additional demand. Guildford County School is consistently oversubscribed on first preferences. For September 2015, the school received 208 first preferences and 716 preferences overall. With the recent primary expansions pressure for places at the school will be increased further in the future. Expanding the school will enhance parental preference by allowing the Governing Body to admit further applicants who name the school as a preferred option.
9. **Expanding good schools** - At its last OFSTED inspection in 2013, Guildford County School received a Good (Grade 2) judgement. This proposal therefore meets both the Local Authority's aspirations to expand good schools, as well as the government's guidance to local authorities that successful, popular schools are expanded where more places are needed.

### Implementation

10. The table below shows the current number of places at the school, in line with its current PAN:

Year Group	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Total
Number of Places	160	160	160	160	160	210	180	1,190

11. The table below shows the proposed number of places if this proposal is implemented. It is proposed to increase pupil places incrementally by offering the increased number of places in each Year 7:

Year Group	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Total
Places in 2017/18	180	160	160	160	160	210	180	1,210
Places in 2018/19	180	180	160	160	160	210	180	1,230
Places in 2019/20	180	180	180	160	160	210	180	1,250
Places in 2020/21	180	180	180	180	160	210	180	1,270
Places in 2021/22	180	180	180	180	180	210	180	1,290

The first expanded year will join the sixth form in the 2022/23 academic year, and is expected to increase the size of the sixth form proportionally. The school has sufficient capacity in the sixth form for the expected increase in sixth form students as a result of the proposed expansion.

12. This proposal does not change the admissions criteria of the school, only the PAN and, therefore, the number of places provided at the school.
13. **Impact on other schools** - There has been some concern whether this expansion will have an impact on other secondary schools in Guildford. School commissioning anticipates that the impact of this proposal on other schools would be minimal due to the increased pupil numbers in Queen Eleanor's from which pupils normally transition. Due to site constraints Guildford County School is limited to providing an additional 20 places per year. As such, there will be overspill of these additional pupils to other secondary schools in Guildford.
14. Additional accommodation will be required to facilitate the expansion in the form of some internal remodelling of existing spaces and new build. Being a constrained site, the new build element is being carefully considered to maximise underused space and minimise impact on play/sport space. The project would be overseen by the Governing Body of the school and be project managed by consultants appointed by the school working closely with Surrey County Council. The school has developed a master plan for the site, of which this scheme forms part of. Planning permission for the master plan was granted by Guildford Borough Council in 2013 and commenced with the addition of the art block in 2014, funded by the school's successful application to the Department for Education's Academy Maintenance Programme. Subject to Cabinet approval, the scheme to provide additional facilities to accommodate the additional pupils can commence in 2016.
15. Traffic and parking. Although this is a relatively small expansion, it is recognised that the school is accessed from a main road and that traffic and parking issues may be an area of concern. As part of the expansion, the Governing Body is intending to create additional parking spaces within the school site to meet the needs of additional staff and mitigate the impact on local residential roads. The school's travel plan will also be reviewed and updated. Typically 53.62% of students walk to school and 19.67% use public transport to get to and from school. Hence the impact on traffic and parking is expected to be minimal.

## **CONSULTATION:**

### **Background**

16. A public consultation was run over a five week period from 19 October to 20 November 2015. Members of the public were able to contribute via a paper copy of the response form (dropped in at the school), email and via the "Surrey Says" website. The consultation was advertised to all staff and parents at Guildford County School, parents at local primary schools, head teachers of all Surrey schools, residents of nearby roads, and other stakeholders. A public meeting was held at Guildford County School on 11 November 2015, and two information sessions were held for staff members at the school.

### **Results**

17. The results were overwhelmingly positive with 95% of responses in favour of the expansion going ahead. There was a positive response from all groups of respondent, with even the least favourable group (local residents) being 85% in favour. The results of the consultation (split by respondent type) are summarised in the table below:

Respondent	Number of Responses	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	% In Favour (of those who agree or disagree)
Local Resident	15	11	2	2	85%
Current Parent	11	10	1		91%
Prospective Parent	47	45	1	1	98%
Staff Member	27	26	1		96%
Governor	1	1			100%
Other	2	2			100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>95%</b>

18. Specific comments were left on some forms. Most of these were positive, with numerous observations being that it is a positive step to expand a good school, and appreciating the additional places that would improve choice for local families. There were also comments that the additional investment and facilities would benefit the school community.

19. Comments from the ninety five positive responses included:

Parents/carers of a child who may attend the school in the future and those at the school currently:

- I think it's very important to increase the number of places as there has been a large increase in the number of primary and infant school places in the last three years.
- This would be wonderful. Giving an increased chance for children from further afield.
- This is needed to ensure that children living in the centre of Guildford (ie between GCS and GA) are offered places at one or other of these schools.
- Primary schools in local areas have grown – it fits that senior schools must increase places.
- Guildford and surrounding areas need to plan for the future and create places in excellent schools.
- Important to provide a good local school for local children.
- I would welcome this expansion plan but would question whether the plan should be for more places, given the demand.
- Fully agree and support the proposal to expand GCS from September 2017. Believe it can only be beneficial to the school and local community. GCS represents the best of what a comprehensive school should be and it will be an incredible chance for some more students to benefit from the facilities and experienced teaching proposed by the school. Having visited the school I am convinced it will be for the best of all. Shame it hasn't been done already. Please consider the good this expansion would do for our community.

- We live 1.013 miles from GCS. According to the SCC website, the furthest distance address that was offered a place under criteria 5 was 1.654 for Sept 15. Given that this would be the criteria we would be applying under for Sept 17 for our eldest, we would very much welcome the increase in the number of places available.
- The School serves Guildford well and is very popular. Being able to accommodate a small number more will benefit those students and families.
- It is sensible to extend the school within its space constraints. I would like to think my child in Year 2 had a chance of following his brother into GCS.
- Whilst I appreciate that we all want to keep our local schools smaller, I think it is important that local children have the opportunity to attend the local school within their community.
- It is a prudent move to expand to another form, as there is a shortage of secondary spots. It is important that County gets sufficient support from educational funding if there are any additional needs affected by additional students such as ensuring sufficient sports space.
- The secondary school provision in Guildford must be expanded to cope with an increase in children moving up from primary school.
- New facilities will benefit all students at the school. Good to allow more local children the chance to attend this excellent school.
- Guildford needs more school places, so GCS should play its part in this.
- I feel more places are needed within Guildford for both secondary and primary places. I would be happy for the extra 20 places to be put in place, however, I do like the fact at GCS that the class sizes are relatively small and the Headteacher and my daughter's tutors know her by name.
- Having seen and visited the school, I am confident that it can deliver this without lowering the quality of education offered. Our son will be starting secondary school that year, and this change pleases us.
- Guildford County is an excellent school and if more children can attend, and, therefore, receive the benefit of the school, the better. My daughter, I hope, will attend, but my son will have just finished sixth form so we will not have the benefit of being a sibling at the school. Now the school is so popular it will be harder to secure her a place so the more places the better chance of her attending.

#### Local Residents:

- I hope that the additional income from the increase in numbers will help keep the school up-to-date and fully resourced, as well as ensuring that the local community is catered for by a local accessible school.
- I am fully supportive of your plans to expand your admissions.

#### Staff Members at the school:

- GCS is currently the most over-subscribed school in Surrey and therefore we need to do something to increase the places available and reduce the number of parents that don't get their first choice preference. It would be a fantastic development / expansion to the school for us to be able to offer an additional 20 places. We are oversubscribed and every year many parents don't even get their first choice! We clearly provide an outstanding education and opportunity for young people and with extra financial support we could be even better. Our current catchment area is very small and we are only offering places to students living just over 1.1 miles from the school. We have a large number of feeder schools and this always encourages our new students to build and make new friends. Another 20

students would still enable this to happen and more students are likely to know and have a greater number of friends attending with them.

- Positive step for the school and students for educational places.
- We are a successful school and have never struggled with PAN numbers over all the years I've been a teacher here. We continually have parents who have been disappointed because their child has been unable to get in. This expansion will benefit the neighbourhood.
- Wonderful school. Will be good to offer more places to more local families.
- The school provides amazing opportunities for all of its students. To allow 20 more children access to these would be a blessing.

#### Governor at GCS

- With the ever increasing need for additional school places, I believe this would be a great help, by improving the space and facilities available to students and giving them the chance of a better education.

20. From the five negative responses, the comments were as follows:

- Prospective parent – Classrooms in the school are already overcrowded
- Local Resident – Various concerns, including overdevelopment, lack of all-weather outdoor space, trespass to gardens and noise from lettings.
- Local Resident – Site is too small – already short of space
- Current Parent – Not enough space
- The staff member leaving a negative response did not include a comment.

21. The overwhelming impression from the responses and comments was one of support for the proposal and the associated investment in the school.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

22. The education consultation has been completed in compliance with the relevant legislation governing such decisions. Therefore there is no outstanding risk associated with this.

23. A programme of works to provide additional accommodation by September 2017 is required and as such there are risks associated with this proposal. There is a risk that the project will not complete within the timescales outlined above and there may be site abnormalities not identified as part of the initial feasibility exercise. A risk register will be maintained and updated on a regular basis.

#### **Financial and Value for Money Implications**

24. The scheme is included in the 2015-20 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The scheme will be implemented by the Governing Body of the school in partnership with Surrey County Council. All schemes are expected to remain within the funding which has been allocated to them in the MTFP.

#### **Section 151 Officer Commentary**

25. The scheme for Guildford County is included in the 2015-20 MTFP.

### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer**

26. There are no legal implications arising out of the cabinet member reviewing and noting the fact that the academy school has decided to expand as described in this report. However, the academy's decision will assist Surrey County Council in meeting its general duties in relation to securing sufficient school places in its area which arise out of sections 13 and 14 Education Act 1996.

### **Equalities and Diversity**

27. 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.

### **Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications**

28. This proposal would be of benefit to Looked After Children who have the opportunity of attending this school, through the increased number of places.

### **Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications**

29. Safeguarding vulnerable children is a high priority in Surrey schools. Schools have considerable expertise in safeguarding vulnerable children and adhere to robust procedures. The school would continue to apply good practice in the area of safeguarding. Safeguarding is monitored when Ofsted carries out inspections of schools.
30. 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.

### **Climate change/carbon emissions implications**

31. The additional accommodation would be built to the school's local planning authority's adopted core planning strategy. The provision of additional school places is likely to have a limited impact on carbon emissions due to high proportion of pupils that typically travel to the school by public transport or walking.

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

32. The next steps are:
- To put forward a business case for the associated capital works to Surrey County Council's Cabinet. If approval is granted, and subject to planning permission, the project will move to implementation, with the aim of additional accommodation being in place by September 2017 to provide for the additional pupils.



**Contact Officer:**

Melanie Harding  
School Commissioning Officer (South West)  
07966 636 780

**Consulted:**

Guildford County School Governing Body  
Parents of pupils attending the school  
Prospective parents  
Local residents  
Diocese of Arundel & Brighton  
Diocese of Guildford  
Local Head Teachers  
Local County Councillor  
Borough Councillors  
Anne Milton, MP  
Julie Fisher, Deputy Chief Executive  
Peter-John Wilkinson, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning  
Unions

**Sources/background papers:**

- The Education Act 1996; the Education Act 2002; the Education Act 2005; the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
  - Consultation document regarding the proposal to expand Guildford County School by 20 places per year.
-

This page is intentionally left blank