

## SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

## CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND LEARNING

DATE: 15 JANUARY 2013

REPORT OF: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

SUBJECT: A PROPOSAL TO PERMANENTLY EXPAND BISLEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM 1.5 FORMS OF ENTRY (315 PUPILS) TO 2 FORMS OF ENTRY (420 PUPILS) FROM SEPTEMBER 2013

**KEY ISSUE/DECISION:**

To determine a proposal to permanently expand Bisley Church of England Primary School from 1.5 to 2 forms of entry (a total increase of 105 pupils).

**DETAILS:****Business Case**

1. Following a period of consultation with parents, residents and other statutory consultees, the Governors of Bisley Church of England Primary School decided to publish a statutory notice indicating their intention to expand the school from 1.5 to 2 forms of entry. This was done in partnership with Surrey County Council and the Diocese of Guildford. The notice was published on 9 November 2012 and is included as an appendix to this report. The Cabinet Member is asked to determine this proposal.
2. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places. Earlier in the year, the Army indicated to Surrey County Council that about 120 families of servicemen from the 2nd Yorkshire Regiment ('2 Yorks') were expected to be returning to the UK from Cyprus next year and children would require a school place for a September 2013 start. There are three primary schools in the area that could serve Pirbright Barracks: Pirbright Primary School, Brookwood Primary School and Bisley Church of England Primary School. Pirbright has little or no spare places and Bisley and Brookwood have a small surplus of places between them across different year groups. If a significant number of families return to the Barracks next year it is unlikely that this demand could be met by the existing schools in the area within their current accommodation.
3. Following the reorganisation of the armed services the 2 Yorks have been merged and will not be returning to Pirbright Barracks. However, the Army have indicated that the Local Authority should 'pause but not cancel' their plans as it is likely that families will still return to Pirbright Barracks next year but from a different base abroad. At the time of writing this report a basing plan indicating how many families would be returning to the barracks had not yet been provided by the Army, so the number of additional children that the Local Authority must provide for is not yet known. This information is expected to be

provided by the end of December and therefore an update will be tabled to the Cabinet Member in the meeting on the 15 January 2013 so that an informed decision can be taken on this proposal.

4. As a signatory to the Surrey Community Covenant, Surrey County Council is committed to supporting families from the armed services. Part of this covenant is to ensure that there are sufficient school places for families returning into the area. Officers decided to consult on and work up plans for additional accommodation (including a planning application) at the school in advance of confirmation on returning families from the Army and therefore 'at risk,' on the grounds that there would be insufficient time to build new classrooms if the process had started only once the Army had produced their basing plan.
5. Planning educational provision for families from the army can be a difficult process given the high mobility and unpredictable nature of their movements. Ordinarily the Local Authority would seek to meet demand from service families within spare capacity in the existing schools in the area. The context to primary place planning issues in the area is that there is great pressure on places in Woking, Runnymede and to a lesser extent in Surrey Heath which makes this approach untenable at this time.
6. In discussion with the three primary schools in the area, Bisley Church of England Primary School was deemed the preferable school to expand to meet the potential demand for the following reasons:

(i) Demand profile – assuming there will be a similar demand profile to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Yorks regiment returning to Pirbright Barracks, creating 105 additional places at Bisley (15 extra pupils at reception and across all other year groups) better meets the expected demand than expanding any of the other schools by 30 places and is more likely to avoid a situation where too many places are created. This is therefore a more cost effective option.

(ii) Planning educational provision on classes of 30 – Bisley has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 45 – the County Council prefers to plan school provision on multiples of 30. A PAN of 45 means schools have to mix year groups. The Local Authority is of the view that this is inefficient educationally, financially and organisationally and will seek to address this where possible. This proposal presents an opportunity to do this.

(ii) Difficulty in expanding the other two schools in the area – Pirbright Primary School already has 2-forms of entry and would not wish to expand further to 3 forms of entry. The school sits in the Green Belt and therefore from a planning point of view there is a presumption that the Local Authority should seek an alternative option for meeting the demand. The school has an adequate site for expansion but the current configuration makes access to site difficult. Based on the above assumptions, creating an additional 30 places may be more than is actually required. Brookwood Primary School has a small site. Although not in the greenbelt the site has poor access making expansion very difficult to deliver in practice. Creating an additional 30 places may create spare places in this school or others as this would create more provision than the expected demand. Brookwood is also a school named to expand to meet additional pressure expected from the Brookwood Farm Housing development from September 2014.

7. Bisley Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Aided primary school. The Local Authority values diversity in school provision and works with the Diocese of Guildford to ensure that there are sufficient places for children who would choose a place at a church school. Further details of this proposal are set out in the consultation paper that was published on 26 September 2012 (available on Surrey CC website – [Home > Learning > Schools > Education Consultation and Plans](#)).

## Consultation

8. The School, Diocese and Surrey County Council consulted on this proposal between 27 September 2012 and 25 October 2012. A report was issued to the Governors outlining the responses that were received throughout that consultation. In summary, there were 31 responses to the consultation. This includes all written responses either in response form, email or petition format.
9. There were two questions in the consultation form that respondents were asked to respond to:

(i) “If service families return to Pirbright Barracks the Local Authority should provide more school places in the area”. Across all the responses the following results were recorded and broken down further in the box below (totals may not add up to 31 given that some people have multiple interests):

Agree: 24  
 Disagree: 4  
 Don't know: 3

Total 31

Type of respondent	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Parent (Nursery, pre-school or mainschool)	20	1	3
Member of staff	3	0	0
Governor	1	0	0
Local Resident	1	2	0
'Other'	1	2	0

(ii) “If service families return to Pirbright Barracks, Bisley Church of England Primary School should permanently expand to become a 2 -form entry primary school to meet the additional demand”. Across all the responses the following results were recorded and broken down further in the box below (totals may not add up to 31 given that some people have multiple interests)

Agree: 16  
 Disagree: 12

Don't know: 3

Total 31

Type of respondent	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Parent (Nursery, pre-school or mainschool)	13	8	3
Member of staff	3	0	0
Governor	1	0	0
Local Resident	1	2	0
'Other'	1	2	0

10. The dominant issue raised during the consultation was regarding any additional traffic, parking concerns and concerns over child safety. This is reflected in the comments to the consultation as well as those views raised at the consultation meetings that were held with parents and local residents. The access to the school is tight and comes through a residential area. This is clearly an issue for local residents but is also an issue for parents who are worried about the safety of their children. Alongside these issues, many respondents cited the distance between the school and the Barracks as a concern as there are currently few, if any, safe routes to school. Traffic and parking concerns were cited equally between those people that agreed and disagreed with the proposal.
11. Taking into account the response to the consultation as well as the case for and against the proposal, the Governors decided to publish a notice indicating their intentions to proceed with the proposal. Following the publication of the statutory notice, a further 4-week period was undertaken to hear any formal representations. This was a final opportunity for anyone to make comments on the proposal, whether statements of support or objection. The deadline for all representations was 7 December 2012.
12. 3 formal representations have been received regarding the proposal. All are from local residents. All three representations raised objections on the grounds that the expansion of the school would have an unacceptable impact as a result of increased traffic, parking issues and poor access to the school that is already an issue for local residents. One resident also raised an objection to the proposed elevations of the extension.
13. It should be noted that no residents objected to the principle of the school expanding, only the planning issues associated with such an expansion. As this is the focus of this report, these objections should not be considered grounds to reject the proposal on educational grounds. Objections or concerns regarding amenity, traffic and parking issues will be dealt with through the travel planning process led by the school and ultimately by the planning approval process on the expansion which is currently underway.

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

14. This scheme was not in the original Basic Need Capital Programme as reported in the Medium Term Financial Plan (2012-2017). This is because the Army

communicated the potential return of families to Pirbright Barracks after the capital programme was compiled. This project will be reported as part of the 2013-2018 business planning cycle. Financial details on the expansion are not given in this report as they are commercially sensitive and may prejudice the tendering process should the project proceed.

15. A feasibility scheme has been developed by the Diocese of Guildford in conjunction with the school outlining the additional accommodation required to facilitate this expansion. This will involve a 3 classroom extension with toilets and a small group room space. Approval for the funding of this scheme will be requested from the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning acting on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Assets and Regeneration Programmes, also on 15 January 2013. These reports are being submitted together for the reasons set out in paragraph 4.

### **Equalities implications**

16. The proposal would enhance educational provision for children in the community served by the school as well as ensure that adequate educational provision is in place for service families. There are no direct equalities implications arising out of the proposal. However the increase in provision will be open to all applicants with the highest priority given to Looked After Children (LAC) and pupils on the SEN register and/or who would benefit from a statement of educational need, thus supporting provision for our most vulnerable children.

### **Risk management implications**

17. Given that the Army has not yet confirmed their basing plan for Pirbright Barracks, there is a risk that this information will not arrive by the time in which a decision is required or this information or will be incomplete / unreliable. This is a risk to the proposal and to the investment. Officers have been assured by Army representatives that the Local Authority will be informed of the basing plan, with details of the number of families returning to the area, as soon as the Ministry of Defence has completed this work and as 'soon as they know'.
18. Given the objections that have been raised by local residents a further risk is that planning approval for the scheme will not be approved, or will be delayed meaning that the additional accommodation cannot be delivered in time for the school to take additional pupils from September 2013.
19. Officers are working with the Army to ensure that any decision on this proposal is taken with the latest information and an update will be given at the meeting on the 15 January before any decisions are made. Given the above, any decision by the Cabinet Member will be conditional on planning permission being granted.

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

20. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. Given that the school already serves Pirbright Barracks, the catchment of the school is not expected to increase significantly and the school is working on a number of schemes to encourage parents to find alternative modes of transport into the school as well as investigating the possibility of coach transport from the Barracks to the school.

### **Legal implications/legislative requirements**

21. The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 contains the regulations that apply to prescribed alterations. The DfE has published two pieces of Guidance relating to prescribed alterations: Expanding a Maintained Mainstream School or Adding a Sixth Form 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 regard) and non-statutory guidance on the process for making changes to school provision.

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

22. The Council has a duty to promote and improve educational outcomes for all children, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, including Looked After Children. Securing provision at this school, where the demand for places is very local and also prioritised for children in local authority care will support this obligation.

### **Section 151 Officer commentary**

23. The Section 151 Officer notes that this scheme was not part of the 2012/17 capital programme as the army only notified the local authority of its intentions after the programme of work was agreed. However, it is included in the proposed capital programme for 2013/18.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member approve the proposal to permanently expand Bisley Church of England Primary School from 1.5 to 2 forms subject to confirmation from the Army that Pirbright Barracks will have a significant number of families returning with children requiring a school place from September 2013. Furthermore, any approval is conditional on planning permission being granted for the scheme.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and as a signatory to the military covenant is committed to addressing the specific needs of service families. This proposal achieves this aim should a significant number of children return to Pirbright Barracks requiring a school place from September 2013 next year.

## **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- Cabinet Member for Children and Learning acting on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Assets and Regeneration Programmes approves the costs of the scheme on 15 January 2013
- Planning permission will be sought on the expansion of the school building.
- Subject to approval above, tendering for a contractor to deliver the works required at the school.

### **Contact Officers:**

Kieran Holliday, School Commissioning Officer, tel 020 8541 7383

### **Consulted:**

Schools – Head Teachers and Governors in Woking and Surrey Heath  
Parents and Pupils at Bisley Church of England Primary School  
Diocese of Guildford  
Local Councillors (Borough/District and County Councillors)  
Local Residents

### **Informed:**

School Commissioning  
Estates  
Finance  
Legal Services

### **Sources/background papers:**

- Consultation Paper – ‘ A Proposal to expand Bisley Church of England Primary School to 2 forms of entry from September 2013’. (available on Surrey CC website – [Home > Learning > Schools > Education Consultation and Plans](#))
  - Bisley Public Notice (see below)
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**Appendix 1 – Statutory Notice on the proposed expansion of Bisley Church of England Primary School**

**Proposed expansion of Bisley Church of England Primary School in September 2013**

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that The Governing Body of Bisley Church of England Primary School, in partnership with Surrey County Council and Guildford Diocese, intends to make a prescribed alteration to Bisley Church of England Primary School (Voluntary Aided), Hawthorn Way, Bisley, Woking, Surrey, GU24 9DF from 01 September 2013.

The proposal is to expand the school from a 1.5 form entry primary school with a Published Admission Number of 45 (total of 315 pupils), to a 2 form entry primary school with a Published Admission Number of 60 (total of 420 pupils). The school will admit 15 additional pupils across all year groups (Reception Year to Year 6) from the date in which the proposal is effective. Accommodation would be provided on the existing site of the school to enable this change to take place by September 2013.

The current number of pupils registered at the school is 291 (as at 9 January 2012).

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained by writing to: Kieran Holliday, Room 326, County Hall, Penrhyn Road, Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 2DJ or emailing [schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk).

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to, or make comments on, the proposal by sending them to Kieran Holliday using the contact details above.

Signed: Julie Holt, Chair of Governors, Bisley Church of England Primary School

Publication Date: 9 November 2012

**Explanatory Notes**

This proposal is being made on the expectation that a significant number of service families will be returning to Pirbright Barracks and requiring a school place in September 2013.