

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****DATE: 28 FEBRUARY 2017**

**REPORT OF: MS DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS SERVICES**  
**MRS LINDA KEMENY, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING**

**LEAD OFFICER: JOHN STEBBINGS, CHIEF PROPERTY OFFICER**  
**LIZ MILLS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING**

**SUBJECT: EWELL GROVE INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**  
**WEST EWELL INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**  
**DANETREE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

To approve the Business Case for the conversion of Ewell Grove Infant and Nursery School which is currently a 2 Form of Entry infant school (180 places) with 26 full time equivalent (fte) nursery places, to a 2 Form of Entry Primary (420 primary places with 26 fte nursery places). As the school expands incrementally this will create 240 new junior places overall.

The proposal is part of the Ewell primary school re-organisation which will create another 200 infant and 480 junior places in total to help meet the basic need requirements in the Ewell area from September 2017. The net number of nursery places will be unaffected but the re-organisation allows for more 2 year old places and a more flexible offer to parents across the three nurseries at Danetree, West Ewell and Ewell Grove Primary schools.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that, subject to the agreement of the detailed financial information for the expansion as set out in agenda item 17 in Part 2 of this agenda, the business case for the provision of an additional two forms (240 places) of junior places in Ewell planning area be approved.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

The proposal supports the Authority's statutory obligation to provide sufficient school places to meet the needs of the population in the Epsom and Ewell Borough.

<b><u>DETAILS:</u></b>
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## **Background**

1. There has been an increasing trend in the demand for places in primary schools in Epsom and Ewell. There was also an historic mismatch between the number of infant and junior places available, especially in the Ewell area. The two infant schools had a combined PAN of 190 in 2015 and yet Danetree's junior PAN was only 128. There is no other feeder junior school in this area.
2. The rising demand has been partially addressed by some permanent expansions in other planning areas within the borough and some infant and junior bulge classes in different schools each year. This strategy caused a degree of parental concern as to which schools would offer a Key Stage 2 place to children moving out of the infant phase.
3. Having received requests from both infant schools in Ewell to convert them into primary schools for educational reasons, and Danetree Junior academy also indicated a willingness to both expand and become an all through primary school, the Council agreed to move forward with a re-organisation of all three schools beginning with the conversion of Danetree to primary status in September 2016. This decision has made it possible to reduce the number of school transitions for Ewell children and, when complete, will add some more primary places into the borough's net capacity. This will ensure a sufficiency of places up to the end of the current forecast period, which is 2024. Moreover the re-organisation should facilitate a continuing rise in academic standards by ensuring a smooth progression through the primary curriculum with no need to change schools for their entire primary education phase.
4. Ewell Grove Infant School and Nursery is a popular and successful school which delivers high quality education. It was rated Outstanding by OFSTED at its last inspection (January 2009) and was over-subscribed for 2016 Reception places. The proposed conversion to a 2 FE primary school and the provision of 240 additional junior places therefore meets the government's policy position to expand successful schools in order to meet parental preferences. The reduction of 90 YR - 2 infant places (PAN reduction from 70 to 60 in September 2016) will be compensated by the conversion of Danetree to a 4 FE primary school which will add infant places from September 2016. The schemes are therefore intrinsically linked.
5. The Ewell and NW Epsom primary planning areas have been affected by the increase in births and new housing. 2015 marked the highest point, to date, for live births in the borough and these are the children that we expect to enter Reception classes in 2019 or 2020. The development of the new estates on the former hospital sites has put additional pressure onto education infrastructure with many new residents either arriving with, or starting, families. There has also been considerable small 'in fill' housing developments that have added to the pressure for school places across the borough
6. The 2016 combined Published Admission Number for the Ewell Primary School planning area is 360 in Reception classes. The council received 350 first preferences for these places and has also allocated the few remaining places so there is no current spare capacity in Reception.

7. The 2016 combined PAN for the North West Epsom planning area (which serves the large developments on former hospital sites) is 210 and we received 235 first preferences for these schools. We were therefore at least one form of entry short across the two areas, based on only first preferences, and without taking into account any in year applications. We have supplied some temporary additional places at Stamford Green Primary School to meet this year's demand.
8. This situation should improve as the re-organisation is complete. Danetree converted to primary status in September 2016 and the two Ewell infant schools will follow in September 2017. Once all three schools have converted to primary we will be able to meet the current forecast demand in Ewell and potentially have a few places as spare capacity. By 2022 officers predict that there could be a surplus of 10 Reception places in Ewell, spread between 6 primary schools, and a surplus of up to 5 places in NW Epsom.
9. Although in 2012 and 2013 the Epsom and Ewell birth rate fell (to 923 and 916 respectively) this was clearly not the start of a falling trend as the 2015 births were the highest in the borough to date (945). The current set of forecast data, (which includes proposed new housing and trajectory data obtained from the Borough Planning Department) indicates that the ongoing demand for primary school places in the two above mentioned planning areas will be sufficient but if any significant housing developments come forward, that we do not yet know of, we may have to contemplate planning for a new primary Free School. This would be needed to serve the Epsom town area to supplement the places we have already planned to supply in Ewell. There is therefore a robust business case for the Ewell primary re-organisation to enable us to meet the overall primary demand across the borough.
10. To facilitate the conversion to primary status there needs to be significant capital works at Ewell Grove Infant and Nursery school. This is because the site is restricted, is in a conservation area and has poor vehicular access. The scheme requires a new building with additional classrooms and a new hall and kitchen facility. There will also be some demolition required and internal modifications to the existing accommodation to enable it to function as a 2 FE primary school with a nursery. A planning application has been submitted and a decision is expected at the Planning and Regulatory Committee meeting in June 2017.

#### **CONSULTATION:**

1. Public consultation was undertaken on this proposal twice; once informally in 2014, where it received strong support from parents. A second statutory consultation was held in July 2015 and again the response was overwhelmingly positive to all three schools converting to primary status. A consultation document was published and all statutory stakeholders including parents and local residents were informed. In addition, public meetings were held at all 3 schools during June and July 2015.
2. The results of the public consultation were summarised in the report to the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning on 28 July 2015. The meeting was attended by 20 people and the council received 117 written responses. Of these 101 people agreed with the proposal (86%) ; 13 disagreed (11%) and 3 respondents stated that they were undecided.

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

1. Ewell Grove Infant and Nursery School is on a relatively compact site with difficult vehicular access arrangements. The delivery team will work closely with the school's management and contractor to manage construction risks and ensure the site is safe for pupils, staff and visitors.
2. The main risk to this project currently is the planning permission. As the existing school is a traditional early twentieth century brick building , and is in a conservation area, the design of the new block has been challenging; however we have consulted throughout with Planning and Heritage officers and now believe that we have a design which is acceptable to all. If the design does not receive planning approval then the Ewell re-organisation project will be at significant risk.
3. The location of this school in the heart of Ewell village brings with it a perception that parental traffic will cause significant disruption at key times. A full transport assessment has been carried out and the impact of traffic may be less than it appears; particularly since most parents already 'park and stride' or walk their children to this school now. When Ewell Grove becomes a primary there will be no need for parents to drive between an infant and junior school. In recent years the admissions area for Ewell Grove has reduced down to within 0.7 of a mile thus it is reasonable to expect that most families will continue to follow their current pattern of behaviour and walk to school.
4. The construction, delivery time and financial risks associated with the project are specified on a project risk register and this is updated regularly and will be throughout the delivery phase. A contingency allowance appropriate to the scheme has been included within the project budget to mitigate for potential unidentified risks.

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

5. The project will be subject to robust cost challenge and scrutiny to drive optimum value as it progresses. Further financial details are set out in the report circulated as item 17 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**

6. The funding for this scheme is included in the 2016/21 medium term financial plan.

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

7. 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**

8. The expansion of the school will not create any issues requiring the production of an Equality Impact Assessment.
9. The new school building will comply with Disabilities Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations. The expanded school will provide employment opportunities in the area.
10. 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.
11. 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**

12. 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 means it would therefore also be of benefit to any looked after children who will attend the school.

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

13. 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.

### **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 for the Built Environment  
John Beckett, Local Member: Ewell – Epsom and Ewell  
Julie Fisher, Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director for Children, Schools and Families  
Paula Chowdhury, Strategic Finance Manager – Business Services

**Annexes:**

None - Part 2 report with financial details attached to agenda as item 17.

**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
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