

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

**REPORT OF: MRS LINDA KEMENY, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS,
SKILLS AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

**MS DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS
SERVICES AND RESIDENT EXPERIENCE**

LEAD OFFICER: JOHN STEBBINGS, CHIEF PROPERTY OFFICER

**LIZ MILLS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR SCHOOLS AND
LEARNING**

**SUBJECT: CHART WOOD SCHOOL DORKING, PROPOSED
RATIONALISATION ONTO ONE SITE**

FORMER STARHURST SCHOOL, DORKING
FORMER ST NICHOLAS SCHOOL, REDHILL

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

To approve the Business Case for the rebuilding of Chart Wood School on its Dorking site, so as to fully realise the benefits of amalgamating this provision. Critical amongst these benefits is the release of the school's Merstham site for alternative use as a location for a new mainstream 6FE secondary free school and 2FE primary free school. Forecasts of pupil demand in the area indicate that this provision is necessary, in order for the County Council to effectively discharge its statutory responsibility to provide sufficient pupil places in the area to meet local demand. Without this site (and the free schools that the Education Funding Agency will build and fund), the County Council would be liable to provide these places from its own capital budget. This would be estimated to cost the Council £26 million, which is far in excess of the cost of the proposed amalgamation scheme.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that, subject to the agreement of the detailed financial information for the expansion set out in Part 2 of this report, the business case for rebuilding of this school be approved.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

This proposal will streamline Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) provision in the south east of Surrey. It will allow for the more effective use of the available Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) resources. The aim is to develop outstanding provision with a larger and more sustainable single special school for SEMH in the east quadrant of Surrey.

DETAILS:**Background**

1. Chart Wood School is presently located across two sites, in Dorking and Merstham. This is a function of the fact that the school is the product of a recent amalgamation of two previously existing schools; Starhurst School (Dorking) and St. Nicholas School (Merstham). The newly amalgamated school came into existence as of 1 September 2016 and offers education provision for boys aged 9-16, with some residential places. The school has recently extended its age range to admit up to 10 primary-aged children.
2. The amalgamation of the school onto one site will release the Merstham site, which represents a critical element of the County Council's strategy for the provision of pupil places in the wider Reigate & Redhill area. The intention is for the Education Funding Agency to establish both a new free secondary and a free primary school on the site with an investment of approximately £26m. This provision will meet the demand for basic need places in the Redhill area that would otherwise have to be funded by Surrey County Council.
3. Projections of demand for primary and secondary school places in the Reigate & Redhill area (inclusive of Merstham), relative to current supply, are provided in the below tables:

Primary:

Year	YR PAN	YR Projection	Projected Surplus
2017/18	900	967	- 67
2018/19	900 (960)	999	- 99
2019/20	900 (960)	953	- 53
2020/21	900 (960)	954	- 54
2021/22	900 (960)	965	- 65
2022/23	900 (960)	973	- 73
2023/24	900 (960)	986	- 86
2024/25	900 (960)	993	- 93
2025/26	900 (960)	1,004	- 104

Secondary:

Year	Y7 PAN	Y7 Projection	Projected Surplus
2017/18	813	895	- 82
2018/19	813	1,003	- 190
2019/20	813	1,042	- 229
2020/21	813	1,065	- 252
2021/22	813	1,117	- 304
2022/23	813	1,159	- 346
2023/24	813	1,245	- 432
2024/25	813	1,186	- 373
2025/26	813	1,201	- 388
2026/27	813	1,161	- 348

4. The forecasts demonstrate the need for an additional 3-4FE of primary provision in the area and a minimum of an additional 12FE of secondary provision, represented in a pressing short-term need that steadily grows in the medium- to long-term. As such, the release of the Merstham site for the proposed new free school(s) (6FE secondary and 2FE primary) represents a key, time-critical strategic priority for the delivery of mainstream school places in the Reigate & Redhill area. Due to the paucity of suitable sites for schools in the area, whilst alternative options for meeting the rising pupil demand in Reigate & Redhill have been explored, these are either unfeasible in school organisation terms, or else would either incur significant capital cost for SCC.
5. The physical amalgamation of the school onto a single site is also guided by a sound educational rationale, in terms of enhancing the SEMH offer in the area. Chart Wood School's sites are located approximately 11 miles from each other. Rationalising the arrangements to create one school would combine good practice from each and augment the cohesiveness of the school community. Additionally, the larger, integrated school model allows for economies of scale to be implemented that would make the school more financially sustainable in the longer term. Consolidating the school's operation on a single site will enable the elimination of cost duplication, with resources being deployed to maximum effect in terms of outcome realisation. In particular, a purpose built single building will be more efficient in terms of utilities expenditure, which will equate to significant revenue savings moving forward.
6. Significant efficiencies will be achieved as a result of providing a new replacement building. The planned maintenance programme for the existing schools suggest a high level of investment to maintain the fabric and services over the coming years at an estimated cost of £1.7m. In addition, as a result of the poor condition of the buildings, a significant sum is being spent annually on reactive revenue maintenance calls, which will be avoided in the future.
7. The intention is that, whilst rationalising the school on a single site, there will also be a slight reduction in overall numbers from 120 to 105 pupils. From the cohort of 105, there will be places for 24 residential pupils.
8. The Ofsted report for St Nicholas Special School, the predecessor of Chart Wood Academy, from September 2013, rates the school as 'Good', with the behaviour and safety of pupils and the overall effectiveness of the residential provision both rated as 'Outstanding'. In particular, this report noted that "the headteacher is an exceptional leader who is constantly looking at ways to improve the well-being of students. He is very well supported by strong senior leaders and by the effective governing body. Senior leaders are highly visible about the school and are seen as very supportive by staff and students. The residential facility is very well managed. A highly effective head of boarding ensures the residential provision is an integral part of the school." Delivery of a new, purpose-built facility for the newly amalgamated provision will enable the school to build upon these strengths, to continue to provide positive outcomes for SEMH pupils into the future.
9. The transition to a single site will mean that there are likely to be some changes to staff working arrangements and for some, living arrangements. These are currently being determined and this process will involve detailed work with the staff concerned, together with support from Union and HR representatives.

10. In order to provide for this rationalization of provision, it is proposed to locate an entirely new, purpose-built building on Chart Wood's Dorking site. The new Chart Wood School will provide key stage two and secondary school places for 105no pupils with SEMH (Social Emotional and Mental Health) special educational needs, as well as residential accommodation for 24no pupils who will board during the week. The proposed scheme is comprised of two wings linked by a central space which accommodates the main entrance, gymnasium and library space. The arrangement of the accommodation ensures that there is a discrete separation between educational facilities and the more homely environment of the residential provision.
11. A planning application will be submitted in February 2017 and a decision is expected in June 2017.

CONSULTATION:

12. The Headteacher and school governors have been fully consulted on the amalgamation proposals.
13. The amalgamation proposal was the subject of a Council-led consultation process that was held between 8 February – 8 March June 2016. This process engaged a range of interested stakeholders, including the school community, local residents, local admissions authorities and the Surrey School Admissions Forum. During the consultation period, three public meetings were held: at St. Nicholas on 22 February and at Starhurst on 26 February and 1 March 2016. Altogether, there were over 80 attendees across the three meetings, with the audiences consisting of parents, staff and local residents. 54% of formal responses to the consultation agreed with the proposal, 38% disagreed with 8% undecided.
14. The Statutory Notice period ran from 15 March to 13 April 2016. No correspondence was received relating to this notice. The Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievements made the formal decision to amalgamate these schools on 30 June 2016.
15. An open public consultation event was held at the school on 12 February 2017 as part of the pre-planning application process, to which all interested stakeholders were invited.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

16. There are risks associated with the project and a project risk register has been compiled, which 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

17. 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 in Part 2 of the report. These details have been circulated separately to ensure commercial sensitivity, in the interest of securing best value.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

18. This scheme is included within the 2016/21 Medium Term Financial Plan.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

19. The public sector equality duty in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 applies to the decision to be made by Cabinet 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.
20. 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.

Equalities and Diversity

21. The expansion of the school will not create any issues that would require the production of an Equality Impact Assessment.
22. The new school building will comply with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations.
23. The school will be expected to contribute towards community cohesion and to provide the normal range of before- and after-schools clubs provided in a typical Surrey County Council school.

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications

24. In providing new, purpose-built facilities for SEMH pupils in the area, this proposal would also be of benefit to any SEMH Looked After Children who have the opportunity of attending the school.

Climate change/carbon emissions implications

25. 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 commence the tender process for the project, through to contract award, via delegated decision.

Contact Officer:

Keith Brown, Schools and Programme Manager – tel: 020 8541 8651
Oliver Gill, School Commissioning Officer – tel: 020 8541 7383

Consulted:

Tony Samuels, Cabinet Associate for the Built Environment
Mr Stephen Cooksey, Local Member – Dorking South and the Holmwoods – Mole Valley
Bob Gardner, Local Member – Merstham and Banstead South – Reigate and Banstead
Julie Fisher, Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director for Children, Schools and Families
Paula Chowdhury, Strategic Finance Manager – Business Services

Annexes:

None but Part 2 report with financial details attached to agenda as item 18.

Sources/background papers:

- N/A
-