

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING****DATE: 13 MARCH 2013****LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES****SUBJECT: TO DETERMINE A PROPOSAL TO EXPAND ESHER CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Secondary School rolls are set to rise significantly across Surrey from 2015 onwards as larger pupil cohorts move out of the primary sector. Esher C of E High School has already taken one additional form of entry in the previous two years in order to meet local need and to build capacity within Elmbridge. To ensure sufficient provision of secondary school places in the longer term Surrey County Council is proposing the permanent expansion of Esher High School with effect from 1 September 2015.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that:

1. The school is enlarged by 2 forms of entry (from 6 FE to 8 FE).
2. The school to undertakes a building remodelling programme on its present site managed by Surrey County Council. This will add teaching accommodation and improve the use of space on campus and enable the school to accommodate 1200 students (PAN 240).
3. This expansion would be effective from 1 September 2015.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Esher High is a popular school and successful which delivers a high quality education. It was rated by OFSTED at its last inspection (Nov 2009) as an outstanding school. It also holds a number of awards and is recognised as a National Teaching School, a National Support School and a Lead school for educating Gifted and Talented students. The provision of additional places at Esher High meets the government's policy position to expand successful schools in order to meet parental preferences.

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

1. There will be a need for additional Year 7 places in Elmbridge from 2015. The current pupil forecast numbers indicate a need for an additional 42 places to meet demand. This figure then rises to 98 places in 2016 and continues to increase to 2020. These figures can be treated with a degree of certainty as

the pupils are already in the primary sector. There are four secondary schools in Elmbridge but only three of them have the capacity to expand on their present sites. By expanding Esher High School in 2015 we can meet the immediate demand while we plan to increase capacity elsewhere in the medium term.

2. Esher High School has already been expanded on a temporary basis in previous years (2010, 2011 and 2012). Surrey County Council has supplied temporary classrooms to enable this to happen. However it is not possible to expand further on the present site without rationalising the existing accommodation and creating some new classrooms and a specialist science teaching area. Originally the school was built to accommodate 900 pupils and it now has 1080 students on campus in a mixture of permanent and temporary accommodation. A new sports hall has recently been built by the school to enable specialist teaching and create a space large enough to allow this increased number of students to meet together as a whole school.
3. The school is willing to expand permanently and is keen to do so with the promise of new, purpose-built accommodation which is designed to enhance the quality of the educational opportunities on offer and provide permanent classrooms and some additional ancillary space. This project has been identified as 'Basic Need' and as such is to be funded by Surrey County Council. It was offered to the market as a single tender. The staff and governors have been working closely with SCC, a project manager and the architects to re-design the space within main building by linking the two halves of this main block and adding a science block extension to the rear of the building. The design is now at a stage ready to be submitted to the Planning Authority.
4. The present school site and the new land are both situated within the Green Belt and therefore the Planning Application addresses this issue.
5. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and it is not currently feasible to expand other local schools or academies within the borough by 2015. Rydens Academy (RES) has announced its intention to rebuild and Surrey County Council has agreed with the governing body to finance some capacity onto their site. However, the earliest this can be achieved would be 2016. The area strategy includes this and other expansions all of which have been discussed with the schools in question and are accounted for within the Capital Strategy and the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

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| <b>CONSULTATION:</b> |
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6. A public consultation was carried out between 5 and 30 November 2012. A consultation document was produced and circulated to all parents and other stakeholders and interested parties. In addition a meeting was held at the school on 13 November but regrettably this was not well attended (only one parent and a governor turned up). The consultation document was also published on the Surrey County Council website and the local Borough and County councillors were sent copies of this document.
7. The Council received 15 written consultation responses. An analysis of these is given in the table below. NB Some respondents are parents of children at

the school, parents of likely future pupils and/or governors; for the purposes of this summary table they have been counted once:

| Respondent  | Agree | Disagree | Don't Know |
|---|-------|----------|------------|
| Parent of a child attending the school                  | 4     | 1        | 1          |
| Potential Future parent/child in an Early Years setting | 5     | 0        | 0          |
| Parent of child at another secondary school             | 1     | 0        | 0          |
| Employee of the school                                  | 0     | 0        | 0          |
| School governor   | 1     | 0        | 0          |
| Other stakeholder – student or anonymous                | 1     | 1        | 0          |

8. Twelve responses indicated agreement with the proposal. One respondent stated that they did not know whether or not they were in favour, two respondents were against the proposal.
9. The main concern raised by respondents was the need to retain the ethos of the school and assurance was sought that resources would not be so stretched as to have a negative impact on standards. Many respondents noted that this is a popular school which is oversubscribed; they expressed support for the expansion so that more local children would have the opportunity to attend an outstanding school. The two people who disagreed with the proposal state that they liked the fact that Esher High was a small school and felt that much would be lost if it were to increase in size. One person mentioned a perceived diminution in standards of behaviour and restrictions on tutorial time since it has increased in size on a temporary basis.
10. Public Notices were subsequently published and we received no further responses to these.

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

11. The key risk to this proposal was the dependency on a successful planning application to develop the site. This scheme has been discussed informally with planners throughout the design and development process and a planning application has been submitted.

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

12. The cost of the proposed project will be funded through the Schools Basic Need Capital Programme and funding for this scheme is included in the current 2012/17 Medium Term Financial Plan.

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

13. The *School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007* contain the regulations that apply to prescribed alterations. The DCSF 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.

#### **Equalities and Diversity**

14. 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 being given to Looked After Children, pupils on the SEN register and/or those who would benefit from a statement of educational need, thus supporting provision for the most vulnerable young people.

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

15. The school has a robust Safeguarding Policy which is monitored by the designated Child Protection Lead Officer, is regularly reviewed by the governing body and is subject to OFSTED inspection. Site access and security, both during the proposed building programme and afterwards, have been considered and addressed in the planning and design of this building project.

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

16. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. A safe walking route to the school has been identified for use by residents and facilities will be provided at the new campus for students and staff who cycle to school.
17. The additional school provision is centred close to an area of demographic demand and therefore will enable young people to attend a local school; thus reducing the need for lengthy school journeys.

#### **Section 151 Commentary**

18. The section 151 officer confirms that funding for this scheme has been included in the 2012/17 medium term financial plan and scheme costs are expected to be contained within this funding allocation. More detailed costings will be developed as the scheme progresses to tender.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- Subject to Cabinet Member approval, Statutory Notices stating the Council's intent to expand the school will be published. The Cabinet Member would then receive a report to determine the proposed expansion within two months of the expiration of the Statutory Notices.
- The outcome of this consultation will be published on the Surrey County Council website and parents of pupils at the school will be notified by letter from the Governing Body.

**Contact Officer:**

Melanie Harris

School Commissioning Officer NE Surrey tel. 020 8541 9556

**Consulted:**

Parents of pupils and prospective pupils of Esher C of E High School

Staff and Governors of the school

Local Councillors

Local residents and other local schools via the consultation document published on the SCC website

**Annexes:** None

**Sources/background papers:**

School Organisation Consultation Proposal

15 Consultation responses

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