

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND LEARNING

DATE: 13 MARCH 2013

LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

SUBJECT: PROPOSED EXPANSION OF ST MARTIN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS, EPSOM



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

In order to meet a local need for primary school places it is proposed that St Martin's Infant and Junior Schools permanently expand from 2 to 3 forms of entry.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. St Martin's Infant School admits 3 FE from September 2014
2. St Martin's Junior School admits 3 FE from September 2017
3. Additional accommodation is built at both schools and a suitable travel plan is agreed.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

There is an immediate requirement for more primary school places in Epsom which is evidenced by data. This proposal to expand two popular and successful schools is in response to this need and the additional places will benefit local parents and children.

DETAILS:

Business Case

1. Surrey County Council's forecasts and historical data indicate that school rolls have been rising steadily across Epsom and Ewell Borough since 2006. Much of the rise is as a result of the increase in the local birth rate and some is due to housing development and inward migration. Births have risen across the borough by about 24% since a low point in 2002. Consequently we need to take account of this trend and provide more school places in the areas where they are needed.
2. The South Epsom and Langley Vale primary school planning area is served by 6 schools: St Joseph's, St Martin's Infants and Juniors, The Vale, and the two Wallace Fields schools. Additional Reception classes have been provided in a number of these schools over the past 3 years and most are now unable to expand further on their present sites.

3. Our projections for the planning area are given in the table below. The 'PAN' is the combined published admission numbers for Reception Year of the schools in the planning area. The 'spare' columns show the projected shortfall in Reception and in Year 3 places when children transfer into junior provision (Key Stage 2). Later projections should, however, be treated with caution – these are based not on actual births but on the current birth trend. Over the next two years or so, we will be able either to confirm this trend or revise our projections accordingly.

	PAN	Spare	YR	Y1	Y2	I	Jun PI	Junior Spare	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	J	Total	Cap	Surplus
2011/2012	210	5	205	210	229	644	207	5	202	212	199	210	823	1467	1429	-38
2012/2013	210	-31	241	205	208	654	207	-32	239	205	209	200	853	1507	1429	-78
2013/2014	210	-35	245	240	203	688	222	5	217	242	202	210	871	1559	1429	-130
2014/2015	210	-39	249	244	238	731	222	11	211	219	238	203	871	1602	1429	-173
2015/2016	210	-38	248	248	242	738	222	-26	248	213	215	239	915	1653	1429	-224
2016/2017	210	-40	250	247	246	743	222	-30	252	251	209	216	928	1671	1429	-242
2017/2018	210	-42	252	249	245	746	222	-34	256	255	247	210	968	1714	1429	-285
2018/2019	210	-42	252	251	247	750	222	-33	255	259	251	248	1013	1763	1429	-334
2019/2020	210	-43	253	251	249	753	222	-35	257	258	255	252	1022	1775	1429	-346
2020/2021	210	-47	257	252	249	758	222	-37	259	260	254	256	1029	1787	1429	-358

4. Taking a cautious view, we believe that there is a need for potentially more than 1 additional form of entry in Reception classes in the area by 2020. There will be a corresponding need to increase Year 3 places across the planning area in due course and we will need to match junior provision to infant places as the pupils move through the system.

Why Expand St Martin's Schools?

5. Both St Martin's Infant and St Martin's Junior have had recent positive OFSTED inspection judgements and are providing a good quality of education. Both schools are popular with parents and are often over-subscribed. The schools share a campus in a central location in Epsom town which makes them accessible and should enable parents living locally to walk their children to and from school.
6. The provision of additional places at St Martin's Infant and Junior schools meets the government's policy position to expand successful schools in order to meet parental preferences. Both schools are Voluntary Aided so may determine their own admissions arrangements. The Governing Bodies are therefore making this proposal in conjunction with Surrey County Council and The Diocese of Guildford.

CONSULTATION:

7. A public consultation was carried out between 26 November and 21 December 2012. A consultation document was produced and circulated to all parents, other stakeholders and interested parties. In addition a meeting was held at the junior school on 3 November 2012; this was attended by approximately 20 parents and some residents. The consultation document was also published on the Surrey County Council website and the local Borough and County councillors were sent copies of this.

8. The Council, on behalf of the two Governing Bodies, received 9 written consultation responses. An analysis of these is given in the table below:

Respondent	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Parent of a child attending the schools	3	1	3
Potential Future parent/child in an Early Years setting	1	1	0
Parent of child at another school	0	0	0
Employee of the school	0	0	0
School governor	0	0	0
Other stakeholder	0	0	0

9. Four respondents were in full agreement with the proposal. Three respondents stated that they did not know whether or not they were in favour; one respondent raised concerns about traffic and parking but did not specify whether they were for or against the proposal; and two respondents stated that they were against the proposal.
10. The main concerns raised by respondents were parking and traffic considerations and the possibility of upsetting local residents due to the increased volume of parental vehicles. There was a perception by some people that the council and Governing Bodies had not presented sufficient convincing data to justify expansion. One respondent also mentioned a perceived lack of evidence to show that larger schools benefit children's education. This person stated that, in her opinion, smaller schools offer better education. One respondent particularly felt that there were a number of unanswered questions relating to operational aspects of the proposal. Another person commented that the council should have built a new school on the site of one of the recent housing developments in the borough.
11. Supportive comments were received about the capacity of both schools to make a success of this project, in terms of maintaining high standards; and the benefits of increased budget and resources in a larger school. One respondent stated that all local schools should be made to expand in order to meet the demand for places however this is not technically possible as some sites are too small or have other restrictions that preclude this.

Statutory Notices

12. The consultation responses were subsequently reported to the Governing Bodies who jointly determined to recommend the expansion of both schools. The proposal is that the Infant School will begin admitting three Reception classes in September 2014 and the Junior School will begin admitting three Year 3 classes in 2017.
13. The Governing Bodies also proposed a building project to add accommodation and facilitate better access between the two schools for staff and children as necessary. This requires planning permission to be obtained.
14. A report was subsequently presented to the two Governing Bodies seeking approval to publish Statutory Notices. This approval was given and Notices were duly published and closed on 15 February. The council received one response, on behalf of the Governing Bodies, which objected to the proposal on the grounds that the current admissions policies of the two schools could

deprive local children, who do not attend the infant school, a place at the junior school. The respondent contends that both schools' admissions policies should be reviewed. This letter was copied to the Head and Chair of Governors at St Martin's Junior School and as they are their own Admissions Authority this is a matter for the governing bodies to consider.

15. The Governing Bodies made a joint Planning Application and have now received consent from the Planning Authority to proceed with the building project subject to final approval of the expansion scheme by Surrey County Council.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

16. The predominant risk to this proposal is that if it is unsuccessful then the County Council still has a duty to provide additional school places elsewhere and in time for the 2014 intake of children starting school. Finding a suitable alternative school in the right location will be extremely difficult if not impossible, especially within the given time frame.
17. An analysis of the forecast data indicates that there is a definite need for at least one more class in the south of Epsom town. The Wallace Fields' schools and St Joseph's are unable to expand further on their present sites. The council has already made plans to expand four other schools in other parts of the Borough which will assist with the overall pattern of need but this will not deliver places locally for parents in south Epsom.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

18. The funding for these schemes is included within the 2013/18 Medium Term Financial Plan. It is expected that through effective tendering and cost efficient build solutions that the total cost will remain within the funding agreed. It is expected that the project will be jointly managed by the two schools and the agreed project budget will be delegated to them.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

19. The Section 151 Officer confirms that the funding for these schemes is included in the 2013/18 Medium Term Financial Plan. More detailed costings for the schemes will be developed as they progress to tender, but the Section 151 Officer expects the costs to be contained within the agreed funding levels.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

20. 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.

21. The schools have adhered to these regulations by holding a consultation phase with stakeholders within the prescribed timescales.

Equalities and Diversity

22. 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 those who would benefit from a statement of educational need, thus supporting provision for our most vulnerable children.

Looked After Children implications

23. Looked After Children currently have a high priority in the Admissions criteria for both schools and as such may benefit from additional available school places in Epsom.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

24. Both schools have robust Safeguarding Policies which are monitored by the designated Child Protection Lead Officers, are regularly reviewed by the governing bodies and are 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

25. The schools have submitted revised Travel Plans as part of their Planning Application. These aim to encourage parents to walk their children to and from school as far as possible; or to park away from the immediate vicinity and walk the last few hundred yards or so. This is to restrict vehicles around the school site and the residential streets adjacent to the school gates.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- Subject to approval of this proposal the schools will commence building work in order to ensure that there is sufficient teaching accommodation is available for the additional infant class in September 2014 and for the junior expansion in the future.
- A request will be made to the Cabinet Member for Assets and Regeneration programmes seeking permission to release the budget for the building project so that it may be delegated to the schools.
- The outcome of this report will be communicated to the schools by letter and to the general public via the County Council website

Contact Officer:

Melanie Harris
Schools Commissioning Officer NE Surrey
Tel. 020 8541 9556

Consulted:

The staff, parents and Governing Bodies of St Martin's Infant and Junior Schools; members of the public, The Cabinet Member for Assets and Regeneration ; local members; the Diocese of Guildford

Annexes:

None

Sources/background papers:

- School Organisation Consultation document November 2012
 - Officer presentation to the public meeting 3 December 2012
 - Report to the Governing Bodies of St Martin's Infant and Junior Schools January 2013
 - Public Notices for both schools January 2013
 - Copies of responses to consultations
-