

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND LEARNING****DATE: 13 MARCH 2013****LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES****SUBJECT: CHARLWOOD INFANT SCHOOL CHANGE TO A PRIMARY SCHOOL – DECISION****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Charlwood Infant School is a small school that serves the communities of Charlwood and Hookwood in the parish of Charlwood to the west of Horley. There is a shortage of junior places in the wider area. Junior places could be provided by Charlwood Infant School becoming a primary school

Surrey County Council in partnership with the Governing Body of Charlwood Infant School is proposing that Charlwood Infant School becomes a primary school with a Published Admission Number of 15 on 1 September 2013.

On 11 September 2012 the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning approved the publication of statutory notices. Funding issues had to be resolved and the notices were published on 17 January 2013.

The notice period has expired and the Cabinet Member needs to consider the proposals and act as Decision Maker and, giving regard to the Decision Maker's Guidance, to examine the Prescribed Information (Annex A) and determine the proposals - decide whether to approve the proposals.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member approves the following proposals:

- Charlwood Primary School would decrease its Published Admission Number from 30 to 15 on 1 September 2013
- No Year 2 children would remain on roll at Charlwood Primary School, but would continue to progress to other schools for their junior education
- The school would become a restricted age primary school
- Charlwood Primary School would extend its age range by 1 year on 1 September 2016
- Charlwood Primary School would then extend its age range by 1 year each year until 1 September 2019, when it would become an all-through primary school

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Additional junior places in the area are necessary. The expansion of Charlwood Infant School would increase parental certainty of progression for their children and provide effective long-term provision to meet the needs of local children, promoting

high standards, ensuring fair access to educational opportunity, and promoting the fulfilment by every child of their educational potential.

DETAILS:

Business Case

1. Charlwood Infant School is a small school that serves the communities of Charlwood and Hookwood in the parish of Charlwood to the west of Horley. The Year 2 children from Charlwood Infant School primarily progress into junior schools in Horley.
2. Numbers of primary children in Horley are increasing and there are fewer junior places than infant places, leading to a shortage of junior places. Additional junior places could be provided by Charlwood Infant School becoming a primary school, reducing the need for junior places in Horley.
3. The Charlwood site is too small for a one form entry (1FE) primary school, Therefore, it is proposed to become a 0.5 FE primary school. There would be a net increase in capacity of 15 places.
4. Charlwood Infant School is a good school and it is entirely appropriate to expand the provision at good schools.

The area served by the school

5. Charlwood Infant School serves the communities of Charlwood and Hookwood in the parish of Charlwood. The ward of Charlwood covers the same geographical area as the parish of Charlwood. Over the years, a variable number of children have lived outside of this area. The average number of children attending Charlwood Infant School over recent years who live in Charlwood Ward has been about 15 pupils. Therefore a catchment area which is Charlwood Ward would appropriately match the historic and anticipated demand for places in the community.
6. Therefore, it is also proposed that the school would have a catchment area consisting of Charlwood Ward. This would provide long-term sustainable provision to serve the parish of Charlwood for many years to come.
7. Therefore, it is proposed to amend the admission arrangements so that the school has a catchment area which is the wards of Charlwood and Hookwood.

Educational advantages

8. The advantages if Charlwood Infant School changed into a primary school:
 - there would be a clear progression route for infant children at Charlwood
 - there would be an enhancement in community cohesion were there to be a primary school rather than an infant school
 - there would be a significant reduction in travel, including car journeys, as junior children would not need to travel to another school.
9. A primary school has the following advantages:

- a seamless transition from Key Stage 1 (Infants) to Key Stage 2 (Juniors)
 - greater opportunities for curriculum development
 - greater opportunities for staff development
 - greater flexibility with a larger budget to deploy staff and curriculum resources effectively
 - greater opportunities for staff recruitment
10. It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit headteachers, and the range of teaching and learning in a primary school means it would be more likely to attract aspiring headteachers when a new headteacher is needed in the future.

Pupil Numbers in the area

11. Whilst Charlwood Infant School is in the South Mole Valley primary planning area, it has links with Horley. Therefore, it is appropriate to look at Horley as well as the South Mole Valley area as the pupil numbers in Horley affect pupil numbers in Charlwood.
12. Pupils' numbers are related to the number of births and new housing in an area. Therefore, both births and new housing should be considered.

Births

13. Births in the South Mole Valley area have been relatively stable over the years and are forecast to remain around the same level. This means the number of children from this area starting school should be stable.
14. Births in Horley have been increasing since the Millennium except 2003 to 2004. They have flattened out and are forecast to remain relatively stable. When the new housing becomes occupied by families over the years, the birth rate may increase.
15. The Horley births are now about 62% higher than around the Millennium. Horley births are now forecast to increase between 2% and 3% per year. This will increase the number of children needing a primary school place 4 years later each year in the future.

Housing developments

16. There has been a significant amount of new housing in Horley and there large numbers of additional new housing planned. Families move into this housing and the additional children need additional school places. New housing has a significant impact on numbers of children needing a school place in the Horley area.

Historic Numbers on Roll and Forecast demand for primary places

17. Applications for reception places in South Mole Valley have been variable over the years. In recent years, applications dipped in 2008 but have increased since then. Reception numbers at the school have varied in line with applications.
18. Reception numbers in Horley are forecast to dip slightly in 2012 then to increase steadily. An expansion of primary provision in Horley is needed in

the next two years. Further expansion of primary provision is needed in following years. There will be significantly more junior children in Horley than the places currently available. Junior provision in the area will need to be increased in addition to the primary expansions.

19. The reduction in reception places at Charlwood would increase the need for the expansion of infant provision in Horley. The provision of Year 3 places at Charlwood would decrease the need for the expansion of junior provision in Horley. The pressure on junior places is more critical than the pressure on infant places as there are already fewer junior places than infant places in the area. Moreover, there would be an overall increase in total primary places as the pupil capacity would increase from 90 to 105.

Sustainability of provision at Charlwood

20. Having a school in a village is an important element in both promoting community cohesion and supporting its sustainability. Young families are more likely to come to live in a village which has a primary school
21. Primary schools are more sustainable than infant schools owing to the increased breadth of provision available and economies of scale. Therefore, changing Charlwood Infant School into a primary school would increase its sustainability.
22. Historically, the school has not needed 30 places per year and so its sustainable size in the long term is likely to be less than 30 pupils per year. Analysis of the home locations of pupils indicates that about 15 pupils per year live in the Parish of Charlwood.
23. Therefore, providing 15 places per year should ensure the long term sustainability of primary provision in Charlwood.

Interim funding

24. The School will need financial support during the transition period, and until funding for the whole transition period had identified we were unable to proceed with the proposals.
25. Surrey Schools Forum has agreed to transition funding, but it does mean that rather than there being 3 class teachers throughout the transition period, there will only be 2 class teachers in the school year 2015/16, when the Number on Roll will be 45 pupils.
26. This is not a material change to the Proposal as it relates to the transition rather than how the school would be once it has become an all through 0.5 FE primary school.

CONSULTATION:

27. The consultation included all those persons who are required to be consulted according to statutory requirements. The following were consulted: the governing body of the School; the families of pupils, teachers and other staff at the school; the trade unions who represent staff in Surrey schools; all primary schools in the District; schools in the Horley Learning partnership; the Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses in which the school is

located; the local MP; the local SCC members and members of adjacent divisions; local district councillors; the local Parish Council and the adjacent Parish councils in the district; the adjacent district councils; the adjacent Local Education Authority, the Primary Care Trust; SCC Early Years and Childcare Service; the local Early Years setting.

28. Public consultation has taken place on the proposal to expand the School, and a Consultation Booklet was issued. Two public meetings were held at the School. The consultation meetings were relatively well attended.

Consultation Response analysis

29. There were 15 responses received by the deadline for submitting responses. Of these, 3 were parents/carers of a child at the school, and 6 were parents/carers of a child who may go to the school.
30. As the number of responses is small, analysis of the numbers cannot be considered to be highly reliable.
31. There are about 75 pupils at the school, so this is a response rate of about 4% of the parents/carers of children at the school depending on whether each child has one or two parents/carers and the number of children in the families. This is a low response rate.
32. The figures for percentages may not add up to 100% owing to rounding errors or where either more than one response was made, or where no response was made by respondents.
33. There was a high level of support for the proposal to become a primary school.
34. Of the total respondents, 73% supported the proposal, 0% neither supported nor opposed the proposal, and 27% of respondents opposed the proposal.
35. Of those respondents with a child at Charlwood, 44% supported the proposal, 12% neither supported nor opposed the proposal, and 44% of respondents opposed the proposal.
36. There was marginal support for extending the age range in 2016.
37. Of the total respondents, 47% supported the proposal, 13% neither supported nor opposed the proposal, and 40% of respondents opposed the proposal.
38. There was less opposition to bringing forward extending the age range to 2015.
39. Of the total respondents, 47% supported this, 13% neither supported nor opposed this, and 33% of respondents opposed it.
40. There was a high level of support for the proposal to create a catchment area to give priority to children living in Charlwood Ward.
41. Of the total respondents, 67% supported the proposal to create a catchment, 0% neither supported nor opposed the proposal, and 33% of respondents opposed the proposal.

42. Charlwood Parish Council supports the proposal to become a primary school with an extension of age range starting in 2016; and supports the proposal to create a catchment area to give priority to children living in Charlwood Ward.
43. Newdigate Parish Council supports the proposal to become a primary school with an extension of age range starting in 2016; and supports the proposal to create a catchment area to give priority to children living in Charlwood Ward.
44. Details are provided in the document "Charlwood Consultation Analysis", but the responses are summarised below with SCC's observations upon them.

Point 1

45. There were concerns about traffic and parking – 27% of respondents raised this as an issue.

Response 1

46. It is recognised that traffic is an issue, with congestion affecting local residents. Currently there are no junior places within walking distance of the school. Therefore any child with a junior age sibling will have to be driven to school. If junior children can be educated at the school, then this will reduce the need for a considerable number car journeys.
47. Currently, children at the school live in a wide area. The proposal to create a catchment means that after a time the school population will stabilise to being predominantly residents of Charlwood Ward. Those living in Charlwood are within walking distance of the school. It is recognised that the Hookwood area is not within walking distance, and so car journeys may be necessary. Where families have siblings at the same school they would only make one journey, but there would be a marginal increase in the number of families owing to the increase in age range. However, this would be substantially offset by the reduction in journeys that are currently made by children living in locations outside the proposed catchment area.
48. The School will be producing a new Travel Plan and will be able to explore options for further reducing car journeys.

Point 2

49. The school is at the heart of a village community – 27% of respondents raised this as an issue.

Response 2

50. The promotion of community cohesion and enhancing the stability of education provision in rural communities is an underlying rationale for this proposal.

Point 3

51. Siblings should be education at the same school and so they should be given priority above living in catchment – 16% of respondents raised this as an issue.

Response 3

52. It is appropriate for siblings to be educated at the same school, where possible, so an admission that would enable siblings of current children to attend the same school would be beneficial.
53. The full details of the admissions policy have not yet been decided. It would be appropriate to give priority to siblings of children currently at the school and of those who will be at the school in September 2012 to support those families involved.

Point 4

54. The school should have 30 pupils per year - either in the transition or permanently.
55. The school should have 30 pupils per year permanently – 20% of respondents raised this as an issue.
56. There would be insufficient infrastructure to have 30 junior pupils per year – 20% of respondents raised this as an issue.

Response 4

57. The site is not large enough for sufficient infrastructure to be provided for 30 pupils per year throughout the school. Additional land would need to be purchased and there is no funding allocated for this. Moreover, this would mean the school would be planned to serve a greater area than the proposed catchment area of Charlwood Ward.
58. If there were significantly more than 15 pupils per year in the junior age group then additional classrooms would be required. The School believes that there would be an adverse impact on the ethos and standards if the school site was overcrowded owing to additional junior classes being required.

Publication of Statutory Notices

59. Surrey County Council published Statutory Notices on 17 January 2013.
60. No representations were received regarding the publication of the Statutory Notices.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

61. A project to provide additional classrooms for September 2016 will be required. There is a very low risk that these classrooms will not be available in time as there is a considerable lead time.
62. There is a risk that the interim revenue funding based on the projected budget agreed by Surrey Schools Forum may not be sufficient. Further additional interim funding would require Schools Forum to approve a deduction from all other maintained primary schools' budgets.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

63. The number of pupils at the school will decrease significantly during the transition phase. Funding for schools is based on pupil numbers, therefore, without additional transition funding, the school would not be viable. Surrey Schools Forum was asked to authorise transition funding, and this was eventually agreed. It is expected that the school will manage the transition arrangements within the additional funding they have been allocated by schools forum.
64. The school agreed that it would only have 2 teachers plus a headteacher, for the one year when the number on roll falls to 45. This brought the projected interim funding request to £113k. On 11 January 2013, Schools Forum agreed to £100k interim funding during the transition period, with the assumption that the school will make further savings.
65. The cost of the proposed additional classroom is likely to be achievable for less than the normal cost of an additional classroom. This has not yet been included in the Schools Basic Need capital programme.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

66. The Section 151 Officer confirms that interim revenue funding has been approved by Schools Forum to the value of £100k and expects the school to manage within this allocation. The capital funding allocation for this scheme has not yet been approved and is not currently included in the schools basic need capital programme. The full cost implications will be further considered in developing a business case required for its inclusion within the capital programme

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

67. Section 1 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserts section 13A into the Education Act 1996, which places a duty on local education authorities (ie Local Authorities with responsibility for the functions of education in their area) to promote high standards and the fulfilment of potential. A local education authority shall exercise its functions with a view to promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to educational opportunity, and promoting the fulfilment by every child concerned of his educational potential. The duty of promotion means a local education authority should be proactive in the discharge of its functions.
68. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on local education authorities to secure that efficient primary education is available to meet the needs of the population of their area. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local education authorities to secure that sufficient schools for providing primary education are available in their area. Section 5 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 places a duty to promote high standards. Therefore, there is a duty to provide efficient education and sufficient schools to do so.
69. The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 contains the regulations that apply to prescribed alterations. The former DCSF, now DfE 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

70. This educational provision would be for children in the community served by the school. If there is sufficient provision available, then it would be beneficial for all children, including vulnerable children.
71. Ofsted has judged that the school promotes equality and tackles discrimination successfully. There is no discrimination because pupils learn to respect and understand different beliefs. This helps the school to make a good contribution to community cohesion. Therefore, changing the school into a primary school would promote equalities.
72. The proposal is for an expansion of provision, so more staff would be employed. Employment opportunities would increase with a larger school. The range of opportunities would be enhanced by the expansion of the school and there would also be greater professional development opportunities.

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications

73. This proposal would provide increase provision in the area, which would be of benefit to all in 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.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

74. Safeguarding vulnerable children is a high priority in Surrey schools. Schools have considerable expertise in safeguarding vulnerable children and adhere to robust procedures. The school would continue to apply good practice in the area of safeguarding. Safeguarding is monitored when Ofsted carries out inspections of schools.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

75. Subject to Cabinet Member approval, Surrey County Council and Charlwood Infant School would implement the Proposals. The school would become a restricted age primary school with a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 15 on 1 September 2013.
76. The decision will be communicated to all statutory consultees via email.

Contact Officer:

Mark Burton, School Place Planning Manager, tel 020 8541 9142

Consulted:

David Hodge, Leader

Helyn Clack, Member for Dorking Rural

Nick Wilson, Strategic Director – Children Schools & Families

Julie Fisher, Strategic Director – Change & Efficiency

The following were also consulted:

the governing body of the School; the families of pupils, teachers and other staff at the school; the trade unions who represent staff in Surrey schools; all primary schools in the District; schools in the Horley Learning partnership; the Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses in which the school is located; the local MP; the local SCC members and members of adjacent divisions; local district councillors; the local Parish Council and the adjacent Parish councils in the district; the adjacent district councils; the adjacent Local Education Authority, the Primary Care Trust; SCC Early Years and Childcare Service; the local Early Years setting.

Annexes:

Annex A – Proposal to change Charlwood Infant School into a Primary School

Sources/background papers:

The Education Act 1996; the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; the Education Act 2002; the Education Act 2005; the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Consultation Booklet regarding the changing Charlwood Infant School into a Primary School

Charlwood Infant School to Primary Consultation Analysis.

All background papers used in the writing of the report should be listed, as required by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.
