

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING****DATE: 11 SEPTEMBER 2013****LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES****SUBJECT: PROPOSED EXPANSION OF BROOKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM ONE TO TWO FORMS OF ENTRY ON A SPLIT SITE****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

There is currently a considerable pressure for primary school places in Woking. In addition to the demand generated by an increasing birth rate, there is a need to provide more school places in the Borough as a result of additional housing and increasing numbers of families returning to Pirbright Barracks as part of the Ministry of Defence's basing plan.

There is an opportunity to secure new school provision on new land as part of the Brookwood Farm Housing development recently approved by Woking Borough Council.

The proposal is to expand Brookwood Primary School from a one form entry primary school (capacity of 210 pupils) to two forms of entry (capacity of 420 pupils) by building a junior school building on a new site adjacent to Bagshot Road / Corresbrook Way. Infant children would operate from the existing primary school site and junior age children would be located in new accommodation on the new site.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the expansion of the school to two forms of entry on a split site be agreed subject to planning permission.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places in the County. There are currently no Year R or 1 vacancies at schools in the local area and although there are some vacancies in other year groups they are not expected to be sufficient to meet the expected additional demand met by the housing development and returning service families.

Surrey County Council is a signatory to the Military Covenant and is committed to ensuring that children from service families are not disadvantaged in any way and are fully able to access key public services. It is important that there are sufficient school places in the area for service families which this proposal will ensure.

DETAILS:

The Proposal

1. Surrey County Council, in partnership with the Governors of Brookwood Primary School is proposing that the school expands from a one form entry primary school with a Published Admission Number of 30 (total capacity of 210 pupils), to a two form entry primary school with a Published Admission Number of 60 (total capacity of 420 pupils). The school will operate as a 'split site' primary school with a new junior school building to be developed to the south of the Brookwood Farm Housing development. It is proposed for the school to open in September 2014.

Rationale

2. Demand for school places – Demand for school places has increased significantly in Woking in recent years. The County Council has commissioned over a thousand additional school places in the Borough in the last three years, permanently expanding primary schools including Westfield, Beaufort, St Dunstan's, The Marist and Goldsworth as well as temporary expansions at Sythwood, St John's and Pyrford (projects being in various stages of completion). Even with these additional places, most primary schools in Woking are expected to be full and to continue to be full in the future.
3. Given the level of applications that came in for 2011, 2012 and 2013 the Local Authority has been talking to primary schools in the Borough about commissioning further provision over and above the permanent expansions already identified above. The Council is planning on the basis that it will need three more forms of entry in Woking from 2014. Brookwood Primary Expansion is one of the projects that had been identified.
4. Housing development in the Borough - In January 2013 Woking Borough Council approved the development of 297 new homes on the Brookwood Farm site. Given that all primary schools in the Borough are currently full there will be a need for more school places arising from this development. The County Council welcomes the opportunity to create new school provision on new land, rather than having to expand existing schools on their existing sites and the County Council wishes to make additional school provision available to meet the future need arising from the Brookwood Farm community at Brookwood Primary School. Given the proximity of the land identified for new school provision to Brookwood Primary School, it makes good sense to expand the existing primary school rather than build a new stand alone school with separate Governing Body / Head Teacher and teaching staff. This will help reduce traffic in the area which is a key issue for local residents.
5. Returning families to Pirbright Barracks - In May 2012 the Army indicated that around 120 families of servicemen in two Yorkshire infantry units were expected to be returning to the UK from Cyprus next year (for a September 2013 start). At the time, the Local Authority proposed to expand Bisley Church of England Primary School to meet this demand (expansion on the existing Brookwood Site was not deemed possible). Following the national restructure of the Army, it was no longer planned for the two Yorks to return to Pirbright and in March 2013 the Ministry of Defence published a new basing plan indicating that the Welsh Guards would return to Pirbright Barracks instead. The expected number of returning pupils is expected to be lower but

the actual numbers and the dates of their return are still not yet clear. Expanding both Bisley Church of England and Brookwood Primary school would risk putting in too many additional places into the area and would be cost prohibitive. Given that there is an opportunity to secure land for new school provision, the County Council is committed to the expansion of Brookwood Primary School and it is envisaged that this will be sufficient to meet the demand arising both from the housing development and returning families to Pirbright Barracks in the future.

6. The proposal is to include a new junior school building as part of the community facilities being developed as part of the Housing Development on the Brookwood Farm site. Broadly speaking, a new single storey junior building with outdoor play facilities will be provided and delivered by the County Council in partnership with Woking Borough Council. This part of the site will be secure and for use only by the school. In addition, two junior size pitches, a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and a sports pavilion will be located on the site and will be provided on the site by the developer. The playing pitches and pavilion will be available for use by the school but will also be available for community use outside of school hours. A pathway and bridge will be constructed joining up the existing and new site across the Basingstoke Canal and open space between the sites. This is to reduce additional traffic in the area and to ensure that the school can link as 'one school' as effectively as possible. An outline planning application for the new school buildings was submitted and approved at the same time as the detailed planning application for the Brookwood Farm Housing development in January this year. A full planning application on the proposal is expected to be submitted to Woking Borough Council shortly.

CONSULTATION:

7. Full statutory consultation for a prescribed alteration has taken place. 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 Borough; the local MP; the local Surrey County Council members; local borough councillors; Surrey County Council Early Years and Childcare Service.
8. The Cabinet Member considered the responses to the consultation on 11 July 2013 and determined to publish a notice indicating the Local Authority's intention to expand the school. A statutory notice was published on 18 July 2013. A four week period of representations was allowed for any further representations from the local community. No representations have been received.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

9. There are risks associated with this project and a project risk register has been compiled and is regularly updated. Given that the main community facilities and school buildings will be provided by two separate organisations but on the same site there are interface risks associated with the project. To mitigate the risk of these interface issues, the Local Authority has delegated the responsibility of managing the delivery of the school building to Woking Borough Council (who are working closely with CALA homes who are providing the community facilities) with County Council officers part of the project team. The other main risks relate to the capital budget and

programme for the scheme. Given that a full planning application will be submitted shortly the timetable for the delivery of the school is very tight. This risk has been mitigated by the choice of contractor (Wilmott Dixon) and the construction methodology employed. Woking BC has called off the 'Scape' framework avoiding the need for a lengthy procurement process. The building is 'pre-designed' with part of the building constructed off site resulting in greater cost certainty and shorter construction periods (24-28 weeks). Given this as well as some contingency being planned into the programme, the timetable for a September 2014 is considered achievable.

10. In terms of capital costs, there are a number of 'abnormals' which present some cost risks. These include the construction of the bridge and the pathway to join up the two sites. This work (and the school building and site) is being taken forward by a single contractor who are in the process of pricing the work based on surveys of the site. An appropriate level of contingency (5%) is included within the project budget as well as any costs associated with the buildings meeting a BREEAM very good rating which is likely to be a requirement by the Local Planning Authority. Full feasibility costs will be reported to Cabinet at an appropriate time in the future.
11. There is still a high level of uncertainty as to how many new pupils will actually present to the local schools as a result of the army moves and the new housing developments. The likely impact will be that the school will be simultaneously filling up several classes in different year groups and there is potential for unfunded vacancies causing a revenue funding pressure on the school. In the case of most primary school expansions the year groups fill up one at a time, usually starting with Reception or Year 3, therefore avoiding/minimising unfunded places. In this case, a contribution has been requested from Schools Forum to provide transitional funding to guarantee vacancies at the school for all year groups for three years in order to manage the turbulence of uncertain numbers. This reduces the risk to the school but puts a risk on the Dedicated Schools Grant from where 'Growing Schools Funding' is derived.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

12. The additional basic need in the area of Woking was identified during 2013/14 and this scheme, along with several others, were added to the capital programme. These now have approved funding following the 2013/18 medium term financial plan (MTFP) review. All schemes are expected to remain within the funding which has been allocated to them in the MTFP. The development of the business case as the scheme progresses through its phases to completion is crucial to ensuring that costs are constantly reviewed and contained. In addition the scheme costs are monitored against the annual profiled budget on a monthly basis and variances reported to Cabinet.
13. It is acknowledged that there is a real need for additional school places, over and above those identified in the 2012/17 capital programme, especially in the Woking area.
14. A split site school does incur more revenue costs than a single site school. Alternative sites and schools have been reviewed and despite this potential revenue implication, Brookwood is still considered to be the most appropriate to meet the school basic need in that area.

15. The potential for simultaneously filling up classes across all year groups is high and there will be revenue implications to DSG for unfunded vacant places that will be guaranteed for three years until such time as all year groups are filled.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

16. The capital funding for this scheme has been approved as part of the reviewed 2013/18 MTFP. The Section 151 Officer expects the costs to be contained within the funding available and that partner organisations are aware of this requirement. A more detailed business case will be developed with more up to date costings following feasibility of the site.
17. The business case is also expected to address the potential revenue budget implications and outline the management action to be taken in order to minimise the funding risks.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

18. 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 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.

Equalities and Diversity

19. A full equalities impact assessment has not been undertaken on this proposal as it is unlikely that the proposal would have a negative impact on any groups with protected characteristics. The school does serve both traveller families and families from the armed services but this proposal ensures that there will be sufficient places for children from these groups to go in the future. The proposal does not change the nature of the admissions criteria for the school.
20. The new school building will comply with the Equality Act 2010. The expanded school will provide additional employment opportunities in the area.
21. The school will 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.
22. 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

23. No significant implications.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

24. There are potential safeguarding issues arising from the split site nature of the school. The school intends to manage these issues by only allowing pupils to travel between sites accompanied by an adult and to instigate 'walking buses' to ensure that children can be dropped off at their most local school site and be accompanied across to the correct site by school staff before being registered.

Public Health implications

25. No significant implications.

Climate change/carbon emissions implications

26. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. The new school building will meet BREEAM very good and will be providing additional energy saving measures such as improved lighting, solar thermals and point of use water heating systems. Photo Voltaic panels will be provided to provide a renewable source of energy. The new buildings will comply or exceed Building Regulations. The contractor will be required to provide a Site Waste Management Plan.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

27. The current programme identifies the key next steps:
- End of August 2013 – planning application submitted to Woking Borough Council
 - October 2013 – Cabinet to consider business case and costs of the scheme
 - November 2013 – Decision on planning application from Woking Borough Council.
 - January 2014 – Implement proposals

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

All schools in Woking
Pupils and Parents of Brookwood Primary School
Local Residents and Local Resident's Associations
Local Members

Sources/background papers:

- Proposal to expand Brookwood Primary School by one form of entry by 2014. A copy of this report can be found here on the SCC website by navigating to, or clicking on, the following: [Learning > Schools > Education Consultation and Plans](#)
 - "Proposed expansion of brookwood primary school from 1 to 2 forms of entry on a split site" – Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning, Committee Papers, 11 July 2013
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