

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS & LEARNING****DATE: 9 OCTOBER 2013****LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES****SUBJECT: GRAYSWOOD INFANT SCHOOL EXPANSION TO PRIMARY – DECISION****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Governing Body of Grayswood Church of England Infant School is responding to the increasing demand for infant places in Haslemere and Hindhead. This demand will result in a shortage of junior places in September 2015.

Grayswood Church of England Infant School is one of the schools that has been identified for expansion to meet the need for places in the local area. It is proposed that the school will expand from a one form entry (1FE) infant school with 90 places to become a 1FE primary school with 210 places.

An initial consultation has been undertaken and the Governing Body has published Statutory Notices stating the intent to increase the school as described. An alteration to the proposal, to bring the expansion forward by one year, was put to the Governing Body by parents following the initial consultation. This has been investigated by the Council and a need for additional Year 3 places in the area is likely to arise in September 2014.

The Statutory Notice requires determination so that the proposal can be implemented. It is recommended that the Statutory Notice be determined with modifications.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. The Statutory Notice stating the Governing Body's intention to extend the upper age limit of Grayswood Church of England Infant School is determined, such that the school becomes a one form entry (1FE) primary school with a published admission number (PAN) of 30 and a total of 210 primary places.
2. The proposal is moderated such that the expansion is brought forward by one year and is implemented on 1 September 2014, rather than 1 September 2015.
3. The upper age limit of Grayswood Church of England Infant School increases from Year 2 (age 6+) to Year 3 (age 7+) on 1 September 2014.
4. The age range would extend by a further year each subsequent year from 1 September 2015 until the upper age limit is Year 6 (age 10+).
5. The Governing Body of Grayswood Church of England Infant School implement the proposal, with funding for the building provided by Surrey County Council.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

There is an increasing demand for infant places in the Haslemere and Hindhead planning area. Numbers of children starting school in the area have been increasing over recent years. Additional classes have been provided at a number of schools including an additional half a class of reception places at St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School in both 2012 and 2013. There are not enough permanent primary places in the area.

Grayswood Church of England Infant School is one of the schools that has been identified for expansion. It is an outstanding school and it is entirely appropriate to expand successful and popular schools in line with government policy. In addition, a village primary school would serve the local community by securing long term local education for local children and would reduce travel movements as junior age children would not need to be transported to other schools.

DETAILS:

Business Case

1. Births in the Haslemere and Hindhead area dipped during 2000 and 2001 but then increased to a peak in 2005 and 2006. Since 2008, births have been relatively stable but with a gradual increase that is forecast to continue. Births are now about 10% higher than ten years ago. This means that the number of children requiring a school place has also gradually increased over the last ten years.
2. There are a number of housing developments taking place and more are proposed for the area. Families moving into new housing developments result in increased demand for school places in the area.
3. Pupil numbers entering reception in the Haslemere and Hindhead area have steadily increased apart from a slight dip in 2009. The extra demand for reception places in 2011 and 2012 was equivalent to half a class (0.5 FE).
4. To cope with the extra demand for places, an additional class was provided at Shottermill Infant School in both 2010 and 2011. A further half a class of reception places was provided at St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School in both 2012 and 2013. An additional class has also been provided at Beacon Hill Primary School for 2013.
5. There are not enough permanent primary places in the area. In addition, there are fewer junior places than infant places, which reduces the number of children able to stay on now that demand for places has increased.
6. Grayswood Church of England Infant School has been judged "Outstanding" by Ofsted and it is entirely appropriate to expand successful and popular schools.
7. A primary school also 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
 - a larger school is more sustainable as it has a larger budget
8. In addition to parental demand, the expansion of the school would increase the number of places that would be available for local children. This is likely to result in a reduction in travel, including car journeys, as fewer children would travel to more distant schools.

CONSULTATION:

9. Statutory consultation for a prescribed alteration has taken place and all relevant stakeholders were consulted. A consultation booklet was issued and two public meetings were held at the school in June 2013.

Consultation responses

10. There was a high level of support for the proposed expansion. 130 responses were received of which 92% (120 responses) were in favour of the expansion. Six responses were opposed to the change and three did not express a preference.
11. Two main positive themes of the responses were acknowledgement of the outstanding provision (expressed in 76% of the responses) and the benefits that extending to all-through primary provision would bring; and the potential benefits that the expansion may bring for the local community (mentioned in 40% of the responses).
12. The main concern raised in the responses was related to traffic and parking; this was raised by many in support of the expansion as well as it being the main issue for those opposed to the proposal. Key concerns were the current lack of parking and how this would be addressed were the school to increase in size; traffic flow within the village at school drop-off/collection times; inconsiderate parking; and the safety of children when moving from car to school.

Comments on responses

13. The planning application required for the programme of building work for the expansion will draw out specific aspects of the traffic and access issues related to Grayswood Church of England Infant School.
14. A further requirement for the planning application is a revised travel plan which will include strategies for reduction of car journeys and increases in sustainable modes of transport. It is likely that the expansion of the school will reduce the number of children travelling to more distant schools for junior provision, and the number of parents dropping children at two different schools for infant and junior provision, and therefore decrease the number of car journeys.

15. A number of respondents to the consultation mentioned the positive impact that the new walking bus (started in June 2013) had already had on traffic flow within the village. Several additional ideas were suggested during the consultation and these will be considered as part of the travel plan.

Statutory Notices

16. The Governing Body considered the responses to the initial consultation and determined that Statutory Notices should be published for an expansion to primary in September 2015.
17. Statutory Notices were published and closed on 13 September 2013. No further representations have been received.

Early expansion (September 2014)

18. Thirteen respondents to the initial consultation suggested that the expansion should be brought forward to September 2014. Following the consultation, a parental proposal was put to the Governing Body by parents of children in the current Year 2 class to bring forward the date of the expansion.
19. This proposal has been considered by the Council in coordination with the Governing Body and the Diocese. Recent data has been examined and this indicates that there is likely to be a basic need for Year 3 places in the Haslemere and Hindhead area in September 2014. This is due to the current limited surplus capacity of places across the primary phase in the area and also related to the number of late applications received Admissions, which is likely to happen again in 2014.
20. Creating additional Year 3 places in the area in September 2014, by bringing forward the expansion by one year, will further relieve some of the pressure on primary places in the Haslemere and Hindhead area.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

21. A project to provide additional buildings will be undertaken by Guildford Diocese and as such there are risks associated with this proposal. There is a risk that the project will not complete within the timescales outlined above and there may be site abnormalities not identified as part of the initial feasibility exercise. The Diocese is confident that additional building work can be completed to accommodate the early expansion in September 2014.
22. Should the approval of additional school places not be granted there is the risk that Surrey would fail to meet its statutory duty in providing sufficient school places, without mitigation at another site.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

23. The scheme is on the Schools Basic Need Programme and has approved funding in the 2013/18 medium term financial plan. The scheme will be implemented by the Governing Body of the school in partnership with Guildford Diocese and Surrey County Council. All schemes are expected to remain within the funding which has been allocated to them in the MTFP.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

24. The Section 151 Officer confirms that the funding for this scheme is included in the current 2013/18 medium term financial plan. More detailed costings for the schemes will be developed as the scheme progresses to tender, but the Section 151 Officer expects the costs to be contained within the agreed funding levels.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

25. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on local education authorities to ensure 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 ensure that sufficient schools for providing primary education are available in their area.
26. The *School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007* contains the regulations that apply to prescribed alterations. The Department for Education (DfE) 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. These regulations have been followed.

Equalities and Diversity

27. 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 proposal does not change the nature of the admissions criteria for the school.
28. This educational provision would be for children in the community served by the school. 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.
29. The proposal is for an expansion of provision, so more staff would be employed. Employment opportunities would increase with a larger school and there would also be greater professional development opportunities.
30. It is intended that the school will promote cohesion of the local communities in the area served by the school through extended services to enhance the well-being and future opportunities of those children in the area.

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications

31. This proposal would provide increased provision in the area, which would be of benefit to all in the community served by the school.

32. 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 the Haslemere and Hindhead area.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

33. 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.
34. Site access and security, both during the proposed building programme and afterwards, will be considered and addressed in the planning and design of this building project.

Climate change/carbon emissions implications

35. A planning requirement for the proposed expansion is a revised travel plan which will include strategies for reduction of car journeys and increase in sustainable modes of transport. The introduction of the 'walking bus' in June 2013 has already had a positive impact on the reduction of car journeys for children attending the school.
36. The proposal is likely to reduce some local journeys as children will be staying on at the school, rather than travelling further afield for junior provision. The proposal is also likely to reduce the number of parents who will be dropping one younger child at the school before transporting an older sibling to another school with junior provision.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

37. Subject to approval, the Governing Body of the school in partnership with Guildford Diocese and Surrey County Council will implement the proposal.
38. The outcome of this report will be communicated to the school by letter and to the general public via the Surrey County Council website.

Contact Officer:

Dr Kathy Beresford
School Commissioning Officer (South West)
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Consulted:

- David Hodge, Leader of the Council;
- David Harmer, Local Member for Waverley Western Villages
- Nick Wilson, Strategic Director – Children Schools & Families;
- Julie Fisher, Strategic Director – Business Services;
- The public and parents

Sources/background papers:

- The Education Act 1996; the Education Act 2002; the Education Act 2005; the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
 - Consultation Booklet regarding the expansion of Grayswood C of E Infant School to a 1FE primary school
 - Consultation responses for Grayswood C of E Infant School
 - Statutory Notice for Grayswood C of E Infant School (August 2013)
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