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<b>Section 151 Finance cleared on:</b>	<b>29/01/2024</b>
<b>Cabinet Member consultation completed:</b>	<b>13/02/2024</b>

## SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

### CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

**DATE:** 27 February 2024



**REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER:** CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

**LEAD OFFICER:** RACHAEL WARDELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

**SUBJECT:** Proposal to change the age range and extend the premises at St Paul's CofE Infant School, Tongham

**ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA:** Tackling Health Inequality, Empowering Communities, Enabling a Greener Future

#### SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

As part of a wider strategy, Surrey County Council is seeking to provide a sustainable education landscape across the county.

Surrey County Council, in collaboration with the Governing Body of St Paul's CofE Infant School, are proposing to extend the school's age range, allowing them to become a 1FE primary school with a nursery for pupils aged 2-11 years. This would allow for a roll of 210 pupils across the school with 68 children in the nursery. Further building work will be required on the site of the school to provide appropriate accommodation for the additional pupils, which will be subject to planning permission.

The rationale behind this proposal is that it provides Surrey County Council with the opportunity to reorganise primary places in an area of Tongham by providing an all-through primary school, which will benefit the local community and provide opportunities for siblings in a family to attend the same school. It would also ease the transition made by children when transferring from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, as pupils will have the opportunity to remain at St Paul's CofE Infant School instead of transferring to another school for their junior education.

The proposed change of age range allows St Paul's CofE Infant School to offer junior places. The increase in junior places in the Ash and Tongham planning area will then match the total number of Reception places available. This would improve the sustainability of the school.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning determines the statutory notices published thereby bringing into effect the formal commencement of the proposal to change the age range and extend the premises at St Paul's CofE Infant School.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning may:

1. reject a proposal
2. approve a proposal without modification
3. approve a proposal with modifications, having consulted the LA and/or GB (as appropriate)
4. approve a proposal, with or without modification – subject to certain conditions (such as the granting of planning permission) being met.

#### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The proposal supports and delivers the Local Authority's statutory obligation to provide sufficient school places to meet demand and forms part of a reorganisation of primary places in Guildford and Waverley.

Implementing the proposal will:

- Allow pupils to transition through the school from Reception year, without the need to apply elsewhere, giving them and their families the reassurance of a continuity of educational provision
- Seek to enhance pupils' experiences, enabling higher standards of education to be provided
- Enable the school to deliver the curriculum in a continuous and coherent way, putting them in a stronger position to plan for both continuity and progression in learning
- Provide the opportunity to build partnerships with pupils, parents and families over a longer period of time
- Enable siblings to remain together during their primary education, rather than parents having to travel to two different schools
- Create a sustainable school to serve the local community

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning's approvals and recommendations completes the statutory process in accordance with the DfE guidance "Making significant changes ('Prescribed Alterations') to Maintained Schools."

#### **DETAILS:**

1. St Paul's CofE Infant School, Tongham is a voluntary controlled school and is situated in Tongham, within the borough of Guildford. At present, St Paul's CofE Infant School is a one-form entry (1FE) infant school for pupils aged 4-7 years, with a published admission number (PAN) of 30 and provides permanent accommodation for up to 90 pupils. The school is rated as "Good" by Ofsted in its last full inspection in September 2023.
2. Children currently leave St Paul's CofE Infant School at the end of Year 2 and parents make separate admission applications for Year 3 places. The admissions criteria for Walsh CofE Junior and Waverley Abbey Junior Schools currently list St Paul's CofE Infant as a feeder school. If this proposal goes ahead, these schools as academies, could make the decision to reduce their PAN.
3. The rationale behind this proposal is that it provides Surrey County Council with the opportunity to reorganise primary places in an area of Ash and Tongham by providing an all-through primary school, which will benefit the local community and provide opportunities for siblings in a family to attend the same school. It would also ease the transition made by children when transferring from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, as pupils will have the opportunity to remain

at St Paul's CofE Infant School instead of transferring to another school for their junior education.

4. Historically, St Paul's Infant School is currently a formal feeder school for Walsh CofE Junior and Waverley Abbey Junior Schools. However, Walsh CofE Junior only offers 4 places and Waverley Abbey is over four miles away from St Paul's CofE Infant and therefore some distance from the homes of pupils, who tend to live near the infant school. St Paul's CofE Infant currently subsidise a school bus to take previous pupils to Waverley Abbey Junior and this results in circa £38,000 being pulled from the school budget each year.
5. For the purposes of education place planning, Surrey County Council produce pupil projections based on planning areas. Planning areas do not have geographical boundaries but are groups of schools which reflect the local geography, reasonable travel distances and existing pupil movement patterns.
6. **Table 2** below outlines the primary projections for the Ash and Tongham planning area. Housing permissions and trajectories received from boroughs and districts are combined with birth data and pupil movement trends to create projections.

**Table 2: Current pupil place forecasts for Ash and Tongham planning area**

Ash and Tongham						
School year	Year R places	Year R Forecast	Surplus / Deficit	Year 3 places	Year 3 Forecast	Surplus / Deficit
2023-24	240	253	-13	218	228	-10
2024-25	240	246	-6	218	219	-1
2025-26	240	237	3	218	231	-13
2026-27	240	233	7	218	230	-12
2027-28	240	235	5	218	219	-1
2028-29	240	237	3	218	210	8
2029-30	240	238	2	218	206	12
2030-31	240	239	1	218	207	11
2031-32	240	239	1	218	209	9

7. The forecasts for Ash and Tongham do not demonstrate a need for additional Key Stage 2 places because the current trend is for pupils of St Paul's CofE Infant to be educated out of the planning area for Year 3, as there are no current places available.
8. **Table 3** outlines the residential primary projections for the Ash and Tongham wards including Ash South and Tongham, Ash Vale and Ash Wharf. As well as housing, birth and migration data, these forecasts show the number of pupils residing within the wards. The forecasts indicate a deficit of places compared to current PANs of up to over two forms of entry.

**Table 3 – Residential Forecasts for Primary Aged Pupils**

School Year	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2023-24 (F)	258	255	251	257	237	244	210
2024-25 (F)	245	263	263	266	264	242	250
2025-26 (F)	237	247	269	274	270	267	246
2026-27 (F)	232	235	250	277	275	270	268
2027-28 (F)	235	232	238	258	278	276	272
2028-29 (F)	239	235	235	246	259	279	277
2029-30 (F)	240	238	238	243	248	260	280
2030-31 (F)	241	239	241	246	245	249	261
2031-32 (F)	241	240	242	249	248	245	250

9. Should the proposal to expand the age range and premises of St Paul's CofE Infant School, Tongham be agreed, the deficits shown in Table 4 will change with the increase of the junior intake in the Ash and Tongham planning area.
10. Subject to the decision on this proposal and planning permission, building work will be required to the existing site at St Paul's CofE Infant School, Tongham to make it suitable for an additional 120 permanent pupils. This will involve adaptations and refurbishment to the interior of the existing accommodation and a new classroom block and school hall to increase classroom and resource space.
11. The proposal will enable St Paul's CofE Infant School to start providing Key Stage 2 places from September 2025. The Year 2 class for 2024/25 would transfer into the newly established Year 3 class in September 2025/26, and Key Stage 2 will increase incrementally each year as each new Reception cohort is admitted. St Paul's CofE Infant School would be operating as a full 1FE primary school from September 2028/29 onwards.

#### CONSULTATION:

12. An informal consultation was published from 18 September to 5 November 2023 and further Statutory Notices were published from 24 November and concluded on 15 January 2024. All consultation documents are available at [www.surreysays.co.uk](http://www.surreysays.co.uk). The full Statutory Notices are also attached as **Annex 1** of this report.
13. During the Informal Consultation period, there were 246 responses to the consultation:
  - 91% of respondents agreed with the proposal
  - 6% of respondents disagreed with the proposal
  - 3% of respondents stated they didn't know
14. During the Statutory Notice period, there were 54 responses to the consultation:
  - 92% of respondents agreed with the proposal
  - 4% of respondents disagreed with the proposal
  - 4% of respondents said they didn't know
15. Of those agreeing with the proposal, the majority of respondents were parents/carers of pupils currently attending the school.

16. The main positive themes raised throughout both the informal consultation and statutory notices were that local residents felt that the school was a community asset, the expansion would meet demand for primary school places and that the expansion of the school from infant to primary will allow the continuation of primary education.
17. Negative themes included the impacts on primary places within other local schools, the disruption caused by building works and the impact on parking and traffic surrounding the school.
18. The full consultation analysis is attached as **Annex 2**.

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

19. There are design, planning and building risks associated with the project and a project risk register has been compiled, which is regularly updated. A contingency allowance appropriate to the scheme has been included within the project budget to mitigate for potential identified risks.
20. The Local Authority needs to be satisfied that the appropriate fair and open local consultation and or representation has been conducted and that the proposer has given full consideration to all responses received. To ensure that this is the case the consultation and decision-making processes are quality assured.

#### **Financial and value for money implications:**

21. The project will be funded from Surrey County Council's Basic Need Capital Programme (SBN) and the budget for this scheme is included in the approved Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
22. The project will be subject to robust cost challenge and scrutiny to drive optimum value for money.
23. In situations where one school reduces its PAN and another increases its age range there tends to be a period of double funding. This occurs as funding is based on pupils on roll in the previous October. In order to reflect the increase in pupils the expanding school will be funded in the year of expansion for the consequential increase in pupils. Conversely, to avoid a sudden drop in funding, the school with reducing PAN remains funded at the numbers on roll at the previous October unless there is a specific ruling from the Department for Education (DfE) to do otherwise. Experience has indicated DfE are unlikely to support such a proposal.
24. As a result, the cost of that double funding will need to be met from the Dedicated Schools Grant growth fund within the schools block. Based on this scenario an estimate of £40k double funding will occur. This has no direct impact on the Council's General Fund.

#### **Section 151 Officer commentary:**

25. Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and the financial management capabilities across the

organisation. Whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the increased cost of living, global financial uncertainty, high inflation and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to be forward looking in the medium term, as well as the delivery of the efficiencies to achieve a balanced budget position each year.

26. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2023/24 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority, in order to ensure the stable provision of services in the medium term.
27. Appropriate capacity within the Surrey maintained estate is a key element of ensuring sufficiency of school places in the right areas of the County. The Section 151 Officer therefore supports the proposal.

#### **Legal implications – Monitoring Officer:**

28. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on the Council to secure that efficient primary and secondary education is available to meet the needs the population in its area. In doing so, the Council is required to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community.
29. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Council to secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available in its area.
30. The local authority has published statutory notices for increasing the capacity of St Paul's CofE Infant School, thereby bringing into effect the formal commencement of the proposal prior to the consultation stage in accordance with statutory requirements.
31. The Governing Body of St Paul's CofE Infant School have published statutory notices for expanding the age range of the school, thereby bringing into effect the formal commencement of the proposal prior to the consultation stage in accordance with statutory requirements.
32. In considering this Report, the Cabinet Lead Member for Education and Learning must give due regard to the results of the informal consultation as set out in the report and the response of the Service to the consultation comments and conscientiously take these matters into account when making a final decision.

#### **Equalities and diversity:**

33. The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposal is attached to this report as **Annex 3**.

**Other implications:**

34. The potential implications for the following Council priorities and policy areas have been considered.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	Set out below
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Set out below
Environmental sustainability	Set out below
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

**Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications:**

35. This proposal would provide increased primary provision from Key Stage 2 in Ash and Tongham, which would be of benefit to the community served by the school, thereby ensuring that those who are Looked After Children can attend a school closer to home and be more connected to local communities and support services.

**Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults' implications:**

36. Safeguarding vulnerable children is a high priority in all Surrey schools. Schools have considerable expertise in safeguarding vulnerable children and adhere to robust procedures. The schools will continue to apply good practice around safeguarding as they do currently. In addition, safeguarding is a key area for monitoring when Ofsted conducts inspections.

**Environmental sustainability implications:**

- 37. The provision of Key Stage 2 places closer to home will reduce the average journey times for children and their families.
- 38. The design philosophy is to create buildings that will support low energy consumption, reduce solar gain and promote natural ventilation. Any new infrastructure will be built to the local planning authority's adopted core planning strategy.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- 39. Subject to the Cabinet Member determining the statutory notice, Surrey County Council and the Governing Body of St Paul's CofE Infant School, Tongham will proceed to implement the proposal. The school nursery provision will open 15th April 2024.
- 40. Subject to the Cabinet Member determining the statutory notice, Surrey County Council and the Governing Body of St Paul's CofE Infant School, Tongham will proceed to implement the proposal. The significant change to

change the age range from infant to primary will be implemented from 1 Sept 2025.

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**Contact Officer:**

Katie Kelly-Weller, Commissioning Manager



**Consulted:**

Headteacher of the school featured in the proposal  
Parents of children attending the school featured in the proposal  
Children and young people who attend the school featured in the proposal  
Governing bodies and staff members of the school featured in the proposal  
Surrey Family Voice  
Local residents in Surrey  
Local Cllrs in the areas of the school featured in the proposals  
Divisional (Surrey County Council) members  
Cllr Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning  
Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning  
Julia Katherine, Director Education and Learning  
Carrie Traill, Assistant Director Education

**Annexes:**

**Annex 1 Statutory Notice GB change of age range (Full)**  
**Annex 2 Statutory Notice enlargement of premises (Full)**  
**Annex 3 Consultation Analysis**  
**Annex 4 Equality Impact Assessment**  
**Annex 5 Question and Answer document**

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