

By: ROSALIND TURNER, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

To: SARAH HOHLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Subject: PROPOSAL TO EXPAND THE JOHN WESLEY SCHOOL FROM 210 PLACES TO 420 PLACES

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The Cabinet Member is requested to agree to issue a public notice to expand The John Wesley School from 210 places to 420 places.

Introduction

1. The School Organisation Advisory Board, at its meeting on 4 November 2009, supported a recommendation to consult on the proposal to expand The John Wesley School from 210 places to 420 places.

The Proposal

2. The proposal is to expand The John Wesley School by one form of entry, bringing the total capacity to 420 places, with up to 60 places per year group. The expansion of the school will be gradual with the additional places being created annually to accommodate reception aged pupils only, and therefore taking seven years for the school to grow to its full size. The first two form entry intake is proposed for September 2010.

The Consultation

3. (1) A public consultation document was widely distributed. Hard copies were provided for all parents / carers, students, staff and governors of The John Wesley School. Hard copies or links to the electronic copy on the County's website were distributed to all schools in the area, Local Members, Cabinet Members, SOAB Members, the local Member of Parliament, Ashford Borough Council, the Diocesan Boards, local libraries, key colleagues in the Children, Families and Education Directorate and others.

(2) Approximately 500 copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

4. (1) 204 responses have been received, of which 156 are in favour, and 48 are opposed.

Views of the Local Member

5. Mr Wedgbury sees the expansion as necessary and feels that it is sensible for the school to go to 2fe. He does have some concerns regarding the entrance for the proposed neighbouring housing development and would like to see the entrance for that development to enter Cuckoo Lane thus helping traffic calming measures in the vicinity.

Views of Local Member of Parliament

6. Damian Green feels that this school has been excellent since it was founded and deserves the chance to expand.

Views of Ashford Borough Council

7. Amanda Hodgkinson, local Borough Councillor for Singleton South, likes the way the expansion is planned to grow year on year and wishes the school the best of luck with the proposal. She is happy with the excellent teaching team at the school.

Views of the Parish Council

8. The Parish Council is more than happy to support the proposal but has grave concerns about the traffic management outside the school. The school is in a flagship building which looks good and fits in well with the Environment Centre. The school is very accommodating and works with the community far more than any established school in the area.

Views of the Diocesan Authorities

9. [1] Canterbury Diocese is very pleased to support the proposed expansion of John Wesley School, Ashford. It was always expected that this would be a 2 FE school and although only 1FE was built in phase 1 the infrastructure was designed for 2FE. It will be straightforward for diocesan architects to add the additional 7 classrooms and we would expect this to be done in a way that is in keeping with the rest of the school. It is also our view that, in order to minimise the disruption to the existing schools and children, the whole of the next phase should be built at once, rather than a couple of classrooms every few years.

[2] The Methodist Circuit is fully behind the expansion of the school to 2fe. Since 2002 it has been a long-term aspiration of the Methodist Circuit for the school to become a 2fe school and to provide for the wider community as well as for church-going families.

Views of the Governing Body

10. The Governing Body is in unanimous support of the proposal. It would wish to see the permanent buildings completed as soon as possible to minimise the period of temporary accommodation on site.

Views of the Partnership Board

11. The Ashford One and Rural Boards received a presentation on the proposal at a joint meeting. The need for additional capacity was noted and the opportunity to respond to consultation was highlighted.

Views of Highways

12. The school travel plan actively encourages sustainable modes of transport, but, parking is a serious issue here with inconsiderate parking on verges. Currently, parents park on one side of the road causing other vehicle to mount the pavement. These matters will worsen as the school grows. Measures need to be put in place before the school expands, ie Police Community Support Officer to attend to make parents aware, bollards to prevent parking on the verges, making use of the Park Safe Scheme which encourages parents to park in safe places. Other matters that need to be considered are a dedicated school crossing patrol on Cuckoo Lane, eg a zebra crossing, and warning signage on Cuckoo Lane for the school.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

13. (1) Initially, the school will require temporary accommodation to enable the intake of additional pupils, and until the permanent build is complete. The Canterbury Diocese have indicated that they will fund the temporary accommodation and the Local Authority will have to cover the 10% Governors liabilities. This will be funded from an existing budget. The permanent expansion will be funded via developer contributions and is in the agreed capital programme.

Human

(2) Additional teaching and support staff will be required. The school's budget will increase annually as its pupil numbers increase, although there is a lag of seven months in receiving this funding. The school will also receive reorganisation funding, current £7,041 based on a per class allocation for furnishing.

The Views of the School Organisation Advisory Board

14. The School Organisation Advisory Board at its meeting on 17 March 2010 unanimously supported the proposal and recommended to the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education to expand the John Wesley School from 210 to 420 places. The Board also advised the implementation date of this proposal should be 1st September 2011 as opposed to 1st September 2010. The report is attached as appendix 1

Recommendation

15. The Cabinet Member is requested to agree to issue a public notice to expand The John Wesley School from 210 places to 420 places.

David Adams
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The Local Member is Jim Wedgbury

Background Documents: None

Previous Committee Reports:

School Organisation Advisory Board - 4 November 2009

School Organisation Advisory Board – 17 March 2010