

By:	Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills
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To:	Education Committee, September 2012
Subject	Primary Commissioning in Gravesham District
Classification:	Unrestricted

Summary:	This report seeks to inform Members of arrangements in place to ensure sufficient school places are available in Gravesham, and seek the views of the Education Committee on proposals to commission additional provision.
Recommendations:	The Education Committee is asked to agree that the Local Authority confirm enlargement of St Botolphs CE PS and Whitehill PS by 1FE for September 2013.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Gravesham section of the Kent Commissioning Plan indicates a need to commission additional provision to manage the increase in numbers in the West Gravesend and Northfleet planning areas.

1.2 Following consideration of all available options, the local authority is proposing to enlarge St Botolph's CE PS by one form of entry. This will increase the number of Year R places in Gravesham by 30.

1.3 Whitehill PS temporarily increased their intake to 90 for September 2010 and 2011. This temporary enlargement now needs to be confirmed as a permanent enlargement.

2. Background

2.1 St Botolph's CE Primary School (Aided) is a popular, oversubscribed school with a PAN of 30. Planning consent for a 1FE expansion is currently being sought. The school is between West Gravesend and Northfleet and is ideally placed to accommodate the demand from this area. The Rochester Diocese is fully supportive.

2.2 In September 2011 and 2012 Whitehill Primary School admitted a bulge year group in Year R, admitting 90 rather than 60 pupils. The school needs existing accommodation to be refurbished.

3. Commissioning Options

3.1 The local authority has considered several options for increasing provision. Factors under consideration include, site size, suitability, available accommodation, proximity to demand, performances and standards, willingness of the headteacher and governing body and sustainability.

3.2 The two indicated schools provide the most appropriate options to manage the increased demand in Gravesham district.

4. Proposal

4.1 It is proposed to:

- a. Enlarge St Botolphs Church of England Primary School by 1FE taking their PAN to 60 for the September 2013 intake.
- b. Confirm the permanent enlargement of Whitehill Primary School taking their PAN to 90 for the September 2013 intake.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 St Botolph's CE Primary School

- a. Capital - The enlargement of the school requires an initial installation of two additional classrooms, followed by a permanent build. The total cost is likely to be in the region of £1.2m.
- b. Revenue - The schools will receive increased funding through the Delegated Budget on a 'per pupil' basis.
- c. Human – St Botolphs CEPS will appoint additional teachers as required, as the school size increases and the need arises.

5.2 Whitehill Primary School

- a. Capital - The enlargement of the school requires a refit and refurbishment of the existing accommodation. The estimated cost of this will be in the region of £150k which will be drawn from the Capital Budget.
- b. Revenue - The school will receive increased funding through the Delegated Budget on a 'per pupil' basis.
- c. Human - Whitehill PS will appoint additional teachers as required, as the school size increases and the need arises.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 Will need to be completed.

7. Member Opinion

7.1 The proposals are for schools sited in the following divisions:

- a. St Botolphs CE PS – Gravesham West division, Mr Leslie Christie and Mr Harold Craske

b. Whitehill PS - Gravesham East division, Mr John Cubitt and Mr Bryan Sweetland

7.2 The members have been informed of the proposals and have indicated their support for the enlargements.

8. Area Education Officer Opinion

8.1 The Area Education Officer for West Kent fully supports these proposals and having considered other commissioning options, is of the belief that these enlargements offer the best locations, are the most cost-effective and are the most sustainable solutions to increased demand for places in the Gravesham area.

9. The Views of The Schools

9.1 The head teachers and governing bodies of both schools have agreed to the proposals.

10. Conclusions

10.1 Forecasts for several Gravesham urban planning areas indicate increasing demand for primary school places. These enlargements will add an additional thirty Year R places per year, in line with priorities 3, 4 and 9 of 'Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework' and the 'Commissioning Plan for Education – Kent'.

11. Recommendations

11.1 Members are requested to agree/endorse the recommendations as printed on page 1 of this report.

12. Background Documents

Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework
Commissioning Plan for Education – Kent

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