

By:	Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills
Subject	Decision number: 12/02024 - Proposal to expand Palm Bay Primary School (Community)
Classification:	Unrestricted

Summary:	This report informs the Cabinet Member of the results of the Public Consultation and seeks agreement to the issuing of a public notice in respect of the expansion of the school.
Recommendation	The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the issuing a public notice to expand Palm Bay Primary School

1. Introduction

1.1 The Thanet District section of the Kent Commissioning Plan 2012-17 indicates a need to commission additional primary school places in the Margate area.

1.2 On 12 September 2012, Education Cabinet Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills that a consultation take place on the proposal to expand the Palm Bay Primary School.

1.3 This report sets out the results of the public consultation, which took place between 15 October 2012 and 28 November 2012. A public meeting was held on 6 November 2012.

2. Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to enlarge Palm Bay primary school by 15 reception year places, taking their PAN to 60 (2FE) for the September 2015 intake. Successive Reception Year intake will offer 60 places each year and the school will eventually have a total capacity of 420 pupils.

3. Bold Steps and the Kent Commissioning Plan

3.1 This proposal will help to secure our ambition, "to ensure every child can go to a good school where they make good progress and can have fair access to school places" as set out in Bold steps for Kent.

3.2 The Thanet section of the Commissioning Plan indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the Margate, Garlinge and Westgate-on-Sea planning area.

4. Outcomes of the Public Consultation

4.1 The majority of respondents support the proposal.

4.2 A summary of the comments received during the consultation period are give in appendix 1.

4.3 A summary of the questions asked at the public consultation meeting and the responses given, is attached as Appendix 2.

5. Views

5.1 Local Members

The Local Members for the Margate and Cliftonville division are Mr Michael Jarvis and Mr Chris Wells and their views are as follows: Mr Jarvis welcomes the proposal to increase the capacity for Palm Bay Primary School. *“The school is very popular with parents and it is often their first preference for placements since the school provides good education and activities.”* Mr Wells’ views have been sought but to date no response has been received.

5.2 Governing Body

The Governing Body does not object to this proposal. They accept that the Local Authority has an urgent need to provide school places for the increasing number of school age children in Thanet. “As a good school, which is always over-subscribed, we recognise that we are in a position to support the local community and assist the Local Authority by expanding our school (via a phased transition) to a full two-form entry of 60 pupils per year.” The school is working with the Local Authority to ensure that:

- the school’s teaching and caring ethos remains unaffected through the transition
- future premises arrangements are optimised
- the impact on the school’s management practices and day-to-day operations are minimised.

5.3 Pupils

School Council members talked to their classes about what the school would be like if it had more children. The positive and negative comments from the pupils are set out in Appendix 3 attached.

5.4 Area Education Officer

This is a popular and successful school that is regularly oversubscribed. Increasing pupil numbers in the Cliftonville and Margate area, including in the vicinity of Palm Bay, mean that expansion is necessary to ensure sufficient school places for local children. We are working closely with the school on the design and positioning of the new buildings and the planning for the works on site in order to ensure that this supports the smooth running of the school, is in keeping with the vision that the governing body has for Palm Bay primary School and provides for a permanent solution for September 2013. Highways will be consulted as part of the planning for the new accommodation should the proposal go ahead. The school at that time would also produce a new travel plan in liaison with Highways.

Education Cabinet Committee

The Education Cabinet Committee, at its meeting of 18th January 2013, considered and endorsed the proposed Cabinet Member decision to issue a public notice to expand

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is available via the following link: <http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/gf2.ti/f/321794/8101829.1/DOC/-/EIA%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20Report%20August%202012.doc>

7. Recommendations

7.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the issue of a Public Notice to

Background Documents

Commissioning Plan For Education Provision 2012-17

<http://kent590w3:9070/documents/s34295/FINAL%20VERSION%20Kent%20Comm%20Plan%20Ed%20Prov%202012-17%20attached%20to%20WEB%20SITE%2020%20SEPT.pdf>

Education Cabinet Committee report – 12 September 2012 – Primary Commissioning –East Kent

<http://kent590w3:9070/documents/g4880/Public%20reports%20pack%2012th-Sep-2012%2010.00%20Education%20Cabinet%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

The public consultation document is available via the following link:

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/PalmBay/consultationHome>

Lead Officer contact details

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**The Proposed Expansion of Palm Bay Primary School
from 315 pupil places to 420, increasing the PAN from 45 to 60**

Summary of written responses

Consultation documents (hard copies) distributed: 600
Responses received: 40

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parents/Carers	11	10	0	21
Governors	2	1	1	4
Members of staff	12	1	1	14
Interested parties	1	0	0	1
Total responses received *	26	12	2	40

Parents

In support of the proposal

- If Reception had not increased its numbers for September 2012, I don't think my son would have got a place

Against the proposal

- There would be less time available for each pupil
- Whole school activities would no longer be possible
- Surely it makes sense to build new schools to cope with the increase in population levels, not to impose further problems on schools already struggling to cope to maintain standards.

Staff

In support the proposal

- A positive move to two form entry which will benefit the community of Palm Bay
- I support the proposal subject to suitable accommodation being built which does not compromise the current running of the school.
- I am in agreement with the proposal, but am concerned that the increase in roll will have an impact on school life in as much as our current hall will not accommodate all the children for whole school assemblies, there will be an impact on lunchtimes and the current playground would not provide enough space for the children to play.

Governors

In support of the proposal

- It would have been beneficial to have had sight of proposed plans of enhancements to help us make a more informed decision.

Against the proposal

- The additional children would bring an end to whole school assemblies and children with packed lunches would have to eat them in the classroom.

Other Interested Parties

In support of the proposal

- Thanet District Council responded saying that the Council fully supported the proposal.

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**Summary of the Public Meetings held on Tuesday 6 November
at Palm Bay Primary School**

The meeting was chaired by Mr Robert Burgess and was attended by approximately 25 people, including parents, governors, members of staff and other interested parties.

The key issues raised are summarised below.

Parents

Would the catchment area change for the school?

- Mr Mark Cowell, headteacher responded that the oversubscription criteria would not change and therefore it was envisaged that the school would continue to serve the children in the locality. Under the distance criteria, the furthest child offered a place lived one mile away from the school, but if the school expands permanently, this may stretch further.

Would parents be able to view the plans for the new buildings and what would happen if building work over-ran?

- Mr Mark Cowell, headteacher responded that the school was working closely with KCC Property on the planning process to ensure that should the proposal go ahead, the accommodation would be in place for September 2013. The school would display the plans in the reception area as soon as they were available.

Would parking be adequate?

- Mr Mark Cowell, headteacher responded that additional parking for staff would be considered during the planning stage, but there was not a requirement to include parking for parents.
- Mr Robert Burgess suggested that a Walking Bus could be considered and there was already a large parking area outside the school.

Would the school be able to continue to hold whole school assemblies?

- Mr Mark Cowell, headteacher responded that although the hall was considered large enough for a two form entry school, it was unlikely that they would be able to hold whole school assemblies.

How would the expansion of the school be managed?

- Mr Mark Cowell, headteacher responded that should the expansion go ahead it would be phased and initially only the Key Stage One classrooms would be resourced and operated.

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Summary of the Pupils at Palm Bay Primary School

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More friends ▪ More equipment for the classes ▪ More teachers ▪ No mixed classes ▪ More school councillors so more ideas ▪ More books and toys ▪ More money collected on non-school uniform days ▪ More toilets ▪ We might get a bigger hall ▪ It's nice and fair to let children come to our school ▪ We will get more cleaners and other staff ▪ More clubs ▪ Better school teams ▪ More friends and family members getting into Palm Bay ▪ More children means more money for the school ▪ Children who don't have a school get the chance to come to Palm Bay ▪ We will get to meet people from different cultures and who have different beliefs ▪ It's nice that Palm Bay is popular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More people – too crowded on the playground which is dangerous ▪ It will be noisier around the school ▪ The library and computer room might not be big enough ▪ Take longer to get people together on the playground if the fire alarm goes off – where will we go? ▪ Too squashed in assembly ▪ Not enough days to each have a turn on the climbing frame ▪ Too many children to have the stage up in the hall ▪ The people might not be good friends ▪ Not enough playground equipment ▪ More bullies ▪ We will need to find money to build a bigger hall ▪ Longer waiting lists for clubs ▪ Three lunch slots will be needed so people will be hungry ▪ No more whole school assemblies ▪ We will need to cut down trees for the new building ▪ Too many people for celebration shows, e.g. year 6 production and nativity ▪ Less PE slots