

By:	Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Education Cabinet Committee 19 March 2013
Subject	Decision No. 12/02020 - Proposed expansion of Knockhall Community Primary School, Dartford
Classification:	Unrestricted

Summary:	This report informs members of the results of the Public Consultation
Recommendations:	The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills on the decision to issue a public notice to expand Knockhall Primary School.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Dartford district section of the Kent Commissioning Plan 2012 - 2017 indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the Swanscombe planning area.

1.2 On 12 September 2012 the Education Cabinet Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member of Education, Learning & Skills that a consultation takes place on the proposal to expand Knockhall Primary School.

1.3 This reports sets out the results of the Public Consultation which took place between Monday 3 December 2012 and Monday 28 January 2013. A public meeting was held on 21 November 2012.

2. The Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to enlarge Knockhall Primary School by 30 reception year places taking their PAN to 90 (3FE) for the September 2014 intake. Successive reception year intakes will offer 90 places each year and the school will eventually have a total capacity of 630 pupils.

3. Bold Steps and the Kent Commissioning Plan

3.1 This proposal will help to secure our ambition “to ensure every child will 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 Dartford section of the Kent Commissioning Plan indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the Swanscombe planning area.

4. Outcomes of the Public Consultation

4.1 A small majority of respondents were opposed to the proposal. The concerns raised at the public meeting are explored in paragraph 5.2 below.

4.2 A summary of the comments received during the consultation period are given at appendix 1.

4.3 A summary of the questions, comments and responses made during the meeting are given at appendix 2.

5. Views

5.1 Local Member

The Local Member is Mr Richard Lees. Mr Lees said:

Two Primary Schools in my Division are proposed for expansion; Manor Community Primary and Knockhall Community Primary.

I am in favour of both these expansions.

Even without the benefit of the commissioning plan and the pupil roll predictions, I am keenly aware, through my work as a local councillor, of the growing pressure on places in Swanscombe & Greenhithe.

Both Schools have shown a willingness and desire to expand but more importantly, they have the capacity to expand without adversely affecting teaching and learning standards.

I have gauged public feeling to the proposals and so far the majority of residents and other stakeholders in the community I have spoken to view the proposals very positively.

There are genuine concerns, which I share, about the impact on the surrounding communities, on the quality of the learning environment, the possible disruption to learning and increases in traffic but I am confident these will all be addressed at the design and planning stages, should the proposals be accepted.

I hope that the proposals will be accepted and that these two, popular, primary schools of choice can offer a quality education to even more children in Swanscombe and Greenhithe.

5.2 The following views were raised in the public consultation meeting:

(i) Concern over the potential for an increase in traffic or local parking issues.

Access to the school is via Eynsford Road which is residential. Drop off and pick up parking can cause traffic issues. These issues would need to be considered in the wider planning, following a survey by Kent Highways.

The school mainly draws in pupils from the Greenhithe and Ingress Park areas, but the A226 is a very busy road and this makes walking a less attractive travel to school option.

Possible solutions could include additional parking/stopping restrictions, installation of a turning area inside the school, a new road crossing and walking buses.

5.3 Area Education Officer

The AEO fully supports this proposal. This enlargement is one of three proposals for the Fleetdown/Greenhithe/Swanscombe area. Demand in this part of Dartford district has currently outstripped capacity and forecasts indicate that this increasing demand is likely to continue.

The AEO is of the belief that this enlargement is not only necessary, but the most cost-effective and sustainable solution to increased demand in the immediate area.

5.4 Governing Body

The Governing Body of Knockhall Primary School are supportive of the proposal.

5.5 Headteacher

The head teacher of the school has been fully consulted and is supportive.

5.6 Parents

Half of the parents who responded to the consultation supported the proposal.

5.7 Pupils

The pupils of the school have been offered the opportunity to contribute.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. No comments were received and no changes needed to be made to the Equality Impact Assessment following the consultation period.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 Capital funding is required to complete this expansion. The funding available comes from an annual Government allocation, topped up, where eligible, with Developer contributions. There are no capital costs during 2013/14 as building will commence in 2014/15. Estimated costs for 2014/15 are £807,605. We still await confirmation from the DfE of our 'basic need' capital allocations for 2013/15

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills on the decision to issue a public notice to expand Knockhall Primary School.

9. Background Documents

Knockhall Primary School consultation document

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

Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/priorities_policies_and_plans/priorities_and_plans/bold_steps_for_kent.aspx

Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2012-2017

<https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/education-and-learning/plans-and-consultations/strategic->

[plans/Commissioning%20Plan%20for%20Education%20Provision%20Kent%202012-17%20FINAL%20\(Sept-2012\).pdf](plans/Commissioning%20Plan%20for%20Education%20Provision%20Kent%202012-17%20FINAL%20(Sept-2012).pdf)

Education Cabinet Committee report – 12 September 2012 – Primary Commissioning – Dartford District

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

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Proposal to expand Knockhall Community Primary School, Dartford

Summary of Written Responses

Printed Consultation Documents distributed: 400
 Consultation responses received: 17

A summary of the responses received showed that:

	In Favour	Undecided	Opposed
Governors			1
Staff	2		
Parents	4		4
Pupils			
Other		1	5
Totals	6	1	10

Comments in favour of the proposal:

- Knockhall School is a good school with good staff but poor quality building. Now is a good chance to rebuild a huge part of the building and make it more habitable.
- I appreciate that the local community may be apprehensive about the growth and parking issues etc. but with the correct management of grounds this is easily solved.
- The proposal will give Knockhall School children more money, better facilities and more opportunities in their learning.

Comments against the proposal:

- My major concern is the safety of the children when in Eynsford Road. It is currently dangerous and before long a child will be killed or seriously injured.
- More parking needs to be made available for staff, parents and visitors which is insufficient at present and a nuisance to residents near the school.
- The increase in the number of pupils will increase the mayhem and hazardous parking.
- I feel that teachers will lose touch and bullying will become a problem for the children.
- The road cannot accommodate an increase. Parking is a severe problem often blocking neighbours drives.
- Concern for the children's safety as parents stop in the middle of the road to drop off, blocking the road and putting their children at risk which will increase with expansion.
- A reduction in outdoor space to make way for the new building.
- The ability of current facilities, such as the hall, to accommodate a larger number of children.
- The current size of Knockhall School and its outside space were both plus points for me when choosing the school and these are now both at risk.
- I have seen development on a massive scale regarding housing but nothing of new primary or secondary schools, healthcare or roads. More thought should be given to what services these new residents will need.
- I am against the proposal to expand the school until the road issues are addressed.

Proposal to expand Knockhall Primary School

Summary of Public Consultation Meeting

Purpose of the Meeting

- To explain the proposal to expand Knockhall Primary School
- To give members of the public an opportunity to ask questions and comment
- To listen to views and opinions

Kent County Council is proposing that Knockhall Primary School increase its Year R intake to 90, taking the proposed total capacity of the school from 420 places to 630 places which means 21 teaching rooms will be required.

The eastern part of Dartford has seen significant growth from large and small scale development over the last few years. The Kent Thameside development particularly is bringing new families to the area requiring enhancements to the infrastructure in order to meet the future needs of the area and its residents. Demand for reception year places is currently in excess of capacity and the local authority feel Knockhall Primary School is ideally placed to accommodate the forecasted growth.

Three primary schools in Swanscombe planning area, Manor, Craylands and Knockhall.

A comprehensive feasibility study and survey will be required to plan the new build at the school in consultation with parents, pupils, staff and the governing body.

A short presentation outlining the proposal for expansion was given by Simon Webb.

Statement from the Acting Headteacher, Jacquie Connetta

As a school, everyone is very excited about the prospect of expanding the school and we are always oversubscribed and it will provide added benefits for the children and opportunities for the staff. Obviously there will be disruption whilst the building work is undertaken to accommodate for the extra children but I am sure we can work through this. I would like to reassure parents that the staff are committed to ensure that standards, teaching and learning does not suffer as a result of the expansion.

Statement from Substantive Headteacher from 01.01.10, Rob Juniper

Looking forward to meeting and working with you all next January. Wish to reassure that over last 6 years my school in Ashford has gone through this process, the important message is, I know you will have questions but it is important you embrace this process and support the school as there are lots of benefits. Understand concerns about maintaining standards, my school came out of special measures in 2006 and in July this had received good/outstanding Ofsted – it is about managing this process and working together. Fully embrace the proposals that KCC are putting forward to increase Knockhall to 3FE.

Statement from Chair of Governors, Julian Clark

On behalf of governors we broadly welcome proposal to expand the school, as good for the school, the children and Greenhithe. I get upset that we had to turn 28 children away this year; obviously these proposals are subject to the planning approvals going through. We

want the school improvements to be sympathetic to the existing school so does not lose its character – I can assure you that as governors, hold the local authority to account to ensure that this is the case.

Question	Response
<p>Parent As the school are turning 28 children away at reception entry, is an extra 1 FE going to be enough.</p>	<p>Simon Webb Yes, we believe it is. Local authority will strategically grow schools across Dartford East. The Manor Primary School has increased temporarily and Fleetdown and Knockhall in 2014 so it is phased and does not impact on the neighbouring schools.</p>
<p>Parent & Resident Main concern, as a resident is how will the school communicate with us, received a leaflet on Friday because parent of a child to this school but my neighbours did not receive anything. As a resident we are very concerned about parking issues, as teacher's park in the road. Perhaps yellow lines or a one way system might help?</p>	<p>Simon Webb Try to get consultation documents out to staff, parents and governors as quickly as possible. Current policy of KCC is that we do not leaflet drop to local residents as it is singularly about educational enlargement. The residents will be consulted at the planning and highways stage, which is a separate consultation, including a full highways assessment of traffic movement to monitor the volume of traffic and challenges as far as school and residents are concerned. The highways department will explore all avenues to try and alleviate the traffic congestion and the painting of yellow lines or putting in a single track access into the school to make an in and out may be an option. In terms of the planning and highways consultation period, local residents will be consulted through the local and county council.</p>
<p>Parent & Resident This is a wonderful school and we welcome the investment that KCC is prepared to make. My dealings with KCC or planning is an absolute joke, Sure Start Centre, just turned up and built it – no consultation. Are we going to get guarantees that this highways consultation will include local residents?</p>	<p>Simon Webb I agree that we will make a report available at the school. Want to make sure that we are transparent and nothing done through back door. I am giving an undertaking that residents can get a copy of the relevant reports.</p>
<p>Resident The education people think they can plan these things out – please explain why they shut two schools in area because of no demand, then opened one back up and built a new one. We have an estate which included houses, a pub, shops and a new school and that school has never been built. Fear someone is going to get killed on the road and if they do are KCC going to take responsibility because you made it a death trap.</p>	<p>Simon Webb I am a KCC officer and therefore accountable for making the decisions regarding the school. School closure you are referring to Swanscombe Secondary School, after a period of time built as SW community college and why we didn't built a school on Ingress Park. It was my decision not to proceed with primary school at Ingress park as after development built</p>

	<p>we had a option on that site to put primary school and throughout that period not one child came from Ingress Park and at end of time period had to make a decision whether to build a school or not. Of course, consequentially 2-3 years later there were a lot of children beginning to come off that development. Manor, Craylands and Knockhall schools had surplus places to cater for the additional children from that development. Population has increased from that development and inward migration, which was not included in original calculations. Thought growth was a spike but it was actual growth so have had to temporarily increase some schools but now need to put permanent accommodation in.</p>
<p>Parent & Resident at Ingress Park I moved to Ingress Park having had children and feel the decision not to build a school was wrong. Feel proposals here to enlarge school is great – Craylands is a school you have not mentioned, why as only 1FE?</p>	<p>Simon Webb We would never look at enlarging Craylands School as it is a PFI school. Any enlargement proposals would cost far too much as the clauses within the legal agreement would make it unaffordable.</p>
<p>Resident My concern like a lot of people, is the traffic and parking in the road. There is a problem with flooding on corner of school gates; surely someone from KCC could have done something about that.</p> <p>Also have concerns about the actual building works at the school as some years ago my garden wall was knocked down on three occasions by contractors going into the school. I wrote letters but to no avail. If the building works are due to start again can you let me know who I should contact if this happens again.</p>	<p>Simon Webb If enlargement goes ahead I will work with school to ensure that local residents likely affected by plant coming in know the timescale of when equipment coming into school. There will be a project manager appointed to oversee the build. I will give you my contact and you can contact the headteacher, Rob Juniper and we will personally speak to the contractors and follow that back.</p> <p>Mr Lees is County Member here tonight and he will pick up the issue of the drain and I will ensure feasibility study will pick up the water & drainage system is included. We will have to ensure that the utilities are fit for purpose to accommodate a 3FE school.</p> <p>There is no chance that a school can go onto Ingress Park now – as the land has been released back to the developers.</p> <p>Get a traffic assessment done on Eynsford Road.</p>
<p>Parent If increasing reception intake what are you doing about nursery places? Also what about secondary schools, where will children go? How will disruption affect children's learning and where is the money coming from?</p>	<p>Simon Webb Local authority do not have to offer nursery places now, use to, but any independent provider can set up own nursery where there is demand.</p>

	<p>In terms of secondary provision, as children work through 5 enlargements then clearly there is a need for secondary school places. Identified by 2016 we will have put 2FE in secondary school and by 2019-20 there will be the need for another 3FE.</p> <p>Any children going through disruption would hold headteacher & governors to account for the standards in the school so local authority would expect the standards to only improve.</p> <p>Cllr Lees added that the Manor Community Primary School is a case in point where despite several years of disruption through building works standards have been maintained and improved.</p> <p>In terms of resources the money will come into the school because children come in in reception year group. County Council guarantee funding for 30 children irrespective of how many children actually start school. An additional £6,500 will be given to kit out the class rooms.</p>
<p>Resident How is this traffic assessment going to be made, as we also suffer from traffic from the Surestart and the Nursery. Teachers are parking in the road, their cars do not move all day, it is a nightmare for us and we are all concerned. We have had to spend money putting in a drive but it is constantly obstructed. Cars have been hit by passing traffic because of obstruction. How long is Kent highways going to spend assessing this road.</p>	<p>Simon Webb Within the feasibility we will identify where there is education provision. They will visit on 3-4 separate days and look from all angles. The report they produce will have to be validated so we can be assured that the recommendations they make</p>
<p>Parent Question about existing building and what is proposed. Building has history but some areas of the school not fit for purpose, i.e. heating systems etc, is there any provision to improve areas of the school that already exists.</p>	<p>Simon Webb We will put in money to ensure enlargement is possible. If current roofs not up to specification we cannot through basic need replace those roofs but we could look at it, if more effectively to knock down old part of the building not fit purpose knock down ground floor to build 2 floors. We will undertake any reasonable work to make building fit for purpose.</p>
<p>Parent & Local Resident Parking – does the study include the parents parking on zig zags morning after morning?</p>	<p>Simon Webb The traffic feasibility which will have a lot of elements will look at zig zag lines, it is an illegal act. We will work with parents to ask them not to do it and if they continue to do it, we need to get the Police down to issue tickets.</p> <p>We can only do what we are allowed to do.</p>

<p>Parent Perhaps the best way to approach this is to have the officers in plain clothes and not high visibility jackets as people will be alerted and no one will park illegally.</p>	<p>Simon Webb I will ask the company that undertakes this traffic survey to dress appropriately and not to aggravate the situation.</p>
<p>Parent & Resident Will there be any changes in recreation facilities and if so, how will this impact on the school.</p>	<p>Simon Webb As the school is enlarging it will need more green space for sports activities to take place. The local authority do not like take out green field space unless need to. If currently ground floor building that is not fit purpose the feasibility may say more cost effective to knock this down and build up to second storey.</p>
<p>Hall does it include canteen?</p>	<p>Simon Webb Yes, anything that the staff and children need for school to remain as effective as it is. New hall, kitchen, staff room etc will be looked at.</p>
<p>Will assessment take into consideration the age of the building and cost of keeping it going? As a lot of money is spent maintaining this old building to keep it going.</p> <p>Sensible to look to the future, might be cheaper to replace parts now than keep carrying out remedial work.</p>	<p>Simon Webb Only allowed to use funding on basic need to enlarge the school. If the current buildings start to deteriorate significantly ht can make application for a building improvement grant. Not a lot of capital money around and this will only be undertaken if really needed.</p> <p>Best way forward is for the headteacher and governors to put an accommodation plan against the buildings condition survey forward.</p>

Leyland Ridings thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for the questions that had been asked. He encouraged everyone to send in their comments by the closing date, 28 January 2013.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.