

By:	Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills
Subject	Decision number: 12/02009 - Proposal to expand Southborough Church of England Primary School, Tunbridge Wells
Classification:	Unrestricted

Summary:	This report provides the results of the Public Consultation for consideration by the Cabinet Member and seeks agreement to expand the school
Recommendations:	The Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills is recommended to expand Southborough Church of England Primary School via the necessary first stage issue of a Statutory Public Notice and to put in place measures to continue with the proposal after that period has ended

1. Introduction

1.1 On 12 September 2012 the Kent Commissioning Plan was presented to Education Cabinet Committee, together with a report listing Primary Commissioning proposals for Tunbridge Wells District.

1.2 Following discussions with Southborough Church of England Primary School, KCC, supported by the Governing Body, undertook a public consultation on a proposal to expand from 60 reception year places to 90 places with effect from September 2013.

1.3 This report sets out the results of the public consultation that took place between Monday 15 October 2012 and Monday 3 December 2012. A public meeting was held on 16 October 2012.

2. The Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to enlarge Southborough Church of England Primary School by 30 reception year places taking their PAN to 90 (3FE) for the September 2013 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 Tunbridge Wells section of the Kent Commissioning Plan indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the Southborough planning area.

4. Outcomes of the Public Consultation

4.1 The consultation document was distributed to parents/carers, school staff, nursery staff, governors and County Councillors, Member of Parliament, the Diocesan Authorities, local library, the Borough and Parish Councils, and others, in accordance with the agreed County policy. The document was also posted on the KCC website and the link to the website widely circulated via email.

4.2 Approximately 600 copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses

Written Responses

Responses to the Public Consultation

5.1 47 responses have been received, of which 42 are in favour, 4 are opposed and 1 is undecided. The Cabinet Member has reviewed these responses and should have due regard for them before taking a decision.

6. Views

6.1 Local Member

The Local Member is Mr Roy Bullock who has not yet indicated whether he supports the proposal.

6.2 The following issues were raised at the public consultation meeting:

(i) Concern over the potential for a dilution in ethos or standards at the school.

The responsibility for maintenance of standards at the school is vested in the Head teacher Mrs Emma Savage and the Chair of Governors. Both made it clear during the public meeting that they believed that neither performance standards nor ethos were at risk.

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

There are two sets of access to the school that are in use, but both open onto the same road, Broomhill Park Road. Consideration of the access to the school, including surrounding roads may need to be considered as part of any redevelopment of the site and Property Group are factoring this in to their feasibility studies.

A new traffic survey will be sought in parallel to the planning process to clearly define any potential impact of additional traffic resulting from this proposal. Solutions such as an off-road drop-off/pick-up area, walking buses and off site drop offs may form part of the solution and the School Travel Plan will be updated.

(iii) Concerns about disruption to learning during build.

A project manager will be appointed who will liaise closely with the head teacher. In this way, the head teacher will maintain complete control over any work being done, particularly if it is felt that health and safety may be compromised

Where possible, disruptive building work will be limited to times when the school is closed.

(iv) Concerns over staff parking.

There is limited capacity on the site and an increase in car parking spaces is an issue that will need to be considered and incorporated into the eventual plan.

6.3 Area Education Officer

The AEO fully supports this proposal and, having considered other commissioning options, 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.

Other school sites in the northern part of urban Tunbridge Wells have been considered, but Southborough CE Primary School remains the single most suitable solution to increasing local demand.

6.4 Governing Body

The Governing Body of Southborough Church of England Primary School are supportive of the proposal.

6.5 Headteacher

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

6.6 Diocese

The Diocese of Rochester has been consulted and are happy to support the enlargement of church schools.

6.7. Parents

The majority of parents who responded were supportive.

6.8 Pupils

All the pupils of the school who responded were supportive.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

7.1 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.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Capital funding is required to complete this expansion. The funding available comes from an annual Government allocation, topped up, where eligible, with Developer contributions. The estimated cost for 2013-14 on this expansion is £146,410. This has been included within the 2013-14 capital programme although we still await confirmation from the DfE of our 'basic need' capital allocations for 2013/15

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills is recommended to:

(i) issue a public notice to expand Langton Green Primary School.

And, subject to no objections being received to the public notice

(ii) expand the school

10. Officer Scheme of Delegation

10.1 The Cabinet Member should be aware that no specific officer delegations are included within the formal decision as the Officer Scheme of Delegation; under Appendix 2 part 4 of the Council's Constitution, provides a clear and appropriate link between this decision and the actions needed to implement it. For information it is envisaged that the Director of Property & Infrastructure Support will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council in this instance

10.2 Officers performing tasks under the scheme of delegation are expected to keep the relevant portfolio holder informed of progress

11. Background Documents

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](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)

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

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