

By:	Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills
Subject	Decision No. 12/02012 - Proposed expansion of Fleetdown Primary School, Dartford
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 Fleetdown 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 The Dartford district section of the Kent Commissioning Plan 2012 - 2017 indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the Dartford West 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 Fleetdown Primary School.

1.3 This report sets out the results of the Public Consultation which took place between Monday 12 November 2012 and Monday 24 December 2012. A public meeting was held on 13 November 2012.

2. The Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to enlarge Fleetdown 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 Dartford section of the Kent Commissioning Plan indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the Fleetdown 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 400 copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses.

5. Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

5.1 13 responses have been received, of which 9 are in favour and 5 are opposed. 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 Mrs Penny Cole. Mrs Cole said:

This is an outstanding school and I am assuming that by the lack of parents not attending the consultation they are generally not against the proposal. My only concern is that more children would be driven to the school as the Fleet Estate itself is a small community so the extra capacity would be filled from elsewhere and probably further than may be considered walking distance, ie. Darenth or The Brent area and this would cause extra congestion around the school. I'm not sure how we can tackle this but the issue must be considered during the planning stage.

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

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

The responsibility for maintenance of standards at the school is vested in the Head teacher, Mrs Angela Konarzewski and the Governing body. Both made it clear during the public meeting that they believed that neither performance standards nor ethos were at risk.

Mrs Konarzewski delivered a clear and focussed speech in which she assured parents that she would not let the ethos or standards of the school deteriorate and that the staff were fully committed to the proposal to enlarge the school.

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

Access to the school is via Lunedale Road. The surrounding roads are largely residential, and 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 Fleet estate so most of the children will walk to school. Possible solutions include additional parking/stopping restrictions, installation of a turning area inside the school and walking buses.

(iii) Concerns about disruption to learning during build.

Where possible, disruptive building work will be limited to times when the school is closed. The head teacher will have access to the project manager and will be able to exercise complete control over any work being done, particularly if it is felt that health and safety may be compromised.

(iv) Concerns over staff parking.

There is limited capacity on the site and an increase in car parking spaces is an issue. Part of the feasibility study will consider what options there are to increase the car parking capacity. The site is very large with underutilisation of much of the lower field area. Constraints exist over green belt scheduling, but that would not prevent relocation of sports fields.

(v) Concerns about the need for additional places that would require Fleetdown to expand.

The local authority has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient school places are provided. The case for the expansion is predicated on the forecasting methodology in use. Forecasts clearly indicate a significant and sustained increase of school age children in the Fleetdown planning area.

6.3 Area Education Officer

The AEO fully supports this proposal. This enlargement is one of three proposals for the Fleetdown/Greenhithe/Swanscombe area, due for September 2013. 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.

6.4 Governing Body

The Governing Body of Fleetdown 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 Parents

A majority of the parents who responded, support the proposal.

6.7 Pupils

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

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. There are no capital costs during 2013/14 as building will commence in 2014/15. Estimated costs for 2014/15 are £150,000. 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 Fleetdown 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

10. Background Documents

Fleetdown Primary School consultation document

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/Fleetdown/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-](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](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)

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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