

By:	Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills
Subject	Decision No. 12/02015 - Proposed expansion of Langton Green 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 Langton Green 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 Tunbridge Wells district section of the Kent Commissioning Plan 2012 - 2017 indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the Langton Green 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 Langton Green Primary School.

1.3 This report sets out the results of the public consultation which took place between Monday 19 November 2012 and Monday 14 January 2013. A public meeting was held on 20 November 2012.

2. The Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to enlarge Langton Green Primary School by 30 reception year places taking their PAN to 60 (2FE) for the September 2013 intake. Successive reception year intakes 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 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 Langton Green 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 500 copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses

Written Responses

Responses to the Public Consultation

5.1 268 responses have been received, of which 169 are in favour, 94 are opposed and 5 are 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 John Davies. Mr Davies said:

John Davies is supportive of the increase in the school's PAN from 30 to 60 to ensure that those parents who wish their children to attend Langton Green Primary School can do so and share the excellent education provided by a dedicated team of teaching professionals and support staff led by an outstanding Headteacher and Board of Governors. However until the access and traffic implications are addressed he cannot fully support the proposal as these were not in his view properly addressed in the feasibility study. Mr Davies as the local Member will be responding to any Planning Application that is put forward and will not participate in the decision process of any application as he is a Member of the Planning Applications Committee and Chairman of the Committee and a Governor of the school.

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

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

There were several comments and returns (from residents and parents) that expressed concern that the 'village' aspect of the school would be diluted due to the widening of the area from which the school draws in pupils.

The school has an Ofsted grade of outstanding and the head teacher, Mrs Judith Lees made it clear that neither performance standards nor ethos were at risk. Mrs Lees offered a very firm commitment to parents at the meeting that she believed that the enlargement was a positive move and would benefit the school and local community.

(ii) Concern over the lack of places available in the school for September 2013.

According to the early information available to the school, it is estimated that out of 30 available places at the school, 27 of these will be offered as sibling link places, leaving only 3 places available. This would mean that some local children, even some living very close to the school, will not be able to get a place.

For September 2013, there have been a significant number of responders who have children who would like to go to Langton Green Primary School. These potential parents indicate a unanimous and enthusiastic support for the proposal.

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

It is acknowledged that Lampington Row is a narrow residential road and that even a modest increase in traffic might create issues for residents at drop off and pick up times.

Alternative solutions need to be considered as part of any work at the site and Property Group are factoring this in to their feasibility studies. One possible solution would be to use parish/village car parking, but it is understood that improvements would be required.

MLM Consulting Engineers were commissioned by Kent County Council to provide a Transport Assessment (TA) associated with a proposal to extend the existing Langton Green Primary School. The report is available as a public document and it concludes:

"Overall it has been demonstrated that with the access improvements to the school and the full use of the village hall car park there are no transport or highways reasons to prevent the extension of the current 1 form entry school to a 2 form entry school."

(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 in any work done at the school.

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

There are concerns that Langton Green Primary School is being expanded purely to ameliorate the capacity issues in central Tunbridge Wells. The AEO does not feel that this is the case as Langton Green is a village community, separate from Tunbridge Wells.

Langton Green planning area covers an area beyond the confines of the village itself. There are single dwellings and hamlets outwith the village boundaries, for who Langton Green is the nearest school. Forecasts clearly indicate a significant and sustained increase of school age children in the Langton Green planning area.

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.

6.4 Governing Body

The Governing Body of Langton Green Primary School are supportive of the proposal.

6.5 Headteacher

The head teacher of the school is supportive.

6.6 Parents

Of the parents that responded, there is a small majority opposed to the proposal.

6.7 Pupils

The majority of pupils of the school are supportive of the proposal.

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 £85,000.

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

Langton Green Primary School consultation document

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/LangtonGreen/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 – Tunbridge Wells District

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

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