

By:	Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Mike whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills
Subject	Decision No. 12/02019 - Proposed expansion of Whitehill Primary School, Gravesend
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 Whitehill 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 notice period has ended

1. Introduction

1.1 The Gravesham district section of the Kent Commissioning Plan 2012 - 2017 indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the Gravesham East 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 Whitehill Primary School.

1.3 This reports sets out the results of the Public Consultation which took place between Monday 26 November 2012 and Monday 21 January 2013. A public meeting was held on 29 November 2012.

2. The Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to enlarge Whitehill 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 Gravesham section of the Kent Commissioning Plan indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in the Gravesham East 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.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

4.1 32 responses have been received, of which 11 are in favour, 15 are undecided, and 6 are opposed. The Cabinet Member has reviewed these responses and should have due regard for them before taking a decision.

5. Views

5.1 Local Member

The Local Members are Mr John Cubitt & Mr Bryan Sweetland. Mr Cubitt and Mr Sweetland said:

It is clear that there is a need for a greater number of primary school places to meet the needs of the growing population of Gravesham. So from a pragmatic standpoint we do support the expansion at Whitehill provided that the school receives support in addressing the areas of concern which are detailed below.

- *The latest published Ofsted 2011 shows plenty of room for improvement.*
- *The school has a larger than average proportion of pupils who do not have English as their first language. (Ofsted)*
- *The proportion of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) is larger than the national average. (Ofsted)*
- *The number of pupils that have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is larger than average. (Ofsted)*
- *Access to the school is a cause for concern.*
- *Some of the existing accommodation requires refurbishment.*

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

(i) Concern over the potential for a dilution in the ethos of the school.

There were concerns raised at the public meeting about the possibility of the ethos of the school being eroded with the increase in size, primarily because it would attract more children for whom, English is not a first language.

The headteacher, Mrs Jane Porter maintained that the school was completely inclusive and any such increase would not impact on the learning of any pupil.

(ii) Concerns about the existing school buildings

Several correspondents, including the headteacher, commented on the state of repair of existing school buildings. The AEO confirmed that the intention of the local authority was to ensure that following expansion, the school was fit for purpose. While Basic need funding could not be used to maintain or repair the school, there were other funding streams that might accommodate this, depending upon meeting the criteria.

The feasibility study indicates that the site size is capable of accommodating 3FE.

5.3 Area Education Officer

The AEO fully supports this proposal. Demand in Gravesham West planning area is outstripping capacity and forecasts indicate that this increasing demand is likely to continue

5.4 Governing Body

The Governing Body of Whitehill 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

A small majority of the parents who responded, support 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. The estimated cost for 2013-14 on this expansion is £40,565. 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

8. Recommendations

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

- (i) issue a public notice to expand Whitehill Primary School and subject to no objections being received to the public notice
- (l) expand the school

9. Officer Scheme of Delegation

9.1 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

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

10. Background Documents

Whitehill Primary School consultation documents

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

Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/priorities,_policies_and_plans/priorities_and_plan_s/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)

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

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

Education Cabinet Committee report – 19 March 2013 – Primary Commissioning – Gravesham District

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=746&MId=5032&Ver=4>

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