

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| By: | Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills |
| To: | Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills |
| Subject | Decision No. 12/02020 - Proposed expansion of Knockhall Community 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 Knockhall 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 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 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

Written Responses

Responses to the Public Consultation

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 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

6.4 Governing Body

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

6.5 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.

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 £807,605. 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 Knockhall 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

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](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>

Lead Officer Contact details

Simon Webb

Area Education Officer - West Kent

01732 525110

simon.webb@kent.gov.uk